

# OCCULT OR EXACT SCIENCE?

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*Articles by H. P. Blavatsky*

OCCULT OR EXACT SCIENCE ?

THE NEGATORS OF SCIENCE

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## FOREWORD

THESE two articles by H. P. Blavatsky are concerned with and critical of the prevailing “scientific” theory of knowledge characteristic of the latter part of the nineteenth century, which survives in the twentieth among those who have neglected to become aware of the great changes on the frontiers of modern thought. Without attempting to assemble evidence of these changes, and without suggesting that both new attitudes in psychology and recent thinking about the relation of science to the idea of “truth” are confirmatory of what Madame Blavatsky here wrote, it may be said that the hard crust of materialistic assumption which she attacked so vigorously is now broken in many places.

It should be recognized that the author of these articles had two general purposes. First, she wished to go on record in behalf of the reality of Occult Science—as an actual, working knowledge of the inner side of nature and life. To do this, it was necessary for her to speak of the possibility—for her the certainty—of the existence of highly developed human beings who possess this knowledge and are able to use it.

Second, she gave examples of the insight which such knowledge provides into mysteries of human life and nature, hoping thereby to persuade open-minded readers that she wrote from a stance of understanding not duplicated in any of the schools of the time. She sought students and investigators, not believers or followers. But she was quite aware that the revolutionary character of her declarations would restrict serious response to the few. This remains true, today, although there is reason to think that the few, in these days of anxiety and general disillusionment, may come to be somewhat more numerous

than they were during the confident years of the nineteenth century.

Her method, in these articles, is to state certain of the postulates of Occult Science, to illustrate how the laws they represent may be seen to operate within the field of ordinary human experience, and to use these postulates and examples as a basis for criticism of the gross conceptions of the science and scholarship of that time. She worked, however, as she points out, under the limitations which confine all those who have actual knowledge of the occult realms of nature; she could not, that is, reveal much more than scattered instances of the teachings on which she drew. As she said:

Those who are Occultists work on certain lines that *they dare not trespass*. Their mouth is closed; their explanation and demonstration are limited. What can they do? Science will never be satisfied with a half-explanation.

It follows that her discussion is addressed to those who have intuitive reasons for wondering about the constitution of nature and the meaning of human life, and, being thoughtful, may recognize that if such knowledge as she describes should indeed exist, one who knows it would be placed under precisely the limitations of which she speaks. She wrote for such individuals of perceptive mind, and for all who, in the progress of time, may grow convinced that the human race has never been without true teachers, and who resolve to search out the record of what they have taught.

For the distinguished and often very humble men who may be termed true scientists, H.P.B. had nothing but respect, as she made clear again and again. She sought only to free those who would listen from the dulling effects of soul-denying materialism and to point to a path of self-discovery that, if followed, would lead to a kind of truth that needs no external authority and carries its knowers through every trial.

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*Theosophist*, April & May, 1886

## OCCULT OR EXACT SCIENCE?

**E**CCLE *Signum!* Behold the sign foreseen in a brighter future; the problem that will be *the* question of the forthcoming age, that every thoughtful, earnest father will be asking himself with regard to his children's education in the XXth century. And let it be stated at once, that by "Occult Science" neither *the life* of a *chela* nor the austerities of an ascetic are here meant; but simply the study of that which alone can furnish the key to the mysteries of nature, and unveil the problems of the universe and of psychophysical man—even though one should not feel inclined to go any deeper.

Every new discovery made by modern science vindicates the truths of the archaic philosophy. The true occultist is acquainted with no single problem that esoteric science is unable to solve, if approached in the right direction; the scientific bodies of the West have as yet no phenomenon of natural science that they can fathom to its innermost depths, or explain in all its aspects. Exact science fails to do so—in *this* cycle, for reasons that will be given further on. Nevertheless the pride of the age, which revolts against the intrusion into the empire of science of old—especially of transcendental—truths, is growing every year more intolerant. Soon the world will behold it soaring in the clouds of self-sufficiency like a new tower of Babel, to share, perchance, the fate of the Biblical monument.

In a recent scientific work on Anthropology,<sup>1</sup> one can read the following: "It is then given to us, at last, *to know* (?), to grasp, to handle and measure the forces through which it is claimed, that God proceeded. . . . We have made electricity our postman, light our draughtsman, affinity our journeyman," etc., etc. This is in a French

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin de la Societe d' Anthropologic, 3 fasc. p. 384.

work. One who knows something of the perplexities of exact science, of the mistakes and daily confessions of her staff, feels inclined, after reading such pompous stuff, to exclaim with the malcontent of the Bible: *Tradidit mundum ut non sciant*. Verily —”the world was delivered to them that *they should never know it*.”

How likely the scientists are to *succeed* in this direction may be inferred from the fact that the great Humboldt himself could give expression to such erroneous axioms as this one: “Science begins for man only *when his mind has mastered MATTER!*”<sup>2</sup> The word “spirit” for “matter” might perhaps have expressed a greater truth. But M. Renan would not have complimented the venerable author of *the Kosmos* in the terms he did, had the term matter been replaced by spirit.

I intend to give a few illustrations to show that the knowledge of matter alone, with the quondam “imponderable” forces—whatever the adjective may have meant with the French Academy and Royal Society at the time it was invented—is not sufficient for the purposes of true science. Nor will it ever prove efficient to explain the simplest phenomenon even in objective physical nature, let alone the abnormal cases in which physiologists and biologists at present manifest such interest. As Father Secchi, the famous Roman astronomer expressed it in his work,<sup>3</sup> “If but a few of the *new* forces were proven, they would necessitate the admission in their domain (that of forces) of agents of *quite another order* than those of gravitation.”

“I have read a good deal about occultism and studied Kabbalistic books: I have never understood one word in them!”—was a recent remark made by a learned experimenter in “thought-transference,” “colour-sounds,” and so on.

Very likely. One has to study his letters before he can spell and read, or understand what he reads.

Some forty years back, I knew a child—a little girl of seven or eight—who very seriously frightened her parents by saying:

“Now, mamma, I love you. You are good and kind to me to-day.

2 *Kosmos*, Vol. I, pp. 3 and 76 (with same ideas).

3 *Delle Forze*, etc.

Your words *are quite blue*” . . .

“What do you mean?” . . . asked the mother.

“Your words are all blue—because they are so caressing, but when you scold me *they are red* ... so red! But it is worse when you fly in a passion with papa for then they are orange . . . horrid . . . like that” ...

And the child pointed to the hearth, with a big roaring fire and huge flames in it. The mother turned pale.

After that the little sensitive was heard very often associating sounds with colours. The melody played by the mother on the piano threw her into ecstasies of delight; she saw “such beautiful rainbows,” she explained, but when her aunt played, it was “fireworks and stars,” “brilliant stars *shooting pistols*—and then . . . bursting” . . .

The parents got frightened and suspected something had gone wrong with the child’s brain. The family physician was sent for.

“Exuberance of childish fancy,” he said. “Innocent hallucinations . . . Don’t let her drink tea, and make her play more with her little brothers—fight with them, and have physical exercise. . . .”

And he departed.

In a large Russian city, on the banks of the Volga, stands a hospital with a lunatic asylum attached to it. There a poor woman was locked up for over twenty years—to the day of her death in fact—as a “harmless” though *insane* patient. No other proofs of her insanity could be found on the case-books than the fact that the splash and murmur of the river-waves produced the finest “God’s rainbows” for her; while the voice of the superintendent caused her to see “black and crimson”—the *colours of the Evil one*.

About that same period, namely in 1840, something similar to this phenomenon was heralded by the French papers. Such an abnormal state of feelings—physicians thought in those days—could be due but to one reason; such *impressions* whenever experienced without any *traceable* cause, denoted an ill-balanced mind, a weak brain—likely to lead its possessor to lunacy. Such was *the decree* of science. The views of the piously inclined, supported by the affirmations of the

village *cures*, inclined the other way. The brain had nought to do with the "obsession," for it was simply the work or tricks of the much slandered "old gentleman" with cloven foot and shining horns. Both the men of learning and the superstitious "good women" have had somewhat to alter their opinions since 1840.

Even in that early period and before the "Rochester" wave of spiritualism had swept over any considerable portion of civilized society in Europe, it was shown that the same phenomenon could be produced by means of various narcotics and drugs. Some bolder people, who feared neither a charge of lunacy nor the unpleasant prospect of being regarded as wards in "Old Nick's Chancery," made experiments and declared the results publicly. One was Theophile Gautier, the famous French author.

Few are those acquainted with the French literature of that day, who have not read the charming story told by that author, in which he describes the dreams of an opium-eater. To analyze the *impressions* at first hand, he took a large dose of *hashisch*. "My hearing," he writes, "acquired marvellous capacities: / *heard the music of the flowers*; sounds,—green, red and blue—poured into my ears in clearly *perceptible waves of smell and colour*. A tumbler upset, the creaking of an arm-chair, a word whispered in the lowest tones vibrated and resounded *within me* like so many claps of thunder. At the gentlest contact with objects—furniture or human body— I heard prolonged sounds, sighs like the melodious vibrations of an iEolian harp . . ."4

No doubt the powers of human fancy are great; no doubt delusion and hallucination may be generated for a shorter or a longer period in the healthiest human brain either naturally or artificially. But natural phenomena that are not included in that "abnormal" class do exist; and they have at last taken forcible possession even of scientific minds. The phenomena of hypnotism, of thought-transference, of sense-provoking, merging as they do into one another and manifesting their occult existence in our phenomenal world, succeeded finally in arresting the attention of some eminent scientists. Under the leadership of the famous Dr. Charcot, of the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, several

4 La Presse, July 10, 1840.

famous men of science took the phenomena in hand—in France, Russia, England, Germany and Italy. For over fifteen years they have been experimenting, investigating, theorising. And what is the result? The sole explanation given to the public, to those who thirst to become acquainted with the real, the intimate nature of the phenomena, with their productive cause and genesis—is that the sensitives who manifest them are all HYSTERICAL! They are *psychopates*,<sup>5</sup> and *neurosis*<sup>6</sup>—we are told,—no other cause underlying the needless variety of manifestations than that of a purely physiological character.

This looks satisfactory for the present, and—quite hopeful for the future.

"Hysterical hallucination" is thus doomed to become, as it appears, the *alpha* and the *omega* of every phenomenon. At the same time science defines the word "hallucination" as "an error of our *senses*, shared by, and imposed (by that error) upon our *intelligence*."<sup>7</sup> Now such *hallucinations* of a sensitive as are objective—the apparition of an "astral body" for instance,—are not only perceptible by the sensitive's (or medium's) "*intelligence*" but are likewise shared by the senses of those present. Consequently the natural inference is that all those witnesses are also *hysterical*.

The world is in danger, we see, of being turned, by the end of this century, into one vast lunatic asylum, in which the learned physicians alone would form the *sane* portion of humanity.

Of all the problems of medical philosophy, hallucination seems, at this rate, the most difficult to solve, the most obstinate to get rid of. It could hardly be otherwise, for it is one of the mysterious results of our dual nature, the bridge thrown over the chasm that separates the world of matter from the world of spirit. None but those willing to cross to the other side can appreciate it, or ever recognize the *noumenon* of its phenomena. And without doubt a manifestation is quite disconcerting to any one who witnesses it for the first time. Proving to the materialist the creative *faculty*, the *potency* of man's

5 A Greek compound term coined by the Russian Medical Faculties.

6 From the word *neurosis*.

7 Dictionnaire Medical.

spirit, *naturalising* before the churchman the “miracle,” and *super naturalising*, so to say, the simplest effects of natural causes, *hallucination* cannot be accepted yet for what it really is, and could hardly be forced upon the acceptance of either the materialist or the believing Christian, since one is as strong in his denial as the other is in his affirmation.” Hallucination,” says an authority quoted by Brierre de Boismont,<sup>8</sup> “is the reproduction of the material sign of the idea.” Hallucination, it is said, has no respect for age or for merit; or, if a fatal experience is worth anything—“a physician who would give it too much of his attention or would study it for too long a time and *too seriously*, would be sure to end his career in the ranks of his own patients.”

