

NATURAL REASON

VERSUS

DIVINE REVELATION:

AN

APPEAL FOR FREETHOUGHT.

By JULIAN.

EDITED BY ROBERT LEWINS, M.D.

" Yet let us ponder boldly—'tis a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our Right of Thought—our last and only place
Of refuge;—this, at least, shall still be mine;
Though from our birth the faculty divine
Is chained and tortured—cabin'd, cribbed, confin'd,
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind."

BYRON.

" Philosophy, Wisdom, and Liberty support each other; he who will not reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool; and he who dares not is a slave."—*Academical Questions*.

" Post mortem nihil est, ipsa que mors nihil."



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PREFACE.

THE following tract embodies an argument for the reasonableness and all-sufficiency of Naturism, and the nullity of Supernaturalism, as recorded by pretended divine revelation, in the constitution of the organic and inorganic world. It has been written at my request, and on *data* of my suggestion, by the same profound scholar and divine with whom I was associated some years ago, in "Replies to the Lectures of the Christian Evidence Society," which lectures obtained a wide circulation under the title "Modern Scepticism," and in a series of pamphlets "Biology *versus* Theology," in which we laboured to controvert the dominant theology of Christendom, nowhere so fatuously rampant, in our day, as in this country.

The theses on which is based, on this occasion, the refutation of all spiritual superstition are twofold—1st, the identity of thought and cerebration, or function of the brain, and 2nd, the identity of all vital or physiological function—including, of course, sensation and thought, with the ordinary cosmical operations of the entire external universe—a unity attributable to the identity of the physical force active in sentient life and inorganic motion. These theses have been adequately elaborated in two papers I published in 1869 and 1873, entitled "The Identity of the Vital and Cosmical Principle," and "Life and Mind on the Basis of Materialism," in which I endeavoured to place on exact

scientific *data* the sublime fact that sensation and thought have, for their production, no special spiritual factor, but depend entirely on the same physical agency we find operative throughout the cosmos in light, heat, and motion. I need not, therefore, at present refer further to the subject. Nothing can possibly be simpler or more intelligible, even to the least-instructed mind, than the *rationale* of the following pages, resolving, as it does, all objective phenomena, all "the choir of heaven and furniture of earth—in a word, all those appearances which compose the mighty frame of the world"—to quote Bishop Berkeley in his "Principles of Human Knowledge," into mere subjective or personal perception. We thus can regard everything outside ourselves as parts of a mighty phantom, the actuality of which may or may not be real, and get rid of experimental physics and all specialism, striking out a short and direct path—the path of common sense and healthy feeling, from which all self or world analysis, the habitual and persistent attitude of scientific research, widely diverges—to the one essential science—viz., self-knowledge, on which alone can be based the true theory and *rational, practical* conduct of human existence. In this manner we reconcile the apparent antitheses between object and subject, the ego and non-ego, between the microcosm of the living body and the universe of phenomena lying beyond, or outside that mirror and re-duplication *in parvo* of the macrocosm.

To repeat, in other words, the above statement, it seems surely a self-evident proposition, as formulated more or less clearly by early Greek philosophers, and emphatically by Protagoras, that "man can think nothing except himself, and which self and its anthropomorphism must be therefore to humanity, the sole measure and standard of all existing and non-existing or imaginary things." This standpoint makes thus everything virtually ideal or anthropological,

nothing being tangible, perceptible, cognisable by the five senses or by thought, except ordinary exoteric sensations or perceptions, and those more complex, occult, esoteric ones which we term ideas or ideation, the latter clearly recognisable as the special or peculiar sensations or perceptions of what is termed in modern physiology the hemispherical ganglia of that very complex congeries of organs, within the head, popularly comprehended as one viscus, under the name cerebrum or brain.

As, therefore, we can be only sensible of our own perceptions, exoteric and esoteric—the first the mere reflection of the outer world, and the latter, or ideation, the specific function of the brain (vulgarly speaking) itself, both of which can be ultimately traced to the cellular grey substance of the central nervous apparatus—it is perfectly manifest that the source of all perception and ideation is located in the material organism of the body, and that all divine worship and religion is a mere form of mental and moral confusion and transparent delusion, being necessarily solely Self-idolatry—the prostration of one portion of our feelings and faculties before another portion—seeing that beyond ourselves it is, in the nature of things, impossible for our feelings and faculties to range. Were man a dual being, compounded of matter and spirit, as stated in our Bible and in other records of the supernatural genesis of our race, it is perfectly patent that Pantheism must be the rational solution of all vital and cosmical problems. For on the supposition that matter is supernaturally vivified, all things must be an emanation or *efflatus* of the divine spirit or breath—one and indivisible—a position entirely reversed, and Materialism substituted for that ancient and sublime ontology, as soon as we become illuminated by the conviction that all things and all nothings, alike abstract and concrete—in one word, all consciousness of our own personality and

