

ON THE THRESHOLD

OF A

New World of Thought

AN EXAMINATION OF THE PHENOMENA OF
SPIRITUALISM

BY

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*"Wherever there is the slightest possibility of the mind of man to know,
there is a legitimate problem for Science."*—PROF. KARL PEARSON.

LONDON :

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER AND CO.

1908.

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To the Dear Memory

OF ONE WHOSE RADIANT FAITH GAVE HER
“THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR” AND
NEEDED NOT THE “EVIDENCE OF THINGS UNSEEN”
WHICH THIS LITTLE BOOK MAY POSSIBLY GIVE TO
SOME SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH.

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P R E F A C E .

THIS little book was written and printed more than twelve years ago, but its publication was withheld for the following reason :—

In Section 13, p. 25, reference is made to the remarkable phenomena which occurred with an Italian medium, Eusapia Paladino, and a foot-note gives some details of the phenomena which took place in the presence of Sir Oliver Lodge and Professor C. Richet, in 1894, when this medium was secluded on a small island in the Mediterranean.* Subsequently, a series of experiments were made with Eusapia at Cambridge in 1895, in which the late Dr. Hodgson, Professor Sidgwick, Mr. Myers, and others took part, the result being that the investigators found what seemed to them clear evidence of trickery on the part of

* For the full report see "Journal" of the S.P.R., November, 1894. I wish to correct a slight error in the foot-note mentioned above. It was Sir O. Lodge and Mr. Myers, and not Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, as stated, who aided Professor Richet and Dr. Ochorowicz in the investigation on the Ile Roubaud. It is true that both Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick had sittings later on, both there and elsewhere, with Eusapia, and at the time were favourably impressed (see "Journal" of the S.P.R., Vol. VI., pp. 339 and 345), but they took no part in the experiments referred to in the foot-note on p. 26.

the medium. Accordingly, at a meeting of the Psychical Research Society in October, 1895, Professor Sidgwick stated he desired "to withdraw altogether the limited and guarded support he had previously given to the supernatural pretensions of Eusapia," and in the "Journal" of the S.P.R. for April, 1896, he announced that, in accordance with the established custom of the Society when a medium is discovered to be fraudulent, the performances of Eusapia would in future be disregarded.

Before all this occurred, an edition of this book had been printed, and upon submitting a copy to Professor Sidgwick he strongly urged that all references to Eusapia should be cut out, adding, "We of the S.P.R. should always be prepared to lose our reputations, but there is no reason why we should throw them away," as he believed would be the case if any credence were attached to Eusapia's pretensions.

It was impossible to ignore the opinion of one for whom I entertained so profound a respect and affection, and yet it appeared equally impossible to ignore the searching investigation made in 1894 by Sir Oliver Lodge, and also by other eminent scientific men on the Continent, which had led them to testify strongly in favour of Eusapia's power. It seemed better, therefore, to wait until fresh and more conclusive evidence was forthcoming. Moreover, I felt that if Eusapia were really nothing but a clever and systematic impostor, able to deceive such trained scientific investigators as Lodge, Richet, Schiaparelli, and others, this would certainly shake the value of *all* testimony to the

supernormal and undermine the stability of many of the conclusions reached in this little volume. Hence I decided not to publish this address if Eusapia were further discredited, and meanwhile suspended my judgment on the whole matter.

Shortly after the Cambridge experiments both Professor C. Richet and Mr. F. W. H. Myers made further tests of Eusapia's powers, taking special precautions against fraud, the result being that they were convinced of the supernormal character of the phenomena, and publicly stated this. But it was desirable to wait for still further evidence. This has now arrived in abundance from new and independent witnesses, whose authority cannot be gainsaid. During the last few years, and in the present year, a consensus of opinion in favour of Eusapia has been arrived at by several notable scientific men in Italy (including the eminent criminologist, Professor Lombroso), who have conducted a series of critical and independent investigations of this extraordinary psychic. I have given a brief outline of some of these results in an Appendix (E), to which I desire to draw attention. In that Appendix I have endeavoured to throw some light on the conflicting opinions entertained about Eusapia.

There seems, therefore, no longer any reason to defer the issue of this book.* Upon reading it through, after the lapse of nearly thirteen years, I have no wish to recall

* A decision largely due to the insistence of a friend (Miss Ramsden) who had read the proof-sheets and had kindly collected for me a mass of recent evidence on behalf of Eusapia.

the opinions expressed nor the conclusions to which I had been led. Having approached the subject with a detached mind, and devoted much time during the last thirty-five years to the experimental investigation of psychical phenomena, it cannot be said that these conclusions are the result of hasty and superficial examination.

I should, however, have preferred to ~~have~~ ^{have} rewritten this little volume; for, owing to the fact that it grew out of an address, and was subsequently expanded, it is somewhat discursive, and the composition and arrangement leave much to be desired.*

It will be noticed that in this address Sir W. Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge are referred to without their titles, they having received the well-merited honour of knighthood since this book was printed in 1895. It is also noticeable that a more intelligent and wider interest is now taken in psychical research than was the case when this address was delivered. This, no doubt, is largely due to the work of the Society for Psychical Research and the scholarly presentation of that work in the two volumes on "Human Personality" which we owe to the brilliant genius and indefatigable labour of the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers. The loss we have suffered in his death appears irreparable, and one cannot but mourn how the ruthless hand of death has swept away so many of the pioneers in our researches, dear and honoured friends, who were living

* Here I may mention that I am indebted to Miss Julia Wedgwood for reading the proof-sheets and making many valuable suggestions and additions, of which, unfortunately, I could not avail myself in the present edition, which had already been printed off.

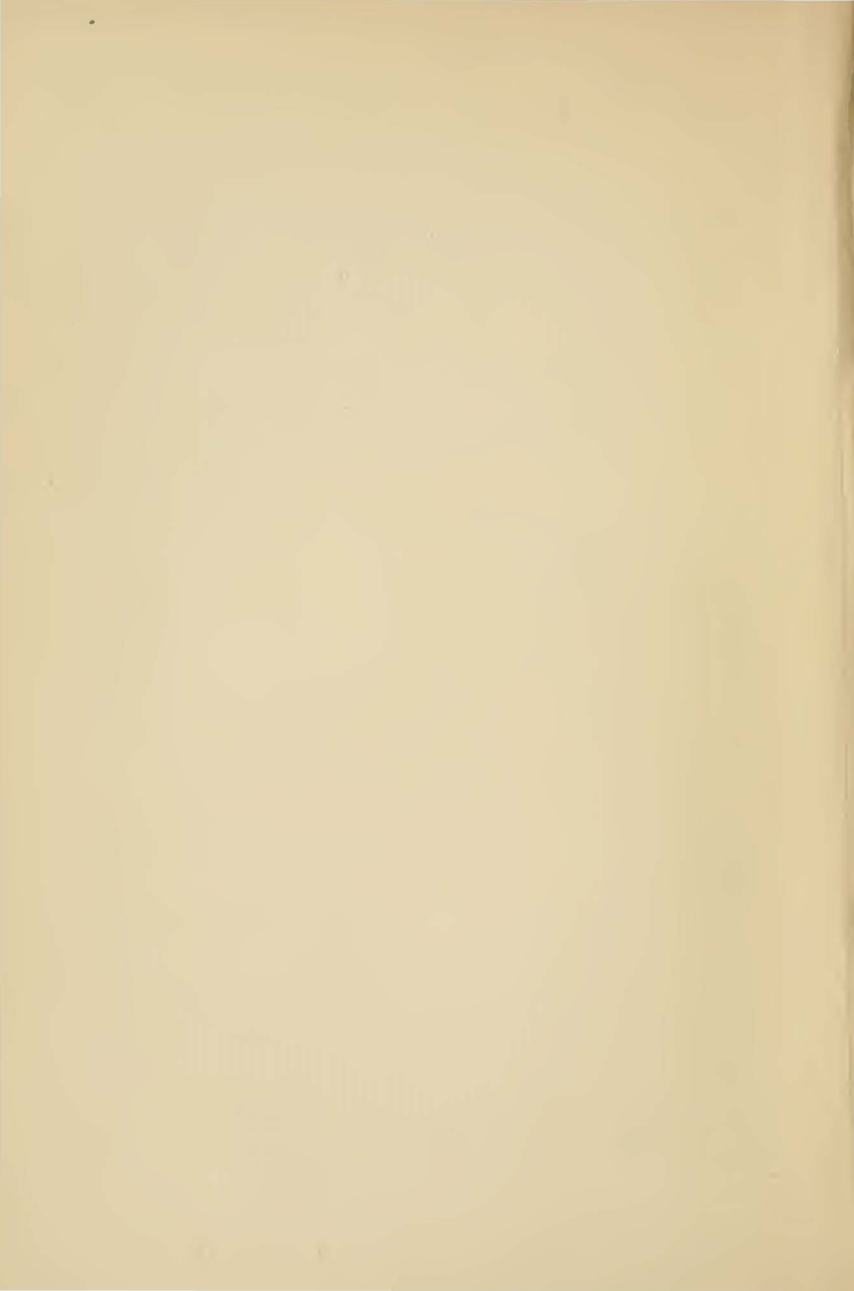
when this book was printed. Professor H. Sidgwick, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Dr. Hodgson, and Mr. C. C. Massey have all passed into the unseen, together with some others whose names occur in these pages. These no longer need to ask :

“Is there an answering voice from the void,
Or vain and worthless my passionate prayer ;
Are all my hopes for ever destroyed
In blackness of darkness, depth of despair ?”

W. F. BARRETT.

Kingstown, Co. Dublin.

April, 1908.



INTRODUCTION.

THERE are many people, and their number is rapidly increasing, who feel, as Professor Henry Sidgwick has said, that "it is a scandal the dispute as to the reality of the marvellous phenomena of Spiritualism should still be going on ; phenomena of which it is quite impossible to exaggerate the scientific importance, if only a tenth part of what has been alleged by generally credible witnesses could be shown to be true." Taking an unprejudiced view of the subject, such persons are anxious to know what amount of truth underlies the alleged facts. To these this little book may be of service.

There are others who, whilst not denying that the subject may possibly be a legitimate object of scientific investigation, prefer to give the whole matter a wide berth ; contending either that it is a worthless will-o'-the-wisp, luring its victims, by an imaginary prospect of knowledge, into a miserable morass, or that it is distinctly forbidden by the Scriptures and condemned by the Church, so that its practice, and some would even add its investigation, is unlawful.

On the other hand, the popular habit of thought, whether lay or scientific, regards the whole thing as too contemptible for any inquiry, that it reeks, not of the bottomless pit, but of the dunghill ; superstition, fraud, and tomfoolery amply accounting for all the alleged "phenomena." In a busy world, occupied with other things—where the fierce struggle for material existence, wealth, and position dominates everything—such a state of mind is very natural. But I have failed to find that a single person who ridicules Spiritualism has given to the subject any serious and patient consideration ; moreover, I venture to assert that any fair-minded person who devotes to its careful and dispassionate investigation as many days, or even hours, as some of us have given years, will find it impossible to continue sitting in the seat of the scornful, whatever other position he may take up.

There are, however, some able thinkers who decline to accept or even investigate these phenomena on the ground that with our limited faculties successful investigation is impossible, and with our present limited knowledge whatever results are obtained would probably be misinterpreted, so that any conclusions drawn as to the supernormal character of the phenomena are worthless, or, at any rate, to be distrusted. Hence they regard with complacency the many shallow *quidnuncs*, ever on the look-out for something new, who find in fourth-hand stories of "spooks" abundant material for the entertainment of their friends.

Finally, there are those—among whom are included some of the most cultured minds and acute investigators of the present day—who have satisfied themselves of the genuineness of the phenomena of Spiritualism, and are profoundly impressed with the issues opened up and the

vast movement of thought the general acceptance of the phenomena would create. Some, it is true, desire to suspend their judgment as to the complete explanation of these phenomena, whilst a surprisingly large number unreservedly accept Spiritualism as an "assurance of things hoped for," a solace in the darkest hours of bereavement, or even as a heavenly light falling

" Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God."

It was to this last class of thinkers that the substance of this address was delivered in 1894, in response to an invitation from the London Spiritualist Alliance to address their annual meeting. Although not a member of that body, and to some extent differing from their opinions, I feel that all engaged in psychical research should gratefully recognise the work done by these and other seekers after truth who, in spite of frequent contumely, have been the courageous pioneers in this difficult region of inquiry.

There can be little doubt that the reason for the impatience with which orthodox science regards psychical research in general, is the difficulty of finding an adequate explanation of the phenomena. For, as Mr. C. C. Massey has pointed out:—

When we see *how* a thing can have happened we are much more ready to give a fair hearing to evidence that it *has* happened, than when the material offered is quite indigestible by our intelligence. And thus an explanatory hypothesis is hardly less necessary for the reception of facts of a certain character, than are facts for the support of a hypothesis.*

The insistence of the demand for some explanation of these phenomena which we find within us, is only a special

* Preface to Du Prel's "Philosophy of Mysticism."

case of that "continuous pressure of the causal instinct" which characterises our reason; and it is because of the difficulty of finding any adequate explanation of them in known causes, that science distrusts the existence of the phenomena themselves. The reasoning faculty, in rejecting every known cause as inadequate, satisfies its unrest by rejecting the *occurrences* as improbable or unproved. In truth, there is, strictly speaking, *no* scientific explanation of the higher phenomena of Spiritualism. Secondary causes, with which science deals, are only antecedents or previous states of a phenomenon, and have more remote antecedents or previous states, which, in turn, need to be accounted for, and so on in an endless chain; thus to the scientific materialist God necessarily becomes an infinite *et cetera*.

With a real or true cause—still less with the ultimate cause of things—science cannot grapple.* A real cause, though of limited range, we find in ourselves, in our personality; and such a cause, perhaps of wider range, we find in the intelligence that lies behind many of the phenomena here discussed. But the operation of unseen intelligences—who, in some unknown manner, can affect us, and also affect material things around us, just as our personality can affect the grey matter of our brain, and through it things outside ourselves—this, although it may be a true cause, is as far beyond scientific explanation as the phenomenon of consciousness itself. Until science can explain how consciousness is related to the brain, which, although a fact of daily experience, is wholly unknown, we cannot expect from it any explanation as to how *discarnate* intelligences can operate upon matter, or whence the energy is derived.

* See on this subject the remarkably suggestive and able work, "Personality, Human and Divine," by Canon Illingworth.

No doubt the popular hesitation in accepting unseen intelligences as a cause of these phenomena arises not so much from inability to explain the *modus operandi*, but from a preconceived theory that such an explanation is impossible, and perhaps also from the fear of being laughed at as unscientific or superstitious in adopting it. Nevertheless, as Lowell says :—

“ We see but half the causes of our deeds,
Seeking them wholly in the outer life,
And heedless of the encircling spirit world,
Which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us
All germs of pure and world-wide purposes.”

W. F. BARRETT.

August, 1895.





A NEW WORLD OF THOUGHT.

AN ADDRESS,

§ 1.

THE philosopher Fichte has said: "Everything great and good upon which our present existence rests, and from which it has proceeded, exists only because noble and wise men have resigned the enjoyments of life for the sake of ideas."* What a man *affirms* is the idea he has made his own, and this is always interesting and generally worth listening to; and what a society of men affirm and continue unshaken to affirm through years of opposing prejudice, or may be of persecution, is certainly a matter to which every honest lover of truth should give some heed. On the other hand, what a man *denies* (unless the denial be a concealed affirmation, such, for example, as the denial of perpetual motion, which is only another way of affirming the law of the conservation of energy), or what a body of men agree to deny, is either quite valueless or, at best, simply evidence of the rarity or novelty of those things which others affirm to exist. Thus for a man, or a hundred thousand men, to deny the existence of, say, the telephone (as some eminent scientific sceptics in 1877 did in my hear-

* Fichte's Werke, Vol. VII., p. 41.

ing) is of no importance compared with one competent witness who declares he has seen and heard the telephone.

Now, I am speaking to an Association which affirms the truth of Spiritualism. You have had in your own experience indubitable evidence of the existence of phenomena entirely new to the science of to-day—phenomena which receive their simplest solution upon the hypothesis of a spiritual world and of intelligent beings therein, able through certain channels at times to communicate with us: or you have satisfied yourself on this point by careful study of the abundant evidence that exists, or by the combined testimony of persons on whose judgment you rely and whose word you respect; in the same way that you believe America exists, though you may not have been there, or that you believe iron exists in the sun, though you may not have been able to repeat the experiments or even to follow the reasoning which has led to this conclusion.

§ 2.

But it is not only the large and thoughtful body of men and women you represent that has arrived at this belief; multitudes of men and women in all parts of the world have come to a similar belief. As our honoured friend, the great naturalist, Dr. A. R. Wallace, has stated in an article in "Chambers' Encyclopædia," "Spiritualism has grown and spread continuously till, in spite of ridicule, misrepresentation, and persecution, it has gained converts in every grade of society and in every civilised portion of the globe. It has its full proportion of believers in the foremost ranks of science, literature, and art, and in all the learned professions." This does not, of course, *prove* it to be true any more than "the theory of

phlogiston" is true, or "the emission theory of light" is true, or the theory of "the immutability of species" is true, though these things were held as fundamental articles of faith by the chemists, the physicists, and the biologists of a generation or two ago. To believe these theories to-day would expose a man to the same scorn as to deny them would have done a century ago. And rightly so, for we have now evidence that was wanting then, and other beliefs, more in accordance with our present knowledge, have taken their place.

No such change has, however, taken place in the belief you hold; it stretches back to a remote past;* it has grown in strength and definiteness with the accumulating evidence that has been forthcoming from year to year and from place to place. Neither the blazing light of public opinion, nor the exact and rigorous methods of modern scientific research, have destroyed it. Nor has first-hand evidence of the phenomena been restricted to wayfaring men and fools; it has been obtained by some of the acutest intellects of the day, who have unhesitatingly avowed their belief in what you profess. I do not need to remind you of those eminent men still living who hold your faith. Others no less eminent held it in the last generation, such, for

* Cf. Myers' "Classical Essays," p. 83, *et seq.* See also Howitt's "History of the Supernatural," Vol. I., Chapter IX.

Delitzsch, in his "Biblical Psychology," Sect. XVII., shows that "table turning" was practised in many Jewish circles in the seventeenth century; the "table springs up even when laden with many hundred-weight." In a work published in 1614 this is denounced as magic. Zebi, in 1615, defends the practice as not due to magic but to the power of God, "for we sing to the table sacred psalms and songs, and it can be no devil's work where God is remembered." To which the obvious rejoinder is St. James ii. 19. But, going back 2,000 years, we find a prominent feature in the enlightened creed of the early *Essenes* was their belief in spiritualism, tending to angel worship. In fact, the tenets of this mystic sect resembled in several other things the views held by many modern Spiritualists.

example, as the venerable German philosopher and nobleman, Hermann von Fichte (son of the more famous Gottlieb Fichte from whom I quoted just now), who in the full maturity of his powers, said : " I feel it my duty to bear testimony to the great fact of Spiritualism " ; or our own great exposé of fallacies and paradoxes, De Morgan, who wrote in 1863 : " I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called *spiritual* which cannot be taken by any rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake."* Similar testimony, as you know, has been borne by men eminent in all departments of learning, whether in science or in theology, in literature or in law.†

§ 3.

Let us, then, ask ourselves why in an age pre-eminent for its fearless inquiry, and for the daring advance that has been made in regions where ignorance has for centuries reigned supreme—why has not more advance been made in a direction which would appear to be so important ? Surely the supreme problem for science to solve if she can, is whether life, as we know it, can exist without protoplasm, or whether we are but the creatures of an idle day ; whether the present life is the entrance to an infinite and unseen world beyond, or " the Universe but a soulless interaction of atoms, and life a paltry misery closed in the grave." And although the province of religion is the region of faith, yet,

* Preface of "From Matter to Spirit." Longmans, 1863.

† An admirable summary of the statements made by distinguished individuals who have been led to a belief in Spiritualism, is given by Dr. A. R. Wallace in his "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism."

surely, as a handmaid to faith, the evidence afforded by Spiritualism ought to be welcomed by it. Yet, strangely enough, it is these two great authorities, Science and Religion, which have hitherto blocked the way. And when we ask the leaders of thought in each to give us the ground for their opposition, we find their reasons are mutually destructive.

Our scientific teachers deny the possibility of mind without a material brain, or of any information or knowledge being gained except through the recognised channels of sensation. But our religious teachers stoutly oppose this; they assert that a spiritual world does exist, and that the inspired writings contain a system of knowledge supersensuously given to man. Both views cannot be true, yet both are urged in antagonism to Spiritualism. Their common ground is that all extension of our existing knowledge in their respective departments must only come through the legitimate channels they prescribe; in the one case the channel is that bounded by the known senses, and the known properties of matter, and in the other the channel is that sanctioned by Authority. Everything outside these channels is heresy, and must be discredited. I am, of course, speaking generally, for we all know eminent men, both in science and theology, who take a broader and more rational view. Albeit, there is a great deal to be said on behalf of orthodoxy. It is by no means a misfortune that for the sake of peace the world generally adopts the advice Douglas Jerrold gave the rising generation:—

Opinions current in the world
Adopt with deep respect;
New fangled thoughts and things, at once,
My prudent son, reject.

The inertia of Conservatism is useful, nay, even necessary, in helping to suppress rash or hasty deviation from the recognised order of things; hence mere aberrations of intellect meet with a steady resistance, but that which is true, however novel it may be, has a resiliency which grows stronger the greater the resistance it encounters, and finally wins its way among our cherished and enduring possessions.

§ 4.

Before passing from this part of my subject, however, let me say that I think there *are* fair reasons both science and religion might give for their opposition to this subject (nor has the effect of their opposition been by any means an unmixed evil). In an address which I will refer to more particularly later on, the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour has well stated one of these reasons. He says: "If we took it by itself we should say that scientific men have shown in connection with it * a bigoted intolerance, an indifference to strictly scientific evidence, which is, on the face of it, discreditable. I believe that although the course they pursued was not one which it is very easy rationally to justify, nevertheless there was a great deal more of practical wisdom in it than might appear at first sight."† He then proceeds to show that as no nation or age can do more than the special work which lies before it at the time, so natural science, during its comparatively short life, has had enough to do in building up the whole body of the natural and experimental sciences, which within the last century

* Mr. Balfour is here speaking of mesmerism, but the remarks equally apply to Spiritualism.

† "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychological Research. Vol. X., p. 4.

have been reconstructed from top to bottom. If science had at first attempted to include in its survey not only physical but psychical phenomena, it might for a century have lost itself in dark and difficult regions, and the work of science to-day would then have been less, not more, complete.

I quite agree with this. Not only had our knowledge of nature to be first learnt, but the foundation of our *scientific faith in the undeviating order of nature* had also to be laid, by the investigation of the laws of matter and motion and the discovery of the orderly evolution of life. What science has now established, and holds as eternally true, is that the universe is a *cosmos*, not a chaos, that amidst all the mutability of visible things there is no capriciousness, no disorder ; that in the interpretation of nature, however entangled or obscure the phenomena may be, we shall never be put to intellectual confusion. The magnificent procession of phenomena in the midst of which we stand ; the realms and magnitudes above us, too vast for the mind to grasp ; the molecules and movements around us, too minute or too rapid for the eye to see or the mind to conceive, are all marching to the music of a Divine and Eternal order. On this system of the orderly government of the world, our faith in a Supreme Being is rooted ; on it are founded the arguments of Butler and other philosophers. The progress of modern science has made this faith an integral part of our daily life, whether we regard the Supreme as an impersonal power or as a beneficent Father. Now, if instead of investigating *natural* phenomena (I use that term in its common meaning, all phenomena are, strictly speaking, natural, only the Deity is *supernatural**) science had first grappled with supernormal phenomena, I doubt whether

* See Appendix A.

it would have yet emerged from the abyss; certainly it would not have reached its present assured belief in a reign of Law. We believe that law governs these obscure phenomena as it does those of chemistry or physics, but the appearances are so elusive, the causes so entangled, that we need the steadying influence of the habit of thought engendered by science to enable us patiently and hopefully to pursue our way.

