

THE
PHILOSOPHY
OF
REINCARNATION
CONSIDERED.

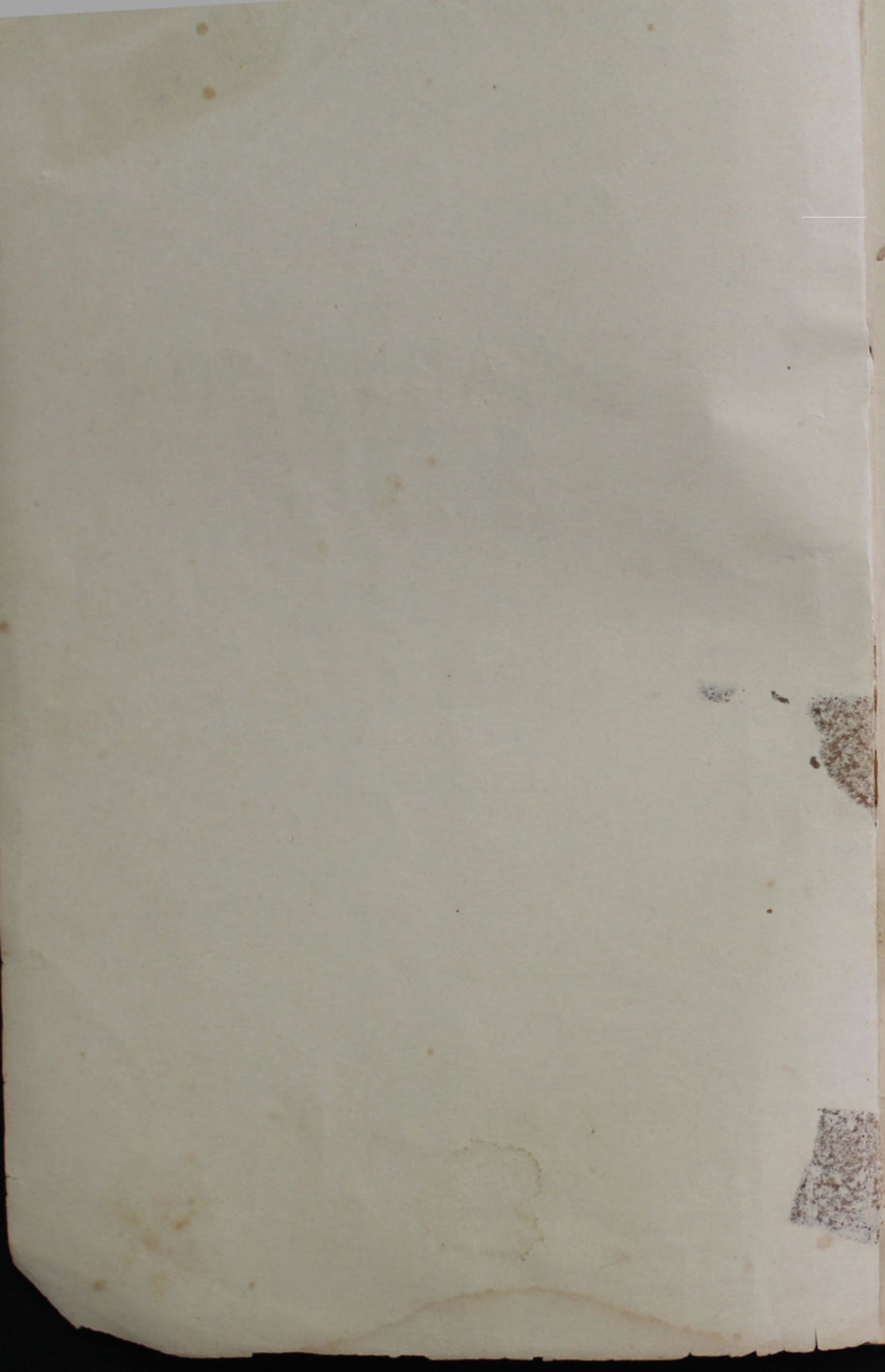
BY
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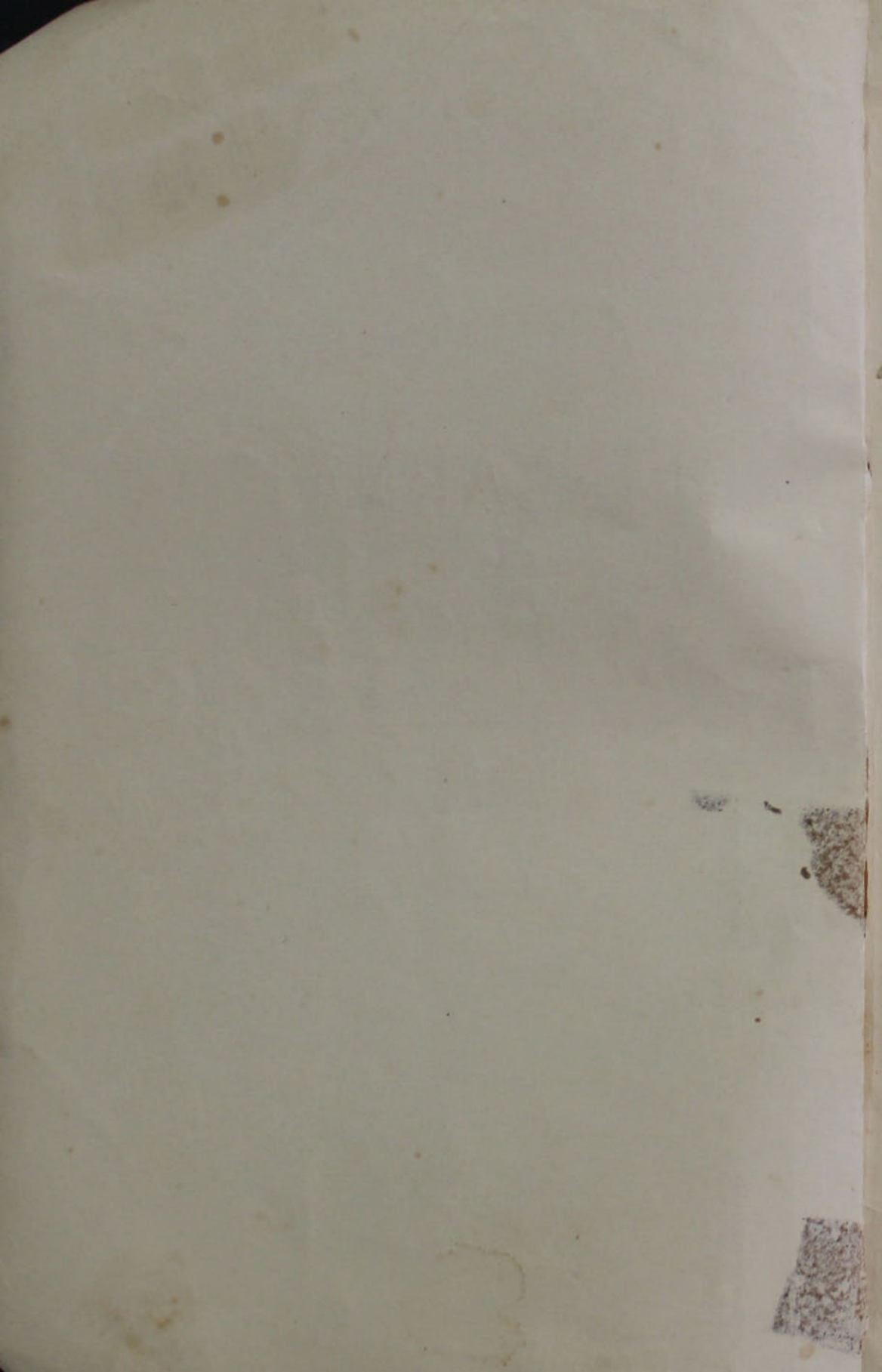


DEDICATION.

To HENRY J. NEWTON, Esq.

I dedicate this little work to you as a friend I deeply prize for your works and worth in the cause of Science, Spiritualism and Mental Liberty.

THE AUTHOR.



INTRODUCTION.

My mind is overwhelmed with the idea of the duration and change of natural phenomena, and also the magnificent movements of the stars, the rising and setting of the sun, and the sublime diversity of form and color displayed upon the face of the earth. There is no study like the study of nature. It improves the intellectual faculties, refines the taste, and makes the imagination sensitive to the gentlest touch. I look on the face of the same sun which gave light and heat to the first inhabitants of the earth. Down all the ages this God-like power has presided over the destiny of the day, and my soul is bathed in delight and wonder at his persistent presence and use. Turning to the doings of men I see the tragic panorama of history; the rise and fall of cities; the doings of heroes; the destructive agencies of war devastating fertile plains, the groans of dying millions of brave men; the gaudy trappings and arms of barbaric warriors pass before my eyes; the mild influences of renovating peace; the wise teacher, and the rise of science, liberty and justice to bless the world. I see these things come and go in the times that lie behind me. As I turn the pages of history one chapter or epoch of events lies behind another, running into one another and sometimes divided by revolutions and cataclysms so terrible as to appall the mind with the fearful extent of their destruction. In this manner the long vista of history closes in grotesque myths and benighted superstition. Behind all—darkness—eternal, unthinkable darkness—and time is silent. An infinite past lies buried before the first historian is born. Its contents, events and conflicts are all lost; but maybe if we had knowledge of them humanity would not be much the gainer. It is better as it is. Nothing lies buried there of essential and commendable worth.

Humanity forgets that which serves no useful or pleasurable end, which is the same thing, for pleasure is as useful as the useful. Something supersedes something else; the grave's holy mound is leveled in time by summer's heat and

winter's storm. Everything has somewhere its tragedy; a time comes when it meets a gorgon, and it is eaten up,—the victor becomes the vanquished. I know nothing about those voids of Time; knowing not the extent of my loss, I grieve not at my misfortune. Moreover, there is a sense in which I am influenced by that unknown past; the events and circumstances then are potent elements in the line of my heredity now. All that ever was, is, and will be, world without end, in some incomprehensible way.