our surroundings, *including transcendental idealism and the Divine Idea itself*, can be traced to the direct natural operation of a special portion of our anatomical structure—a structure, the functions of which are amenable, just as much as those of all other corporeal organs, to ordinary *natural law*.

From this vantage ground, therefore, natural reason is seen to be the supreme judge and arbiter of all conceivable objects, relegating all Supernaturalism and Revelation into the realm of the imaginary and irrational, thus realizing the truth of the Laureate's verse :

“ I take possession of man's mind and deed,
I care not what the sect may bawl ;
I sit as God, holding no form of creed,
But *neutralizing* all.”

ROBERT LEWINS.

London, March, 1879.

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NATURAL REASON *v.* DIVINE REVELATION.

“Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind who want for day,
Though sitting girl with doubtful light.”

TENNYSON.

SECTION I.

BELIEF AND INFIDELITY.

THE world is now, and ever has been, divided into two great parties—those who think for themselves, and those who credulously accept what they are told to believe. Reformers and infidels are the thinkers; the orthodox and *laissez aller* party are those who believe on the authority of others, and ask no questions. The latter are too lazy, or too interested, or too ignorant to wish for progress; the former is the salt of the earth, and would go from bad to good, from good to better, and from better to best, regardless of all interests but those of fact and truth. The orthodox never think for themselves, they only “think” to understand what they are told to believe. They are the mere exponents of a routine system consecrated by custom, which they feel themselves bound to support. The infidel, on the other hand, takes nothing upon trust, nothing on the *ipse dixit* of others, and holds nothing to be sacred which his own conviction does not approve. The former deify tradition, the latter would “prove all things, and hold fast [only] that which is good.” If any discrepancy between reason and dogma occurs to the orthodox, he gives up reason, experience, nature, and clings to dogma; but the infidel pays no reverence to anything which stultifies his reason, contradicts general experience, and does violence to the laws of nature. The one thinks it would be better to sink with the time-honoured ship; the other would save his life, and persuade others to do so likewise.

St. Paul was an infidel in Judea, so was the “man Christ Jesus.” It was as much for their infidelity and exposure of priestcraft as for sedition that Jesus and his disciples were opposed by the orthodox hierarchy, scourged, imprisoned,

and in some cases put to death. The Mahometans call all Christians *giaours*—that is, infidels—because unbelievers in Mahomet and the Koran. In a word, a believer is not one who believes truth, but one who slavishly pins his faith to a creed, whether true or false.

Take our own nation, for example. There was a time when the Druids were the great teachers, and if any private or public individual disobeyed their decrees, or attempted to question their authority, he was excommunicated and excluded from the right of sacrifice. The Romans came next, displaced the oak-worshippers, put flamens and augurs in their sees, and Polytheism became the orthodox creed of the land. Again the scene shifted, and the Saxons lorded it over England. Neither Druidism nor the Roman mythology suited the new-comers, so Odinism was set up, and the down-trodden islanders were told to look forward after death to a "feast of skulls"; and those who doubted or disbelieved were threatened, not with everlasting fire, so terrible to the dwellers in the hot east, but with an ever-living death in thick-ribbed ice. Truth is one, it changes not, it is wholly regardless of what men like or loathe, believe or disbelieve; but orthodoxy, like the chameleon, is white or black, blue or green, according to circumstances. In one place it is Brahmanism, in another Buddhism, in a third Polytheism, in a fourth Mumbo-Jumboism. In England it was once the worship of oaks, then the worship of Jupiter, then of Odin, for falsehood can have no stability. While still the Saxons were in power, a band of missionaries came from Rome with censer and crucifix, chasuble and crosier, under whose teaching the ignorant and unlettered islanders abandoned Teutonic for Roman Catholic orthodoxy; so the trinity of Odin was changed for the trinity of Galilee, and the old orthodoxy became the new heterodoxy. Kings were the nursing fathers and queens the nursing mothers of the new faith, till infidelity, in the form of "Protestantism," taught men to be dissatisfied with the faith and legends of the prevailing creed, and Anglicanism was established as "the way, the truth, and the life." Since then education has been at work, and now more than ever men are beginning to think for themselves, and to ask their own judgments if the hour for a new departure has not struck. The infidel is always the movement party, which, as St. Paul says, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto

those things which are before, press towards the mark of the [only] prize" worth attaining—that is, truth. They are the thinking minority—always a small party, because the multitude, as a multitude, is a mere *caput mortuum*—always unpopular, because they pay no more heed to legends, tradition, and creeds than to sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

SECTION II.