This is an additional proof, that “hallucination” was hardly ever studied “*too seriously*” as self-sacrifice is not quite the most prominent feature of the age. But //so catching, why should we not be permitted the bold and disrespectful suggestion that the biologists and physiologists of Dr. Charcot’s school, have themselves become *hallucinated* with the rather one-sided scientific idea that such phenomenal hallucinations are all due to *Hysteria*?

However it may be, whether a *collective hallucination* of our medical lights or the impotency of material thought, the simplest phenomenon—of the class *accepted* and verified by men of science in the year 1885—remains as unexplained by them, as it was in 1840.

If, admitting for argument’s sake, that some of the common herd out of their great reverence—often amounting to *fetich worship*—for science and authority, do accept the dictum of the scientists that every phenomenon, every “abnormal” manifestation, is due to the pranks of *epileptic hysteria*, what shall the rest of the public do? Shall they believe that Mr. Eglinton’s *self-moving* slate pencil is also labouring under a fit of the same epilepsy as its medium—even though he *does not touch it*? Or that the prophetic utterances of the seers, the grand inspired apostles of all ages and religions, were simply the pathological results of hysteria? Or again that the “miracles” of the Bible, those of Pythagoras, Apollonius and others—belong to the

<sup>8</sup> Hallucination, p. 3.

same family of *abnormal* manifestations, as the hallucinations of Dr. Charcot’s Mile. *Alphonsine*—or whatever her name—and her erotic descriptions and her poetry—“in consequence of *the swelling with gases of her great bowel*” (*sic*)<sup>7</sup> Such a pretension is likely to come to grief. First of all “hallucination\*” itself, when it is really the effect of physiological cause, would have to be explained—but *it never has been*. Taking at random some out of the hundreds of definitions by eminent French physicians (we have not those of the English at hand) what do we learn about “hallucinations?” We have given Dr. Brierre de Boismont’s “definition,” if it can be called one: now let us see a few more.

Dr. Lelut calls it—“a *sensorial and perceptive folly*”; Dr. Chomil—“a common illusion of the *sensorium*”<sup>9</sup>; Dr. Leuret—“an illusion intermediary between sensation and conception” (*Psychol. Fragments*); Dr. Michea—“a perceptive delirium (*Delusion of the Senses*); Dr. Calmeil—“an illusion due to a vicious modification of the nervous substance” (*Of Folly*, Vol. I) etc., etc.

The above will not make the world, I am afraid, much wiser than it is. For my part, I believe the theosophists would do well to keep to the old definition of hallucinations (*theophania*)<sup>10</sup> and folly, made some two thousands of years back by Plato, Virgilius, Hippocrates, Galen and the medical and theological schools of old. “There are two kinds of folly, one of which is produced by the body, the other sent to us *by the gods*.”

About ten years ago, when *Is is Unveiled* was being written, the most important point the work aimed at was the demonstration of the following (a) the reality of the *Occult* in nature; (b) the thorough knowledge of, and familiarity with, all such occult domains amongst “certain men,” and their mastery therein; (c) hardly an art or science known in our age, that the *Vedas* have not mentioned; and (d) that hundreds of things, especially mysteries of nature,—*in abscondito* as the alchemists called it,—were known to the Aryas of the *premahabharata* period, which are unknown to us, the modern sages of the XIXth century.

<sup>9</sup> See Dictionary of Medical Terms.

<sup>10</sup> Communication with Gods.

A new proof of it is now being given. It comes as a fresh corroboration, from some recent investigations in France by learned “specialists”<sup>11</sup>) with regard to the confusion made by their *neurosis* and *psychomaniacs* between colour and sound, “*musical impressions*” and *colour-impressions*.

This special phenomenon was first approached in Austria in 1873 by Dr. Newbamer. After him it began to be seriously investigated in Germany by Blaver and Lehmann; in Italy by Vellardi, Bareggi and a few others, and it was finally and quite recently taken up by Dr. Pedronneau of France. The most interesting accounts of *colour-sound* phenomena may, however, be found in *La Nature*, (No. 626, 1885, pp. 406, *et seq.*) in an article contributed by A. de Rochat who experimented with a certain gentleman whom he names Mr. “N.R.”

The following as a short *resume* of his experience.

N. R. is a man of about 57 years of age, an *advocate* by profession, now living in one of the country *faubourgs* of Paris, a passionate amateur of natural sciences which he has studied very seriously, fond of music, though no musician himself, a great traveller and as great a linguist. N. R. had never read anything about that peculiar phenomenon that makes certain people associate sound with colour, but was subject to it from his very boyhood. Sound of every description had always generated in him the impression of colours. Thus the articulation of the vowels produces in his brain the following results:—the letter *A*—appears to him dark red; *E*—white; *I*—black; *O*—yellow; *U*—blue. The double-vowelled letters; *Ai*—chestnut colour; *£7*—greyish white; *Eu*—light blue; *Oi*—dirty-yellow; *Ou*—yellowish. The consonants are nearly all of a dark grey hue; while a vowel, or a double vowel forming with a consonant a syllable, colours that syllable with its own tint. Thus, *ba, ca, da* are all of red-grey colour; *bi, ci, di* ash coloured; *bo, co, do* yellow grey, and so on. *S* ending a word and pronounced in a hissing way, like the Spanish words *Jos compos*, imparts to the syllable *tyat* precedes it a metallic glittering. The colour of the word depends thus on the colour of the letters that compose it, so that to N.R. human speech appears in the shape of many coloured, or variegated ribbons coming out of persons’ mouths, the colours of which are determined by those of the vowels in the sentences, separated

one from the other by the greyish stripes of the consonants.

The languages receive in their turn a common colouring from those letters that predominate in each. For instance, the German, which abounds in consonants, forms on the whole the impression of a dark grey moss; French appears grey, strongly mixed with white; the English seems nearly black; Spanish is very much coloured especially with yellow and carmine-red tints; Italian is yellow, merging into carmine and black, but with more delicate and harmonious tints than the Spanish.

A deep-toned voice impresses N. R. with a dark red colour which gradually passes into achocolatehue; while ash-rill, sonorous voice suggests the blue colour, and a voice between these two extremes changes these colours immediately into very light yellow.

The sounds of instruments have also their distinct and special colours: the piano and the flute suggest tints of blue; the violin—black; and the guitar—silver grey, etc.

The names of musical notes pronounced loudly, influence N.R. in the same manner as the words. The colours of a singing voice and playing depend upon the voice and its compass and altitude, and upon the instrument played on.

So it is *with figures* verbally pronounced; but when read mentally they reflect for him the colour of the ink they are written or printed with. The form, therefore, has nought to do with such colour phenomena. While these impressions do not generally take place outside of himself, but perform, so to say, on the platform of his brain, we find other sensitives offering far more curious phenomena than “N.R.” does.

Besides Galton’s interesting chapter upon this subject, in his “Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development,” we find in the *London Medical Record* a sensitive describing his impressions in this wise: “As soon as I *hear* the sounds of a guitar, I see vibrating chords, surrounded by coloured vapours.” The piano produces the same: “coloured images begin to float over the keys.” One of Dr. Pedronneau’s subjects in Paris<sup>11</sup> has always colour impressions

<sup>11</sup> *Annales d’Oculistique*, Nov. and Dec. 1882.—*Journal de Medicine de l’Ouest*, 4me Trimestre, 1882.

*outside* of himself. “Whenever I hear a chorus composed of several voices,” he says, “I *feel* a great number of coloured points floating over the heads of the singers. I *feel* them, for my eye receives no definite impression; nevertheless, I am compelled to *look* at them, and while *examining* them I feel perplexed, for I cannot find those bright coloured spots where I *look* at them, or rather *feel* them.”

Inversely, there are sensitives in whom the sight of colours evokes immediately that of sounds, and others again, in whom a triple phenomenon is produced by one special sense generating two other senses. A certain sensitive cannot hear a brass band without a taste “like copper in the mouth” during a performance, and seeing dark golden clouds.

Science investigates such manifestations, recognizes their reality, and—remains powerless to explain them. “*Neurosis and hysteria*” is the only answer obtained, and the “*canine hallucinations*” of the French academicians quoted in *Isis*, have remained valid to this day as an explanation, or a *universal solvent* of all such phenomena. But it is only natural after all, that science should be unable to account at any rate for this particular phenomenon of *light and sound*, since their theory of light itself has never been fully verified, nor made complete to the present day.

Let then our scientific opponents play for a while longer at “blind man’s buff” amongst phenomena, with no ground to stand upon but their eternal physiological hypotheses. The time is not perhaps far off when they shall be compelled to change their tactics or—confess themselves defeated by even such *elementary* phenomena as described above. But, whatever physiologists may, or may not say, or do; whatever their scientific explanations, hypotheses and conclusions at present or in the future, modern phenomena, are fast *cycling* back for their true explanation, to the archaic *Vedas*, and other “Sacred Books of the East.” For it is an easy matter to show, that the Vedic Aryans were quite familiar with all such mysteries of sound and colour. *Mental* correlations of the two senses of “sight” and “hearing” were as common a fact in their days, as that of a man in our own seeing objective things before him with eyes wide open at noon.

Any student of Occultism, the youngest of *chelas* who has just begun reading *esoterically* his *Vedas*, can suspect what the real phenomenon means; simply—*acyclic return of human organisms to their primitive form* during the 3rd and even the 4th Root Races of what is known as the *Antediluvian periods*. Everything conspires to prove it, even the study of such exact sciences as philology and comparative mythology. From the hoary days of antiquity, from the very dawn of the grand civilizations of those races that preceded our *Fifth Race*, and the traces of which now lie buried at the very bottom of the oceans, the fact in question was known. That which is now considered as an abnormal phenomenon, was in every probability the normal state of the antediluvian Humanity. These are no vain words, for here are two of the many proofs.

