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# SPIRIT AND MATTER;

THEIR NATURE AND THEIR RELATION TO EACH

OTHER: WHICH SHALL PREVAIL?

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DELIVERED AT CHICAGO, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1888.

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## INVOCATION.

Life of all life; Light of the universe; Creator, Ruler, Lord: Thou Infinite Love; Thou Infinite Wisdom and Goodness: unto Whom all must turn forever: Thou Who hast fashioned the visible universe, which is but the outermost of Thy creation, the feeblest expression of Thy divinity, but which in its wonder and magnificence fills man with admiration: we praise Thee for the things that are visible; for the structure of the earth and its wonderful productiveness, for the beauty of the leaf, the shrub, the tree, and the blooming flower; for the universe of stars: worlds upon worlds, suns upon suns, and systems whose vast cycles are thousands and millions of years; never tiring, never resting, but onward in their courses sweeping steadily through the spaces in response to Thy Being: we praise Thee for this; but for that portion of the universe that is invisible, for that life that pulsates in and through all things, for this conscious being filling the illimitable, we praise Thee without ceasing: that which neither suns nor systems can compass, but which holdeth within itself all knowledge of suns and systems; that which neither the wonders of the earth nor the heavens can comprehend, but which, though invisible, can encompass and comprehend the earth and the heavens. O God, we praise Thee for intelligence, for the mind, for the spirit, for that consciousness of the soul that enables man to know that, although he seemeth but as a speck of dust, his soul is more wonderful than all the stars, than all the systems of suns, than the myriad of galaxies that fill the universe of space and time. We praise Thee that one thought of Thee, one aspiration for divinity, one rev-

elation from within the soul is more valuable than all worlds and systems, and can never be blotted out: that eternity in its vast cycles seemeth but as the smallest portion of Thy Divinity. Amen.

#### DISCOURSE.

"All things declare the glory of the Lord."—Psalms.

Bishop Berkley says, that matter is but an inverted reflection of spirit, having no real existence in itself, but being the result of that which hath existence forever.

The utmost that science can declare, whether it traces the origin of the organic being to the atom and molecule, thence through the various states of organism, or whether from protoplasm and the primordial cell the various structures are being reared; still science can only teach the methods of these formations, their relations to each other, their existence in time and space, but nothing of their origin or remote causation; and in the abstract science has never declared the primal causation, and can only deal with such effects as to the senses or mind of man naturally lead to other effects, leaving the question of primal causation, not only without an answer, but totally unanswerable in the realm of natural philosophy, or the bases of scientific research. So complicated, however, so various the methods of human thought, and so do they seem to be so utterly dependent upon the material conformation with which man is surrounded, that many unscientific minds deduct from the fact that man has this physical environment that it therefore is the primal causation, in that they declare it to be material: that matter is at once the cause and effect, the source and result, of all the phenomena and all the psychical perception in the universe.

This is of course assumption. What science can really prove within her realm none would more readily concede than those who address you to night; especially from the realm which perceives more and more the region of causation, and the source of it. It is perfectly compatible to say that science for all its positive claims has absolute authority, but if it transcends those claims in the region of speculation or hypothesis, science has no basis then. In other words, science may only prove the more remote effects, may prove *a priori* causes, which in themselves are effects, and may never transcend the first effect, whatever that may be, nor claim it to be a primal cause; for no sane man, however scientific he may be, or prone to view the universe wholly on the side of matter, can ever declare that he believes the atom to be the source of creation, the primordial cell the beginning of things; nor can he declare what kind of cosmic dust or especial quality any matter takes on as the primal state of things.