ALL RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS ARE MUCH ALIKE.

THERE is a wonderful family likeness in all the religious systems of the past and present. The general programme is a self-existing Eternal Being and three working deities—a period of darkness and water—a creation—a golden age—a degeneracy—and a general flood. It matters little to what part of the world we turn, whether India or China, Scandinavia or Greece, America, Africa, or European Christendom.

It might be difficult to account for this similarity in a satisfactory manner,* but it would be preposterous to suppose that all these traditions are more or less mutilated versions of the Mosaic original, inasmuch as many of the nations could not have known even the name of the Jewish lawgiver, and others would know as much about him as Aristotle did of Britain, or Virgil of Thule, where, Ptolemy tells us, "the days are twenty-four hours long at the [spring] equinoxes" [*sic*].

What is the Hindü story? Like the Jewish, it presupposes a self-existing Eternal Unit, invisible, all-potent, soul of all created life, from whom all spring, to whom all will return, the Altogether-all before creation, the All-in-all during creation, and the All-of-all at the consummation.

No doubt there is great vagueness in both the Hindu and Jewish notions of Deity, nor is the Jewish perplexity at all relieved by the Christian dogma. All speak of the One Eternal, but all employ in the business of creation a divine triad. Thus, in the first chapter of Genesis we are introduced to Elohim, the Logos or Word, and the spirit

* To me no difficulty whatever exists, the substantial unity of the human mind exhibiting itself everywhere independently in similar forms.—R. L.

that moved on the face of the deep; and that there may be no doubt on the matter, St. John tells us the Word or Logos, which was "at the beginning," was the Creator of all things, and the very Deity which was "made flesh and dwelt among us." So the Hindus are taught to believe in One Only Everlasting Potentate, and yet in the *trimûrti*, or three operative deities, called Brahma, Vishnu, and Sheva. The incarnations or *avatars* of the second person of the Hindu triad cannot fail to bring forcibly to mind the *avatar* or incarnation of the second person of the Christian Trinity.

Going back to the cosmogony, according to Indian mythology, we read that before creation the Eternal called into being the sacred triad, that Brahma was the father of spirit, that "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made which is made. In him was light, and the light was the life of man." So Manu speaks of Brahma, and so St. John has spoken of Jesus. Having created the elements, Brahma next called into being the whole animal world, together with angels and demons, the seas, the clouds, and the host of heaven. When all was finished, the Eternal gave Brahma the sacred volume called the Rig-Veda, of which the Shasta is a *targum*. The volume was God's revelation to man, and contains not only a history of creation, a code of duties, and a series of prophecies, but also sets forth what feasts and fasts, what rites and ceremonies, the faithful are expected to observe.

The Guebres, or ancient Persians, presupposed a One Eternal, but they also had their working triad, Oromasdes the principle of good, Arimanes the principle of evil, and Mithras, the principle of beauty. Zoroaster tells us that Oromasdes, in the character of creator, took *six* unequal periods to complete his work of creation: In the 1st period he made the heavens; in the 2nd, the water; in the 3rd, dry land; in the 4th, grass, the herb yielding seed, and the trees after their kind whose seed is in itself; in the 5th, the fish of the waters, the birds of the air, and the cattle of the field; and in the 6th, man.

The Aztecs, or ancient Mexicans, have a legend wonderfully like that told by Moses. They say that God created a man and a woman out of the dust of the earth, but their offspring became so wicked that a flood destroyed the whole race except a priest named Tezpi, with his wife and family, who were preserved in a huge ark. In this ark

Tezpi saved a vast number of animals and much seed. When he fancied the waters were subsiding, he sent forth a bird, called Aura, but the bird never returned; he then sent forth others, but one only, the smallest of them all, came back to the ark, bearing an olive-twig in its beak.

The old Virginian tribes had a mythology equally striking. According to this legend, there is a great eternal and two lesser deities. Water was the first created element, and woman was taken out of man.