§ 5.

And so with the Hebrew religion. The seers and prophets of the Old Testament were the statesmen and men of science of their day: they were in advance of the people, because their thinking was based upon a philosophy illuminated with the Divine idea,—the idea that through all the strife of nature and men one eternal purpose runs. And from Moses to Isaiah we find them united in warning the people against any attempts to peer into and forecast the future, or meddling with psychical phenomena for this or any lower purpose. *Divination, enchantment, witchcraft, astrology, and sorcery* were various methods of augury, or of attempts to inflict injury on an enemy, veiled in a cloud of mystery to impress the beholder; and *necromancy*, or the attempt to hold communication with the dead, seems to have been resorted to chiefly for the same purpose.* These practices were condemned in unmeasured terms by the Hebrew prophets, and this irrespective of any question as to whether the phenomena were genuine or merely the product of trickery and superstition. They were prohibited—as a study of the whole subject undoubtedly shows—not only, or chiefly, because they were the practice, and part of

* See Appendix B.

the religious rites, of the pagan nations around, but mainly because they tended to obscure the Divine idea, to weaken the supreme faith in, and reverent worship of, the One Omnipotent Being, whom the nation was set apart to proclaim. And the reason was obvious. With no knowledge of the great world order which we now possess, the intellectual and moral sense of the people would be confounded by these psychical phenomena. Still worse, a sense of spiritual confusion would probably ensue. Not only might the thought, the industry, and the politics of the nation be hampered or paralysed by giving heed to an oracle rather than to the dictates of reason, but the calm unwavering faith of the nation in an infinitely wise and righteous Ruler of all might be shaken. Instead of the "arm of the Lord" beyond and above them, a motley crowd of pious, lying, vain, or jibbering spirits would seem to people the unseen; and weariness, perplexity, and, finally, despair would enervate and destroy the nation. As a learned and suggestive theologian has recently said: "Augury and divination wearied a people's intellect, stunted their enterprise, distorted their conscience. Isaiah saw this and warned the people: 'Thy spells and enchantments with which thou hast wearied thyself have led thee astray.' And in later years, Juvenal's strong conscience expressed the same sense of the wearisomeness and waste of time of these practices."*

With this, I am sure, many of us can sympathise, as we have felt much the same in the quest of these elusive phenomena. But beyond this weariness, which in the search for truth we must endure, the perils which beset the ancient world in the pursuit of psychical knowledge do not

* G. A. Smith's "Isaiah," Vol. I., p. 199.

apply to *scientific* investigation to-day, which is based on the acknowledged omnipresence of order.

§ 6.

It is true there still exists very widely among Christian men and women a deep repugnance to the whole scope of our inquiries. This feeling I wish to treat with the deep respect which I feel for those who entertain it, many of them dear and honoured friends. The aversion so felt is based, I believe, partly upon the warnings contained in the Scriptures, to which I have alluded, and partly upon the more general ground that our investigations are an attempt to force an illegitimate entrance into the spiritual realm, a presumptuous effort to draw aside the veil, which both Scripture and our most sacred feelings have closed over the portals of death. What have we to say to this? I think it largely arises from a misconception of our position. I have already dealt with the ground upon which those magnificent men, the Jewish prophets, so strenuously forbade all psychical inquiry—grounds most wise and rational then, but inapplicable now. In the New Testament the ground, to some extent, changes; unmistakable warnings are uttered of the spiritual dissipation and danger which the early Christians would suffer if they allowed their religion to be degraded by the spiritual thaumaturgy still prevalent among neighbouring nations. The civilised world of that time believed in the existence of demons or spirits in the air, and the illuminated spiritual insight of the Apostles saw (and I, for one, believe we shall all see this more clearly as our knowledge grows,) that the unseen was full of spiritual creatures (not only discarnate men), whose influence was sometimes good but more often evil; that it was necessary to try the spirits; and further, that the

foundation of religious life, which consisted of *faith* in a risen Lord, was seriously imperilled when the seen was substituted for the unseen, the phantasms of the spiritualistic séance for the realities of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The same peril exists to-day, and through all time will continue to exist. This every thoughtful and reverent mind must admit, and it is a distinct warning against making a *religion* of Spiritualism. But what has this to do with the study of the phenomena as a branch of physical or psychological science? Whatever be the power or intelligence behind these phenomena, the fact that it manifests itself to us—that, directly or indirectly, it impinges on our senses, and so affects our perceptive faculties, or can leave a permanent automatic record of its presence—this fact not only places Spiritualism within the pale of legitimate experimental inquiry, but invites and demands the attention of science. It may be that the phenomena are so elusive, depend so largely on conditions beyond our control, such as the volition of unseen agents, that we shall never arrive at the laws that underlie them. But that need not prevent our observing, recording, and classifying the phenomena, noting the physical and psychical conditions most favourable to their production, and the variations induced by a change in these conditions. Only thus can we hope to link the unknown to the known, and so to correlate these obscure phenomena with the general body of recognised knowledge. Until this is done they will remain an outstanding puzzle, and the educated world will continue to shun them.

§ 7.

Let us remember that there are two wholly distinct aspects in the study of Spiritualism. One is the question of

fact, the other is a belief and a hope founded on the facts. The first is the region of science, the second is that of faith; for faith, as we are told, "is the assurance of things hoped for,"* whereas science is an organised body of knowledge, or, as John Stuart Mill defined it, "a collection of truths :— the language of science is this is, or this is not ; this does or does not happen. Science takes cognisance of a phenomenon and endeavours to ascertain its law." Now the function, to some extent, of your Association, and wholly of the Society for Psychical Research, is strictly scientific ; its business is to apply known scientific methods to the study of the whole range of obscure psychical phenomena hitherto neglected by any organised society. The caution with which the Society for Psychical Research proceeds is characteristic of all scientific investigation, and is doubly necessary in a region where there are so many pitfalls for the unwary. But if it builds up slowly it builds securely, and next to the addition of fresh knowledge within its domain, it welcomes most heartily that investigator who can prove that any of the conclusions at which it has arrived are incorrect. We have no retaining-fee on behalf of telepathy or of ghosts, no vested interest in the supernatural. Theories, however plausible, that do not cover the whole of the facts observed must be rejected ; superstition reverses this process, but science should know nothing of prejudices and prepossessions. As Sir John Herschel has well said : "The perfect observer will have his eyes, as it were, opened, that they may be struck at once with any occurrence which, according to received theories, *ought not* to happen, for these are the facts which serve as clues to new discoveries ;" and he even adds elsewhere :

* Heb. xi. 1 (Revised Version).

“The true philosopher should hope all things not impossible, believe all things not unreasonable.”*

Now the general body of Spiritualists--who even outside Great Britain have their hundred journals and number some millions of people—are held together by a common faith ; they have had evidence which to them has been sufficient. I am not speaking of your Association, which is, I take it, a semi-scientific organisation, but of the body of Spiritualists you will agree with me when I say that their methods cannot with strict accuracy be called *scientific*. Whatever “assurance of things hoped for” they may have obtained, they can hardly be said, in a scientific sense, to “have *proved* the things not seen.” But if they have erred, science, as I shall show presently, has erred not less grievously, and more reprehensibly (because its knowledge and responsibility are greater), in not keeping its eyes open, as Sir John Herschel has said, to occurrences which, according to received theories, ought *not* to happen. Be this as it may, it is desirable that unscientific Spiritualists should recognise that their faith is foolishness, unless the facts on which it is based can be incontestably established in the dry and clear light of science. And even then, when we have got the kernel of truth out of its present hard and unattractive husk, these phenomena cannot be a religion—in the sense in which that word is defined by St. James, or as denoting the awe, contrition, and self-surrender of soul, which prompts us to worship the Divine Being and obey His will rather than our own. The attempt to make of them a religious cult is to return to the darkness of Egyptian and Chaldean magic, to pass out of the light of Christianity which has shined upon us, and to “dwell in

* “Discourse on Natural Philosophy,” secs. 5 and 127.

the land of the shadow of death.”* At the same time I, for one, increasingly feel that these psychical phenomena will not only be an inexhaustible mine for scientific research, but will also be of inestimable value in destroying a materialism which is eating into the heart of religion. As an aid to faith they are certainly to be welcomed ; as an object of faith as certainly to be shunned.

§ 8.

It is necessary, therefore, to ask ourselves—what is the exact sense in which the word “Spiritualism” is used ? On the Continent this word is often replaced by the term “Spiritism” to distinguish it from the broad sense of the word as used by philosophical writers, to denote a metaphysic opposed to materialism. But the generally accepted sense in which the word is used to-day is defined (1) by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, in the article “Spiritualism,” in the last edition of the “Encyclopædia Britannica,” as “a belief that the spiritual world manifests itself by producing in the physical world effects inexplicable by the known laws of nature,” or (2) by Dr. A. R. Wallace, in “Chambers’ Encyclopædia,” as “the name applied to a great and varied series of abnormal or preter-normal phenomena, purporting to be for the most part caused by spiritual beings,” or (3) by a writer in the “Spiritual Magazine,” whose definition I curtail, as “a *science* based solely on facts open to the world through an extensive system of

* Isaiah ix. 2. The whole passage, from Isaiah viii. 19 to ix. 4, as well as Isaiah xxvi. 11-16, becomes clear in the light which modern Spiritualism throws on ancient magic. The words in Isaiah viii. 19, “familiar spirits and wizards that chirp and mutter,” are referred to in Appendix B, “peep” or “chirp” probably meaning “tapping.”

mediumship, its cardinal truth, established by experiment, being that of a world of spirits, and the continuity of the existence of the individual spirit through the momentary eclipse of death.”*

These definitions, it will be noticed, are somewhat progressive; the last is doubtless the usual meaning attached to the word by Spiritualists. I see nothing to dissent from in it, and, speaking for myself, I do not hesitate to affirm that a careful and dispassionate review of my own experiments, extending over a period of twenty years, together with the investigation of evidence, supplied to me from trustworthy sources, compels my belief in Spiritualism, as so defined. Hence, I place myself by your side, if, by so doing, I can in any way, however humble, help forward the attainment of truth.

* The Rev. Dr. Thornton, Vicar of St. John's, Notting Hill, London, gave the following comprehensive statement of the belief of Spiritualists at the Church Congress in 1881: "The doctrine of those who are said to profess Spiritualism is, if I do not misrepresent it, something of this kind: God is a Spirit and the visible universe is an expression to man of His infinite life. Man is a Spiritual being; each individual Spirit is a part of the great Over-soul, or Anima Mundi. The Spirit is enthralled in a body during this life; when released it at once enters upon the possession of higher powers and more extended knowledge; and its condition is one of regularly progressive advancement. Disembodied Spirits are able to hold converse with those in the body; not with all immediately, but through the instrumentality of privileged or specially gifted persons called mediums, who are, on occasion, influenced, or as they term it controlled, by the Spirits. Spirits can also apply force to physical objects, perform certain actions, such as writing or producing sounds; they can sometimes show themselves in materialised forms, some of the material being borrowed from the medium. A new era is dawning on us. . . . By intercourse with the Spirit-world man will advance as he has never advanced before, in knowledge, purity, and brotherly love." Dr. Thornton goes on to say, and I quite agree with him: "There is much of the Spiritualist's teaching with which the Church can most cordially agree, but there is much that is error; the personality of evil is denied, and the Scriptures displaced from the post of honour due to the written word of God." ("LIGHT," October 8th, 1881, p. 313.)

§ 9.

As I have said elsewhere,* “I am not so foolish as to suppose anything I can say will make an appreciable difference in public opinion, or that my testimony is superior to, or ought to have more weight attached to it, than that of several other observers. But it will, I hope, lead others to come forward and inform us of any unexceptionable evidence they possess, until ‘we drive the objector into being forced to admit the phenomena as inexplicable, at least by him, or to accuse the investigators either of lying, cheating, or of a blindness or forgetfulness incompatible with any intellectual condition except absolute idiocy.’” At the same time, I am sure you will all admit with me that much of what passes as evidence among certain Spiritualists has really no claim to this distinction, and is only evidence of the difficulty of preserving a sound judgment and uninterrupted attention when dealing with these obscure phenomena. Nor is this to be wondered at. When any of us have obtained what we deem conclusive proof of some amazing occurrence, and are thereby convinced, we are all apt to relax the stringency of our inquiry, and accept as corroborative evidence what to an unconvinced outsider may seem capable of quite a different and more familiar explanation. At the *outset* we all start from very much the same level; some, of course, are worse observers than others; some jump to conclusions too readily: their judgment is less valuable; but the uniformity of the laws of nature is the common experience of mankind, and the man who tells us his gooseberry bush is bearing cucumbers

* “Proceedings” of the Society for Psychological Research, Vol. IV., p. 38.

does not expect to be believed until we can verify his statement. There are some who assert that *no* evidence, however weighty, could make them believe in phenomena that appear to be impossible. The great Von Helmholtz, whose loss to science we all deplore, once said to me that "neither the testimony of all the Fellows of the Royal Society nor the evidence of his own senses would lead him to believe even in thought-transference, as it was impossible." I shall deal with what is possible and impossible presently, but the fallacy in Helmholtz's assertion arises from the common mistake of thinking belief can be given or withheld at pleasure. Belief is not a voluntary act, but an involuntary state, of the mind, arising from the evidence to which we have given our attention. We can, of course, refuse to listen to the evidence, but, having listened to it, belief or disbelief follows, whether we wish it or not, according as our judgment considers the evidence conclusive or otherwise.*

§ 10.

Here it would not be unreasonable for an outsider to ask me to relate the evidence that has come under my own observation, and has led to the faith that is in me. To some extent, I have done this in various papers, besides those in the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," for April, 1883, and March, 1886. But, as you well know, it is hardly possible to convey to others who have never witnessed any of the Spiritualistic phenomena, an adequate idea of the strength and cumulative force of the evidence that has compelled one's own belief.

* The *amount* of belief depends on the nature of the events, see § 16. In all minds the tendency is to repel the intrusion of any hostile and dis-integrating element of thought, so that attention to evidence against which we are predisposed is often a painful and difficult act of self-conquest.

I may, however, very briefly refer to two investigations, out of very many, because, in these two cases, owing to the unexceptionable nature of the evidence, belief in the genuineness of the phenomena could hardly have been withheld even by, say, our friend Mr. Podmore. The mediums were neither professional nor paid. In one the medium "F.," was a bright little child, the daughter of an English solicitor of high standing; and in the other the medium, "X.," was a lady of mature years, the relative of a leading Irish photographer. The phenomena occurred in full light; in the case of the child, in broad daylight, even sunlight; in the other case, in daylight or abundant gaslight; and every opportunity was afforded me of making the investigation as rigorous as possible. Some of the manifestations occurred in my own house, not previously entered by the medium, while all the phenomena occurring with little "F." took place in a house belonging to a personal friend, who was absent at the time and took no interest in Spiritualism. It made no difference whether anyone but myself and the medium "F." were excluded from the room, or whether others were present to check my observations. Now, what occurred were those elementary and yet astounding physical phenomena with which you are all familiar, and which I ought to apologise for describing. The most persistent and frequent occurrences were raps in different parts of the room, more or less remote from the medium and usually far out of reach of anyone present. The raps were undoubtedly objective; the exact spot could be localised and even the physical vibration felt. They were heard by all present and by strangers suddenly called in. The loudness varied from gentle ticks to loud taps such as would be made by smartly striking the table with the edge of a paper knife. The movement of furniture also occurred. Seated one day, in

full sunlight, at a large mahogany dining table, big enough to seat twelve at dinner, the little medium "F." and her parents (inquirers and, at first, sceptics like myself) being present with me, all our fingers were visibly resting on the top of the table, when three legs of the table deliberately rose off the floor to a height sufficient to enable me to put my foot beneath the castors. Let anyone try to imitate this by using all the muscular force he possesses, and he will find, as I did, that even allowing the hands to grasp the table, it cannot be done. Even more startling movements occurred in the other case with the adult medium "X." A heavy loo table in my own house pranced about in so demonstrative a manner, and made such a racket, that it was heard all over the house. This, also, was in daylight, and the movements could not have been accomplished even by the combined muscular exertions of all present. But, perhaps, the most startling phenomenon was the unexpected movement of a small table, *without the contact of any person*—a curious swaying and singularly life-like movement, the table advancing until it ultimately imprisoned me in the arm-chair in which I was sitting. Here, too, there was plenty of light; in this case it was gaslight, but sufficient to enable me to read in any part of the room, and I could plainly see that the table was untouched by anyone. To suppose that the table was moved by invisible and non-existent threads, worked by an imaginary accomplice, who must have floated in the air unseen, is a conjecture which sceptics are at liberty to make if they choose.

§ 11.

But the impressive fact in all these phenomena is the *intelligence behind them*, and the evidence of an unseen

individuality as distinct as our own. Lively repartee, a pleased assent, or a vigorous and often angry dissent, were exhibited ; the characteristics of each influence were preserved, and you felt in the presence of a living but unseen person. In the case of the little medium "F.," the characteristic of the controlling influence was pure fun ; in the case of the adult medium, it was serious purport. The information given was not beyond that possessed by the mediums, or, at any rate, by the unconscious subliminal self, and the intelligence was distinctly of the order of that of the medium. Nor can I say, from my own experience, that I have ever obtained evidence that goes beyond this. That is my misfortune, for a large amount of experimental evidence does exist, independent of Christian belief or Scriptural authority, which, in my opinion, goes far to prove that those who have once lived on this earth continue to live after "the momentary eclipse of death." Such evidence is furnished, I think : first, by apparitions of those who have recently died ; second, by the trance utterances of Mrs. Piper and others ; third, by the statements in Mr. Stainton Moses' "Spirit Identity" ; fourth, by individual experience such as Mr. Dawson Rogers and others have obtained, and given from time to time in the columns of "LIGHT" ; and fifth, by the evidence contained in Madame Home's "Life of D. D. Home," which Mr. Myers and myself have discussed in the "Journal of the Society for Psychical Research" for July, 1889. All, however, that I am prepared to assert, from my own experience, is that neither hallucination, imposture, mal-observation, mis-description, nor any other well-recognised cause can account for the phenomena I have witnessed, and that the simplest explanation is the spirit hypothesis.

A provisional theory which physiologists may propose,

when they accept the evidence we offer them, is that of an "exo-neural" action of the brain, but this will have to be a sub-conscious action, for, to our consciousness, it is unknown and undesigned. Further, this must be supplemented by a store of available energy in the unseen, which can not only be controlled and liberated by the subliminal self, but also, in some unknown way, can be made to act directly upon lifeless matter. I daresay some such view will be enunciated with an air of authority before another quarter of a century. Nor must we be surprised. We are laying the foundations of a new and spacious annexe to the temple of knowledge, and we must be prepared to see a forest of scaffolding—in the shape of theories and working hypotheses—arise. Only thus can the solid stones of fact be laid and the temple upbuilt, but we who have adventurously gained a distant glimpse of the plan can hopefully await the time when the disfiguring but needful scaffolding will be removed, and the beautiful and spacious edifice revealed—an enduring possession for those who come after us.

I will not weary you with reciting other evidence of a similar kind that has come before me. To those who are unacquainted with the wonderful phenomena that have been obtained by Professor Alexander of Rio de Janeiro, I would refer to the full details, which are given in the "Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research" for July, 1891. In this case, also, the medium was one or other of two little girls, daughters of a friend of his, and here, not only did the movement of heavy objects by unseen intelligences occur, but "direct writing," under test conditions, took place in full lamplight; an unseen hand wrote messages on a slate, touched by the child's fingers only, the writing being far superior in execution to the childish

caligraphy of the medium. Then luminous appearances presented themselves, at first a flitting, playful light, then growing in definiteness till a form was said to be seen by the little mediums, though not by others present. The clairvoyance was apparently shared by a dog, who gazed upward and barked at the figure, and at another time shared by a baby, who, gazing with astonishment, and pointing to an unseen figure, called, "Man, man," and at last said, "All gone!" Unseen hands were felt by all the sitters, caressing those present, and eventually the imprint of a tiny baby foot, far smaller than that belonging to any of the sitters present, was obtained on a school slate, over which a coating of flour had been spread.

§ 12.

I have mentioned the name of D. D. Home—in spite of the wide notoriety which he attained and the hostile spirit which he so frequently encountered I can find no *proof* of fraud in any of the amazing phenomena which were obtained through his mediumship. My friends, General and Mrs. Boldero, neither of whom were Spiritualists, gave me some evidence regarding Home which I have published in the "Journal of the Society for Psychical Research,"* but as that journal is only accessible to members and associates of

* "Journal of the Society for Psychical Research," July, 1889, pp. 127-128. Notes of what occurred were written shortly afterwards, and the evidence was independently given to me by each observer. On subsequently reading over Mrs. Boldero's evidence to her husband, the General agreed that, where a difference existed, his wife's account was more exact. A detailed account of a still more remarkable séance with Home, on February 4th, 1870, was written down by General, then Colonel, Boldero a few hours after it took place. It is, unfortunately, too long for quotation here, but is given in the Society for Psychical Research "Journal" referred to above.

the Society, I will, with your permission, quote part of it here :—

GENERAL BOLDERO'S ACCOUNT.—It was at the end of February, 1870, Home came to visit me by invitation, at my house in Coupar Fife. He arrived immediately before dinner, and after dinner we, Mrs. Boldero, Home, and myself, sat in the drawing-room for any manifestations that might occur. The room was quite light, the gas being lighted, and a bright fire burning. Home sat with his back to the fire, at a small table, with a cloth on it. I was opposite to him, and Mrs. Boldero was on his right hand. A piano and Mrs. Boldero's harp were at the end of the drawing-room some 10ft. or 12ft. away. Almost immediately some manifestations occurred ; in a little while the table moved towards the piano. I saw a hand come out on my side from under the table, pushing out the tablecloth and striking notes on the piano. Afterwards I saw a whole hand as far as the wrist appear without the tablecloth and strike the notes, playing some chords on the piano. At this time Home was some distance off, and it was physically impossible for him to have struck the piano. It was equally impossible for him to have used his foot for the purpose. I was perfectly confident at the time and am now that trickery on the part of Home was out of the question. After that some chords were faintly struck on the harp standing immediately behind me. We asked for them to play louder, and a reply came by raps, "We have not power." Then voices were heard speaking together in the room, two different persons, judging from the intonation. We could not make out the words spoken, as Home persisted in speaking to us all the time. We remonstrated with him for speaking, and he replied, "I spoke purposely that you might be convinced the voices were not due to any ventriloquism on my part, as this is impossible when anyone is speaking in his natural voice." Home's voice was quite unlike that of the voices heard in the air.