All the phenomena of nature and history, even though they may appear to be in conflict there, is beyond the reach of sense, consciousness, a law of universal harmony reigning with undisputed continuity. What seems a complete variation from this law is only apparent, not real, and those events in the career of humanity that seem to destroy civilization, and the best conditions of happiness, are but simply links in the chain of development. The most potent agents of progress are the invisible ones. The spirit world is around us and exercising an immeasurable influence upon us in all our conditions and relations. We are constantly being touched by spiritual forces, and not one man can give a correct definition of the philosophy of development without taking into full account the effects and surroundings involved in the nearness and contact with the spirit world.

The man of this hour is superior in capacity, endowments and general equipments to any other man who ever lived on earth. This is an age of intelligence, notwithstanding its blots and imperfections. The masses of the people are entering the temple of knowledge. They are laying hold on science and philosophy. The influence of the mythical objects of devotion is waning and practical knowledge is coming to take the vacant place. The power of civilization consist in its capacity to afford knowledge of the relative qualities and practical uses of phenomena to the common needs of man. Faith is less useful than knowledge. Inferior civilizations have been dominated by faith; superior civilizations are dominated by knowledge that will advance unusual good. With its advance metaphysical speculation is become less valuable; it fades before the grand march of science.

In the classic age of Greek philosophy there grew up a

party who despised the practical application of mathematical truth to the common affairs of life; nothing less than transcendental contemplations were worthy of the dignity and pride of metaphysical schools. Esoteric dreams and illusions were taught as solid learning. The devout student thus became hedged in by clouds of phantasmagoria; he lived and thought in a world of mysticism and wonder. A man who spends his time in this way now is pitied, if not censured, for his folly. This change is so much gained in human progress. Primitive man was not a philosopher; he was destitute of an accurate knowledge of nature. He had but the simplest tools with which to work. He lived on the natural and spontaneous products of nature. Civilized man became a manufacturer, and forever changed the conditions of mankind. The powers of nature are being chained by man, and trained like a docile animal to useful work. Man's mind is penetrating into the secrets of life and power. The priest and medicine man are slinking back into the caves of darkness and death, not needed any more in the world because knowledge has assumed its sovereign sway over the minds of men.

Better conditions exist for studying nature than ever before. The school boy is led by a scientist. Industries are being developed by the scientist. The patent office at Washington is crowded with new inventions destined to revolutionize the work and pleasures of men and women. We are standing on the brink of a new era of scientific and social splendor.

The development and influence of this knowledge have lessened man's devout dependence upon Supernatural aid. At the same time his ideas of ethics and the necessary utility of justice making the social contract have advanced. He values more his natural independence and connects himself with the phenomena of nature rather than with the influence of so-called supernatural or religious agency. A few centuries ago man was mentally and bodily a slave. His master was a priest. Religion was the chain which bound his soul. Science has been his emancipator. All religions, wherever they may exist, are made by man. All bibles and creeds have come from the same. Gods live only in the brain.

The mistakes men made in former ages arose from their

inability to correctly trace the cause of phenomena. They failed to trace them to their correct antecedents. This led to the imagination inventing an ideal cause. Intellectual progress is marked by the ability to correctly perceive the relation of phenomena. An undeveloped mind the moment it stumbles upon a mystery will call in the aid of miracle to explain it. Because man cannot yet account for all the phenomena of nature, he places miracle or creation behind them. The feeble mind takes refuge and seeks for rest in the supernatural.

Psychical science is more important than almost any other study to-day. The mind must first know its own capacity, and in what plane of nature it can and cannot work. There is no way at present open to correct the constitutional defects of human reason, but the character of the defects are becoming better known. The mind can only deal with phenomena and their relations. This boundary cannot be passed until reason becomes something more than what it is at present. Men so often forget this natural limitation and talk about the Supernatural as if they actually knew something about it. There is no philosophy of the Unknowable possible, but philosophy deals with the principles involved in the Relative, which has its origin in the Unknowable. In all ages of the world man, controlled by Ignorance, Fear and Wonder, became subject to supernatural illusions, among which can be found miracle and creation. Mental progress is an increasing capacity to know the correct relation of natural phenomena. This involves a correct knowledge of the effect one object has upon another; also, how simple elements conspire to produce that variety of things existing around us.

Natural science is the most valuable study. In recent years science has established the existence of law. The laws of nature never change. Before history began to be written or a man existed on the earth the laws of matter were the same as they are at this moment. Forms of life came by a process of evolution known under the law of natural selection and survival of the fittest. While conditions existed favorable for the persistency of one form of life, that form held its place unmodified, but when the physical conditions of the earth altered, the organic life present

adjusted itself to the altered circumstances of existence. Those forms of life which were so powerfully affected by the change died and could not maintain the continuance of their kind, but those more favorably situated did continue to exist and slowly accommodated themselves to the new environment. The variation of species is the effect of change in surrounding conditions worked out slowly. Thirty years ago hardly any man distinguished in science accepted the hypothesis of evolution. It was spoken of in the pulpit and press with sneers and contempt. Now, not to accept it, is the mark of a backward mind. When I first read the works of Charles Darwin few men really understood what was meant by natural selection and the survival of the fittest.

Now, it is common to hear a daring clergyman refer to it as a truth in the pulpit.

"Surely the world does move." In the most conservative schools both of Europe and America the hypothesis is frankly admitted.

The same law applies to the development of the mind as to the development of the body. Mental power has come by slow degrees of growth to be what it is. Man is no exception. The intelligibility of physical things makes it possible for them to be intelligently understood; the intelligibility of mental phenomena must be intelligently understood upon the same law. There is a perfect correlation between all varieties of mental development and condition and all physical states and conditions. Matter is so closely related to mental states that to a large extent the latter can be known from the condition of the former, and all psychical phenomena must be studied as they stand related to the physical basis of life and organization.

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE.

Mind is a word that stands for cerebral function, personal and conscions. It perceives and co-ordinates perceptions into classes. The only avenues of knowledge are the senses. Mind can know nothing but phenomena. Its consciousness is relative and dependent on cerebral states. Sensation is nerve motion. Without nervous tissue there can be no sensation. Mental states are dependent on physical states. Whatever

affects the body unfavorably has a corresponding unfavorable effect on the mind. A diseased brain is the cause of insanity. An injury to the brain will produce unconsciousness. Consciousness, like perception, is relative. Man has no original knowledge, that is, knowledge that has not been acquired through the senses, nor has the mind any original ideas or judgments anterior to experience.

Sensation is the excitement of a sensory nerve; perception is the act of seeing it. Reason is the power that classifies perceptions and formulates ideas from them. Truth is knowledge capable of verification by the standard of uniform experience. The strength of the different faculties of the mind depends upon the development of the brain and temperament of the body.

THE MIND IS NOT PERFECT.

Not one of the five senses does its work correctly. The eye does not see things just as they are in themselves. Two persons will not see the same thing in the same way. The color of an object is in the mind. The mind makes color and all minds do not make it alike. Some minds are color blind. The perception of space or size is very imperfect. The mind fails to mark off a yard correctly without a standard measure. The perception of weight likewise is defective. A standard of weight has to be employed or great mistakes in the weight of things would be made. In like manner the faculties of the mind that classify perceptions are imperfect, and only do good work by unusual effort. The different opinions existing among men who see all the details of the subject is remarkable, and can be explained on the basis that minds are not alike in the way the faculties combine in individual actions and reasoning. The mind falls into habits of thinking, and feelings disturb the rational balance. Equity shows how inconsistently the minds of men act upon the same subject in the same conditions. To enable the conclusions of reason to be valuable they must be ever subject to verifications; without the power of verification truth would have no consistency or standard of authority.

INTUITION.

The mind has no original and essential perception of truth. It has no conclusions or judgments apart from experience. The mind holds no contents but what has been acquired through the senses. Mind has no original and independent perceptions of justice. Without experience the mind knows no rule of right. When the child is born the mind is but a function and empty. As knowledge grows mind gradually appears. The faculty of imagination has an important function. It duplicates sensations, perceptions and ideas, and, allied with the faculties of reason, can design and co-ordinate its creations; but imagination cannot leave the realm of sense-consciousness. Imagination cannot transcend the condition of time and form relations in any work it may attempt to do. Imagination can only employ what perception can give it. The metaphysical side of imagination has been often taken for intuition, and has led to the most awful mistakes in philosophy. The imagination builds illusions and disturbs the critical powers of the intellect. Sensitive minds so often take these illusions for intuition and believe that the mind has some original inherent store of knowledge and correct judgment. From this source philosophy has been corrupted.

SUBSTANCE, MATTER AND SPIRIT.

The metaphysician has coined many words. Substance is his word. He made it. I do not know that it means anything in reality, but it is supposed to be stuff from which matter is made. It stands under matter. It means that which stands under. It is the raw stuff of the universe, but I confess that I have never met with any. Matter is that which persists in a given space. I cannot think of anything not in space. That which has neither length, breadth, nor thickness, is not anything. It is nothing. I know matter as solid, liquid and gaseous. Some of the gases are so fine that I am not sensible of their existence. I know them by experiment. There is something involved in the existence of matter I call life, or force, or spirit,—these terms are arbi-

trary, and stand for the cause of certain phenomena presented in organic conditions. I apply the term spirit to the element which perceives, and knows, in its combinations with grosser material elements. Spirit must have much in common with matter or it could not approach it and control it. Some way the correlation is made and a living being is the product. The mystery is not lessened a bit by inventing spirit to supply the knowing element. What is that which knows? How does it know? Calling into existence God, or thinking stuff, does not explain anything, nor make the mystery any less. What is thinking stuff?

CREATION.

