

CT 12

# DREAMS AND GHOSTS.

A Lecture

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BY

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## S Y L L A B U S.

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Naturalism and Spiritualism.  
Astrologers and Philosophers.  
Perceptions either sensual or cerebral.  
Dreams. Object and subject blended into one.  
"Noctambulatio."  
Dreams of reality.  
Hallucinations.  
Nikolai of Berlin. Abercrombie. Brierre de  
Boismont.  
Natural or Supernatural agencies.  
Hysteria and Revivals.  
Are Ghosts possible?  
How to treat those who see them.  
Shakespeare's Ghosts.  
Some practical points to be taken into con-  
sideration.  
Conclusion.

## DREAMS AND GHOSTS.

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**M**IND is assumed to be opposed to Matter, Nature to be different from Spirit, and Reality to be unconnected with Ideality. These assumptions, and a continuous misuse of words, have for thousands of years produced misunderstandings of the utmost importance to Science and the welfare of Humanity.

Mysticism and Rationalism, Naturalism and Spiritualism, have been arrayed against one another like two hostile armies; and whilst the one party took everything literally, and required a certain notion to be attached to every word, as the result of a clear perception, the other roamed into the field of the allegorical or parabolical, performed tropological gambols with exquisite cunning, and terrified us by an anagogical treatment of the simplest matters. If a certain substance was stated to be black or white, it might be black only in substance, whilst in essence it was white; all depended whether it was taken in its reality or in its ideality.

A fluid may be in substance, say, oil, but in essence fire; allegorically it may be food for hungry souls; tropologically it may represent virtue gliding smoothly through the heavenly gates, and anagogically it may be spiritual balm on our wounded hearts to cool their passionate throbbing for the vanities and pleasures of this world.

The difficulties were made still greater by the combinations of these four categories; a thing might be to one mind allegorico-tropological, whilst to another it appeared litero-anagogical. The term

allegorical is used when you say one thing and mean another ; the terms tropological or symbolic are synonymous, and imply when you mean one thing and say another ; and anagogical, is to argue from generalities to particulars ; namely, "all men are sinners ; Joe Smith is a man, therefore he must be a sinner." A syllogism, which, at all events, is not very complimentary to Joe Smith.

For centuries, nay for thousands of years, science had often no other task than to sift the allegorico-tropologico-anagogical nonsense that was propounded by mystics, dogmatists, and metaphysicians, who brought confusion into the simplest phenomena of this world. The differences between mystics and rationalists often existed in mere words,—the one trying to oppose a common-sense explanation upon which the other insisted. Obstinacy on both sides made the struggle still fiercer and hindered the real progress of knowledge. I said in one of my Lectures, that the "unknown" had always a mysterious charm for man. Astrologers need not know as much as philosophers. The astrologer gazes at the stars, sees threads millions of miles in length extending from certain stars to particular individuals, and talks of the influence these mystic ties must exercise on the destinies of those thus attached to heavenly bodies. If the individual believes in this star-theory, the philosopher tries in vain to detach him from his star, and all he can do is to prove the impossibility of the man's having anything to do with the star or the star with him. So it is with the great question in dispute concerning mind and matter. If people start with the conviction that there is something above nature, or as they call it "supernatural," that impressions on our senses are possible, even though an outward object to create such impressions be wanting, that there exists beyond nature a realm peopled by various strange beings, how are we to proceed to argue the point ?

What is Supernatural ?

The very expression, though continually used, designates in itself a "nonentity." All things must exist in space and time ; space and time are the first conditions of anything existent, but all nature with its attributes of space and time fills the Universe, and there is undoubtedly no room for anything above or beyond nature as a Universe. Super-earthly or supersensual might have some meaning as referring to that which is beyond our globe, but supernatural has certainly no sense.

In discoursing on dreams and ghosts, I shall endeavour to avoid being dogmatic, and simply take up certain psychological phenomena, lay them before you, and you will be kind enough to draw your own conclusions.

First of all it must be borne in mind that our perceptions of the outer world are not only *sensual* (by means of our senses) but also *intellectual* (by means of ideas produced in the brain), that is *cerebral*. The senses produce nothing but mere sensations in their special organs, furnishing thus the material from which intellect, by applying the laws of causation, forms the outer world under the existing conditions of space and time.