MRS. BOLDERO'S ACCOUNT OF THE SAME SÉANCE.—On February 28th, 1870, Home arrived at our house shortly before

dinner. After dinner we agreed to sit in the drawing-room at a square card-table near the fire. In a few minutes, a cold draught of air was felt on our hands and knockings occurred. Several messages of no consequence came, questions being asked and answered. I was exhorted to pray more. A rustling of dresses was heard, as of a stiff silk dress in the room. [General Boldero recollects this also.] My gold bracelet was unclasped whilst my hands were on the table, and fell upon the floor. [General Boldero agrees to this.] My dress was pulled several times. I think I asked if the piano could be played; it stood at least 12ft. or 14ft. away from us. Almost at once the softest music sounded. I went up to the piano and opened it. I then saw the keys depressed, but no one playing. I stood by its side and watched it, hearing the most lovely chords; the keys seemed to be struck by some invisible hands; all this time Home was far distant from the piano. Then a faint sound was heard upon my harp, as of the wind blowing over its strings. I asked if it could be played louder; an answer came, there was insufficient power. Later on in the evening, we distinctly heard two voices talking together in the room; the voices appeared to come from opposite corners, from near the ceiling, and apparently proceeded from a man and child, but we could not distinguish the words. They sounded far off. Home was talking the whole time the voices were heard, and gave as his reason that he might not be accused of ventriloquism. During the whole of this séance, the whole room seemed to be *alive* with something, and I remember thinking that no manifestation would surprise me, feeling that the power present could produce anything. Home himself remarked that he had rarely had so satisfactory a séance. Throughout, Home seemed to be intensely, and very genuinely, interested in the whole séance. I am perfectly sure that Home could not possibly have played the piano himself; his touching it was wholly out of the question. General Boldero saw a hand playing on the piano, but I did not see this.*

* Appendix C.

§ 13.

If it is urged these things took place some time ago—though I fail to see what difference that makes if the evidence is good—I would point to the remarkable phenomena going on at Milan at the present time through the mediumship of Eusapia Paladino, and which have been witnessed and attested by some of the most eminent and critical English and Continental observers. I am not at liberty to anticipate the paper, even if I knew its contents, that will be shortly presented to the Society for Psychical Research on this subject. But you have already had in “LIGHT”—a journal which is a standing memorial of hard work and honesty of purpose, and which deserves a very wide circulation from the freshness and variety of its contents—for April and May of last year a report of the commission of inquiry on the phenomena attending Eusapia Paladino. The commission consisted of five professors of medical or physical science, three doctors of physics or of philosophy, and one Russian Councillor of State; the names including men of world-wide reputation, such as Professor Lombroso, Professor Schiaparelli, Professor Charles Richet, &c., and the phenomena they describe are similar to those that occurred in the presence of D. D. Home. Even although the delicate psychical conditions which underlie these manifestations prevented this commission, and will probably always prevent us, from getting the same exact evidence which we obtain, say, for a new chemical element, yet this ought not to surprise any student of experimental psychology; on the contrary, it is an additional testimony that the phenomena really are, what we believe them to be, glimpses of a transcendental world.*

* The important paper by Dr. Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., referred to above has since been read before the Society for Psychical Research, on October

§ 14.

Returning now to the question we asked at the beginning of this paper—Why has all this weight of past and present testimony not made more impression on the educated world of to-day? Partly because no explanation of the observed phenomena can be given in terms of our existing knowledge, the facts will not fit received theories, and, as Goethe said to Eckermann, “In the sciences, what has been laid down and learnt at the schools is regarded as *property*. Comes now one with something new, opposed to, or even

26th, 1894, and is referred to in “LIGHT” for November 3rd. In it Dr. Lodge, after the most searching investigation, in which he was aided by Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, gives the deservedly high authority of his name to the “real and objective existence” of most of the phenomena long asserted to occur by Spiritualists. Dr. Lodge states:—

“The things for which I wish specially to vouch, as being the most easily and securely observed, and as being amply sufficient in themselves to establish a scientifically unrecognised truth, are (always under conditions such as to prevent normal action on the part of the medium):—

- (1) The movements of a distant chair, visible in the moonlight, under circumstances such as to satisfy me that there was no direct mechanical connection.
- (2) The distinct and persistent bulging and visible movement of a window-curtain in absence of wind or other ostensible cause.
- (3) The winding-up and locomotion of the untouched *châlet*. [A musical cigar-box, shaped like a *châlet*.]
- (4) The sounding of the notes of the untouched accordion and piano.
- (5) The turning of the key on the inside of the sitting-room door, its removal on to the table, and subsequent replacement in door.
- (6) The audible movements and gradual inversion of an untouched heavy table, situated behind the medium and out of the circle; and the finding it inverted afterwards.
- (7) The visible raising of a heavy table under conditions in which it would be ordinarily impossible to raise it.
- (8) The appearance of blue marks on a surface previously blank, without ostensible means of writing.
- (9) The graspings, pittings, and clutchings of my head, and arms, and back, while the head, and hands, and feet of the medium were under complete control and nowhere near the places touched.”

It is needless to add that the observers satisfied themselves that no other person had any part in these occurrences, which also included the appearance of a large hand and the outline of a large face, seen against the dim light of the night sky.

threatening quite to subvert, the Credo which we have for years repeated after others, and again handed on to others; passions are excited against him, and all means are employed to suppress him. He is resisted in any way possible; by pretending not to hear, not to understand; by speaking of the thing contemptuously, as not at all worth the trouble even to look at and inquire into it; and so a new truth may be kept long waiting till it has made a path for itself.* But another and chief reason which has prevented the general recognition of these phenomena, is because modern science, or rather the dominant school of scientific thought, is essentially, if not grossly, *materialistic*. This school, as Mr. F. W. H. Myers has eloquently said, "insists, in tones louder sometimes and more combative than the passionless air of science is willing to echo or convey, that all inquiries into man's psychical nature, all inquiries which regard him as possibly more than a portion of organised matter, are no longer open, but closed, and closed against his aspirations for ever." The materialist is imprisoned within the limits of his senses; hence a world which has no continuous relation with his senses has no existence for him. Life without ponderable matter he confidently asserts is impossible, and he prophesies that the atoms of matter contain within themselves "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life."†

This mode of thinking has become fashionable, and has even spread among the clergy. Only a few weeks ago I read in a religious newspaper a bitter attack on Professor Drummond's last book, "The Ascent of Man," by the Rev. Dr. Dallinger, F.R.S., who holds the author up to scorn be-

* Eckermann: "Gespräche mit Göthe," III., 20.

† Tyndall. Belfast Address to the British Association. "Fragments of Science," Vol. II., p. 210.

cause Drummond attempts to show (whether successfully or not is immaterial) how intellect and consciousness might be *associated* with, but are not *identified* with, the purely animal body. The reverend critic writes: "Without protoplasm—life's specific basis—there never was and never can be Instinct, and to science, *there never was and never can be Intellect*. Mind and matter are as inseverable as shadow in daylight is inseparable from substance."* If a distinguished scientific man and orthodox Christian minister can thus disregard the existence of an unseen spiritual world, need we wonder that the abundant testimony that exists on behalf of the operation of unseen intelligences is put aside by the general public as rubbish. Science having done so much for human thought and life, public opinion naturally inclines to the view held by the present school of scientific thought, which denies the possibility of any life without protoplasm, *i.e.*, a particular molecular grouping of what we may call chemical matter.

§ 15.

Even those who do not go so far as this regard psychological research, whether it be telepathy or Spiritualism, as unworthy of serious attention, because the phenomena are either (1) *impossible* or (2) *utterly trivial*; therefore in either case a sheer waste of time. For the sake of those among our friends who think thus, permit me to say a word or two in reply on each of these points.

(1) There are some things, I admit, it would be utter folly to waste our time upon, such as "circle squaring,"

* "British Weekly," Vol. XVI., pp. 226 and 242.

or "perpetual motion," &c. These things are beyond the pale of rational investigation at the present day on account of the *extent of our knowledge* in those particular regions. But there are other things which to-day appear impossible only from the *extent of our ignorance* in those directions. Such, for example, as, say, the sea serpent, thought-transference, or Spiritualistic phenomena ; a few years ago we should also have included the telephone and phonograph. The essential difference between these two classes of improbable events is that the first involves a *contradiction* of experience or of laws well established, the second involves an unforeseen *extension*, but no contradiction, of existing knowledge and experience. To assert that mind can act upon mind independently of any recognised channel of sense, or that mind can exist associated with an imperceptible form of matter, is a considerable extension of our knowledge, if true as we believe it to be, but involves no rejection or contradiction of other knowledge equally true. On the other hand, to assert that 2 and 2 make 5, and also make 4, would involve intellectual confusion ; similarly, to believe in materialism, as now understood, and in the phenomena we assert to be true, involves a contradiction of thought, and consequent intellectual confusion ; hence one or the other must be rejected. So that the "impossibility" that is urged refers, not to the phenomena themselves, but only to certain popular theories or conceptions about those phenomena.

(2) But it is urged that the utterly trivial character of the phenomena renders them too contemptible for serious inquiry. "Even if true *we don't care* for the results you obtain," is a common observation. This was doubtless the feeling that prompted the illustrious Faraday to decline any further investigation, as he stated in his well-known

letter to Sir Emerson Tennant* that he had found in the phenomena "nothing worthy of attention," or capable of supplying "any force or information of the least use or value to mankind." With all deference to one whom I knew and revered so highly, this surely was a wrong position to take up. Long ago Benjamin Franklin, most practical of men, disposed of that argument; but the whole of Faraday's great career showed he valued truth for its own sake, irrespective of any commercial consideration, and supplies the best answer to the words of his I have quoted. Nevertheless, we find to-day scientific men of the highest eminence taking precisely the same ground. They have been well answered in the very citadel of science by that distinguished physicist and courageous thinker and investigator, Professor Oliver Lodge, who again recently, in the columns of "Nature," has said (and I was glad to see the article quoted in "LIGHT"†):—

This attitude of "not caring" for the results of scientific investigation in unpopular regions, even if those results be true, is very familiar to some of us who are engaged in a quest which *both* the great leaders in the above-remembered controversy [Lord Kelvin and Professor Huxley] agree to dislike and despise. It is an attitude appropriate to a company of shareholders, it is a common and almost universal sentiment of the noble army of self-styled "practical men," but it is an astonishing attitude for an acknowledged man of science, whose whole vocation is the discovery and reception of new truth. Certain obscure facts have been knocking at the door of human intelligence for many centuries, and they are knocking now, in the most scientific era the world has yet seen. It may be that they will have to fall back disappointed for yet another few

* "Pall Mall Gazette," May 19th, 1868. The whole correspondence is given in "LIGHT," February and March, 1888.

† "LIGHT," August 11th, 1894.

centuries ; it may be that they will succeed this time in effecting a precarious and constricted right of entry ; the issue appears to depend upon the attitude of scientific men of the present and near future, and no one outside can help them.

Thirty years ago Professor De Morgan, with inimitable satire, exposed the unphilosophical and illogical position still taken up on these questions by such honoured leaders of science as Lord Kelvin and Professor Huxley. Nothing more brilliant or amusing has ever been written on the whole subject than De Morgan's preface to his wife's book, "From Matter to Spirit," and I earnestly commend its perusal to the scientific men of to-day. And to those who prefer Bishop Butler to De Morgan for their guide let me quote the following words from the "Analogy" : "After all, that which is true *must* be admitted ; though it should show us the shortness of our faculties, and that we are in no wise judges of many things, of which we are apt to think ourselves very competent ones."

§ 16.

Nevertheless it is unlikely that those who have never witnessed any of the phenomena we have been discussing will be able to believe in them fully. A natural and proper reservation of mind always accompanies the reception of evidence which is opposed to the general experience of mankind. Even Mr. Crookes writes that, in recalling the details of what he witnessed, he finds an antagonism in his mind between his reason on the one hand, and on the other the evidence of his senses, corroborated as it was by that of other witnesses who were present. Yet, as Reid states in his essay on "Mind," and as all jurists know, no counsel ever dared

offer as an argument that we ought not to put faith in the sworn testimony of trustworthy eye-witnesses because what they assert is incredible; no judge would listen to such pleading. In the same way Butler, in his "Analogy," states (Part II., chap. 7):—

Nothing can destroy the evidence of testimony in any case but a proof or probability that persons are not competent judges of the facts to which they give testimony, or that they are actually under some indirect influence in giving it in such particular case. Till this is made out the testimony must be admitted.

But, in spite of all logic, we are conscious that

"Events may be so extraordinary that they hardly can be established by testimony. We should not give credit to a man who should affirm that he saw an hundred dice thrown in the air and they all fell on the same faces. If we had ourselves been spectators of such an event, we should not believe our own eyes till we had scrupulously examined all the circumstances, and assured ourselves that there was no trick or deception. After such an examination we should not hesitate to admit it, notwithstanding its great improbability, and no one would have recourse to an inversion of the laws of vision in order to account for it. This shows that the probability of the continuance of the [recognised] laws of nature is superior, in our estimation, to every other evidence. One may judge, therefore, of the weight of testimony necessary to prove a suspension of those laws, and how fallacious it is in such cases to apply the common rules of evidence." *

Hence, Bertrand, in his "Traité du Somnambulisme," says, with regard to kindred amazing phenomena, that though by listening to weighty evidence we may conclude there are sufficient reasons for believing them, "yet one

* Laplace, "Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités," p. 76.

really *does* believe them only after having *seen* them." We may entertain a limited belief, one tempered with scepticism, but unreserved assent to miracles, ancient or modern, requires actual experience of similar marvels, or absolute faith not only in the wisdom, but also in the moral and spiritual superiority to ourselves of the person who attests them; in fact, the inner witness of our spiritual nature to what would otherwise be incredible. Albeit the position taken by St. Thomas in the Gospels does not justify the scornful attitude of many sceptics. It is utterly unphilosophical to ridicule or *deny* well-attested phenomena because they are inexplicable. Laplace, Abercrombie, Herschel, and many others might be quoted to this effect, but it is needless to verify so obvious a proposition. Only "in proportion to the difficulty there seems of admitting the facts should be the scrupulous attention we bestow on their examination."*

§ 17.

This brings me to the perfectly legitimate position which many take up, and which is justified by the caution that characterises all sound advance in knowledge. It is that the antecedent improbability of these phenomena is so great, they are so far removed from the common experience of mankind, and, moreover, they involve ideas so unrelated to our existing scientific knowledge, that, before we can accept them, we must have, not only evidence, but incontestable evidence, on their behalf.†

* See quotation on cover.

† In a paper, "On the Value of Testimony in Matters Extraordinary," Mr. C. C. Massey, following Dr. A. R. Wallace, has urged that the antecedent improbability of an event is simply equivalent to the improbability that affirmative evidence, reaching a certain standard of intrinsic value, will be forthcoming, and therefore vanishes with the occurrence of such evidence; so that adverse presumption ought never to prejudice reception

This is common sense, and obviously necessary. But it is precisely the business of science to obtain this, and it is only because the trained scientific investigator has, till recently, turned his back on these phenomena, that you and your predecessors have had to try and do the neglected work of science in this very difficult region of inquiry; and now having done it to the best of your ability, you are scorned and pelted by the educated world and told you are guilty of "intellectual whoredom," whilst your painstaking effort to enlarge the sum of human knowledge is stigmatised as the "recrudescence of superstition," and this by the leaders and organs of scientific thought, where one would have expected a welcome even to the humblest seeker after truth. I heartily agree with our great logician, De Morgan (pardon my quoting him again), who says:—

The Spiritualists, beyond a doubt, are in the track that has led to all advancement in physical science; their opponents are the representatives of those who have striven against progress. . . . I say the deluded spirit-rappers are on the right track; they have the *spirit* and the *method* of the grand old times when those paths were cut through the uncleared forests in which it is now the daily routine to walk. What was that spirit? It was the spirit of universal examination wholly unchecked by fear of being detected in the investigation of nonsense. When the Royal Society was founded the Fellows set to work to prove all things, that they might hold fast that which was good. They bent themselves to the question whether sprats were young herrings. They made a circle of the powder of a unicorn's horn

and estimation of evidence on behalf of some fact outside our experience. Hence (according to this view) we must dissent from the proposition commonly adopted that "improbability" legitimates the demand for an extraordinary amount of evidence, and have regard rather to the *positive* presumption which experience affords, that the best human testimony, after taking account of all elements of fallacy in the particular case, is only to be found co-existing with the actual fact testified to. (Appendix to translation of Zöllner's "Transcendental Physics.")

and set a spider in the middle of it; "but it immediately ran out"; they tried several times and the spider "once made some stay in the powder." Then they tried Kenelm Digby's sympathetic powder, and those members who had any of the powder of sympathy were desired to bring some of it at the next meeting.

But these childish researches, as we now see them, showed that the inquirers had really been inquiring. Then De Morgan proceeds to show that "Spiritualists have taken the *method* of the old time," that they have started a theory and seen how it works, for without a theory facts are a mob, not an army. This was the method of Newton; he started one of the most outrageous ideas that ever was conceived and tried how its consequences worked. For Newton's theory was, "that there is not a particle of salt in the salt-cellars of the most remote star in the Milky Way that is not always pull, pull, pulling every particle of salt in the salt-cellars of our earth—aye, the pepper in the pepper-boxes, too—our pepper and salt, of course, using retaliatory measures."* So the great law of gravitation came to be our heritage; rigorous investigation and overwhelming evidence on behalf of this most improbable idea has established it as a universal truth.

Again, it has now become a *scientific heresy to disbelieve* in an imperceptible, imponderable, infinitely rare and yet infinitely elastic all-pervading kind of matter, the so-called *luminiferous ether*, which is both interstellar and interatomic, a material medium of a wholly different order of matter to anything known to our senses, and the very existence of which is only known inferentially. For it is to be noted that this staggering but fruit-

* Preface of "Matter to Spirit," p. xix., *et seq.*

ful idea is based not upon direct but indirect evidence, and this notwithstanding its "antecedent improbability." Moreover, modern science has taught us that there are myriads of waves in the ether which are too short or too long to affect our unaided senses. They might for ever have been falling on us, bringing a constant stream of energy from the sun to the earth, and still we could never have become aware of their existence, or of the medium which carried them, had we trusted solely to the direct evidence of our senses. As a recent writer has said in a standard textbook, in earlier times "the suggestion of such a medium by anyone would probably be looked upon as strong evidence of insanity. Even with the double evidence of our senses which we now have in favour of a space-filling ether, there are many who would rather doubt such evidence than believe in a thing which they cannot taste or smell [or handle]. However, considering the medium as only hypothetical, the fact that it might certainly exist and fill important functions in the life of the universe and still never be detected or suspected by us, is a strong reason why the postulation of such a medium for the explanation of natural phenomena should not be branded as irrational or unphilosophic." *

Quite true, nor is the theory that most Spiritualists hold, that the phenomena are due to discarnate human beings, any more reason to be branded as irrational or unphilosophic, though the enormous difficulty of verifying the identity of any particular spirit renders it, at present, only a provisional or working hypothesis. †

* Preston's "Theory of Heat," p. 56.

† Lawyers know how hard it is to establish a legal proof of the identity of a claimant in any disputed case; the difficulty is ten thousandfold greater when the claimant is invisible, when "personation" seems to be a common practice, when telepathy is admitted, and when the evidence is

§ 18.

Let us, therefore, consider what other hypotheses can be framed to account for the phenomena under discussion.

1. I have already referred (page 21) to a scientific theory which might be adopted ; in fact, a theory of this kind has been proposed by Count de Gasparin, in 1854, as the result of his prolonged experiments, and a little later by Professor Thury, of Geneva, and again later by Serjeant Cox. This may be called the theory of "ectenic" or "*psychic force*," and it attributes the phenomena to some extension in space of the nervous force of the medium, just as the power of a magnet extends beyonds itself and can influence and move certain distant substances.* It is possible the light of further investigation may support this view, but it is to be noted that whilst investigators usually adopt this hypothesis when first convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena, they generally abandon it as inadequate later on.

2. The popular conception that mediums are impostors and all the phenomena due to *fraud* does very well till you

of a fitful and fragmentary character. An instructive illustration of the uncertainties of "spirit identity" is given in some experiences detailed in "LIGHT" for May 6th, 1881, *et seq.*; the writer was a personal friend of mine, and I can vouch for the accuracy of his statements. In a truer and deeper sense knowledge of one another is not a matter of *external* evidence, but of personal communion incommunicable to another.

* So far as I am aware, the first person to support an exo-neural action of the mind was Dr. Mayo, F.R.S., in his admirable little book on the "Truths contained in Popular Superstitions," published in 1851. He says in explanation of mesmeric clairvoyance or lucidity, "I hold that the mind of a living person in its most normal state is always, to a certain extent, acting exo-neurally or beyond the limits of the bodily person, and in the lucid state this exo-neural apprehension seems to extend to every object and person around." The high position held by Dr. Mayo as Professor of Physiology in King's College and the Royal College of Surgeons, London, entitled his suggestions to greater consideration than they received.

take the trouble to inquire. But I have never yet met with anyone who holds that view who knows anything about the subject. The most notable instance of a body of able men setting out with the determination to show that Spiritualistic phenomena were all due to trickery, and finding after inquiry at first hand that their prepossessions were hopelessly wrong, is the Dialectical Society, who reported in 1870 that the phenomena could not be explained by fraud, and that the subject was one worthy of serious scientific inquiry. Of course bad coins do exist, but their number is comparatively small and their very existence is obviously due to the fact that there are good ones to imitate. Mr. Crookes, F.R.S., whose famous scientific researches show him to be one of the most exact and accomplished of living experimental investigators, has said that he began his inquiry into the phenomena of Spiritualism, believing the whole affair was superstition and trickery, but he ended by "staking his scientific reputation" that his preconceived ideas were wrong and that a class of phenomena wholly new to science did really exist.

Let me remind you to what Mr. Crookes pledges himself; he asserts that there occur, under stringent test conditions, and inexplicable by any known agency (1) raps and other percussive sounds displaying intelligence; (2) the alteration of the weight of bodies; (3) the movement both of small and light, and of large and heavy bodies; (4) levitation both of furniture and of human beings; (5) luminous appearances; (6) musical instruments played without human intervention; (7) contact with fire without the least injury to hands or face; (8) direct writing, or intelligent messages written with unseen hands; (9) the appearance of hands often self-luminous; (10) the appearance of phantom forms and faces; (11) a materialised human figure of angelic

beauty, clothed in a white robe, so real that not only was its pulse taken but it was repeatedly photographed, sometimes by the aid of the electric light, and on one occasion simultaneously with and beside the entranced medium, who was plainer, darker, and considerably smaller than the preternatural visitant, the latter coming into and vanishing from a previously searched, closed, locked room in Mr. Crookes' own house.

3. What are we to say to these amazing assertions? *Hallucination* naturally suggests itself: and, in fact, in the paper I read at the British Association in 1876, I detailed some experiments I had made, showing that by suggestion it was easy to lead a subject, when in a light hypnotic trance, to hold the most extravagant beliefs, *e.g.*, that he had floated round the room, and this for some days after complete waking. But hallucination cannot account for the permanent records Mr. Crookes obtained, even if it extended to all the numerous witnesses who were sometimes present with Mr. Crookes, and I for one—though admitting that it is of great importance to be on one's guard against hallucination and mal-observation, as well as fraud—am fully satisfied these causes are quite inadequate to explain what is before us.

§ 19.

What other theory, then, can be proposed from a scientific standpoint?