In consequence of the abundant data gleaned by linguistic research, philologists are beginning to raise their voices and appointing to some very suggestive, though as yet unexplained facts. (1) All the words indicative of human representations and conceptions of *light* and *sound* are *found to have their derivation from the same roots*<sup>12</sup> (2) *Mythology* shows, in her turn, the evident law—the uniformity of which precludes the possibility of chance—that led the ancient symbologists to represent all their *sun-gods* and *radiant* deities—such as the Dawn, the Sun, or Aurora, Phoebus, Apollo, etc.—connected in one way or the other with music and singing,—with *sound* in short,—associated with radiancy and colour.<sup>13</sup>

If this is as yet but an inference, there exists a still better proof in the *Vedas*, for there the conceptions of the words “sound” and “light,” “to hear” and “to see,” *are always associated*. In Hymn X, 71, verse 4, we read “One—though *looking*, *sees not the speech*, and the other *seeing*—does not *hear* it.” And again in verse 7th, in which a party of friends is represented as emulating each other in singing, they are characterized by the double epithet placed side by side: *Akshavanta* and *Karnavanta*, or “one furnished with eyes” and “one furnished with ears.” The latter is natural—the singer *has a good ear for*

12 Introduction a la Mythologie de l’Odysee. “Voyvodsky.”

13 Essay on the Bacchic Cults of the Indo-European Nations.

*music*, and the epithet is comprehensible in view of the musical emulation. But what sense can the *Akshavanta* have in this case, with his good sight, unless there is a connection and a meaning in it that are not explained, because probably the hymn refers to days when *sight* and *hearing* were synonymous terms? Moreover, a philologist, a rising Orientalist, tells<sup>14</sup> us that “the Sanskrit verbal root ARC is used to denote two meanings—(a) “to *sing*,” and (b) “to *shine*,” to radiate beams or rays. The substantives *re* and *arka*, derived from the root ARC are used to signify (1) *song*, *hymn*, and (2) *brilliance*, ray, sun. ... In the conception of the ancients *a speech could be seen* ... he explains. What does the Esoteric Doctrine,—that universal solvent indeed of all scientific difficulties and puzzles—say to this? It sends us to the chapter on the *Evolution of Races*, in which primitive man is shown in his special evolution advancing on the physical plane by developing a sense in each successive sub-race (of which there are seven) of the 1st Root-race during the 4th Round on this globe.<sup>15</sup> *Human* speech, as known to us, came into being in the Root-race that preceded ours—the *Fourth* or the “Atlantean”—at the very beginning of it, in sub-race No. 1; and simultaneously with it were developed *sight*—as a physical sense—while the four other senses (with the two additional—the 6th and 7th—of which science knows nothing as yet)—remained in their latent, undeveloped state as physical senses, although fully developed as spiritual faculties. Our sense of *hearing* developed only in the 3rd sub-races. Thus, if human “speech”—owing to that absence of the sense of hearing—was in the beginning even less than what we would call a whispered speech, for it was a mental articulation of sounds rather than anything else, something like the systems we now see worked out for the Deaf and Dumb, still it is easy to understand how, even from those early days, “speech” became associated with “sight,” or, in other words, people could understand each other and *talk* with the help of only *sight* and *touch*. “Sound is *seen* before it is heard,”—says the Book of *Kiu-ti*. The flash of lightning precedes the clap of thunder. As ages

<sup>14</sup> Professor Ovseniko Koulikovsky, the Author of the Essay on “Bacchic Cults.”

<sup>15</sup> See Esoteric Buddhism—for the Rounds, World-periods, and Sub-races. The chapter referred to will appear in the Secret Doctrine, which will shortly be published.

went by mankind fell with every new generation lower and lower *into matter*, the physical smothering the spiritual, until the whole set of senses—that had formed during the first three Root-races but one SENSE, namely, *spiritual perception*—finally fell asunder to form henceforth five distinct senses. . . .

But we are in the 5th race, and we have already passed the turning or *axial* point of our “sub-race cycle.” Eventually as the current phenomena and the increase of sensitive organisms in our age go to prove, this Humanity will be moving swiftly on the path of pure spirituality, and will reach the apex (of *our* Race) at the end of the 7th sub-race. In plainer and *fuller* language—*plainer* and *fuller* to some theosophists only, I am afraid—we shall be, at that period, on the same degree of spirituality that belonged to, and was natural in, the 1st sub-race of the 3rd *Root-race* of the FOURTH Round; and the second half of it (or that half in which we now are) will be, owing to the law of correspondence, on parallel lines with the  $\frac{1}{5}$  half of the THIRD Round. In the words of one in whom live Truth and Wisdom—however often His words may have been misunderstood and criticised, not alone by profane critics but even by some theosophists,—“in the 1st half of the 3rd Round the primordial spirituality of man was eclipsed, because over-shadowed by nascent mentality”; Humanity was on its *descending arc* in the first half of that round and in the last half on its *ascending arc*: *i.e.*, “his (man’s) *gigantic* stature had decreased and his body improved in texture; and he had become a more rational being though still more an ape than a *Zeva-man*.” And, if so, then, according to that same law of correspondences—an immutable one in the system of cycles—we have to infer the following :—that the latter half of our Round,—as shown to correspond with the 1st half of the 3rd,— must have already begun to be once more overshadowed by renascent “primordial” spirituality, which, at the end of the 4th Round, will have nearly eclipsed our actual mentality—in the sense of cold *human* Reason.

On the principle of that same law of correspondences,—as shall be shown and thoroughly explained in the forthcoming SECRET DOCTRINE—civilized humanity will soon begin to show itself, if even less “rational” *on the wordly plane*, at any rate more *Deva*-like than

“ape-like”—as we now actually are, and that in the most distressing degree.

I may conclude with the remark, that since our natural and still “ape-like” propensities make us read, individually and collectively, to be thrown by public opinion out of that region where all the smaller bodies gravitate toward the luminary of our social solar system—Science and her authority,—something has to be done to remedy such a disastrous state of things. I propose to show therefore, in my next, that as we are still only in the 5th sub-race of the Parent race, and none of us shall live to see the 7th—when things shall mend naturally,—that it is just as well not to hang our hopes on science, whether orthodox or semi-heretical. The men of science cannot help the world to understand the *rationale* of phenomena, which for a little while longer in this cycle it will be quite impossible for them to account for, even to themselves. They can neither understand nor explain it, any more than any one else can, who has not studied occultism and the hidden laws that govern nature and rule mankind. The men of science are *helpless* in this case, and it is unjust to charge them with malice, or even with unwillingness—as has been often done. Their *rationality* (taken in this case in the sense of *intellectuality*, not of *reason*) can never permit them to turn their attention to occult study. Therefore it is useless to demand or expect from the learned men of our age that which they are absolutely incapable of doing for us, until the next cycle changes and transforms entirely their *inner* nature by “improving the texture” of their spiritual minds.

## II

It has already been remarked that neither the medical faculties, nor the scientific bodies of physicists, could ever explain *the primum mobile* or *rationale* of the simplest phenomenon, outside of purely physiological causes: and that, unless they turned for help to occultism, they would have to bite the dust before the XXth century was very old.

This seems a bold assertion. Nevertheless, it is fully justified by that of certain medical celebrities: that *no phenomenon is possible outside of physiological and purely physical causes*. They might

reverse this statement and say *no final investigation is possible with the light of only physiological and physical causes*. That would be correct. They might add that, as men of exact science, they could not employ other methods of investigation. Therefore, having conducted their experiments to a certain boundary, they would desist and declare *their* task accomplished. Then the phenomena might be passed on to transcendentalists and philosophers to speculate upon. Had they spoken in such a spirit of sincerity no one would have the right of saying that they had not done their duty: for they would have done the best they could under the circumstances, and, as will presently be shown, they could do no more. But at present the neuropathic physicians merely impede the progress of real psychological knowledge. Unless there is an opening, however small, for the passage of a ray from a man’s higher *self* ‘to chase the darkness of purely material conceptions from the seat of his intellect, and to replace it by light from a plane of existence entirely unknown to the ordinary senses, his task can never be wrought to a successful termination. And as all such abnormal cases, in order to be manifested to our physical as well as spiritual senses, in other words, to become objective, must always have their generating causes inter-blended between the two spheres or planes of existence, the physical and the spiritual, it is but natural that a materialist should discern only those with which he is acquainted, and remain blind to any other. The following illustration will make this clear to every intellectual reader.

When we speak of light, of heat and sound, and so on, what do we mean? Each of these natural phenomena exists *per se*. But for us it has no being independently of our senses, and exists only to that degree which is perceived by a sense corresponding to it in us. Without being in the least deaf or blind, some men are endowed with far less acute hearing and sight than their neighbours; and it is a well known fact that our senses can be developed and trained as well as our muscles by exercise and method. It is an old axiom that the sun needs an eye to manifest its light; and though the solar energy exists from the first flutter of our Manvantara and will exist to the first killing breath of Pralaya, still, if a certain portion of that energy did not call forth in us those modifications that we name perception of light,

Cymmerian darkness would fill the Kosmos and we should be denying the very existence of the sun. Science makes a distinction between the two energies—that of heat and that of light. But the same science teaches us that the creature, or being, in which the corresponding external actions would cause a homogeneous modification, could not find any difference between heat and light. On the other hand, that the creature, or being, in which the dark rays of the solar spectrum would call forth the modifications that are produced in us by the bright rays, would see light there, where we saw nothing whatever.

Mr. A. Butlerof, a professor of chemistry and an eminent scientist, gives us many instances of the above. He points to the observations made by Sir John Lubbock on the sense of colour in ants. It was found by that distinguished man of science, that ants do not allow their eggs to remain subjected to light, and carry them off immediately from a sun-lit spot to a dark place. But when a ray of re-light is turned on those eggs (the larvae), the ants leave them untouched as though they were in complete darkness: they place their eggs indifferently under a red light or in utter darkness. Red light is a non-existent thing for them: as they do not see it, it is for them darkness. The impressions made on them by bright rays are very weak, especially by those nearest to the red—the orange and yellow. To such rays, on the contrary, as light and dark blue and violet—they seem very impressionable. When their nests are lit partly with violet and partly with red rays, they transfer their eggs immediately from the violet onto the red field. To the ant, therefore, the violet ray is the brightest of all the spectral rays. Their sense of colour is therefore quite the opposite of the same sense in man.

But this contrast is still more strengthened by another fact. Besides the rays of light, the solar spectrum contains, as every one knows, the so-called heat rays (for red) and the chemical (for violet). We see however neither the one nor the other, but term both of them *dark rays*; yet the ants perceive them clearly. For, as soon as their eggs are subjected to the action of those dark rays, the ants drag them from that (to us) quite obscure field on to the one lighted by the *red ray*; therefore, for them, *the chemical ray is violet*. Hence says the professor—“Owing to such a peculiarity, the objects seen by the

ants must appear to them quite different from what they seem to us; those insects find evidently in nature hues and colours of which we have not, nor can have, the slightest conception. Admit for one moment the existence in nature of such objects as would swallow up all the rays of the solar spectrum, and scatter only the chemical rays: these objects would *remain invisible to us*, while the ants would perceive them very well.”

And now, let the reader imagine for one moment the following: that there may be a possibility within the powers of man, with the help of secret sciences, firstly of preparing an “object” (call it *talisman* if you will) which, detaining for a longer or shorter period the rays of the “solar spectrum” on some one given point, will cause the manipulator of it to remain invisible to all, because he places himself and keeps within the boundary of the chemical or “dark” rays; and *secondly*—reversing it, to become enabled to see in nature by the help of those dark rays that which ordinary men, with no such “talisman” at hand, can never see with their natural, naked eye! This may be a simple supposition, or it may be a very serious statement, for all the men of science know. They protest only against that which is claimed to be supernatural, above or outside *their* Nature; they have no right to object to the acceptance of the *super-sensuous*, if shown within the limits of our sensuous world.

The same holds good in acoustics. Numerous observations have shown that ants are completely deaf to the sounds that we hear; but that is no reason why we should suppose that ants are deaf. Quite the reverse; for taking his stand on his numerous observations, the same scientist thinks it necessary to accept that the ants hear sounds, “only not those that are perceptible to us.”

Every organ of hearing is sensitive to vibrations of a given rapidity, but in cases of different creatures such rapidities may very easily not coincide. And not only in the case of creatures quite different from us men, but even in that of mortals whose organizations are peculiar—*abnormal* as they are termed—either naturally, or through training.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The case of Kashmiri natives and especially girls who work on shawls is given in *jsis*. They perceive 300 hues more than Europeans do.

Our *ordinary* ear, for instance, is insensible to vibrations surpassing 38,000 asecond,whereastheauditive organof not only ants but some mortals likewise—*who know the way to secure the tympanum from damage, and that of provoking certain correlations in ether*—may be very sensitive to vibrations exceeding by far the 38,000 in a second, and thus, such an auditive organ,— *abnormal only* in the limitations of exact science,—might naturally enable its possessor,whether man or ant,to enjoy sounds and melodies in nature, of which the ordinary tympanum gives no idea. “There, where to our senses reigns dead silence, a thousand of the most varied and weird sounds may be gratifying to the hearing of ants,”says Professor Butlerof,<sup>17</sup> citing Lubbock; “and these tiny, intelligent insectscould,therefore,regard us with the same rightas we have to regard them—as deaf, and utterly incapable of enjoying the music of nature, only because they remain insensible to the sound of a gun, human shouting, whistling, and so on.”