The Chipionyans, another large tribe of American Indians, assert that at one time water covered the face of the whole earth, but a bird (the spirit of Jewish mythology), brooding over the water, caused dry land to appear from the great brilliancy of its eyes, after which the same bird made all the different parts of creation one after the other. In the process of time the race of man became so rebellious, that a great flood swept every living thing away. The Hurons have a legend that there was once a time when there was only a single man on the earth, and feeling very desolate, he went to heaven to look for a companion. The Eternal gave him Atahentsik as a helpmeet, and in time the woman had two sons, who killed each other.

It would be easy to multiply these legends, but we shall add only one more, that of the ancient Romans. Of this we have the fullest detail in Ovid's "Metamorphoses," so that he who runs may read it. The poet tells us there was once a time when heaven, and earth, and sea were all mixed together in a chaotic mass; there was no sun at that time, no moon, no dry land. The Creator wished, and immediately the heavens were lifted from the earth; and the waters being gathered into their bed, dry land appeared. Again the Creator wished, and the earth was rolled into a globe, the atmosphere separated the clouds from the earth, and the starry host shone forth in the vault of heaven. Again the Eternal wished, and the air, the sea, and the dry land were stocked with living organisms. Last of all, man was made, "of a larger understanding;" but, says the poet, "whether from an immediate divine germ, or whether the earth, being fresh from the hands of God, retained a certain divine quality, we know not; all we know is, that Japetus fashioned man in the image of deity, and gave him dominion over all the earth. For a long period the new-created race enjoyed a golden age, an Eden of innocence and delight; but a change came over the earth, and the

golden age lapsed into the silver, the silver into the brazen, and the brazen into the age of iron. From time to time deity pleaded with man, but wickedness at length grew rampant, a flood swept over the whole earth, and a new race arose from the one pair which was alone saved."

We are so accustomed from early childhood to regard the Bible as an inspired book, wholly *sui generis* and entirely unique, so unlike every other book, that we are overwhelmed with amazement when the truth first dawns upon us that the legends and traditions there on record are common to every quarter of the globe, and it needed no more inspiration for Moses to bring them together than for the Hindus, the Guebres, the Aztecs, the North American savages, and the hundreds of other nations or tribes which have from time immemorial repeated them in their legendary lore.

SECTION III.

EVERY RELIGIOUS SYSTEM CLAIMS TO BE DIVINE.

THE Jews assert that their Scriptures were given by direct inspiration, but it is by no means certain what they meant by their Scriptures before the Babylonish captivity, probably the Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses. It seems, however, that no great reverence was paid to these Books, or care taken of them, at least in the reigns of the latter kings. It surely must strike every one as most strange that the High Priest should not know where to find so precious and sacred a volume, yet it is quite certain that the Book was mislaid or lost when Josiah succeeded to the crown. This young king began his reign with great activity and zeal, which diffused itself into the priesthood, for Hilkiyah, after diligent search or some lucky accident, stumbled on the sacred volume, and said to Shaphan, the scribe, "I have found the Book, the Law. I found it in the Lord's house." This intelligence was thought so surprising that Shaphan went forthwith to the King and told him, saying, "Hilkiyah, the priest, has found the Book of the Law." (2 Chr. xxxiv., 14-16). How marvellous does this sound! Here was a Book said to be inspired, said to be sacred, said to be guarded by the Jews as the most precious of relics, actually lost and found. Hilkiyah, although the High