All our perceptions when in a waking and normal state, are certainly results of impressions on our senses, which produce an effect of which our intellect causes us to become conscious. Now is it possible that impressions may reach our brain from quite a different source than the outer world, impressions produced by our own organisation, working on our brain exactly like impressions of the outer world ? If this be possible, we should endeavour to find out the relation in which such a phenomenon would stand to its effect, and whether such effect would afford us means of making ourselves acquainted with its real cause ; and we should be at once obliged, as in the material world, to investi-

gate the apparition, that is the outward impression on our senses in its relation to its own reality.

People do dream, have dreamt, and will dream. Apparitions, or to speak more colloquially, ghosts have been really seen.

Dreams and spectral visions are the strong points of those who assume an Empire of Spirits altogether independent of matter. There was probably a time in the phase of the progressive development of humanity, when man was not yet able to discriminate between dreams and reality. I am inclined to consider the whole period during which myths, nursery tales, miracles, and pious wonders, such as flying monks and nuns who "levitated" from the ground, were assumed to be realities—a period of dreams. For the question, whether perceptible visions, as perfect and distinct as those caused by the impressions of the material world can be produced in the brain, must be answered in the affirmative; phenomena known to us all, phenomena, the effects of which we experience nearly every night, prove this with incontestable force, namely DREAMS!

What are dreams?

They are not, as has been assumed, a mere play of our fancy, an echo of our imaginary faculty, or an epilogue of those outward impressions which we received when still awake. Fancies, as the effects of our imagination, are weak, imperfect, and transitory; so that the most vivid imagination is scarcely able to reproduce the image of an absent person, even for a few seconds. In our dreams everything affecting our perceptive faculty appears as exterior to ourselves as are the impressions received from the outer world. All objects appear clear and defined, exactly as in reality, not only with regard to ourselves, but perfectly finished in all their details, surrounded by all real impediments; every body with its shadow, every object with its peculiar form and special substance. That our dreams are entirely

objective is shown by the actions that take place in them being often contrary to our expectations and our wishes. Our astonishment is excited by the dramatic truth of the characters and their actions; so much so that it may almost be asserted that a person dreaming is, for the time, a kind of Shakespeare.

The deception produced by dreams is sometimes so great that, reality stepping into its rights when we awake, has to combat our vivid impressions to prove that what has been was only the airy creation of a dream. This goes far to prove that dreams are not a function of our brain, and totally distinct from its power of imagination. Aristotle already called "sleep a special sense," and made the observation that in dreams our imagination is often engaged in representing extraneous objects. This leads us to the conclusion that during dreams our faculty of imagination is at our disposal, and that this cannot be at the same time the instrument or organ of our dreams.

Dreams resemble madness, they may be called a short and passing madness, whilst madness is a long and sometimes lasting dream. The essential condition of dreams is sleep, in which the normal activity of our brain and senses is suspended. Only when this activity ceases dreams begin to work; just as the pictures of a magic lantern appear in a room deprived of light. It is a further fact that in our very dreams our reasoning faculty is often at work: we reason about their incongruity, their ridiculous combinations. There is, therefore, in us a force by means of which we can fill space with forms, we can hear and understand voices, can see, smell, and taste without any outward influences on our senses; which influences are necessary when we are awake; we ourselves, therefore, are the sole cause, object, and empirical basis of our thoughts, though in no

way identical with them. In working on our imagination this force does not gather impressions through our senses from *without*—but undoubtedly from *within*. For our senses are closed to the outer world, and all the objects of our dreams appear to be the creations of our own subjectivity. Object and subject are thus blended into one. Let us not lose sight of this important assertion ; for I intend to lead you step by step to the most incredible phenomena, which, however, are facts, and may be explained in a very rational way. We must only give up the old “shell and kernel theory,” and see that there is no contest between the within and without, but that mind and matter, however complicated, marvellous, and incomprehensible their functions may be, are *one*. The “gross and brutal materialism” and the “moonshiny, dreamy idealism” formulæ must be given up. If dreams are facts whilst we are asleep, might dreams not be possible whilst we are half or entirely awake ?