4. It is not a very incredible thing to suppose that in the luminiferous ether (or in some other unseen material medium) life has originated, and the law of evolution—the Divine law of progress—has been at work, maybe for æons prior to the formation of a habitable earth. If the grosser matter we are familiar with is able to be the vehicle of life,

and respond to the Divine spirit, the finer and more plastic matter of the ether would more perfectly manifest and more easily respond to the inscrutable Power that lies behind phenomena. There is nothing extravagant, nothing opposed to our present scientific knowledge, in this assumption. It is, therefore, in harmony with all we know to entertain a belief in an unseen world, in which myriads of living creatures exist, some with faculties like our own, and others with faculties beneath or transcending our own; and it is possible that the evolutionary development of such a world has run on parallel lines to our own.* The rivalry of life, the existence of instinct, intellect, conscience, will, right and wrong are as probable *there* as here. And, in course of time, consciousness of *our* human existence may have come to our unseen neighbours, and some means of mental, or even material, communication with us may have been found. For my own part, it seems not improbable that the bulk, if not the whole, of the *physical* manifestations witnessed in a Spiritualistic séance are the product of human-like, but not really human, intelligences—good or bad *daimonia* they may be—which aggregate round the medium, as a rule drawn from that particular plane of mental and moral development in the unseen which corresponds to the mental and moral plane of the medium. The possible danger of such influences I will refer to immediately.

But if such unseen intelligences have for ages past

* Isaac Taylor, in his well-known and suggestive book, "Physical Theory of Another Life," chap. 17, which I have read since delivering this address, has a similar conjecture, and maintains that the Scriptures support the existence of an entire order of both good and evil beings around us; he holds that "one well-attested instance of the presence and intelligent agency of an invisible being would be enough to carry the question of an invisible economy pervading the visible universe" (p. 264).

existed in our midst, may they not have had some share in the history of life on this earth? We know how largely man can modify both organic and inorganic nature by the exercise of his intelligence and will; if we can even alter the varieties of plants and animals by artificial selection, is it unreasonable to suppose that the psychical operation of unseen intelligences may have influenced the course of evolution through the ages? The unsolved problem in the doctrine of evolution is to account for the production and persistence of variations of any type of life. This problem seems to get more and more insoluble as our biological knowledge advances. Is it possible that this problem will have to be shifted from the world of sense and gross matter to the unseen world around us? just as in physics we are gradually shifting our ultimate explanation of perceptible things to the imperceptible ether. The great First Cause must ever lie beyond our ken, but science, which deals with secondary causes, is finding that to many obscure questions the visible world appears to offer no intelligible solution.

§ 20.

5. There is another supposition worthy of consideration. It may be that the intelligence operating at a séance is a thought-projection of ourselves—that each one of us has his *simulacrum* in the unseen. That with the growth of our life and character here, a ghostly image of oneself is growing up in the invisible world; nor is this very improbable. As thought, will, and emotion can affect, and to some extent mould, the gross matter of which our bodies are composed,

“For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form and doth the body make,”

a more perfect impress is likely to be made upon the finer matter of the unseen universe. The phenomena of telepathy show either that thought *can* powerfully affect an unseen material medium, or else project particles of thought-stuff through space, or that "action at a distance" exists; the latter a supposition opposed to all we know. Moreover, physics teaches us that light, heat, electricity, and magnetism affect the matter of an invisible world more perfectly than they do the matter of the visible world. Suns and stars, as well as much of the world in which we live, would have no existence for us but for the corresponding image they impress upon the unseen.* And so it has been suggested by two profound and distinguished scientific men, Professors Balfour Stewart and P. G. Tait, "that thought conceived to affect the matter of another universe simultaneously with this may explain a future state."† In a modified and less scientific form this idea has been held as an article of faith by the majority of the human race for the last twenty-four centuries.‡

* As the sun is the source of all, or nearly all, the available energy in the world, our material life is a daily dependence on the ministry of the unseen.

† The whole passage runs as follows: "If we now turn to thought, we find that inasmuch as it affects the substance of the present visible universe, it produces a material organ of memory. But the motions which accompany thought must also affect the invisible order of things, while the forces which cause these motions are likewise derived from the same region, and thus it follows that *thought conceived to affect the matter of another universe simultaneously with this may explain a future state.*"—"The Unseen Universe," p. 199. (Fourth Edition.)

‡ I refer to the Buddhistic belief in Karma, which is the sum of merit and demerit of each individual; a seed of existence that remains in the unseen and is handed on to every succeeding generation and determines the future condition of every living thing. Karma is thus the relentless operation and spiritual embodiment of the law of cause and effect, from which none of us can escape. In modern Theosophy the same idea is further developed in connection with the doctrine of re-incarnation. The thoughts of each individual life—being things in the unseen, *i.e.*, thought-stuff formed of ether—ultimate in a *thought-body* which serves as a mould

If, in a more concrete manner than Longfellow meant,

“ No action whether foul or fair
Is ever done but it leaves somewhere
A record written by fingers ghostly,”

if our thoughts and characters are faithfully and indelibly being written on the unseen, we are, in fact, involuntarily and inexorably creating in the invisible world an image of ourselves, a thought-projection, that embraces both our outer and our innermost life. And it may be that during a séance a quasi-vitality is given to these thought-bodies which disappears when the sitting is over. There is, as we all know, some drain on the medium's vitality during a successful séance. But whatever explanation we adopt, there is certainly some sympathetic response, *something analogous to resonance*, occurring in these psychological phenomena. Possibly it is this which so often causes the manifesting intelligence to appear but a reflection of the mind of the medium, and leads to the danger, of which you are well aware, of deceptive communications.*

At the same time, I admit that the intelligence occasionally exhibits a knowledge beyond that possessed by anyone present in the circle, and sometimes, it would seem,

for the next dwelling-place of our soul on earth. Hence the innate disposition of a child at its birth is the result of its own past; the tendencies for good and evil we each possess are the result of the character we have moulded for ourselves, the thought-bodies we have created, during our past existences on the earth.

* The reverse conjecture is barely conceivable, that we on earth are the incarnate and perishable ghosts of our true selves existing in the unseen; fleeting material phantasms of a more enduring personality on the other side, temporarily subject to the limitations of gross matter. Here the good and the bad can intermix, but if spiritual affinities govern the aggregation of souls in the unseen it must there be well-nigh impossible for the higher to approach and influence the lower.

beyond the knowledge of any living person. Mr. Crookes gives two good cases of the former ("Phenomena of Spiritualism," p. 95), and others have had experience *prima facie* confirmatory of both of these statements; nor must the remarkable agreement in the communications as to their origin be forgotten, an agreement in favour of their coming from those who have once lived on this earth. Evidence also exists of the apparent fulfilment of promises to try to appear or communicate after death ("Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research," Vol. X., p. 337).

§ 21.

6. The existence of a *fourth dimension* in space is not an explanation of the origin of the phenomena of Spiritualism, but a mathematical conception that shows the easy possibility of those phenomena to four-dimensional beings, provided they could, under certain circumstances, produce effects visible to us three-dimensional beings. One of these effects, we can theoretically predict, is the knotting of a single endless cord, or loop, or ring of leather. An intelligent being, having the power to produce on this cord four-dimensional bendings, would be able to tie one or more knots on it without loosening the sealed ends of the cord or cutting the ring of leather. Though to us, of course, impossible, this feat was successfully performed in a few minutes, in full light, in December, 1877, through the instrumentality of a well-known medium, and in the presence of some distinguished and critical German men of science, Professors Zöllner, Weber, Fechner, and Scheibner. The full account, with all the minute precautions taken to avoid the possibility of deception, is given in Mr. Massey's translation of Zöllner's "Transcendental

Physics." Nor was this by any means a unique experience, nor has it been confined to one set of experimenters. Since the delivery of this address a similar experiment, a knot tied in an unseamed ring of leather, has been successfully made in Russia, and is vouched for by M. Aksakof.*

§ 22.

Before passing from these various theories and conjectures you may ask me what is my own opinion. That is a matter of comparatively small importance, yet, as I am frequently asked this question, I wish distinctly to state that at present it is too soon, the phenomena are still too entangled, to express any definite opinion as to their cause or causes. Our present knowledge indicates not a simple, but a very complex explanation. We are on the Threshold of a New World of Thought, and our main business for some time to come will be to learn what are the facts, and to continue the task Mr. Myers has so ably begun of separating phenomena due to the conscious or unconscious mental agency of the medium and of those present, from phenomena not so caused. It is exactly eighteen years ago this week that I drew attention in the columns of the "Times" newspaper to the need of such discrimination, and also of knowing whether any direct action of mind upon mind does occur, before even a provisional scientific explanation could

* The question whether the whole of the phenomena may not be explained away by ascribing to every witness gross and persistent exaggeration may be dismissed, as it cannot be seriously maintained; neither is it possible to sustain an explanation founded on a system of laborious and disinterested deception, though isolated cases of this kind are known. Professor Sidgwick has dealt with this point ("Journal of the Society for Psychical Research," July, 1894), and, moreover, such actors not only shrink from scientific scrutiny, but sooner or later get tired of their motiveless deception, or their fraud comes to light.

be given of Spiritualistic manifestations. The advance of our knowledge since then has shown the truth of this forecast, and in course of time, as Mr. Stainton Moses said in 1874, "the facts will tell their own story and supply their own explanation ; at present we have to labour and to wait."

§ 23.

It may here be argued, why should a *medium* be necessary in these Spiritualistic manifestations ?

As we are all aware, the production of the phenomena appears to be inseparably connected with some special living organisations that are called "mediumistic." Looked at from a purely scientific standpoint, there is nothing remarkable in this. Certain persons, happily not all of us, are subject to abnormal states of body and mind, and the alienist or pathologist does not refuse to investigate insanity or epilepsy because restricted to a limited number of human beings. Furthermore, physical science affords abundant analogies of the necessity for a medium, or intermediary, between the unseen and the seen. The waves of the luminiferous ether require a material medium to absorb them before they can be perceived by our senses ; the intermediary may be the photographic plate, the rods and cones of the retina, a blackened surface, or the so-called electro-magnetic resonators, according to the respective length of those waves ; but *some* medium, formed of ponderable matter, is absolutely necessary to render the chemical, luminous, thermal, or electrical effects of these waves perceptible to us. And the more or less perfect rendering of these effects depends on the more or less perfect synchronism between those ethereal waves and their mundane receiver.

Thus we find certain definite physical media are necessary to enable operations to become perceptible which would otherwise remain imperceptible. Through these media, energy from the unseen *physical* world without us enters the seen, and passing through the seen affects thereby the unseen *mental* world within us. The extreme ends of the operation are unknown to us, and it is only during the transition stage that the flux of energy appeals to our senses, and therefore it is only with this stage of appearances, that is to say with phenomena, that science deals. And we may take it as unquestionable, whatever shrinking our religious instincts may at first feel, that anything and everything that enters the world of phenomena becomes thereby a legitimate and promising subject of scientific investigation.*

The *nexus* between the seen and the unseen may be physical, physiological, or psychical, but whichever it may be, it is a specialised substance, or organ, or organism; in many cases it is a body in a state of unstable equilibrium, and in that case, therefore, of a delicate nature, a body to be handled carefully, and its behaviour or idiosyncrasies needing to be studied and known beforehand.

It is doubtless a peculiar *psychical* state that confers mediumistic power, but we know nothing of its nature, and

* "Science is bound by the everlasting law of honour to face fearlessly every problem which can fairly be presented to it."—*Lord Kelvin*.

"The least justifiable attitude is that which holds that there are certain departments of truth in the universe which it is not lawful to investigate."—*Dr. Oliver Lodge*.

"Wherever there is the slightest possibility for the mind of man to know, there is a legitimate problem for science."—*Karl Pearson*.

"Is anything of God's contriving endangered by inquiry? Was it the system of the universe or the monks that trembled at the telescope of Galileo? Did the circulation of the firmament stop in terror because Newton laid his daring finger on its pulse?"—*Lowell*.

we often ruin our experiments and lose our results by our ignorance. Certainly it is very probable that the psychical state of those present at a séance will be found to re-act on the medium. We should get no results if our photographic plates were exposed to the light of the room simultaneously with the luminous image formed by the lens. In every physical process we have to guard against disturbing causes. If, for example, Professor S. P. Langley, of Washington, in the delicate experiments he is now conducting—exploring the ultra red radiation of the sun—had allowed the thermal radiation of himself or his assistants to fall on his sensitive thermoscope, his results would have been confused and unintelligible. We know that similar confused results are obtained in psychical research, especially by those who fancy the sole function of a scientific investigator is to play the part of an amateur detective; and accordingly what they detect is merely their own incompetency to deal with problems the very elements of which they do not understand and seem incapable of learning. Investigators who, taking an exalted view of their own sagacity, enter upon this inquiry with their minds made up as to the possible or impossible, are sure to fail. Such people should be shunned, as their habit of thought and mode of action are inappropriate, and therefore essentially vulgar, for the essence of vulgarity, when you come to think of it, is inappropriateness.

Inasmuch as we know nothing of the peculiar psychical state that constitutes mediumship, we ought to collect and record all conditions which attend a successful séance. Mediumship seems in some points analogous to "rapport" in mesmeric trance, and it would be interesting to know whether a mesmeric sensitive is more open to mediumship than the rest of mankind. Again, are those who are good

percipients in telepathic experiments also percipients in spontaneous telepathy, such as apparitions at the moment of death, and are these again hypnotic sensitives? Similar questions also arise as to somnambulists; in a word, is there anything in common between the obscure psychical states of these different classes of sensitives? Very probably there is, for all psychical phenomena, as we shall see directly, involve to a greater or less extent the operation of an unconscious part of our personality, a hidden self which in a medium emerges from its obscurity, as the normal consciousness and self-control subsides. This fact does, indeed, afford some clue to the peculiar psychological condition of mediumship.

It must be borne in mind that the medium understands the phenomena as little as the investigator, or even less if possible, for he has less experience of what goes on, being usually in a trance; hence the medium's opinion or explanation of the manifestations, in his normal state, is quite valueless. The medium should, in fact, be treated as I have already said, and as Professor Lodge, since this address was delivered, has also said, "as a delicate piece of apparatus wherewith we are making an investigation. The medium is an instrument whose ways and idiosyncrasies must be learnt, and to a certain extent humoured, just as one studies and humours the ways of some much less delicate piece of physical apparatus turned out by a skilled instrument maker."

This is quite consistent with taking all needful precautions against deception. The stricter methods which, I think wisely, the Society for Psychical Research have adopted have no doubt eliminated much that passed as evidence amongst Spiritualists, and also cleared off a

number of those detestable professional rogues who prey on the grief and credulity of mankind.

Obviously the right course is to seize every opportunity for critical investigation when it occurs. As Mr. Crookes has lately said :—

I think it is a cruel thing that a man like D. D. Home, gifted with such extraordinary powers, and always willing, nay, anxious, to place himself at the disposal of men of science for investigation, should have lived so many years in London, and with one or two exceptions no one of weight in the scientific world should have thought it worth while to look into the truth or falsity of things which were being talked about in society on all sides. To those who knew him Home was one of the most lovable of men, and his perfect genuineness and uprightness were beyond suspicion.

§ 24.

The word “medium” is certainly an objectionable one. In the public mind it is usually associated with various degrees of rascality, and so long as paid mediums and dark séances are encouraged, and rogues and fools abound, the evil odour which surrounds the name “medium” is, with considerable justice, likely to remain. But there is another objection to the word, from the point of view of those I am addressing. A “medium” is too often taken to imply an intermediary between the *spirit-world* and our own; whereas, many so-called Spiritualistic communications are, as you know, nothing but the unconscious revelation of the medium’s own thoughts, or latent memory, or “secondary self.” I agree, therefore, with Mr. F. W. H. Myers, who calls the word medium “a barbarous and question-begging term.” Mr. Myers suggests the use of the word “automatist”; others have suggested, and some have

used, the word "psychic." Either of these words is preferable, if usage were not against them: until a wider interest in, and knowledge of, the whole subject leads to a new terminology, I have thought it better to keep to the common phraseology, disclaiming, however, the common implication.

The "unseen," to which I referred just now,* must not, therefore, be taken to mean necessarily an unseen spiritual world or personality, *external* to the medium; it may be, and very often is, only the unseen world or unrecognised personality within the medium; what has been termed the secondary or *sub-liminal* self, that part of each one of us which lies below the threshold of our consciousness. For the whole of our personality is not included in the normal self with which we are familiar in our waking life. There is in each of us an outer as well as an inner court to our personality. I do not refer to the material and spiritual *me* in us which are objects of consciousness to our Ego, but to the duality that exists in the Ego itself. It is important we should dwell upon this for a few moments, as the emergence of this inner self becomes a conspicuous feature in the phenomena of automatic writing and trance speaking, which is so common an aspect of mediumship, and to which I will refer directly. Permit me, therefore, to make here a slight digression into psychology.†

* See page 47 and also § 20.

† The reader who prefers to omit this *excursus* may pass on to § 28 without interruption of the sense. The whole subject of the sub-liminal consciousness has been dealt with in the series of remarkable papers with which Mr. F. W. H. Myers has enriched the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research, and to which the reader is referred for fuller information.

Part II.

§ 25.

Our consciousness is the fundamental fact, the most real thing, of which we are aware, and although it consists of a succession of states of mind, no two of which are exactly alike, it is nevertheless combined into a continuous personal identity which we call "ourself." Even when there are interruptions of our self-consciousness, as in sleep, we recognise the self that wakes up in the morning as the same self that went to sleep overnight. But our personality is not a mere bundle of loose sensations: no succession of states of mind, no series of thoughts or feelings can fuse themselves into a single resultant consciousness, with a knowledge or memory of all the other states.

We sometimes see a rapidly-revolving series of photographs, as in the kinetoscope, give rise to the appearance of a single moving figure. But the photographs remain distinct; the combination is effected by something external to the pictures, our own perception. And so there must be something lying in the background of our consciousness which combines the series of impressions made upon us, or the states of feeling within us; this unifying power we may call our "pure Ego" or soul.

Now comes a remarkable fact; a multitude of impressions are constantly being made upon us, to which this Ego appears to pay no heed. Either (1) they are not strong enough to pierce our consciousness, for a certain intensity must be reached before an impression can stir our Ego,—a relatively feeble stimulus, such as the light of the stars in daytime,

cannot cross the threshold of our consciousness and gain an entrance to our mind—or (2) among the crowd of strong impressions which do enter, the Ego exercises a selective power. We direct our attention upon a few, chiefly because they interest us; these we are conscious of and can afterwards recall by an effort of memory.* Furthermore, this process of selection, if we do it regularly, soon becomes habitual or automatic; the effort of attention is no longer required, and the will is set free for some other purpose; for instance, we walk, or we combine the letters in reading instinctively without being conscious of the steps in the process.† And so with the world within ourselves, we do not perceive the regular and continuous beating of the heart, hence the processes of respiration, circulation, and nutrition go on unconsciously in a healthy body. And to some extent this is also true of the nutrition of the mind, for the character is built up, in part, by the stream of unconscious impressions made upon us. Again (3), consciousness is not aroused by a continuous succession of uniform impressions. We should be utterly unconscious of warmth, however hot things might be, if everything were

*The will, moved in the first instance by desire—that is, by what interests us, our ruling love—determines the attention we give to particular impressions; thus we become conscious of, or alive to, thoughts or sensations excited by certain impressions, and let the rest go by unheeded. Our *choice* thus determines our *experience*, what we include in our material and mental possessions, our conscious “me”; that which is of supremest interest to us each, for all else we regard as the “not me.”

†Education is, in great part, the training to do automatically and unconsciously what would otherwise have to be done with conscious effort. Genius is a still more striking example of the power of unconscious acts. And what is done by the unconscious self is more easily and better done than by the conscious self; hence it would seem as if the summit of attainment would lead to the absence of any conscious effort at all. This, indeed, is the logical outcome of all Naturalistic hypotheses of human life. In a striking passage in the second chapter of “Foundations of Belief,” published since the foregoing was written, Mr. A. J. Balfour has dealt with this very question.

at one uniform temperature, and we should be equally unconscious of light if the universe and all material objects were illuminated with a continuous and uniform brightness. It is differences of state that we perceive, or the ratio of the strength of one sensation to another. The actual span of our consciousness is, therefore, very narrow. As Professor W. James, of Harvard, remarks in his valuable text-book on Psychology:—

One of the most extraordinary facts of our life is that, although we are besieged at every moment by impressions from our whole sensory surface, we notice so very small a part of them. The sum total of our impressions never enters into our *experience*, consciously so called, which runs through this sum total like a tiny rill through a broad flowery mead. Yet the physical impressions which do not count are *there* as much as those which do. Why they fail to pierce the mind is a mystery, and not explained when we invoke *die Enge des Bewusstseins*, “the narrowness of consciousness,” as its ground.

All these impressions, whether we are conscious of them or not, leave some mark behind ; they weave a visible or invisible thread into the fabric of our life ; like every trivial act we perform, they make a perceptible or an imperceptible indent on our personality. We know that this is the case, that impressions not perceived when they were made have, nevertheless, effected a lodgment within us, for, although we cannot recall them at pleasure, they often emerge from their latent state in a fragmentary and disconnected manner. This is the case when the attention is withdrawn from things around us in reverie or “ crystal gazing,” or often in illness or dream, and still more in somnambulism or in hypnotic trance, and in many cases of automatic writing, or other so-called Spiritualistic phenomena.

§ 26.

Is, then, our Ego or soul only co-extensive with those things of which we are or have been conscious? Surely not; the range of our personality must be extended to include something more than our normal self-consciousness. Not only are there, as it were, horizontal strata in our personality, from the material or lowest "me" up to the spiritual or highest "me," but there is also a vertical division which runs through all. On one side of this vertical plane of cleavage lie all those impressions which have penetrated our consciousness, all those states of thought and feeling which in our waking life memory can restore; on the other side lie the vastly greater number of impressions made upon us of which we were unconscious at the time, or, being conscious, have completely forgotten. One part of our "me" is, therefore, illuminated by consciousness, and another part lies in the dark shadow of unconsciousness.

Our outer or conscious self is, therefore, not our entire self, any more than the visible or earth-turned face of the moon is the whole moon. Mr. Myers has well compared our normal self-consciousness to the visible spectrum of sunlight; beyond it on either side is a wide tract, imperceptible to the eye, yet crowded with radiation. Each pencil of sunlight embraces these invisible, as well as the visible, rays, and so each human personality embraces the unconscie as well as the conscious self. And just as experimental physics has within the present century revealed the existence of ultra-violet and infra-red portions of the spectrum, and shown us how we may, in part, render these obscure rays visible, so with the growth of experimental psychology we are beginning

to discover the complex nature of our personality, and how that part of our Ego which is below the threshold of consciousness may be led to emerge from its obscurity. As the bright light of day quenches the feebler light of the stars, so the vivid stream of consciousness in our waking life must usually be withdrawn or enfeebled before the dim record of unheeded past impressions becomes apparent.

§ 27.

A state of *passivity*, therefore, is favourable to the emergence of the sub-liminal consciousness, and this is one of the characteristics of mediumship. It is true that in many cases of automatic writing by planchette or otherwise, long coherent messages are given whilst the thoughts of the medium are engaged on other matters, but the effort of attention is relaxed, and if it be directed to the writing, or any conscious effort made to assist it, the spell is broken, and the inner self sinks again into obscurity.* Furthermore, and singularly enough, this secondary or sub-liminal self never identifies itself with the ordinary waking self. Another person seems to have taken control of the hand or voice of the medium, a distinct intelligence that has its own past history, but with little, if any, knowledge of the past of the other self. The foreign nature of the "control" naturally suggests the agency of an external intelligence, a spirit or demon, "possessing" the medium, or of another personality that alternates with the normal soul.

* A similar sensitiveness to conscious attention is seen in experiments in thought-transference, and even in the pseudo thought-reading of the "willing game"; and ignorance of this fact is what usually leads to failure. In fact, "psychical research" in general deals with the varied manifestations and operations of the unconscious part of our personality.