Creation means making something out of nothing. Some of the old-fashioned thinkers believe that God, or absolute individual spirit, from nothing made all things. That there was a time when matter began to be. Through an eternal past God had existed alone. If Infinite Spirit always existed, why could not matter always have existed? Why is it necessary to invent Infinite Spirit to explain the existence of matter? The Infinite Spirit is more difficult to believe in than Infinite Matter. How could Infinite Spirit always have existed? How could Infinite Matter always have existed? One question is as rational as the other. The fact is the human mind is incompetent to handle the Infinite. Cause lies not in the domain of the "Knowable."

In the theological mind God stands for the Infinite Spirit, Creator of all things in heaven and earth. Omniscient and omnipresent, His conscious ruling eye sees all things from the smallest to the greatest. He is the Sovereign Ruler sitting on the throne of the universe, one and everlasting. His power is absolute. This idea of Creator or Maker of the universe is not a sensible one. Something the mind cannot run against, but absolutely unthinkable and undemonstrable.

Science postulates nothing about the "Infinite Cause," or the origin of all things. The mind can meet with no evidence on this subject. It is not investigating that subject, but science deals only with things and their relations with one another. The universe is a machine, and the scientist is

studying its parts. To him the First Cause is freighted with no scientific meaning, and presents no function of usefulness in the development of human knowledge. The machine of nature is so fixed in its parts that no divine hand can come in and put it out of gear—that would be a miracle—or impede its necessary actions.

Matter and Energy exist. They are subject to trial and experiment. One event follows another as cause and effect, according to the forces inherent in the elements of matter. The creation of something out of nothing is beyond the possibility of thinking.

The phenomena of nature can be most rationally explained on the Hypothesis of Evolution. All phenomena can be the effects of the action of atoms one on another in endless varieties of combinations. The phenomena of nature are huge chemical products.

GENERATION.

Generation is the result of a sexual copulative act. The male and female blending of the elements of personal life. The male fertilizes the ovum of the female and gives it independent personal life. The new creature is the product of parental combination. Before copulation the Personality did not exist. That act started a new vital centre of activity. An organism is produced and the functions of life advance toward a standard of organic maturity, and then birth takes place. The female alone cannot produce a new life. Nature will not permit such an event to happen. It would be as easy to stop the earth in its orbit as to have an immaculate conception. The male likewise is unable to produce alone offspring. Copulation is necessary to the process of generation. The personality is transmitted through the organisms of the parents. There is no door open for an element to enter the new life only that which nature has furnished—the organism. The sex processes in man is the same as in four-footed animals, birds, reptiles, fishes and insects. Copulation is the way they all reproduce their kind. What is true of the one is true of the other. There is nothing peculiar about man. No variation

in the process from the manner common to all. The male fertilizes the ovum of the female.

The personality of the child is marked with the special and peculiar traits and conditions of the parents. The predominating parental temperament will show in the child. Mental traits, too, will be transmitted. The qualities of the mind are derived from parental states. It is a purely new mind molded by the physiological and psychological qualities of the parents and mechanically transmitted. The child cannot be made to comply with the arbitrary will of either or both parents. Its form and ability are decreed by biological conditions. Ethical qualities cannot be willed to descend upon the child only through the measure of organic fullness or quantity. Temperamental conditions are mechanically transmitted. The germ has no power to change the law of necessity. It must fertilize the ovum then by no choice of its own. It does not apprehend any of its then relations. It has no consciousness. It is the creature of law just as much as a falling snowflake or the decomposition of silver on a photographic negative.

Nature regulates the process of generation this way and permits no other.

The term "Virgin Mother" can have no meaning. A fatherless child was never born. Nature says "it cannot be."

SOUL.

I speak of soul without any dogmatism. It is something which I postulate that I may better explain the intelligent phenomena of nature. I know that I think. I am thinking now, but my thought is the product of the totality of my individual functional activity.

My soul element is not the only agent in the production of thought any more than oxygen is air. Soul I define to be a sensitive element blending with the elements of my constitutional organism ; which does the thinking and which is the basis of my consciousness.

Life I define as a complicated function resulting from the union of elements existing in nature. These elements being points of energy in a certain individual mode of

motion, and when they suitably combine in perfect harmony with their essential nature, vital, organic, mental phenomena appear. Animals have mind. What is that which smells in a dog? Of course the same as that which smells in a man. What is that which causes the cow to love her calf? The same as that which causes the mother to love her child, What is that which gives capacity to the bird to build its nest? The same capacity as that which gives a man ability to build his house. The sentiment of love is the same through all nature. It stands for the same in every single life on earth.

The personal pronoun, I, stands for the thinking power and its functions. I began to be when I knew that I was. My body is not I alone, my soul is not I alone, but I stands for the whole of them combined. The term Federal Republic stands for all the combined States, but not for any of the single States alone. My soul, or the sensitive element, often called the Original Ego, always existed, because it is one of the elements of being, and a force and always a force, a conscious force only under its congenial relativity. Consciousness is progressive because the soul can combine in advancing chains of complex relations existing and constituted of more ethereal elements than those which constitute ponderable matter. It never drops out of combination. It never attains the limit of its relativity, hence its conscious sensibility is susceptible to endless progress. It advances from the simple to the complex, never from the complex to the simple. The greater consciousness cannot be shrunk into the lesser.

The Soul, or Original Ego, I have to imagine its existence to explain the phenomena of Intelligent Mind. I cannot see but that some mode of motion expressive of some entity must be so sensitive in its relations as to result in self-consciousness in the most potent and favorable states. It seems to me essential and rational to propound this hypothesis to explain the manner in which the phenomena of thought is produced, than to rest upon the bare material hypothesis that the brain secretes thought in the same manner as the liver secretes bile. There are ethereal combinations which express mind beyond any ponderable combinations, as seen in the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, where intelligent power is manifested without brain, so that the sensitive ele-

ment can express conscious capacity in different modes of nature. It seems absurd to me to believe that there is only one mode of combination of the elements to produce intelligent conscious states. Hypnotism and clairvoyance necessitate a variety of combinations of elements to develop the different conscious conditions. There is a dream consciousness, a trance consciousness, a clairvoyant consciousness, and a normal or physical consciousness, and they sometimes blend or over-lap one another with a perfect dramatic unity.

THE DURATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

There is no change in the functional power of consciousness while the organization remains unaltered. The functions of the nervous system present to us the action of the simple and complex ganglia. If I dissected a human body I would find fine white threads running in almost every direction over the surface of the body, and if I traced them to their source I would find that they went a certain distance and then joined another nerve. The place where they join each other is called a ganglion, and from that centre the muscles can be automatically moved without the action of volition. Some inferior animals are almost entirely automatic in their action so that there is involved in the nervous system a complex series of vital acts that are not related to cerebral consciousness, but are very important and complicated acts independent of volition. They must be called operations produced by a mechanical or instinctive consciousness. As we ascend the scale of automatic action we reach the brain, which is a complicated automatic machine possessed with a self-consciousness. On any interference with the parts of the machine, the consciousness will be destroyed till the interference is removed.

It is clear that when the body dies a serious change takes place in the elements of conscious power. Death is the beginning of a birth to new bodily and functional states. Some of the elements are scattered; those which remain build a new structure in their own plane of nature and develop a relation as complete as in the former one, and the result is a spiritual consciousness is produced that is superior

to the former. It takes in all the former and extends its circumference into clairvoyance. This clairvoyant perception widens the eyes to fields of life and nature never beheld before. Invisible conditions of nature start up in visibility. The faculties of reason are enlarged in number and power. Thought is higher in quality and order. The continuity of consciousness is like that seen in an old man reflecting and living over the events of childhood. This fact accounts for the alleged recollections as stated by supposed reincarnated spirits in human bodies that have been used as facts to sustain reincarnation. Death does not destroy but alters the basis of consciousness. It does not create a new self, but it enlarges the sense capacity to take in spiritual realities of life and phenomena. The spiritual world must be realized as beyond and different from the material world. The understanding of the one does not involve an understanding of the other. It is impossible for the mind to conceive the state and nature of Clairvoyant Perception. We see sometimes persons possessed with a rudimental faculty of clairvoyance. It seems to be immediate perception, and to be independent of the conditions of time and place. It seems to see existence in its hidden relations. It involves psychometry and prophesy. Thus the spirits are a higher order of beings than men and stand related to man in the chain of development as more advanced intelligences toward whom man is progressively tending.

Consciousness has been confused in thought with the Ego,—the thing that is conscious. Some metaphysical writers have mistaken the function for the entity. The soul as entity is one thing, and the function of knowing is another. How difficult it is to invent words that will just say what is meant and no more. Speculation has said a hundred queer and senseless things about this Ego. It glows in the gilt of imagination. Glamour has heightened the lights and shadows, and around it dance a thousand fictions of the dreamer of oriental dreams. The religious fiction of India clothed it in brilliant hues and traced its history from God, through matter, and back to God again.

It is needless to say that these transcendental dreams are worth no more than a dramatic poem. As baseless in fact as the historical character of Hamlet, and as charm-

ingly imaginative as Milton's Comus. When a mind plunges into transcendentalism it is like taking a plunge over Niagara. Reason is lost in the tumbling waters of belief. Gigantic propositions are made with infallible confidence. The soul is said to contain the possibilities of the Infinite. Men listen to this and call it grand philosophy. Nothing but words—empty words. Another statement is made, equally wild, "that the soul is God, and knows in its inner consciousness, God, and every step the Ego takes is toward God—Universal Love and Truth." When called upon to furnish data on which such conclusions are based, they say: "We know it from intuition; we know it intuitively. We have spiritual peceptions of it." Such answers can have no place in logical thought; belief without data is faith, and faith is superstition. For a few decades back it has become clear that a few minds in and outside the Christian Church have become diseased with Pantheism. Theosophy is another name for Buddhism, and is Pantheistic Paganism,—the maddest craze of philosophy. It originally was an Aryan form of speculation and ran through a splendid career in India.