The Scotch have for this state an excellent term—they call it “second sight ;” whilst one sight through our eyes is going on, another faculty of seeing, as in our dreams, is at work in us. We see and at the same time create what we see. Our imagination is impressed, but its impressions are produced by an inner force of our own. The term “*second sight*,” however, is applicable to a “species” of our mental and bodily functions, we cannot use it for the genus. To designate that indisputable and undeniable force in us which produces perceptions without any outward influences on our senses, we will use the expression “organ of dreams.” So soon as we assume an organ we naturally wish to know its construction and mode of acting, and, in fact, are anxious to see the machine and its working ; I must content myself at this moment with merely giving you some further effects of which this organ must be the cause.



There are undoubtedly different degrees of dreams; of some we are only dimly conscious, of others we often are in doubt whether the incidents of our dream did not happen in reality. We have dreams in which we dream only of those realities which surround us. What we dream is at the same time true and real. It is as if our skull were transparent, as if the outer world were directly affecting our brain, instead of impressing it by means of our senses.

This mysterious state we might call "half-dreams," or, still better, "dreams of reality." These dreams often reach a higher phase when the horizon of the dreamer is enlarged so as to enable him to see beyond the walls of his bedroom. Our "organ of dreams" appears often to lead us to distant places, often utterly unknown to us, never before seen. Instances of this are numberless. Recently a gentleman wrote to a newspaper "that he was lifted up, or rather levitated on the tower of St. Mark at Venice; that he looked down upon the town, seeing it in all its reality as clearly as if he had known the place before, though he had never been at Venice." Of course he might have seen many engravings or paintings of the town, and have read many descriptions of it; to this he does not allude, but, at all events, we can have no reason to doubt that, whilst asleep, he was transferred to Venice, and was impressed by the visionary city as though it had been the real one.

A still higher effect of which the "organ of dreams" may be assumed to be the cause is "Noc-tambulatio," described by the Greeks as "upno-bateia" (sleep-wandering), that is somnambulism. It is very common in Austria and Germany, France and Italy; less common in England, but more frequent in Scotland. Somnambulists dream, and at the same time often perform their daily occupations; some have copied music, others have made

notes of sermons, others have put their rooms in order, others have climbed dangerous heights, or walked on parapets; and though their senses are perfectly asleep, all the sensual functions are performed. They see, they feel, they avoid chairs, tables they move about, and hear the noise they make; this is also the case with people artificially put into this peculiar state. The brain appears to be in the deepest sleep, that is in perfect inactivity—what organ is there active in us? Have we after all really a double life; is there something active in us whilst our brain, the organ of our mighty intellectual faculties, is at rest? If so, there must be in us a separate Spirit that enters and leaves our body, and is strangely occupied not only when still attached to us, but also when it has left the shell and floats through the infinite. But is this so? I think that the theory of psychologists and physiologists is much more likely to be near the truth, than the assumption that there are lively sprites in us which are altogether independent of our material organisation. Modern psychologists assume that in such a state as I have alluded to, a total depression of the vital functions of the brain and an accumulation of all vital force in the ganglia take place. These ganglia have their centre in the “plexus solaris,” or “cerebrum abdominale,” (the brain of the stomach), which consists of a few annular vessels filled with a nervous fluid, standing in the same relation to the ganglia as the brain to our nervous system. This has given origin to the hypothesis that dreams have a special organ, which during a total depression of the functions of the brain is most active, so much so “that apparently an accumulation of all the vital force takes place in the ganglia, whose larger tissues, with the ‘plexus solaris,’ are turned into a sensorium, which, as if by substitution, performs the functions of the brain, dispensing with the aid of

the senses to receive impressions from without, and still exercising all the faculties of the brain, sometimes even with greater perfection than when awake."—(See my work, 'Spiritualism and Animal Magnetism.' London: Robert Hardwicke. 1872. Second Edition, page 33.) By this means we may trace a *positive*, self-conscious force in us, and a *negative* or unconscious force; a positive and negative element in our nature. The equilibrium of these forces or elements may be disturbed; the brain or the positive force may be with all its glorious structure, its intricate and complicated windings, its admirable power of consciousness, if deranged, lowered, depressed, exhausted under the influence of the ganglia, and the brain of the stomach may rule the brain of the head. That is, the "organ of dreams" becomes master of the "organ of intellect." It is a well-authenticated fact that somnambulists move with great decision, extreme quickness, that they conform to anything surrounding them; that they observe everything with the "organ of dreams," that they dare more when led by this mysterious organ than when awake.