The well-known facts of "double consciousness" illustrate the latter; a remarkable case of this kind I was personally acquainted with and investigated some years ago. The subject, since dead, was the son of a London clergyman, and the duration of the abnormal state became so extended that it was difficult to call it by that name, but however many days had elapsed since the transition from one state to the other,—a brief period of insensibility separating the two,—on the return to the previous state, the old conversation was resumed precisely at the point where it was interrupted; in the abnormal state considerable musical knowledge was possessed, of which the subject appeared to be quite ignorant in the other state; the life, the interests, the conversation were quite distinct; even the parentage and family were regarded as different in the two states. More striking still, and better known, are the cases of Louis V., Félicité X., and Léonie, described in the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research. These and other cases of alternating personality resemble some of the delusions of the insane, and from time immemorial have led to the belief that the rightful owner of the body has been temporarily or permanently displaced, and another soul has taken "possession," like a cuckoo, of a nest that is not its own.

But, as we have seen, the recrudescence of lapsed memories, and of some of the many unconscious impressions made on our personality, is an explanation more in harmony with our present state of knowledge and the scientific views of to-day.* This uprush of past impressions would

* One probable, though only partial, explanation of dual consciousness is the separate action of the two lobes of the brain caused by an alternating inhibition of the functions of each lobe. A good illustration of this will be found in a recent number of the journal, "Brain."

come as a revelation to the subject, unrecognisable as belonging to his own past experience, and therefore regarded as no part of his own personality, but looked at merely with the curiosity and fainter interest that attaches to the "not me." Moreover, the series of unfamiliar nervous discharges, accompanying the emergence of new sensations and ideas from previously dormant nerve centres, would appear as foreign to the subject as the reproduction of one's voice in the phonograph, or the reflection of one's face in a mirror, if heard or seen for the first time. The sensation of "otherness" thus produced would give rise to the feeling of another Ego usurping the body, hence the control would be designated by some familiar or chance name other than the subject's own, or by a name that appeared to fit the ideas expressed.

§ 28.

But is this explanation sufficient? It may be a *vera causa*, but does it account for *all* the facts that are definitely known about double consciousness and about these automatic or trance communications? Regarding the latter, I know that it certainly *does not*. Whilst it disposes of, perhaps, the bulk of the messages usually attributed to disembodied spirits or Satanic agency, it does not, as you are aware, cover all the ground. M. Aksakof—whose opinion, formed after a painstaking and life-long study of the whole subject, is deserving of the highest respect of scientific men as well as of Spiritualists—points out, and the evidence he adduces fully bears out his statement, that the unconscious self of the medium cannot explain *all* the facts, but that an external and invisible agency is occasionally and unmistakably indicated. The opinion of the Russian *savant* is

corroborated by the experience of many present, and, in further proof, I will cite two distinguished and most competent scientific authorities, who have made a careful study of this part of our subject.

In his text-book on "~~Psychology~~ Psychology," Professor W. James, of Harvard, writes (p. 214):—

I am, however, persuaded by abundant acquaintance with the trances of one medium that the "control" may be altogether different from any *possible* waking-self of the person. In the case I have in mind it professes to be a certain departed French doctor, and is, I am convinced, acquainted with facts about the circumstances, and the living and dead relatives and acquaintances, of numberless sitters whom the medium never met before, and of whom she has never heard the names. . . . I am persuaded that a serious study of these trance-phenomena is one of the greatest needs of psychology.

Professor W. James not only speaks with authority as an eminent psychologist, but he has had unusual opportunities for a careful investigation of the case of Mrs. Piper, to which he here refers, and he reiterates,—in a letter to Mr. Myers, published in the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research., Vol. VI., p. 658,—that:—

I feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact in the world that she knows things in her trances which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state.

Professor Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., the other witness I will cite, has also made a prolonged study of Mrs. Piper, and he fully confirms Professor James. Dr. Lodge says:—

Mrs. Piper's trance personality is undoubtedly (I use the word in the strongest sense) aware of much to which she has no kind of ordinarily recognised clue, and of which she, in her ordinary state, knows nothing. But how does she get this knowledge?

§ 29.

That is the question we have to face. Even assuming the fact of thought-transference, of which some of these messages afford an interesting confirmation, that only helps us a little further; clairvoyance often occurs, far-seeing as well as far-feeling. Then there is often a curious reflection of the prevailing sentiment of the community, "As if" (Professor James remarks), "the sub-conscious self was peculiarly susceptible to a certain stratum of the *Zeit-Geist*"; but more deeply interesting to us each there is, in my opinion, evidence of occasional communications from those who have once lived on earth—very seldom satisfactory, and never a complete revelation of their personality, but in general the same kind of trivial, fragmentary, and sometimes even preposterous, presentation that we have in our own dreams. But the messages are more than the incoherent mutterings of a man in his sleep. Behind them there is the same evidence of a combining and reasoning power as we have in our own normal self-consciousness; evidence of an unseen person, with an intelligence and character of its own entirely distinct from that of the subject's normal self.* It may be that this person is only part of the personality of the medium, the transcendental Ego of the unconscious self; but if so, it is, I am convinced, at times in touch with those who have once lived on earth—possibly only a distant or partial touch—but evidence of *some* living communication, unsatisfactory and dream-like as it often is, certainly exists. As Dr. Lodge states concerning Mrs. Piper, when this Ego is asked as to the source of its information:—

* See the remarkable cases given by the Hon. A. Aksakof, quoted by Mr. Myers in "Proceedings" S.P.R., Vol. VI., p. 341 *et seq.*

“She herself, when in the trance state, asserts that she,” *i.e.*, her “control,” or that part of her which calls itself Dr. Phinuit, “gets it by conversing with the deceased friends and relatives of people present . . . but even when the voice changes and messages come apparently from these very people themselves, it does not follow that they themselves are necessarily aware of the fact, nor need their conscious mind (if they have any) have anything to do with the process.”*

If the *identity* of the intelligence which communicates through the medium with a person who has once lived on earth can be established, even in a single instance, all other questions sink into comparative insignificance.† True, the difficulty of arriving at conclusive evidence of identity is very great, and here, especially, we need to be most careful in distinguishing between facts and our inferences from the facts. Those, however, who will take the trouble critically to examine the ample records of the communications made through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, which have been published in Vols. VI. and VIII. of the “Proceedings” of the Society for Psychical Research, and also the forthcoming and still more striking recent evidence, will find that it needs a great deal of ingenuity and a great many hypotheses to get rid of the inference that we are here, in several instances, actually in touch

* “Proceedings” S.P.R., Vol. X., pp. 15 and 16.

† See footnote page 36. In connection with the question of identity, I have not referred to “spirit photography”—that is, the revelation afforded by a photographic plate of the presence of otherwise invisible beings—because I regret that I have not had an opportunity of making a careful examination of the foreign evidence, nor of that recently obtained in England, which certainly appears to be of a remarkable character, and of far greater weight than that which I investigated some years ago, and which then led me to the same opinion Mrs. Sidgwick independently arrived at, *viz.*, that the evidence was inconclusive.

with the veritable persons who assert they have, and whom we know to have, once lived on earth. This inference is, of course, a matter of individual judgment, in which no doubt each person's mental bias will come into play, be he as judicial as he will.

§ 30.

Let me briefly narrate the circumstances of one of the evidential cases on behalf of spirit-identity which was obtained through the mediumship of our friend, the late Rev. Stainton Moses. And I am glad of this opportunity of saying how heartily I join in Mr. Myers' noble tribute to the worth of our departed friend. No one who knew him even slightly could for a moment doubt "his sanity or his sincerity, his veracity or his honour," and those who knew him better could understand the esteem and affection which his colleagues at University College School and his intimate friends always felt for him. A future generation, if not the present, will be deeply grateful to Mr. Myers for the publication in the "Proceedings" of the S.P.R. of fuller details of those wonderful psychical experiences which for so many years Mr. Moses enjoyed; I know nothing more impressive, in their astounding implications, than these records.

The case referred to is as follows:—In August, 1874, Mr. Moses was staying with a friend, a medical man, in the Isle of Wight, and at one of the "sittings" which they had together a communication was received with singular impetuosity purporting to be from a spirit who gave the name Abraham Florentine, and stated that he had been engaged in the U.S. war of 1812, but only lately had entered into the spiritual world, having died at Brooklyn,

U.S.A., on August 5th, 1874, at the age of eighty-three years, one month, and seventeen days. None present knew of such a person, but Mr. Moses published the particulars as above stated in a London newspaper—the journal which preceded “*LIGHT*”—for December 11th, 1874, asking at the same time American journals to copy, so that, if possible, the statements made might be verified or disproved. In course of time an American lawyer, a “claim-agent,” who had been auditing the claims of soldiers in New York, saw the paragraph, and wrote to an American newspaper to say that he had come across the name A. Florentine, and that a full record of the person who made the claim could be obtained from the U.S. Adjutant-General’s office. Accordingly the headquarters of the U.S. army was applied to, and an official reply was received, stating that a private named Abraham Florentine had served in the American war in the early part of the century. Ultimately the widow of Abraham Florentine was found to be alive. Dr. Crowell, a Brooklyn physician, by means of a directory, discovered her address in Brooklyn, and saw and questioned the widow. She stated that her husband had fought in the war of 1812, that he was a rather impetuous man, and had died in Brooklyn on August 5th, 1874, and that his eighty-third birthday was on the previous June 8th. He was therefore eighty-three years, one month, twenty-seven days old when he died, the only discrepancy being seventeen for twenty-seven days, a mistake that might easily have arisen in recording the message made through Mr. Moses when entranced in the Isle of Wight. The full details of this case will shortly be republished in the next “Proceedings” of the S.P.R.

What are we to say to this evidence? The newspaper files remain to attest the facts, which seem to be absolutely

irrefragable.* The only surmise that can be made is that Mr. Moses had seen some notice of the man's death and career in an American newspaper, and either had forgotten the fact or had purposely deceived his friends. But then, this could only have been one of many similar cases of forgetfulness or deception, and before we can assume this we have to prove that Mr. Moses *did* obtain the required information by means of newspapers or other mundane channels of information. And no one as yet has been able to do this, or to find a particle of evidence on behalf of the wearisome and motiveless deception which must, in this event, habitually have characterised a man of spotless integrity and honour.

§ 31.

But why should we think it so extravagant to entertain the simplest explanation that occasionally a channel opens from the unseen world to ours, and that some who have entered that world are able to make their continued existence known to us? Why *some*, we cannot tell. And why so paltry a manifestation? But is anything paltry that manifests life! In the dumb agony which seizes the soul when some loved one is taken from us, in the awful sense of separation which paralyses us as we gaze upon the lifeless form, there comes the unutterable yearning for some voice, some sign from beyond; and if, in answer to our imploring cry for an assurance that our faith is not in vain, that our

* This case forcibly illustrates the value of a journal, such as "LIGHT," specially devoted to the publication of a class of news that would not find an entrance, or at best a grudging, contemptuous entrance, into ordinary newspapers. The evidential importance of the case of "A. Florentine" would be considerably diminished if only a private memorandum of the séance had been made, whereas the prior publication in a newspaper is accessible and incontrovertible evidence.

dear one is living still, a smile were to overspread the features of the dead, or its lips to move, or even its finger to be lifted, should we deem *any* action a paltry thing that assures us death has not yet ended life, and still more that death will not end all !

Though it be

“Only a signal shown and a voice from out of the darkness,”

it is not paltry ! Only the dead in spirit care not for the faintest, the rudest sign that assures us, who are “slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken,” that the soul lives freed from the flesh, that the individual mind and memory remain, though the clothing of the body and brain be gone. And it is just this natural human longing that renders a dispassionate consideration of the facts, a calm and critical weighing of the evidence, so difficult and yet so imperative. This is now being done with a care that grows by experience, and with an honesty that none can dispute. At present I cannot say that there exists much psychical evidence of scientific value for human identity many years after death ; the evidence begins to grow in abundance and weight as we approach a limited period after death, and when we come to within a few hours of death, and still more to the moment of death, the evidence becomes large in volume and conclusive in character.

§ 32.

I allude here to the evidence derived from apparitions of, or telepathic impacts from, the dying and the dead. One of the most cautious and philosophical among our distinguished men of science in England, the late Dr. R. Angus Smith, F.R.S., wrote to me, nearly twenty years ago, that

he was not aware of any law of nature, except the most obvious, that was sustained by so much and such respectable evidence as the fact of apparitions about the time of death.* In a subsequent interview I learnt from him that this opinion was arrived at only after long and careful investigation of the evidence attainable at that time. Since then the Society for Psychological Research has obtained a mass of additional and confirmatory evidence, which is incorporated in the two bulky volumes on "Phantasms," published by the Society.

But the weightiest evidence on behalf of the veridical, or truth-telling character, of apparitions at the moment of death is that afforded by the laborious investigation begun by Mr. Edmund Gurney, and continued by Professor and Mrs. Henry Sidgwick. By the aid of friends Mr. Gurney questioned 6,000 adults, and Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick 17,000 adults as to their experience of any sensory hallucination in their waking state. A careful analysis and dis-

* As the whole letter may be of future, if not of present interest, I give it here in full:—

MANCHESTER,

October 18th, 1876.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR BARRETT,—I see you are deep in that fascinating study, the action of mind freed from the organism. It surprises me much that any man is found to think it of little importance, and that any man is found who thinks his own opinion so important that he cares for no evidence. I have not been able to find a book which contains all the laws of nature needed to sustain the world, but some men are easily satisfied.

It is difficult to obtain such proofs as men demand for free mind. Visions are innumerable, and under circumstances that seem to render the sight of the absent, especially about the time of death, a reality. I am not aware of any law of nature (except the most obvious, such as are seen by common observers) which is sustained by so many assertions so well attested, as far as respectability of evidence goes. The indications we have point out to some mighty truth more decidedly than even the aberrations of Uranus to the newest of the great planets. If we could prove the action of mind at a distance by constant experiment it would be a discovery that would make all other discoveries seem trifles.—Yours sincerely,

R. ANGUS SMITH.

cussion of those cases led Mr. Gurney, and subsequently Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick and their committee, to the definite though cautiously-expressed, conclusion that:—

“Between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone. This we hold to be a proved fact. The discussion of its full implications cannot be attempted in this paper, nor, perhaps, exhausted in this age.”*

§ 33.

Here let me narrate an experience that came under my own observation which, though not strictly evidential of the operation of a discarnate mind, yet receives its simplest explanation on that hypothesis, if we admit that phantasms of the dead are not due to chance hallucination. I was staying at a friend's house in the country, which, for convenience of reference, I will call Hawthorne Manor, and found my hostess—the wife of a lawyer holding a responsible official position, and herself a matronly lady of great acumen and common-sense, the centre of a circle of religious and charitable activity—had accidentally discovered that her hand was occasionally impressed by some power she could not control ; long messages, the purport of which were at the time unknown to her, were thus written. The curious feature of this automatic writing was that it came on her suddenly ; when writing up some household accounts she fell into a dreamy or semi-trance like state, and then felt the fingers of another hand—belonging apparently to an invisible person seated *opposite* to her—laid on her right hand, and a sudden vigorous scribbling ensued ; but

* Report on Census of Hallucinations, “Proceedings S.P.R.,” Vol. X. p. 394.

the writing was all upside down, each line beginning at her right hand side of the page, and could only be read by turning the page round. Mrs. Z. assured me, and I have no reason to doubt her word, that it was quite impossible for her to write a single word correctly in this way in her normal state, and anyone who will make the attempt will find how difficult this is to execute, especially in the clear and characteristic caligraphy, quite different from her own, of these automatic communications. No serious attention was given to this abnormal writing until a message came containing certain specific statements, wholly outside the knowledge of herself or husband, and which they subsequently discovered to be perfectly true incidents in the life of the deceased relative who asserted he was present and guiding the lady's hand. Other communications followed, which also were verified. Then another evening the hand wrote :—

“I want you to believe your friends live still and can think of you. . . . On opening the eyes of my spiritual body I found myself unaltered, no terror, only a strange feeling at first, then peace, a comforted heart, love, companionship, teaching. I am [giving here his full name], and have written this, but your brother [giving the name] is here and wants to speak to you.

Mrs. Z. had recently lost a dearly loved brother, and after an interval the hand again wrote :—

“I am here [giving her brother's name] and want to tell you about my awakening into spirit life. I was at first dimly conscious of figures moving in the room and round the bed. Then the door was closed and all was still. I then first perceived that I was not lying on the bed, but floating in the air a little above it. I saw in the dim light the body stretched out straight and with the face covered. My first idea was that I might re-enter it, but all desire to do this soon left me—the tie was broken. I

stood upon the floor, and looked round the room where I had been so ill and been so helpless, and where I could once more move without restraint. The room was not empty. Close to me was my father's father [giving the name correctly]. He had been with me all through. There were others whom I love now, even if I did not know much of them then. I passed out of the room, through the next, where my mother and [I omit the name] were, I tried to speak to them. My voice was plain to myself, and even loud, yet they took no notice of all I could say. I walked through the college rooms; much blackness but some light. Then I went out under the free heavens. I will write more another sitting—power too weak now. Good night." [His signature follows.]

At another sitting, a night or two later, the same name was written, and the thread of the preceding narrative was abruptly taken up without any preface:—

"I saw the earth lying dark and cold under the stars in the first beginning of the wintry sunrise. It was the landscape I knew so well, and had looked at so often. Suddenly sight was born to me; my eyes became open. I saw the spiritual world dawn upon the actual like the blossoming of a flower. For this I have no words. Nothing I could say would make any of you comprehend the wonder of that revelation, but it will be yours in time. I was drawn as if by affinity to the world which is now mine. But I am not fettered there. I am much drawn to earth, but by no unhappy chain. I am drawn to those I love; to the places much endeared."

§ 34.

On another occasion a communication was given which certainly seems an additional link in the chain of identity. In this instance the communicating intelligence was unknown to Mrs. Z. The circumstances, written down at the time, were as follows:—A cousin of my hostess, an officer

in the Engineers, named B., was paying a visit to Hawthorne Manor. I was not present, but the facts were sent to me; some, indeed, came under my own knowledge. B. had a friend, a brother officer, R., who died after B. left Chatham, and to whose rooms he frequently went to play on R.'s piano, both being musical: of this Mrs. Z. assured me she knew absolutely nothing. At the sitting in question, much to B.'s amazement, for he was quite ignorant of Spiritualism, the Christian name and surname of R. were unexpectedly given, followed by the question, addressed to B., "Have you kept up your music?" Then came some private matter, when suddenly the unseen visitant interjected the question, "What was done with the books?" "What books?" was asked. "Lent to me," was the reply. "Who lent you the books?" The reply came at once, "A—," giving the name of another brother officer, of whose existence Mrs. Z. was also wholly unaware. "Shall I write to ask A— if he has them?" B. asked; "Yes," was the reply. All present assert on their word of honour they knew of no such loan, nor was the officer named in any of their thoughts, nor had Mrs. Z. ever heard A—'s name mentioned. A— was written to, and the question about the books incidentally asked, but in a reply that came some time after no notice was taken of the question. Two months later, however, B. accidentally met his friend A—, when, in the course of conversation on other matters, A— suddenly exclaimed: "That *was* a rum thing you asked me about in your letter; I mean about R. and the books. I *did* lend him some books, but I don't know what became of them after his death."

An objector might urge that it is conceivable B. might once have seen some books belonging to A— in R.'s room, and afterwards forgotten the fact, and that this latent

memory had telepathically (and unconsciously to all concerned) impressed Mrs. Z., but obviously this explanation will not cover the other cases here cited; for these some more elaborate hypothesis must be invented, and our ingenuity becomes severely taxed when we remember that these are only stray illustrations of a growing mass of sifted evidence pointing in the same direction; some of this evidence has been published, and other cases are privately known, but each case requires new and often absurd assumptions if we attempt to explain it away.

§ 35.

Now when, in the course of any scientific inquiry, we find that in order to retain some preconceived theory or dogma (such, for example, as the geocentric theory involved in the Ptolemaic system), it is necessary to invent a multitude of extravagant hypotheses, in which at last we become hopelessly entangled, owing to accumulating variations of the particular group of phenomena, it is apparent that the theory itself, however widely believed in, is most probably erroneous. It is, therefore, important to observe that as well-attested Spiritualistic phenomena accumulate in number and variety a succession of fresh, and more or less absurd, hypotheses have to be invented in order to avoid impugning the dogma of our modern Sadducees, that personality cannot exist without a visible body. The conclusion indicated is that the dogma itself, with whatever weight of scientific authority it may at present be supported, is probably erroneous, even from the purely scientific point of view.

It is, and probably will be, impossible to obtain a *logical*

demonstration of the existence of an invisible order of beings, but "formal logical sequence," as Dr. Newman says in his "Grammar of Assent," "is not, in fact, the method by which we are enabled to become certain of what is concrete. . . . The real and necessary method . . . is the cumulation of probabilities, independent of each other, arising out of the nature and circumstances of the particular case which is under review," and so the truth of the spirit hypothesis, and of spirit-identity, like the truth of religion or of common matters, is to be judged in this way, that is, by the *whole evidence* taken together. When this is done the evidential cases appear to fall into two groups, with an indefinite line of demarcation between them. In one group, the cause appears to be the operation of hidden powers that lie wrapped up in our present human personality, and which the peculiar organisation of the medium renders manifest; in the other and smaller group the cause appears to be the operation of probably the same powers, exerted, however, by unseen personalities, some of whom have once lived on earth: in this group we may, presumably, place the above cases.

That is to say, the unconscious self of the medium is the instrument *from* which in the former case and *through* which in the latter the messages come. We must not, of course, conclude that these latter are in every case extraterrene in their origin, for a telepathic influence from living and distant persons may oftentimes be their cause:—as, for instance, in Mr. W. T. Stead's interesting experiences, or in the well-known and earlier case of Mr. and Mrs. Newnham, where Mrs. Newnham's hand automatically wrote answers to questions previously written down by her husband, and of the purport of which her conscious self was wholly

ignorant.* I only mention this, parenthetically, to remind you how necessary it is to submit all "Spiritualistic" communications to the most rigorous scrutiny before deciding on their probable origin.

§ 36.

The dark continent within us is, therefore, more than a hidden record of unheeded or forgotten past impressions; there seems to be a *supra*-liminal as well as a *sub*-liminal self; something that has higher perceptive powers than our normal consciousness, something in us that is able to respond to directed thought, whether the thinker be "in the body or out of the body," something that links our individual life to the Source of that life, and to the ocean of universal life. This was firmly believed by that great philosopher, Kant, who, anticipating our present knowledge, slight as that is, was led by the mere strength of his penetrating intellect to assert:—

It is, therefore, as good as proved . . . that the human soul, even in this life, stands in indissoluble community with all immaterial natures of the spirit world, that it mutually acts upon them and receives from them impressions, of which, however, as man, it is unconscious, as long as all goes well.

And again he says:—

It is, therefore, truly one and the same subject which belongs *at the same time* to the visible and to the invisible world, but (since representations of the one world are not associated with

* This classical case is worth careful study. It is given in Vol. III. of the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research, and is quoted among other cases in Mr. Podmore's work on "Apparitions and Thought-Transference," a book that should be read by all who wish for a faithful and admirable summary of our present knowledge on these subjects. I do not agree with Mr. Podmore's agnostic views regarding Spiritualistic phenomena but that is a matter of evidence and individual opinion thereon.

deas of the other) what I think as spirit is not remembered by me as man.*

This was also Swedenborg's view. He repeatedly states :

Man is so constituted that he is *at the same time* in the spiritual world and in the natural world : the spiritual world is where the angels are, and the natural world is where men are.