Its great error lies in the doctrine that spiritual evolution is effected by a process of eliminating from the soul every form of selfishness and the elevation of universal love as the highest attainment of virtue and faith. It declares God to be Good and Love. The Infinite can neither be Good nor Love. Love is a quality of mind, and is any harmonious relation existing between things. The terms cannot stand for Cause. Love cannot stand for Cause, but can merely express relation. The destruction of self-love would amount to the destruction of personality. The primal interest and the highest moral obligation placed by nature on man is self-preservation. Any system of morals that contradicts it is unsound and impractical. But, any way, spiritual progress is natural progress and not determined by any system of ethics. Progress is biological and is in the direction of making the personality of man more comprehensive. A theosophist dogmatizes with the vigor of a priest, and scans the Infinite with as much ease as Calvin set forth Infinite Decrees. He plays with mystery like a divine, and revels in superstition like a monk. He calls the inventions of the imagination hidden learning, and neglects the grand realities of Natural Science.

Theosophy builds on what it calls the soul's own immediate conception of Truth. On the absurd notion that the soul has a deep and hidden power of wisdom beneath experience, it is declared that its highest directing light is from this centre, Divine Light, and the freer it can become the clearer its light and revelation of Truth. That the soul is God, and has an immediate knowledge of God, and that every new embodiment the Ego makes is a step forward toward the all-perfect—universal Love and Truth. The Ego pervades the body as the Infinite Spirit without personality or parts pervades the universe. I said that the doctrines of Theosophy are Pantheistic and are peculiar to Aryan speculation. From the earliest history of that race we learn of the natural beginning of some of the doctrines of Christianity. To those of my readers who have had any training in the methods of modern science, the mystical doctrines of Theosophy will be as absurd as the philosophy of Christianity. Of the two, I think that Christianity, with its incarnated and divine Saviour, resurrection and its final judgment day, are far preferable, and certainly more in harmony with well regulated common sense, than the doctrines of an almost endless round of reincarnations.

Of course the existence of an Ego at all is but an hypothesis, and has to be found before it can be known.

Pantheism is captivating to some minds. It has met with a revival in some parts of the country. It is the refuge of minds that have realized the absurdity of a God-like Jehovah, or the mystical personality worshiped by Christians. Pantheism denies the separate existence of God from the phenomena of nature. It denies the absolute personality and invents a divine Immanency. A God in all things and all things God. A God who cannot think, nor award honors, nor inflict punishment for wrongs committed is no more a God in reality than a Dakota blizzard. Pantheism is Atheism with a gilt edge. The domain of Natural Beginnings and Causation will always be to some minds the delightful ground of meditation. There was once a time when nothing was considered worthy of the philosopher's attention than the investigation of the powers and constitution as well as the intelligent purpose of the Infinite God. He who employed his mental powers in the vulgar pursuits of science or com-

merce was not worthy of the fellowship of a spiritual philosopher. The man who handled a yard stick or raised potatoes was a clown to be fleeced by tithe to enable the priest to enjoy the fat of the land, to revel in the luxury and folly of divine speculation. God has been used by kings and priests in all ages as a chain to enslave, and a power to steal from the hand of honest labor that which it had produced.

The king says: "God made me thy master; thou art my servant to labor and to fight my battles that I may live in magnificent palaces and enjoy life." The priest says: "I am appointed by Almighty God to teach thee His will; thou must obey me, pay thy taxes, or be eternally damned." And this is called the wonderful and sublime justice of God. The man with well-developed spiritual faculties can walk on clouds, talk with Infinite wisdom, solve divine riddles—as easy as a New York baker kneads his dough. We have elemental spirits, astral shells, mahatmas, diakas and carmas of one kind and another, a species of microbes eating into the tissue of theosophical cobwebs. These people are in the stage called metaphysical; they are spiritually developed; they have intuitions of truth; they have eyes in their souls: they alone are able to enter into the delightful raptures of a divine spiritual philosophy.

When Pantheism is reduced to its last analysis it becomes a sweeping negation. It may be correctly described as Nontheism or Atheism, which, of course, is the same thing. The favorite form in which it is expressed is the following: "God is everything and everything is God." No man, divine or philosopher, speaks five minutes about God without showing his folly and fallacy. Pantheism, as drawn by its Master-Workman, Pythagoras, is, to say the least, poetically picturesque. He imagines that beyond the gates of all matter, in some remote province across Nothing, exists the "All Perfect Good." He, or it, I don't know which, never soiled its hands in the manufacture of matter. This was the "SOLE ABSOLUTE ESSENCE." The first "STUFF" out of which all other kinds of stuff sprang. The creator of the material was a God of inferior dignity. He made the world without the consent of the "ALL PERFECT GOOD," and he did bad work. He was known as the Soul of the World. From him come all forms of life. He is the source of the human soul. He

made life and death. Sin came into the world because he had neither wisdom nor power to prevent it. There was also a spiritual world peopled by inhabitants who never dirtied their hands in matter. They were the chosen angels of God,—courtiers and flatterers of the first order. They were pure. Human spirits were poor, wretched things. They had a bad origin. Their father was the soul of the world. To wash off the dirt of matter each soul had to repeatedly take the form of matter, and by a process of life and death attain the pure and refined state like that of the angels.

The Pantheism of Plato also set forth the relationship between the Soul and the soul of all things. The immortal Ego came from God, and went back to Him; the body came from matter and returned to it again. The doctrine of soul progress is inconsistent with Pantheism, so is the doctrine of spiritual evolution. If the Soul be from God it can never rise above its origin; there must come a time when its progress must end; and what can come after progress has ended? The moment a Soul attains perfection, ambition and aspiration are eliminated from the Soul. Ambition is dead, and the fires of honor are extinct. The Soul itself is gone into the common stuff of divinity like a raindrop runs back to the ocean. Such a presentation of the Soul's career is disappointing. After ages of struggle and pain it ends its personal career at the point where it began. It is no better and no worse. It begins in God and ends in Him, alike unconscious of its birth and death.

The different theories of Pantheism are all deficient in their theoretical character, inasmuch as they do not explain how the All Perfect Good could be the cause of evil. The Soul of the World from which human spirits proceeded occupied as secondary dignity in the divine Pleroma. He was the Creator of heaven and earth. Matter was the matrix from which generations sprang. All the phenomena of life presented in matter rose no higher than the fountain head from which it sprang. Its source being corrupt, all life was corrupt. All individual life inherited pains and sorrows and death. The All Perfect Good was in conflict with the Soul of the World, and had compassion upon its miseries and long endured conflicts. From Himself He sent messengers to the

earth to give the wisdom of light and truth, and save the world from death by this wisdom. The Messianic messenger—the christian Christ—and the Chrishna of India, and all other Christs, are but varying forms of this Messianic messenger. The Soul of the Messenger is derived from the All Perfect Good. The spiritual companions of the All Perfect Good knew no imperfections and therefore had no sins. Human spirits were very imperfect beings. They could only advance to a higher life and enjoy the companionship of sinless beings by descending to earth and taking upon themselves the physical form and purge themselves from the inferior dignity of their origin by suffering the utmost bitterness of pain and misery. The exalted and delightful abodes of the good were attained by walking through floods of tears. The chasm between the All Perfect Good and the Soul of the World had to be crossed by sacrifice and suffering. In all the different phases of Pantheism this is the one demand. Christianity even is in the same class. The demands of the All Perfect Good on the part of the creature are met by suffering and sacrifice. The ethical problem has been the puzzle in all ages: how to justify the present conditions of life with the divine attributes of the All Perfect Good.

I cannot go into further details, but this is a general description of Pantheism as it existed in Greece before the influence of Roman aggressions polluted it. A deeper study of the subject would show how racial prejudices modified the cult. Localities added lights and shadows, and the military achievements of the dominant nationality accepted or defeated the teachings of the different schools. Pantheism at the beginning of the Christian era was universally corrupt. Christianity grew to be a dominant sect, assumed political authority, and soon controlled the Roman world.

The interior spirituality and the mystical forms of Pantheism were not compatible with the stern common sense of the Roman character. The spiritual world ceased to be a spectacular display of Divine Dignities. Polytheism yielded to Monotheism and the Adæmic theory of sin was accepted as the basis of man's spiritual condition. But suffering and death were still retained as the road by which the Soul could come to God and final happiness. The Messiah, the Saviour, the Incarnated Son of God, became the one absolute sacrifice.

So much mysticism was retained as to impute the righteousness of Christ to every believer upon Him. Belief was the ground upon which the soul was sanctified. Ethics has no place in the redemptive plan. Good conduct entitles no one to justification, the stream of life being corrupt from its very spring. Hundreds of ages are necessary to cover the metaphysical and divine problem of justification. The one dominant thought being the absolute sinfulness of all material conditions and things, everything was cursed by death, all natural beauty was illusive, and love itself was hedged about by sighs and tears. The Divine Philosopher painted life in mourning and the spiritual poet presented it as a dirge. Life was set forth as a prison, toil a duty, tears a necessity; Kings divinely appointed to rule; the people peaceably to pay taxes; Priests to preach and be obeyed; this was written down as the justice of God.

The most poetic form of Pantheism is retained in the modern form of Buddhism. But there is a school growing into some prominence, of which Emerson may be called its high priest. In this school God is an Over-Soul—a Cause—inherent in nature. A Potential Immanency without individuality or consciousness, an all-pervading intelligence in the phenomena of nature. This form of the doctrine is as illogical as any of its predecessors.

The metaphysical and theological speculations were inspired and associated with the most striking phenomena of nature; nature being the Word or the clothing of God. The leading manifestations of nature became objects of profound study. The heavenly bodies became the objects which most commanded the study and devotion of the priest. The sun and moon in their course through the heavens marked the prayers, the feasts and the fasts of the church.