The aforesaid instances sufficiently show that the scientist’s knowledge of nature is incapable of coinciding wholly and entirely with all that exists and may be found in it. Even without trespassing on other and different spheres and planets, and keeping strictly within the boundaries of our globe, it becomes evident that there exist in it thousands upon thousands of things unseen, unheard,and impalpable to the ordinary human senses. But let us admit,only for the sake of argument, that there may be—quite apart from the supernatural—a science that teaches mortals what may be termed supersensuous chemistry and physics;in plainer language—*alchemy* and the *metaphysics* of *concrete* not abstract nature, and every difficulty will be removed. For, as the same Professor argues—“If we see light there, where another being is plunged in darkness; and see *nothing* there, where it experiences the action of the light waves; if we hear one kind of sounds and remain deaf to another kind of sounds, heard, nevertheless, by a tiny insect—is it not clear as day, that it is not nature, in her, so to say, primeval nakedness, that is subject to our science and its analysis, but simply those modifications, feelings and

<sup>17</sup> Scientific Letters, X.

perceptions that she awakens in us? It is in accordance with these modifications only that we can draw our conclusions about external things and nature’s actions, and thus create to ourselves the image of the world surrounding us. The same,with respect to every ‘finite’ being: each judging of the external, only by the modifications that are created in him (or it) by the same.”

And this, we think, is the case with the materialist: he can judge psychic phenomena only by their external aspect, and no modification is, or ever can be, created in him, so as to open his insight to their spiritual aspect. Notwithstanding the strong position of those several eminent men of science who, becoming convinced of the actuality of “spiritual” phenomena, so-called, have become spiritualists;notwithstanding that—like Professors Wallace,Hare, Zollner, Wagner, Butler of—they have brought to bear upon the question all the arguments their great knowledge could suggest to them—their opponents have had, so far, always the best of them. Some of these do not deny the fact of phenomenal occurrences, but they maintain that the chief point in the great dispute between the transcendentalists of spiritualism and the materialists is simply the nature of the *operative force*, the *primum mobile* or the power at work. They insist on this main point: the spiritualists are unable to prove that this agency is that of *intelligent spirits of departed human beings*, “so as to *satisfy the requirements of exact science*, or of the unbelieving public for the matter of that.”And, viewed from this aspect, their position is impregnable.

The theosophical reader will easily understand that it is immaterial whether the denial is to the title of “spirits” pure and simple or to that of any other intelligent being, whether human,sub-human, or super-human, or even to a Force—if it is unknown to, and rejected *a priori* by science. For it seeks precisely to limit such manifestations to those forces only that are within the domain of natural sciences. In short, it rejects point blank the possibility of showing them mathematically to be that which the spiritualists claim them to be, insisting that they have been already demonstrated.

It becomes evident, therefore, that the Theosophist, or rather the

Occultist, must find his position far more difficult than even the spiritualist ever can, with regard to modern science. For it is not to phenomena *per se* that most of the men of science are averse, but to the nature of the agency said to be at work. If, in the case of “Spiritual” phenomena these have only the materialists against them not so in our case. The theory of “Spirits” has only to contend against those who do not believe in the survival of man’s soul. Occultism raises against itself the whole legion of the Academies; because, while putting every kind of “Spirits,” good, bad and indifferent, in the second place, if not entirely in the back-ground, it dares to deny several of the most vital scientific dogmas; and in this case, the Idealists and the Materialists of Science, feel equally indignant; for both, however much they may disagree in personal views, serve under the same banner. There is but one science, even though there are two distinct schools—the *idealistic* and the *materialistic*, and both of these are equally considered authoritative and *orthodox* in questions on science. Few are those among us who clamoured for a scientific opinion expressed upon Occultism, who have thought of this, or realized its importance in this respect. Science, unless remodelled entirely, can have no hand in occult teachings. Whenever investigated on the plan of the modern scientific methods, occult phenomena will prove ten times more difficult to explain than those of the spiritualists pure and simple.

It is, after following for nearly ten years, the arguments of many learned opponents who battled for and against phenomena, that an attempt is now being made to place the question squarely before the Theosophists. It is left with them, after reading what I have to say to the end, to use their judgment in the matter, and to decide whether there can remain one tittle of hope for us ever to obtain in that quarter, if not efficient help, at any rate a fair hearing in favour of the Occult Sciences. From none of their members—I say—not even from those whose inner sight has compelled them to accept the reality of the mediumistic phenomena.

This is but natural. Whatever they be, they are men of the modern science even before they are spiritualists, and if not all, some of them at any rate would rather give up their connection with, and belief in, mediums and spirits, than certain of the great dogmas of orthodox,

exact science. And they would have to give up not a few of these were they to turn Occultists and approach the threshold of THE MYSTERY in a right spirit of enquiry.

It is this difficulty that lies at the root of the recent troubles of Theosophy; and a few words upon the subject will not be out of season, the more so as the whole question lies in a nut-shell. Those Theosophists who are not Occultists cannot help the investigators, let alone the men of science. Those who are Occultists work on certain lines that *they dare not trespass*. Their mouth is closed; their explanations and demonstrations are limited. What can they do? Science will never be satisfied with a half-explanation.

*To know, to dare, to will and to remain silent*—is so well known as the motto of the Kabbalists, that to repeat it here may perhaps seem superfluous. Still it may act as a reminder. As it is, we have either said *too much* or *too little*. I am very much afraid it is the former. If so, then we have atoned for it, for we were the first to suffer for saying *too much*. Even that little might have placed us in worse difficulties hardly a quarter of a century ago

Science—I mean Western Science—has to proceed on strictly defined lines. She glories in her powers of observation, induction, analysis and inference. Whenever a phenomenon of an abnormal nature comes before her for investigation, she has to sift it to its very bottom, or let it go. And this she has to do, and she cannot, as we have shown, proceed on any other than the inductive methods based entirely on the evidence of physical senses. If these, aided by the scientific *acumen*, do not prove equal to the task, the investigators will resort to, and will not scruple to use, the police of the land, as in the historical cases of Loudun, Salem witchcraft, Mor-zine, etc.: The Royal Society calling in Scotland Yard, and the French Academy her native *mouchards*, all of whom will, of course, proceed in their own detective-like way to help science out of difficulty. Two or three cases of “an extremely suspicious character” will be chosen, on the external plane of course, and the rest proclaimed of no importance, as contaminated by those selected. The testimony of eye-witnesses will be rejected, and the evidence of ill-disposed persons speaking on hearsay accepted

as “unimpeachable.” Let the reader go over the 20 odd volumes of de Mir-ville’s and de Mousseau’s works, embracing over a century of forced enquiry into various phenomena by science, and he will be better able to judge the ways in which scientific, often honourable, men proceed in such cases.

What can be expected then, even from the *idealistic* school of science, whose members are in so small a minority. Laborious students they are, and some of them open to every truth and without equivocation. Even though they may have no personal *hobbies* to lose, should their previous views be shown to err, still there are such dogmas in orthodox science that even they would *never dare to trespass*. Such, for instance, are their axiomatic views upon the law of gravitation and the modern conceptions of Force, Matter, Light, etc., etc.

At the same time we should bear in mind the actual state of civilized Humanity, and remember how its cultured classes stand in relation to any idealistic school of thought, apart from any question of occultism. At the first glance we find that two-thirds of them are honey-combed with what may be called gross and practical materialism.

“The theoretical materialistic science recognizes nought but SUBSTANCE. Substance is its deity, its only God.” We are told that practical materialism, on the other hand, concerns itself with nothing that does not lead directly or indirectly to personal benefit. “Gold is its idol,” justly observes Professor Butler<sup>18</sup> (a spiritualist, yet one who could never accept even the elementary truths of occultism, for he “cannot understand them.”)—“A lump of matter,” he adds, “the beloved substance of the theoretical materialists, is transformed into a lump of mud in the unclean hands of ethical materialism. And if the former gives but little importance to inner (psychic) states that are not perfectly demonstrated by their exterior states, the latter disregards entirely the inner states of life. . . . The spiritual aspect of life has no meaning for practical materialism, everything being summed up for it in the external. The adoration of this external finds its principal and basic justification in the dogmas of materialism, which has legalized it.”

<sup>18</sup> Scientific Letters, X.

This gives the key to the whole situation. Theosophists, or Occultists at any rate, have nothing then to expect from materialistic Science and Society.

Such a state of things being accepted for the daily *routine* of life, —though that which interferes with the highest moral aspirations of Humanity cannot we believe live long,—what can we do but look forward with our hopes to a better future? Meanwhile, we ought never to lose courage; for if materialism, which has depopulated heaven and the elements, and has chosen to make of the limitless Kosmos instead of an eternal abode a dark and narrow tomb, refuses to interfere with us, we can do no better than leave it alone.

Unfortunately it does not. No one speaks so much as the materialists of the accuracy of scientific observation, of a proper use of one’s senses and one’s reason thoroughly liberated from every prejudice. Yet, no sooner is the same privilege claimed in favour of phenomena by one who has investigated them in that same scientific spirit of impartiality and justice, than his testimony becomes worthless. “Yet if such a number of scientific minds,” writes Prof. Butler, “accustomed by years of training to the minutest observation and verification, testify to certain facts, then there is *a. prima facie* improbability that they should be collectively mistaken. “”But they *have* and in the most ludicrous way,” answer his opponents; and this time we are at one with them.

This brings us back to an old axiom of esoteric philosophy; “*nothing of that which does not exist somewhere, whether in the visible or invisible /cosmos, can be reproduced artificially, or even in human thought.*”

“What nonsense is this?” exclaimed a combative Theosophist upon hearing it uttered. “Suppose I think of an animated tower, with rooms in it and a human head, approaching and talking with me—can there be such a thing in the universe?”

“Or parrots hatching out of almond-shells?” said another sceptic. Why not?—was the answer—not on this earth, of course. But how do we know that there may not be such beings as you describe—tower-like bodies and human heads—on some other planet? Imagination is nothing

but the memory of preceding births—Pythagoras tells us. You may yourself have been such a “tower man” for all you know, with rooms in you in which your family found shelter like the little ones of the kangaroo. As for parrots hatching out of almond shells—no one could swear that there was no such thing in nature, in days of old, when evolution gave birth to far more curious monsters. A bird hatching out of the fruit of a tree is perhaps one of those countless words dropped by evolution so many ages ago, that the last whisper of its echo was lost in the Diluvian roar. “The mineral becomes plant, the plant an animal, an animal man,” etc.—say the Kabbalists.

Speaking of the evidence and the reliability of senses—even the greatest men of science got caught once upon a time, in not only believing such a thing, but in actually teaching it *as a scientific fact—as it appears*.

“When was that?” was the incredulous question. “Not so far back, after all; some 280 years ago—in England.” The strange belief that there was a kind of a sea-fowl that hatched out of a fruit was not limited at the very end of the XVIth century to the inhabitants of English sea-port towns only. There was a time when most of the men of science firmly believed it to be a fact, and taught it accordingly. The fruit of certain trees growing on the sea shore—a kind of Magnolia—with its branches dipping generally in the water, had its fruits,—as it was asserted,—transformed gradually by the action of salt water into some special Crustacean formation, from which emerged in good time a living sea-bird, known in the old natural histories as the “Barnacle-goose.” Some naturalists accepted the story as an undeniable fact. They observed and investigated it for several years, and “the discovery was accepted and approved by the greatest authorities of the day and published under the auspices of some learned society. One of such believers in the “Barnacle-goose” was John Gerard, a botanist, who notified the world of the amazing phenomenon in an erudite work published in 1596. [n it he describes it, and declares it “*a fact on the evidence of his own senses.*” “He has seen it himself,” he says, “touched the fruit-egg day after day,” watched its growth and development personally, and had the good luck of presiding at the birth of one such bird. He saw first the legs of

the chicken oozing out through the broken shell, then the whole body of the little Barnacle-goose “which begun forthwith swimming.”<sup>19</sup> So much was the botanist convinced of the truth of the whole thing, that he ends his description by inviting any doubter of the reality of what he had seen to come and see him, John Gerard, and then he would undertake to make of him an eye-witness to the whole proceeding. Robert Murray, another English *savant* and an authority in his day, vouches for the reality of the transformation of which he was also an eyewitness.<sup>20</sup> And other learned men, the contemporaries of Gerard and Murray—Funck, Aldrovandi and many others, shared that conviction.<sup>21</sup> So what do you say to this “Barnacle-goose—?”

