

A PHILOSOPHY OF IMMORTALITY.

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AUTHOR OF

"HOUSE OF RAVENSBURG," "A LITTLE CHILD'S MONUMENT,"
ETC.

"I am the Resurrection, and the Life."

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CONTENTS.

PRELIMINARY	P. i
-----------------------	------

CHAPTER I.

On the Nature of the Spirit or Person, as distinguished from his Body—The Soul-Body—The Ether—What is Life?	Pp. 23-57
--	-----------

CHAPTER II.

Materialisation — Obsession — Madness — Mesmerism — Haunted Houses	Pp. 58-68
---	-----------

CHAPTER III.

Miracle—The Devils—Magic—Cosmogony—The “Last Judgment” —Final Universal Reconciliation—Resurrection	Pp. 69-77
--	-----------

CHAPTER IV.

“Psychic Force,” and the Doctrine of “Automatism”—“Un- conscious Cerebration”—Spiritualism and Miracles as old as the World	Pp. 78-86
---	-----------

CHAPTER V.

The Teaching of James Hinton—The true bearing of Physiology on the Nature of our Conscious Life—Materialism absurd— Materialistic Difficulties — Is the Soul divisible?—Its Origin and History—Cosmogony—What are the Sun, the Stars, and Planets?	Pp. 87-108
--	------------

CHAPTER VI.

Materialisation—Elementals—Theosophist Theories—The Doubling of Personality Theory—"A More Excellent Way" than Spiritism—The True Philosophy of Memory, Imagination, and Dream—Neither Physiology, nor the Hypothesis of an "Ether Body" gives much help in explaining these (or any) Mental Phenomena—There is no Unconscious—Hartmann and Carpenter Pp. 109-131

CHAPTER VII.

"Unconscious Cerebration"—Planchette—Psychography—Miracle Pp. 132-146

CHAPTER VIII.

Arguments for Human Immortality Pp. 147-157

CHAPTER IX.

Further Considerations on Immortality—Darwin: whence Identity of Type?—Natural Selection—The Creative Idea—The Platonic Idea—Aristotle—Oriental Philosophy—Conditional Immortality—Philosophical: Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, H. Spencer, Büchner Pp. 158-171

CHAPTER X.

The Goddess "Matter," and Human Immortality—The Moral Aspect of the Question—Our Intellectual, Affectional, and Moral Natures are not fundamentally at War—The Absurdities of Pessimism, and the Moral Revolt (especially in recent verse) against God as Lawgiver—The Glory of Christ, and the Christian Idea—Salvation by Suffering and Sacrifice—Love, the *Summum Bonum* Pp. 172-186

APPENDIX P. 188

PREFACE.

ONE is glad to know that our two most eminent, and most thoughtful poets, Tennyson, and Browning, are on the side of *faith*. Not that they never doubt, or feel the stress of difficulties almost overwhelming, but their whole rich poetic nature bends them to faith, if the mere naked understanding of others causes them to lean the other way.—Yet notice an argument in one of Mr. Browning's recent poems, *La Saisiaz*, on the subject of our immortality. He concludes that we may have a *hope* of it, but no more; for if this hope were a certainty, we should no longer be in a state of probation; our right conduct would not be right, since we should be yielding to a *must*, and not freely choosing between good and evil, which is what makes conduct right or wrong. That is very much Kant's view. It is not one with which I can sympathise. I do not find that the great upheavals of the world for good have been achieved with any mere feeble peradventure for fulcrum. Faith, on the contrary, which is insight rather than a faint hope, has been the impelling agent. If none can be good except in the dark, how can God, with whom is no darkness at all, be good? In the utterances of Christ, and the great martyrs for truth, there is assurance, trust, not a dim surmising. This latter belongs to our unreal, lapsed, degraded state; and I do not deny that it is proper to that, fitting therefore, and best for our education and fullest ultimate development. But that again is a matter for faith. Uncertainty belongs only to our very imperfect condition.

It is quite true indeed that the more certainty in these matters, the more is our conduct subject to necessity, necessity of rightness—but is that undesirable? We are fettered enough with the chains of a degraded hereditary, and habit-forged necessity, fettered to the dead body of an evil nature: and we surely want some very strong counter-influence to set us free. If our clear insight, and purified heart compelled us to see and do right, would we not part with the mere *name* of

"virtue," if that were necessary, to hold something more substantial or more excellent? If Love and Justice, which are qualities of the spirit, *may* finally perish with it, *is it* particularly meritorious to esteem them so very highly? To hold them in the highest honour, to sacrifice all for them, must surely be a mere question of individual taste then. It shows, no doubt, a strongly-virtuous *predilection*, but it does not show after all a very elevated *idea* of virtue, to count it as perishable as refined vice, and rare crockery; a man must be in perpetual danger of letting the balance incline to the side say of selfish gain, whether in the form of *undue* absorption in æsthetic china, or some other pleasure, if the windy impulse should happen to veer and blow very strongly in that direction—for how *can* one brittle evanescent thing be *intrinsically* much better and more valuable than another? The fact is, we are under a mere illusory "freedom of will," and the "liberty" to do wrong and choose wrong is none at all—most assuredly no blessing. We are not at full liberty yet to choose and do right, but that is the blessing to be desired; it is possession of our full spiritual prerogative. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." A man who cannot choose wrong shows, I think, still more virtue than one who does not, but conceivably might.

I do not deny that our faith needs to be tried, and will come out the stronger for the temptation not to trust our highest intuitions and aspirations. But this is only as a necessary condition in this our undeveloped, not fully human and personal, state of progress towards fuller certainty, and unerring moral reason, which shall be compelling. This is the inevitable groping and fumbling without which we could never reach the full light; yet we are not to acquiesce even in this twilight, but, for our spiritual safety, to seek ever more assurance, lest we fall back into the profounder gloom.

But there are the two kinds of knowledge—one of the whole being, the intuitional, another of the mere understanding. And a virtuous man really has the former, which is the real knowledge, though he may not have the other clear; it would be better, however, if he had both in one full vision, as he may hope to have. A bad man's understanding may be pretty clear on the subject of right conduct and its consequences, but he possesses not the more essential and intuitive knowledge, which involves an implicit conviction of the paramount worth, and therefore truly of the superior permanence and reality of virtue. He may apprehend, he may even desire; but he does not feel, he does not know.

A PHILOSOPHY OF IMMORTALITY.

PRELIMINARY.

My principal purpose in this dissertation is to furnish some arguments for what is by Materialism denied, and by Agnosticism doubted, the *permanent reality of human personality*. We feel it intuitively, but Understanding suggests difficulties. My attention here has been largely directed also to that branch of the evidence derived from phenomena known in England as *spiritualist*, and on the Continent by the preferable name of *spiritist*—offering a contribution toward a philosophy of these from an idealistic standpoint.

I here avow that I think the evidence published in connection with them is sufficient to convince an unprejudiced person of their genuineness—that they are not all conjuring tricks; though there is plenty of imposture in professional

A

mediumship, no doubt. I for a long time remained unconvinced, but my incredulity yielded to a careful study of the published evidence. And if people would only read and weigh it carefully, I am sure that any impartial mind would be constrained to yield assent. But so strong appears the *prima facie* improbability of what is alleged, that very few will do this. After long and repeated failures to obtain personal proof of the genuineness of these occurrences, I have recently succeeded in doing so. But this can only convince oneself. And for my own part I would rather trust the accumulation of proof published by other competent and independent witnesses in different quarters of the world, and at different times, than I would even the evidence of my own senses, and my own private ability to detect imposture. I therefore beg to refer the candid reader to the readily-accessible, published testimony of Mr. Wallace, the co-originator with Darwin of the Development hypothesis; Mr. Crookes, F.R.S., one of our most eminent scientific discoverers; Professor Barrett, Professor of Physics in Dublin University; Mr. Varley, the electrician, F.R.S.; Mr. Robert Dale Owen, ambassador to Naples

from the United States, a man of calm judicial faculty ; Judge Edmonds, of whom the same may be said ; Professor de Morgan, our great mathematician ; Lord Lindsay, M.A. (Oxon), in his "Spirit Identity," and other dispassionate and well-weighed works ; Mr. W. Harrison, in his excellent work, "Spirits before our Eyes ;" Mr. Epes Sargent, an American writer of marked ability ; the late Mr. Serjeant Cox, and many others, who have written in our own language ; last, but not least, the published Report of the Commission of the Dialectical Society, composed of distinguished men of science, whose chairman was Sir John Lubbock. We have just had translated from the German, by Mr. C. C. Massey, barrister-at-law,—an eminently competent man, whose own preface and essays, printed in the same volume with the translation, are themselves of high value,—the record of Professor Zöllner's experiences. This book is perhaps the most important yet published in this connection, and is likely to be epoch-marking. Professor Zöllner, himself one of the most distinguished scientific men in Germany, was assisted in his observations—made, of course, under strict test conditions (and in this

case, moreover, *in a full light*) by colleagues equally eminent in the scientific world—Professors Weber, Scheibner, and Fechner. We have the testimony of Professor Wagner also to similar occurrences, and that of the philosopher Fichte, not to mention many others. I omitted from the English and American list the scientific discoverer, Dr. Hare, Professor of Chemistry in Philadelphia. Perhaps the admissions of well-known conjurors, that the phenomena *produced under the same test conditions* in private houses, away from their own premises, are beyond their power, should not be omitted. We have this admission made by Bellachini, court conjuror to the king of Italy, Jacobs, and Robert Houdin. Mr. Maskelyne seems himself to have made a very similar admission (see Mr. Massey's book). But scientific men do not insist on imposing all their own conditions when making other experiments. That these phenomena do not easily succeed in the light may be a law of nature which we cannot alter at will. For a discussion on the value of human testimony in matters extraordinary, I may refer to Mr. Wallace's dissertation, and to Mr. C. Massey's. That no amount of testimony, otherwise unimpeachable,

can prove what is extraordinary, and that *à priori* this must be rejected, is a proposition leading to strange results ; one totally contrary, moreover, to the very spirit of the modern philosophy, which proclaims aloud the mere *relativity* of our knowledge, that we do not and cannot know all the conditions under which phenomena occur, or may occur. To the evidence furnished for the so-called “miraculous” in past times, I cannot here refer. But to myself the proof for the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ is as strong as any historical proof can be ; and the evidence for the Port Royal miracles is also strong ; so also that furnished by John Wesley for so-called “supernatural” occurrences in his own house,—not to speak of other well-attested relations of apparitions of the dead, more especially at the moment of death, or a little after.

The cheap ridicule and irresponsible chaff of the penny press, or of those for whom they cater—the many who have neither read nor investigated for themselves—seems on the whole not quite to dispose of all this array of evidence, and may perhaps safely be left out of account.

Apparitions of the dead have, however, been

pretty generally believed in everywhere and always, and I rather incline to think there is no smoke without some fire. The present age is peculiarly sceptical—too clever by half. At least some of us doubt gravely whether wisdom was born, and will die with it after all, though that claim be made. Yet there is plenty of ridiculous nonsense, as well as mischievous and heartless imposture, about the whole concern of spiritualism, mankind being so largely knaves and fools. And it is absurd enough when you get poor doggerel palmed upon too credulous spiritualists, as from the muse of Byron, or Shakspeare, or Shelley. But there must be knaves and fools over there as well as here, seeing how many daily pass over to the majority.

Now, in a very momentous crisis of my own life I happened to be thinking much and deeply on some very important questions in philosophy, when the evidence in favour of these occurrences was presented to me with a gradually accumulating force ; and, curiously enough, the philosophical conclusion that had appeared to throw most light upon our relations with the external world, and to harmonise the teaching of physiology and science as to the connection between

our bodily organisation and the phenomena of inner consciousness with the more fundamental intuitions, demands, and aspirations of our moral, emotional, and intellectual nature,—that philosophical conclusion seemed also to throw light upon these abnormal experiences themselves. Hence I was led to give the more attention to these; they fitted into the scheme of thought, which had independently commended itself to me on other accounts, and in their turn threw light upon the general system of belief to which I had gradually been impelled by the combined influence of reason, feeling, and external circumstance. But should the reader care for the thoughts of a poet on philosophical questions, I would refer him to some other metaphysical essays I have written, and hope to publish, for a more thorough elucidation of them.

These abnormal phenomena, occurring in an age peculiarly given up to physical investigations, sordid, selfish, money-making, and materialistic scepticism, are grave, startling, momentous,—even though Professor Huxley has pronounced that they do not interest him. For this is a time sceptics cannot allege to be uncritical and incapable in the matter of sifting

evidence, which is what they allege to account for the superstitious belief of their ancestors in a spiritual world, and in occasional breakings through from that into this. And just as we were all settling down comfortably (or uncomfortably, some of us!) into the dogmatic certainty that the present common sensible order of things was all and in all, and that there was nothing beyond it—just as we were all smiling blandly, and wonderingly at the exploded follies of all our forebears—lo! these strange and mysterious visitations from the unknown!

Think of it—if the great problem should be solved hereby—of where we shall be in a year or two, and where our friends are who have passed from our longing embrace, as it seems, for ever! Is that a light claim for spiritism to make? And take even the poets and thinkers, and the ordinary people who do not disbelieve in their religion—yet see how this sensible difficulty of the corpse and the grave weighs upon them like leaden coffins, or the dull, deep earth over the bosom of our beloved! how, even without intending it, I have used, as others use, this horrible phraseology of confusion! It is all very well for abstracted students to tell us that no wise man

ponders over this problem ; the voice of the crabbed, icy recluse, or the flippant worldling, not the warm heart of human affection, speaks in such accents. It has been said, and with real meaning, that the wise man thinks of nothing less than of death—he lives in *the present*. And that is good and true, provided that the present is no ephemeral dream of little worth to him, but involves the past and future, as indeed it must—is to him a solid, grave, momentous reality—implicitly, if not explicitly, includes the inmost conviction of immortality. And were there not this *implicit* conviction (however, when the understanding comes to fumble at the problem of *what the future will be like*, he may doubt or deny), no man could live as a wise man should, and does.

But one is prepared to hear one's friends and enemies say one is mad, and see them shake their heads significantly. Discoverers, and those who believe in their discoveries, are always mad till the world comes wholly round to their opinion. New truths have ever to run the gauntlet between ridicule and persecution. The men of science who only mumble their *non possumus*, and refuse to investigate the phenomena, are

surely out of court as witnesses in the question. Talk about "intellectual prostitution," and the necessity of running us all in, is not argument, and cannot avail against the facts. What a collapse of scientific reputation if it were proved all true! What a crash of pretentious systems! It would be too dreadful. "Let us turn away our eyes from beholding vanity!"

I shall here, for the reasons briefly given, take the facts as proved, and shall address myself, in the course of a philosophical disquisition on the main theme of our personal immortality, to possible explanations of these phenomena, and to a discussion of some theories that have been proposed to account for them. I am personally not in much sympathy with the frame of mind that is content simply to *register* the same kinds of phenomena over and over again for ever, without any attempt at explanation. The facts have been long enough before us, I think, to justify such an attempt. It does not seem very healthy for the mind to be ever swallowing a crude mass of so-called "facts," without any wish or endeavour to digest, and bring them into order. There may be too much of mere cataloguing and registering. The minds of many people

seem to be mere curiosity-shops. This is a lazy time so far as *thinking* is concerned, though there is plenty of pretentious bustle that does duty for it.

“The world is too much with us ;
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.”

Men angrily resent being called on to think for themselves. No writer can be popular who urges them to so uncongenial a task.

As to the objections of religious people, I believe they have some foundation. And yet they should consider that men have been led in this manner to see the crudity of their own materialism, and have been disposed to weigh the evidence for alleged Christian miracles more dispassionately ; they have been disposed to admit their *possibility*, as they were not before. Some proof of a world beyond the grave, and of an unseen order, seemed presented to them here and now, and that was a step toward the serious consideration of the question of the credibility of Christianity. Some people, whose faith is strong, do not want spiritualism, but to others, whose faith is weak, and who have been strongly impressed by scientific conclusions and modes of

thought, whose department is the sensible understanding, these manifestations to sensible understanding come with peculiar force; it is "proof palpable" to them. To this religious people reply: "It is forbidden in the Bible." But the persons of whom I speak do not believe the Bible, and the persons to whom consultation with certain spirits was forbidden were not, that I know of, materialistic sceptics. While the phenomena are still *sub judice*, and we are patiently investigating to ascertain *what they really are*, it seems somewhat premature for persons, who will not look at them or touch them with a little finger, to exclaim in pious horror that these are and must be communications from the very identical devils, intercourse with whom was forbidden to the Jews many thousands of years ago by their inspired teachers. This may conceivably be so—or it may not. It hardly seems a justifiable, though it may be "a short and easy method," to throw texts of Holy Writ at people's heads when we happen to differ from them, and with the smallest possible amount of attention to the proper meaning of the texts, or to the circumstances under which they were written. It does not follow that a prohibition, delivered

under certain circumstances, is absolutely binding for all time and under all conceivable circumstances. The Jews, *e.g.*, were forbidden to eat pork, and there were good special reasons for it then. But if even the universal moral law undergoes modifications as mankind develops, how much more the obligation as regards specific practices upon which the general conscience hardly delivers a unanimous verdict? In fact, there have always been a black and a white magic. And in all religions the black magic has been forbidden.

Intercourse with bad or low spirits for immoral or unjustifiable purposes—that appears to constitute the phase of spiritism, which would be universally counted wrong by moralists, and which was discountenanced in the Old and New Testaments. In former times the *higher angelic* manifestations were clearly on the side of the Jewish theocracy, and on that of Christianity; and those spirit agencies were discountenanced which were hostile to these. But the higher spirit manifestations are common and essential to all the higher religions. Worse than mere idle curiosity usually prompted the seekers to “familiar spirits,” the wizards and witches of

former times ; there was too often a malignant motive, or at best a motive of mere selfish greed, actuating these, and the persons who sought their aid. And clearly our own object in these investigations, our own frame of mind, is the point of importance in deciding the lawfulness or unlawfulness of them : is it mere idle curiosity, or any less praiseworthy end even than that ? The adepts and magicians of old often sought a selfish, unhallowed pre-eminence over their fellows, which, if it was not to be used for their injury, was certainly not desired for their good. One's own conscience should surely be competent to tell one what is forbidden, and what is lawful in these pursuits and studies. It was not for the disinterested study of truth, or for satisfaction of holy aspiration, or for the purpose of benefit to his fellows, that Faust, and such as he, sold their souls to the devil. The Christian revelation is to give life, and the power to judge which life bestows ; but the slaves of the letter of texts seem to aim at making it a Procrustes bed whereon to cramp and distort the spiritual freedom of humanity. Revelation were no blessing, but a curse, if it were converted into the swaddling-bands of perpetual mental infancy. The idol of

Timorous Ignorance, set up for worship by strict orthodoxy, is far from well-favoured. It is true that we ought to seek rather high than low companionship, whether among the denizens of this world, or among those of another; still I fancy that if I could get hold of a *bona fide* native of Jupiter, I would not be too particular about what stratum of Jovian society my new friend might belong to. And "a man's a man for a' that," even when his conduct is not wholly irreproachable. By virtue of that altered condition of life which must one day be mine, any traveller from beyond "that bourne whence," our great poet half feared, "no traveller returns" would be interesting to me. I would not sniff too closely and curiously in order to ascertain his unimpeachable moral propriety. Foot-sore and ragged he might be, but still he comes from *yonder!* and visitors thence are rare. Christ ate and drank with publicans and sinners, and went to preach to the spirits in prison. It is more healthy to wish well to the souls of others than to think perpetually about saving our own. Disregarding the risk of contamination, if our motives are pure, we may well hope to be allowed to be of some use to our neighbours

on the other side when they visit us : surely we owe them a good turn, if one deserves another ; though, certainly, the views of Mr. Harris, the seer, on the danger and unnaturalness of seeking to break down the wall of partition between the two worlds, is well worthy of serious consideration. But, judging by the messages delivered through *Psychography*, the intelligences employed in producing the extraordinary manifestations obtained by Professor Zöllner, through Dr. Slade, were of high capacity, and of elevated moral purpose, above the average of mortal investigators certainly. But we are not, most of us, so far removed in nature from the riff-raff of the prison-house that we can afford to scorn them—even them ; though if we *were* further removed, we should scorn them as little as Christ. It is mostly a superficial veneer only that mischievously makes us fancy the very grain of the wood so different in our own case. And then what is suggested by the phenomena is, that we are in contact as a rule neither with angels nor devils, but with ordinary men and women, sharing in our own evil dispositions, and our own foibles. This may contradict the orthodox, though not rational and scriptural, doctrine of the absolute and final

shutting up of saints and sinners in two totally distinct, hermetically sealed, cast-iron compartments at death; but this is what the facts suggest. Hence, probably, the wish of orthodoxy to prove that devils only are concerned in these manifestations. That the character, mind, and disposition constitute our state here and hereafter, is a view, however, not unfamiliar to the more reasonable and devout believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the confirmation of such a view by spiritism is a boon not lightly to be estimated. If the devil has taught us this, he has made a serious blunder, and Satan is divided against Satan. But assuredly we ought to be very much obliged to him. Many of the phenomena, too, suggest *progress* in the next state, or attest the possibility of it. And that is a moral rational doctrine.

Then, further, some holy and devout persons have attained formerly, and, I believe, attain now, to the higher kind of spiritualism, what we may name the white magic, to conscious angelic communion. Both Catholic and Protestant saints, and some self-renouncing Eastern devotees, have done this. Yet I quite believe spiritualism would

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be injurious and perilous to some natures; let these judge for themselves and avoid it.

But we are told that certainly the spirits of the departed are likely to be better employed than in hauling chairs and tables about a room; that the occupation is so intrinsically absurd and useless, that on the face of it we cannot attribute any such antics to the dead. Now, in the first place, only ignorance imagines that these rude and elementary phenomena exhaust the multi-form and subtle mysteries of spiritualism; and in the second, I confess I do not feel the force of this objection very strongly. The average of one's own acquaintances are scarcely of so very elevated a character, and their habitual occupations hardly of so transcendent a sublimity here, that they need think this sort of thing so very much beneath them in the next world—to be hewers of wood and drawers of water over there! If, as these intelligences allege, they are employed by others set over them to do this kind of drudgery for a good end, there is no particular reason why they should not do it cheerfully enough. It may be the most accessible and ready means of convincing us that they are indeed round about us, that our normal senses are not sole

criterion of all possible reality, that there is a world within and about us, encompassing us on every side. And if we are dense and pig-headed enough not to believe in it, we need not be so high and mighty when obvious, vulgar means are used now and then to wake us up to the fact. But we resemble Naaman the Syrian, who "turned and went away in a rage," because the Prophet bade him do a very simple, trivial thing in order to be cured. There is indeed nothing common or unclean, nothing vulgar or trivial, except as our own private vulgarity and triviality cause us so to regard it—save as our "thinking makes it so." But looked at from the right angle, a chair or a table is quite as dignified as anything else. The lid of Watt's mother's old tea-kettle bobbing up and down with the steam under it was trivial enough, and the boy supposed to be a fool for gazing at it so abstractedly; but out of it came the genii of the steam engine, and the system of modern commerce. Nor had Newton's apple as it fell in its orchard a very pretentious and solemn appearance beyond other apples. Why, Zöllner has already drawn scientific inferences of momentous import from these very conjuring feats, as they appear, of tricky spirits,

elves, and goblins. For my part, I am thankful for what I get, and will look no gift horse in the mouth. But the self-complacent stolidity of incredulity is invincible.