Plotinus, who lived in the third century, also held a very similar belief, speaking of men as "amphibia," who live partly in the natural and partly in the spiritual world. In fact, the teaching of the Neo-platonists and mysticism generally is that the soul has a two-fold life, a lower and a higher. Iamblichus believed that even in sleep the soul is freed from the constraint of the body and enters on its divine life of intelligence : the night-time of the body being the day-time of the soul.† The "ecstasy" of Plotinus, and earlier still of Philo, was, according to them, the temporary liberation of the soul from its finite consciousness and its union with the Infinite.

Thus we see the opinion of many of the world's great thinkers in the past is quite in accord with recent evidence,

* Kant : Werke (Rosenkranz), vii., 53, 59, quoted by Dr. Du Prel in his "Philosophy of Mysticism" (Redway, London), a valuable work, to which I wish to express my indebtedness, and would fain hope it will meet with wider recognition in years to come. It has been, with loving labour, admirably translated by Mr. C. C. Massey, not the least valuable part of the work being the translator's own suggestive and scholarly preface. Mr. Massey has also rendered great service to English readers by his translation of E. von Hartmann's "Spiritism," and his valuable critique on the provisional hypothesis which Von Hartmann suggests. Like other candid inquirers, this eminent German philosopher, having with painstaking care made himself acquainted with the facts of Spiritualism, states that they afford "an urgent challenge to science to enter upon the exact research of this phenomenal province."

† See that delightful and well-known work, Vaughan's "Hours with the Mystics." Professor Harnack's admirable article on "Neo-platonism," in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," should be read by all who are interested in this subject.

which teaches us that our Ego is more than our self-consciousness reveals. As the roots of a tree are hidden in the earth, so we may regard the root of our Ego as sunk in a world beyond our consciousness, and the Neo-platonic idea—that the soul is only partially known in its normal, or physically-conditioned, consciousness—becomes intelligible. There is certainly a world beyond our normal consciousness from which neither space nor time divides us, but only the barrier of our sense-perceptions. This barrier constitutes what has been well termed the “threshold of sensibility,” and limits the area of our consciousness. In the progress of evolution from lower to higher forms of life this threshold has been successively shifted, with a corresponding exaltation of consciousness. The organism of an oyster, for instance, constitutes a threshold which shuts it out from the greater part of our sensible world; in like manner the physical organism of man forms a threshold which separates him from the larger and transcendental world of which he forms a part. But this threshold is not immovable. Occasionally in rapture, in dream, and in hypnotic trance it is shifted, and the human spirit temporarily moves in “worlds not realised” by sense. In the clairvoyance of deep hypnotic sleep, and in somnambulism, the threshold is still further shifted and a higher intelligence emerges, in a clearness and power proportional to the more complete cessation of the functions and consciousness of our ordinary waking life. This intelligence—that part of ourselves which we have called the supra-liminal self—has powers and perceptions wider and deeper than those of the normal waking consciousness. Accordingly, we may infer that in death the threshold is still more and permanently displaced, the normal sense-consciousness ceases, and that perceptive and reasoning power which in the somnambule

state is found to be independent of the body is not therefore likely to be destroyed with the body. As, one by one, the avenues of sense close for ever, the threshold of sensibility is not violently displaced; and so, as our loved ones pass from us, it is probable that the "dawn behind all dawns" creeps gently upward, slowly awakening them to the wider and profounder consciousness that, for good or ill, awaits us all.*

"Death is the veil which those who live call life;
They sleep and it is lifted."

§ 37.

Here let me remark in passing that the transcendental does not exclude the "Divine ground of the soul," as the mystics would say; encompassing the supernormal within us, lies the supernatural, in the true meaning of that word. For "Behind consciousness itself must certainly be placed the ultimate Reality of which consciousness offers only a reflection or faint representation."† The intimacy and immediacy of the union between the soul and God, the

* There are many who believe with the devout and learned Henry More, and other Platonists, that the survival of the soul after death involves the assumption of its pre-natal existence. If so, as Mr. Massey has said, "The whole conception of immortality undergoes an important change if we regard the personal consciousness with its Ego as a mere partial and temporary limitation of a larger self, the growth of many seasons, as it were, of earthly life." If we do not thereby lessen the sense of personal responsibility in the present life, there seems to me nothing in this view inconsistent with the teaching of the New Testament, nor with the attainment of that conscious personal immortality which was one great object of the Incarnation to bestow; see the next section.

† See upon this subject the recent striking work on "Personality" by the Rev. J. R. Illingworth, especially Lecture II. and the note on p. 240, where the views of Von Hartmann and Lotze are contrasted.

Infinite manifesting itself in and through the finite, is the fundamental idea, not only of the mystics, but of the New Testament, and of great Christian thinkers from Origen to Luther, and onwards to Fichte and Schelling. The attainment of this profounder consciousness, and therefore of our full personality, is, however, the province of religion, the "true theme of which is not the future life but the higher life." *

May I add, though you will here, perhaps, be less inclined to agree with me, that the inference so commonly drawn that these phenomena teach us the necessary and inherent immortality of the soul is, in my opinion, a mischievous error. It is true they show us that life *can* exist in the unseen, and—if we accept the evidence for "identity"—that some we have known on earth are still living and near us, but entrance on a life after death does not necessarily mean *immortality, i.e.*, eternal persistence of our personality. This is an error into which many Spiritualists

* We may, in fact, compare our normal self-consciousness to a narrow ring, which is encircled by the larger life of which that forms a part. God is the centre, and the manifestation of God the circumference, of all consciousness. Within this vast circle lies all creation, like the myriad cell-life within the human body. As by our self-surrender to the Divine will the consciousness of God enters into our life, our own will dies and God's will lives in us, and in so far as this is the case we attain the object of our earthly existence, that is, the realization of a higher and wider consciousness, the discovery of our true personality, which is immortal. This cannot persist until it has been attained, and its attainment is the Way of Life, for, as Lotze says, "Perfect personality is in God alone." In other words, when we are conscious of the Divine life and love dwelling within us, our human life becomes a conscious partaker of the endless life of God; without this consciousness human life is not only unsatisfying but unenduring. As St. Paul says: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you." It is important to note that *effort*, which seems to lie at the root of self-consciousness, is as necessary for the spiritual as the intellectual life. The ethical importance of *effort* is a question of profound interest.

fall, and also, I venture to think, a large part of Christendom. For my part, I am strongly of opinion that there is no clear Biblical evidence of any value on behalf of the *natural* immortality of man. On the contrary, we are distinctly told God "only *hath* immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; Whom no man hath seen nor can see," and again and again that "ye have not life in yourselves." I hold, therefore, in common with many whose opinion is far more entitled to respect than mine, that for us human beings immortality, in the sense above defined, is not our birthright, but an attainable Divine gift, as many passages from the Old and New Testaments, and from the apostolic fathers clearly teach.* But I must not go into Theology, though we are dealing with the allied question of eschatology.

§ 38.

Our personality is, therefore, a very complex and mysterious thing. In each of us there are potentialities which far outstrip the capabilities of our conscious voluntary intelligence; nay, more, which transcend the limitations of our senses, of space, of time, and even of our thought and consciousness. But if these supernormal faculties exist—and of their existence such acute thinkers as Schopenhauer and E. von Hartmann were convinced—other manifestations of them might be expected than those we are acquainted with in somnambulism, hypnotic trance, automatic writing, &c.

Experiment has recently taught us that the most

* This view is held, not only by some of the most learned theologians, but also by not a few devout and famous scientific men, such as Sir G. G. Stokes. I have ventured to add a few remarks on this subject in Appendix D.

startling physiological changes can be produced in a hypnotised subject merely by conscious or unconscious mental suggestion. Thus a red scar or a painful burn can be caused to appear on the body of the subject solely through suggesting the idea. By some local disturbance of the blood vessels in the skin, the unconscious self has done what it would be impossible for the conscious self to perform. And so in the well attested cases of stigmata, where a close resemblance to the wounds on the body of the crucified Saviour appear on the body of the ecstatic. This is a case of unconscious *self*-suggestion, arising from the intent and adoring gaze of the ecstatic upon the bleeding figure on the crucifix. With the abeyance of the conscious self the hidden powers emerge, whilst the trance and mimicry of the wounds are strictly parallel to the experimental cases previously referred to. May not the effects (now receiving attention) of pre-natal impressions on the offspring also have a similar origin? And, if I may make the suggestion without hurting any religious susceptibilities, may not the well-known cases of mimicry in animal life originate, like the stigmata, in a reflex action, as physiologists would say, below the level of consciousness, created by a predominant impression?

Adaptation to environment is usually a slow process spread over countless generations, but here also the same causes, *inter alia*, may be at work. Moreover, rapid changes do sometimes occur. Thus the beautiful experiments of Mr. Paulton, F.R.S., have shown that certain caterpillars can more than once in their lifetime change their colour to suit their surroundings. I have seen a brilliant green caterpillar acquire a black skin when taken from its green environment and placed among black twigs. It is no explanation to say that the nervous stimulus which produced these

pigmentary deposits is excited by a particular light acting on the surface of the skin. Through what wonder-working power is the change accomplished? Not, of course, through any conscious action of the caterpillar, for even the pupæ of these caterpillars undergo a like change, a light-coloured chrysalis becoming perfectly black when placed on black paper; even patches of metallic lustre, exactly like gold, appear on its integument, as I can testify, when the chrysalis is placed on gilt paper! Does it not seem as if animal life shared with us, in some degree, certain super-normal powers, and that these colour changes might be due to the influence of causes somewhat analogous to those producing the stigmata, *i.e.*, suggestion, unconsciously derived from the environment; something like the externalising of unconscious thought?

§ 39.

Certainly amongst mankind a conscious thought always strives and tends to externalise itself, to pass from a conception to an expression. Creation is the externalised thought of God, and this God-like attribute we, as part of the Universal Mind, share in a partial, limited degree. Our words and actions are a constant, though partial, embodiment of our thoughts, effected through the machinery of our nervous and muscular systems. But, without this machinery, thought can sometimes, as in thought-transference, transcend its ordinary channels of expression, and act, not mediately, but *directly*, upon another mind. Nay, more, the telepathic impact on a distant mind may, as is now known, actually excite what appears to be a real external image of the person whence the impulse proceeded, or of the idea in that person's mind. The first successful

attempt at this, under conditions that admit of no dispute, was made in 1881 by a personal friend, Mr. Beard, one of the earliest members of the Society for Psychical Research, and is described in that monument of labour, "Phantasms of the Living" (Vol. I., pp. 104-109). On several occasions Mr. Beard, by an effort of his will, was able to cause a phantom of himself to appear, three miles away, to certain acquaintances who were not aware of his intention to make the experiment. The phantom appeared so real and solid that the percipient thought Mr. Beard himself had suddenly come into the room ; and on one occasion the figure was seen by two persons simultaneously. Similar results have been obtained by at least nine other persons, independently of each other, living, in fact, in different parts of the world, more than one carefully conducted and successful experiment being made in each case.*

Doubtless these apparitions, though appearing so life-like and substantial, were hallucinations, but by what process is thought able to reproduce itself in, and thus cause these phantoms to be projected from, a distant mind ? Either, thought in A. by some unknown means, affects the brain matter in B., and so excites the impression, or thought exists independently of matter. Whichever alternative we take, as Mr. F. W. H. Myers says :—

"It is the very secret of life that confronts us here ; the fundamental antinomy between Mind and Matter. But such confrontations with metaphysical problems reduced to concrete form are a speciality of our research ; and since this problem does already exist—since the brain cells are, in fact, altered either by the thought or along with it—we have no right to take for granted that the problem, when more closely

* Details of most of these are given in chap. 10 of Mr. Podmore's book on "Apparitions," &c.

approached, will keep within its ancient limits, or that Mind, whose far-darting energy we are now realising, must needs be always powerless upon aught but the grey matter of the brain." ("Proceedings" S.P.R., Vol. X., p. 421.)

§ 40.

Of this we may yet obtain evidence when the physical phenomena of spiritualism are studied with scientific precision, if, from their nature, that is ever possible. For I am inclined to believe those phenomena will be found to resemble automatic writing and speaking, being *in part* due to the operation of the supernormal faculties in man.* If this be so, it would give to the psychic force theory discussed on page 37 a more probable and intelligible basis, though, as already remarked, this explanation is inadequate to account for all that occurs. Until we can locate the *source* of the energy causing the rappings and movements of objects, and the seat of the *reaction* that must somewhere take place, it is impossible to say how far the transcendental powers within the personality of the medium unconsciously take part in the production of these phenomena. But how, it may be asked, is this possible? That mind can act directly on mind is conceivable, but that mind can act directly on matter, outside its own brain cells, few would admit to be conceivable, though the action of mind on those very cells is no less a mystery. All depends upon how we regard matter, or what is its true nature.

The first lesson taught by mental philosophy is that all we know of external objects and material phenomena are certain sensations within us; of the things-in-themselves

* In the conjecture regarding *daimonia* on p. 40, line 18 from top, the words "*if* not the whole" should be "*though* not the whole."

we know absolutely nothing. The things we do know are certain states of consciousness, certain symbols—or *tekmeria*, as Dr. Johnstone Stoney, F.R.S., proposes to call them*—signs evoked in our mind by events happening in the universe outside our mind. Accordingly we do not perceive the actual material world, nor anything like it, and have not, therefore, the remotest idea of what the thing we call matter is in itself. We can watch the movements of a telegraphic needle and learn to read the message it brings, but the moving needle does not enable us to perceive the operator at the other end who is causing it to move, nor does it even remotely resemble the operator; its signals give us, it is true, an intelligible message, but it is intelligible only because the intelligence of the operator has been and is related to our intelligence. In like manner the mental signs our brain and nervous mechanism give us of the material world outside are not the things, nor a resemblance to the things, in themselves; the real world around us, the world of *ontology*, is absolutely inaccessible to us. But the reason why the material world is intelligible, why we can interpret the signs it gives us, is because there is an Intelligence behind the universe which has been and is related to our intelligence.

The common supposition, then, that the material universe and the conscious beings around us are directly and indubitably known, and constitute a world of “positive” facts, on which reason can certainly pronounce without any exercise of faith . . . is an entire mistake, based upon astonishing ignorance of the essential limitations of human knowledge, of which thinkers who lived in the very dawn of philosophy were perfectly aware. The fact is, we are equally obliged to transcend phenomena,

* See a profound and suggestive paper by Dr. Stoney in the “Proceedings” of the Royal Dublin Society, Vol. VI., p. 475.

and to put faith in events and powers and realities which do not appear, when we recognise the past, or the distant, or the material universe, or the minds of men, as when we infer the existence of God and of the unseen world.*

And if science replies to this that the premises on which it rests are furnished by immediate experience in the shape of observation and experiment—

What are we to say about these same experiences when we discover, not only that they may be wholly false, but that they are never wholly true; . . . nine-tenths of our immediate experiences of objects are visual, and all visual experiences, without exception, are, according to science, erroneous,† that is to say, the degrees of brightness or colour whereby we perceive objects are, as optics teaches, not properties of the things seen but sensations produced in us by undulations in the ether. Hence, psychologically regarded,

Our perceptions, regarded as sources of information, are not merely occasionally inaccurate but habitually mendacious.†

It is our ignorance, or our forgetfulness, of these facts, our neglect of the vast difference between our perceptions and the realities for which they stand, that gives rise to most of the perplexities we encounter, to the conflicts between science and faith, and to the difficulties of belief in an unseen personal God and an unseen spiritual world.

§ 41.

It has, moreover, become so integral a part of modern scientific thought to regard matter and mind as distinct entities that we forget this common dualistic conception may

* "The Realistic Assumptions of Modern Science Examined." By Professor Herbert, M.A. P. 455.

† "The Foundations of Belief." By the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P. Page 111.

be an entirely fallacious idea. Just as language is a manifestation of thought and indissolubly connected with it, so matter may be only a manifestation to us of spirit. To human intelligence, spirit is invariably and universally manifested through matter; so that spirit and matter, like force and matter, or thought and language, are to us inseverable and even unthinkable apart.* The essential unity which underlies thought and its expression in language, affords a valuable analogy, and has been ably worked out by a suggestive writer in the "Contemporary Review," who remarks:—

Matter is a real thing, just as language is a real thing; but we could not have had language without thought, and in the same manner it is contended that we could not have had matter without spirit, or the "immanent Reason" of which it is the expression. Language is the mode in which thought takes shape, its way of becoming known to itself, and therefore dependent on thought for its existence, but their relationship is a far more intimate one than that of cause and effect. . . . We cannot "account for" thought by the laws of language, simply because thought unconsciously makes those laws by way of attaining to a clearer recognition of itself. In the same way we cannot "account for" mind by the laws of matter, because those laws are, in reality, the principles according to which human intelligence apprehends the material universe. In them, mind recognises itself in the external world. . . . As thought is essentially self-manifesting, so the life of the spirit is essentially self-manifesting, and that as language is the utterance of the one, so matter is the utterance of the other.†

* By language must be understood more than words, which are the finer instruments of thought; animals have doubtless a primitive form of gesture language, as there is good evidence that they possess rudimentary thought and reason. Musical, pictorial, and plastic art are also modes of thought expression, but *pure* thought is as inconceivable to us as pure spirit.

† The essay from which this is quoted is republished, and forms chap. v. of a volume entitled "Progressive Revelation," by Miss Caillard, a work we earnestly commend to our readers.

Experimental science is still young and has not emerged from the Cartesian stage of thought where matter and mind, nature and spirit are absolute opposites, their antagonism reconciled only in the Divine incomprehensible will ; but as our knowledge progresses and our interpretation of nature becomes more adequate, we are beginning to recognise, as Hegel taught, that a unity lies beneath all opposition, though that unity may not be a subject of consciousness. The dualism and antithesis of nature and spirit would thus disappear, and miraculous phenomena become less incredible when nature is seen to be, as Novalis said, "an illuminated table of the contents of the spirit." *

To some extent, perhaps more largely than we think, we *do* create our own world. Our ideas and wishes project themselves on the unseen and come back to us as realities. It is so with all the great achievements in politics, philanthropy, and science. The works wrought by faith have been almost as wonderful in science as in religion, and the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is one which scientific men should be the last to deny.

Furthermore, with a slight change in the point of view of science, it is possible we may see as rapid a change of opinion with regard to the importance of psychical inquiry, as we have seen in regard to other subjects in our own time. Be this as it may, I believe that it is neither to place nor time, but to our states of mind, the "psychological climate" of the generation, that we must look for the acceptance and the prevalence, or otherwise, of the phenomena we are discussing.

* It is amazing to note the complacent assumptions of materialism after all that Kant, "the Copernicus of mind," and his successors have taught.

§ 42.

In fact, we are, I venture to think, on the eve of a new departure in public opinion with regard to the whole class of psychical phenomena. I think you will admit with me that the Society for Psychical Research has largely contributed towards this better state of things. Though many of you who have long ago obtained for yourselves conclusive evidence of some of the facts we are re-discovering, are naturally inclined to think our methods over cautious and our progress slow, yet even such will, I am sure, agree that the Society has achieved a success and has won a position which is unique. This result is in no small measure due to the wise counsels of Professor and Mrs. Henry Sidgwick and the zealous and brilliant work of Mr. F. W. H. Myers, and of our departed friend Mr. Edmund Gurney. Some of us know a little of the disinterested courage, the eminent fairness, and the self-sacrificing labour which our distinguished friends have brought to the study of these difficult problems, and I am sure you will allow me to testify on your behalf, to the grateful esteem and appreciation in which you hold their names.

Surely it is significant of the coming change when we find one of the most distinguished statesmen of the day (who by common acclaim will, in all probability, be ere long our Prime Minister), the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, stating in his recently published Presidential address to the Society for Psychical Research, that—

I think the time has now come when it is desirable in their own interests, and in our interests, that the leaders of scientific thought in this country and elsewhere should recognise that there are well attested facts which, though they do not easily fit

into the framework of the sciences, or of organised experience as they conceive it, yet require investigation and explanation, and which it is the bounden duty of science, if not itself to investigate, at all events to assist us in investigating. . . . All arbitrary limitations of our sphere of work are to be avoided. It is our business to record, to investigate, to classify, and if possible to explain, facts of a far more startling and impressive character than these modest cases of telepathy. Let us not neglect that business. . . . If many are animated by a wish to get evidence, not through any process of laborious deduction, but by direct observation, of the reality of intelligences not endowed with a physical organisation like our own, I see nothing in their action to criticise, much less to condemn. . . . If I rightly interpret the results which these many years of labour have forced upon the members of this Society, and upon others not among our number, who are associated by a similar spirit, it does seem to me that there is at least strong ground for supposing that outside the world (as we have, from the point of view of science, been in the habit of conceiving it), there does lie a region . . . in regard to which some experimental information may be laboriously gleaned.*

If it is not impertinent for me to say so, these are brave and timely words, and when generally known (and I am surprised more public attention has not been directed to them) they cannot fail to produce a profound effect. But you have only to look at the many famous names among those who have given in their adhesion to the Society for Psychical Research to realise that a change of thought has already begun. Foremost men of science in England, such as Lord Rayleigh, and Professors Lodge, J. J. Thomson, Ramsay, and Macalister ; and in America Professors Langley, Pickering, Bowditch, W. James, and Stanley Hall ; and on the Continent Professors Lom-

* "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research, Vol. X., p. 6, *et seq.*

broso, Richet, Janet, Bernheim, Wagner, and others equally famous, are all members of the Society for Psychical Research, as was also the late Professor Hertz, "the lustre of whose name," as Mr. Balfour remarked, "added dignity to our proceedings." Nor have the more enlightened clergy held aloof. When we find men of such eminence, learning, and piety as the late Bishop of Carlisle and the present Bishop of Ripon becoming Vice-Presidents of the Society, and other scarcely less honoured ecclesiastics of all denominations, to the number of eighty, amongst its members, it looks as if the whirligig of time was already bringing its revenge. But amidst this galaxy of names do not let us forget the brave pioneers who led the way, and some of whom, including such distinguished men as Crookes and A. R. Wallace, are still amongst us.

§ 43.

Before bringing this lengthy paper to a close, it is desirable we should consider what weight can fairly be claimed for the argument often urged by candid friends, that the dangers of psychical inquiry, especially of spiritualism, more than counterbalance its possible usefulness.

I do not deny that there are some risks (in what branch of novel inquiry are there not risks?), but they have been greatly exaggerated, and those who know *least* of the whole subject are apt to magnify the dangers most. Public performances of mesmerism by travelling showmen ought to be prohibited by law, in the same way as public performances of the effects of chloroform by a quack doctor should be, and would be, prohibited. In fine, I am of opinion that, if restrictive legislation is necessary in the case of animal vivisection, it would be desirable to extend it also to

psychical or moral vivisection for pecuniary or morbid purposes. But experiments in thought-transference in the normal state are *entirely harmless*, so far as my knowledge goes, and I speak with some authority on this matter. The general public resembles a lady friend who, not long ago, objected to our trying some simple thought-transference experiments with her daughter, and when asked why, she whispered to me, "Because I am sure that *electricity* is at the bottom of it!" and when I endeavoured to show her that, whatever the explanation, electricity had certainly nothing to say to it, she triumphantly exclaimed, "Well, then, if it is not electricity, *I am sure it is the devil.*" Both agencies were, let us hope, equally unknown to her, and therefore in her mind equally likely to be the cause of these novel effects ; mysterious boiler explosions and formidable earthquakes generally find the same explanation in the uninstructed mind.

As regards Spiritualism, I, for one, recognise that there are certain dangers, and we do well to be on our guard against them. These dangers do not attend a prudently-conducted and purely scientific investigation of the phenomena, but may seriously affect those who from idle curiosity venture upon these treacherous psychical quicksands, or attempt to build a religious faith upon the same insecure foundation.