—Well, I would rather call it the “Gerard-Murray goose,” that’s all. And no cause to laugh at such mistakes of those early scientists. Before two hundred years are over our descendants will have for better opportunities to make fun of the present generations of the F.R.S. and their followers. But the opponent of phenomena who quoted the story about the “Barnacle-goose” is quite right there; only that instance cuts both ways, of course, and when one brings it as a proof that even the scientific authorities, who believe in spiritualism and phenomena, may have been grossly mistaken with all their observation and scientific training, we may reverse the weapon and quote it the other way; as an evidence as strong that no “acumen” and support of science can prove a phenomenon “referable to fraud and credulity,” when the eye-witnesses who have seen it know it for a fact at least. It only shows that the evidence of even the scientific and well trained senses and powers of observation may be in both cases at fault as those of any other mortal, especially in cases where phenomenal

19 From the Scientific Letters—Letter XXIV, Against Scientific Evidence in the Question of Phenomena.

20 He speaks of that transformation in the following words, as translated from the Latin: “In every conch (or shell) that I opened, after the transformation of the fruits on the branches into shells, I found the exact pictures in miniature in it of the sea-fowl: a little beak like that of a goose, well dotted eyes: the head, the neck, the breast, the wings, and the already formed legs and feet, with well marked feathers on the tail, of a dark colour, etc., etc.”

21 It is evident that this idea was commonly held in the latter half of the 17th century, seeing that it found a place in *Hudibras*, which was an accurate reflection of the opinions of the day:—

“As barnacles turn Poland Geese  
In th’ islands of the Orcaes.”

occurrences are sought to be disproved. Even collective observation would go for nought, whenever a phenomenon happens to belong to a plane of being, called (improperly so in their case) by some men of science the fourth dimension of space; and when other scientists who investigate it lack the *sixth sense* in them, that corresponds to that plane.

In a literary cross-firing that happened some years ago between two eminent professors, much was said of that now for ever famous fourth dimension. One of them, telling his readers that while he accepted the possibility of only the “terrestrial natural sciences,” viz., the direct or inductive science, “or the exact investigation of those phenomena only which take place in our *earthly conditions of space and time*” says he can never permit himself to overlook the possibilities of the future. “I would remind my colleagues,” adds the Professor-Spiritualist, “that our inferences from that which is already acquired by investigation, must go a great deal further than our sensuous perceptions. The limits of sensuous knowledge must be subjected to constant enlargement, and those of deduction still more. Who shall dare to draw those limits for the future? . . . existing in a three dimensional space, we can conduct our investigations of, and make our observations upon, merely that which takes place within those three dimensions. But what is there to prevent us thinking of a space of higher dimensions and building a geometry corresponding to it? . . . Leaving the reality of a fourth dimensional space for the time being aside, we can still . . . go on observing and watching whether there may not be met with occasionally on our three-dimensional world, phenomena that could only be explained on the supposition of a four-dimensional space.” In other words, “we ought to ascertain whether anything pertaining to the four-dimensional regions can manifest itself in our three-dimensional world . . . can it not be reflected in it . . . ?”

The occultist would answer, that our senses can most undeniably be reached on this plane, not only from a four-dimensional but even a fifth and a sixth dimensional world. Only those senses must become sufficiently *spiritualised* for it in so far as it is our inner sense only that can become the medium for such a transmission. Like “the projection of an object that exists in a space of three dimensions can

be made to appear on the flat surface of a screen of only two dimensions”—four-dimensional beings and things can be *reflected* in our three-dimensional world of gross matter. But, as it would require a skilful physicist to make his audience believe that the things “real as life” they see on his screen are not shadows but realities, so it would take a wiser one than any of us to persuade a man of science—let alone a crowd of scientific men—that what he sees reflected on our three-dimensional “screen” may be, at times, and under certain conditions a very real phenomenon, reflected from, and produced by “four-dimensional powers,” for his private delectation, and as a means to convince him. “Nothing so false in appearance as naked truth”—is a Kabbalistic saying;—“truth is often stranger than fiction”—is a world-known axiom.

It requires more than a man of our modern science to realize such a possibility as an interchange of phenomena between the two worlds—the visible and the invisible. A highly spiritual, or a very keen impressionable intellect, is necessary to decipher intuitionally the real from the unreal, the natural from the artificially prepared “screen.” Yet our age is a reactionary one, hooked on the very end of the Cyclic coil, or what remains of it. This accounts for the flood of phenomena, as also for the blindness of certain people.

What does materialistic science answer to the idealistic theory of a four-dimensional space? “How!” it exclaims, “and would you make us attempt, while circumscribed within the impossible circle of a three-dimensional space, to even think of a space of higher dimensions! But how is it possible to think of that, which our human thought can never imagine and represent even in its most hazy outlines? One need be quite a different being from a human creature; be gifted with quite a different psychic organization; one must not be a man, in short, to find himself enabled to represent in his thought a four-dimensional space—a thing of length, breadth, thickness and—what else?”

Indeed, “what else?”—for no one of the men of science, who advocate it, perhaps only because they are sincere spiritualists and anxious to explain phenomena by the means of that space, seem to know it themselves. Is it the “passage of matter through matter?”

Then why should they insist upon it being a “space” when it is simply another *plane of existence*,—or at least that is what ought to be meant by it,—if it means anything. We occultists say and maintain, that if a name is needed to satisfy the material conceptions of men on our low plane, let them call it by its Hindu name *Mahas* (or Mahaloka)—the fourth world of the higher septenary, and one that corresponds to *Rasatala* (the fourth of the septenary string of the nether worlds)—the fourteen worlds that “sprung from the quintuplicated elements”; for these two worlds are enveloping, so to say, our present fourth-round world. Every Hindu will understand what is meant. *Mahas* is a higher world, or plane of existence rather; as that plane to which belongs the ant just spoken of, is perchance a lower one of the nether septenary chains. And if they call it so— they will be right.

Indeed, people speak of this four-dimensional space as though it were a locality—a sphere instead of being what it is—quite a different state of Being. Ever since it came to be resurrected in people’s minds by Prof. Zollner, it has led to endless confusion. How did it happen? By the means of an abstruse mathematical analysis a spiritual-minded man of science finally came to the laudable conclusion that our conception of space may not be infallible, nor is it absolutely proven that besides our three-dimensional calculations it is mathematically impossible that there are spaces of more or less dimensions in the wide Universe. But, as is well expressed by a sceptic—”the confession of the possible existence of spaces of different dimensions than our own does not afford us (the high mathematicians)^ slightest conception of what those dimensions really are. To accept a higher ‘four-dimensional’ space is like accepting infinitude: such an acceptance does not afford us the smallest help by which we might represent to ourselves either of these...all we know of such higher spaces is, that they have nothing in common with our conceptions of space.” {*Scientific Letters*.)

“*Our conception*”—means of course the conception of *materialistic Science*, thus leaving a pretty wide margin for other less scientific, withal more spiritual, minds.

To show the hopelessness of ever bringing a materialistic mind to

realize or even conceive in the most remote and hazy way the presence among us, in our three-dimensional world of other higher planes of being, I may quote from the very interesting objections made by one of the two learned opponents,<sup>22</sup> already referred to, with regard to this “Space.”

He asks: “Is it possible to introduce as an explanation of certain phenomena the action of such a factor, of which we know nothing certain, are ignorant even of its nature and its faculties?”

Perchance, there are such, who may “know” something, who are not so hopelessly ignorant. If an occultist were appealed to, he would say—No; *exact* physical science has to reject its very being, otherwise that science would become *metaphysical*. It cannot be analyzed—hence explained, on either biological or even physiological data. Nevertheless, it might, inductively—as *gravitation* for instance, of which you know no more than that its effects may be observed on our three-dimensional earth.”

Again (1) “It is said” (by the advocates of the theory) “that we live *unconditionally* in our three-dimensional space! Perchance” {*unconditionally*) “just because we are able to comprehend only such space, and absolutely incapable, owing to our organization,^ realize it in any other, but a three-dimensional way!”

(2) In other words, “even our three-dimensional space is not something *existing independently* JovX represents merely the product of our understanding and perceptions.”

To the first statement Occultism answers that those “incapable to realize” any other space but a three-dimensional one, do well to leave alone all others. But it is not “owing to our (human) organization,” but only to the intellectual organization of those who are not able to conceive of any other; to organisms undeveloped spiritually and even mentally in the right direction. To the second statement it would reply, that the “opponent” is absolutely wrong in the first, and absolutely right in the last portion of his sentence. For, though the “fourth dimension”—if we must so call it—exists no more *independently* of our perceptions and senses than our three-dimensional *imagined* space,

22 1883.—*Scientific Letters*—published in the *Novoye Vremya*, St. Petersburg.

nor as a locality, it still *is*, and exists for the beings evolved and born in it as “a product of their understanding and *their* perceptions.” Nature never draws too harsh lines of demarcation, never builds impassable walls, and her unbridged “chasms” exist merely in the tame conceptions of certain naturalists. The two (and more) “spaces,” or planes of being, are sufficiently interblended to allow of a communication between those of their respective inhabitants who are capable of conceiving both a higher and a lower plane. There may be amphibial beings intellectually as there are amphibious creatures terrestrially.

The objector to a fourth dimensional plane complains that the section of high mathematics, known at present under the name of “Metamathematics,” or “Metageometry,” is being misused and misapplied by the spiritualists. They “seized hold of, and fastened to it as to an anchor of salvation” “His arguments are, to say the least, curious. “Instead of proving the reality of their mediumistic phenomena,” he says, “they took to explaining them on the hypothesis of a fourth dimension.” Do we see the hand of a Katie King, which disappears in “unknown space”—forthwith on the proscenium—the *fourth* dimension; do we get knots on a rope whose two ends are tied and sealed—again that fourth dimension. From this standpoint space is viewed as something objective. It is believed that there are indeed in nature three, four and five-dimensional spaces. But, firstly, by the means of mathematical analysis, we might arrive, in this way, at an endless series of *spaces*. Only think, what would become of exact science, if, to explain phenomena, such hypothetical *spaces* were called to its help.” If one should fail, we could evoke another, a still higher one, and so on. . . .”

Oh, poor Kant! and yet, we are told that one of his fundamental principles was—that our three-dimensional space is not an absolute one; and that “even in respect to such axioms as those of Euclid’s geometry, our knowledge and sciences can only be relatively exact and real.”

But why should exact science be thought in danger only because spiritualists try to explain their phenomena on that plane? And on what other could they explain that which is inexplicable if we undertake

to analyze it on the three-dimensional conceptions of terrestrial science, if not by a fourth-dimensional conception? No sane man would undertake to explain the *Dsemon* of Socrates by the shape of the great sage’s nose, or attribute the inspiration of the *Light of Asia* to Mr. Ed. Arnold’s skull cap. What would become of science—verily, were the phenomena left to be explained on the said hypothesis? Nothing worse, we hope, than what became of science, after the Royal Society had accepted its modern theory of *Light*, on the hypothesis of an universal *Ether*. *Ether* is no less “a product of our understanding” than *Space* is. And if one could be accepted, then why reject the other? Is it because one can be materialised in our conceptions, or shall we say had to be, since there was no help for it; and that the other, being useless as a hypothesis for the purposes of exact science, is not, so far?