What, after all, do these supposed visitants from another world tell us? Well, if they tell us that all is much the same as it is here, I believe that proposition is philosophically capable of defence *a priori*. We do not, I fear, often meet on this plane with the highest messengers from God's throne: they indeed would have something more to tell us; but could we hear or understand? We must raise ourselves up to them: rarely can we be sensibly conscious of their presence when they stoop to help us. For the rest, a very acute and practised observer has suggested that when the departed take on these conditions, they are as we should be, in a dream; they can hardly remember, or speak as they would. They are mesmerised in our atmosphere. If we will have them back in the flesh, we cannot have them as they are in the spirit. They resume for the nonce their earth-life, its habits, ways, and memories; but their own normal condition becomes comparatively obliterated for them. Perhaps, then, with the lower dead

there may be oblivion—there may be Lethe's cup—but not surely with the higher! For they pierce to the centre, seeing and feeling all lives *from within*: so they are very near; but we cannot perceive them, for they are removed from matter and its imperfection. Yet the Babel alleged to come from over there is bewildering indeed! It suggests not rest for the dead, and peace. It seems but an infinite prolongation of these poor earthly voices. Whatever it may be, spiritism is no religion, though it may be auxiliary to religion. Therefore is there a more excellent way than spiritism: this can be but a stepping-stone to something higher. And let us try the spirits. Believe not every spirit. What think ye of Christ?—superstition apart—is still the test. For no creature speaking by the Holy Ghost (Spirit of Holiness) calleth Jesus accursed. His character: is that honoured, venerated, held forth for imitation, love, and worship—the principles that dominated it? If so, the wisdom taught is from above; if otherwise, from beneath. Or it may only be that even these intelligences cannot *translate* into our language the secrets of the *silent land*. We have no faculty wherewith to imagine, wherewith to grasp, so different a condition.

I will add that before reading Mr. Massey's translation of Zöllner, and the quotation from Kant's works (vol. vii. p. 32), I was not aware that Kant had anticipated my contention for the fact of an "indissoluble communion of the human soul with all the immaterial beings of the spiritual world," though it seems to me strange that he should not have applied this doctrine, as I have here done, to the explanation of external perception, and thought in general. But I rather suppose that Swedenborg has this doctrine also—though again without this special application. I am, however, not as familiar with his writings as I desire to be.

CHAPTER I.

On the Nature of the Spirit or Person, as distinguished from his Body—The Soul-Body—The Ether—What is Life?

MATERIALISTS and spiritists appear to me equally unphilosophical in their attempts to explain the phenomena of consciousness by the phenomena of body, or physical organisation. Mr. Frederic Harrison, indeed, has told us that we who believe in a spirit interpose an imaginary figment between body and thought. But, indeed, we only interpose ourselves. We only interpose Mr. Harrison himself between his body and his thought. We fancy thought must belong to some one, and body also. But I so far agree with him that it is absurd to separate ourselves from all that belongs to us—from our thought and body—as if we could exist alone without these. That is a false idea of spirit. But it is equally absurd to fancy body and thought can exist without a self or spirit to think body and thought. And, further,

I must own that what is usually said in much spiritualistic literature about the *ethereal body*, which is alleged to survive at death, appears to me somewhat unphilosophical—even what is said in so very clever and interesting a work as Mr. Epes Sargent's "Proof Palpable of Immortality." For if that inner "spirit" body be material in any sense at all, it must surely be *phenomenal* merely, and as such essentially changing, whether it be electric, magnetic, odyllic, the "nerve-aura," psychic force, "perispirit," or what not. It is still a form of the phenomenon we name material. It is playing into the hands of materialists to speak so very respectfully of this subtle form of matter, as if it were a kind of spirit, or next door to it, probably capable of transformation into it, *perhaps* even the very thing itself—the permanent substance under the perishableness of our gross bodies. It can really be nothing of the sort. That permanent substance can only be our own spirit, our one self-identical Ego, and, as I believe, others co-operating with our own to produce the phenomenon. Only spirit, and by that I mean the Ego, the self, can be one and self-identical amid a variety of phenomenal experience. But of this phenomenal experience, necessarily

belonging to a person or spirit experiencing, such an inner subtle body (if it exists, and I do not at all deny its existence) is as much a portion as the more "solid" outer body we perceive. If *we* do not actually perceive it, and if yet it exists, that can only be in the perception of others like ourselves; or else it is a mode of action of other spirits co-operating with our own, which we are not at present phenomenally conscious of, but which, when we become conscious of it, will thus present itself to us, if we retain our actual faculties of perceiving. It is said, however, that spirit must be, or must have, "*a substance*." And this is a curious instance of the confusion of thought produced by our inevitably *physical modes of perceiving*, and by the materialism thereby engendered in minds either not capable of, or not trained in philosophy—which, indeed, Mr. Robert Lowe, in a public speech the other day, warned us was all nonsense, following the passing evil fashion of the Philistine multitude, drifting along the wave of gross and vulgar scepticism, which for wise purposes is permitted for a while to submerge us. *Why must "substance" be material?* Of course spirit must be, or have substance; but *why material?* A material substance is really

an absurdity, and there can be no substance but spirit. You and I are the same to-day as we were yesterday and last week, in spite of the changes through which we have passed; we know ourselves to be the same; and we have faculties, attributes, a character, qualities. Here is substance. Why should it be "matter"? Why should it be an immovable gas, or ether (which is like jelly, some say), any more than it is a permanent piece of lead? My consciousness of personal identity does not seem to need a permanent gas to support it—since I cannot cut it up into extended parts, or think of it as moving molecules; whereas the permanent gas, like any other form of matter, does need my conscious identical personality to support *it*, or if not mine, then someone else's, because it is only a phenomenon, an appearance in some consciousness or other. And if so, I, or you, or spirits, that is, persons like us, at all events in so far as consciousness of personal identity is concerned, seem to be the only real conceivable substance in the universe, and not to require any other. "But," it will be said, "you must be mad! Do I not know that a chair, or a pen, or a stone, is the same as it was yesterday?" Only, I reply, by

the identity of the impressions it makes on you now, with the remembered and compared impressions it made on you yesterday. *You compare your present with your past impressions, and pronounce them "the same."* The first thing implied here obviously is *your* identity; for if you were not identical, and consciously so, you could not compare your impressions of yesterday with your impressions of to-day. Ether-molecules in motion, permanently in the same manner, is equally a very complicated conception, involving the memory and personal identity of the person or spirit conceiving, according to the principles I have elsewhere enlarged upon. The same may be said of the hypothetical "vital fluid." Can such a hypothetical ether then *be the basis and substance* of that spirit or self which, on the contrary, seems alone capable of *affording it* a basis and a substance? However, it may be replied, "you are talking of the knowledge or perception, and we of the thing itself." Now what is this "thing itself," *apart from* the impressions we have of it? I have elsewhere shown at large that the qualities of a thing are ideas or feelings of ours, which can become and be what we name them—colour, extent, solidity,

gaseity, tenuity, size, motion of a particular kind—only by remembrance, and comparison of our own former and present ideas or feelings of the same kind, and by distinguishing them from others of a different kind. Can these ideas and feelings of ours—implying, as we have seen, the one self-identical spirit or person—be the basis and substance of the person or spirit who is needed to conceive and constitute them what they are, the organised perception, or conception of a spirit? Surely not! But it may be said, They are more than this. They surely come to us from outside. At least they suggest always an external origin—they seem always to belong in some sense to a centre and substance outside us. And that I admit. The most philosophical of our men of science, however, *do not*. They say, like Mill, that it is all subjective. And it is really not an answer to such arguments, or rather statements of obvious fact, to make cat-calls, or cry “mad metaphysics!” like street-gamins, and not like reasoning men. For if hypotheses about a gaseous substance of our thinking selves be *not a kind of metaphysic*, I do not know what it is—whether madder, or less mad, I will not decide. At any rate, this is a question to be decided by

sober argument, not by chaff. It is not to be decided by stamping with the foot on the ground, and bidding us observe what solid matter *that* is! And if a person be born without sight, is that a justification of his laughing at those who have it? But if he is too lazy to use his sight, there is still less justification of his abusing those who prefer to use theirs. And if a whole society have gone mad, as Butler suggested it might, it is not a lovely sight to see this society angrily jeering at the one or two sane members. Let them grovel who are truncated, or like it, but why abuse those who stand? Nor can I admire the god of ignorance and stupidity, either when it is set up for worship by the orthodox, by the man of science, or by the spiritualist. See a book called "Life Beyond the Grave," in which spirits are alleged to denounce philosophy, especially all attempts to penetrate the mystery of matter, presumably because the spirits or their medium had found it impossible personally to cross that *Pons asinorum* of philosophy, after wistfully attempting it. But no spirit, alive or dead, should make his own individual capacity the measure of human capacity in general. An agnostic ghost, or an agnostic medium, who draws the line

man's mind may not pass just beyond ghosts, is really more absurd than the positivist, materialist, or agnostic, who draws the line very decidedly on this side of ghosts. These ghosts, like the orthodox, seem not to appreciate the love of truth for its own sake. They call speculation a selfish amusement. And yet how ill the world would get on without it! How many materially "useful" discoveries have been made by the apparently "useless" speculators about abstract truth, or rather by means of their labour! But the love of truth is not a selfish or mean amusement: it is good for its own sake. So Lessing has told us, if we need "authority." And one regrets ghosts should be no wiser than they prove themselves, in this and many sad, strange ways! Still I maintain that with all their folly, and with the deep disappointment that folly causes us who supposed death might make men wiser, and even solve some great mysteries, they do teach us *something*. The most important thing they teach is, that there seems to be possibility of progress, of rising in the scale of existence; that where the tree falls, there it need *not* lie; and that our own moral state here must determine our position hereafter. But that proves nothing

against the grace of God being source of all good, and salvation by the imparted holiness of the Divine Humanity in whom we are; till that is fully formed in us, we are not fully saved. But God already sees us in the Beloved Son, and so in Him accepts us.

Do you want a solid brain, or an ether—extended, and composed of molecules—as a pin-cushion to stick our faculties and qualities in, like pins? Surely such a hypothesis very ill serves your purpose! But then it will be said, You have admitted that there is something outside, giving us these material impressions. Yes; but *if it is outside, then how is it inside?* If it is something *giving us* impressions, how is it *also us to whom* these impressions are given? How can it be the substance and reality of ourselves, to whom, *ex hypothesi*, it is external and opposite? Does not that seem somewhat difficult to conceive? And then, further, I have shown fully elsewhere why the most reasonable explanation of the unknown centres of active powers, that result in these intelligible impressions on us, which, when organised into a whole of experience by our own spirits or selves, we call material, seems to be that they are also other spirits,

selves, or persons, and so far at least like us. But these spirits external to us are not ourselves; and no gas or ether, following out the same argument, can be *them*, any more than it can be us. There can be really no identity, no substance, that is not conscious, I think; that is not in and by consciousness; that is not self-identification. Of course, it will be objected that we do not remember the whole of our past lives, or foresee our future; and to that my answer is—made more at large elsewhere—that all the evidence seems to point to our present successive time-consciousness being a truncated, confused fragment of our true eternal consciousness, which does realise the whole of our true selves once and for ever. That there are difficulties at present insuperable in this conception I do not deny. Nevertheless, I can conceive of no other existence, of no other substance and identity but that of consciousness, which is able to realise identity in the midst and by reason of difference, to fuse all the differents into one whole, essential to them, and to which they are essential. What unites the qualities of a thing, as we perceive and conceive them, into a whole, into one and the same thing, is entirely

our own active, comparing, remembering, conscious self or spirit. And what shall thus unite any such qualities as *are outside* into one and the same thing, if it be not a similar identifying, differencing, living thought, conscious active self, or spirit? Besides, a source, centre, giver of ideas, must be active spirit—cannot be conceived to be otherwise. A centre of active forces, combining together, and resulting in a reasonable, intelligible end or purpose—what else can it be? Now, if I talk to you, I can give you my perceptions, as well as my ideas. Or certainly a *mesmerist* can impart his sensations and perceptions to another at will; and, therefore, in perception the external agent may be a spirit, or spirits, deliberately and consciously imparting to us its own sensations and perceptions—as in thought spirits may likewise impart to us their thoughts or ideas.

Ultimately, indeed, these perceptions and thoughts must be from the Spirit in whom all other spirits are; they are the result in them of His action upon them, they co-operating and receiving His ideas according to their own several capacities, their peculiar special limitations, their native modes of perception and thought; and

mediately they may come through elevated spirits or angels, in whom we are. Then they are translated into our corresponding inferior earth-perception and thought. James Hinton taught me this modification of Berkeley's theory : he made a distinct step forward in philosophy ; where I believe he was wrong was in his non-admission of other intelligences in nature, equally finite and imperfect with ourselves, as essential to our relations with the universe around us. This thought to my mind has to supplement the other in explaining the relation of man to nature and God. Man to him was the only imperfect creature. He would scarcely admit the real conscious existence of lower animals. The hierarchy of monads in their monad state, I think, he would not have admitted either. But modification of God's mind by the finiteness of the creature's nature, being the result of His spiritual action upon man, was a step beyond Berkeley. It could not have been taken but for Kant, and his doctrine of the *categories*. But *as regards the external world*, I believe that Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel went beyond Kant in the wrong direction, and Hinton in the right. Yet the true law of the time-circulation of thoughts,

perceptions, and feelings may be this—that finite spirits communicate them to one another. This direct manner of communication, however, implies very close similarity in the innate capacities of thought between one spirit and another. But without going further than this communication between very similarly constituted spirits, I believe there may be not only a conscious, but an unconscious intercommunion between such. What one loses, the other gains; what one gains, the other loses. Then, thirdly, however, there may be an interchange between spirits of a different order. And here the unknown, the inconceivable by us, may become the corresponding known, perceived, conceived. Thus, assuming the correctness of Zöllner's hypothesis concerning the fourth dimension of space, there would be projections from the region of fourth-dimensional space into that of our own three-dimensional space, *i.e.*, from the ideas of one order of spirits into the ideas of another. But we should not know this except by abnormal (so-called miraculous) experiences. Conservation of energy would hold everywhere.

I have, indeed, never been able to understand why people talk of a "vital fluid," a "magnetic

fluid," &c. All we know in this connection is, that certain concrete effects are produced in nature which we agree to call electric, magnetic, galvanic, vital. And we infer powers corresponding, able to produce these diverse effects upon minds that observe the phenomena. The concrete phenomena of polarity and attraction, for instance, are evidence to us of a mode of energy we term magnetic. And so the concrete phenomena of assimilation, unstable equilibrium of elements, growth, reproduction, differentiation of organs, are evidence to us of a mode of energy we term "vital." Modes of physical energy seem to be convertible into one another. And it has been argued that there is nothing peculiarly special in life; on the other hand, that there is life everywhere. But what evidence or need is there of a "fluid" here? That suggests something visible or tangible, or what *may* be visible or tangible under some circumstances. But nothing can be visible that is not luminous; light and visibility are synonymous. What is luminous—the concrete phenomena of life, or the energy that produces life? *Energy* is not visible or sensible in any way; it is an intuition, derived from the spirit's own inmost energy of

will ; and the resisting power outside is necessarily conceived like this volitional energy of spirit. The *concrete phenomenon* of life, then, must be meant, I suppose, when we are told that it is a "fluid." Yet surely *that* is a contemporaneous and successive special arrangement of sensible or material parts, forming the whole we are agreed to call organic body. And that certainly is not what is meant by the "vital fluid." Is it a "gas," or an "ether"? But what are the molecules of our present living body, if not compacted of elements that may exist either in a gaseous, or solid form? And these are surely not *in themselves* properly called "life;" it is their *arrangement* that constitutes the phenomenon of life. Is "life," then, an "ether"—the universal ether? Well, it is contended by some that the so-called elements are modifications of this "ether," and it is admitted that we have our visual impressions and some others by certain modifications of it; or you may take it as filling the interstices between other molecules and the expanse of space. But in any view, what can it be except a peculiar (and, if you please, fundamental) result or mode of physical phenomenal energy? Is there more

reason to call and conceive of it as "life" than to conceive of the "elements" as life? Extended molecules with certain motions — or points, centres of energy called "ether"—do not seem identical with our idea of life. Life can only belong to some living body—it is a concrete phenomenon. *But its essence and source must be energy—and that energy can only be spiritual.* The ether must be definitely modified into some concrete complex organism before we can conceive of it as "life" phenomenal. That you may so conceive it universally, I admit; while the hypothesis of an ether has scientific value undoubtedly. And you may certainly conceive that all possible modifications of the universal primary ether are properly to be termed living, besides that which is manifest in our own bodies. Nevertheless, what Isaac Taylor says of the probable comparative *simplicity* (though *with more various power*) of a higher form of body is exceedingly suggestive and reasonable. What he says of the brain as a voltaic pile, affording the necessary stimulus for sensation, thought, and motion, is also suggestive; and of the possible substitute for this in the more spontaneously active ethereal organism with which the spirit may

be subsequently provided. I could not help thinking, as I read Norman Lockyer's account of his recent discoveries in regard to the spectra of the hotter and more luminous stars, as compared with those of the colder and apparently more *complex* bodies, that this was confirmatory of Taylor's view, and very suggestive of far higher thought. He concludes distinctly in favour of the ultimate identity of so-called elements. In the hotter stars there is little more than hydrogen and calcium, while our colder sun has a spectrum of terrific complexity. With increase of light and heat there is increased dissociation of compounds. And Taylor compares the superior body to a lens, in which *infinitely various principles* are involved, but the carnal body to an automaton, where few principles, but much complexity of individual parts, mechanism, organs, is involved. Now, may not this throw light on *materialisation*, e.g., on that most remarkable instance of it, as detailed by Mr. Crookes, which occurred under strict test conditions at his own house, where Katie King conversed for long with the family, and with *Miss Cook, the medium*, and when Mr. Crookes felt the spirit-heart beating, and examined the spirit-lungs? Extraordinary this

does seem indeed! But here, may not the simpler spirit-body, having some functions corresponding to ours, yet differently organised according to the different needs and conditions, when the spirit takes on the earth-perception and condition, *naturally* become complex, and elaborately organised like ours, because this is the earth-form corresponding—*the same, but on a lower plane of existence?* And, by the way, is not this holding apart of the molecules of elements—holding them from their chemical affinities—the very notion of physical *life*? I like the idea of spirits being chastised by having to manifest, and so doing a good, useful work at the same time while they are being disciplined, as we set prisoners to useful work. Others may do it from love. I think spiritualism, if you take it rightly, may confirm much that is true and noble in religion, delivering us from much human error that has crept in. But there are dangers too! The Seeress of Prevorst, a good, evangelical, Lutheran lady, however, did good by praying for and preaching to the low spirits who visited her. They *told her they were the better for her* after a time. Had she gone by the *letter* of the Bible, she would have had nothing to

do with them. But Christ mixed with publicans and sinners, rather than with orthodox pharisees.

The truth is the *Entelecheia*, the *whole concrete result*, appealing to our whole being. The understanding divides, composes, analyses into "*elements*." This is necessary, yet is it a lapse or fall from the *Entelecheia*, less being, less truth. Spirits that are very hungry and thirsty when they materialise ! does not that express in appropriate earth-form the sad actuality of their spiritual experience ?

But all these phenomena, involving sensible impressions and intelligent, active, organising spiritual conceptions of our own (as I have shown), imply, at the objective or external centres of them, similar active and thinking spirits. They alone can be the centres, sources, and conceivers of the phenomenon *life*, however that may be modified. After the cessation of any particular *mode* of "life," there still remains the living spirit, the spirit that alone can produce and conceive the phenomenon, and must necessarily produce and conceive another manner of it. And there you have at once the "spirit-body." If you get *inside* any physical phenomenon, though it may not correspond to

your present notion of life, you *will necessarily find spirit, and therefore life, or a living body, the outward expression and phenomenon of spirit.* And you may trace the living principle everywhere, as Hinton and others have shown ; or you may put it as the partisans of the non-vital, dynamic-and-chemical theory do, and show how all is chemistry and mechanism. But the “ether” being the fundamental, ultimate form of the physical phenomenon, as it were, may be viewed so far as the universal life. It is, however, always necessarily modified, concrete, complex. Thus seers and spirits assure us that the ethereal body is to them sensible, luminous, palpable, organised. And, therefore, even though they do not see it with their actual bodily eyes, it cannot differ *very essentially* from the ordinary body.

But the notion of a *universally diffused “life-stuff” or life, belonging to no living person or thing in particular*, seems to me, for reasons here given, very unphilosophical. It seems a somewhat gratuitous, unscientific excrescence on the doctrine of spiritualists (and, I suppose, of spirits also!). Still more impossibly untrue, however, is the doctrine of a *universal mind*

or "*soul-stuff*" corresponding. That is indeed a contradiction in terms. For a mind or soul is of necessity special and concrete, and *the* Mind or Soul is the most concrete and personal of all. How would you make an originating spirit with free-will and energy, the very principle of all phenomena, of all things, essentially one and self-identical, out of a universally diffused soul-stuff! What is, or could be such a hybrid between matter and mind? I know not. It is born of the materialistic fancy that the spirit is a *kind* of extended matter, though, as Emerson says, "O so *thin*!" But you cannot cut a self into little bits and lay them side by side, even in imagination, as you can ever so subtle an ether that fills space. And what would be an ether that should not fill space? Hume is partly responsible for that suggestion. And let no spiritualist adopt it; for it cuts at the root of immortality; since, if a person can be made *out* of a diffused life-stuff and mind-stuff, he will pretty certainly be *resolved into* his raw material again, wanted for making up somebody else. But the central intuition of personality sets itself like a rock against so absurd a figment. Hume derived it from certain Greek philosophers. An ether is

simply a good working hypothesis, accounting for certain concrete phenomena, such as light, &c. And life can only belong to the living spirit; physical life or body to the time-manifestation of spirit, which we term soul, *psyche*; it is just the *other half* of that phenomenal self-manifestation of the *Pneuma*, or inner self. And there must be *many* ways of conceiving it; many ways in which the phenomenon shall present itself to us. These must vary with our own state and being. I apprehend that the "*psychical*" body of St. Paul is as much the ethereal after (or inner) body as it is the flesh and blood we see and handle: the "*pneumatical*" body, by his description of it in 1 Cor. xv. and elsewhere, can only belong to the spiritually-minded and characterized. And assuredly it may be quite true that we already possess an organism not subject to the law of perpetual assimilation and dissolution, which rules in our visible mortal body. That may not be necessary to all forms of life. The spirit may seem to itself to live otherwise than in this special mode of the phenomenon. All intelligible physical energy must indeed be life, and belong to spirit. *How* it shall live will depend on what

it has to do—what are its ideas and proper functions. If these are different from ours, so will be its life, its body. “The ether” must be a special mode, or special modes of physical energy; at least the result of these upon our conceiving minds; while other modes of matter are other modes of the same. But how it could ever have been supposed that the spirit was subject to dissolution like the body is strange indeed. For the spirit does not *live* by the condition of unstable equilibrium in which *its* elementary molecules may be placed, and therefore cannot well *die* (one should suppose) by the condition of stable equilibrium to which these may return. *Does* this personal thinking self *consist of* molecules moving, and held apart from one another? Well, it may cease at death to have these atoms thus modified before it; it may cease so to see, and mould the phenomenon of the body; the action of other spirits may not be just thus upon it—but somewhat otherwise. And yet for it to seem *very* different, must not the spirit’s self be in a *very* different condition? If I were much wiser and higher, I might *now* conceive and feel the phenomenon, the body, in a very different way, and all the world around me as well; not at

some future time, as at death, but even now, immediately. But if I am no wiser and higher then—at death—I do not think that my altered mode of conceiving it, or its, in fact, being different, will amount to very much. It may indeed be different; I may know it in that other way in which I might know it now, which may be expressed by calling the future, and the present latent body "*ethereal*." But I do not know if that will be any advantage; for me, possibly, it may be quite the reverse. I may not be able to do then so easily what my desire is most set upon doing—in which case I may be more wretched and uncomfortable. My memory and desire may bind me to the past—to the earth, to the passions, to the old body and its surroundings. To have the run of all the worlds would not satisfy me if I lacked the capacity to appreciate and enjoy them—if I were still selfish, sunk in the slough of gross passion, and stupidity; self-centred, unparticipant consciously of the universal, overflowing, holy life in God. It were vain to give a sick paralytic the range of a king's palace. One would rather not be an ape, a toad, a tiger, or a pig for ever, however *ethereal* or phantasmal. Better cease at once.