One who has scientific research as well as spiritual unfoldment may be better to answer the materialist, because he knows the weakness of the hypothesis that claims matter as the basis of all existence. Yet so untutored in the methods of science are many, so unreliable are the spiritual bases of most human religions, that as soon as science presents an aggressive and reasonable front, the spiritual forces of the human theological thought seem to take flight, whereas it is just then that they should appear; for where the uttermost realm of human investigation in science ceases, there spirit, properly, takes up the thread and line and answers the *a priori* question; not only answers it there,

but answers it at the extreme other end of the line, which is the line of effect, proving that that which precedes the cause, and is beyond the effect, must be superior to the cause and effect discernable by the materialist. So whatever realm lies antecedent to the beginning of atomic life, or to the beginning of that primal life which is the basis of all material organization, whatever realm lies beyond the uttermost expression of effects, that life, that realm must include both; and is, therefore, not only the cosmic source of being, but a source which can only be traced through the nature and through the sources that relate wholly to itself.

The materialist is quite correct in reducing his system to that which relates wholly to matter, since it is only in that realm that he can hope to gain a hearing; though he may limit the universe to the realm of matter by declaring that there is no realm beyond it; but that which he cannot explain by the material hypothesis, that which he cannot answer as the result of what is in the universe aside from matter he must either disclaim as having an existence or say, this also is but another form of material expression.

The truly spiritual mind accepts science for its relative value; and in the senses, in the midst of human life, in time and all that relates to material things is perfectly correct in accepting the standards of material science as true, but there matter ends; as far as what we call substance is concerned, substance being the proper statement for matter as something that is beneath: beyond this is the real realm of causation. That realm in all ages under whatever names, interpreted from all languages as remote as human history, holds the spirit of life the breath of Divinity, the power and force—a priori—of all existence.

That which is expressed, therefore, is not life. Bishop Berkley very correctly perceived the truth when he stated that matter is but the inverse reflex of spirit, whatever may be its source, in and of itself it is not creative, not primordial, has in itself no source of absolute beginning. Not so with what is termed thought in the mind of man: independent of organism, and even the limited structure of the brain, there are absolute creative processes: inventions not discovered through matter, things not suggested by time and sense, because contradictory of it; that which declares itself superior to its surrounding environment: not only measuring the environment, scorning the surroundings, but entirely inverting them; so that spirit is perception, which matter declares to be false yet which spirit knows to be true.

That which matter cannot understand because it has no understanding, is, nevertheless, a part of the possessions of the spirit, and, therefore, is not based upon scientific investigations, but upon what science has failed to declare. The spiritual realm of the universe intervenes, supplements, surrounds, encompasses, enfolds, and has *a priori*, as well as *a posteriori*, existence of every form of matter. It can, therefore, be clearly shown that matter in itself may have, as Berkley says, no absolute existence, but that which is infinitely immaterial, infinitely spiritual, by reflex action may produce the relative state in the universe that man calls matter.

I do not say whether this is or is not true, but I say it is much more plausible than that matter includes the hypothesis of that which is beyond itself, and overthrows itself by producing a spiritual power which denies the right of matter to control it.

In the ultimate sense we will accept the relative interpretation of science, as man must do, but only declare the spirit as the primal life, the important factor in existence, the one causation which matter cannot find, yet the human spirit in contact with matter can declare and understand.

Matter does not recognize spirit; spirit recognizes matter and something more: matter cannot reveal spirit; spirit reveals itself and all that pertains to matter: matter of itself cannot register anything that belongs to the spirit; spirit can record itself upon matter and can declare that it has other powers which matter is not capable of revealing. Take, for instance, a genius; the artist may declare himself upon canvass, but he also declares that the canvass does not begin to portray what he can think, what his spirit sees. If the canvass and picture were real and the artist but the reflection of the images around him, then the artist could never imagine anything higher than he could paint; so with the sculptor, the same with music, and equally the same with every form of art and invention. No invention is ever declared perfect, yet the inventor sees that beyond expression which, if matter were more pliable, and time and space were less distinct he could make matter more and more positive. In other words the inventor sees the absolute relation of principles and things. While things themselves are only relative and can only partially express the perfect thought, the divine inspiration of genius sees the principles.