So far as the Occultists are concerned, they are at one with the men of strict orthodox science, when to the offer made “to experiment and to observe whether there may not occur in our three-dimensional world phenomena, explainable only on the hypothesis of the existence of a space of four dimensions,” they answer as they do. “Well”—they say—and shall observation and experiment give us a satisfactory answer to our question concerning the real existence of a higher four-dimensional space? or, solve for us a dilemma un-solvable from whatever side we approach it? How can our human observation and our human experiments, possible only *unconditionally* within the limits of a space of three dimensions, serve us as a point of departure for the recognition of phenomena which can be explained “*only if we admit the existence of a four-dimensional space?*”

The above objections are quite right we think; and the spiritualists would be the only losers were they to ever prove the existence of such space or its interference in their phenomena. For see, what would happen. No sooner would it be demonstrated that—say a ring does pass through solid flesh and emigrate from the arm of the medium on to that of the investigator who holds the two hands of the former; or again, that flowers and other material things are brought through closed doors and walls; and that, therefore, owing to certain exceptional conditions, matter can pass through matter,—no sooner would the

men of science get collectively convinced of the fact, than the whole theory of spirit agency and intelligent intervention would crumble to dust. The three-dimensional space would not be interfered with, for the passage of one solid through the other does nothing to do away with even metageometrical dimensions, but matter would be probably endowed by the learned bodies with one more faculty, and the hands of the materialists strengthened thereby. Would the world be nearer the solution of psychic mystery? Shall the noblest aspirations of mankind after the knowledge of real spiritual existence on those planes of being that are now confused with the "four-dimensional space" be the nearer to solution, because exact science shall have admitted as a physical law the action of one man walking deliberately through the physical body of another man, or through a stone wall? Occult sciences teach us that at the end of the Fourth Race, matter, which evolves, progresses and changes, as we do along with the rest of the kingdoms of nature, shall acquire its fourth sense, as it acquires an additional one with every new Race. Therefore, to an Occultist there is nothing surprising in the idea that the physical world should be developing and acquiring new faculties,—a simple modification of matter, new as it now seems to science, as incomprehensible as were at first the powers of steam, sound, electricity. But what does seem surprising is the spiritual stagnation in the world of intellect, and of the highest exoteric knowledge.

However, no one can impede or precipitate the progress of the smallest cycle. But perhaps old Tacitus was right: "Truth is established by investigation and delay; falsehood prospers by precipitancy." We live in an age of steam and mad activity, and truth can hardly expect recognition in this century. The Occultist waits and bides his time.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

Lucifer, April, 1891

## THE NEGATORS OF SCIENCE

As for what thou hearest others say, who persuade the many that the soul, when once freed from the body, neither suffers evil nor is conscious, I know that thou art better grounded in the doctrines received by us from our ancestors and in the sacred orgies of Dionysos, than to believe them; for the mystic symbols are well known to us, who belong to the "Brotherhood."

PLUTARCH

OF late, Theosophists in general, and the writer of the present paper especially, have been severely taken to task for *disrespect to science*. We are asked what right we have to question the conclusions of the most eminent men of learning, to refuse recognition of infallibility (which implies omniscience) to our modern scholars? How *dare* we, in short, "contemptuously ignore" their most undeniable and "universally accepted theories," etc., etc. This article is written with the intention of giving some reasons for our sceptical attitude.

To begin with, in order to avoid a natural misunderstanding in view of the preceding paragraph, let the reader at once know that the title, "The NEGATORS of Science," applies in no wise to Theosophists. Quite the reverse. By "Science" we here mean ANCIENT WISDOM, while its "Negators" represent *modern materialistic Scientists*. Thus we have once more "the sublime audacity" of, Davidlike, confronting, with an old-fashioned theosophical sling for our only weapon, the giant Goliath "armed with a coat of mail," and weighing "five thousand shekels of brass,"<sup>19</sup> truly. Let the Philistine deny facts, and substitute

for them his “working hypotheses”; we reject the latter and defend *facts*, “the armies of the one living TRUTH.”

The frankness of this plain statement is certain to awake all the sleeping dogs, and to set every parasite of modern science snapping at our editorial heels. “Those wretched Theosophists!” will be the cry. “How long shall they refuse to humble themselves; and how long shall we bear with this evil congregation?” Well, it will certainly take a considerable time to put us down, as more than one experiment has already shown. Very naturally, our confession of faith must provoke the wrath of every sycophant of the mechanical and animalistic theories of the Universe and Man; and the numbers of these sycophants are large, even if not very awe-inspiring. In our cycle of wholesale denial the ranks of the Didymi are daily reinforced by every new-baked materialist and so-called “infidel,” who escapes, full of reactive energy, from the narrow fields of church dogmatism. We know the numerical strength of our foes and opponents, and do not underrate it. More: in this present case even some of our best friends may ask, as they have done before now: “*Cui bono?* why not leave our highly respectable, firmly-rooted, official Science, with her scientists and their flunkies, severely alone?”

Further on it will be shown *why*; when our friends will learn that we have very good reason to act as we do. With the true, genuine man of science, with the earnest, impartial, unprejudiced and truth-loving scholar—of the minority, alas!—we can have no quarrel, and he has all our respect. But to him who, being only a *specialist* in physical sciences—however eminent, matters not—still tries to throw into the scales of public thought his own materialistic views upon metaphysical and psychological questions (a dead letter to him) we have a good deal to say. Nor are we bound by any laws we know of, divine or human, to respect opinions which are held erroneous in our school, only because they are those of so-called authorities in materialistic or agnostic circles. Between *truth* and *fact* (as we understand them) and the working hypotheses of the greatest living physiologists—though they answer to the names of Messrs. Huxley, Claude Bernard, Du Bois Reymond, etc., etc.—we hope never to hesitate for one instant. If, as Mr Huxley once declared, soul,

immortality and all spiritual things “lie outside of [his] philosophical enquiry” (*Physical Basis of Life*), then as he has never enquired into these questions, he has no right to offer an opinion. They certainly lie outside the grasp of materialistic physical science, and, what is more important, to use Dr. Paul Gibier’s felicitous expression, *outside the luminous zone* of most of our materialistic scientists. These are at liberty to believe in the “automatic action of nervous centres” as primal creators of thought; that the phenomena of *will* are only a complicated form of reflex actions, and what not—but we are as much at liberty to deny their statements. They are specialists—no more. As the author of *Spiritisme et Fakirisme* admirably depicts it, in his latest work:—

A number of persons, extremely enlightened on some special point of science, take upon themselves the right of pronouncing arbitrarily their judgment on all things; are ready to reject everything new which shocks *their* ideas, often for the sole reason that *if it were true they could not remain ignorant of it!* For my part I have often met this kind of self-sufficiency in men whom their knowledge and scientific studies ought to have preserved from such a sad moral infirmity, had they not been *specialists*, holding to their speciality. It is a sign of relative inferiority to believe oneself superior. In truth, the number of intellects afflicted with such gaps (*lacunes*) is larger than is commonly believed. As there are individuals completely refractory to the study of music, of mathematics, etc., so there are others to whom certain areas of thought are closed. Such of these who might have distinguished themselves in . . . medicine or literature, would probably have signally failed in any occupation outside of what I will call their *lucid zone*, by comparison with the action of those reflectors, which, during night, throw their light into a zone of luminous rays, outside of which all is gloomy shadow and uncertainty. Every human being has his own lucid zone, the extent, range and degree of luminosity of which, varies with each individual.

There are things which lie outside the *conceptivity* of certain intellects; they are outside their lucid zone.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Analyse des Choses.” Physiologic Transcendentale. Dr. Paul Gibier, pp. 33, 34.

This is absolutely true whether applied to the scientist or his profane admirer. And it is to such scientific specialists that we refuse the right to sit in Solomon's seat, in judgment over all those who will not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears. To them we say: We do not ask you to believe as we do, since your *zone* limits you to your specialty; but then do not encroach on *the zones* of other people. And, if you will do so nevertheless, if, after laughing in your moments of honest frankness at your own ignorance; after stating repeatedly, orally and in print, that you, physicists and materialists, know nothing whatever of the ultimate potentialities of matter, nor have you made one step towards solving the mysteries of life and consciousness—you still persist in teaching that all the manifestations of life and intelligence, and the phenomena of the highest mentality, are *merely properties of that matter of which you confess yourselves quite ignorant*<sup>2</sup> then—you can hardly escape the charge of *humberging* the world.<sup>3</sup> The word “humberg” is used here advisedly, in its strictest etymological Websterian meaning, that is, “imposition under fair pretences”—in this case, of science. Surely it is not expecting too much of such learned and scholarly gentlemen that they should not abuse their ascendancy and prestige over people's minds to teach them something they themselves know nothing about; that they should abstain from preaching the limitations of nature, when its most important problems have been, are, and ever will be, insoluble riddles to the materialist! This is no more than asking *simple honesty* from such teachers.

What is it, that constitutes the real man of learning? Is not a true and faithful servant of science (if the latter is accepted as the synonym of truth) he, who besides having mastered a general information on all things is ever ready to learn more, because there are things *that he admits he does not know*?<sup>4</sup> A scholar of this description will never

2 “In perfect strictness, it is true that chemical investigation can tell us little or nothing directly of the composition of living matter, and ... it is also in strictness true, that we KNOW NOTHING about the composition of any body whatever, as it is.” (Prof. Huxley).

3 This is what the poet laureate of matter, Mr. Tyndall, confesses in his works concerning atomic action: “Through pure excess of complexity ... the most highly trained intellect, the most refined and disciplined imagination retires in bewilderment from the contemplation of the problem. We are struck dumb by an astonishment which no microscope can relieve, doubting not only the power of our instrument but even whether we ourselves possess the intellectual elements which will ever enable us to grapple with the ultimate structural energies of nature.” And yet they do not hesitate to grapple with nature's spiritual and psychic problems—life, intelligence and the highest consciousness— and attribute them all to matter.

4 And therefore it is not to such that these well-known humorous verses, sung at Oxford, would apply:

“I am the master of this college,  
And what I know not is not knowledge.”

hesitate to give up his own theories, whenever he finds them—not clashing with fact and truth, but—merely dubious. For the sake of truth he will remain indifferent to the world's opinion, and that of his colleagues, nor will he attempt to sacrifice the spirit of a doctrine to the dead-letter of a popular belief. Independent of man or party, fearless whether he gets at loggerheads with biblical chronology, theological claims, or the preconceived and in-rooted theories of materialistic science; acting in his re-searches in an entirely unprejudiced frame of mind, free from personal vanity and pride, he will investigate truth for her own fair sake, not to please this or that faction; nor will he dislocate facts to make them fit in with his own hypothesis, or the professed beliefs of either state religion or official science. Such is the ideal of a true man of science; and such a one, whenever mistaken—for even a Newton and a Humboldt have made occasional mistakes—will hasten to publish his error and correct it, and not act as the German naturalist, Haeckel, has done. What the latter did is worth a repetition. In every subsequent edition of his *Pedigree of Man* he has left uncorrected the *sozura* (“unknown to science,” Quatrefages tells us), and *his prosimioe* allied to the *loris*, which he describes as “without marsupial bones, but *with placenta*” (*Fed. of Man*, p. 77), when years ago it has been proved by the anatomical researches of Messrs. “Alphonse Milne, Edwards and Grandidier . . . that the *prosim* of Haeckel have . . . *no placenta*” (*Quatrefages, The Human Species*, p. 110). This is what we, Theosophists, call downright *dishonesty*. For he knows the two creatures he places in the fourteenth and eighteenth stages of his genealogy in the *Pedigree of Man* to be myths in nature, and that far from any possibility of their being the direct or indirect ancestors of apes—let alone *man*, “they cannot even be regarded as the ancestors of the zonoplacental mammals” according to Quatrefages. And yet Haeckel palms them off still, on the innocent, and the sycophants of Darwinism, only, as Quatrefages explains, “because the proof of their existence arises *from the necessity of an intermediate type*”!! We fail to see any difference between the pious frauds of a Eusebius “for the greater glory of God,” and the impious deception of Haeckel for “the greater glory of matter” and—man's dishonour. Both are *forgeries*—

and we have a right to denounce both.