Our nerves of motion originate in the spine, they are connected by the "medulla oblongata" with the cerebellum, the regulator of our motions, which again is connected with the cerebrum, the seat of our consciousness and perception. Now, how is it possible that perceptions which determine our motives for movements, when transferred to the tissue of the ganglia in the stomach, should direct the steps of a somnambulist with the swiftness of lightning? All we can assume is that the cerebral force of the somnambulist in such a state is not entirely asleep, but only sufficiently awake to direct his steps, to receive impressions through organs which are different from our senses; thus dreams, half-dreams, and somnambulism are but effects of a special organ in us which becomes the more active

the more passive our brain is. We must consider a still stranger state, arising from a complication of the disturbed balance between the functions of the brain and those of the "plexus solaris."

Let us assume a state in which our brain is, at least, partially awake; we see the objects in our room with perfect clearness; the lamp on our writing table, the books on our shelves, the pictures, &c., and still we suddenly see a figure before us,— a dear relation not long dead, a beloved child, whose last parting words still resound in our ears. Such cases are recorded by perfectly credible persons. How is this? Our answer would be: we do not doubt your assertion; we believe your having seen your dead mother, but you were in a half-dream; your brain was, in spite of its partial capacity of receiving certain impressions through your senses, depressed, and your ganglionic system hard at work to make you dream, whilst in this state. All cases of hallucinations and spectral visions may be reduced to this natural cause. If we admit that our "organ of dreams" can produce impressions on our senses when asleep, we may assume, with great probability, and without leaving the firm ground of physical possibility, that this organ may work in us whilst our senses of vision and hearing are awake. The perceptive faculties of our brain will be influenced exactly as in our dreams, though we be not asleep. The phantom or object of our visual organ will stand before us in a given form, as perfect as any object of our dreams. But its immediate cause of existence must be looked for in our own inner organism. These phantoms, in accordance with the faculties of our "organ of dreams," will assume form, colour; emit sounds which will affect us like the language of living beings; and if our organ of dreams is in an excited state of activity, the phantoms presenting themselves will be hazy in appearance, pale, greyish, ghastly, nearly transpa-

rent; their voices will be hollow and whispering, or hoarse and whistling. A heavy supper (say, a Welsh rare-bit,) nervous debility, over-work, great grief, or a glass of grog as an overdose, will produce the most important changes in these phantoms; but as soon as the visionary tries to bring his faculty of reasoning into play, that is, as soon as his positive or cerebral force becomes master of the negative or abdominal element, the phantoms vanish. Nothing can more speedily cure our propensity to see spectres than a firm will to verify, by close investigation, the *reality*, the substance of the apparition.

Spectres, like dealers in mysticism and dogmatic incredibilities, prefer above all the twilight, or rather no light at all. Visionaries of whatever sort and stamp do not like to be disturbed in their manipulations by candles and gas-jets, and least of all by some rays of common sense and sound logic. Midnight, dark abodes with painted windows, have been set down from old as the time and places when not only Erin's but "any clouds are hung round with ghosts."

That visions and apparitions are facts produced by our own selves cannot be denied, but they do not prove anything extraneous to us, or the existence of some undiscovered country from whose bourne some travellers do return.

We may now investigate their causes, and we shall find that some very material physical derangement of our constitution is the principal one. Already Hippokrates and Galen drew the attention of medical men to phenomena of this kind, and tried to classify the diseases according to the visions of the sick person. It is pretty well known that those suffering from "delirium tremens" generally see rats, cats, mice, serpents, black dogs, elephants, devils with big horns, grotesque monkeys, or some terrifying monster of the animal kingdom. So much so, that even the visionary realm of ghosts

appears to abominate drunkenness as something loathsome and bestial. Those suffering from consumption have pleasant visions; bright, sunny plains, beautiful cool woods, present themselves to their eyes; they see angels in long robes with broad, airy wings, and hear strange melodies resounding through space. The sooner people having such visions consult a physician the better. Madness is, not necessarily always, but frequently accompanied by hallucinations.