Then in the universe of creation we perceive in the visible structure the evidence of perfect thought; not that the structure itself is perfect, for there is scarcely a leaf or blossom in which there is not some slight flaw, but the whole of the intention is declared in the flaw itself, for the intention is perfect, but matter is the only part that fails in declaring that perfect intention. Take the geometrical proportions of flowers: the primal productions of the earth declare geometrical rules and laws: the lily has its six petals; all over the world, in every clime, under all conditions and circumstances the lily has the six petals; none of the petals may be absolutely perfect, there may be some slight digression in form, there may be some flaw in the fiber, but the perfection is declared by the stamp or type that is placed upon it in the original intention. Although there may be seven or five petaled lilies, these would be the exceptions and the whole earth would declare the others to be the rule.

In the wild rose in any primitive type of *Rosaceæ* the petals are five. Whether you take the Roman blossom as the type, or the wild rose of the Alps, or those various blossoms that are in this middle country, they reveal themselves as belonging to that type. Nature declares the perfect type by certain indications. If the roses are individually imperfect, if their petals have been marred in their unfolding, by insects, if there have been the ravages of storms, it matters not, the stamp of the primal intention is placed upon them.

The same is true of the groups of crystals, of every geometrical formation in the earth, and of all things that relate to the laws of light, the mathematical rules are absolutely observed. As one writer has said: "It has been found that the first geometrizer was God."

Nature herself is blind, and deaf, and dumb to this wonderful alchemy and geometry that is going on within her processes; but behind is the divine alchemy and geometry of mind: the only realm in the universe where these things are recognized is the realm of mind, which man for long ages has declared; he meets the geometry of God by his recognition in the science of mathematics. Yet there are those so destitute of perception as to declare that all is the result of matter, of which mind is an attenuated, evanescent, effervescence.

In the realm of the spirit there is no doubt as to where spirit begins and matter leaves off. It is only in the realm of mind, of material existence, of that which is fettered and tethered by matter that there is any limit placed upon anything. Just where the question can be asked: where does matter cease and

spirit begin? there is the beginning of spirit. Whosoever cannot think, contemplate, ask, or in some subtle or occult way know that question has not arrived at a consciousness of spirit in the outward mind.

If there were no spirit beyond matter, if the next step, the solution of the problems of the universe were not behind matter, if the primal source and beginnings were not there, who in all the realm of the universe would have taught man to ask the question? From what fable or fancy in nature, what satyr or fairy, what image in rocky cave or ocean, who from out the lily's cup or the rose's fragrance would ever have told man to ask where the limit of matter might abide? Blind, and deaf, and dumb as nature is she has never been known to stultify herself, and her dead ask no questions. But the dead in human life, the spirit out of the form, that is what prompts the question in the human mind, and if there was no answer man could never from the unfathomable abyss of annihilation have found the question or thought of the answer.

When the rose falls asleep you need not dream that the sister roses weep because it is dead: nor do they say to themselves, in what form does the spirit of that rose abide? they blossom on harmoniously to their end and fall asleep as did all the roses upon the parent stem. Behind the rose tree, beyond the roses, before the roses were born, was the breath of that God, that life, that preordinate existence that said in some thought as sweet as silence, as perfect as love: let this thought take the shape of a rose forevermore; in all lands, beneath all suns, wherever that thought is expressed it is a rose.

You and I shall not declare what form of thought from the realm of the Infinite has shaped itself in the petals of the rose or in the whiteness of the lily, any more than that we shall declare what wonderful majesty of thought shapes suns and planets in their spheres and gave them brightness, and through space lent the trembling lines of light the swiftness and wonder of their flight; but the one thought, before the light was in any shape of world, somewhere in the realm of the Infinite was the thought of light. For without it Chaos, Night, the ancient divinities that were said to prevail over matter, must always have had being, and if God is light, light is the symbol of perfect truth and the whiteness of His infinity. What other thought could shape itself into suns, systems, and geometrical lines by the slowly unfolding processes of created power, excepting the light itself? In order that the Infinite light should shape itself into the finite, created light, must not there be first that relative background of darkness, which the Grecians deified in the names of Nox, Chaos; upon this almost, seemingly, infinite shadow must not the white light of God shine forth and suns have birth?