The same with regard to other branches of science. A specialist—say a Greek or Sanskrit scholar, a paleographer, an archaeologist, an orientalist of any description—is an “authority” only within the limits of his special science, just as is an electrician or a physicist in theirs. And which of these may be called *infallible* in his conclusions? They have made, and still go on making mistakes, each of their hypotheses being only a surmise, a theory for the time being—and no more. Who would believe today, with Koch’s craze upon us, that hardly a few years ago, the greatest authority on pathology in France, the late Professor Vulpian, Doyen of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, *denied the existence of the tubercular microbe*? When, says Doctor Gibier, (his friend and pupil) M. Bouley laid before the Academy of Sciences a paper on the tubercular bacillus, he was told by Vulpian that “this germ *could not exist*” for “had it existed it would have been discovered *before* now, having been hunted after for so many years!”<sup>5</sup>

Just in the same way every scientific specialist of what ever description denies the doctrines of Theosophy and its teachings; not that he has ever attempted to study or analyze them, or to discover how much truth there may be in the old sacred science, but simply because it is not modern science that has discovered any of them: and also because, having once strayed away from the main road into the jungles of material speculation, the men of science cannot return back without pulling down the whole edifice after them. But the worst of all is, that the average critic and opponent of the Theosophical doctrines is neither a scientist, nor even a specialist. He is simply a *flunkey* of the scientists in general; a repeating parrot and a mimicking ape of that or another “authority,” who makes use of the personal theories and conclusions of some well-known writer, in the hope of breaking our heads with them. Moreover, he identifies himself with the “gods” he serves or patronizes. He is like the Zouave of the Pope’s body-guard who, because he had to beat the drum at every appearance and departure of St. Peter’s Successor,” ended by identifying himself

5 Analyse des Choses, etc., Dr. P. Gibier, pp. 213 and 214.

with the apostle. So with the self-appointed flunkey of the modern Elohim of Science. He fondly imagines himself “as one of us,” and for no more cogent reason than had the Zouave: he, too, beats the big drum for every Oxford or Cambridge Don whose conclusions and personal views do not agree with the teachings of the Occult Doctrine of antiquity.

To devote, however, to these braggart with tongue or pen one line more than is strictly necessary, would be waste of time. Let them go. They have not even a “zone” of their own, but have to see things through the light of other people’s intellectual “zones.”

And now to the reason why we have once more the painful duty of challenging and contradicting the scientific views of so many men considered each more or less “eminent,” in his special branch of science. Two years ago, the writer promised in the *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II., p. 798, the third and even a fourth volume of that work. This third volume (now almost ready) treats of the ancient Mysteries of Initiation, gives sketches—from the esoteric stand-point—of many of the most famous and historically known philosophers and hierophants, (every one of whom is set down by the Scientists as an *imposter*), from the archaic down to the Christian era, and traces the teachings of all these sages to one and the same source of all knowledge and science—the esoteric doctrine or WISDOM-RELIGION. No need our saying that from the esoteric and legendary materials used in the forthcoming work, its statements and conclusions differ greatly and often clash irreconcilably with the data given by almost all the English and German Orientalists. There is a tacit agreement among the latter—including even those who are personally inimical to each other—to follow a certain line of policy in the matter of dates;<sup>6</sup> of denial to “adepts” of any transcendental knowledge of any intrinsic value; of the utter rejection of the very existence of *siddhis*, or abnormal spiritual powers in man. In this the Orientalists, even those

6 Says Prof. A. H. Sayce in his excellent Preface to Dr. Schliemann’s Troja: “The natural tendency of the student of to-day is to post-date rather than to ante-date, and to bring everything down to the latest period that is possible.” This is so, and they do it with a vengeance. The same reluctance is felt to admit the antiquity of man, as to allow to the ancient philosopher any knowledge of that which the modern student does not know. Conceit and vanity!

who are materialists, are the best allies of the clergy and biblical chronology. We need not stop to analyze this strange fact, but such it is. Now the main point of Volume III. of the *Secret Doctrine* is to prove, by tracing and explaining the *blinds* in the works of ancient Indian, Greek, and other philosophers of note, and also in all the ancient Scriptures—the presence of an uninterrupted esoteric allegorical method and symbolism; to show, as far as lawful, that with the keys of interpretation as taught in the Eastern Hindu-Buddhistic Canon of Occultism, the *Upanishads*, the *Purdnas*, the *Sutras*, the Epic poems of India and Greece, the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, the Scandinavian *Eddas*, as well as the Hebrew *Bible*, and even the classical writings of Initiates (such as Plato, among others)—all, from first to last, yield a meaning quite different from their dead letter texts. This is flatly denied by some of the foremost scholars of the day. They have not got the keys, *ergo*—no such keys can exist. According to Dr. Max Müller no pandit of India has ever heard of an esoteric doctrine (*Gupta-Vidya, not a bene*). In his Edinburgh *Lectures* the Professor made almost as cheap of Theosophists and their interpretations, as some learned Shastris—let alone *initiated* Brahmins—make of the learned German philologist himself. On the other hand, Sir Monier Williams undertakes to prove that the Lord Gautama Buddha *never taught any esoteric philosophy* (!), thus giving the lie to all subsequent history, to the Arhat-Patriarchs, who converted China and Tibet to Buddhism, and charging with fraud the numerous esoteric schools still existing in China and Tibet.<sup>7</sup> Nor, according to Professor B. Jowett, the Master of Balliol College, is there any esoteric or gnostic element in the Dialogues of Plato, not even in that pre-eminently occult treatise, the *Timoeus*.<sup>8</sup>

The Neo-Platonists, such as Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Porphyry etc., etc., were ignorant, superstitious mystics, who saw a secret meaning where none was meant, and who, Plato heading them, had no idea of real science. In the scholarly appreciation of our modern

7 See Edkin's Chinese Buddhism, and read what this missionary, an eminent Chinese scholar who lived long years in China, though himself very prejudiced as a rule, says of the esoteric schools.

8 See Preface to his translation of *Timoeus*.

scientific luminaries, in fact, science (*i.e.*, knowledge) was in its infancy in the days of Thales, Pythagoras and even of Plato; while the grossest superstition and “twaddle” reigned in the times of the Indian Rishis. Panini, the greatest grammarian in the world, according to Professors Weber and Max Müller *was unacquainted with the art of writing*, and so also everyone else in India, from Manu to Buddha, even so late as 300 years B. C. On the other hand, Professor A. H. Sayce, an undeniably great paleographer and Assyriologist, who kindly admits such a thing as an esoteric school and occult symbology among the Accado-Babylonians, nevertheless claims that the Assyriologists have now in their possession all the keys required for the right interpretation of the secret glyphs of the hoary past. Methinks, we know the chief key used by himself and his colleagues:—trace every god and hero, whose character is in the least doubtful, to a solar myth, and you have discovered the whole secret; an easier undertaking, you see, than for a “Wizard of the North” to cook an omelette in a gentleman's hat. Finally, in the matter of esoteric symbology and Mysteries, the Orientalists of today seem to have forgotten more than the initiated priests of the days of Sargon (3750 years B.C., according to Dr. Sayce) ever knew. Such is the modest claim of the Hibbert Lecturer for 1887.

Thus, as the personal conclusions and claim of the above-named scholars (and many more) militate against the theosophical teachings, in this generation, at any rate, the laurels of conquest will never be accorded by the majority to the latter. Nevertheless, since truth and fact are on our side, we need not despair, but will simply bide our time. Time is a mighty conjurer; an irresistible leveller of artificially grown weeds and parasites, a universal solvent for truth. *Magna est Veritas et prevalebit*. Meanwhile, however, the Theosophists cannot allow themselves to be denounced as visionaries, when not “frauds,” and it is their duty to remain true to their colours, and to defend their most sacred beliefs. This they can do only by opposing to the prejudiced hypotheses of their opponents, (a) the diametrically opposite conclusions of their colleagues—other scientists as eminent *specialists* in the same branches of study as themselves; and (b) the true meaning of sundry passages disfigured by these partizans, in the

old scriptures and classics. But to do this, we can pay no more regard to these illustrious personages in modern science, than they do to the gods of the “inferior races.” Theosophy, the Divine Wisdom or TRUTH is, no more than was a certain tribal deity—“a respecter of persons.” We are on the defensive, and have to vindicate that which we know to be implicit truth: hence, for a few editorials to come, we contemplate a series of articles refuting our opponents—however learned.

And now it becomes evident why it is impossible for us to “leave our highly respectable, firmly-rooted official *sciences* severely alone.”

Meanwhile we may close with a few parting words to our readers. *Power belongs to him who knows*; this is a very old axiom: knowledge, or the first step to power, especially that of comprehending the truth, of discerning the real from the false—belongs only to those who place truth above their own petty personalities. Those only who having freed themselves from every prejudice, and conquered their human conceit and selfishness, are ready to accept every and *any* truth—once the latter is undeniable and has been demonstrated to them—those alone, I say, may hope to get at the ultimate knowledge of things. It is useless to search for such among the proud scientists of the day, and it would be folly to expect the aping masses of the profane to turn against their tacitly accepted idols. Therefore it is also useless for a theosophical work of any description to expect justice. Let some unknown MS. of Macaulay, of Sir W. Hamilton, or John Stuart Mill, be printed and issued to-day by the Theosophical Publishing Company, and the reviewers—if any—would proclaim it ungrammatical and w/?-English, misty and illogical. The majority judge of a work according to the respective prejudices of its critics, who in their turn are guided by the popularity or unpopularity of the authors, certainly never by its intrinsic faults or merits. Outside theosophical circles, therefore, the forthcoming volumes of the *Secret Doctrine* are sure to receive at the hands of the general public a still colder welcome than their two predecessors have found. In our day, as has been proved repeatedly, no statement can hope for a fair trial, or even hearing, unless its arguments run on the lines of legitimate and accepted enquiry, remaining strictly within the boundaries of either official, materialistic science, or emotional, orthodox theology.