The progress of the sun through the signs of the Zodiac was perpetually watched. The coming of a new dispensation had its advent when the sun passed out of one constellation into another; these events are separated by a period of 2155 years. This is the length of the Messianic reign. A messenger from the All Perfect Good appeared among men every time the sun attained a new astrological sign and the Messiah was expressed under the emblem of that sign. For example—Christ was adored under the emblem of a fish for

250 years at least after the Christian era. Late in the fourth century the figure of a man was substituted for that of a fish upon the cross. This old emblem is still honored by the Christians eating fish on Friday, the day of crucifixion, and the sign of two crossed fishes is still retained on the signet ring of His Holiness, the Pope of Rome.

The age of Alexander, like that of Augustus, marked the beginning of a fusion of widely different schools of thought. His military achievements in the East ; the proximity of Macedon to Egypt ; the growing commercial and military relations produced a familiarity between the different States to completely obliterate the long pronounced peculiarities of sectarian schools of thought maintained and fostered by a national pride and isolation. Greece led the way to a higher intellectual development. The Greek mind was the first fitted to advance on the scientific lines in the study of nature. It was the first to break away under Aristotle from the myths of darker ages. The surrounding nations were steeped in the common and vulgar forms of superstition ; their religious cults were entirely crusted over in the rudest traditions of miracles and wonders. The religion of India in the time of Alexander's invasion was rich in Pantheistic speculation. Self-abnegation was the supreme ethical element in the popular faith. The mildness of disposition and the strictness in which they followed the precepts of Buddha have not been surpassed in faithfulness by any people. This self-denial, carried to an extreme, interfered with the independence and greatness of their country. The severity of their faith and the mildness of their disposition led them to believe it an unpardonable sin to take away any form of life or eat any animal food. A faith built upon the idea that God is Immanent in every living being, and that the individual soul, after it leaves the body, will have to return and live again in some other form, is so impressive and serious a belief as to elevate in their eyes the sacred rights of life enjoyed by every living thing. Alexander brought from the East profound scholars who had long meditated upon the mysteries of a Moral Universe. He planted them in the new schools of Alexandria, and from them sprung an eclectic order of philosophy that modified the ancient teachings of Pythagoras and grew to be a formidable antagonist

of the schools of the Stoics. In the meantime the arms of Rome overran the kingdoms of Egypt and Macedon, the stalwart vigor with which they planted themselves in the wilder provinces of Asia Minor and the Nile accelerated the triumph of philosophical reform. Christianity was the product and the collective embodiment of all the elements the Roman intellect could assimilate.

The poetic Pantheism of Pythagoras was defeated at Rome. The interior truths long carried in the spiritualism of the Platonists could not be comprehended by a people whose ambition carried them into political fields of ambition and military conquests. They were indifferent to the mystical abstractions that were food alone for the esthetic student. Rome was a barrier to the progress of idealistic philosophy. The ancient mysteries found their grave outside the walls of Rome. Political Rome, with a new God, a new Christ, and a new Priest, soon fell. The priest conquered the king and life became one dull monotonous parade of sing Psalms, tinkling of bells and repeating prayers. So ended oriental Pantheism as a distinct embodiment of human thought in the West.

The integrity of Christian Theology and political supremacy were not destined to remain for any length and period perfect. Dogmatic authority cannot last. When an independent thinker arises he soon grows to be a rebel and changes succeed him. The period of the Reformation marks an epoch no less important than that of Augustus. The age of Wycliffe and Luther mark the period when villainage ceased in Europe. At that period the cultivator of the soil was a chattel;—he could be bought and sold. Magna Charter did not emancipate a slave. Free thought awoke and emancipated every slave. Liberty and the Protestant reformation are identical. The Church of Rome, notwithstanding its greatness and power, is a defeated church and can never regain, had it the will, its lost absoluteism. Liberty brought with it the individual thinker. Nations are now made up of readers and thinkers. This is a destructive and a creative age, because every man is a thinker, and, being so, he is a reviewer of the past. The result is dead faiths are resurrected and get another airing. They come forth, though smelling of the grave, clothed in the beauty of Antiquity.

That fantastic cult known as Theosophy is simply the re-appearance, dressed in the adjuncts of modern civilization, of the Pythagorean philosophy as it existed in the brilliant age of Alexander. Its life must be feeble under these conditions for the practical intellect of the scientific man makes a hard atmosphere for the air balloons of a deductive philosopher to sail in.

THE MOSAIC THEORY OF CREATION AND SIN.

I will accept for the purpose of these remarks the authority of the Pentateuch as affirmed by the Christian Church that the different books are the writing of Moses preserved by the greatest care by the scholars of the Church ; but this acceptance is only for convenience. I do not believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch; the contents of those books were probably collected from legends and traditions existing among the people that the Jews at different times came in contact with. Some persons living after the time of the Babylonian captivity wrote or edited the floating material as it existed among the priesthood. The Mosaic account of creation, as given in the first chapter of Genesis, is undoubtedly thousands of years older than Moses, for it can be traced in the literature and on the monuments of Babylon. The suggestion is a plausible one that Abraham brought from Chaldea the foundation of the story this later writer presents. It would seem, from the story, that the theological mind had arrived at a state when it was impossible longer to accept Polytheism in its widest sense. Monotheism and Polytheism are confused and mixed in the Creator. The writer of the narrative puts into the mouth of God : " Let us make man." This plural pronoun leaves us to infer that there was a company of Gods. This language evidently belongs to a time when the first writer had not reached the idea of one God. The Jews from the beginning of their nationality were Monotheists, and no writer after the foundation of their kingdom would speak of God in that way. The narrative also is shorn of all the mysticism peculiar to the oriental mind. The story of creation is told in a simple and very definite manner. The writer betrays an utter ignorance of natural science ; he

lived in a time when the age of the world was supposed to be of a very limited character. The stars in heaven were mere lights put there to light up the night. The earth was the centre of the universe, and each form of animal life was a distinct creation. This view of creation is just such an one as an uninformed mind would invent in a very primitive state of society. The creation of man is in perfect harmony with the simple theory of the creation of light, and of the sun, moon and stars. It appears that the idea early took possession of man that somewhere in a far back age a great moral misfortune befell the race. There seems to have been a belief existing in several countries that man was originally created perfect, and that in the faculties of his soul he resembled his maker. The story of the Garden of Eden seems clearly to be by another writer who had lived under influences that prompted the solution philosophically of the problems of good and evil. Man's sentiment of devotion soon revolted against attributing imperfect moral quality to God. God was good and could not therefore be the cause of evil. Good and evil were metaphysical contradictions, and this Garden of Eden story is a creation of some devout moralist who sought "to justify the ways of God to man."

Man had made some progress when he came to this point that, personal liberty involved personal responsibility. This story of the Garden of Eden is a makeshift to get rid of the inconsistency of a perfect God controlling an imperfect world.

The story antedates any reincarnation so that it must be very old. Man's loss of his pure nature was a calamity that occurred to him before the formation or the gathering together of the elements of the first society.

John Milton's great poem of "Paradise Lost" is built up from material drawn from other sources than the Pentateuch. Greek traditions contained a richer Mythos than the Mosaic story. Probably the Mosaic story is but an episode from an older story very much mutilated in the time of Abraham. Milton goes to a source in which the story is more complete. We are introduced in Paradise to a strange and wonderful personality called Satan, who appeared in the garden in the form of a serpent. It may be remarked here that the symbolism of the Serpent plays an important

part in Ancient Mysticism. A person cannot be charged with too much curiosity who asks the question: "Who made Satan?" Mythology in the language of Milton sets forth that Satan was a glorious Angel in heaven before matter or evil existed. When nothing but a spiritual universe existed then Satan was an Angel of splendor and light. There was not a spot on the purity of heaven; the empire of celestial beings was in perfect harmony; the universe of spirit alone existed. Satan grew ambitious; like Woolsey's ambition it led to his fall. He incited a rebellion in heaven and drew after him legions of Angels who were driven out of heaven by the superior power of God. The new place into which they were consigned was the opposite to everything they had known before. Their abode was Hell. Millions of years rolled away before any plan was thought of by which these rebellious Angels could be restored to their first estate. The world of matter was created and a physical birth established through which they could enter into material conditions and be purged from their guilt. The road to felicity by experience gathered by the Soul in its passage through matter was deemed a sufficient atonement for their sedition. These dreams of the ancient philosopher lie at the back. They are the substratum of popular theology. Milton's fallen Angels become the Souls of men, which theory is of Aryan character, more Greek than Jewish; but nevertheless for many ages the Christian Church was thrown into great tumult over this form of Mystical speculation. At last the doctrines of the church became purified to a certain extent and the Mystics were left to sustain the vitality of these dreams.

These creations were intended to get rid of the contradiction of a perfect God creating an imperfect world. Incarnation of the spirit in one form or another has always been resorted to to solve this moral problem. God has been exonerated and honored at the expense of the created. It never occurred to these Mystics that there was a short cut to solve the problem, namely, that this perfect God, creator of all things, was a product of man's own ideal of force and power; that the difficulty lay within man himself. Mystery and ignorance threw him into this intellectual bondage and

blinded him to the fact of creative power lying outside of the domain of his intellectual capacity.

The best mind of to-day is as impotent to deal with the subject of God as the mind of the first savage who picked the lotus from the Nile.

MANICHÆANISM.

At the beginning of the Christian era no error was more degrading to human belief than that matter was essentially evil and in its nature the very antithesis of all that the soul ought to love. The idea is very old and comes from a period of time when the philosopher reasoned no better than the reasonings of a child of this day. It is a singular commentary on the weakness of the human race that the Apostle Paul should have been the victim of this belief. The doctrine comes after some changes from Adam's transgression and the curse pronounced by God upon Adam and all his works. This curse made all men the subject of sorrow, toil and tears. When man readily accepted such an idea he had made scarcely any observations of the phenomena of nature. The organisms of life he had not studied, the nature of cause evolving effects he had not traced and did not know. In such simple conditions of thought he lived in continual fear of supernatural powers, and his imagination magnified the more alarming appearances of nature. His faith was built on exaggeration. He never corrected his experience by the natural standards, but kept on groping his way guided by an imperfect rule of reason.