Let us try to ascertain what warnings are necessary :

1. There is certainly some evidence indicating that continual sittings cause an illegitimate and excessive drain on the vitality of a medium, creating a nervous exhaustion which is apt to lead, in extreme cases, to mental derangement, or to an habitual resort to stimulants with a no less deplorable end. If this be the fact we must, of course, be on our guard, as no gain to science would ever justify

experiment heedless of a risk so great; but on this point we want more knowledge, for well-known cases recur to our mind (such as D. D. Home) where, so far as my knowledge goes, no injury was caused by prolonged mediumship.*

2. Well-informed and experienced Spiritualists say that serious risk to the health and even life of the medium is incurred by any sudden and violent awakening from the state of trance. To a scoffing public this plea seems obviously invented to secure immunity from detection by a sudden seizure of the medium; but the sniffs and scoffs of the ignorant do not advance our knowledge; what we want to know is, is there any conclusive evidence one way or the other on this point? If an experienced and unprejudiced physician were willing to take the risk a decisive experiment could, perhaps, be made. Whatever the conclusion might be, it is really absurd to suppose that the resources of science are so far exhausted that highly-trained investigators, like Mr. Crookes and Professor Lodge, cannot determine, with reasonable precision, whether certain physical movements or appearances are due to a known or an unknown cause without resort to the aid of clumsy and possibly hazardous police expedients.

The best and most conclusive manifestations occur when the investigator treats the phenomena as if they were produced by a timid animal, a sensitive living thing, that will shrink into obscurity and disappear at a sudden disturbance or surprise of any kind, often by a mental as well as material shock. Imagine you are watching the unfold-

* I confess that the widespread aversion to Spiritualism may possibly be the survival of an ancient antipathy, now submerged below the level of consciousness. If it really be an instinctive misgiving, it ought not to be lightly disregarded until it can be shown to be wholly irrational.

ing of a rare and highly organised polyp, and observing the capricious movements of its long and sensitive tentacles, and you will be able to realise how even a sudden ray of light may startle it to instant closure, though it may by training be accustomed to unfold in full and steady light. In "quietness and confidence" will be the strength of the observer and the richness of his observations.*

3. Spiritualism has been accused of creating insanity and fostering immorality, but no reliable evidence in support of such sweeping charges is adduced, and unsupported accusations of a similar character are familiar in the history of nearly every new and disturbing phase of thought. Isolated cases, no doubt, exist; but, as Mrs. Sidgwick points out in an article in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," "the fact that the delusions of the insane not infrequently take the form of converse with invisible beings" has probably led to this widespread and mistaken inference. The same writer remarks: "The great scandal of Spiritualism"—or I should prefer to say its tendency in ignorant and foolish minds—"is the encouragement it gives to the immoral trade of fraudulent mediumship." On the other hand, it is to Spiritualists themselves we mainly owe the exposures of these frauds; but very often, I think, we are apt to judge the medium too harshly. We must remember the abnormal condition and loss of normal self-control (p. 49) involved in mediumship, and surely it would be as unjust

* The phenomena produced by the unconscious or secondary self of the medium may not only be *telepathic* and *telekinetic* (i.e., the movement of objects without a known physical cause), but also—following Mr. Myers' useful terminology—*teleplastic*, i.e., the alleged materialisation or duplication of parts, or the whole, of the human body. All these M. Aksakof embraces under the term Animism, using the word Spiritism to denote similar phenomena which, from their intellectual content, give evidence of the operation of another personality or "spirit" acting through the medium.

to charge a deeply-entranced medium with conscious fraud as to accuse a somnambulist walking on a housetop with consciously jeopardising his life. It is this weakening of the sense of personal responsibility that constitutes, in my opinion, the chief peril of Spiritualism. Hence your gates need to be guarded with jealous care; even the level-headed should walk warily, and the excitable and emotional should have nothing to do with it; for the fascination of the subject is like a candle to moths, it attracts and burns the silly, the credulous, and the crazy.

But every Spiritualist knows the mischief of promiscuous sittings of ignorant people, and many feel as strongly as I do that dark séances and paid professional mediums are, as a rule, to be sedulously avoided and should be protested against. The latter I have already referred to, and the former are really unnecessary. The best sittings I ever had have been in full light; so with Mr. Crookes' wonderful observations; in fact, Home always refused to sit in the dark; and, probably, with any medium by patience and perseverance the light could be gradually increased without serious injury to the results, and with enormous gain to the accuracy and precision of the observations.

4. As regards those taking part in a séance caution of a different kind is necessary. With the following remarks by Mr. Epes Sargent you will, I know, all concur:—

The circumstance that scientific persons have, as a general rule, kept aloof from the whole of this subject, partly through a misgiving as to their ability to cope with it, and partly through their own *à priori* objections and rooted prejudices, has left it largely in the hands of those who, from defective training, or from a lack of the critical faculty, have supposed that all which may come from the unseen world must be authoritative and

right. Messages that violate all the laws of logic and common-sense have thus been accepted as *bonâ fide* communications from the world's great departed thinkers.*

One of the most provoking things in these communications is this not infrequent personation of great names in history. The absurdity is so transparent that only the ignorant are misled, but these freaks of the sub-liminal self (see p. 58) often add to the perplexity of the inquirer and to the contempt of the scoffer.

A century before modern Spiritualism arose Swedenborg uttered warnings on the delusive character of many of the communications from "spirits." In the "Arcana Cœlestia" he says: "When spirits begin to speak with man they conjoin themselves with his thoughts and affections; hence it is manifest none other but similar spirits speak with man and operate upon him. . . . They put on all things of his memory, thus all things which the man has learned and imbibed from infancy the spirits suppose these things to be their own; thus they act, as it were, a part of man with men."† And again, "Wherefore let those who speak with spirits beware lest they be deceived, when they say that they are those whom they know or pretend to be."‡ And so Preiswerk, in a German work published in 1856, giving an account of Spiritualism among the Swiss, says it was found "that the communications by table

* "Scientific Basis of Spiritualism," p. 341. So also Dr. George Wyld, one of the band of pioneers in this subject, writes in his "Spiritual Dynamics": "It is a great evil when people receive the vapid, or commonplace, or inflated verbiage of some 'inspirational medium,' as not only a guide for their lives, but as a revelation of celestial truth, or of a new religion higher than that we have in the teachings and life of Christ."

† "Arcana Cœlestia," §§ 6192 and 5850.

‡ "Spiritual Diary," §§ 1622, 2686, *et seq.* Cf. also "Apocalypse Explained," § 1182.

rapping were only an echo and reflection of the mind of the persons engaged."* This, as we know, is very often the case, and indicates that the source of some of the "physical phenomena" may also be the unconscious self of the medium, as I have already suggested.

5. Moreover, if there is any truth in the views suggested on p. 40 of a possible source of the purely physical manifestations, it seems to me that the Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, points to a race of spiritual creatures similar to those I have described, but of a malignant type, when he speaks of beings not made of flesh and blood inhabiting the air around us, and able injuriously to affect mankind. Good as well as mischievous agencies doubtless exist in the unseen; this, of course, is equally true if the phenomena are due to those who have once lived on the earth. In any case, granting the existence of a spiritual world, it is necessary to be on our guard against the invasion of our will by a lower order of intelligence and morality. The danger lies, in my opinion, not only in the loss of spiritual stamina, but in the possible deprivation of that birth-right we each are given to cherish, our individuality, our true self-hood; just as in another way this may be impaired by sensuality, opium, or alcohol.

The great object of our life on earth appears to be, on the one hand, the upbuilding, strengthening, and perpetuation of our separate and distinct personalities; and, on the other, the awakening and development in each of the consciousness of an underlying Unity, which links each person into a larger Personal Life common to all, "in Whom we live and move and have our being"; in a word, the realisation of the fact that we are integral parts and members of

* Delitzsch, "Biblical Psychology," p. 369.

one Body. In so far as Spiritualism aids or thwarts these objects its moral effect must be judged ; like mysticism, I think it aids the latter, but is apt to endanger the former.*

What I have said, let me once again repeat, has obviously no bearing on prudent scientific inquiry ; this is the more necessary if the view of the religious world be true, that Spiritualism is a fell disease. Indiscriminate condemnation and ignorant credulity are, in truth, the two most dangerous elements with which the public are confronted in connection with Spiritualism. The explorer speedily discovers that both are out of place, and in the ardour of the search—unless properly equipped and guided by the *lumen siccum ac purum notionum verarum*—is likely to become engulfed in a Serbonian bog, even if no worse fate befall him. It is,

* The most vigorous onslaught on the practice of Spiritualism is to be found in the "Merchants' Lecture" for 1893 (published by Elliot Stock), by the Rev. Edward White, the learned and distinguished author of "Life in Christ." Agreeing in many points with my friend Mr. White, his arguments do not apply to serious scientific investigation, and should be read in connection with (among other publications) the Hon. Roden Noel's "Philosophy of Immortality," p. 11 *et seq.*, and Mr. Epes Sargent's "Scientific Basis of Spiritualism," ch. 5 ; with the latter, however, I wholly disagree that Spiritualism satisfies our aspirations. Everyone, outside a lunatic asylum, must revolt from the hideous nightmare of a spiritual realm such as is depicted by the quasi *ticket-of-leave* ghosts met with in the physical and form manifestations of a Spiritualistic séance. Compare such buffoonery with our cherished ideals :—

" Where thou hast touched, O wondrous death,
Where thou hast come between,
Lo ! there for ever perisheth
The common and the mean."

We may attribute the vulgarity of such séances to the fact that "there are as great fools in the spirit-world as there ever were in this," as Henry More said over 200 years ago : or to the manifestations being caused by the "double" of the medium, and hence partaking of his mental and moral characteristics. Physical manifestations are necessarily limited in the range of their intelligence ; though of most importance to the scientific investigator, they are least so to the Spiritualist, who rightly finds higher satisfaction in trance addresses and communications. These latter, however, as we have seen, are intermixed with, or may be often wholly due to, the medium's own subconscious mind.

therefore, because I feel that in the fearless pursuit of truth it is the paramount duty of *science* to lead the way, and erect such signposts as may be needed in the vast territory we dimly see before us, that I so strongly deprecate the past and the present scornful attitude of the scientific world. Furthermore, as a famous philosopher has remarked of cognate facts, "The phenomena under discussion are, at least from a philosophical standpoint, of all facts presented to us by the whole of experience, without comparison the most important; it is, therefore, the duty of every learned man to make himself thoroughly acquainted with them." *

§ 44.

I have dealt in this paper exclusively with Spiritualistic phenomena, as it was not my intention here to treat of other subjects of psychical research, most of which are of a less startling character and some of which, like mesmerism and telepathy, are, in my opinion, almost as fully established as some of the accepted truths of science. We have added considerably to the weight of evidence since Schopenhauer wrote: "Who at this day doubts the facts of mesmerism and its clairvoyance is not to be called sceptical but *ignorant*." † And this remark would now apply to other branches of our inquiry. Deeply interesting scientific problems lie before us in the immediate future. I can only hint at some of these. ‡ In Thought-transference

* Schopenhauer, who is here speaking of mesmerism and clairvoyance, but his observation applies still more emphatically to the phenomena of Spiritualism. The passage is from the "Versucht über Geistersehen," and is quoted in Du Prel's "Philosophy of Mysticism."

† Schopenhauer, "Versucht über Geistersehen."

‡ In some public lectures on Thought-transference, given upwards of ten years ago, I first suggested the ideas embodied in the latter part of this paper. Isaac Taylor, in his "Physical Theory of Another Life,"

is it the idea or the word that is transmitted ; is it the emotion or the expression of the emotion ? I believe it is the former. But if so, may not this afford a hint towards the possibility of an interchange of thought amongst men in spite of differences in language ? Language is but a clumsy instrument of thought, "consisting as it does of arbitrary signs, it is a rudiment of a material system";* and we may expect it to disappear under the action of evolutionary forces. For how much more perfectly should we be able to transmit complex ideas and subtle emotions by the naked intercourse of minds than by the mechanism of speech. Or again, may not the *animals* share with man this power ? Evidence exists that domestic animals often perceive apparitions, and are frequently keener in their perception than man. It is worth trying if animals *are* open to telepathy ; will a favourite dog, for example, respond to the unuttered call of his name, no sense perception reaching him ? The habits of ants and bees seem to indicate the possession of a mode of communication unknown to us. If our domestic animals are in any degree open to thought-transference, may we not thus get into somewhat closer communion with them ?

But leaving aside such speculations, the wider recognition of the fact of thought-transference will inevitably lead

written nearly fifty years before telepathy was heard of, has, I find, on some points anticipated me, though I was unaware of this till quite lately. Owing to the use of the phrase *thought-reading*, the absurd idea is prevalent that thought-transference means reading all the thoughts in another's mind. Only the dominant idea in the agent's mind is passed on to the percipient, and that apparently requires an effort of will, so that filching one another's thoughts is not possible, and the sanctity and privacy of our minds must always be within our power and possession, so long as we retain our true self-hood.

* Isaac Taylor, "Physical Theory of Another Life," p. 102. Professor H. Drummond, in his recent work, the "Ascent of Man," has also the same idea as I. Taylor : "telepathy," he remarks, "is theoretically the next stage in the evolution of language," p. 233.

to its culture and development.* Does it not already play some part in the growing sense of sympathy and humanity we find in the world around? But if it were as common here among men, as it is doubtless common in the intercourse of the spiritual world, what a change would be wrought! Involuntarily sharers in one another's pleasures and pains, the brotherhood of the race would not be a pious aspiration or a strenuous effort, but the reality of all others most vividly before us; *the* factor in our lives which would dominate all our conduct. What would be the use of a luxurious mansion at the West End and Parisian cooks if all the time the misery and starvation of our fellow creatures at the East End were telepathically part and parcel of our daily lives? On the other hand what bright visions and joyous emotions would enter into many dreary and loveless lives if this state of human responsiveness were granted to the race!

It may be that telepathy is the survival of an old and once common possession of the human race that has fallen into disuse and almost died out with the growth of language; more probably, I think, it is a rudimentary faculty, or, as Mr. C. C. Massey suggests, an early and special case of the great human *rapport* which is slowly awakening the race to the sense of a larger self: to

“ . . . A heart that beats
In all its pulses with the common heart
Of humankind, which the same things make glad,
The same make sorry.”

* How delightful an anticipation for parted friends; for, as Shakespeare says, in one of his Sonnets (XLIV.) :—

“If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance would not stop my way.”

So Tennyson, with poetic prescience, says in “Aylmer's Field,” as
“Star to star vibrates light, may soul to soul
Strike thro' a finer element of her own.”

§ 45.

In spite of all these interesting questions, still I hear, and have often addressed to me, in relation to psychical research, the old cry, "What use is it?" When all is said and done, and the facts we are slowly accumulating are generally recognised and accredited, what will be the gain? None at all to such as Peter Bell, to whom a primrose by the river's brim will only excite regret that he cannot eat or drink it; none to the simple, contented heart; none to those saints whose supreme faith has enabled them to transcend all earthly doubt, and who daily "live as seeing Him who is invisible"; but very much to the rest of mankind, in whom most of us are included. For, as the learned Dr. Glanville says in the dedication of his famous "*Saducismus Triumphatus*," "these things relate to our biggest interests; if established, they secure some of the outworks of religion, and regain a parcel of ground which bold infidelity hath invaded." But our scope is wider than Glanville had before him, and our philosophical need is greater. A false and paralysing materialistic philosophy must either disappear or be reconstructed, when the phenomena we attest can no longer be denied; and so, too, the popular assaults on the Christian religion, based on its incredibility, will be deprived of much of the force they now possess in certain minds. It is obvious to the meanest intellect that the most profound change in human thought that has occurred since the Christian era will, in all probability, follow the general recognition by science of the immanence of a spiritual world. Faith will no longer be staggered by trying to conceive of life in the unseen; death will no longer be felt to have so icy a grip over even Christian hearts; the miracles of the

Old and New Testament will no longer seem to be the superstitious relics of a barbarous age; the "prayer of faith" will no longer find an adequate explanation in the subjective response it evokes, nor the "Word of the Lord" in mere human aspiration. On the contrary, if, as I hold, telepathy be indisputable, if our creaturely minds can, without voice or language, impress each other, the Infinite and Over-shadowing Mind is likely thus to have revealed itself in all ages to responsive human hearts. To some gifted souls were given the inner ear, the open vision, the inspired utterance, but to all there comes at times the still small voice, the faint echo within us of that larger Life which is—here a little and there a little—expressing itself in humanity as the ages gradually unfold.

§ 46.

But even to those who prefer to regard these phenomena from a purely scientific aspect there will be great gain. I have already alluded to the possible solution which they afford of many perplexing, and at present inscrutable, scientific problems, the opening up of new regions of fruitful experimental inquiry, the impulse they will give to a truer psychology and a healthier philosophy. But more than this, they will tend to bring more forcibly before our minds the solidarity of the race, the immanence of the unseen, the dominance of thought and spirit—in a word, the transcendent unity of nature. Our scientific as well as our political memories are short-lived. We only see vividly that in the midst of which we live. What has gone before us is as if it had not been and never could be. So the science of to-day forgets, as has been well said, "that the tendency of all the earlier

systems of physical philosophy was to supernaturalise natural actions, whereas the tendency of modern science is to force into the phenomenal world that which must ever be ultra phenomenal. The older writers on physical science delighted in symbolical designs in which the forces of nature were represented each at his appointed work, and over all they placed a cloud from which issued the hand of God, directing the several agents of the Universe, and introducing harmony into their various actions.* The symbol is not unjust :

“ All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is and God the soul.”

Or, as Coleridge says :

“ ’Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole !
This fraternises man. . . . But ’tis God
Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole.”

We are not isolated in or from the great Cosmos, the light of suns and stars reaches us, the mysterious force of gravitation binds the whole material universe into an organic whole, the minutest molecule and the most distant orb are bathed in one and the self-same medium. But surely beyond and above all these material links is the solidarity of mind. As the essential significance and unity of a honeycomb is not in the cells of wax, but in the common life and purpose of the builders of those cells, so the true significance of nature is not in the material world but in the *Mind* that gives to it a meaning, and that underlies and unites, that transcends and creates, the

* Rodwell. Preface to “Dictionary of Science,” p. xxviii.

phenomenal world through which for a moment each of us is passing. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal," and so

" We hope
That in a world of larger scope,
What here is faithfully begun
Will be completed, not undone."

NOTE.

The following extract from an essay of Sir John Herschel's, "On the Origin of Force," published in his Lectures on Scientific Subjects, appears to me so valuable a contribution to our belief in a Supreme Mind that I venture to quote it; the whole essay, like all Sir John wrote, is full of luminous thought:—

The universe presents us with an assemblage of phenomena—physical, vital, and intellectual—the connecting link between the worlds of intellect and matter being that of organised vitality, occupying the whole domain of animal and vegetable life, throughout which, in some way inscrutable to us, movements among the molecules of matter are originated of such a character as apparently to bring them under the control of an agency other than physical, superseding the ordinary laws which regulate the movements of inanimate matter, or, in other words, *giving rise to movements* which would not result from the action

of those laws uninterfered with ; and therefore implying, on the very same principle, the origination of force. The first and greatest question which Philosophy has to resolve in its attempts to make out a Cosmos—to bring the whole of the phenomena exhibited in these three domains of existence under the contemplation of the mind as a congruous whole—is, whether we can derive any light from our internal consciousness of thought, reason, power, will, motive, design, or not ; whether, that is to say, Nature is or is not *more interpretable* by supposing these things (be they what they may) to have had, or to have, to do with its arrangements. Constituted as the human mind is, if Nature be *not* interpretable through these conceptions it is not interpretable at all ; and the only reason we can have for troubling ourselves about it is either the utilitarian one of bettering our condition by “subduing Nature” to our use through a more complete understanding of its “laws,” so as to throw ourselves into its grooves, and thereby reach our ends more readily and effectually ; or the satisfaction of that sort of aimless curiosity which can find its gratification in scrutinising everything and comprehending nothing. But if these attributes of mind are not *consentaneous*, they are useless in the way of explanation. Will without motive, power without design, thought opposed to reason, would be admirable in explaining a chaos, but would render little aid in accounting for anything else.

APPENDIX A.

SUPERSTITION AND THE SUPERNATURAL.

§ 1.

The phenomena we have been discussing in the preceding address are usually characterised by sceptics as "recrudescence of superstition,"* and by believers as "evidence of the supernatural." If either of these statements be true they have serious and far-reaching consequences, and as they are both supported by some authority, it is eminently desirable we should examine these assertions carefully. And, first, what is the meaning to be attached to "superstition" on the one hand,† and "supernatural" on the other? Superstition (Lat., *superstitio*) is etymologically the *standing over* a thing in amazement or awe. By so doing we shut out the light of inquiry and reason; where this light enters superstition fades away, so that we no longer enshroud a mystery by standing *over* it, but begin to *under*-stand it. Superstition is, therefore, the antithesis of understanding, and of that *faith in the intelligibility of the universe* which is the sheet anchor of science and the lode-star of all intellectual progress.

* Leading review in "Nature," December 6th, 1894, p. 122.

† Johnson gives several definitions; the best is "unnecessary fear." Cicero says it is "a certain empty dread of the gods." Plutarch's definition, in his interesting essay on Superstition, resembles this,

In a lecture on Science and Superstition that I heard him deliver at the Royal Institution in 1866, the Rev. Charles Kingsley defined superstition as "fear of the unknown." But, though terror is often fed by superstitious beliefs, it would be the consequence and not the cause of superstition. Moreover, the ancient Greek, "who believed that every tree, or stream, or glen had its nymph, whose kindly office men might secure by paying them certain honours," was a superstitious man, though he did not here exhibit any dread of the unknown. The definition given by a learned writer, Sir G. W. Cox, seems to me nearest the truth, if restricted by the clause I have added in brackets, viz.: *Superstition is a belief not in accordance with facts [wherein no connection exists between the act done, or cause ascribed, and the effect imagined], and issues in superstitious practices when such a belief is regarded as capable of affording help or injury.* Hence, when a *primary hypothesis* is not only erroneous, but unrelated to the facts in question, we have the basis of superstition and its attendant evils, though the deductive reasonings from that hypothesis be irrefragable. The witch mania was thus a horrible superstition. False ideas of the Cosmos are fruitful sources of absurd and sometimes revolting superstitions.

We are now in a position to test the first assertion: Is Spiritualism—using the word in the sense defined on page 14—a superstition? Certainly it is, if not in accordance with facts; but those who assert this are the very persons who, on *à priori* grounds, deem it impossible or unverifiable, and have therefore never given to the subject any painstaking study whatever! Those who have been eye-witnesses and made it a subject of laborious investigation, at first hand, assert that certain phenomena entirely new to science *do exist*, that the facts are there; in fine,

although differences of opinion may exist as to the interpretation of those facts, no one has yet proved that a belief in these phenomena is utterly groundless; on the contrary, every painstaking and honest investigator who has endeavoured to prove this, so far as I know, has failed, and many such have eventually changed sides.