It may be that I still actually seem to have my old body with all its imperfections. For, after all, it is all thinking and seeming. In dreams we seem to have our ordinary earth-body, clothes and all ! And it seems quite as solid and actual.

There is perhaps nothing to disprove the doctrine of transmigration, so universal in the East, and believed in by the band of spirits controlling Kardec and his school. Nor do I see the disproof of the Indian, and probably Egyptian form of the doctrine, degradation to animal shapes, such as those we normally see. Very probable seems the idea that we have risen from the animal to the human. But Kardec's way of putting his doctrine does not seem quite philosophical. For he speaks as if the spirits were pure spirit between their reincarnations. That is neither really reconcilable with any of the teachings of spiritism, nor with reason. And there is no essential difference between incarnation in a normal human earth-body, and incarnation in a to us at present invisible body. That body becomes sensible to the clairvoyant—and is as much a form, an outward objective material self-manifestation of the spirit, as any other kind of body. His system is vitiated by two Western

assumptions, the real existence of brute matter, and the *carpenter* theory of creation. The great Eastern systems of thought are far more philosophical. There may be an ascent from the earth plane, but there is always body or form. The phenomenon is always twofold, male and female, mind-matter, subject-object, thought-image, until we arrive at such intuition as we cannot at present fathom. Even in that there is plurality. But that we are forming our own future souls and bodies now—determining their functions and capacities—by our character and conduct here, is a most important truth: more important by far than the question whether body is to be considered “ethereal” or not. And that the spirit shows a power of acting independently of its normally visible body, yet still clothed in a material form, is also apparently a fact taught us by spiritualism, and other considerations, such as those connected with dreams; and this affords, no doubt, a confirmation of the belief in the spirit’s native immortality. The spirit may be capable even now of appearing in different forms—and doubtless does appear different, according to the seer; may at the same time, and apparently in different places, appear

diversely to many. Swedenborg says that the evil spirits appear as bestial to the good, but as fair men and women to one another; and Africans believe that wizards can change into wild beasts, or phantasms of them. Space and time, moreover, remember, are earth-illusions of the fallen. And, therefore, may not our consciousness be actually capable of division in the lower conditions of our being, such as the present? This would account for dreams—for our seeming to another person to do in his dreams what we are not conscious of doing either in our waking or sleeping state. But in our higher eternal self-consciousness we know all that we think and do—as also why. Then it may be said, in that case, may not the medium be indeed the materialised spirit in materialisation? I must own that this may not be absolutely impossible; but I have given reasons for holding the belief that the *materialised form is what it professes to be, a far more simple and credible theory on the whole.*

But it is said in the New Testament: “Ye are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God.” And the death of the normal body will not make the spirit more alive, though it will not kill the

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spirit. Whether hydrogen gaseous be better than hydrogen solid or liquid, may be open to question. But it does seem unreasonable to rejoice so very triumphantly in the mere prospect of *it*. Clairvoyance perhaps proves that the spirit can perceive otherwise than by special affections of special nerves. Indeed, so may dreams. And perhaps that proves another body—other organs of sense—because there can be no perception, as it appears, without some such. Yet while a man has his normal body, it will always be hard to prove that his nervous system has nothing to do with his perceptions or imaginations. But, of course, in these instances it will not be acting in the normal manner. Even the Protozoa must be very otherwise sensitive than through special nerves; there seems to be some kind of general diffused neurility in them. Now this supposed other body may not be subject to the laws of growth, assimilation, and decomposition that our normally visible body is subject to. And yet we cannot suppose that this, or any other assemblage of material phenomena, is unsubject to change and vicissitude. For that depends on our own soul. While we are subject to the law of phenomenalness,

which seems to be essentially that of vicissitude, transition, beginning and ending, the material phenomenon must correspond, must be in time and space, and bound in a successive series of causes and effects. Since it exists by the soul's formation, and conceiving power, it cannot but partake of the soul's vicissitude: birth and death are but modes of that; and there must be, if not these, yet something corresponding in the spirit-body,—until the *soul itself, by an inner transformation*, raises itself above these conditions into a higher spiritual region. No merely *external* change can radically alter our own free spirits, but a radical change from within may completely alter the external phenomenon or body.

It is wanted, I know, to provide some *molecular motion* as a condition of thought after, as before death; and this has been ingeniously attempted by the distinguished scientific authors of the "Unseen Universe." But, first of all, remember that this very motion can only be a complex conception of ours, or other spirits; must be a system of thought in us corresponding to a system of thought external to us; and which, as it is the objective face of a system of subjective thought in us, must also represent the objective

face of a system of subjective thought in spirits communicating with ours. But to these the phenomenon may not appear precisely as it does to us. There may be a double and, for aught I know, a quadruple system of molecular motions perceptible even now under certain conditions. All I insist on is, *that this can never explain thought or memory; but thought and memory are, as I have urged, needed to explain it.* There may indeed be whole systems of thought of the physical or material order in the external phenomenon of the body—these belonging partly to us, partly to spirits external to us, consciously or unconsciously feeding our minds. But spirits like ourselves, departed human spirits who have changed their form, or higher angelic, or more powerful evil spirits, may put thoughts into us without our knowing whence they come—in other words, without our perceiving the form, image, or body of the spirit so impressing us; and yet, doubtless, a form is to be perceived, if we could perceive it, which must be in close connection with our own body, our own organs of feeling, perception, and thought.

After all, what is *language* but a system of *symbolic thought* in us, communicating itself to

another spirit, and interpreted according to *our* interpretation, and signification (or otherwise too often !) by him ? There is indeed a whole system of thought between, or apparently between, as we discover when we learn "science"—a vibrating air, a tympanum, otolithes, nerves, brain, &c. But, after all, consider that this *system of thought*, consisting in vibrations of visible and otherwise palpable molecules, does not in the least help us to comprehend the sensation of *sound* designedly transmitted from one spirit to another, distinguished, conceived, chosen, and interpreted in the same manner by each, the one being confident beforehand that the other to whom it speaks will so interpret and understand what it designs to tell. Nor do we comprehend any better how if the vibrations were really out there (as they seem to be) as we perceive them—independently of our perception, or of any one else's—they should ever get themselves perceived at all. But in fact, as I have shown, they are, and can only be, a *system of thought in us*—or *in other spirits* capable of thought, of perceiving and conceiving. What have we, then, all through the most ordinary process of mortal earthlife-intercommunication but a transmission

of thought from spirit to spirit, but apparently with the assistance, conscious or unconscious, of innumerable other intelligences? And it is quite as easy to imagine spirits communicating *otherwise* than *through these special processes* with one another, seeing that what we have before us is nothing *but* spirit communication, and that we cannot at all fathom how this is really effected; we can know that it is effected, and some of the phenomena that accompany it we can trace—but we have not got to the bottom of the mystery of these, only to the surface, with all our science; it may most easily be conceived that there may be a hundred other ways, therefore, in which the same great constant known fact of spirit communication may be accomplished. Language, with the rest of the mind-system, is truly a *revelation*, a mystery, the presence in us all of the universal Spirit or Reason in whom all are. The communication of thought and feeling proves our identity with others—identity in difference. That *there are* other kinds of language, we appear to have, moreover, good evidence in the habits of animals, and especially in the phenomena brought to light by modern spiritualism. We think in language;

and why should not the word heard in imagination be transmitted from one spirit to another, as much as the word heard in perception? They are equally symbolic thoughts; once arrive at that conviction, and there does not seem much difference between them—nor, again, so very much between the visual image of perception, and the image of conception or memory, or between any sensation, and the conception of such; for I hold that sensation, to be discriminated in feeling, must be judged, must be conceived. The molecular motions in ether, air, and nerve, accompanying thought, prove external communication; that I prove to be spiritual necessarily; and whence, then, come the associated thoughts in the mind, if not from those same spirits that are around, and in close connection with our own? As to *thought reading*, Serjeant Cox adopts the hypothesis of *brain waves*. To that, if it were only admitted that they are *ideal*, it will be seen that I am far from objecting. But he is wrong when he says that we perceive the molecular motions in the brain. Surely (as I have said in the *Contemporary Review*, a *propos* of Hamilton's theory of perception) we do nothing of the

kind! Why, we should not only, in order to this, have to vivisect ourselves, but we should have to put our eyes in a very impossible position indeed! There are inner voices, inner sounds, and we may not be sure if they are indeed our own or not, so strangely commingled with our own being are they; there are forms also not to be seen by the external eye, but by inner sense-organs. Often things are said in me that I repudiate: I say them not, and *could not* say them. Often suggestions, obviously from some higher spirit in me, are made unexpectedly to me. Is it not so in dreams, in imagination, in the wildest illusions of insanity or delirium? How do these differ in palpability, in objective reality, from what we call the outer world of sense? *In no wise.* The voices are not heard, the forms are not seen by all; we are taken apart and spoken to in secret. What are the visions of the inspired prophets? These are spoken to, and so are we; but they know it, and they have clearer and deeper revelations of wisdom also. It may be well—it must be—that for a while we fancy our thoughts are all our own. Perhaps our freedom of development might otherwise be fettered. But our eyes will

be opened when it is good for us to see. Meanwhile some ears and some eyes are unstopped already. Besides, however, the soul-body may have an occult language of its own, similar to the tone, the facial expression, the inarticulate cry, which some spirits may be able easily to read.

CHAPTER II.

*Materialisation—Obsession—Madness—Mesmerism—
Haunted Houses.*

BUT do these inner organs seem to have the form of the outer? It may be so, or it may not. It is really of little importance. For what signifies the form of the outer? The significant fact is, that our permanent spirits feel, our spirits see, hear, perceive, think. The soul is the true eye, and hand, and ear, and foot. The image of a person remembered implies, however, the present impression, not only of the spirit, but of the body, recognised as identical with the image or body through which that spirit or person was formerly perceived. Yet this can scarcely be said to be his normal earth-body, visible by normal affections of the retina; it may therefore be said to be another body, the inner form of the spirit as it was then, and therefore as it is still; for the past is never destroyed, still exists in

the identity of the continuous higher consciousness of the spirit, though in his phenomenal consciousness the very spirit or person may seem to himself quite different. I confess, however, that to call this inner body, form, or image "ethereal" does not seem to help much; and what is any body but an image or form, more or less vividly thought? The difference is not in our believing the object external, because when we think of it we equally think it as external to us. It is true we do not believe it to be present; but that, I have argued, *reflection* teaches that it is.

And all present human thought is in the form of perception, in the form of external object—involves this, I mean, even in reflecting abstraction. Let it be, then, admitted that both the so-called inorganic, and the so-called organic stand for images, or bodies of spirits imperfectly comprehended; that a tree, for instance, is not only a tree-soul, about whose own nature we can at present know little, but also may include, if we could penetrate the mystery of it, innumerable other spirits; for any such phenomenon, the more closely it is studied, the more infinitely complex, and all-comprehensive does it

appear ; it is, moreover, in solidarity with all others, past, present, and to come. All is in all. From this point of view it becomes more intelligible, perhaps, how there may be obsession, possession, the proper soul of a body seeming to retire into the background, to be entirely dominated, mesmerised by another, or the body ceasing to express its proper soul, and expressing the thought, desire, and will of another,—the use of the muscles, and nervous force of a medium in writing, &c., by an alien intelligence, or genuine trance-speaking, being a minor example of the same power in exercise. In such cases the alien spirit seems to dominate with its own body the body of the medium, or possessed person. But the outer mortal earth-body is dominated. For this the “vitality” of it, as we express it, seems to be drawn upon ; the nerve-force must be employed. Now what is this but a special mode of *thought-and-feeling formation*, peculiar to the spirit in the earth-life ? Then, if this can be borrowed, the perception of the alien spirit becomes earth-perception, and its objective action incarnate action, visible and palpable in a mortal manner. Then what one spirit loses, the other gains of earth-perception, and power of

earth-action, till control of this particular body, with which the alien spirit and its form were perhaps in close (though unguessed) connection before, becomes transferred from the proper owner to the unterrestrial obsessor. But such mesmerism, even at a distance, is practised by spirits in the earth-life over one another. What is distance? If you think of a person, or a scene, you are present to him or to it, and he or it is present to you. And some have undoubtedly the power of causing (voluntarily or involuntarily) such presence (at a distance, as we call it) to be manifest to another person. Either an impression is felt, an influence, a voice is heard, or a form is seen. And whether this is internally, or (as we say) externally perceived really does not make so much difference from a philosophically idealist standpoint. If it is an external perception, we have what is now termed *materialisation*; and on this I shall speak immediately. It is remarkable that we hear of materialised forms disappearing *into* the medium, or entranced person, and issuing out of him. But sometimes they seem to rise from the ground near him.

Space, I believe, is but the physical reflection of distance between spirit and spirit, of a fallen,

limited, selfish condition. Thus it stands, as Mr. Tylor tells us : The lower races of mankind believe that the departed have subtle forms that can enter into other bodies ; and though they commit the error—pardonable in primitive races, but, may I say ? not so pardonable in civilised ones (however eminent the authorities which may be cited)—of confounding the person or spirit, and the soul, with this inner body, yet the belief I have quoted above doubtless comes very near the truth. The phenomenon of the body, like other material phenomena, is not to be regarded, I suppose, as exclusively the property or manifestation of a given person or spirit. *We* may only know it *as* such a manifestation ; but it does not therefore follow that there is nothing else in this phenomenon, were we to sound the very depths of it. It implies, on the contrary, as I have explained, the objective, *therefore the bodily* action of other spirits upon our own ; it appears as our body to us, and to others like us, because *we* are concerned in giving it this particular appearance and function, which we speak of when we name a particular person's body, and which appears the same to our fellow-men as to us—they being in the same plane or con-

dition. But viewed from another point of view, it might appear quite different. The spirits acting upon us, so as to produce this bodily, material phenomenon in our consciousness (by virtue of the constitution of our consciousness), may regard this phenomenon, or rather their face and side of it, as their body; the effect of our spirits acting upon their consciousness, on account of the constitution of their consciousness, may be to so represent the phenomenon to them. But then, if we were conscious of their presence near us—as it were, in us—and could place ourselves at their point of view, could we not use the body as they use it, rather than as we use it, seeing it as they see it, rather than as we see it? Now, that probably may be the case with *some* spirits living near and beside us, or able to come at times into close conscious connection with us, they having, as is likely, known personally, and remembering conditions similar to our present earth-conditions. They can borrow our earth-life consciousness; it can pass from us to them; and then the bodily appearance, the material phenomenon, changes from what it was to them before, and what it is to them normally, to what it is normally to ourselves; or, in other words, our body

becomes for the nonce their body, and our fellow-men can perceive the change in its new manifestation, and direction. What becomes of *us*? May not the spirit be *expelled* in some cases, so as to have an unearthly consciousness, and not the normal one at all for the time being? The two souls may have changed states so far as the mode of conscious perception and feeling goes. Some anecdotes (*e.g.*, that of Mary Roff in the "Spiritualist") seem to warrant this inference. The person is wholly different, though the body looks the same. And then the former person returns, while the other goes. But in other cases we may be dominated, and feel bound as the passive slaves, and mere echoes of another, or other wills. This is strange, because it almost involves a loss of identity. But our true selves are universal, and not shut up in isolation. "*Tied and bound* by the chain of our sins" will occur to many. "Give me the man that is not passion's *slave*!" And we speak of one in a violent passion, or mad, as *not himself*. Hamlet says that it is not poor Hamlet himself who does what is unseemly. We are made forcibly partakers of alien experiences, usually remote from our own. What are so-called uncontrollable

impulses that lead to crime? And so again the higher inspiration lifts us into a higher world of consciousness and feeling for the time being than belong to us.

In trances, as in dreams, certainly the spirit wanders in other regions, among many strange or familiar spirits; has as little as possible to do with the body reposing in sight of the spectator; has very little to do, at least, with this flesh-and-blood form of it, which alone the mortal sense can discern; though the connection cannot be altogether broken, since the "vitality" is preserved; and I suppose that is by the supraconscious influence of the spirit. But in death the "vitality," or earth-formative influence, is withdrawn; and must not that be in favour of some other spirit, who is about to be born? unless, indeed, we may regard it as simply convertible, transformable, into *another mode* of phenomenon-forming spirit-power. Yet the materialisation phenomena would almost seem to suggest the former view. Vital power is in those cases said to be withdrawn from the medium, and probably from the circle in a less degree, that the departed spirit may "materialise;" and it has been added that the medium might *die* if certain conditions

E

were not complied with ; certainly he is usually much exhausted ; and the weighing-machine experiments are most suggestive, though the full meaning of them be not yet distinctly intelligible. Might all death be proved to be a withdrawal of "vital power" by spirits, drawing on the store of it possessed by mortals for some purpose of their own ? But this may not be always a conscious process. Yet sometimes it may be a deliberate and malicious act of evil demons—as disease too may be (permitted, of course, for wise ends by God). Only "vital" may in ordinary cases be convertible into other forms of force, or spirit-power. (Might not a medium's life be actually endangered if a *malicious* spirit were to materialise through him ?)

If, however, the so-called inorganic and organic be convertible *inter se*, then it might be possible for a spirit to materialise otherwise than from the life-force of a living person ; to convert the "inorganic," yet *really vital* and spiritual forms of thought, probably by help of vivid memory of his own former state, and perhaps by intimate knowledge of the conditions, into a temporary organic body, visible and palpable ; to convert his own living body, that is, into a living body

after our fashion and conception. And this might explain houses or places that are apparently haunted to every one who goes there, for every one would not have the mediumistic temperament: but is it ever the case that every one who goes is witness of such apparitions and noises in an equal degree? But there is danger in forgetting to take all these phenomena from the higher and more ultimate point of view, of their being the effect of a change in the mode of operation upon us of those higher gods or angels in whom we are, ultimately of God Himself, for our development, growth, experience, final transformation into His own image once again, whence we have so fatally and lamentably, however necessarily, fallen. Yet in this process our own initiative, our own free-wills, are (inexplicably) concerned. *We can never, however, act alone*; but ever we act in concert with the whole hierarchy of spirits. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," however desirous he may be of doing so. But I am here concerned to repeat that we ought not to confound the *after body*, whatever it may seem, with the true spiritual, *pneumatical* body of St. Paul; for that can only belong to those who

live according to the *pneuma*, the spirit, the inner divine self. Whatever we lose, we lose it for the benefit of some other. And if we realised our common life in God we should rejoice. It is a loss of ourselves in others, but so truly a fulfilling of our own true being ; and this we *shall* know and rejoice in when we are perfected. *All* our experience, indeed, pleasurable or painful, has a universal reference. But we are in and by the universal. (Respecting "vital power," let us remember that a *constant* renewal of that is needed : is it constantly derived from those who are losing it, or is it a constant conversion of other forms of force into this by our spirit ?)

CHAPTER III.

Miracle — The Devils — Magic — Cosmogony — The “ Last Judgment ” — Final Universal Reconciliation — Resurrection.

As to miracle, so called : man, being spirit, and all being spirit, in proportion as he raises himself, must he become ruler over other spirits—knower of them, ruler over them. In such proportion will he be lord of the phenomenon, disposer of Nature. For God is that *par excellence* entirely. And man's spirit is divine. Let him then rise up to his privilege. In fact, to have the greater command of the phenomenon, which science gives, is to rule the inferior spirits, though it may be unconsciously on their parts that the change involved in such a command occurs, unconsciously so far as the human source of it is concerned ; still a change in them there must be. But let a man deliver himself, through his Divine Head, from unreason, contingency,

passion, the hellfire of restless longing and desire, and low carnal passion! and he will *perceive* the phenomenon more intimately; it will be different to him; influencing also, perhaps, the perception of others.* He may attain a limited power much greater than the ordinary by deeper knowledge, and by the observance of certain rules known to the initiated: eating certain kinds of food; fasting, temperance, asceticism, self-command; moreover, by possession of a certain favoured temperament. Yet right, justice, universal charity being the fundamental and most divine of all, it is by these that the most *essential* being, the most *fundamental* power, is to be attained; not by dominating, masterful will-power; but by renunciation, humility, submission to, and active harmony with, the Universal Will, which involves unsparing sacrifices of one's self for the good and richer being of others, which is divine, the principle embodied most fully in Jesus, the

* I have just read, since writing these pages, Dr. George Wyld's paper on *Christian Occultism*. With him and Mr. Farquhar I find myself, perhaps, in closer agreement than with any other writer on spiritualism; though, I suppose, on the question of matter we should not quite agree. Of course, I am in general agreement with Mr. Stainton Moses, Mrs. De Morgan, Mr. Harrison, however, on their main principle.

Christ. Christ Jesus met the most powerful angel of evil, who claimed to rule over the kingdoms of this world, and does rule them, alas!—the Prince of the Power of the air—and the Christ dominated him, wrestled with and threw him, bruised the serpent's head. Yet *the Power* does not *seem* here ostensibly, manifestly, with the good. The Power in this world, whether natural, or what we name supernatural, seems often with the evil; and we have to exercise faith—*that is, appeal to our highest intuition*, whose light is frequently wavering, obscure, faint—in order to realise that Power does not *indeed* belong to evil but to good. But this is “your hour and the power of darkness.” This is a purgatory—a hell—with alleviations. The god of this world, Satan is called; there are evil principalities or powers, spiritual wickedness in aerial places—Princes of the Power of the air. The old legends gave evil spirits authority to grant magical powers to kindred spirits among mortals. This is not what we want, or should want; from wanting any such thing, good Lord, deliver us! Yet the “devils” would rather we did not believe in them, or anything supernatural, than

that we did just now, no doubt, and are themselves busy persuading us that they themselves are all old wives' fables; indeed, that God and His angels are the same, and we ourselves into the bargain, I almost think they have persuaded positivists and modern philosophy in general! Yet the masterful self-will power, however great it is, having other will-powers opposed to it, and the yet more powerful good angels, yea, the Universal Divine Will, must fall or be broken at last, to be tormented, or shorn of its glory, as Napoleon's was.