Doubt it not: that although the universe is not God, although the suns and worlds are no part of this infinite, immortal splendor, which is the absolute Soul, Spirit. Still suns and worlds could have no existence but for that which is infinite, they are relative and have no creative power.

When one shall ask, is not spirit refined or attenuated matter? Refined or attenuated matter is still matter; it is nothing, it does not create; it has not the power of contemplating eternity; it is not absolute, and it can only be named matter; for an atom cannot be perceived by any human sense, nor analyzed by any human science, and can only be discovered in its associative and relative degrees, still that atom is matter, the aggregation of atoms make up the grossest substance, it is not in the quality of the atoms that is found the difference between the fiber of the lily and the strong trunk of the oak, but simply in the nature of their aggregation, they are still atoms, still material.

The point of contact between matter and spirit is that matter reduced to its ultimate, simplified in every crucible of science, analyzed to its supremest verge is still matter and not spirit. Spirit by no device of the senses, by no trick of science, by no process of alchemy, by none of those mysterious methods that prevail in the Orient, or have been handed down through occult sciences, has ever been discovered; never has the essence of life been analyzed by science. Spirit alone has declared spirit, and whatever images or forms the spirit may array itself in, whether embodied in the human form that is organic, or whether the apparition of a materialized form, it is the result of its power over the material surroundings; or whether those subtle, seeming vaporous forms which float in ether and are supposed to be the ghosts of disembodied spirit, still spirit is the source of all activity, of all sensation, of all organic life. The essence has never been named from analysis, nor discovered in any other manner than by spirit.

It is soul unto soul this night; even to you, incarcerated in time, imprisoned in the senses, hedged around with the limitations of the flesh, chained to the dust; what business would you have to listen to these words but for the soul that is within you, words that would have no meaning to the lily or to the rose, that would fall as idle and empty air; to every fiber, muscle, nerve, sinew, and bone, every vein and artery of your bodies would be as nothing? But through the brain, which in its construction is of external formation, into that something which is all voice, all solutions which man here can understand, and fully know, the knowledge of the immortal voice, the consciousness of immortality, and that communion that is beyond the light that is above, these interpenetrate. We speak, albeit, through a mortal voice, but unto your souls, and unless your souls make answer there is nothing said.

Before the body, previous to its birth, what could form the image of man, filled with the divine life that expands into manhood and womanhood, but that which is stamped in and through the clay and declares itself the image of the Divine, not the outward image, but the soul, that is itself like God? But matter, perishable in its forms, changeful in its very being, transcendent as it is in those forms and in that expression, still is only transcendent as it expresses something; and that something, the intention that is behind, impels into the mind that which is called perception and intuition.

It has been said that the "Doctrine of Correspondences" would teach that there is spiritual form before there is outward form, i. e., before the natural image is expressed in the earthly dust there is a spiritual image precisely like it. This is not the meaning of the doctrine of correspondences, there may be a correspondence without being an actual resemblance, to those familiar in the science of music there are musical notes that harmonize, but are not the same notes; as there are complementary colors which are almost opposite, but which are rendered complementary by their relations to each other; so with the doctrine of correspondences, that which is within the spirit may not resemble the form that is expressed, but the intention of it resembles that which the mind can discover the intention of the form to be. Take, for instance, if a man is ugly or hideous to behold, deformed or otherwise physically imperfect, it is no evidence that the spirit is deformed. In some manner is evident, however, that the intention in that formation, which expresses a spiritual proposition, may lead mankind to discover that for every physical imperfection, every outward blemish, there is a spiritual cause which is not like the blemish, but which the blemish suggests. The same is true with reference to an image of beauty: there are forms of perfect



loveliness, apparently, that do not express loveliness; there may be no flaw, the form itself may be perfect, all is made in harmony with the laws of the physical body, but they may suggest that which is hideous. The doctrine of correspondences would teach that the beautiful image devoid of that alone which can be beautiful in human life: the grace of mind and perfection of heart, the transcendent nature of goodness, is more hideous and lifeless than an image of stone.