He lived in an abstract realm of ideality and separated the universe into two orders of existence. Spiritual beings were perfectly good and physically constituted beings were as perfectly depraved. The material universe was a great blot on divine existence. At this stage of the world there was not a thinker who recognized the reign of law. When man attained to the conception of natural law he had made great progress toward a knowledge of the correct processes in which the causes of phenomena were involved. His imagination discerned universal will rather than universal law. A universal providence controlling human affairs, and that

not a sparrow fell to the ground without being perceived by the eye of God. The doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God obstructed the way of the mind perceiving natural law.

The doctrine of divine sovereignty and natural law are destructive of one another. In a later age the doctrine of absolute sovereignty was carried into the realm of morals. The question was put: Could an absolute sovereign be amenable to the obligations of his own moral law? Sovereign being final, there was no other power to enforce the obligation should he choose to decline it. God is outside the law and can do no wrong. The first reasoners had not advanced so far in metaphysics as to understand this argument; therefore they had to invent reincarnation on the one side and the fall of Adam on the other. Modern metaphysicians have been more successful than the ancients in justifying the ways of God to man.

Again, the acts of an Infinite being cannot be conditioned by a code of laws. An Infinite Will would cease to be infinite the moment it came under the reign of law. The influence of this doctrine in Theology has had a withering and a blighting influence on the study of natural phenomena.

Since Science became a power we have heard very little about the divine sovereignty. One of the effects of the Reformation has been to limit in dogmatic thought the Divine Will; now we are taught that the laws of nature are the expressions of divine will. If that be so it ceases to be will, because will implies the power of choice, but the laws of nature are the expression of a continuous method of mechanical energy. The present order of nature would end the moment will interfered with it. Mechanical order is one thing and the guidance of will another. Nature has no ethics. Good and bad cannot be applied to things in themselves. These terms are relative. I can say a good stone when the stone can be applied to some use or end. I can say this stone is good because it is hard and can stand the pressure of a heavy building, and resist for a long time the action of the weather. Things are good and bad according to the use we put them to. An action may be good or bad. When an action takes place in the manner intended it should, and answers the purpose correctly, it is a good action, but if

it does not it is a bad action. The action in itself is neither good nor bad—goodness and badness are relative states and conditions.

The phrase "Absolute Good" has no meaning to me. The Infinite can have no attributes, because they would limit it and condition it. Good matter or bad matter can only have a meaning in relation to use.

Any mind dominated by the idea that matter is evil, and that all material conditions are in antagonism to spiritual states of being, is an egregious misunderstanding of nature, and betrays a slavish adherence to the mysticism of ancient superstition. Very few men now believe in the necessary depravity of matter. The Christian Church practically has given it up; and only a few mystics infected by the dreams of Indian priests and theosophical jugglers venture to call any attention to the subject.

Common sense teaches a man to look after the health of his body just as well as the health of his soul. Every faculty of mind and body are good, wholesome and useful.

ASTRAL SHELLS.

Who am I? When did I come into being and when shall I cease to exist? I am answered, "that I never had a beginning; that I have been an eternity in reaching my present development; that I have lived in, may be, a thousand bodies before on this earth, and that if need be will occupy one thousand bodies more in the future." If that be so, where are the persons I have been before? Where are the Astral Shells I have cast off? Am I the first or the last shell, or embodiment? Pray tell me, Reincarnationist, who I am, and who is the other fellow I was, and where and what is he now? The Modern Mystic has created from his own brain this Astral Shell. He did not find one, he never saw one, and he never has met anybody who ever did see one. Napoleon the I. was the Reincarnated Spirit of Julius Cæsar; therefore we never had a Napoleon, one entity appearing at different times; an actor taking and personating many characters. We cannot stop with the Great Roman. Who was Julius Cæsar? Had his "Original Ego" been on earth

before? Such contentions are beneath a moment's thought,—too absurd for refutation.

Yet we have Annie Besant seriously claiming to believe in such things. This lady did once possess a clear faculty of reason and showed some good mental quality in the day when Charles Bradlaugh was a power in progressive thought. In these later days her mind seems to have weakened and fallen into the dreamy mysticism and schemes of the notorious charlatan, Madame Blavatsky, who succeeded in securing a few dupes both in this country and in England. There are no facts to sustain such a theory as is claimed. It will be time to believe in the existence of Astral Shells and Elemental Spirits when specimens of them can be produced. Until that time comes, I, for one, must say no such things are to be found in the compass of existence, and that such teaching is unworthy of a true, serious and scientific age. There is time yet for Annie Besant to save the reputation of her intellect by returning to her old work of killing the phantoms of superstition, and assisting to drive from the earth man's false conceptions of life and its future.

TRANSMIGRATION.

Transmigration is a doctrine held by the Brahmins. It teaches that the Soul must enter into different physical forms to gain an experience which will purify to such a degree as to be able ultimately to pass into that state called Nervana. This state is an unthinkable one and cannot be understood, not even by those who teach it. It is a phrase from distilled Mysticism. The best way that I can approach a description of it is this: It is a state of absolute rest. The Soul loses all discontent, ambition and desire. It is a pure negation of self in which the individuality lapses back into the impersonal Infinite. The great Hindoo speculators realized that conscious mind must be associated with pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain are the necessary companions of all thinking beings. A perception of pain involves a perception of pleasure, just as a perception of justice involves a perception of injustice. The perception of right in the same manner involves a perception of wrong.

The most exalted mind can perceive all the opposites of virtue. Hence, to lose the experience of pain is to forfeit the experience of pleasure, as both are perceptive states. To place the Soul outside of these conditions is to suspend its relativity and annihilate its consciousness so that a state of NERVANA is one of pure negation. It is pure pessimism ending in nothing. As a religious force it may be described as Atheism. It is Atheism. For a God without consciousness is no God at all. Impersonal intelligence are words without meaning in that relation. Intelligence involves consciousness and consciousness personality. Where there is thought there is personality. Directing intelligence is personal intelligence. A force is either mechanical or intelligent. To deprive force of its intelligence is to make God stand for nothing but a mechanical, hurrying cyclone.

The doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls is a doctrine that admits of the Soul's passing either up or down the scale of animal being. Whether this power be of necessity or choice is not clear; some teachers say, the Soul can choose when it will re-enter the form, and can do more than that; that it can actually make its conditions; while others of equal authority say that it is impelled into the form it takes by necessity. The doleful perspective such a doctrine presents, has had an ethical effect very striking and peculiar on the people who believe in it. India has a population of about two hundred and eighty millions of people. They are subject to the control of the English Crown, and are held in subjection by less than thirty thousand British soldiers. The Hindoo declines to kill. The taking of any form of life he regards as a great sin. In every bird and quadruped he sees a human Soul imprisoned, making its weary journey toward Nervana. The benevolent preservation of animal life long persisted in under the sanction of his faith, has made him kind and tender in his domestic relations, and unfitted him for aggressive social enterprises. He has lost the higher qualities of physical courage. In the exercise of his religion he subjects himself to long fasts, inducing great physical weakness, in which his imagination becomes peopled with visions and chimeras, which he calls glimpses of the invisible world. When a mind has reached that point of belief, to see in every animal the soul of a human being reincarnated, is

as credulous as the widest limits of credulity can demand. In such an intellect the critical powers are dead, and intellect has passed into the state of senility.

The re-embodiment of a soul in another form is not in harmony with the process of evolution. If we have a scientific truth at all, the process of evolution is a scientific truth. It bars the door against the possibility of the Soul, either by choice or necessity, creating for itself a new body. Creation is not a process in nature. Mind and body are so closely related that the evolution of the one involves the evolution of the other. Mind is the function of the organization. The more differentiated the parts composing the nervous system and the more complicated will be mental power and function. Before reincarnation can be accepted extraordinary data would have to be adduced ; but there are no data, and I may safely say there never will be. Nature cannot admit a contradiction. The claim made on behalf of Transmigration is not put forth by science but by those so-called Teachers of Truth,—Priests, who arrogate unto themselves infallible powers to declare the nature of Truth. This claim can only exist in the rudest conditions of intellectual development. A people with any critical power at all can see that no man has found Truth but by the study of nature. Truth is established by experiment. Theory becomes knowledge by verification. There is no demonstrated experiment of any souls passing out of the body, making for themselves other bodies and establishing the personal continuance of their separate entities. Why do not the Theosophists make the experiment? Why does not Madame Blavatsky appear again? Certainly there is a necessity, and, if her theory be true, no difficulty at all in the way of her demonstrating the fact. But will she do it? Never!

REINCARNATION :—ALLEN KARDIC.

The United States are not much infested with the doctrine of Reincarnation. The people generally are trained in the first elements of common sense and logical thinking. French spiritualists are almost all believers in reincarnation. The modern High Priest of this creed was Allen Kardic, a

man who flourished in the last generation. He had some intellectual ability and industry. His mind had a mystical rather than a scientific turn. He went into enthusiasm over ancient symbolism and mysteries. Pythagoras was the fountain of his truth.

He, early in the history of European Spiritualism, became interested in a feeble minded Medium of Paris, deficient in those qualities of mind and common sense necessary for good psychical conditions. Through this imperfect channel he claimed to have received spiritual confirmation of the truth of his absurd views. His personality was strong; a strong magnetic atmosphere emanated from him, which formed a substratum of resistance, making it difficult for him to get a correct and reliable communication from Spirits. Spirits always answered back to him just what he had previously believed.

His teachings are adapted for a class of people who are not mentally trained in a correct logical process.

Allen Kardic is the most unreliable teacher Spiritualism ever had. If his thought could ever become generally accepted among men, civilization would lose its ornaments and perfection, and the race would again be plunged into a night of barbarism, out of which condition it has taken the race so long to evolve.

THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT.

Some one has stated that man by nature was a religious being. That upon his nature is stamped an essential religious impulse—a disposition to worship the supernatural and Divine power as manifested in the works of nature. It is true that man has a religious sentiment; a habit or tendency to worship some power shrouded in mystery. Without mystery there would be no devotion, and without wonder there could be no aspiration. The object of worship is in the mind, and the tendency of the mind is to worship that which the mind has invented as cause of all things. Man's religious nature gives no innate character to Theological ideas. An Indian fetish and the Christian's Divine Trinity call into action similar functions of mind. The religious

sentiment is more adhesive and impulsive in ignorant and undeveloped races.

Conduct is more under the influence of sentimental and emotional states. That is the reason for the ancients showing so much respect to their Deities. They never entered upon any new enterprise without consulting the Oracle. The Roman Augurs exercised a great influence over the enterprises undertaken by the rulers of the empire. Greece, too, yielded the same obedience to the power of its Gods. The edict of a God had to be obeyed. The philosopher who dared to question the authority of the Gods was despised as impious—the lower the intelligence of the race and the more perfect will be the quality of its faith. The more ignorant part of a population is more under the influence of religion than the educated part of a population. The priest has great power over the ignorant mass. It believes just as it is educated to believe. Its faith is never shocked by philosophical doubt, hence religion has been used by all modern nations to keep the poor and ignorant in subjection to the law and endure with patience and contentment their servile condition. The religious sentiment has been the power and stability of the social fabric; hence it has been looked upon as the greatest crime against God and the State to propagate infidel opinions. Those people who have been favored by fortune in the social conflict have sustained religious culture because it secured to them undisputed possession of their property and surrounded their lives with a lustre of social sanctity. Religious sentiment has sustained the classes, made kings, enriched aristocracies and impoverished the people. I am not indicting religion. This was an inevitable process in the course of social development.

The development of the religious sentiment was a necessity, under the weak social conditions afforded in a state of barbarism. It made little difference as to what constituted the creed of the religion. The God described by the creed embodied the best ethical qualities of the race. Religious creeds are the philosophical and moral ideals predominant in the people at the time they are made. Religious ideals are not the specific cause of progress and civilization. They rather are registers showing the progress people have made.

Tell me what religion a man believes in and I will arrange the order of his mental growth. Man's mind shows characteristics which belong to certain categories of intellectual development.

The propagation of Atheism as a negation of pure religious belief in some states of society would be calamitous. In a state of society in which a belief in God, Divine Providence, Heaven and Hell, and the fear of the Devil, led to that population obeying the law. It would be wicked to propagate any ideas that would weaken the stability of the social compact, lest, by violence, mischief might be done to the property and lives of the people. A religion may be destitute of the elements of truth in its Theology. Pure ethical truths may be interwoven with its fallacies. Belief is not a vice, and in destroying the former we might weaken the latter. Human progress is slow. It cannot be developed by violence. Wars and revolutions, and creedal controversies and conflicts, are hindrances of progress. As the human mind attains higher stages of growth, it dissolves the connection between the subject of morals and religious belief.

The higher man intellectually grows, and the more attenuated his theological ideal, the more self-sustaining becomes his moral adhesiveness. The ignorant and undeveloped man cannot divorce the moving springs of his conduct from the elements of his belief. Hence, a wise government will give perfect liberty to all religious bodies to exercise unimpeded their religion if it does not conflict with the first duties of citizenship. A man's first and highest duties are the exercise and use of the true functions of citizenship. There is only one thing which stands before a man's religion, and that is, his duty to his country. The existence of any religion can only be tolerated and justified upon the grounds of its utility to the individual and essential interests of the country. All religion being illusion and national interest being real, as rapidly as the illusion conflicts with the development of liberty the illusion must be reformed and readjusted to the new conditions of the times.

Evangelical and religious propaganda of new creeds in countries where different creeds have long existed and been entwined in the moral ideas of the people is highly improper

and injurious, for it upsets the natural order of development. It brings man no nearer to the truth because one religion is as good as another. It is the product of the soil on which it is found, and therefore is the best fitted for the needs of the people of that place. The end of the culture should be to so develop mankind as to need no religion to increase the utility and force of morals.



SPIRITUALISM.

MODERN Spiritualism dates its beginning from the year 1848, in a little farm house at Hydesville, near to the city of Rochester, in the State of New York. The children of the Fox family were the first mediums to attract the public seriously to the phenomena of rappings that occurred in their presence. Since that time spiritual phenomena have been witnessed through mediums in all parts of the world. At first the public was hostile and incredulous, denying the genuineness of the so-called spiritual manifestations. Much of this hostility is abated, and a more tolerant public spirit exists.

Spiritualism, on its psychical side, goes farther back than 1848. The phenomena brought to notice by Paracelsus, Cagliostro and Mesmer were the same as the inspirational, trance and clairvoyance manifestations of to-day. Spiritualism brought all the outlines of mental science within its pale. The study of physiology or the functions of the nervous system in the time of Descartes began to be correlated in mental states and capacity. Mind is the manifestation of function and has corresponding physiological changes in nervous tissue. This is a great fact never to be once lost sight of in the study of conscious phenomena. That which sets up a change in nervous tissue produces a corresponding change in the mental action. Since that time until now a steady growth of knowledge has been secured, the functions of the different organs of the brain have been discovered and the organs located, centres of mechanical nervous action have also been located and their specific functions defined, so that we have by this process of investigation come more definitely toward a science of Psychology, which before this process began was a tangled skein of metaphysical speculation.

Spiritualism affirms that man is a spirit, and survives consciously after the death of the body, and that through certain conditions not fully known a disembodied spirit can take possession and control the living organism of a person called

a medium. When possessed the medium will be the intellectual presentation of the spirit, will think as the spirit thinks and talk as the spirit talks. Personal spiritual intelligence appears to dominate the raps, the turning of tables and the playing of musical instruments without apparent physical contact.

Spirits appear to have ability to make a tangible presentation of their presence. They seem to build a temporary body; but have not the power to submit the body they have manufactured to a thorough scientific examination. So far the experiments have been confined to looking and talking with the tangible forms which come. The phenomena produced by the conditions and attendant spiritual powers present all the evidence we have of a spiritual life and a conscious existence after death. Spiritualism to me stands for phenomena, mediums and spirits. It is a science which consists of knowledge relating to life in and out of the body. So far it has been much mixed in conflicting philosophical theories and mysticism. There is no question but that as the years go by Spiritualism will free itself from the chances of philosophical dogmatism. It stands for no system of philosophy, it claims no new ethical theory, and it cannot be called a religion. It belongs to no domain of faith. It is a study of natural phenomena. These phenomena bring us into intelligent relation with spiritual things, who by a natural process have evolved from one plane of nature to another. It teaches the natural immortality of man and the equal personal possibility of advancement of the whole human race. There is no doubt at all but some time it will have made such advances as to be universally admitted into the study of the schools. When the simple fact of natural immortality is realized, all theological systems will fall into forgetfulness. The treasure and consolation of Spiritualism will abundantly afford relief to the bereaved soul and give to humanity that strength so much needed at the end of life. We shall all meet again, will be the song of all the ages.

As to what I know personally of these phenomena I will say I have witnessed what is called materialization. Forms have come to me as perfect in their parts as human beings, and as intelligent too. I have held and sustained conversations with Jonathan M. Roberts and the late Prof. Riddle, of

New York City. I am a Psychic myself, and can be used by spirits to speak what they control me to say. I developed the power by mesmeric manipulation, and by sitting in the spiritual circle for the development of manifestations. I was first put into the mesmeric sleep when a boy in 1855. Since that I have been a diligent student of Spiritualism and Psychology. As I read the writings of the different members of important Psychical Research Societies I am both pained and amused by some of their statements and deductions. After a certain manifestation has taken place these pseudo scientists assume that such a phenomenon was never creditably and satisfactorily observed before, and such experiment is paraded in their journals with an ostentatious show of authority, precision and vanity, as if never observed and described before, when in reality to the experience of old investigators it is a mere commonplace manifestation. Some of these psychical scientists are philosophers rather than scientists, and worse than all they are under the influence of dominant ideas. If I were to tell these investigators that they were not good scientific investigators, their scholastic dignity would be offended in a moment. A man who has invented a theory to explain certain facts is in a bad mental shape to investigate phenomena. What can a man see at a séance for materialization who knows that all the forms are made by the medium or assistants? Such a mind is dominated by an idea and cannot see anything but what the mind itself makes. A person who believes that he knows that materialization cannot happen, can never be made to see materialization under any ordinary and just scientific conditions. If these scientific theologians (a scientific theologian is an impossibility) would apply the scientific method to the investigation of their theological belief, they would soon have to vacate their pulpits and do something else. The theologian is not in a fit and free condition to investigate any natural question whatsoever. The philosopher (the philosopher is a man of wisdom) is not even in any better position; he is dominated by ideas. Disciples of Herbert Spencer and some other schools of thought—men committed to certain speculative ideas or systems of Psychology—have been arbitrarily appointed to sit on a Psychical Science Congress, to be con-

ducted in Chicago during the present year while the World's Fair is being held. Most of the persons appointed are well known in some profession or study, but very few know anything at all on the subject upon which they are called to deliberate and this Congress will be most surely a sight to see. What would indeed happen if five hundred Roman Catholic Priests were to meet to decide the claims and validity of the principles of the Protestant reformation? Spiritualism will not derive any benefit from it. It seems to me to be a flank movement to explain the phenomena of Spiritualism on what are called purely physiological principles, without calling into existence spirit stuff at all as an example of the method. I quote here an extract from an article written by B. F. Underwood, a gentleman of great ability and probably the best informed man on the writings of Herbert Spencer in America. He stands committed to Spencer's theories. I quote from the *Psychical Review*. He says :

"There are facts which go to show that the ordinary self—the self to which belong the conscious will and the conscious memory, the self which we are accustomed to regard as the totality of the individual mind—is not our complete mental being. Below the threshold of the habitual consciousness, below the surface of the ordinary working life, is the sub-conscious part of our nature,—thought, feeling and will, which are not consciously recognized by the self of common experience,—an unknown category to which may be referred telepathic and clairvoyant impressions. These impressions are conveyed in a peculiar manner to the ordinary consciousness by the consciousness beneath the threshold,—the subliminal consciousness, as it has been very appropriately called by Mr. F. W. H. Myers.