But we are told of a *day of judgment*—for the world, for the race. Days of judgment are ever occurring for men, and for nations. But we are told of one for the race. In the long run, Justice seems, however imperfectly, to be vindicated—justice, mercy, right dealing, generosity. There is a gradual progress of peoples, and so of individuals, toward these ideals, with whatever retrogressions and delays. Still the “kingdom of God is within you.” Men must choose these ideals as most blessed, and in themselves desirable; they must recognise and feel them to be so within; it is not in their nature to be chosen for any extraneous advantages, such

as the prosperity, riches, honour, power, they may (or may not) bring; for they demand to be worshipped for themselves alone. Only, were *they known*, or even generally suspected to be *perishable* like all the rest, they could not *long continue* to be worshipped at all; they would sink in the general contempt of all existence that would soon be, and *is being*, alas! generated among those, whom the evil spirits have deluded into this false science, or "wisdom of the world." Happiness will doubtless in the end, however, declare itself on the right side—that the whole nature of man may be satisfied. We are made for happiness as well as for virtue, and in the supreme intuition there must be a conciliation of the two. But meanwhile conscience bids us not hesitate a moment between the two on pain of everlasting degradation or retrogression, and even of the *misery* involved in this time-state, wherein we now wander.

What, then, of this day of judgment? Does not science tell us of some inevitable catastrophe to befall the planet? And from my own idealist point of view, this must affect the living and the dead. For the planet itself, together with the sun, its ruler, is spiritual, as are the innumerable

constituents thereof. All being spirit, this can only mean some great change in the gods or angels who immediately concern us, and therefore in the constituent or, as we usually say, *inhabiting* spirits also. That must surely mean a great change for the whole human race, living and dead; nay, for all the spirits, whether human or not, involved in the planetary and solar life. Thus may we see a momentous significance in the religious doctrine, not only of an individual judgment at death for each man—nay, there are great days of judgment in his life also—and of a day of national judgment, as in the fall of Jerusalem, and other great national crises—but of a day of general human judgment. Then if there be a central sun, and all are to gravitate there to be absorbed, what would that signify? The central sun—would it represent the universal divine life, as we are able to conceive it in material symbol, in material phenomenon? Whatever it be, if it be at all, it is ideal, spiritual, source of spirit, and life, and all things—not brute matter, or blind force.

The resurrection at a general judgment day, which is the belief of many, may be true in the sense of a fuller possession of our true selves,

soul and body, then, and so a *more full* reunion with our friends, rather a union for the first time, or restoration of a union in the bosom of God, that has long been lost and forfeited. It *may* be this (speaking here of the earth's "destruction" as spiritual fact) will be calamity to those rooted in the principle of evil, a fiery indignation, wrath, damnation (I do not say final), while it is the beatific vision, restoration of spiritual life, reward, to those longing for the higher life. But as to the resurrection of the corpse, you may as well expect a resurrection of perspiration. The corpse is not the body; it is the sheer product of *retrograde metamorphosis*, matter restored to the inorganic world for use there, and by other organisms. "Dust to dust." The same body we shall have. For the same body is the body animated by the same spirit, and that is ethereal in substance, but can become solid on occasion. The husk of the chrysalis does not rise again. Then also our thoughts are taken back to the era when *it is supposed* the nebulae were condensed into suns, and the suns proceeded to throw off planets. How strange and wonderful to regard this as no other than a process in *spirits*, imperfectly understood! It

seems to suggest, together with the catastrophe that is foreseen, whole cycles of creation, that is, creature-separation from the Divine central Spirit, and reabsorption, reunion with Him. Yet the precise spiritual significance of it—even the precise fact of the *physical* phenomenon or appearance—who is bold enough to aver that he knows? But “we look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” And how long men or other spirits may continue to choose evil, the illusive, the worthless, the carnal, the self-seeking, the finite, rather than the good God, rather than Christ, who dare prophesy? The possibilities of our own resistance, as Maurice says, seem, indeed, infinite; and yet is there somewhat mightier than we. The setting in order of “chaos,” however, is the setting in order of mental, spiritual chaos—can be no other; which is, indeed, the self-formation of the Divine Spirit in the creature, in nature, in time, His self-reconciliation; for throughout He ever exists in eternal, unclouded perfection, and the creature in the beloved Word or Wisdom or Son, and the Son in the Father. Hell and sin and error can but belong to an order of things that is perishable and passing. They cannot endure in any one

individual spirit; for each has his real being in the Eternal; though some creatures may be ever passing through the hells. Thus animal suffering points to the fact that the lower creatures have partaken of our fall. The fall of the higher spirit, in whom we are, affects the lower animals as well as ourselves, for they too are part of him, monads in him, and perhaps human spirits in the forming. At any rate, *they*, in their own essential conscious selves, have done wrong in him, and they will know some day the justice and reason of their degradation. Therefore, the Bible tells us that "the creature itself shall be delivered;" "groaneth, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God."

CHAPTER IV.

“Psychic Force,” and the Doctrine of “Automatism”—“Unconscious Cerebration”—Spiritualism and Miracles as old as the World.

HERE I should perhaps say a word on “Psychic Force.” Whether there is evidence of that—of a power on the part of a medium of influencing in an extraordinary manner physical phenomena without contact—is not to me at present very clear. Probably there *is* such a power in some persons. But then remember that, if there be, it is properly *spiritual* power. There is surely very little evidence, however, of such action being ever unconscious on the part of the medium, as Mad^{me}. Blavatsky and others contend ; if it is exerted, it is exerted as will-power. And then it may be will-power over obedient spiritual ministers. That such abnormal changes in physical phenomena might be made by will-power

of certain persons is, however, quite credible; for all force is necessarily spiritual: spirit is the sole possible source of force; "force" has no *meaning* apart from spirit. Neither is it certain that spirit can *only* cause changes in the special and usual way of desiring, or willing them strongly. There may be "ideomotor," and "sensorimotor" power. And, indeed, the power of action in the higher spheres of spirit may be extremely unlike our own motivated, designful, adapting will. That may be only the manner in which God, for instance, *appears to us* to work in nature, and in history; for that is the way *we are obliged* to work, being subject to time and space conditions: only it does not follow that if He works otherwise, He works "unconsciously." That is the mistake Hartmann, Schopenhauer, H. Spencer, and others make.

But *unconscious power* there is none. It seems to me that we can safely affirm so much. Hartmann, and Carpenter, and all those who imagine this, are hopelessly wrong. Who can prove that the reflex movements of the spinal chord are unconscious, only because we do not know what their consciousness is? The individuals concerned are doubtless conscious, although their

lower consciousness is by a higher consciousness directed to a higher and different end from that which they themselves are aware of; to the final cause, namely (for one thing), that *we* discern in the movements. They form part of our human system, but they do not themselves know that. And so also *we* form part of a higher system, without ourselves being aware of it; only with us the consciousness of that *is imperfectly present to us*, even while pursuing our own ends, and satisfying our own single greeds. The same is true of animal instincts. "*Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes.*" Therefore, in exerting abnormal will-power, we are changing by spirit-power the phenomenon, the material appearance, and that, I have admitted, implies other intelligences acting upon us and with us; it must therefore be in concert with these, though it may be, phenomenally speaking, unconsciously on their part, that they act in harmony with us. They are influenced by us, precisely as they must be in any normal change we make by ordinary means in our external surroundings. But in any case the change can only be made in accordance with law, with *the law of our own being and of their*

being; only it is very possible we may not know the law or formula in accordance with which we are acting. Luckily one may act before knowing that, as one may talk prose without knowing it, and reason logically without learning *Barbara, Celarent*. Otherwise we should be in a sad case indeed. Who knows now *how* he moves his arm? So little does any one know it, that our *savants* are all assuring us that nobody does or can move his arm! *E pur si muove. Solvitur ambulando*. You have an idea, and that idea realises itself in a perception, in consequence of your will. You are conscious of power realising itself in the effect. Hume's argument seems to me very bad on this head, because you are not willing to perform an elaborate physiological process, but to realise one particular concrete idea in one particular perception—seen and felt motion of the visible, tangible arm. That a physiological process is needed only proves to me that there are *con-causes*—that there are other (spiritual) energies acting in harmony with your own: so far as the higher beings in whom you are go, consciously; so far as others are concerned, in all probability, unconsciously. But there is a certain

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justification for the doctrine that the mental causes the mental, and the physical the physical. Only the physical is not what it is commonly deemed—a brute, blind, physical, outside a mind—but also ideas, though of a certain order named physical. And spirits communicate. There is, it should be remembered, an outer and inner to all phenomena, a mental and “material” side. And thus physiologists are quite justified in pointing to the equivalence, and correlation of molecular motions preceding the molar motion of the arm following, and saying that we do not want *the will* here. But that, let them remember, is the *physical face* of the phenomenon. The *mental* side is the idea and the will. *Even the physical side, however, represents spiritual energy* ; it is either all ideal in us, or else it is the appearance to us of an ideal process outside us. That follows its own law, in harmony with the subjective conscious process in our minds, which is really the effect on us of a similar subjective process in other spirits, co-operating with our own ; and this concomitant, so-called *physical* process, is only the *other face* of the ever-double phenomenon ; it is the spirits co-operating with ours, *appearing to us as physical, material,*

bodily; and it really implies, I believe, the co-operation of their bodies, *i.e.*, objective appearance, and of our own body, or objective appearance. To them, as the mental process corresponding is other, so also is the body, or objective appearance.

If we, in producing abnormal physical effects, are acting, as some contend, “unconsciously,” according to my lights that can only be *supra-consciously*. That cannot be, perhaps, disproved; only *we cannot act unconsciously*. If you face that notion of unconscious action steadily, I am strongly ‘impressed you will find it sheer nonsense. In winking, I am not acting at all; some other energy is acting. Therefore, even if this hypothesis be true, a man is still acting consciously himself, and necessarily in association with other conscious intelligences, to produce the given change in the phenomenon. It may very well be, however, surely, that some of these co-operators are acting (even now, *phenomenally* speaking) consciously for him, and with him to produce the effects; but then, again, we return by another way to the hypothesis of the spiritualists. And if the *unknown powers seem to allege that they are thus acting*, it seems

very far-fetched to suppose that the medium is (*unconsciously*, so far as he knows at present) *personating somebody else*, but really doing the whole thing himself in an infinitely subdivided condition. And thus the simple, credulous, unscientific people may be justified in their instincts, and too hasty conclusions after all, rather than the learned with their doubts and disbeliefs, and roundabout explanations—as so often has happened before, and will so often happen again. Things are hidden from the wise and prudent, being revealed unto babes. The vulgar have always believed in apparitions of the dead. God confounds our airs of superior wisdom by revealing Himself to fishermen, and unlettered persons, to feeble women, like the Lutheran seeress of Prevorst, and Catholic peasant women, or nuns. Christ was a carpenter and *unlearned*. “How hath this man letters, having never learnt?” the stupid, stiff-necked, learned doctors asked. But His source of wisdom they little dreamt of. There were “more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in their philosophy.”

But why good Protestants are so shocked at our believing in spirit communion I do not know, seeing that Oberlin, Melancthon, Luther, Baxter

of the "Saint's Rest," and so many others—Augustine, Tertullian, Wesley, &c.—believed what spiritualists believe. The doctrine of the communion of saints, and the ministration of angels, is entirely lost out of a fossilised Protestantism, that looks back to a remote era, and a single book for its source of inspiration, rather than to a living, ever-present Holy Spirit. But there have ever been miracles in the *Catholic* branch of the Christian Church.

The spiritualism inaugurated by the raps in the house of the American Fox family, some thirty-six years ago in America, is only a new phase of what has occasionally shown itself in the world from the beginning : the unseen order has ever been peeping at us from behind the veil ; but certain eras have been more fruitful in such manifestations than others. And now the long, self-complacent, triumphant reign of materialism is going to break up in confusion.

What a pity that people should be slaves of certain texts ! Doubtless it is the very writers themselves with whom we are conversing when we read their words. Their spirits are still in communion with ours. These thoughts, these words, this influence, indeed, belongs to them ; and are

they not also now applying them, leading us forward in co-operation with themselves to other issues, further truth ? In their highest selves, to which some of them may have attained, they know, they claim this living personal influence on every kindred spirit, to whom they have been, in God, the means of imparting more life, and strength, and knowledge. Some, however, need no doubt to be under tutelage, under felt guidance, more than others : it is right and good for them ; they are still as children. And what higher external authority have we than the New Testament ? It is an authority all should acknowledge. And in all essentials it will be confirmed by the Light within us, which is God, which is Christ. But does not the Bible allow, and teach present angelic guidance and communion ?

CHAPTER V.

The Teaching of James Hinton—The true bearing of Physiology on the Nature of our Conscious Life—Materialism absurd—Materialistic Difficulties—Is the Soul divisible?—Its Origin and History—Cosmogony—What are the Sun, the Stars, and Planets?

HINTON, indeed, erred in not distinctly teaching that the human spirit is *itself* cause, is *ever* active in perception, as well as in reason, practical conduct, and imagination. That seems to me a great error, to make the spirit *passive* in perception, and only just acted on by God. And yet Berkeley committed very much the same mistake, adopting too readily Locke's somewhat superficial comparison of the mind to a sheet of blank paper. But where Hinton laid a really original and, as I believe, really substantial additional stone upon the wall of our philosophic edifice, was here—in his pointing out that Nature, what we mean by nature, has no absolute existence out of our

human consciousness; that the Noumenon, or Spirit influencing ours as "Nature," is necessarily other than *our* phenomenon, *our subjective representation of nature*. And it was *our finiteness, our limitation* (he thought), *that made us represent nature, or rather, made nature appear to us material, physical*. Envisaging all, moreover, from a moral or spiritual point of view, he identified this finiteness with our moral deadness, our self-concentration, our present low condition of self-seeking isolation, in which we are unable to realise our essential oneness with the universal Life, which sustains us, with other spirits, and with God, the Reason of all reason. Well, if Hinton was wrong in thus envisaging even the intellectual from the moral and spiritual standpoint, he erred herein with Christ Himself, with St. Paul, with the Bible generally, with Augustine, with Kant also, and with Fichte. In the very root of our nature, in our moral character, in our affections, in our will, there is a discord, a want, an abyss unfilled, a something radically wrong, a conflict. You may regard that as a fall, or as a stage in upward development. I cannot see that these views are mutually destructive. Development is but the reaction from degradation, its

polar opposite, the latter being, in Hinton's terminology, the *nutrition* for the former ; providing for the swing of the pendulum in an upward direction ; providing for the polar opposite of nutrition, *function*. Thus death and life are polar opposites necessary to one another, and really included in a higher idea—phenomena merely of our present state of imperfect apprehension—*illusion*. If our whole nature were elevated and regenerated, our understanding too would be enlightened, and we should see things not as now, confusedly, and as in chaos, but more clearly, more truly as they are in themselves, more essentially, more perfectly. The “deadness” that we fancy in nature, and that advancing knowledge shows more and more not really to be there—the physicalness—“the matter”—may it not be then in us, in man ? in the grovelling deadness, and chaotic passion, and unwise self-concentration of our own soul ? Nature, then, may be the true, the more perfect spiritual, the realisation of that imperfectly comprehended moral law, the perfect fulfilment of which Christ pronounced to be love, love absolute, God. And hence the unchangeableness, the fixed order of natural phenomena, the mechanical necessity of

natural law—that is the physical (*i.e.*, imperfect, spiritually dead, finite) representation of the absolute Order, of the absolute Necessity, one with absolute Freedom, which is characteristic of a perfectly righteous, unselfish, loving Will, who is an eternal law to his own self, and determines himself according to reason; which latter in the absolute Spirit is one with desire and will, the supreme intuition, now and for ever perfect, the transcendent I am. That is how I at least interpret Hinton's thought in this connection; and it seems, especially for us poets, to express in terms of reason what we all instinctively feel in presence of Nature, as well as what science seems to teach, that she is not dead, that we do not delusively import our own puny life into her, but that we live in her life, and by her life. Thus we dimly comprehend how it is that She seems so superior to us, that she impresses us with a profound sense of her own greatness, and her own eternal order, to which she is calmly and patiently obedient, as contrasted with our own turmoil of base passion, fretfulness, unrest, disquietude, vain longing ever unappeased, shame, sinfulness, remorse, finiteness, transitoriness, death.

So we, indeed, create the laws of nature, at least in their phenomenal form; their own holiness, and our own holiness (Christ, the Divine Word, without, and within), together with our deadness, create them; in one sense they are the laws of our own understanding, and our own mind. From this it follows, too, that our minds, as well as our bodies, are phenomenal; but our spirits within these phenomena are eternal, are divine.

All, according to Hinton, lives, the so-called non-vital, quite as much as the vital. Only the organic is more within the compass of our faculties; they can discern that for vital; while the inorganic is too vast and complicated in its form of life for us clearly to recognise it as life: but if it were not living, how could life be conceived as proceeding from it? Whereas, according to him, all the evidence seemed to show that life does proceed out of this great reservoir of so-called inorganic forces. Whatever the *origin* of life, these forces at any rate are ever engaged in entertaining it, in getting themselves transformed into it. Hence he regarded the inorganic world as indeed constituting the bodies of greater spirits, who impart of their life, and of their thought also, to us: that was another of his pregnant

ideas, for which I refer the reader to his "Life in Nature." He showed how the molecules of our body, though not themselves living, are living by virtue of their arrangement, are held from following their chemical affinities by a law of polarity, similar to that which obtains, *e.g.*, in the starry heavens, where the star atoms, which are worlds, are held in their places by forces we call attraction and repulsion respectively. And then he might also surely have pointed to the cohesion and repulsion of the molecules of all, even inorganic matter.

Even to Hinton, then, it seemed probable that there were other spirits greater than we, though subordinate to the Supreme, acting upon our spirits in what we call *the system of nature*. In fact, it is difficult to conceive of human spirits, and the lower animals as all alone with God in the universe. Are there no spirits above us, as there certainly are below? Is there not clear evidence of some kind of intelligence in all organic forms of life? though the vegetable, flower lives are obscure to us, as also those of the Zoophytes, which, however, are many of them quite highly organised. But when we come to the so-called inorganic, there, though the evidence of some

order of spiritual life is really plain enough, we are unable to know for certain what kind of spiritual life it is; it seems to be of another order than the human altogether. Yet it may well include the next stage of the human, and possibly some of the former stages—the prehuman. Regarding the so-called inorganic from this point of view, however, may it not well be (here I am supplementing Hinton's notion, however) that there is *more* than moral and spiritual perfection, appearing to us under guise of invariable physical order? For if the system of nature were the manifestation to us of an infinitude of subordinate spirits also, as well as of that higher spirit hierarchy, and ultimately of God Himself, there would, I conceive, be still just the appearance of physical, systematic, necessary order which we observe. For if we ourselves have a transcendent will-freedom as divine essences, partaking of the divine life, we are also subject, as phenomenal minds and as physical, to time-conditions of cause and effect, to motives necessarily determining our volitions, as I have shown at large elsewhere. Our human actions, indeed, are subject to the law of averages—statistics establish a general law obtaining in

our manifestation of special characteristics—so many murders a year, for instance, in a given country. Now, I think an intelligence of a different order, unacquainted with the secret of our special human subjectivity, would certainly regard our actions as manifestations of a *physical order of nature* similar to the physical order of nature *we* are acquainted with *only as a physical order*, though showing to the thoughtful mind clear proofs of being *really intelligent*; and this might probably be regarded by such an alien intelligence as inorganic, or something at any rate corresponding to our notion of the inanimate material world. Still I think Hinton is quite right, that the ultimate essence, and reason of this *necessary* phenomenal order, is the *necessity* of moral rightness, the moral absolute necessity involved in what Kant calls “the categorical imperative, *Thou shalt*,” and that this is the very inmost nature of the universe of spirits—self giving itself freely to others and to all—love—sacrifice—one passing over into another, and not remaining in the isolation of atomic thinghood.

Physiology clearly teaches that the motions of the molecules of the nervous centres and nerves

are necessary to thought and sensation in their present form. These do appear to feed thought and sensation. And this fact (as it seems to be) must not be ignored—must be taken together with the anti-materialistic comments I have made. Then, again, these vital forces are nourished perpetually by the so-called inorganic, and chiefly by forces that centre in the sun. What is the meaning of this? Once recognise nature as *spiritual*, and there is no longer any difficulty. This represents no less than the universal communion of spirits, feeding one another, and living by one another. *The brain*, that seemed so material a thing, that seemed to condemn us to perish with itself, steadily regarded, is transformed into guardian angels, and other nourishing intelligences! This compound supreme system of co-ordinate innervation is indeed no basis for the unity of the person, simply because the unity of the person is implied in the very idea and essence of such a supreme system of nervous unity. The latter is derived from the former. But still this *neurosis* does seem to nourish *the psychosis*, which constitutes our conscious life on earth, or (as some prefer to say) runs *pari passu* and parallel with it.

And once we regard *matter* in its true scientific aspect, as intelligent force "co-operant to an end," therefore necessarily having the nature of intelligent will, centred in personal self-identifying consciousness, there is no longer any obstacle to comprehending this—the *neurosis* is but the objective polar opposite, and feeder of the subjective particular *psychosis*. It is wheel within wheel. We again modify, and nourish, and mould our bodies, and the world external to them, *i.e.*, the universal world of intelligences. The supraconscious person moulds the body, which then the phenomenally conscious person conceives as organic unity, but not without help from the universe of other intelligences. The *type* which Professor Bain points us to as constant in the body, though the molecules change, so far, however, from accounting for the identity of consciousness, presupposes that identity; is an idea and essence only possible by and through such self-identical consciousness, and its moulding power. On this view we are not staggered by the growth and decay of our present minds with the corresponding growth and decay of the body, nor by the effects of accidents to the brain, or blood poisoning—by the strange

consequences to the mind of taking certain drugs, as opium, or haschisch. For these drugs have themselves an unknown spiritual nature. They cause, as is well known, marvellous changes in our notions of space and time. But there must be in the embryo consciousness the pre-existing spirit moulding (under God, and with the help of all) the individual person according to the idea proper to him, which idea can only be in conscious personal self-identity.

Professor Tyndall, Virchow, and others admit there is no passage from nervous motion to thought—no bridge conceivable; and the attenuation of the matter from which you propose to pass really makes no difference. But they do not see the reason. It is simply because nervous motion is thought. But it is true that you cannot pass from the *idea* of motion to the *sensation* of heat, colour, taste, &c., or to some other thought.* But what they ought to see is that

* And yet that may not be exactly true of the mental process corresponding to what appears to us as motion in the consciousness of the spirits external to our own, through whose activity we get the phenomenon, motion. If we knew that as in them, we might see some connection between that, and our sensations of heat, colour, &c. Anyhow, did we see motion as it is in itself, in the Divine intuition, we should have no difficulty in tracing the connection of it with our sensations.

motion involves, and can only be in thought; and the same is true of *force*. Forces are powers, functions of some centre, or centres of unity, acting in concert to produce an order—ends intelligible to thought. If they were all flying about at random, they would produce no intelligible order: they are in harmony with our intelligence, and may be resolved into one Force, or Power, or Cause changing its appearance in relation to our apprehension—*educating us*? As forces they are but the phenomenon, the appearance to our thought, deriving their character from *it*. And yet they are giving us ideas, moulding our thought, which mirrors them. But the type of power, or force is in our own will. Yet Spencer has spoken, as others have also, of material forces passing into thought. (See “First Principles.”) They may if they *are* thought, *certainly not otherwise*, any more than Christmas Day could pass gradually into Westminster Bridge. Moleschott and Büchner have taken the deepest plunge into materialistic absurdity when they boldly declare that “thought is a motion of molecules!” That common sense rejects as sheer nonsense. They may as well say, “The Iliad is roast beef.” But if food has

a hand in producing an Iliad, surely food has, on the contrary, the nature of thought; and very evidently it has.