There are some rare cases, perfectly authenticated, in which apparitions have been seen by individuals who at least were in a state of perfect bodily health. The most known is that of Nikolai, the celebrated author and bookseller of Berlin. This case was laid before the Academy of Sciences at Berlin, 1799. Nikolai's statement was the following:—"On the 24th of February, 1791, after a sharp altercation (the excited, nervous state of the visionary is to be taken into special consideration), I suddenly perceived, at the distance of ten paces, a dead body. (The great accuracy with which the distance is recorded shows at once that Nikolai was altogether dreaming; whoever heard of a man seeing a dead body before him and trying to measure the distance between the apparition and himself.) I inquired of my wife whether she did not see it. My question alarmed her. The apparition lasted eight minutes. (Another peculiarity of these kind of visionaries is that they always are most particular with regard to dates and time. Is anybody childish enough to suppose that a man seeing a dead body takes out his watch, and counts the minutes, and notes them down? The tale, as told, bears in its intrinsic evidence all the usual traces of impossibility which we may study in all reports on so-called "supernatural" matters.) At four in the afternoon the same vision appeared. I was then alone and much disturbed by it. I went to my wife's apart-

ment. The vision followed me. At six I perceived several figures that had no connection with the former vision." Nikolai was undoubtedly dreaming whilst awake: he was bled by a judicious medical man, and the vision did not return.

"A stranger in Edinburgh died suddenly in an omnibus. The corpse was exposed, and a medical man called in to report on the cause of death. After several days' close study of a medical subject, he perceived, on raising his eyes, the form of the dead stranger opposite him, as distinctly as he had seen him on the table of the police office." The overwrought cerebral faculty was under the dominion of the sympathetic nerve, which, in its turn, still affected by the impression of the corpse, represented it to the debilitated powers of the brain.

Abercrombie, in his 'Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers' (11th Ed., Lond., 1841, p. 380), relates the case of a man who was beset with hallucinations all his life. "His disposition was such that, when he met a friend in the streets, he was uncertain whether he were a real person or a phantom."

Unscientifically trained persons often give themselves up to credulity, and to that craving after abnormal supernatural agencies which has done so much evil throughout the whole progressive development of humanity. They take these kind of visions for granted, and jump at the conclusion that, as visions were seen, they must be substances or essences from another world. I recommend anybody suffering from "Psycho-mania," or from "Table-danceology," or paralysis of the brain from knock-conversation, or who has "levitation fits," or "air-floating paroxysms," to read Brierre de Boismont 'On Hallucination,' 1845. His cases are, unhappily, neither systematically arranged nor psychologically or physiologically explained; yet they must convince anybody believing in super-

sensual agencies, that strange things may happen, all taking their origin in a derangement of our nervous and cerebral system, without troubling any spirits from another world. If spirits really exist, why have they not yet proven themselves useful? Why do they not appear half-an-hour before a ship burns down, and 400 human beings are killed and drowned, to warn the captain; or why do they not alter the signals of a railway in right time to prevent a collision and to save an infinity of wretchedness? Because they do not choose to do it—might be the answer of some "Supernaturalist;" but why should spirits come and talk nonsense at the bidding of *A* or *B*, and why not teach us in an evening the multiplication table, or give us some information which might be turned to some use or comfort for humanity?

Hysteria on the one hand, and a reaction against the growing materialistic and utilitarian tendencies of our times on the other, drive those who are endowed with a vivid emotional nature into the regions of ghostly shadows. They tremble that there should be no more mysteries; no more tidings from another world, no more communications with dear pretty angels, no horrible monsters to frighten young and old babies! Why do they not throw themselves into the arms of poetry and art, numberless spirits and fancy-wrought forms may be brought up from the depths of our cultivated minds. We ought not allow ourselves to be dragged into a lowering of our cerebral powers, our faculty of reasoning, by the inordinate use of our sympathetic nerves, or the unconscious emotional, ganglionic element in us. For there can be no doubt that an unusual mental excitement, paired with bodily depression, may abnormally develop the emotional element in us, and produce the most destructive and pernicious results. This statement was born out during the period of St. John's "dance mania;"



people in their paroxysms saw the Saviour enthroned with the Virgin Mary. We do not doubt these visions ; we only are convinced that Christ and the Virgin Mary were no realities ; they formed no more the outer phenomena that impressed the visionaries than do the forms we see in our dreams, but the excited organs of dreams produced them. For Ghosts are impossibilities—they can neither be seen nor heard ; except they are bodies—but then there is an end of the so-called spiritual kingdom. So that those who call themselves Spiritualists, are the greatest materialists, and work into the hands of those who intend to reduce everything to mere ponderable and calculable substances.