But if this be so, it is obvious that, with regard to these phenomena, the "primary hypothesis" of most scientific men to-day,—which leads them to reject the evidence adduced and the expression of opinion in scientific journals, as well as the popular belief, none of these are in accordance with fact, and such beliefs issue in a conduct and a practice hurtful to mankind and to the attainment of truth. Is it not, therefore, the average man of science, the average public opinion of to-day, that is on this subject foolishly superstitious? Nor must we forget the consequences of this erroneous belief upon the holders themselves. As the able and thoughtful writer, whose definition of superstition I have adopted, has said:—

It follows that every belief and every practice not based on, or not in accordance with, actual fact, must have an injurious effect on the mental and moral state of the thinker or actor. How great may be the mischief so produced, and how far it may check the growth of all literature, art, and science, the reader may gather from the 9th chapter of Hallam's "Middle Ages."*

We are all familiar with one mischievous effect of this erroneous habit of thought on the part of the materialistic school of scientific thought. Starting from the fundamental principle of the denial of an unseen or spiritual world, everything is made to give way to that; albeit the

* "Dictionary of Science," by Dr. Brande, F.R.S., and Sir G. W. Cox M.A.; Art., "Superstition."

ludicrous arrogance of this denial is obvious when we consider the narrow limits both of our knowledge and of our senses. According to this school, “*any* solution of a difficulty is more probable than one which would concede a miracle had really occurred. This explains their seeming want of candour, and why they meet with evasions proofs that seem to be demonstrative.”* These are the words the learned Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, Dr. Salmon, applies to the Biblical critics of that school, and they are equally true of the Spiritualistic critics of that school.

§ 2.

Let us now examine the second and opposite assertion, that Spiritualism is “evidence of the supernatural.” Putting aside that school of thought which denies, *in toto*, the supernatural, numerous attempts have been made to define the word supernatural. Strictly speaking, as God is the Creator and Source of all things, He only can be over or above Nature. Archbishop Whately remarks :—

As Nature is another word to signify the state of things and course of events God has appointed, nothing that occurs can be strictly called “supernatural.” Jesus Himself describes His works, not as violations of the laws of Nature, but as “works which none other man did.” *Superhuman* would, perhaps, be a better word than supernatural.

But this was not the idea of the writers either in the Old or New Testaments. Their idea was one common to the age in which they lived (see Grote’s “History of

* Of such it has been truly remarked, “There is a bigotry of unbelief quite as blind and irrational, involving quite as thorough an abnegation of the highest faculties of the human mind, as can possibly be the case with the bigotry of superstition.”—Rev. J. J. Lias: “Are Miracles Credible?” p. 12.

Greece"), viz., that of the arbitrary action of a Supreme Being breaking in upon the ordinary course of events for a special purpose; a miracle was thus a sign or wonder wrought in order to attest His existence and power. Obviously, until science had given us conclusive evidence of an undeviating order in Nature, there could be no clear idea of a miracle as involving a violation of that order, no correct view of the "supernatural."

An interesting discussion on the meaning of the word supernatural is to be found in Dr. Horace Bushnell's suggestive and well-known work, "Nature and the Supernatural." Dr. Bushnell defines a miracle as that which evinces superhuman power in the sphere of the senses, by some action *upon*, not *in*, the line of cause and effect. He takes nature in its etymological meaning, as "'the coming to pass' of that which is determined by the laws of cause and effect in things":—

The *supernatural* is that which acts *on* the chain of cause and effect, from without the chain. The distinction of Nature and the supernatural is the distinction, in fact, between things and powers. In this view man, as a power, is a supernatural being, in so far as he acts freely and morally. If he moves but a limb in his freedom he acts on the lines of cause and effect in nature.*

But we cannot draw the line at man; all volition, whether of animals or man, is thus a supernatural act; and who can say where volition ends! Ultimately, if we accept this definition, we should be driven to say that wherever sensation and causation exist there is an exhibition of the supernatural. But this is too inclusive; in one sense, of course, all conscious existence is supernatural, but then what is meant by natural?

* "Nature and the Supernatural," chaps. 2 and 11.

Bishop Butler gives the best answer to this. He says in his "Analogy," Part I., chap. 1 :—

The only distinct meaning of that word [natural] is—stated, fixed, or settled; since what is natural, as much requires and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, *i.e.*, to effect it continually or at stated times; as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once. And from hence it must follow that persons' notion of what is natural will be enlarged in proportion to their greater knowledge of the works of God, and the dispensations of His providence. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing that there may be beings in the universe whose capacities and knowledge and views may be so extensive, as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, *i.e.*, analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of His creation; as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us. . . . And thus, when we go out of this world we may pass into new scenes, and a new state of life and action, just as naturally as we came into the present; and this state may naturally be a social one . . . in which our capacities and sphere of perception and of action may be much greater than at present.

Hence it was with wonderful prescience St. Augustine remarked: "Miracles do not happen in contradiction to nature, but only in contradiction to that which is known to us of nature." This, as is well known, was also the view of Archbishop Trenchard and is held by most modern theologians.

In fine, as a former Savilian Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford, the Rev. Baden Powell, F.R.S., has said in his admirable series of essays on the "Order of Nature," p. 232, *et seq.* :—

The limits of the study of nature do not bring us to the *supernatural* . . . if at any particular point science finds a *present* limit, what is beyond science is not therefore beyond nature; it is only unknown nature; when we cease to trace law

we are sure law remains to be traced. Whatever amount of the marvellous we encounter in the investigation of facts, such extraordinary phenomena will be sure at some future time to receive their explanation. As Spinoza argued, we cannot pretend to determine the boundary between the natural and the supernatural until the whole of Nature is open to our knowledge. . . . From the very conditions of the case it is evident that the *supernatural* can never be a matter of *science* or knowledge, for the moment it is brought within the cognisance of reason it ceases to be supernatural.

From this point of view it will be seen that spiritualism is not and cannot be "evidence of the supernatural." The Supernatural, in its strict meaning, may be taken to be the knowledge of God—not of the methods of His working, but the consciousness of His presence—and this cannot be a matter of external evidence. Such knowledge is incommunicable from without; it is the voice of the Spirit to the spirit, or, as Philo said, of the "Alone to the alone," and "the soul must be very still to hear God speak." Of this Divine unveiling the humblest human souls have known alike with the greatest prophets and poets.*

"For more than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt

* This is really what is meant by *religion*, which is essentially the soul's awakening to the consciousness and nearness of God, and with religion *faith* is inseparably connected. For, as Canon Scott Holland says in "Lux Mundi" (p. 15), "Faith is the power by which conscious life attaches itself to God. . . . Faith, then, opens an entirely new career to creaturely existence; and the novelty of this career is expressed in the word '*Supernatural*.' The supernatural world opens upon us as soon as faith is in being."

But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
 The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
 Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
 Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world." *

The popular meaning attached to the word supernatural is, however, not this, but Some occurrence which affords evidence of an unseen or spiritual world outside ourselves, and therefore not belonging to the present or visible order of nature. In *this* sense we might speak of a certain limited group of well-attested spiritualistic phenomena as supernatural or miraculous. And here I would remark that the repugnance of scientific thought to the idea of the miraculous largely arises, I imagine, from the erroneous conception that the word implies will or power *operating without the use of means*, instead of, as it surely does mean, the use of means wholly beyond our knowledge or control.

This brings us to the old and long-debated question, What is meant by a miracle? Mansel says "what is superhuman is miraculous"; McCosh defines a miracle as a "superhuman work wrought by Divine power for a Divine purpose." This is the general theological view of the present day. Thus, in a recent work, "Are Miracles Credible?" the Rev. J. J. Lias says, "A miracle is an exception to the observed order of nature, brought about by God, in order to reveal His will or purpose." But, as other writers have pointed out, this restricts the use of the word among most Protestants to the Biblical record, whereas there may be "relative" as well as "absolute" or "theological" miracles. For, as Archbishop Whately, in his Essay on Superstition, says, "If either Roman

* Tennyson: "The Ancient Sage."

Catholics or any others will give sufficient proofs of the occurrence of a miracle they ought to be listened to ; but to pretend to, or to believe in, any miracle *without* sufficient proof is clearly superstition."

In view of the phenomena we have been discussing, I would venture to suggest the definition that miracles are *supernormal and therefore rare manifestations of mind*, and as such they may be evidence either (i.) of the Infinite Mind, or (ii.) of a finite mind in the unseen, or (iii.) of a transcendental part of the human mind. Another and vital distinction must be drawn between miracles which are voluntary and purposive exhibitions of supernormal power, such as the miracles narrated in the New Testament ; and miracles, such as some of the phenomena we have been considering, which are manifestations of an intelligence and a power wholly beyond the control of the psychic, and with which his volition is concerned only so far as the withdrawal of any opposing mental condition. Of these latter ("relative" miracles) it is probable that the progress of research may render the miracle of to-day the accepted scientific fact of to-morrow. But the former being self-determined are not in the same category, and there may be, as Kant says, "events in the world the operative laws of whose causes are, and must remain, utterly unknown to us."

It will thus be seen that the common Protestant belief that miracles, using this term in its widest sense, are credible in Scripture, but incredible out of it, is inaccurate. As Dr. Bushnell has well shown, so far from the age of miracles being past, there is unbroken testimony, from the apostolic times to the present, of the existence of miracles, *i.e.*, evidence of a supernormal character on behalf of the existence and operation of unseen Intelligence.

APPENDIX B.

NECROMANCY AND SPIRITUALISM.

I have more fully expressed my views on this point in a paper published many years ago, entitled "Necromancy and Ancient Magic in its Relation to Spiritualism," in which the following passage occurs with reference to Isaiah xxvi. 13 :—

The Hebrew word here rendered "prayer" means "whispering," the kind of voice imputed to the shades by the Hebrews and other ancient peoples, and in the Scriptures is a frequent name for divining or incantation.* For my own part, the obvious sense of this passage seems to be as follows: "Lord in trouble have they (*i.e.*, the nation) looked for Thee, but they sought after those who poured out trance utterances, when Thy chastening was upon them." And no deliverance came that way, for "*the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation,*" it must be sought for within, and not in external phenomena.

With reference to the footnote on p. 14 where the word "chirping" is interpreted as meaning "tapping," I am

* See Professor G. A. Smith's "Isaiah," Vol. I., p. 445. For a vivid picture of the Semitic conception of the underworld and Semitic views on eschatology the reader is referred to this chapter in Professor Smith's well-known and able work.

informed by Hebrew scholars that this word "tziphtzaph" occurs only four times in the Old Testament, all in Isaiah, and is variously rendered in the authorised version as "peep," "whisper," "chatter." It is an imitative word applied to sounds such as the chirp or twitter of birds and might be interpreted as tapping, though there is no special authority for this.

APPENDIX C.

GENERAL BOLDERO'S ACCOUNT OF THE SEANCE WITH
MISS JAMIESON.

In the following hitherto unpublished case—the particulars of which were also given to me by General and Mrs. Boldero—the medium, Miss Jamieson, was a lady friend of Mrs. Boldero's, who discovered by accident that she was strongly “mediumistic.” I took down in writing the independent accounts of what occurred, given me by my friends. Miss Jamieson at that time lived in Edinburgh; accordingly, upon arriving in Edinburgh in October, 1870, Mrs. Boldero invited Miss Jamieson to the hotel where they were staying, in Princes-street, Edinburgh. Upon her arrival, about mid-day, Miss Jamieson told Mrs. Boldero that, to her horror, she had become a “medium,” and that the furniture and other things moved without her exerting any conscious effort. General Boldero states:—

It was about 12.30 in the day, October, 1870, that Miss Jamieson arrived at our hotel in Edinburgh. Upon putting her hands on the top of the dining-table in the room we were in, the table walked after her. It was large enough to dine eight people, and required great exertion to move it at all over the carpeted floor. My wife being a religious woman, and believing the force came from the devil, had an idea that the Bible would prove an antidote; so she put a Bible in front of Miss Jamieson, and asked her to put her fingers on

the top of the Bible. Thereupon the Bible walked up on Miss Jamieson's right arm and shoulder and came down the left arm to the table. Miss Jamieson's fingers were held vertically down on the Bible all the time she could reach it.

In the evening we had another sitting with Miss Jamieson. As I had the gout I sat by the fire with my foot on a chair. The gas was fully turned up and the room well lighted. Mrs. Boldero and Miss Jamieson sat at the large oval dining-table. After sundry manifestations at the table, a sentence was rapped out telling me to sit at the table. I replied, "Can't ; have got the gout." This was no sooner said than the table left the two ladies and ran across the room where I was sitting, stopping just before it reached my chair. Raps were then heard, and by the alphabet we spelt out, "We are mindful of your foot." The distance run by the table was some ten feet, the two ladies being left sitting in the middle of the room. It was quite impossible for them to have pushed the table over to me, if they had tried to do so. I then sat by the table, the ladies joining me, and several other communications were rapped out, one from an old acquaintance.

Mrs. Boldero gave me a similar account of this seance, adding that when she found evasive replies were given (by means of raps) to her questions :—

I pushed my chair away from the table, and said, "They are a pack of lying spirits." Immediately the table lifted itself off the ground several inches, and came down again with a tremendous bang, and then raps came, and the message was spelt out, "No, we are not ; we are not." The table was most excited over what I had said, and behaved like a living thing. There was no cloth on the table, the room was well lighted, we had our hands on the top of the table, and had we tried could not have lifted up the table, as it was very heavy.

APPENDIX D.

(*Added March, 1908.*)

EVIDENCE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY AFTER DEATH.

The Appendix which was prepared for insertion here when this book was written is now purposely omitted, as it dealt with a question of eschatology which required more adequate treatment than could be given in a brief appendix. As, however, the question of identity is referred to in this section (p. 78) I will here draw attention to a remarkable case of an apparition bearing upon this point, which I have recently communicated to the Society for Psychical Research. An important feature of this incident is that the percipient was secluded in a convent, and had absolutely no access at the time to newspapers or any other sources of information which might have suggested the apparition.

Briefly, the facts are as follows :—

A gentleman of some note shot himself in London in the spring of 1907. There can be little doubt that his mind was unhinged at the time by the receipt that morning of a letter from a lady that blighted his hopes; before taking his life he scribbled a memorandum leaving an annuity to a young lady, who was his godchild and to whom he was much attached. Three days afterwards (on

the day of his funeral) he appeared to this godchild, who was being educated in a convent school on the Continent, informing her of the fact of his sudden death, of its manner, and of the cause which had led him to take his life, and asking her to pray for him.

The mother, anxious to conceal from her daughter the distressing circumstances of her godfather's death, waited to write until a few days *after* the funeral, and then only stated that her uncle (as he was called) had died suddenly. Subsequently, upon meeting her daughter on her return from the Continent, the mother was amazed to hear not only of the apparition, but that it had communicated to her daughter all the circumstances which she had never intended her daughter to know. Careful inquiry shows that it was impossible for the information to have reached her daughter through normal means.

I have myself investigated this case, and know the persons concerned, who have given me permission to publish the facts, withholding their names. The case is unquestionably a most impressive and remarkable one, as will be seen by reference to the fuller particulars, which will shortly be given in the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research.

In connection with this supreme question of proof of the *identity* of the discarnate human spirit, some striking evidence on its behalf will be found in the automatic script of Mrs. Verrall, of Cambridge, and the reports of the trance utterances of Mrs. Piper, which will be published shortly in the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research. A series of interesting "cross correspondences" occur between the communications coming through these two independent transmitters, pointing to the operation of the same unseen intelligence upon both. One of these

intelligences—in the opinion of some who have given the matter careful and critical study—appears to be identified with a deceased friend, but I prefer to suspend my judgment on this point. Moreover, the difficulties in the way of establishing spirit identity are great, and are referred to in § 29.

APPENDIX E.

(*Added March, 1908.*)

EUSAPIA PALADINO.

After the favourable reports by Professor Charles Richet and Sir Oliver Lodge (referred to on pp. 25, 26*) upon their experiments with Eusapia, further séances were held with her at Cambridge in 1895. I was not present, and, indeed, have never had the opportunity of experimenting either with Eusapia or Mrs. Piper, but those present at Cambridge came to the conclusion, on what appeared to them to be an adequate trial, that there was clear evidence of trickery on the part of Eusapia,† although Sir Oliver Lodge adhered to his opinion that the phenomena he witnessed in the Ile Roubaud were genuine.‡

This opinion was corroborated by that of the eminent physiologist, Professor Charles Richet. After the séances at Cambridge he, for a time, suspended his judgment, but subsequently, both in conversation with myself and on other occasions, has stated that he is absolutely convinced of the supernormal character of the manifestations which occur with Eusapia. It was after witnessing further

* See "Journal of the S.P.R.," Vol. VI., p. 306.

† *ibid.*, Vol. VII., p. 148.

‡ *ibid.*, p. 135.

phenomena at Professor Richet's house in Paris, in December, 1898, that Mr. F. W. H. Myers stated, at a meeting of the S.P.R., that these phenomena were "absolutely convincing to all present." This also is the opinion of the well-known astronomical writer, Camille Flammarion, who in his recent work, "*Les Forces Naturelles Inconnues*," deals at length with the phenomena occurring with Eusapia, and is convinced of their supernormal character.

But the most remarkable testimony in favour of Eusapia has recently come from some of the leading scientific men of Italy, men specially trained in the investigation of psychological and physiological phenomena. Perhaps the most notable witness is Professor Lombroso, who conducted the investigation of Eusapia's powers in his laboratory in the University of Turin; needless to say, every precaution was taken against fraud; the result being that Lombroso publicly bore witness to the genuineness of these extraordinary physical manifestations. The opinion of so experienced and able a criminologist as Lombroso—whose high scientific status is recognised throughout Europe—necessarily carries great weight. In an article published quite recently (1908), in the "*Annals of Psychical Science*," Lombroso refers to various phases of these phenomena, including phantasms and apparitions of deceased persons. He points out that sometimes several phenomena occurred simultaneously, and hence were beyond the power of one person to perform, and also that there is evidence of the intrusion of another will, which could not be attributed to the medium or to any person present, but which was in opposition to all, and even to the control, "John." He lays stress upon the importance of these facts in relation to the hypothesis that the occurrences are explicable by the "psychic forces" of the medium and circle alone: an

hypothesis which at an earlier stage of the inquiry he himself adopted, but which he now regards as inadequate.

Independent testimony comes from Dr. Enrico Morselli, Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry (mental therapeutics), in the University of Genoa, who presided over a set of séances with Eusapia in that city.*

The control of the medium was very strict. Her hands and feet were held by Dr. Morselli and Sig. Barzini, editor of the "Corriere della Sera," who states that he was present "with the object of unmasking fraud and trickery," but was in the end convinced of the reality of some of the phenomena. The person of the medium was thoroughly searched before the séance, and the room was also searched; the light was never entirely extinguished.

Under these conditions Dr. Morselli testifies to the occurrence of the following phenomena: movements of the table, raps in the table and sounds on musical instruments, without contact; complete levitations of the table; movements of objects at a distance from the medium seen in the light, and, also, the operation of self-registering instruments by the unseen agency; *apports*, *i.e.*, objects brought into the room from outside; the sound of human voices not proceeding from any visible person, impressions on plastic substances of hands, feet and faces; the appearance of dark prolongations of the medium's body, of well delineated forms of faces, heads and busts. Although entirely sceptical at the outset of his experiments he declares himself convinced that most of the phenomena alleged to occur with Eusapia are "real, authentic and genuine."

Dr. Morselli is disposed to interpret these phenomena by what he terms the hypothesis of special *psychic*, or

* A very full report of these is given in the "Annals of Psychological Science" for February, March, May, and June, 1907.

bio-dynamic forces ; that is to say, he attributes them to some peculiar power emanating from the person of the medium. This is practically the psychic force theory of many earlier English investigators.

Shortly after the séances held under the direction of Dr. Morselli in the University of Genoa, another series of experiments, in Turin, was conducted by Doctors Herlitzka, C. Foà, and Aggazzotti* ; Dr. Pio Foà, Professor of Pathological Anatomy, being present at the most remarkable of this set of experiments. These séances yielded similar positive results to those held by Professors Lombroso and Morselli.

Another competent witness is Dr. Giuseppe Venzano, stated by Dr. Morselli to be an "excellent observer" ; he contributed an important article to the "Annals of Psychological Science" (August and September, 1907), containing a detailed record and critical analysis of his experiences with Eusapia, under conditions of strict control, and sometimes in the full light given by an electric lamp of sixteen-candle power. Dr. Venzano, in the course of his experiments with Eusapia, the light in the room being sufficient to enable both the medium and his fellow-sitters to be clearly seen, perceived a woman's form beside him, felt her touch and heard her speak : the form spoke with fulness of detail of certain family affairs not known to anyone present except himself. The whole incident is a most amazing one, and Dr. Venzano states that, in his opinion, any explanation of this experience based on the possibility of fraud or of hallucination is impossible.

Professor Philippe Bottazzi, Director of the Physiological Institute at the University of Naples, having read

* Assistants of Professor Mosso, an eminent physiologist.

the report of Dr. Morselli's experiments at Genoa, made an attempt to verify the phenomena by means of an elaborate and carefully arranged set of self-registering instruments, in the hope of obtaining an automatic graphic record of the psychic force exercised by the medium. Such a record would negative the hypothesis of hallucination or misdescription on the part of the observer. These important experiments, carried out with the collaboration of several able professors of the same University, were remarkably successful, and Professor Bot-tazzi's article concludes by stating that these experiments have "eliminated the slightest trace of suspicion or uncertainty relative to the genuineness of the phenomena. We obtained the same kind of assurance as that which we have concerning physical, chemical, or physiological phenomena. From henceforth sceptics can only deny the facts by accusing us of fraud and charlatanism." *

It may be asked, how can one reconcile the conflicting opinions about Eusapia? Like other psychics, especially those who exhibit similar amazing supernormal phenomena, she is most sensitive to 'suggestion,' even when unexpressed, and in the trance state, when her consciousness and self-control are inhibited, she is the easy prey of external influences. In the absence of the steadying, though subconscious, influence of a high moral nature, I have no doubt she did unblushingly cheat, whether consciously or unconsciously appears uncertain, whenever the dominant opinion of the sitters was inimical to her supernormal powers. On this point I have made some remarks

* See "Annals," September, 1907, p. 149; October, 1907, p. 260; December, 1907, p. 377; where a full account of these experiments will be found, with illustrations showing the tracings made by the self-registering instruments.

on pages 48 and 92. Moreover, if the "physical" spiritistic phenomena are due to an externalisation of the nerve force of the psychic, as many believe, we may well imagine that the *degree* of this externalisation will vary with the favourable or unfavourable conditions at a séance, so that under the latter the restricted exteriorisation may lead to the movement of the actual limbs of the psychic, which will thus appear to be actuated by a fraudulent intention, though this may not really be the case. Everyone who has had repeated sittings with Eusapia and similar mediums knows that what seems purposeless fraud often intrudes itself after the most conclusive evidence of the absence of fraud has been obtained. It is this apparent demoralisation of the medium which renders the whole inquiry so perplexing and doubtful, both from an ethical as well as a scientific point of view.

There is another hypothesis, which I suggested long ago, and to which I have referred on p. 39, that the medium may exert some hypnotic influence over the sitters and lead them to believe they see what in reality never occurred, or to exaggerate or misinterpret what actually occurred. I have, in fact, obtained experimental evidence of this illusion of the senses, when the sitter was quite conscious but in the semi-waking state of incipient hypnosis. One subject believed I had floated round the room, and continued to believe this for long afterwards, when in reality I had only made a whispered suggestion to this effect and had never left my chair. But I do not now attach so much weight to this hypothesis as I was formerly inclined to do; moreover, the self-registering apparatus employed by the Italian experimenters can have no illusions of this kind.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the *Societa di Studi Psichici*, of Milan, of which the distinguished writer and senator, Signor Antonio Fogazzaro is president, for furnishing me, as one of their honorary members, with the excellent monthly journal, "Luce e Ombra," which gives many of the original reports made by the foregoing Italian savants.