I do not deny that materialists can ask us puzzling questions. For instance, Dr. Büchner asks, What becomes of the spirit, when he successively slices away the faculties by slicing away the brain? This sounds, indeed, as if he thought he could show us the faculties lying in slices on the floor. However, it is not to be denied that the faculties can thus be modified, and reduced. I should think that the soul could be reduced to a very low point indeed. But of course that is not more puzzling than its low state in earliest infancy, and its frequently low ebb in extreme old age. And it is certainly remarkable that the soul does not then make use of the other inner organs we attribute to her. Why she does not do so we cannot explain. But because you may reduce a force to its lowest power, it does not follow that you can annihilate it: you make it latent; and we believe that the spirit's own self remains eternally one and the same through all these bewildering time-phenomena. You do not absolutely know, moreover, what even all the phenomenal consciousnesses of the spirit are

during such experiences : you only know that the normal outward and visible signs of its possession of certain faculties are absent ; the ordinary manifestation of them is prevented ; and if recovery were possible, there might be no memory possible at present of whatever that state of the soul was. You cannot annihilate any force, only diminish, or suppress its manifestation. If you change the mode of it, the old mode is always ready to return, on fit occasion ; and if a little different, nobody denies that we ourselves *vary*. That is, indeed, why force varies.

Then Hartmann asks, What becomes of the soul's indivisibility when you divide a hydra, and make two hydras ? Not being a hydra, I cannot exactly say. We do not even know that a hydra is one individual at all. It may be only a company of individuals, as probably a sponge or a coral is. But if it be an individual, there seems to be the formation of a new individual, as there certainly must be in the process of gemmation, or in that of fission. The great difficulty is, that you cannot tell where is the unit of consciousness, of true identity, in the lower planes of the external world. The molecule, and the

atom are, after all, as Huxley says, only imaginary entities, and even the cell is only what appears to us. But if the cell be an individual, the multiplication of cells is the multiplication of individuals. We cannot tell what the form of consciousness that appears to us inorganic is; it is probably an endless variety of consciousnesses; and we cannot tell how the one form passed into the other in the beginning of so-called life upon our planet, or what are the earliest beginnings of earth-consciousness, or of the present mortal-life consciousness in each of ourselves. What is the process by which the inorganic has passed to the organic mode of consciousness in the case of each cell; when and how the multiplication of their consciousnesses issues in the dawning of the one human earth-life consciousness, that was all along implied as the compelling power, reason and reality of all, and therefore that must have been elsewhere, and otherwise phenomenal (in elementals, or else in animals, or both)—if not wholly unphenomenal and real—we cannot tell. But it seems as if the individual consciousnesses of the monads, whatever they are, must still be re-

tained; though they know not that they are parts of the human system. For whatever the unit of consciousness be, the units must be as eternal and real as ourselves, though they may begin from low beginnings, and expand, according to their eternal predestination. And so, doubtless, we all form part of a higher system—we too begin from low beginnings, and expand to the measure of our destiny; is not that to the God-consciousness that constitutes us and all? It may be that we have formed part of other systems, say of other planets, and shall form part of yet others, even as the molecules, or cells have formed part of other systems, before they became portions of the human, moulded and differentiated always by the dominant human spirit for its own purposes—in accordance, however, with Universal Reason, since the human spirit itself is moulded and differentiated by the gods or angels, in whom it is, and they by the Supreme. But perhaps power of self-identification may be lost for a while, though not permanently: there is dispersal, multiplication of individualities, in a state of fall, and then restoration of the one original God-consciousness.

Such limited truth the notion of *conditional immortality* may have, as is involved in the *temporary* loss of conscious identity.

A most marvellous discovery is that respecting parasites—*entozoa*; how they pass from the interior of one kind of animal to another at different stages of their existence—from herbivorous to carnivorous, and then back to herbivorous. In one sense they belong to these greater systems successively, for these are necessary to them. But the whole is for them, as much as they for the whole; and they *may* disorganise the system by their presence. We see how infinitely complicated a system, however, is a body, and how it is not simply the body belonging to one spirit. What does a parasite think of his environment, I wonder—organic, inorganic, or neither? What sort of world is his—alive, or dead, or what?

There is in the nature of things an insuperable difficulty in knowing the unit of consciousness, when once we leave the sphere of the human. We must then speak conjecturally only. There is the same difficulty above, as below ourselves. But if we take the Earth as the angel or god in whom we are, then will the progressive stages in

the earth's history be the ordered history of his spirit, and he or it will have to be considered in relation to the Sun. And then, must his present state be considered as a degradation from his former luminous and hot state, from his condition of union with the sun? Where were all the living spirits that now constitute him, or rather whom he constitutes, before he assumed his present form? His fall would entail the fall of all in him. But the approximation to the Sun would be a return on the road to a higher pristine state. We should all have once belonged to that still higher angel, the Sun, who is still the ruler of our system, the source and giver of physical life. Of the process of the Earth, or Sun, consciousness it is, of course, impossible for mortal man to speak. And all cosmogonies must be, we should remember, but hypotheses concerning the past phenomenon, as it appears most in accordance with our actual mode of reason; of the nebular hypothesis that is true, as of any other. To other spirits the cosmogony may seem very different. And beyond our sun, yea, beyond all suns, beyond even the central sun, is the very spiritual Sun of spirits, eternal, unsubject to time and space

conditions. But from the point of view of the fallen mortal life, cosmogony appears thus ; it may appear other to-morrow. For truth in the phenomenon is multiform and variable. Infinite space, infinite time, are but images and symbols of the Eternal, and the Eternal is in the depths of every man's spirit. Justice and love, trembling in the clear-obscure of it, tell us most truly of the Stars above them, that never rise and never set, are never born, nor ever die. All cosmogony is but the shifting phantasmagoria, symbolically, poetically representing eternal truth to finite souls ; entirely satisfactory it can never be. Let a great change pass over us, or over the system in which we are, and our whole point of view may be changed ; we may attain to the higher and diviner intuition, and the mystery of the phenomenon, with all its contradictions and obscurity, be resolved. But meanwhile, even a "Revelation," on account of the limitation of our faculties, can give no more to the intellect than limited information on such questions, because the intellect is not the sole organ of true knowledge ; and it is an abuse of terms to talk of dogma being spiritually discerned, dogma being intellectual, not spiritual. Yet a help it may

be to the spirit progressing toward true knowledge.

I cannot honestly say that I think the soul strictly indivisible phenomenally. For instance, you have the phenomena of double consciousness—two completely different lives lived—and we forget much that has happened to us completely. Then there seem to be curious instances of *doubles*, with a different consciousness in each, unless one of these has been a personation by another spirit, which is quite possible. Moreover, there are the phenomena of remembrance and imagination, which, as I have explained, I attribute to the action of a spirit, who may yet not be aware of such action at the time, at least in one of its lives. I think we have every evidence of the absolute unity and self-identity of the spirit in its innermost self, wherein all its phenomenal lives are known, understood, resumed, felt to be indeed one. But yet our pre-terrestrial existence, and our future existence are at present cut off from our consciousness. Nay, our future existence in earth-life is cut off from it, and all that of early infancy. Yet is it as strictly ours as the present moment. Our past, indeed, absolutely deter-

mines us, and so does our final cause—our full, and still future idea. That is ourselves. We are incompletely ourselves in the present moment, which is indissolubly bound up and one with our own past and future.

Notwithstanding, while the process of spirit-life is a *seriation*, a succession in time, and perhaps more than one succession in space—an interrupted, not continuous succession so far as consciousness is concerned, moreover—there is a unity of consciousness, an indivisibility, therefore, in each succession or series, without which it could not be, without which there were *no conscious succession, no differentiation, no series* at all possible; and that is the unity of the spirit; nor can there be any other. And that postulates, as I believe, a conscious intuitional unity above time, to account for the succession in time, and consciousness in the space-relations of sense. Without this the phenomena were unintelligible. But there must be in this the ground, essence, unity, and identity of the particular person, and of all his modes of existence, however at present cut off from a special, momentary consciousness of his. An abstract identity without specialisation were none—would

not provide for the facts of existence. But the mind, the soul, is clearly not divisible in the same sense as the bodily or material phenomenon is; and it is really very odd that any one in his sober senses, however absorbed in his scalpel or his microscope, should fancy the contrary.

CHAPTER VI.

Materialisation — Elementals — Theosophist Theories — The Doubling of Personality Theory—“A More Excellent Way” than Spiritism — The True Philosophy of Memory, Imagination, and Dream—Neither Physiology, nor the Hypothesis of an “Ether Body” give much help in explaining these (or any) Mental Phenomena—There is no Unconscious—Hartman and Carpenter.

AND now to turn to the momentous phenomena of “*materialisation*,” which I shall assume here to be sufficiently well-attested facts ; for I do think that the evidence before the public is amply sufficient to satisfy them that conjuring and fraud will not explain *all* the facts, and hence some other explanation must be sought.

I will not here discuss the question whether (as some persons of real weight believe) the phenomena are due to “*elemental*” extra-human intelligences, or perhaps some kind of devils.

There is some plausibility in that view, though I incline strongly to the common spiritualist view, that these intelligences for the most part are what they profess to be, human: their bearing and conversation, the familiar human allusions they make in the midst of their buffoonery, suggest it; and must it not be very difficult (if possible) for beings of another order to have that kind of familiar conscious intercourse with us, which appears to take place at *séances*? But I would leave all that an open question. The great point to know is, that intelligences are at work other than those of the people clothed in flesh and blood, that these normally exist without our kinds of brain and body, so that certainly our beloved may exist after death, and we may be reunited to them. Nor shall I enter into the suggestion I have seen (I believe made by Mr. Harris) that there are *simulacra* of dead persons engendered in the ether, and that these have some sort of soul or intelligence hanging about them, so that they can personate the departed, and communicate with us. This appears so remote from the philosophical conceptions I am accustomed to that I cannot discuss it—cannot even comprehend it. Such *simulacra* (according to me)

could be but images in our own minds, and in the minds of other personal spirits. I admit that they might be called up before us by some deceiver, and he communicate through them ; but that is another idea altogether.

Collective hallucination, when people are wide awake, and even disposed to be critical or sceptical, seems hardly worthy of discussion ; nor even collective mesmerism by the medium in a diversely temperamentated circle.

Nor will I enter here into the strange theory of Madame Blavatsky, Eliphas Levi, and others, that there is a power possessed by our spirits to create an independent, though temporary *ego*, who shall act quite independently of us, and communicate intelligently with us. So grotesque does this theory appear, indeed so inconceivably impossible, if I rightly comprehend it, that unless it were fortified by stronger arguments than I have ever seen adduced in favour of it, it seems hardly worth discussing ; though certain "occultist" authorities may be quoted in favour of it. We are asked to believe, in sober earnest, in Goethe's "Homunculus," and Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein." Closely akin to this strange fancy, however, is the supposition that these apparently

objective intelligences are indeed ourselves, or the medium, unconsciously doubled, so that two halves, or perhaps several portions of ourselves, can work independently and intelligently face to face. The "Unconscious Cerebration" theory of Dr. Carpenter might also perhaps come under this head. Certainly there seems good evidence for "Doubles," *Döppel-gangers*. This phenomenon is often caused by a projection of thought toward a given place or person, though apparently not always. But then, even when I dream of myself as acting in various positions, which is to all intents and purposes *reality*, which is my acting in these various positions, however the thing may be explicable as respects the spirit's connection with the sleeping body, I do not dream that I personate some one else. Or again, when I am dreamt of, or when I am seen as double, though in these cases I may not be aware (phenomenally) that I am thus seen in dream, or as a double (yet I *may* be aware of it), still I am not dreamt of, or seen personating some one else. But there are well-attested instances of the medium seeing, hearing, watching, and communicating with the materialised spirit, utterly unconscious that *he himself* is the intelligent

eidolon thus acting apart from, and upon him. This seems a wonderfully far-fetched explanation surely! You would have a person giving himself information he was not previously possessed of, he supposing somebody else is giving it, the two *hes* standing opposite one another in different material forms! The frequent resemblance of the two forms to one another does not make the thing less extraordinary; but is quite explicable by the spiritist hypothesis, of life-power borrowed from the medium by the materialising spirit. And I think the frequent resemblance of the ideas of the person asking and the spirit communicating is quite explicable also on this hypothesis. The spirit resumes our life-conditions, but more especially those of the medium, and of the circle endeavouring to communicate with the other world. Will these not therefore tinge his intelligence, his ideas, his feelings? Truth for us is as we tend sincerely to think it; so is it presentable to us. *There is* relative truth in the presentation. *Absolute* truth is for none of us. Yet I suppose when two spirits, calling themselves Bacon and Shakespeare, both claim the authorship of Shakespeare's plays, there must be a lie going about

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somewhere—if not two or three! In fact, these ghosts do seem dreadful liars, on the whole. How is it they never give a straightforward account of themselves, so that we might identify them? Mr. Stainton Moses and Mr. Harrison certainly give striking instances of apparently proved identity; but these are distressingly rare. This *lying* makes for the view of religious people, rather.

We “mesmerise” the spirit at the same time that he “mesmerises” us. But yet he does often tell us what we did not know before, sometimes contradicts our hypotheses and opinions; he sometimes, however, confirms them. It is unreasonable to complain that we do not get *completely new* revelations. How could we take them in? We have no organ for them. It is, moreover, a little perverse to object that what we think true is *confirmed* by such alleged other-world communications. If there is *no truth* in what we are able to think for ourselves, how terribly untrustworthy must be our faculties! Are they then organs of error? The old truths believed in by so many reverend spirits, should we be glad to find them false? And of heavenly things even the Saviour said

He could not tell us. I believe there is a *relative* truth in all sincere opinions, however apparently contradictory. "Heaven," *e.g.*, may indeed be happy hunting-fields to the brave Indian, virtuous in his manner and degree. It will often, perhaps, depend partly on the proportionate strength of the intelligences intercommunicating which mode of conception shall dominate the communication—and on other occult laws. But the more immersed in earth-conditions for awhile a spirit becomes, the more "materialised," the less probably can he tell us of his own unearthly state, the more must he translate into our own order of ideas. "It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive." This must ever be a difficulty which spiritism—insisting on *sensible* phenomena as proofs of the supersensible and unseen—will have to contend with. Shall we raise ourselves to the higher condition of higher spirits, or shall we bring them back to our own lower condition? What did Christ say about seeking after a sign? And compare David: "*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*" I see great present uses in these phenomena; but it were well, perhaps, that we raised ourselves above all these, and communed with our

dead, "spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost:" for it will ever remain true that the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal. And, then, *as a general* rule, must it not be the most elementary who are thus able to manifest? Is not Mdme. Blavatsky right about that, though certainly too dogmatic and absolute as to the impossibility of higher spirits manifesting? Whereas we know that there *is* incarnation of the higher—of the highest; yet will there be much probability of deception and mystification on the part of inferior and frivolous intelligences.

I do not say, however, that these theories of divided selves are entirely devoid of plausibility; for I believe that memory and dreams afford instances of such division. I do not see my way to explaining the commonest fact of consciousness, without which not a moment's common experience is possible, *remembrance*, without reference to the essential, eternal, noumenal self, which I cannot conceive otherwise than as far more intensely conscious than the phenomenal, while yet the latter, strange to say, is not fully conscious of it. For memory is the actual revival of the past, which yet is

known to be past, not present. There is nothing more mystical than this commonplace of Jack, Tom, or Harry. How strange the striving to recall an idea, which, as you have it not, one would think you could not strive to recall! Must not that be the idea acting upon us? Yet how, since it is, ex-hypothesi, not present? It can only be acting transcendently, out of the future, upon us,—out of a state, that is, wherein its future already exists, and that is the conception of eternity. If it does not exist, it cannot act. Past and future are here acting. For you have had the idea before. I remember a beloved person. Then he must be acting upon me; but apparently as he was when I knew him, out of the past. Must not then his past be in some sense present? But in time it is not present, though in the eternal reality it is. That implies that the person, or thing, I remember has a transcendent, noumenal, as well as a phenomenal, existence. Though it has ceased to me in its old form phenomenally, it has not ceased, *even in this old form*, essentially. This suggests the possibility, too, of *prevision*,—for time future is but future relative to our understanding. The

future exists, though we do not see it, even as does the past. The present is in fact but the vanishing point of past and future. There is no present, but only a blending of these two. The past, present, and future only exist by and in relation to one another; and a higher idea absorbs by fulfilling them. It may be replied: The *impression* is the same, or partly so; it is only a question of *our own impressions* in the case of memory. To this I answer: If the impression on us be the same, or partly so, must not the *cause* of the impression be the same, or partly so? Why should the impressions of memory be an exception to the universal law of cause and effect? Or if they must have a cause, why should a different cause produce the same effect? A sensible impression indeed is not precisely the same as the remembrance of it. Therefore I admit a certain difference in the cause. Yet if the effect is mainly, essentially identical, so must be the cause. If a "vibration in the nerve" was not sufficient to cause the impression of my friend before, it is not sufficient to cause me now to remember him. In either case vibrations accompany the idea (in either case the *sensory centres* indeed

are affected), and they are themselves idea; but they are not that special remembered idea of a friend; they are one phase of that spiritual action on us which we call material or corporeal, and which (when scientifically investigated; not till then) seems to accompany the idea of the body of our friend, and his spirit revealed by it. There is the law of "association of ideas," so much insisted on by the Scotch school. That indicates the mystic solidarity of the universe of thought, the wondrous links and identities that pervade it; but it does not dispense with the necessity of the explanation I here propound. We are indeed accustomed to speak of old impressions "stored up," and ready to be revived. But this only indicates looseness of thought. Where are they stored up? And what is the meaning of a conscious impression being stored up out of consciousness? I do not even know what is the meaning of a vibration that is not vibrating being "stored up."

But we may, it is true, conceive of a certain new arrangement, or organisation of the brain-cells made after a given impression, and facilitating a renewal of it, as physiology bids us (*"law of least resistance"*). Only remember that,

in accordance with the principles I have laid down, this must be like every other organisation, a spiritual organisation of thought; here one in close connection with our own spirit, yet *not in our own spirit*, affording *facilities* for a given remembrance. That is the only meaning this "storing of impressions" can have, physiologically speaking. But what I maintain is, that if the same nervous motion, or pulse of "ether," electricity, or what not, of that so-called "material" nature recurs, it must have the same cause, for it is the same effect; moreover, this is truly a *spiritual* action, if we could see behind "the phenomenon" (there being no dead matter); and, again, this is not adequate *by itself* to cause somewhat totally different, the remembrance in question; it accompanies, it may *help* to cause it; but if the friend, or the scene in nature caused the impression before, when you remember him or it, the friend, or the scene must be causing the impression again. The "ethereal body," that spiritualists invoke to explain most things, and especially this, does not explain memory at all events. How can conscious impressions be "stored up" in unconscious ether? And if there be, as there is, a

constant renewal of similar molecules in the visible body, making it the same, for purposes of memory, in this life at all events, the "ether" seems hardly needed. The difficulty is not really in the "flux" of particles. The same reasoning applies even when you have assumed the existence of an "ethereal" body. But that remembrance implies the objective influence of *the subtle body* of the person or object remembered seems most probable. For bodily influence means the influence of spirit upon spirit *external* to itself, which mutual externality is the normal condition of finite spirits—isolation from one another. We must at least conceive it so. Where there is thought-communication, we must also conceive, in the case at least of spirits of our order, of some kind of bodily communication accompanying it. There is perpetual *doubleness* in the finite phenomenon of thought—it is soul-body, matter-thought.

If, on the other hand, you say that the ideas not now in our consciousness, but ready to recur, are "stored up" in God, that amounts very much to what I urge—that the transcendent impressor, person, or so-called *thing* (i.e., *idea* of a person or persons) has not ceased, but is

ready again to act in the same way, revealing in that renewed action that its past has not perished, but essentially and for ever belongs to it; and this is the position which our personal, individual immortality, with at least potential memory of the past, postulates. The truth is, that all influence continued in another implies the continuance of the influencer. That influence essentially belongs to him, and to no other. And he is in it, though he may not in his phenomenal earth-life be conscious of the fact. A man truly lives in his books, in his art-creations, in the impress he has left on others; *he* lives in them. That influence belongs to him; some day, therefore, he will consciously claim it, though in no exclusive or selfish sense; it is his as he is in all, as he is in God, as he is one with others, and with Nature. Positivism is right; our true life is in others, not in our own narrow selves. But positivism is more right than it knows. Its *philosophy* is at fault. We are *really* in posterity—not poetically, illusionally, only. Our ancestors are really in us. But we have got separated, isolated, dazed, by a fall out of our true being. We are subject to illusion now. But I may see and hear a

person without his knowing it, and be much influenced by him. And so I may remember him without his knowing it. And yet my remembering him is as much a proof of his present existence, of his immortality, as my seeing him was a proof that he then existed.

Again, "dreams," and certain imaginations (*e.g.*, in fever or madness), are as vivid as so-called waking perceptions. Doubtless they are as real, as objective. How distinguish? But a person I dream of may not be consciously acting on me at the moment. Yet *that there is any absolutely unconscious action* I cannot conceive or admit. Therefore I should say, this person is conscious in his own true self of this action, as of all others. He obviously does not possess *all himself*—all his past, present, and future, which equally belongs to him now, at a given moment. But essentially he does; he will realise all this fully when he is perfect, as he did once, as in God he does even now. Yet it may well be that sometimes the cause of our thinking of an absent or deceased friend is his *conscious* spirit-presence with us.

Consider, before concluding, the phenomena of recollection and imagination rather closer, and

see how impotent physiology is to explain them. I am trying to recollect something a person told me—and I think and think. It is not this, I say—nor is it that—as successive suggestions come into my head. At last the right thing turns up, and at once I recognise this as what I was seeking for. I am here reaching forward to something out of view, and a long process takes place in my mind; while throughout I have this purpose of recollection before me, yet I have not the remembrance itself. *I* am throughout this process directing it to an unseen end—yet a goal *half seen*—rejecting, searching, trying all the avenues of suggestion, at length finding. Now, with all respect to the infinite number of the nervous fibrils (as insisted on, *e.g.*, by Professor Bain), one cannot but feel that, like innumerable raw recruits of a mob army, they would be rather in the way than otherwise if they found themselves, as our sages appear to think they do, without discipline and without a leader. Where is their leader? Among all these fibrils we seem to want, after all, what Mr. Frederic Harrison tells us is a figment, the *ego*, or self, or spirit, or person. Where is the organ, or bump, or fibril of personal identity?

It must be very big, I suppose ! Nay, we shall be told that is the *harmony* of all the fibrils and ganglia. Well, I understand you or me conceiving the harmony of fibrils, but not the harmony of fibrils being or conceiving you or me ! The harmony must be a thought, a result—and what makes it, who thinks it ? What corresponds among the fibrils to this strange reaching forward into the future, toward a goal out of sight, though dimly apprehended, and recognised for the object sought when at last found ? Will it be answered : The sensations which the fibrils give us (but according to you, I interpose, *there is no us* for the fibrils to give anything to !) are rather *like* the sensations that will be gradually leading on to these others, the others themselves being there in some incipient degree ? Now suppose that what is thus incipient is what I want. Why am I dissatisfied with the next suggestion, which does not give it me fully ? I must, for this, compare it with the incipient sensation or idea, and this again with an imagined future idea which, though like, is yet different. Here is a consciously self-identical person *dealing with* these deliverances of the fibrils (assuming the physiological datum to be correct) ;—but how on earth would

these isolated sensations—or even all of them gathered together in the public square of the skull—get on without the one self-identifying person, who is totally distinct from them, though they belong to him? The nervous motions, we are told, have a tendency to become certain others. Yes—you know that. Professor Bain knows it, or thinks he does. But how are *they*—nay, how are the corresponding sensations and ideas—to know that? How are they to look forward to the different definite thing they are to become, to desire that goal, and consciously seek it, refusing to turn aside from it into innumerable possible bypaths? The organising leader is *outside*. Very well. But then he must be an intelligent person, judging by his conduct and its result. And how account for the sense of personality inside—directing thought, desiring, willing, the far end? Surely this is a strange way for mere “clusters,” and “aggregates,” whether of “vibrations,” or “sensations,” to go on in!