Our age, reader, is a paradoxical anomaly. It is pre-eminently materialistic, and as pre-eminently pietist, a Janus age, in all truth. Our literature, our modern thought and progress so-called, run on these two parallel lines, so incongruously dissimilar, and yet both so popular and so very “proper” and “respectable,” each in its own way. He who presumes to draw a third line, or even a hyphen of reconciliation, so to speak, between the two, has to be fully prepared for the worst. He will have his work mangled by reviewers, who after reading three lines on the first page, two in the middle of the book, and the closing sentence, will proclaim it “unreadable”; it will be mocked by the sycophants of science and church, misquoted by their flunkies, and rejected even by the pious railway stalls, while the average reader will not even understand its meaning. The still absurd misconceptions in the cultured circles of Society about the teachings of the “Wisdom-religion” (Bodhism), after the admirably clear and scientifically presented explanations of its elementary doctrines by the author of *Esoteric Buddhism*, are a good proof in point. They might serve as a caution even to those amongst us, who, hardened in almost a life-long struggle in the service of our Cause, are neither timid with their pens, nor in the least disconcerted or appalled by the dogmatic assertions of scientific “authorities.” And yet they persist in their work, although perfectly aware that, do what they may, neither materialism nor doctrinal pietism will give theo-sophical philosophy a fair hearing in this age. To the very end, our doctrine will be systematically rejected, our theories denied a place, even in the ranks of those ever-shifting, scientific ephemera—called the “working hypotheses” of our day. To the advocates of the “animalistic” theory, our cosmogenetical and anthropogenetical teachings must be “fairy tales,” truly. “How can we,” asked one of the champions of the men of science of a friend, “accept the *rigmaroles* of ancient Babus (!) even if taught in antiquity, once they go in every detail against the conclusions of modern science... As well ask us to replace Darwin by Jack the Giant Killer!” Quite so; for those who would shirk any moral responsibility it seems certainly more convenient to accept descent from a *commonsimian* ancestor, and see a brother in a dumb, tailless baboon, rather than acknowledge the fatherhood of the Pitris, the fair “sons of the gods.”

or to have to recognize as a brother, a starveling from the slums, or a copper-coloured man of an “inferior” race. “Hold back!” shout in their turn the pietists, “you can never hope to make respectable church-going Christians—’*Esoteric Buddhists*!’”

Nor are we in any way anxious to attempt the metamorphosis; the less so, since the majority of the pious Britishers have already, and of their own free will and choice, become *Exoteric Boot lusts*,

*De gustibus non disputandum.*

In our next, we mean to enquire how far Prof. Jowett is right, in his Preface to *Timoeus*, in stating that “the fancies of the Neo-Platonists have nothing to do with the interpretation of Plato,” and that “the so-called mysticism of Plato is purely Greek, arising out of his imperfect knowledge,” not to say ignorance. The learned Master of Balliol denies the use of any esoteric symbology by Plato in his works. We Theosophists maintain it and must try to give our best proofs for the claims preferred.

## II

### ON AUTHORITIES IN GENERAL, AND THE AUTHORITY OF MATERIALISTS, ESPECIALLY

In assuming the task of contradicting “authorities” and of occasionally setting at nought the well established opinions and hypotheses of men of Science, it becomes necessary in the face of repeated accusations to define our attitude clearly at the very outset. Though, where the truth of our doctrines is concerned, no criticism and no amount of ridicule can intimidate us, we would nevertheless be sorry to give one more handle to our enemies, as a pretext for an extra slaughter of the innocent; nor would we willingly lead our friends into an unjust suspicion of that to which we are not in the least prepared to plead guilty.

One of such suspicions would naturally be the idea that we must be terribly self-opinionated and conceited. This would be false from A to Z. It does not at all stand to reason that because we contradict eminent professors of Science on certain points, we therefore claim to know more than they do of Science; nor, that we even have the

benighted vanity of placing ourselves on the same level as these scholars. Those who would accuse us of this would simply be talking nonsense, for even to harbour such a thought would be the mad-ness of conceit— and we have never been guilty of this vice. Hence, we declare loudly to all our readers that most of those “authorities” we find fault with, *stand in our own opinion immeasurably higher in scientific knowledge and general information than we do.* But, this conceded, the reader is reminded that great scholarship in no way precludes great bias and prejudice; nor is it a safeguard against personal vanity and pride. A Physicist may be an undeniable expert in acoustics, wave-vibrations, etc., and be no Musician at all, having no ear for music. None of the modern bootmakers can write as Count Leo Tolstoi does; but any tyro in decent shoemaking can take the great novelist to task for spoiling good materials in trying to make boots. Moreover, it is only in the legitimate defence of our time-honoured Theosophical doctrines, opposed by many on the authority of materialistic Scientists, entirely ignorant of psychic possibilities, in the vindication of ancient Wisdom and its Adepts, that we throw down the gauntlet to Modern Science. If in their inconceivable conceit and blind Materialism they will go on dogmatizing upon that about which they know nothing—nor do they want to know—then those who do know something have a right to protest and to say so publicly and in print.

Many must have heard of the suggestive answer made by a lover of Plato to a critic of Thomas Taylor, the translator of the works of this great sage. Taylor was charged with being but a poor Greek scholar, and not a very good English writer. “True,” was the pert reply; “Tom Taylor may have known far less Greek than his critics; but *he knew Plato far better than any of them does.*” And this we take to be our own position.

We claim no scholarship in either dead or living tongues, and we take no stock in Philology as a modern Science. But we do claim to understand the living spirit of Plato’s Philosophy, and the symbolical meaning of the writings of this great Initiate, better than do his modern translators, and for this very simple reason. The Hiero-phants and Initiates of the Mysteries in the Secret Schools in which all the Sciences

inaccessible and useless to the masses of the profane were taught, had one universal, Esoteric tongue—the language of symbolism and allegory. This language has suffered neither modification nor amplification from those remote times down to this day. It still exists and is still taught. There are those who have preserved the knowledge of it, and also of the arcane meaning of the Mysteries; and it is from these Masters that the writer of the present protest had the good fortune of learning, howbeit imperfectly, the said language. Hence her claim to a more correct comprehension of the arcane portion of the ancient texts written by avowed Initiates—such as were Plato and Iamblichus, Pythagoras, and even Plutarch—than can be claimed by, or expected from, those who, knowing nothing whatever of that “language” and even denying its existence altogether, yet set forth authoritative and conclusive views on everything Plato and Pythagoras knew or did not know, believed in or disbelieved. It is not enough to lay down the audacious proposition, “that an ancient Philosopher is to be interpreted from himself [*i.e.*, from the dead-letter texts] and *by the contemporary history of thought*” (Prof. Jowett); he who lays it down has first of all to prove to the satisfaction, not of his admirers and himself alone, but *of all*, that modern thought does not woolgather in the question of Philosophy as it does on the lines of materialistic Science. Modern thought denies Divine Spirit in Nature, and the Divine element in mankind, the Soul’s immortality and every noble conception inherent in man. We all know that in their endeavours to kill that which they have agreed to call “superstition” and the “relics of ignorance” {read “religious feelings and metaphysical concepts of the Universe and Man”}, Materialists like Prof. Huxley or Mr. Grant Allen are ready to go to any length in order to ensure the triumph of their soul-killing Science. But when we find Greek and Sanskrit scholars and doctors of theology, playing into the hands of modern materialistic thought, pooh-poohing everything *they* do not know, or that of which the public—or rather Society, which ever follows in its impulses the craze of fashion, of popularity or unpopularity—disapproves, then we have the right to assume one of two things: the scholars who act on these lines are either moved by personal conceit, or by the fear of public opinion; they dare not challenge it at the risk

of unpopularity. In both cases they forfeit their right to esteem as authorities. For, if they are blind to facts and sincere in their blindness, then their learning, however great, will do more harm than good, and if, while fully alive to those universal truths which Antiquity knew better than we do—though it did express them in more ambiguous and less scientific language—our Philosophers will still keep them under the bushel for fear of painfully dazzling the majority’s eyes, then the example they set is most pernicious. They suppress the truth and disfigure metaphysical conceptions, as their colleagues in Physical Science distort facts in material Nature into mere props to support their respective views, on the lines of popular hypotheses and Darwinian thought. And if so, what right have they to demand a respectful hearing from those to whom TRUTH is the highest, as the noblest, of all religions?

The negation of any fact or claim believed in by the teeming millions of Christians and non-Christians, of a fact, moreover, *impossible to disprove*, is a serious thing for a man of recognised scientific authority, in the face of its inevitable results. Denials and rejections of certain things, hitherto held sacred, coming from such sources, are, for a public taught to respect scientific data and *bulls*, as good as unqualified assertions. Unless uttered in the broadest spirit of *Agnosticism* and offered merely as a personal opinion, such a spirit of wholesale negation—especially when confronted with the universal belief of the whole of Antiquity, and of the incalculable hosts of the surviving Eastern nations in the things denied—becomes pregnant with dangers to mankind. Thus the rejection of a Divine Principle in the Universe, of Soul and Spirit in man and of his immortality, by one set of Scientists; and the repudiation of any Esoteric philosophy existing in Antiquity, hence, of the presence of any hidden meaning based on that system of revealed learning in the sacred writings of the East (the *Bible* included), or in the works of those Philosophers who were confessedly Initiates, by another set of “authorities”—are simply fatal to humanity. Between missionary enterprise—encouraged far more on political than religious grounds<sup>9</sup>—and scientific Materialism, both

<sup>9</sup> We maintain that the fabulous sums spent on, and by, Christian missions, whose propaganda brings forth such wretched moral results and gets so few renegades, are spent with a political object in view. The

teaching from two diametrically opposite poles that which neither can prove or disprove, and mostly that which they themselves take on blind faith or blind hypothesis, the millions of the growing generations must find themselves at sea. They will not know, any more than their parents know now, what to believe in, whither to turn for truth. Weightier proofs are thus required now by many than the mere personal assumptions and negations of religious fanatics and irreligious Materialists, that such or another thing exists or has no existence.

We, Theosophists, who are not so easily caught on the hook baited with either salvation or annihilation, we claim our right to demand the weightiest, and to us *undeniable* proofs that truth is in the keeping of Science and Theology. And as we find no answer forthcoming, we claim the right to argue upon every undecided question, by analyzing the assumptions of our opponents. We, who believe in Occultism and the archaic Esoteric Philosophy, do not, as already said, ask our members to believe as we do, nor charge them with ignorance if they do not. We simply leave them to make their choice. Those who decide to study the old Science are given proofs of its existence; and corroborative evidence accumulates and grows in proportion to the personal progress of the student. Why should not the negators of ancient Science—to wit, modern Scholars—do the same in the matter of their denials and assertions; *i.e.*, why don't they refuse to say either *yea* or *ay* in regard to that which they really *do not know*, instead of denying or affirming it *a priori* as they all do? Why do not our Scientists proclaim frankly and honestly to the whole world, that most of their notions—*e.g.*, on life, matter, ether, atoms, etc., each of these being an unsolvable mystery to them—*are not scientific facts and axioms*, but simple “working hypotheses”? Or again, why should not Orientalists—but too many of them are “Reverends”—or a Regius Professor of Greek, a Doctor of Theology, and a translator of Plato, like Professor Jowett, mention, while giving out his personal views on the Greek Sage, that there are other scholars as learned as he is who

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aim of the missions which, as in India, are only said to be “tolerated” (sic) seems to be to pervert people from their ancestral religions, rather than to convert them to Christianity, and this is done in order to destroy in them every spark of national feeling. When the spirit of patriotism is dead in a nation, it very easily becomes a mere puppet in the hands of the rulers.

think otherwise? This would only be fair, and more prudent too, in the face of a whole array of evidence to the contrary, embracing thousands of years in the past. And it would be more honest than to lead less learned people than themselves into grave errors, by allowing those under the hypnotic influence of “authority,” and thus but too inclined to take every ephemeral hypothesis on trust, to *accept* as proven that which has *yet* to be proved. But the “authorities” act on different lines. Whenever a fact, in Nature or in History, does not lit in with, and refuses to be wedged into, one of their personal hypotheses, accepted as Religion or Science by the solemn majority, forthwith it is denied, declared a “myth,” or *revealed* Scriptures are appealed to against it.

It is this which brings Theosophy and its Occult doctrines into everlasting conflict with certain Scholars and Theology. Leaving the latter entirely out of question in the present article, we will devote our protest, for the time being, but to the former. So, for instance, many of our teachings—corroborated in a mass of ancient works, but denied piecemeal, at various times, by sundry professors—have been shown to clash not only with the conclusions of modern Science and Philosophy, but even with those passages from the old works to which we have appealed for evidence. We have but to point to a certain page of some old Hindu work, to Plato, or some other Greek classic, as corroborating some of our peculiar Esoteric doctrines, to see—

H. P. B.