Priest, did not even know of its existence. It was so unexpectedly discovered that it was told to the King as a matter of national congratulation. Moses is said to have commanded that it should be kept, with Aaron's rod and a pot of manna, in the ark of the covenant; and had this injunction been obeyed, the High Priest would have known in a moment where to look for it; but, like Aaron's rod and the pot of manna, so little care was taken of these relics that all three were lost. The rod and the manna were never found, but Hilkiah did happen to discover the lost volume of the law. When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple, and took the Jews into captivity, the Book of the Law was destroyed; and during the seventy years' captivity there seem to have been no Scripture writings at all. Some fifty or sixty years afterwards Ezra and Nehemiah, with three or four others, set about hunting up all fragments, traditions, and MSS. which could be found, and these detached pieces were collated and edited on the judgment of the compilers; but these compilers never thought it worth their while to preserve the originals, so that no one can compare the new editions with the old. It seems almost incredible that men like Nehemiah and Ezra should have taken the pains to hunt up the MSS., and yet should have taken none to preserve them. One would think they would have guarded them with the utmost jealousy, and taken every possible precaution to transmit them to posterity; but no, Ezra's version was thought enough, and the originals, like the Ossian of Macpherson, the Book of Mormon, and Rowley's Poems, "edited" by Chatterton, no one ever saw. It is now a general belief among exegists that they never existed of an older date, or in any other form than that in which we now possess them. All this, however, is very different from what we are taught to believe, that the Jews, before the captivity, always preserved their Scriptures with such sacred and jealous care that not a letter or point could be changed without instant detection. The very contrary seems to have been the fact; they paid so little heed to them, if indeed they were in existence at all, that they were sometimes wholly lost, and that till Ezra edited the stray MSS., and pieced them together, no authentic copy of the whole volume anywhere existed—certainly neither Ezra nor Nehemiah knew of one. All that has been said of the Old Testament applies with equal force to the New. Assuming that our present compilation which passes

under that name is the original volume, it must not be forgotten that this canon was not established till the year 494, which would be the same as if ten or twelve gentlemen of the present day sat in judgment on certain writings issued in the reign of Edward III., by authors of whom nothing is known, and whose very names in many cases are doubtful—these works, be it remembered, not being works of taste, but professed records of miracles and “historic facts,” said to have taken place some 500 years ago.

Let us take an actual example from the reign of Edward I. It is recorded in full in Rymer’s “*Fœdera*,” Vol. I., Part II., p. 771, Edward I. laid claim to Scotland, and preferred his claim before a regular synod of bishops, abbots, legates, and barons. His chief plea was that God had confirmed his title by special miracle; and this he made good from a book entitled “*The Life and Miracles of St. John of Beverley*.” The tenour of this extract is as follows: In the reign of Adelstan the Scots invaded England, and committed great devastation. Adelstan went to drive them back, and on reaching the Tyne, found that the foe had retreated. At midnight St. John of Beverley appeared to the King, and bade him cross the river at daybreak, for he “would surely discomfit the foe.” Adelstan obeyed the heavenly messenger, and reduced the whole kingdom to submission. On reaching Dunbar on his return march, Adelstan prayed that some sign might be vouchsafed to him to satisfy all future ages that God, “by the intercession of St. John of Beverley, had given to England the kingdom of Scotland.” Then struck he with his sword the basaltic rocks near the coast, and lo! the blade sank into the solid flint (to use the exact words) “as if it had been butter,” cleaving it asunder for “an ell or more.” And the cleft remains to the present hour, in testimony of the miracle. The wise men of the two nations were convinced by this legend, and as the fissure was there they could not disbelieve their eyes, so judgment was given in favour of King Edward, and Scotland was declared a fief of England. This miracle was said to have been performed some 500 years before. The wisest King of England so firmly believed it that he urges it as an undoubted fact; and the wisest men of two realms allowed the claim to be incontrovertible. What is the obvious inference? What can it be but this? The convocation called in 494 was not wiser nor more serious than the convocation assembled by Edward I. in 1291; both assem-

blies saw no difficulty in the miraculous stories on which they had to arbitrate, quite the reverse. The miracles were proof with them, strong as any natural fact, and both decided that "no men can do such works, except God be with them." If a king or queen tried the same plea now, if France laid claim to England, or England to France, on the authority of some miracle performed 500 years ago, and testified by a Devil's Dyke or rock of Calpe, the pleaders of such "old wives' fables" would be thought fit inmates for Earlswood or Colney Hatch. That a conclave of acute lawyers, most learned prelates, calm-judging barons, and the *élite* of two nations decided the miracle at Dunbar was an undoubted fact, would not weigh a straw in any court of justice in the present century; and that a number of scholars, wise, honest, and discreet, accepted the miraculous records which they thought proper to endorse as worthy of credit, can really have no more weight with men of unprejudiced judgment. Both synods were honest after their lights, both judged righteous judgment according to their conviction; but if the cases were tried again in our own days, no man can doubt that the sentences would be reversed.