"The ordinary consciousness is evidently but one of several elements which constitute the complete consciousness. Two or more distinct trains of memory, feeling and will, as is well known, may co-exist in the same individual. In some cases the secondary consciousness is more continuous than the primary consciousness. The hypnotic trance and double consciousness are probably the disordered workings of a stratum of self which is essential to the complete individuality.

"To what extent does the sub-conscious or subliminal self influence direct us? Awakened from the hypnotic trance, a subject in a perfectly normal condition will do what he was directed to do in the trance, never doubting that he is acting of his own volition. May not a man's acts, those determined upon and performed by his ordinary self, be initiated by some stratum of self which lies outside the conscious will, which forms no part of the stream of consciousness in which he habitually lives? This stratum of self is probably just as actively conscious as

is the self of conscious experience, existing, we may suppose, in some kind of co-ordination with the organism, and forming a part of the total individuality. * * *

"The human mind has powers and capacities not dreamed of in the old philosophies and psychologies, and the movements in which some of them are externalized, although apparently automatic to the ordinary consciousness, are nevertheless conscious and volitional to the stratum of intelligence from which they originate, and all the conscious states are probably comprised in the human mind, which, though it seems to be made up of a whole platoon of personalities, is an indivisible, individual unity, having its basis, not in the fleeting world of phenomena, but in the world of reality, which underlies all the changing scenes of nature in the noumenal world. Thus on one side man is linked to that which is permanent and eternal; on the other, to that which is phenomenal, relative and transient."

Probably Mr. Underwood never before in his life wrote anything so meaningless and positively silly as this. For some time I should infer from articles which have appeared in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* that he has been reviewing that province of tweedledom and tweedledee—called the objective and subjective states of perception—and he accordingly has become a trifle out of mental balance and suddenly become a mystic metaphysician and speculator than a cautious, sober, scientific thinker. He starts out with a dominant idea;—to be accurate and scientific, he has a hypothesis to present to explain certain psychical facts. I must emphatically, but with fraternal feeling, contradict his first proposition that "there are facts which go to show that the ordinary self—the self to which belong the conscious will and conscious memory, the self which we are accustomed to regard as the totality of the individual mind—is not our complete mental being." I remark the expression "ordinary self" has a loose and doubtful meaning. I am not sure of its full mental contents. By the term ordinary self, I mean myself absolutely. I have no extraordinary self. Myself is totality of organic functional activity. My consciousness is not myself, but a function of certain cerebral and nervous states. My consciousness is dependent upon sensation. Without sensation there is no consciousness. Suspend sensation and consciousness is suspended. Consciousness is the supreme function of the totality of organic activity. There can only be one self, one soul, and consciousness—that function which perceives objects. Perceptions in time and

place relations are attributes of consciousness. Consciousness involves two elements,—myself and that which is not myself. Conscious memory has no meaning, only in this sense: I am conscious of my memory, I am conscious of having will, a power to act, choose, do, think, or utter. I am conscious every day of having these powers. They are qualities of myself. And again he says: "Below the threshold of the habitual consciousness, below the ordinary self, which we are accustomed to regard as the ordinary working life, is the sub-conscious part of our nature, thought, feeling and will, which are not consciously recognized by the self of common experience—an unknown category to which may be referred telepathic and clairvoyant impressions." Sub-consciousness are words without meaning. They do not stand for anything in man's nature and belongings. We have no such consciousness of a consciousness under a consciousness. If there be a sub-consciousness there must be sub-sensation on which sub-consciousness must be dependent. The nerve must be excited by some subject before a thought, or a feeling, or will can determine choice, or separate self from the exciting cause of sensation.

Clairvoyance is not sub-consciousness. It is not consciousness at all, but a qualitative and quantitative mode of perception. The same consciousness perceives a spirit and a five dollar bill. Divided degrees of perception there may be, but there cannot be two selves, nor two functions of consciousness. Trance phenomena, clairvoyance, telepathy, dreaming, etc., cannot be explained by the hypothesis of a sub-consciousness. In the constitution of the mind are found faculties and their separate and specific functions. Thought is dependent on perception. Where thought is, so is consciousness. A faculty to deduct or infer involves the function of consciousness. Ideas are deductions and inferences from perceptions, and perceptions are the sum of nerve motions.

A hypnotized subject is not in a sub-conscious condition, but a state in which consciousness is dominated by an impression. Sometimes I have seen the mesmerized person intellectually quickened by force and thought direct from the person of the operator. I have known thought carried from the mind of the operator through the brain of and vocalized

by the sensitive. I have seen a hand mesmerized and made to write the thought of the operator. The nervous ganglia receiving the impression telegraphed the same to the muscles without passing the impression to the brain at all. The automatic action of the nervous system does not constitute a consciousness.

What subterfuges men resort to to get rid of the plain meaning and full import of spiritual phenomena. Psychical research students of the Christian and materialistic order, possessed by dominant ideas, want to accept the reality of psychical phenomena, but they must explain them without admitting that they are produced by spirits. Where does clairvoyance sight come from, and its contents? From the subliminal consciousness, say they. What are spirits? Dreams in the subliminal consciousness. Sub-conscious hallucinations, delusions, say they. Listen to us, gentlemen. There are no spiritual controls. The medium is giving the contents of his subliminal consciousness, say they.

Nay, the only hypothesis which will explain the phenomena of modern spiritualism is spirits, dwelling in another province of nature, who, under certain conditions, can use the nervous system of man and express a limited contents of their progressed and elevated consciousness.

If Mr. Underwood would theorize less and experiment more he would find his hypothesis and dominant idea as illusive as is Myers' subliminal consciousness.

Then, again, we have a statement like this :

"Awakened from the hypnotic trance, a subject in a perfectly normal condition will do what he was directed to do in the trance, never doubting that he is acting of his own volition. May not a man's acts, those determined upon and performed by his ordinary self, be initiated by some substratum of self which lies outside the conscious will, which forms no part of the stream of consciousness in which he habitually lives?"

The idea of another thinker existing behind the personality of ordinary experience and thought is not by any means new. This individuality has been thought by some to be the original spirit sent out of heaven when Satan rebelled against God, and by others it has been thought to be the original self which continues to re-embody itself in

matter and build experience on experience and Karma on Karma. When the trance medium is controlled by the proud spirit, "Broken Feather," he is but a person who once lived and impressed his personality upon the original self,—so to speak. He is a cylinder put upon the conscious phonograph, and views of the contents of his consciousness when the medium is put in a suitable condition. Is George Rushton a phase of my real self as I existed in another period of time and reincarnation?

When he tells of the experiences of travel, reveals the contents of his life at home and abroad more than a century ago, and deals with the details of his home life, and describes some of the conditions of his spiritual existence in the society of his father and mother in spirit life, he uses my brain and effectually entrances me to do this. Is my sub-consciousness playing this trick upon you and me? Can it be true that I lived in the last century and had those experiences? My difficulty is increased. I am sometimes hypnotized by a "spirit." I know as John Shaw. He claims to have lived in the last century, too. His life was contemporaneous with that of George Rushton. Now, I could not be living in two men at the same time, it seems to me.

I am sometimes controlled by Rupert, a Druid who lived before Julius Cæsar made his first invasion of Britain. He was a learned Priest of that ancient order. Did I live in that far back age? Are these persons but phases of my sub-consciousness? My subliminal self, a member of a Chicago Psychical Congress, might say that, but common sense laughs at such luxuriant dreams.

Is the theory Mr. Underwood suggests of a sub-consciousness necessary to explain the simple hypnotic fact he speaks of? I think not.

Why should there be a subliminal self, an underself, to direct the performance? This theory would involve two thinking centres at least. What is the use of two when one will do? Every thought, emotion or feeling is expressed in certain forms of motion in the molecules of the brain. The brain having been put into that state or form of motion by the will force of another person will hold the suggestive force for days,—from 14 to 20 days,—when the impressions made will be constantly recurring more or less accurately. The ac-

curacy of the impression will depend upon the force, or wish, or plan of the operator. The influence of the operator does not end when the subject comes to a state of free-consciousness, so to speak. He performs or carries out the direction because the action is already set up in the brain like any fact of memory, and the association of the influence which caused the fact will pass it into the domain of consciousness, and of course it will be acted. The ganglia which receive the telegraphic messages from the nerves, the thalami, can be operated upon by the hallucinations of consciousness, will pass into sense relation, and take form, number, place and color,—will apparently become a thing. Clairaudience and clairvoyance is perception thrown upon the interior end of the sensory nerve. This is the reason impressions appear to awaken in the consciousness. Any strong impression made on the brain will keep up an excitement till it has opened the gates of consciousness. When this condition is diseased the subject will be always repeating phrase snatches of song or poetry without sense connection. Sometimes the condition will result in hearing voices contradictory and very puzzling and disagreeable. These phenomena are not from a sub-consciousness, but are the result of false motions being set up in nervous tissue which ultimately make perceptions. The brain has a habit of repeating again that which it has repeated once before. Insanity is the result of obstructed function.

When any organ of the brain becomes diseased it fails to do correct work. When the body is tired the memory becomes poor and the intellectual powers less efficient and strong. Mental states are correlated to physical states. Mental force is related to the common force of the universe. There is no place in the constitution of man for a sub-consciousness to exist. It is a metaphysical creation, yet this idea will stop and be a stumbling block in the way of many minds given to the making of psychical air balloons.