The same is true of the formations in nature; the doctrine of correspondences would teach that the natural image is the expression of spiritual antecedents; but the spiritual antecedent need not be rock, flower, grass and the images which your eyes behold. The spiritual antecedent is the intention which precedes the creation of tree, flower and rock, and is the basis for all organic structures: just as the artist arranges in his thought, and has in his mind or spirit the image of that which represents a motive within his soul: so if the motive be love he would image that which might most perfectly express the form of love, and when it is finished he would most gladly destroy it. Why? Because the form is so inadequate to the one that is his ideal, that has no form of expression in all the universe of matter.

Is this not the lesson of all material life? The image is there at first for man to admire, at first for him seemingly to adore, only to find that however perfect the outward image, however rare; that which is divinely free, that which is real, and true, and divine can find no expression in the material universe at all: even as suns, as orbs of splendor, as the moving spheres which fill all space, the light of day and the glories of the night, the marching constellations, which the astronomer views with wonder and admiration, which the ancient kings bended before in silent homage, even these sink out of sight and pass into oblivion, amount to nothing before the rare images of splendor that upbuild the sun of truth and righteousness in the heavens of the spirit. The earthly sun, radiant though it is, with its myriad points of flame reaching out in all directions, standing with arms of light upholding worlds that move around it, these are the shadows of the light of God, which shineth out from within the splendor of the soul.

Spiritual consciousness makes man aware that one perfect thought, one divine aspiration, one holy, sacred impulse from within the soul is worth more than all suns, worlds, and systems; the shadow of God's light.

*WHAT IS LIFE BUT A DREAM?*

*HOW WELCOME AND BLESSED MUST BE THE AWAKENING.*

[IMPROMPTU POEM: THE SUBJECT BEING GIVEN BY A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE.]

The Life on earth is but another name  
 For death, for are not time, and sense,  
 And pain, and shadow, but the weary name  
 Which man calls life, with feeble recompense!

'Tis but the night time to the heavenly state,  
 And he is unaware of the light above;  
 It is the night of shadowy death and hate,  
 And he in darkness and in gloom must move.

Is not the weary way the dismal past,  
 The fighting of grim phantoms here below:  
 Of ambition and mammon which at last  
 Must into their own final darkness go?

And were it all of life, that death here known.  
 He must at last sink out of sight in dust:  
 Even the splendor of ambition's throne  
 Molders, corrodes and sinks in darkened rust:

But well he knows that when the veil of time  
 Was placed before his vision here on earth,  
 He heard the echo of the song sublime  
 That came from out the heavenly state at birth.

And through the pilgrimage of earthly pain,  
 Such time as sorrow pierced his very heart,  
 Or as the shadow rent by love in twain,  
 He knew the song from out the heavens would start.  
 And which through all earth's pilgrimage below  
 Bids him to find strength, and comfort in woe.

Yes, 'tis a dream: but the entire disguise  
 And deep experiences are reality;  
 The veil of vision placed before his eyes  
 Is but the background of eternity;  
 And by the very phantoms here below  
 He must the real life of the angel know;

Just as the artist with the skillful hand  
 Paints the deep shadow and the darkened gloom  
 With wondrous skill and deftly turned command  
 Of coloring, until at last there is room,  
 Amid the deepest shade and tint and tone,  
 For the one form of light which he alone,

From out his soul, can paint, in very truth;  
 So man, amid the gloom and shade,  
 And all the darkness of sorrow's ruth,  
 Must know what an awakening God hath made:  
 For out of this dull dream he wakes to know  
 The fulfillment of hopes that died below;

The forms that perished holding love's sweet light,  
 These are restored within that heavenly sight;  
 And every shadow of the lower earth  
 Becomes the background for the angel's birth.

#### BENEDICTION.

From darkness unto the light of truth, from the shadow of the earth to the reality of the sky, from the chains of the dust to the freedom of paradise, may every soul turn in the light of God's love. Amen.

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