When you come to imagination, and invention, and processes of reasoning, the fibrils and their ganglia seem impotent indeed! They have got to provide for future ideas, as well as for future

movements. But they are themselves present, and not future. Yet they must, in order to conceive of the future, compare it with present and past, and be in some sense in all three times. And so in like manner we are gravely assured that the space we can perceive in the commissures, the juxtaposition, or intercommunication of the ganglia, is to provide for the idea of space. Yet, quite evidently to the very youngest infant-school child, in order to conceive all this, we must have the idea! These things cannot be, unless the idea of space is first there to provide for their existence.

But, of course, on this theory of human consciousness no consciousness were possible at all. No sensation could know itself. For it is only what it is by virtue of its being judged and classified, as like some, and different from others, by a one self-identical person comparing his own past and present experiences. So, indeed, when the materialist and positivist ridicule the notion of a self or spirit, they ridicule the possibility of any experience at all, and so they ridicule their own arguments and conclusions.

We are not a mere "succession" of ideas and feelings, nor a "cluster" of vibrations or sensa-

tions. One is sorry for the physiological theory that makes this conclusion necessary, but it is contrary to the common human experience of us all.

It is, however, an all-important truth—that of the positivists. *We are not apart from* all the effects, conscious and unconscious, that we produce, any more than any force is apart from its effects. The effects *are* indeed the very force itself, when what we call the cause has disappeared—the cause without the effect is simply nothing, a non-ens. Any power, any being, is phenomenon, is *in its* passing on into something different. And our present limited, isolated, conscious life is therefore not our true personality at all; the effects of us in the race, and the world around are essential to us. They will therefore be *manifestly* part of us one day, be involved in our noumenal consciousness, be claimed as ours, for they indeed are us, and ours. They are involved in the one essence that constitutes our present poor consciousness, *as much as that* is involved in it. They belong to the same living spirit, the same essential force or power. Were *that* annihilated, *they* would not be. That is not exhausted in them, any more than in our

present selfish, walled-in consciousness, which we call ourselves—nay, their results are infinite, ever-widening, as a material impulse upon waves of air, and ether is. And, indeed, when Professor Huxley asks Mr Harrison : “Is a stone dropped into water immortal, because the result of its impulse is?” *I* should answer, *Yes* ; the stone is certainly immortal. *Not as a stone*. No ; but as a stone, it is nothing ; it is dead ; it is only a momentary phenomenon *to us* ; as *force* thus appearing for awhile it is immortal ; and yet this appearance is essential to it, is not annihilated, but enters into all its subsequent history as force, however infinite and complicated ; it is real, though temporary, and as stone, therefore, it is immortal, *only as stone + something more than stone*, as yet imperfectly apprehended by us. Do we lose by being and feeling more ? Surely not. That is the grave mistake so many of us make, the fancying that ! What, in fact, is the continued influence of a force, unless the force goes on existing, and influencing now ? What is the influence of ancestors upon us, unless these ancestors exist to influence us now ? What is our influence on others now, or in a thousand years, but a proof of our continued

influencing existence? I cannot conceive it otherwise than so, however unconscious to ourselves at the moment the influence may be. But *eventually these influencings of ours must be identified by us as ours*, if indeed they belong to us. Here have we a glimpse, too, of the meaning of the doctrines of original sin, and imputation of Adam's guilt; also of the visitation of the sins of fathers upon children. For, after all, may not the truth of metempsychosis, so widely believed, be, that we *are* our ancestors, and our posterity *are* us! Here is a new birth of the one spirit, a new (phenomenal) beginning of it, but in closest connection with the *influence* of certain other spirits, those of a given race and family. The ancestors, and the nature-spirits that produce what we name "the body," are concerned, therefore, in this new phenomenal birth of the one spirit. Is not this virtually a new birth of the ancestors, and of the nature-spirits? Yet the unity of consciousness in these, the parents, is, of course, not broken. That belongs to the one spirit. Still to the history of the new infant truly belongs the history of these, and of their parents in turn. It is the one Spirit in all. The spirit is not diminished, but the *phenomenal*

consciousness is increased, added to by one. The former self-consciousness being limited, it can be added to by new incarnations, or avatars of the one spirit. There must, however, be a corresponding *phenomenal loss* for this phenomenal gain at birth: what is that? Is it some death, or some change corresponding to death in some of the higher, or some of the lower "nature"-spirits—those, I mean, that surround and influence us? The phenomenal loss may be a noumenal, a spiritual gain, remember, to the spirit losing. He that will lose his life shall save it. But what is unconscious birth and death to the creature may be conscious voluntary creation in the Creator. And must not a state of oblivion—with the hideous loss of our beloved! and of our very souls!—be a state of hell, of punishment? This may be continued in some other form in the next world, where there may also be salvation, restoration, full reminiscence, knowledge, insight, and holiness.

CHAPTER VII.

*"Unconscious Cerebration" — Planchette — Psychography —
Miracle.*

A PHENOMENAL division of personality seems then, from such considerations, an actual, however mysterious, fact. There are the instances, too, of "double consciousness." There is all my infancy, which I have forgotten. There is all my future, which is cut off from my actual knowledge. When, therefore, I am thinking of my beloved departed, he is indeed influencing me, and therefore he exists. The question that remains to be decided, in respect to an apparent *spiritist* communication from him, is then only this: Whether he is acting on me consciously, or unconsciously to himself? If my argument be conclusive, it follows that, even if it were true that I am, in the case of a spiritist communication (through *planchette* or otherwise), unconsciously doubling myself, so as to play the part of my friend before myself (!!), still my friend

must truly be proving his continued existence by *indirectly* acting on me, when I think of, and seek communion with him. And one must really go a great deal further to fetch that very complicated theory than to find the explanation which seems true on the first blush of the thing. For my friend *seems* to be acting consciously, and answering my questions. Thus my hand, so far as I know uninfluenced by myself, has written a pet name I love, but to my great disappointment seemed not to be spelling the name I had thought of and wanted—till I found that this way of spelling would make the same sound, the same name, though I had never thought of the possibility of so spelling it, and nobody else knew of the name, or that way of spelling it. Now it might be my *double* doing that; but as so unexpected by my wakeful and wide-awake consciousness, and as an answer, apparently from without, to a question, it seems rather improbable. Well, says Dr. Carpenter, it is “*unconscious cerebration*” acting on your muscles. Dr. Carpenter holds that the brain can ratiocinate correctly, independently of the mind, and thus act on one’s muscles so as to produce a rational

action, a writing that shall seem to proceed from outside. In the above instance, my brain is producing consciousness, vehemently expecting and wishing one thing, and at the same moment acting mechanically, but with unconscious rationality, on my muscles, and making them produce what I do not want or expect, but what satisfies me as rational and comforting when produced by their instrumentality!

Moreover, this is not a case in which the idea has ever been in my mind before, and is now "latent" there,—so that it might come forth again unexpectedly, either of its own accord, or from my brain being "picked" by someone else in, or out of the flesh. And though it is contended that there are few instances of the kind where the idea has not been at some former time in the mind, still there do appear to be several. You indeed do perform actions "mechanically," which you seem hardly conscious of, the mind's attention being engaged elsewhere, as when you knock at your street-door, or find your way to it in a reverie about something else; and in cases of secondary reflex motions, in walking, or playing on an instrument, or reading. In all these, and

similar instances, I hold that you must be *supraconscious* (in your own true self conscious), not unconscious; but phenomenally the work is performed *for* you by other intelligences, as no doubt it is for animals, in many of their “instinctive” proceedings; by God and the higher angels, consciously, but through co-operation of the lower, unconscious of this particular effect they are producing. Such is the harmonious solidarity of the universal Thought-System. But habit, and long use, or heredity, are concerned in these instances; and it is quite otherwise with the class of cases we are considering. In the former there is no anterior probability that the muscles would be influenced by the dominant, rather than the latent idea (by my reverie about a poem, or a problem, rather than by my latent wish to get home). In the latter there is no assignable reason why the dominant expectancy should not influence the muscles of the arm, rather than the idea not emerged into consciousness—even when such an idea has been in the mind before, and may be fancied latent—an idea, observe, that often corrects the answer one expects to a question, is subsequently recognised as a correc-

tion of the answer that is expected, as truer to the fact of former experience. Thus a lady asked by planchette of a supposed departed spirit, What did I give you last?—thinking of flowers on his coffin; and the answer came, A table;—which indeed was the last thing she had given the person, in his illness.

This theory does seem a beating round the bush, as compared with the simple theory—that the message is what it professes to be—though I candidly own that it *may* be the work of some spirit who has access to my thoughts,—how I don't know,—and thus proceeds to deceive me; but this cannot so well be an “*elemental*” as a *human* spirit, for *elementals* must be much more out of the sphere of conscious intercourse with us; nor, if I am alone, can it very well be the spirit of another medium in the flesh, in the absence of evidence at least, that any other living person read the word in my mind, and then thought of spelling it otherwise—by occult influence on my own hand! When ideas come into your mind before you write them, though you know you do not mean to write them, that may be *possibly* explicable (though it may be a suggestion from without) by what physiologists call “ideo-motor

action." Of course all "*cerebration*" must be held by those who take the view of matter I have here presented as the reasonable one to be *spiritual action*; and so if unconscious cerebration be a true hypothesis, it would really be *most rational to regard it as the action of spiritual agents, acting upon us in ways other than the normal*, and not to regard it as action of our own doubly-divided personality *alone*—of one-half of us on the other. And thus, after all, we should have to ask: *Why should this not be what it seems, and professes to be*, a message from the spirit I wished to communicate with? I mean: it would be really quite as reasonable to beat about the bush for far-fetched explanations of the apparent addresses of our living friends to us by word of mouth, or by letter. The fact is that, whether in phenomena of divided personality, or of undivided, no spirit ever does or can act alone, but always must act by and with the co-operation of others; though not always, of course, in *conscious* communication with any given spirit; and "*unconscious cerebration*" *might* not give us such direct *conscious* communication as we want to have, any more than voluntary, or ideomotor action would give it.

Though our ideas may certainly be suggested by the spirit we love in conscious communion with us—yet how can we be sure? We *might* be pretty sure in some given instances, but not in ordinary ones. Of course, if the facts seem to show that spirits of the lost manifest themselves *through* other “organisations,” or our own, that affords no sort of presumption that they are only “hallucinations;” or merely doubles of us, or somebody else in the flesh. If they are to manifest themselves at all in that distinct objective way, we might expect that this might very well be the law of their objectivisation.

But though there may be a presumption that a process goes on connected with the brain (according to us a *conscious* process then, though not at present reflected in *our phenomenal* consciousness), that results in sudden inspirations, intuitions, not like the normal process of gradual step by step reasoning; and though in acquired habits the muscles are influenced almost unconsciously and unvolitionally, by a process of what is termed *secondary reflex action*, yet *nothing like this* occurs when by our muscles we are made to write what we do not expect, and do not know; what is at any rate *not now* in our

thoughts, and, perhaps, *never was there—why* should not the *thought present* influence the muscles, as it usually does? Why should not *that*, rather than some other merely hypothetical motion of molecules in the brain, or even the occult consciousness, which must correspond to this, but which, for some *perfectly unexplained reason*, does not in this instance produce normal consciousness, act on the muscles? Why should not the dominant *idea* actually present act on them? *This explanation is contrary to all analogies.* There is in truth, moreover, an occult *conscious* digestion of ideas often going on without our being distinctly aware of the fact; that may even go on in sleep; and the stray moments of forgotten casual thought have a bearing, that we are not aware of at the time, on many a future conclusion which leaps into the mind apparently without ancestry in our previous mental life—as I think Mr. Hutton has noticed. But it is strange that the solving a difficult problem in sleep, and writing it down, should be ranged under the head of unconscious cerebration! It should be recollected that the mind can even *attend* to more than one thing at a time, though not in an equal degree; then the thing less

attended to will probably not be remembered as having been in consciousness at all, though it was so. While in somnambulism, and mesmerism you are under *the influence of a dominant idea*—but *here your idea does not influence you*—you are *influenced by your own body communicating rationally, and in a totally unexpected manner with you, so as to give you from outside new ideas.*

Von Hartmann has, with much ingenuity and learning, insisted on the great part *unconscious* processes play in our personal, as well as in national, history. And that is a most important, pregnant subject. But we have no proof, and we cannot conceive it possible, that such processes are *really, absolutely, unconscious*; they are unconscious only in their present reference to our own passing, temporary consciousness. That the occult consciousness corresponding to the molecular motion of the nervous cells, which does not reflect itself at a given moment in our phenomenal consciousness, may really be helping to prepare the future consciousness of another moment I can well believe (though I think all that is advanced on such subjects by clever scientists is as purely hypothetical as the most

metaphysical hypothesis ever propounded); but that such a result could emerge from blind, material, mechanical motions of molecules, Hartmann, and the materialists seem very credulous, and *naïfs* to believe; while, of course, it must be admitted that our conscious life reposes on a vast basis of what to us *seems* unconscious; but *everything* tends to prove that this is *seeming* only. This "unconscious," as I have said, is thought pervaded by reason, and active purpose; but, confessedly, it is reason, and active power *seen from outside, while we see ourselves from inside*. How do we know that each other's bodies, and the sounds they emit, and the motions they make, are indeed just the outside of rational free agents like ourselves? Surely the rest of the outside of the objective world equally suggests reason, and active power, of a different kind, and therefore one which we are not so well able to imagine. To a minute, lowly organised creature (to an insect for instance) we, with our destructive power, exercised perhaps quite unconsciously at the expense of such a creature, may well seem a dread, mechanical centre of forces—something as a thunder-storm seems to us. Why should he dream that

we are intelligent, like himself? I do not care about the words *spirit*, and *soul*, if these are thought very disgusting. Only it seems a good old fashion not to call everything, however different, by the same name, and to discriminate a little in our nomenclature. But by *spirit* I mean the inside of matter, and by matter I mean the outside of spirit. An atom, which is defined by the most philosophic of scientists as a point, a centre of forces, seems pretty well to answer to the idea of a spirit; i.e., of a person, an individual, an active system of reason, or thought.

I must add that I have not yet seen the phenomena of *psychography* (as detailed—e.g., with all the strong array of evidence confirming their occurrence in “M. A., Oxon’s” book), explained by “unconscious cerebration.” What would have to be assumed? Blind, vibrating brain-waves from one brain to that of the medium, and then, without the medium being necessarily conscious of the ideas corresponding to them, and without the questioner being himself conscious of them (for he does not always know what will be written, any more than the medium, or any one else in the room)—other blind, vibrating brain-waves from the medium

moving the slate-pencil. *Credat Judæus!* But if such a roundabout process must be, as will follow from my arguments, indeed a process in spirits, a conscious process (surely clairvoyance, and thought-reading are *manifestly spiritual* acts, however explicable!), then the question is, Whether it be a simpler, and more credible explanation that what seems, and professes to be, taking place is really taking place, or that this apparent response to a question occurs by the inter-operation of spirits, who are unconscious of what they are doing in these particular instances of their action? Unless we are dreaming, the former alternative is the more credible, though it may involve the too old-fashioned belief in our friends' immortality. *It may be*, indeed, that other human departed spirits are deceiving us. The great difficulty is to obtain enough evidence of spirit identity. One wishes one could be more sure; but "*fas est ab hoste doceri*:" let us learn caution, and suspense of judgment from the agnostics, while we leave to them that *absolute paralysis* of it, which is the specialty on which they plume themselves.

The only tenable ground for the sceptic, in

face of the strong evidence adduced, is the *a priori* impossibility of miracle. But has not *a priori* impossibility been relegated to the limbo of metaphysical absurdities, along with God, immortality, human personality, right and wrong? *Miracle* can only mean facts occurring rarely in experience, and so far, therefore, extraordinary. Now, of course, the testimony must be strong to prove these, in proportion as the event is extraordinary. *But strong it is.* It is, after all, only a question of other laws; of other agencies, not so commonly acting, traversing the operation of better-known agencies, and suspending their result, perfectly in accordance with, not in violation of, the established course of nature. Why, the same thing happens every day. How else was the metal thallium—how else was the planet Neptune—found? How else is any new thing found out? A man of science notes that a given phenomenon disappoints his expectations and calculations. Does he straightway deny that such a phenomenon has, or can have happened? Or does he wait patiently till he find the new element, which he (from ignorance) had left out of his calculations, reveal itself? Or is there,

indeed, no more to learn? *O sancta simplicitas!* of modern materialism. These gentlemen talk as if their conclusions were for ever unalterable, however much we of the laity may with bewilderment behold them altering under our eyes from day to day! as if the sacred canon of discovery were for ever closed, say with the universal refrigeration hypothesis (only that *this* is now giving place to another!). And yet, with their wonted and almost unimaginable inconsistency, they are ever urging the *relativity* of our knowledge, that nothing can be known for what it really is! But what, then, if some change should be slowly wrought *in our human modes of apprehension*—for which, too, they themselves may be preparing? Their conclusion that all is coming to a standstill in a block of ice should surely give them pause—make them hesitate a moment before desecrating and defiling in cool blood, and with all the brutality of a gamin or of a rough, the holy places, and cherished faiths of their own fathers, aye, of the human race. But, meanwhile, “*let us try the spirits.*” I can receive no revelation that my own reason and conscience do not confirm. The Lord Jesus Christ’s I receive because my own reason and

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conscience do. Other spirits may or may not know more than I. But, of course, they must know better than I whether they still continue to exist or not. And so far their information is valuable—possibly even further.

CHAPTER VIII.

Arguments for Human Immortality.

ABOVE all, let us hear no more of the cant that *our wants do not prove they will be satisfied*. That sounds "hard-headed" and "enlightened." "Let us have no damned sentiment!" say the *esprits forts*. If our beloved, in the midst of their high and holy development, were turned into dust-heaps, without rhyme or reason—why, they were, and there is an end of it! Our wishing it otherwise will not make it so. We must just grin, and bear it. But positivism preaching morality (and it does preach an elevated one) has no logical standing-ground. Its morality hangs up in the air. And it is endeavouring to exhaust even the scanty air that supports the morality. How long will that remain floating in this intellectual vacuum of agnosticism? But the very idea of morality involves implicitly the religious affirmations and

sanctions, which this system of negation would whimsically affect to ignore and condemn. The idea of duty is derived from, and promulgated by the external authority of other superior intelligences. The parent, the head-man, and the god have enforced it, and the equal has acquiesced—and this though it is innate in all. Fortunately God leads men while they deny His existence. And we are better than our creeds or denials. Yet positivists should see that shadows sacrificing themselves for shadows is really rather ridiculous. If man exists for a few years only, he is as unreal and ephemeral as a May-fly. It is true, as they contend, that Man is God ; but not this fleeting earth-shadow surely ! Even if the better race—which a physical accident may hinder the development of, and which may never develop—lives, each person of it, a thousand years, it is, indeed, equally ephemeral. But why absolutely extinguish myself before my time for ephemera, or for the big block of ice which is to succeed ? The whole farce being ephemeral, why take it *au sérieux* at all ? I maintain it can only be a matter of individual *taste* (and *de gustibus*, &c.) how we live, if right and wrong, and even human happiness, have no serious basis in the eternal nature

of things, in the living God, who can satisfy all in His own good time and manner. It will be all the same in a few years whether we have been good or bad—or what difference is it supposed to make to the slowly dissipating heat of the solar systems? And why should I be disinterested to the point of minding *that*? If there is no time for me to reach my ideal in, no time wherein to get self-mastery (*and how do I know that there is time for even the race to do that in?*); if the battle between good and evil may be destined to remain for ever a drawn one, what use in such idle beating the air?

And what then is the meaning of *Thou shalt*? "*Thou canst, for thou shalt,*" says Kant. Yes; but *not now*. The absolute law, the ideal, the conscience implies, demands, and reveals real being, eternity, imperishableness, in the moral subject conceiving it—God at the root and source of our being, who, having aroused the Divine thirst in us, will satisfy it with Himself. Unless I and the race have time before us wherein it may be accomplished, Duty is a vain chimera; and the ideal of it is ever widening. Even human happiness on this supposition is but a momentary illusion not worth fussing about. Kant's argu-

ment that the problem of immortality is left purposely uncertain lest we should seek happiness rather than duty for its own sake, though plausible, is, I believe, unsound. Because if Duty be suspected of unsubstantiality and transitoriness, it cannot long retain its sacred character as good for its own sake. And a virtuous man, though he may know that a course of right conduct will bring happiness here on earth, does not pursue it for that end.

And yet I do think some wonder-seekers attach too much importance to the mere prolongation of a useless, frivolous, gossipy existence. That were best, I agree with the sceptics, got rid of altogether. One does not wonder, indeed, to hear some people say it would *bore* them to go on living for ever, since it would certainly bore their friends. But then that only argues deficiency of imagination on their part. They can conceive of no *other kind* of life than the one *they* are now living. Not the mere quantity, but the quality of life, gives it value. Yet even a mere prolongation gives the chance of getting a better quality in time—which gives me the opportunity for saying that I cannot understand how some spiritists propose to supersede the religion of Christ, the pure

uncorrupted universal religion I mean, founded on the rock of spiritual and moral truth, by witch-sabbath feats of impish *diablerie*, or even by windy sermons of rhetorical ghosts about "the Zendavesta." And respecting "trance poems," as a rule, I fancy that those written under ordinary conditions are to be preferred: or is a full-flowing stream of muddy water the better for not dropping more slowly through a filter? Not, certainly, if you want it for drinking. May we not be in some danger of an irruption of obscene gods like Belial, who have already meddled over-much with former human religions? If such should materialise, and speak with oracular voices to the outward ear, will they be better than when they only tempted us within? The late venerable William Howitt raised a seasonable voice of warning on this head. Other foundation can no man—or demon—lay than is laid. Miss Kislingbury, too, has bidden us beware of another gospel which is not another. St. Paul said if an angel from heaven preached it, he was to be accursed. The Christian idea has been too great and good for us. It has still to educate society up to its own level. It is the root-idea of all great spiritual religions, but was most fully developed, and incarnate in the life,

death, and teaching of Jesus, the Christ. In this new spirit movement there may be agencies that make for this deeper Christianity, and agencies that war against it. Is Christ shut up within the pale of so-called orthodox churches? Far from it! There is plenty of black magic, and evil spiritual agency there, masquerading under sacred names and sacred vestments! "By their fruits ye shall know them." Was not Pope Borgia an antichrist? And a bishop singing "Te Deum" over the victories of a traitor—or bidding him go forth to an unjust war and prosper—what is he? Consult Victor Hugo! But let reason and conscience try the spirits.