In order to see—a body or a substance is required, which by means of reflection of the rays of light acts on our retina ; in order to hear—a body or substance is required to act by means of the vibration of the air on our tympanum. All that visionaries or ghost-see-ers may justly assert, is that they are conscious of the impression on their perceptive faculties of something that reflects light, creates sounds, though there is nothing which could produce these phenomena—that is they dream—for all other phenomena, if they really happen, however mysterious they may appear, however incredible, are mere deceptions *à la* Dr. Lynn, or Maskelyne and Cooke, and of course not worthy of any scientific treatment.

The danger in playing with the so-called “supernatural” is that the derangement in one individual becomes contagious. One hysteric girl in a school is capable of infecting all the others. But for any such derangement the best cures are rational ones, or wherever these do not suffice a drastic physical one will do. An English physician was called into a ladies’ school, where one hysterical girl had infected many others ; after he had in vain tried various remedies, he one day observed to the mistress of the

establishment in the hearing of the patients that there remained but one chance of effecting a cure,—the application of a red-hot iron to the spine of the patients so as to quiet their nervously excited system. Strange to say, the red-hot iron was never applied, for the hysterical attacks ceased as if by magic. The same was the case with a revivalmania in a large school near Cologne; Government sent an inspector down; the boys pretended to have visions of Jesus Christ, but the implacable officer threatened to close the school if any other spiritual inspector should interfere with his business, and the students should be for ever excluded from pursuing their studies: the effect was as magical as the red-hot iron remedy—the revivals ceased at once.

Shakespeare, that master-mind, who knew the most hidden recesses of our hearts, whose writings form the most complete and exhaustive psychological essays, who made many a ghost “revisit the glimpses of the moon, to make night hideous,” has solved the “Spirit Question” in a clear, common-sense, and exhaustive way in “Macbeth,” when he makes the ambitious thane exclaim:—

“Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee!  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?”

To beware of false creations in science and religion, not to allow our heat-oppressed brain an unruly dominion over our intellectual faculties, is conveyed by those few lines of our immortal bard.

The brief consideration of dreams and ghosts which I have placed before you may be summed up in the following points:—

1. That we have an organ in us which can act on the perceptive faculties of our brain from within.

2. That this "organ of dreams" has its seat in the centre of our ganglionic system or the sympathetic nerves, namely in the "plexus solaris."

3. That our cerebral faculties may be lowered and the faculty of our ganglia heightened.

4. That spectral visions, religious excitements, emotional extravagances, mysticism, and symbolic charlatanism are merely products of a deranged balance between our vegetable or ganglionic and our cerebral or intellectual life.

5. That there is nothing in nature that ought not to be capable of explanation from a natural point of view, as there is no room for anything to be above or without nature.

6. That instead of admitting in some instances our ignorance of the laws of nature with regard to certain phenomena, to assume some "supernatural" interference is an insult to the all-pervading spirit of the Creator, who cannot allow his spirits to wander about to serve small table-talk. Anything beyond the horizon of human intellect is of evil. This evil peopled heaven and earth with gods, goddesses, angels, and demons; it formed a strong element in our double nature, and took its origin in our craving to fathom the unfathomable. It is, in fact, nothing but a piece of pride. We think ourselves better than others when we have dear little apparitions which others have not; we consider ourselves chosen, elected, specially inspired, small prophets, benighted evangelists, and mighty instruments to testify that God takes us more into his councils than others. The roaming in the Empire of Ghosts, the taking of dreams for realities, the neglect of *this* world for the sake of other distant unknown worlds is nothing but inordinate pride.

If I have erred in trying to explain hypotheti-

cally some curious phenomena of our nature, I can only plead that the striving of finite beings in whom the cerebral functions are not lowered by tropological or anagogical studies should be after truth in the sense of the immortal Lessing:—

“If God were to hold in His right hand all truth, and in his left the everlasting active desire for truth though veiled in eternal error, and were to bid me choose, I would humbly grasp his left, praying, Almighty Father, grant me this gift—absolute truth is for **THEE ALONE.**”

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