From the darkness of the cross of Christ radiates athwart the ages the light of active self-sacrificing love as supreme good, demanding for its own glorious expansion no less than eternity. "*Une immense espérance a traversé la terre.*" Jesus Christ has indeed "brought life and immortality to light." For my own part, I confess I never cared much for another life till profound personal affection taught me better. But if any literary man should feel that having "made a hit," or being frequently quoted and praised by friends in the newspapers, is enough to satisfy

his inmost aspirations for evermore, then in the name of all the dailies, weeklies, monthlies, and quarterlies let him sing his *Nunc Dimittis*, and depart in peace to that nonentity, which he feels on the whole best adapted to his own nature, deserts, and requirements, now that he has eaten and drunken his own little fill at life's feast. He himself should be the best judge on this score,—and after him the Deluge. What has posterity done for him that he should be interested in posterity? We poor devils, not having his advantages, cannot tell how repleted we might feel after having enjoyed them. And our friend, of course, will tell us that the grapes are sour. But Mr. F. Harrison's contention that to want a future life is *selfish* surely seems a strange one! Does he know, then, that all space is afflicted with surplus population? I should have thought that the aspiration to rot idly for ever after you have done a day's work here, however much there might be in God's worlds to do, was more selfish still. I do not, however, address persons whom a surfeit of life's sugar-plums, whether moral or material, may have left dyspeptic. I address the majority, the "common herd" (as they are called by persons of culture

and refinement). For my part, *nihil humanum alienum a me puto*. And I urge that our opponents do not prove that the deepest instincts, the highest aspirations, the moral intuition, the sense of justice and right, that all these are less entitled to satisfaction, less likely to get it, than the mere logical "fox-faculty," the mere understanding of which they are so vain, and which they worship, while making so poor a use even of that. They do not prove it; they should; it is not self-evident—only because "sentimental," i.e., the best, most unselfish, and most affectionate people have usually disagreed with them. Why should this one halting, feeble faculty, lord it over the depths and heights of our human nature? Let this faculty be relegated to its own place—below—not above; it is hand-maiden, not mistress. All is ultimately dependent on immediate intuition—even the processes of understanding are—on *faith* therefore, which is coincident with *reason*. All analogy, too, is against this view. The bird by blind instinct—according to these men, absurdly then—prepares her nest against the coming of the future brood; and again, according to them, absurdly, sentimentally, prepares to fly at the

approach of winter. The bee blindly and absurdly stores her honey; the embryo blindly and absurdly contains provision for the life that is to be after birth. Your data must be taken on trust. "No; we verify them." But every time you verify them, you take the deliverance of your faculties—of your judgment—your perception—your memory—on trust. Will you use these data, then, to throw doubt upon the veracity of these very faculties? Or why are these lower rudimentary faculties, sensation, perception, and mere memory, mere media and vehicles of the higher, why are they more reliable than the aspirations of your inmost being after perfection, after knowledge, after a harmony of the Kosmos—after purer love, and opportunities of service for ever—after universal justice, and the fulfilment, or development of all capacities, elsewhere than here? A feather-brained penny-a-liner, incapable of reflection, may call such an argument *goody*; but a serious, responsible man never will. These vague blind instincts, that are the stirrings of a rudimentary higher consciousness, are the leadings of a fuller developed consciousness in the animals, and doubtless so also in ourselves. They are God in us. *In our true being, which*

we have lost, understanding, conscience, affection, sense, were one! And we have certainly no right to let our lower faculties give the lie to our higher. The higher should interpret for the lower, by right of dignity, by right of true reality. They are, at least, *as* authoritative. Meanwhile the high priests of science should remember their responsibilities. All men cannot console themselves for the loss of all that makes life worth living with æsthetic wall-papers, or alliterative verse, or the fair humanities of neopaganism, or even with the disinterested *cultus* of that great new goddess Matter, who, like older deities, is not unworshipped with tears, agony, and the most terrible of all bloody sacrifice—vivisection. Carl Vogt has proclaimed No God, and Annihilation, as the creed of science, amid the plaudits of learned men, young and old. Let the hierophants of our new culture remember the *Demos*—the swarming human millions below them—the “common herd”—whom they have undertaken to instruct. You instruct them that they, with their loathsome, plague-spotted, blood-stained grey lives, have no future! that for them there is no compensation either here or hereafter. Here they will have it, then, if not hereafter!

Why should their children perish of ignorance and vice, of hunger, and disease and despair? You are proclaiming, you have proclaimed by your new gospel, inextinguishable war of classes. The great Revolution, and the last Commune prove it. "Blessed are the poor," said Christ, for their redemption is being wrought out by suffering, and *their very discontent is blessed*; and "they shall be filled" with far better things than the good things of time and sense; their "sorrow shall be turned into joy." So they may possess their souls in patience, and trust in the the Father of us all. But if you proclaim to them that this is all a bigot's dream, that we have no Father, and no future, that justice is a name, and that the weakest must succumb, then the human struggle for existence that you inaugurate will be terrible indeed, because the grey monotony of man's long toil will be unendurable! Be very sure of it before you teach this! But if you are sure of it, then teach it, and God defend the right! There are signs, however, that He will soon rend the heavens and come down, that He will bare His arm to avenge and to enlighten His poor, blind, prisoned people, who cry to Him with so piteous, so inarticulate a cry!

CHAPTER IX.

Further Considerations on Immortality—Darwin: whence Identity of Type?—Natural Selection—The Creative Idea—The Platonic Idea—Aristotle—Oriental Philosophy—Conditional Immortality—Philosophical: Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, H. Spencer, Büchner.

It is indeed quite unphilosophical to say, *we have a certain degree of permanence, and then we perish*. All "modes," all changing phenomena, must be admitted to have this, or we could not know them, distinguish them as this or that, could not so far fix them, hold them steady. In the midst of flux there must be stability; we could neither affirm existence, nor change—this has become that, or this is no longer, but the other is—were it not for such stability. But consider whether we can conceive an absolute origination, or annihilation of being. Yet this we must do if we are to admit a certain degree of permanence in the modes of phenomena. The fact is, these phenomena are not at all in

their isolation from others, but *are only in their relation* to others, in their passing over into others. That is the pregnant truth of Hegel. This is their absolute reality and permanence; and this process, *as a whole*, does not begin or end. If there be any permanence at all, it is an everlasting one; and without permanence, no knowledge, no experience. The permanence of a day, an hour, a century, is not a more real permanence, if you come to think about it closely, than that of a quarter of a second. For time is relative and comparative. To one who lives a quadrillion of years a century would seem as half a second to us. Under influence of certain poisons, what is a second to a healthy person may seem an immensely long period to another. But there is implied in these, and kindred experiences as to time a defect in our manner of apprehending. Yet that must be grounded in a higher, and truer manner of apprehension. And thus also the phenomena we so measure and apprehend must have a truer and higher manner of being. Neither we, nor they can be precisely as we, or they now seem. Things are in their causes and effects. But what precisely is in the antecedents and consequents? Why, the very

essence of the known thing—that and nothing else—it is more there than in what we call the present existing thing—that can only be a passing phase of the reality we know and name—know and name by its *relation* to other things. Knowledge is knowledge of relations. The “thing” is in, and by its present, and successive relations. But all is in relation. Therefore “the thing” always is; only we imperfectly comprehend it. Or what lowest degree of permanence shall we affirm constitutes reality? We can only measure it by, it only means, a degree, or so many more than another thing has. And there is a standard, a third, a unit of measure; but that, of course, is purely arbitrary and relative to us. Of some quantities of momentary existence we may be able to take no cognisance at all. *Whose minimum sensible* shall measure beginning and ending? For some intellects may be able to take no cognisance of *our* existence. It is not of these flashes of existence that true being can consist, though they manifest it partially. Therefore it is untrue to say, Types are permanent, while individuals perish. Types, measured by an absolute standard, or one longer than the one we usually employ, are not at all

more permanent than individuals. But types involve many, and successive similar individuals; and if the individual has no reality or permanence, the type can have no more. Nothing can be stronger than the materials of which it is composed. It is very singular that this should not be better, or more generally understood! What is proved is that the individuals, and types both have a truer, and more real being than the apparent. The whole idea is only partially in either, but they are essential to it nevertheless, and in it imperishable. No real can perish.

This shows the weakness of Spinoza's philosophy (though, indeed, its *chief* error is in *putting extension beside thought as an attribute, whereas extension is but a mode of thought*). According to him, *we are modes!* and modes perish, though attributes and substance, of which they are modes, endure. But if modes perish, the attributes and substance they manifest must perish also; because they are nothing at all unless manifestations, developments, of the inner nature of the substance, which has no being out of relation to them; its being is but in so far as they are, an idea necessary to them, as they are necessary to it. Blank self-identical

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substance is an abstraction merely, a *nonens*. In Spinoza it is the great reality. If you say that the substance brings forth successive modes, though the old ones perish, I answer : here again you are talking of mere empty abstractions. No mode exists except *in relation to essential being, and to all other modes*. The perishing of any phenomenon is only in present seeming. It is always ready to return ; but it may return in a higher form, in truer reality. Then *we are not modes* ; for we are the thinkers and conceivers of modes, which are phenomena. We are their very substance, ground, and reality. How could Spinoza conceive of permanent substance and reality, if it were not in him, in the very root of his own nature ? He knows that is. Where does he find it, then, if not within ? He gets the idea by examining, and considering his own world of thought, and the world of thought reflected in himself, which could not be reflected or known, were it not of like nature with his own. It is according to the categories of reason which he finds within that he understands and reasons about the universe, which therefore cannot be of alien nature. He has therefore substance *and* mode in him, or he would never

get them from elsewhere. But the mode of himself also is essential to the substance of himself. Without memory, and all cognate faculties, perception, judgment, reasoning, &c., no knowledge of identical permanent substance were possible to him. Without self-identification, no true identity. If, then, we perish—as modal, conscious, self-identifying persons—Substance, Force, Reality, perish also. The substance existing up by itself somewhere is a mere figment of philosophy. Substance is in and by its qualities; and can only be in consciousness. This is where Hamilton, Mansel, and Spencer mistake. It is a kindred error when Aristotle makes his *active*, as distinguished from his *passive* intellect, immortal; and when the Oriental philosophers, the Neoplatonist, and Eleatic schools of ancient thought, and other kindred thinkers, believers in a *conditional immortality*, distinguish so absolutely as they do between the one and the many, the spirit and the soul, the Pnuma, or Nous, and the Psyche. That is a distinction of importance, if we will remember that it is relative to our present mode of existence and apprehension, not absolute and fundamental. But man is not really separable into something

like the successive skins of an onion. He is a unity—the unity. The Pysche—the soul, including memory, and all that constitutes personal identity—belongs essentially to the Nous, or Pneuma; and the latter can no more be without the former than the former without the latter. They are by and in one another: and so the many belongs essentially to the one. And therefore the soul must either remain as it is, or become *still more real and actual* by being what the Germans call *aufgehoben* into the spirit. But such absorption is quite erroneously fancied to be annihilation; it is *the exact contrary: it is fulfilment of true being*. Or will it be said: our true being is perhaps unconscious? But how can our conscious self be identical with unconscious being?—the self that is by self-identification through all times and circumstances can have nothing in common, *certainly is not identical with* a being that does not, and cannot identify itself with this conscious self. *This cannot change into that*—this can only be substituted for that. But *then identity has gone*—Force and Substance are annihilated. For the self is by potential self-identification. If, *e.g.*, I change into salts and gases, I, the thinker,—

who, by virtue of my being thinker, am and give substance,—change into phenomenon, into somebody else's thought. But then Substance does not persist. Physical forces may indeed change into one another, for one is not itself without the other, and thought is the substance underlying them all. But if I change into the Unconscious Unknowable of Hartmann, or Herbert Spencer, identity is equally gone.

And here we may note Kant's difficulty, that whereas Butler argued the soul to be indestructible, because one and indivisible, it may be destructible by being diminished intensively; even to the vanishing point as power, as force. Now first, I protest against our personality being spoken of as a force, or as forces, if by that is implied that it is on a level with the external phenomenon of physical forces. These are what a foreign, a different mode of being appears to us, and we are aware how imperfectly we apprehend it. But we are—ourselves—the self-conscious, spiritual focus of unity, which thus represents it. Secondly, I believe that if Kant had known the modern Conservation of Force doctrine, he would hardly have used this argument. The essence of force persists, though the form vanish,

and the form can be restored. But are we only as real as the form of a force, not as real as the essence thereof? And yet the whole idea of essence and form necessarily arises from within our own spirit! Of course, we do appear to grow, and to decay, as to our faculties. But yet these must permanently belong to us, to our real essence; we only appear to gain, we only appear to lose them. And we shall some day know why—this only proves that our present existence, like that of other things, is imperfectly, phenomenally apprehended by us. Our faculties perish only by transmutation, transfiguration into higher forms of the same essence—certainly retaining their present reality in gaining more and truer. And they can only be gained by us, because indeed they always belong to us—though I admit there may be a temporary loss to us as phenomenally existing here and now. But even in passing to another, our possessions still belong to us; it is our influence, our gift, and we are in the other we have helped to build up. There we shall find ourselves again—as well as elsewhere. But the spirit giving cannot perish; fulfils *itself* in passing over, and rendering itself up. For that is the real and permanent reason

of the interchange—for interchange there must be. Action and reaction are equal. Hegel has shown that we must supplement causality with the idea of Reciprocity: cause is also effect—effect is also cause. Such is the divine solidarity of all spirits; and all is spirit. Hinton beautifully applies this principle to pain—suffering—in his little book, the “*Mystery of Pain.*” But we still find each other, and ourselves, perfect, complete in God. What the Indians call the night of Brahma—universal reabsorption into God—will really be, whatever the Indian view on this point may be, a fuller, not a lesser, consciousness for the creature than the day of creation, or manifestation. It were a gross materialistic fancy to make God a mere solution, and the creatures a precipitate! But probably while there is ever absorption for some, there is ever creation for others. These are indeed, however, matters too high for us, and we must be content to be ignorant of many things. That principle of the eternal self, the ideal individual, in his superior monad, explains the retention of the idea, of the same form, of its own type by every new-born and growing individual in the organic world, its differentiation in accordance

with this idea, though all germs appear so much alike. I do not think Darwin's doctrine of *Pan-genesis* explains it fully, though it may help. And as to *natural selection*, how is the "environment" adapted to produce the changes it actually does produce in the organism? And what produces the slight variation upon which the "environment" works? You point to mechanical and chemical *laws*, invariable modes of procedure, and vitality that responds to stimuli. But all this implies, and is in accordance with permanent *ideas*, that work harmoniously into one another: *harmony* of organism, cell, and environment—of organic and inorganic. For instance, read Spencer's imaginative account of the specialisation of a rudimentary organ of sight in the early forms of organic life; and of the gradual specialisation of nerve-fibres, nerve-ganglia, and muscles. To the difficulty of understanding all this, Mr. Henry Atkinson has forcibly drawn attention. The environment is as much saturated with thought, with idea, with form, as the organism; *they only exist by virtue of one another*. But the immanent idea implies also the dominant idea, so far *external* as to be greater, more real, eternal, creative. Both

conceptions are needed to supplement one another.

The permanent eternal Monad, in whom all others are permanent and eternal, is required to make the phenomenal growth of individuals according to a definite type conceivable. That eternal fact reflects itself in time as an influence of the ancestor upon the descendant. The monads *are* thus—*are* in this close relation of mutual influence, and identity. The higher monad in whom we are is not exactly like us; and it was an error of the Platonic theory of ideas to represent it so; but the identity of type in the subordinate monads was required by the idea of the constitutive superior monad—an identity of type in all these, considered as subordinate; and finally, the source of all this must be sought in the Supreme Ideal. Even Büchner talks of “the creative idea in the organised germ.” A most marvellous unwilling testimony to the truth on the part of a materialist, leading him of course to the most glaring inconsistency with his own system. Clearly that is impotent to explain the fixed type, or idea, according to which the individual organism grows up. The *Correspondences* of Swedenborg is the really

fruitful conception; what is thus or thus above, *by a negation* (he says by "influx"), becomes or appears thus or thus in the sphere beneath. That principle was worked out also by Schelling. Only he, and Hegel, turned it the other way. And that is a pity. That has led to all the absurdities of the so-called *Hegelian Left*—Strauss, Feuerbach, and their materialistic successors. *Development* there is, but then it is indeed *reformation*. The Darwinian school need also to see that.

The outer, creative idea is the truth and reality of the immanent idea in the lower spirit, or in the phenomenon, and so the latter must issue at last in the former; they are identical. We are assisting at the self-formation of the Divine Image in all the scattered spirit-fragments of time.

Can a senseless clod, or a witless malignant, or a wild beast, casually, or at its own sweet will, annihilate a Socrates, or a Jesus! Is that credible? Such consequences—from which the moral reason, and the understanding alike shrink, staggered and appalled—which we cannot bring ourselves to *think*—though they may not precisely be *arguments* in favour of immortality,

nevertheless are elements in that cumulative, converging weight of proof, that pours in on us from all quarters, testifying to the *absurd impossibility of unreason that lies hidden at the root of* this assumption—that *the phenomenon of sense*, the rigid silence of the corpse, is to be accepted as its own sufficient and final interpretation, as the very fact and reality of death. Nay, the true man, like all nature, is a Proteus, who, if you press him too hard, simply *eludes* you by changing his form.

CHAPTER X.

The Goddess "Matter," and Human Immortality—The Moral Aspect of the Question—Our Intellectual, Affectional, and Moral Natures are not fundamentally at War—The Absurdities of Pessimism, and the Moral Revolt (especially in recent verse) against God as Law-giver—The Glory of Christ, and the Christian Idea—Salvation by Suffering and Sacrifice—Love, the Summum Bonum.

BUT as respects *morality*, it does seem to me evident that, if a man believes in no future, he is likely, *cæteris paribus*, to be more ignobly anxious about the only life he can ever possess, seeking to pamper, and preserve it by constant small compromises with the higher law, even if he do not throw duty overboard altogether as a superstitious and inconvenient chimera. A man's life, he will argue, does consist after all in the abundance of things he possesses, in the solid properties, and very palpable utilities he can amass here upon earth ; not in vain spiritual illusions, or dreams of slavish contentment, or submission to

an imaginary, priest-invented "good God," or in any vain future hope. The rich, even the "religious" rich, seem indeed practically to believe that; while positivists, scientists, and socialists only preach it in plainer and more honest language to the poor. So *væ victis*! Christ, and the great Eastern sages, to say nothing of the *illuminatus* Rousseau, were miserably mistaken when they taught that happiness—the kingdom of God—was *within*; that restless greed for power, honour, riches, and carnal enjoyment was the sign, seal, and condition of man's degradation, of his fall; that these were indeed the very fire of hell, from which God would fain deliver us. Nay, we are but larger-brained wild beasts; so let us "tear one another in the slime!" on the one hand by respectable orderly ways of tyrannic selfishness, "inexorable laws of political economy;" on the other by sanguinary social revolutions, crying with the Communist leader, as he shot innocent old men, and set fire to Paris, "*Que tout crève!*" But we who profess to have faith in spiritual things are far more guilty than the rest; for we expose them to contempt by our own practical defiance of them, our infidel lives, episcopal sanctions of unjust foreign wars for our own

aggrandisement under hypocritical canting religious pleas, civil war of classes, utter worldliness, and unscrupulous ambition. The truth is that the Christian world consists mainly of baptized heathens, who have simply put on a new suit of opinions. And much good may these do them ! But a right spirit is shown by full sympathy, and anxiety to make fair concessions to our neighbour in temporal affairs, willingness *impartially* and *unselfishly* to judge, and try whatsoever political or social reforms may be for the benefit of the whole people. For *some measure* of temporal welfare men need, if only for due leisure and opportunity to develop human faculty. A man must feel that he has *a right* to some measure of this, and that society wrongs him if it systematically ignores his claim. Every man, every person, has a right to assert himself so far (though, if he could once know it, he has yet a higher right to sacrifice himself altogether). But, on the other hand, he should be able to feel that, in case he cannot get even the very means of living without doing wrong, without violating duty, without injury to others, it signifies little after all ; for, in the words of Coriolanus, "*There is a world elsewhere.*" I say you cannot expect him

to sacrifice himself to the point of extinction for evermore. Some may ; and it is grand, noble. And yet that is an exaggerated, inhuman view, and will not prevail, I believe. It makes sacrifice seem *absurd*. A man is to sacrifice himself to society *for the sake of society*, I grant, but also on condition that thereby himself enters into deeper and ampler being, by the loss, by the utter sympathy, and very self-renouncement, by love. This teaching of Christ is nobler than the Epicurean, wiser and more human than the Stoic, or the Buddhist. Even Kant, the stern apostle of duty, preaches that man needs eventual *happiness in harmony with duty*, and that he will have it ; they are not to be proclaimed for ever incompatible. *Love* largely solves the problem : but not if she is mortal.

But that so many, the majority, are fatally condemned to live miserable, undeveloped lives here, is to me the strongest argument on which to build a future life. For reason and conscience combine to bid me have faith in the soundness of the core and heart of things. Why so much, if no more is to follow ? The universe *cannot* be the brutal jest it would be, if this were all. Well, I do not believe we can or need go beyond that *faith*.

Even reason and conscience found themselves on faith. All argument presupposes it. There are certain things that would simply confound all our lives, and paralyse all our faculties, if they were true. "God's ways are not as our ways," whine and cant the orthodox. "God is unknowable," urge the Agnostics. And that comes very much to the same thing. It means that God—He, or It—may commit what *appears to us* atrocious immorality on an infinite scale. That I deny, because if so, then the very ground of my faith in God goes. On this ground the orthodox blaspheme the All-Father with their inhuman, and monstrous doctrine of an everlasting hell, which, if it were in the Bible, would be sufficient to disprove for ever its claim to inspiration—but which *is not* in the Bible, passionately as cruel, inquisitorial Pharisees may try to see it there. And so also the Agnostic, and Positivist proclaim universal annihilation; far preferable indeed to the religious doctrine, but still immoral, degrading, and absurd. The Unknowable, or God, is the source of what I know as profoundest, and highest, and most real in human nature—or else this is greater than It; for I know nothing in any other nature so great and real:

and then this again is the true God. "But to extinguish us all, after giving us the thirst for more light and more life, may not be immoral, or wrong, or absurd." To that one can only reply : Search the depths of your own consciousness, say after the loss of a beloved being full of promise unachieved, and if you still maintain that gravely and sincerely, then as we differ on first principles, further argument becomes impossible. Our faculties are differently constituted. Indeed, "spiritual things are spiritually discerned." If, however, you say this as mistrusting your own reason, because you think you cannot judge the infinite wisdom, then I reply that, to be logical, you should mistrust it still further, and sit down with your hands folded, neither presuming to argue, nor understand anything ; for surely reason and conscience cannot pronounce themselves more decidedly on any question than they do on this. The argument that Nature, or God, does already appear to commit atrocious immorality on an infinite scale, even on any view of what He or it will do, seems to me an exceedingly absurd one. Because what we maintain is that the evils we actually witness are evils, only so long as we conceive them to be without compensation, to be the

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whole, to be perpetual, and irremediable. If they are means to an end, they may be the only ones possible, and therefore good, necessary, and in a higher light altogether excellent. If they are all in all, then reason is itself a juggle, conscience an inexplicable *ignis fatuus*, without origin and without issue, and the whole of our vaunted "experience" no better than a vain illusion; for its only basis is this very reason that thus plays us so very false. Choose between these alternatives.

But we have a right to tell men that this monstrous god, Matter, with which some would terrify us, and in whose name they would shatter all the hopes and prerogatives of humanity, terming this a deliverance from worn-out superstitions, is but a chimera born of ignorance, arrogance, and error. Of all degraded idols man made in God's image has been called upon at various epochs to fall down before and worship, this one, set up in Europe to-day, with sound of shawm, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of barbaric music, is surely the most barbarous and degraded.

It seems rather infantile, indeed, for clever men like Büchner, picking up, as it were at

random, on the highways of mature thought, ready-made complex conceptions, like "Kraft" and "Stoff," to pitchfork these outside themselves, and then proceed to adore them as mechanical toy-idols capable of manufacturing the universe offhand, themselves included—these toy-idols being, indeed, their own manufacture all the time ! These are but fetishes of the savage. The Hebrew prophets' solemn mockery of those who worship wood and stone, the work of their own hands, precisely applies here. After all, what I have before me is mountain, ocean, heaven, whose myriad forms and voices are ripe with all memories and associations, eloquent of the infinite and eternal. That is the *fact* I know—that has to be accounted for. Looking upon the Mediterranean I feel : " Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee ; " " Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow ; such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now." And I confess I find the dance of molecules in my brain or elsewhere rather a hindrance than a help to me in *comprehending*. But this is "sentiment," "poetry." Nay, it is *fact*, by whatever name you call it. Because a dry-as-dust, a human petrification, finds himself minus imagination and feeling, is that a

reason why such a moral Laura Bridgeman as himself should erect his own truncated consciousness into sole arbiter, and criterion of truth for the human race? I weigh, indeed, what has been discovered by the dissection of dead bodies, and the scientific torture of living ones, anent these really wonderful phenomena of physiology ; and I hope I have shown that I give full weight to such discoveries ; for who should not do so in the present day would prove himself incompetent for such discussions. Yet there has been too much burrowing in dark detail : let us look up and around us. I contend that these special details furnish little help in comprehending the grand totality of human experience : that has, as it were, to be believed in spite of them ; they assuredly have to be interpreted by it, not it by them.

“Great is Diana of the Ephesians,” and great the goddess *Matter*, whom (for the moment) all the world worshipping. Yet when she claims that, whereas Orthodoxy has slain his thousands, she will slay her tens of thousands ; that whereas orthodoxy scourged us with whips, she will chastise us with scorpions ; while orthodoxy demanded the damnation of many, she will compass

the everlasting destruction of us all : when she claims to blast the fairest hopes, and holiest promises of humanity, to stultify, and annihilate at one fell swoop the blood-bought heritage of man's toiling generations, the labour of mourning myriads, whose life has been all one hodden grey, stained with their own heart's blood and with tears, the triumphant faith of heroes and martyrs, singing and smiling in the midst of fire : when she swears that she will sweep into one blank grave—yea, blow away in one vain dust—alike tyrant and slave, wise man and fool, demon gloating over ruined innocence, and Christ rendering up His soul in mortal anguish to the Father, a love-offering for the world—love inconsumable in fiery floods of anguish, and spiritual temptation—trust in the All-Father, not all the hells can quench—Him, and the miserable multitudes He died for, who in dying stretched to Him weak fools' arms of longing, ere oblivion's dull wave rolled over them for ever ;—when this new deity prefers so formidable a claim, it is time for men to rise up, as they have risen in rebellion against other false gods before, and dispute the pretensions to supreme divinity of the Nightmare, which our so-called science has set up

for them to worship. And, at all events, they will refuse, however jauntily invited, to lick their lips over the poisoned bowl she proffers, pretending that they like it. The fair living world has been converted into a corpse for us, and we are invited to declare that its loathsomeness smells nice! Nay, rather let us curse their god, and die. But says the cynical, the gay, devil-may-care penny-a-liner—the newspaper Gallio—This is “goody,” this is “sentiment.” The fundamental atrocity of things is no proof that they are otherwise; our wanting them to be different does not make them so. We are babies crying for the moon. After all, we have had a few sweets given us, and what if we have the stomach-ache? We may grin and bear it, or we may shriek, “Damn the nature of things,” with our brand new school of poets, whose own cadences of “linked sweetness long drawn out,” to be sure, may be some set-off against the disagreeableness of things in general; or we may swear how delightful it all is, like the Positivists; or, again, we may believe with Schopenhauer that the “nature of things,” having found out the ridiculous mistake of waking up, will very soon turn round and go to sleep again for ever. But whatever

we do, let us not “be wise above that which is written” *in the senses*. Let us beware of supposing that our superficial, sensuous notion of things, picked up at random, can be a mistaken one, can be doing them gross injustice. On the contrary, it seems to me that the stultification of all that is highest and holiest in human nature is a complete *reductio ad absurdum* of this new theory, or no theory of the universe, is a more complete refutation of it than all the logic of Mill, or of the schoolmen. Is what contradicts the sense false? Nay, it is not false; for the intellect has always to correct, and interpret the sense. But why is what gives the lie to all our moral aspirations, and cries *vanity of vanities* to all the unselfish affections—why is that which insults with contumely the profoundest intuitions of our race—why is that to be taken for granted? *Whence then comes what is highest, best, and deepest in us? Whence, if not from this much maligned nature of things herself?* Shall we greedily adopt any floating calumny of lewd witlings against our own Mother, averring it to be “goody,” and “sentimental” to put faith in her? Kant, whom our young sages talk about without understanding, did not think so meanly

of the practical reason, and the conduct of daily life; and to him it seemed that God, and immortality were absolutely necessary postulates of the practical reason, which, as higher than the mere speculative theory of understanding, imperatively demanded that, whether provable by theory or no, these postulates should be accepted. Understanding must be corrected by conscience, affection, even as sense, by understanding. The understanding has no such paramount claim as has been pretended. Its deliverances must be harmonised with those of the rest of our nature; and when conscience clashes with understanding, the latter must defer. Though Vinet had said something much like this before, it is Hinton's great honour to have said it independently, and with still more distinctness. But I deny that our faculties are fundamentally at war; and I have tried to prove in this essay that they are not. So far as they *are* at war, it is the result of our present lapse, and degradation.

I remember, travelling in the East, I heard of a sect, who maintained that there was once a God, but that he unfortunately created a wind, and that wind of his became very turbulent, till at last it carried its creator right away and de-

stroyed him. Was that a sort of unconscious prevision, I wonder, of our latest school of versifiers? Are the youthful members of it the wind God made, who, with melodious numbers, and fierce upbraidings, at any rate threaten to blow Him away? And then we have Schopenhauer and the pessimists, who tell us that, though the Deity is not dead, He has one foot in the grave, so disgusted is He at the fiasco He has unwittingly made (when He was asleep) of this whole mad, bad business of a universe. What Jehovah's prophet said in derision of an idol he contemned, the modern philosopher gravely affirms of his God: "*Peradventure he sleepeth!*" By a universal resolve not to *be* any more, the creatures, we are told, may succeed in annihilating all consciousness, and with it all pain. But who is to warrant that God, when His creatures have thus reduced Him to unconsciousness, will not commit the same old blunder of waking up again in them? For experience will not profit Him when He is asleep, and the creatures will not be there to remind Him of His folly!

I may conclude in the words I have recently used in the "British Quarterly Review," in an essay on "Materialism, Pessimism, Positivism,

and Final Causes":—What if pain and joy, vice and virtue, are necessary to one another; if good is by evil; if perfection, to be ultimately secure and full measured, must be by degradation and fall, and experience of the lowest deeps? A Redeemer upon the shameful cross, in the midst of darkness, triumphant over sin and pain, over enemies within, and enemies without, principalities and powers—that has been the outcome and result. Yes! the Christian symbol is a *gallows-tree*, and we glory in it; though the Cross is also the symbol of *life* in all faiths. God hung there, and wrested the empire from hell, for humanity, for the world. In a suffering, out-cast, degraded God we glory. "All the breasts of all the loves" poor humanity will reject for Him. How many have been crowned conquerors by love! And what if all shall be one day, in the Supreme Son, voluntarily, what they are even now ignorantly, indeed saviours and redeemers, sublimely bearing one another's burdens in the midst of fire, having for their comrade, like those three Jewish children in the furnace of old, One whose form is like unto the Son of God? For as long as there are creatures, there must be evils to share and to remedy. Heaven is no idle

bliss. And it is but a *coward's* part to desire for oneself annihilation—the ignoble sloth and repose of an endless inactivity! Strange that *this* should be represented as heroic and unselfish! At whatever cost, more life, more light! Is it no glory if we poor worms, who have done so much hideous wrong to so many, and to ourselves, may be permitted at length, like Paul, to “fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ,” for the sake of our brethren, the other children of one God? But let him, who objects to the critic finding fault with the poet, ask himself if he does well to find fault with God, who is the *Poeta Sovrano*, the Supreme Artist? Did not Pope warn the versifiers of his day in these stern accents: “*But learn, ye dunces, not to scorn your God?*” And is the cross, indeed, foolishness to us? Shall we howl, and blaspheme because we are bidden put off the hornèd satyr’s bestial hoof, and put on the human martyr’s crown, though that be flame; because at whatever cost of death-pangs, which are birth-pangs, we are bidden “let the ape and tiger die” within us, claiming the blood-bought heritage of man, being born again human?

APPENDIX.

I.

Dr. Carpenter's Explanations of Spiritism by "Expectant Attention," &c., &c.—Personal Experience of the Writer —"Theosophical" Explanations.

DR. CARPENTER, in his "Mental Physiology," makes a great deal of *expectant attention* as explaining those phenomena of spiritism, which are not due to conjuring. And he is doubtless right that persons of special temperament, very nervous and fanciful, or even persons fully impressed that they are about to witness certain phenomena, may actually experience sensible phenomena, as the result either of this peculiar impressibility, or an external suggestion wrongly interpreted (a frequent cause of imaginary ghost-seeing), or merely as the result of a strong expectation; but in the latter case I think there must be undoubting faith, and conviction that the phenomena will occur. He gives some very remarkable instances of this kind of experience. Faith, in other words, can work the wonders it expects

—a most important principle—and a strong imagination can body forth its conceptions even sensibly. Of course in madness, as in some diseases, there is actual seeing and feeling what is unreal to others. But *distinguish*! If Dr. Carpenter were in the habit of attending spiritist *séances* (*horresco referens*!), he would know that the people attending them are very generally *not* “attending,” but conversing and laughing about other topics, until their attention is *forcibly drawn* to what is taking place by some very unmistakably loud noise, or very palpable visual appearance: in their case then there can hardly be much “expectant attention:” in that case, Dr. Carpenter would retort, there is probably *conjuring*; and to this I can only reply, possibly; but read Zöllner’s book, and weigh well the experimental tests to detect conjuring devised, for instance, by Dr. Hare, and Mr. Crookes; for while these and similar tests were being applied, such manifestations have occurred. Then, again, many people witness these manifestations, who are not of a peculiarly nervous, or sensitive, or fanciful temperament (say Judge Edmunds, for instance), and who, before witnessing them, have no strong expectation that they will happen, no strong conviction that the special phenomena which seem to occur will occur, but rather have grave doubts about the whole matter, and are in a very critical, *à priori* agnostic frame of mind, if not in a state of positive disbelief. Lastly, moreover, is it likely that a circle of persons of different

temperaments and dispositions, as also of varying degrees of belief and disbelief, should *all* be hallucinated by "expectant attention" in the same manner—attention of which there may be little, or which may be directed chiefly to the detection of always too possible trickery; or that they should be "biologised" *so similarly* by the medium as to suppose themselves all to see, feel, and hear the same phenomena?—for instance, to see apparently material forms, faces, hands; to fancy they touch them, and are grasped by these hands, hearing at the same time diverse voices appearing to proceed from these ostensibly independent intelligences, holding rational conversation with the witnesses? Yet there is no doubt all this constantly occurs, and to it I am myself a witness. My own experience was in a *private* house, though our host kindly allowed me to take precautions against the presence of confederates. Many persons were grasped and touched at different sides of the large table at once; and the medium, I firmly believe, and in one instance I *know*, did not move from his seat; and in that instance his hands were firmly held by myself, and another person in whom I had confidence. Various extraordinary physical manifestations then occurred. I have myself bought a common folding slate, sealed it up with my own crest impressed on many seals over string-bound ruled paper, closely pasted and strained over the edges of the folding frames, and had a photograph of my own passed inside it, though the slate had not

been out of my own possession, except when the hand of a person I could trust was resting on it, the fastenings being found absolutely intact afterwards. I have also obtained writing on the same slate, which had before been perfectly clean, under the same conditions, only that I had in this case my own hand on the slate all the time. There were witnesses to this, and this could not be the result of expectant attention, or hallucination. If it was anything normal, it was sleight-of-hand; and I *believe* that the conditions made this out of the question. Dr. Carpenter, and Professors Tyndall and Huxley, should take Professor Zöllner's book in hand, and explain how all that might have been done by normal means. It does seem to me pretty cool for one scientific man to treat the testimony of another equally eminent, as Dr. Carpenter treats Mr. Cromwell Varley's, when the latter testifies to witnessing a phenomenon, which the former thinks *cannot* be true. He says that, sooner than believe Mr. Varley saw what he says he saw, he prefers to suppose that Mr. Varley was expressly hallucinated for the occasion. Is that an illustration of the "scientific" spirit?

That unconscious muscular pressure is not exerted on the *planchette* by the medium in all cases, has been proved by the ingenious experiments of Messrs. Hare and Crookes. But in some other manner it may be said that his ideas influence the pointing of the instrument. This again does not apply (as I have argued) when the opposite idea brought out by the instrument

is not in the mind of the medium at the time; but that Dr. Carpenter would deny. Yet he must admit that if the information given has never been in his mind, then it could hardly emerge from it by "unconscious cerebration." And there is good evidence of this having occurred. It is still, of course, possible to assert that the person may have forgotten information which he once possessed, or that it originally made no impression on his mind, but only on his brain; yet where there is no proof whatsoever that a man was ever in a condition even to have his brain without his mind affected by such information, it is surely arbitrary and gratuitous to invent such an hypothesis—unless there be an *à priori* impossibility in the explanation of the abnormal phenomenon which first suggests itself—which through the phenomenon indeed *claims* to be the true one. This *à priori* impossibility is indeed tacitly assumed in all this circumlocutory theory-mongering; but, I think, unphilosophically assumed. Dr. Carpenter, moreover, while he assumes it to be the fact, does not explain *why* such a supposed trace left in the brain by forgotten, or even by not consciously digested information, should influence the muscles through planchette *before* emerging into consciousness, rather than consciousness first before the muscles. Especially is this hard to understand when *other* apposite ideas are dominating in consciousness, and expected to emerge through the instrument. But all this I have already argued out in the text.

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There is, however, of course much of extreme value and interest in Dr. Carpenter's work. Among other things there is an account of strange hallucinations regarding personal identity in some cases of madness and disease. The consciousness of some one else seems to become yours. This is a remarkable proof of the essential oneness and solidarity of souls, and a prophecy of what may be hereafter far more perfectly realised in normal conditions. But at present it seems to involve temporary obliteration of your own past from remembrance. Therefore even this would not afford a parallel to that theosophical explanation of certain spiritist phenomena, which refers them to the multiplication of the medium's conscious personality—for in these cases the medium is conscious of his own normal personality quite as usual (where he is not entranced)—and yet there would be these other abnormal personalities belonging to him, but not identified as his by this normal personality! That is a curiously intricate conception! The cases mentioned by Dr. Carpenter are more like *dreams*, where we imagine ourselves in certain circumstances and positions that are not ours in a waking state; or like the transfusion of personality involved in intense dramatic realisations of character by the dramatic poet, and even by the great actor. For *the time being*, in such cases, we lose the remembrance of our more normal past experience. But that is not properly a doubling, trebling, and quadrupling of personality—which the pheno-

mena in question would involve if that strange explanation of them were true—for there may be several seemingly independent intelligences manifesting at the same time and conversing together.

II.

*On the Genesis of Mind and Organism, as conceived
by Herbert Spencer, &c.*

YOU may as well talk of the gradual approximation of Christmas Day to Westminster Bridge as of the gradual approximation of matter, in the vulgar sense of the word, to mind; and this remark applies to the genesis of mind and moral phenomena given us by writers like Haeckel and Mr. Herbert Spencer. Of course, if you choose to define matter as we define mind, then it is only a question of difference of terms between us. But we are told "*the brain thinks*"—by which is meant the grey matter and the white matter, the grey cells, the cortical envelope, the gross pulp vulgarly intended by brain; and to say this is to talk sheer nonsense—as great as when it is said by some ardent materialists (as if to demonstrate to the uttermost the "art of sinking" in philosophy) that "thought is a motion of molecules"! Nay, a motion of molecules is a thought.

Mr. Spencer shows us the gradual advance of the

lower kind of organisms through successive accumulating differentiations and integrations up to the higher; and seems to want to show us a general "irritability" passing gradually into general sensibility, and this into *special* sense. But if by "irritability" he means contractility, or any disposition to molecular motion, no *gradual approximation* is more possible than a sudden leap. Sensibility is subjective, internal feeling, but irritability is disposition to external, perceptible motion. If you take that in the vulgar aspect, as something altogether outside consciousness, the chasm between the two cannot be bridged.

But there is ambiguity in the word *irritability*, and here lies the danger. A thinker easily slips from one meaning of a word to another. The word may have a conscious application implying some kind of sensation; or, at least, may be easily fancied to have such an application. Because an organism shrinks on being touched, and we fancy that must imply feeling, we may easily confuse the physical shrinking and the conscious feeling, but they have nothing in common, and of course the one could never *pass into* the other. It is indeed possible that Mr. Spencer only means to show us a lower degree of primitive sensibility corresponding to a low physical development, passing along with this into a higher phase; but if so, his language is often ambiguous. The irritability and molecular motion are mental constructions, complex notions of our own, and

as external to us, they can only be notions in some one or many like us; except so far as they are correlates of similar, but not the same ideas, in other orders of intelligence thus affecting us. That this may have something to do with the low degree of sensation in the lower organism itself, is very possible and probable. Certainly the Divine Intuition at the basis of this particular appearance to us must have everything to do with it. But the higher intelligences of the pre-Adamite period may not have conceived of such lower organisms as Mr. Spencer shows us the probable genesis of, precisely as we should have conceived them had we been in their place, and as we must conceive them now.

III.

Kant on Immortality.

THERE is a very strange argument of Kant in the *sceptical* part of his work (for he restored with one hand what he destroyed with the other) against immortality. He says (in the "Critique of the Pure Reason") that we cannot pronounce the ego or spirit immortal, because we do not know it as an object in perception: it is only known as subject, as a mere "I think," the essential condition of experience, the unity of "apperception." Therefore it is not really known at all, and

so cannot be pronounced immaterial, indivisible, immortal.

This is a *most* strange argument. The ego is not known as a sensible object certainly. But sensible objects do not look particularly immortal; their permanence would have to be (and may be) argued out with some elaboration. Whereas the ego is surely known to have a certain permanence at all events; it is only, as has been here argued, on condition of such permanence that we can know anything at all—that we can know whether any other thing has remained as it was, or has changed, and given place to something else. We surely do know ourselves better than we can possibly know anything else, however imperfectly we may know even ourselves. If, as is acknowledged by Kant, we know the ego as an essential condition of all experience, as transcendent “unity of apperception,” what further knowledge is required in order to pronounce the ego or self immaterial, indivisible, and so far “immortal” as the mere liability to dissolution, to the material death we know of, is concerned? Whether other kinds of death may affect it is another question. At any rate, what would be gained, supposing it were possible to know ourselves as *sensible* object? But *object* we may be to ourselves, to our own consciousness: we are not only implicitly conscious of ourselves, but explicitly in reflection. In knowing something other than ourselves, we also know ourselves. I push, and a *non-ego* resists. The two consciousnesses are

correlative, equal, and opposite, and are only possible through one another.

Kant says also the soul is not even a notion. Certainly it is a great deal more; but it is known in a notion as the active source and substance of notions, as *Actus Purus*.

In what he further says about its not existing apart from the body, I agree; in its present form it cannot: but the body need not for ever retain its present form; that may vary with the soul. The identity, however, penetrates through, is indeed by the change.

IV.

“Simulacra :” what are the Spiritual Agencies at work in the Phenomena ?

THERE is an alternative, of which I cannot absolutely deny the possibility, that these materialised figures are in no sense the bodies of those who produce these appearances, but creations of theirs engendered out of the air by the plastic power of their will and imagination, animated by them for a moment; masks, in short, through which these unknown intelligences manifest and speak, personifying others, the images of whom they have stolen from the memory, or some yet more hidden receptacle belonging to the medium, or the other living persons present. But memory is

often inapplicable; what, then, is this hidden receptacle? To the *inner* or *supra* consciousness I doubt any but very elevated spirits having access. As to the state of the brain, what clue to the special notions (psychoses) corresponding to nervous motions (special neuroses) would a vision of the molecules in our brain bestow upon us? And here these intelligences would be clever enough to translate into *their* consciousness nervous states which do not emerge into our own!

As to permanent simulacra or images in the ether, to which access might be had by such wandering intelligences, I do not know what to say.

That is not a hypothesis that commends itself to scientific men in general, I think, even in the form in which the authors of "the Unseen Universe" maintain it. As existing out of intelligent consciousness of some kind, I need not now say that my philosophy rejects anything of the kind.

But if you took it as existing in such intelligence, then it could be only a simulacrum of the *past*, and would require to be animated, if not by the person whose it is, then by the spirit having access to it, in order to be more than a mere reproduction of the past, and in order to become a perception of the earth-form, what we mean when we speak of a materialisation. All that, as resulting from influence of the person, really involves the person himself now acting, as I have argued, though not necessarily his phenomenal

consciousness. But as the phenomenon in question cannot exist unconceived, so, to become the simulacrum of a personal past, it must be interpreted: in the intelligence where it is stored, it is not necessarily stored *just so*, but perhaps potentially, in a corresponding form; it can, I think, only be conceived as capable of receiving this interpretation when passing into minds qualified so to interpret and apprehend, unless you would regard it as a distinct memory, or rather intuition of higher intelligences; and there you would come, I take it, upon the very personal essence, which originally impressed itself in the manner imagined (or some other) upon the realm of intelligence outside itself. Anyhow the fancy of such simulacra existing by themselves in the air or ether, and imposing themselves on us as the living persons who threw them off, seems a fantastic and baseless one. But, indeed, you might imagine (nay, *you must*) the objective influence, the bodily influence of a given person upon the intelligences external to him, always to remain, so as to be capable of reproduction under favouring circumstances. And that seems to me all we can affirm in this connection with certainty.

But the general question, how far these material appearances are "lying wonders," diabolically, or by some evil agency, produced in order to deceive, must, I think, remain an open one for the present. This was the opinion of Henry More, as it is, I suppose, that of Mr. Harris. Yet the disposition among our fathers to

attribute *every* abnormal or supernatural manifestation out of the pale of orthodoxy, and even in it, to "devils," is surely of questionable praiseworthiness : what chance would the founders of a new religion have had with them? For even in cases of apparent moral excellence of teaching, it may always be urged that Satan may "be transformed into an angel of light." If an angel ever does appear, he must be taken for a devil; and yet why? What if St. Paul had so treated the vision at Damascus?

But what are the *fruits* of spiritualism? That is the practical test. I suppose orthodoxy does not recognise goblins and fairies of *neutral* character, though loving pranks and mischief. All creatures must be either very good or very bad, lost or saved. But the whole question is still an open one with me—except so far as there being extra-terrene intelligences other than those of men in the body at work : that I can hardly consider an open question.

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