Allowing, however, for the sake of argument, that the canon was wisely selected in 494, we have very little evidence that the compilation now called the New Testament was the one approved of. Dr. Davidson, in his "Introduction to the New Testament," tells us that the fourth Gospel, like the First Epistle of John, is notoriously doubtful. Indeed, so doubtful is it that though the Christian Evidence Society, in 1871, selected the then most learned Churchman to plead for it in their course of lectures delivered in St. George's Hall, neither the Society nor its author, the present Bishop of Durham, Dr. Lightfoot, would venture to print the lecture. In the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, held at Westminster, February 10th, 1870, the Bishop of Winchester moved for a revision of the New Testament, "for everybody knew there were in the present version parts which did not really belong to the canonical Scriptures." The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol seconded the proposal, and instanced the truth of the remark by "the early part of St. Matthew's Gospel, the Book of Revelation, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and some of the Pastoral Epistles." He next pointed out the doxologies of Matthew and Mark in proof of the trinity as doubtful. The Bishop of St. David's spoke next, and

said that some of the prophecies pressed into the Christian cause were certainly no prophecies at all, as, for example, "the desire of all nations" applied to Christ, the "Lord our Righteousness," and so on. The Bishop of Llandaff followed in the same strain, and said the Second Epistle of Peter was confessedly spurious, and the Epistle of James was marked as supposititious by Eusebius and Jerome.

Here then we have parts of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, all the Gospel of John, the Book of Revelation, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the First Epistle of John, the Second of Peter, and the Epistle of James, all pronounced to be forgeries—this, be it remembered, not by foes, but friends—not by infidels, but prelates—so late as the year 1870. Must it not force itself upon the conviction of every one that a compilation so confessedly dishonest is wholly worthless as an authority? Is it not palpable that the Church which would knowingly palm off false documents as true might readily tamper with genuine and authentic books if it served their purpose? Must it not be evident that these prelates and scholars, when they repeat that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," are saying what in their hearts they know to be false, and are with their eyes open deluding the people? Orthodoxy, indeed! Why, the very prelates of the Church are infidels of their own Scriptures!

Having disposed of the inspired character of our own Scriptures, it will be an easy task to show how other religious institutions have laid claim to a similar divine origin. Reference has been made already to the Vedas of Brahmanism. Probably the oldest book in the world, older even than the Pentateuch—supposing it to be coeval with the settlement of the Hebrews in Palestine—is the Rig-veda, reduced into writing by Vyasa, but existing in an oral or traditional form from "the foundation of the world," if we may trust the statement of the Brahmans. It is divided into two parts, the first being prayers and hymns to be used in sacrificial offerings, the second being of a more diffusive characters. Three other Vedas are based on the Rig-veda, and the whole resemble in character the Jewish Scriptures, inasmuch as they contain psalms, prophecies, history, together with directions for religious rites and ceremonies. The last of the Vedas has incantations also, charms, and exorcisms. They all claim a divine origin and immemorial antiquity.

Every one read in Roman history will remember that:

Numa, when he wished to organise a religious system for the new Roman State, used to retire to the sacred grove; and as he promulgated a law, or instituted a religious rite, he gave out publicly that he had received instruction from the nymph Egeria, a prophetic divinity. He knew enough of human weakness to feel assured that the name of Egeria would outweigh in authority a whole multitude of mere mortals like himself. The history of Romulus—his miraculous origin from a vestal virgin and God, his translation to heaven in a storm of thunder and lightning in presence of the whole Roman people, and his subsequent appearance in a glorified form as the god Quirinus—finds an exact parallel in the case of Christ. Mahomet adopted a similar device. He retired from the sight of man, and the people were taught to believe that Gabriel, the archangel, had descended in visible shape to make a revelation. Mahomet dictated the revelation to a scribe, it was then read to the people, and the MS. thrown into a box. For twenty-three years revelation after revelation was brought from heaven, and when any moot point was to be decided, the archangel went to the "lowest heaven" to consult the original document, which was "written by the rays of the sun," and kept in a coffer studded with inestimable jewels. Occasionally, on a great emergency, God himself or the Holy Ghost would resolve a doubt; but the main body of the Koran was revealed from time to time by Gabriel, and taken from the sacred book, "eternal as God himself."

The book of the "Latter-day Saints" is no exception to the general rule. Joseph Smith asserts it was revealed to him by an angel, as the Koran was revealed to Mahomet by Gabriel. Smith says on Sept. 21st, 1823, he was in secret prayer, when the whole house seemed to be "one vast consuming fire"; while he gazed in consternation at the fire, like that of the burning bush, there came out of the midst thereof "a personage" with a face like lightning, who announced himself an angel sent from God. "Thy prayers are heard," said the heavenly apparition, "and God hath chosen thee to be a vessel unto great honour, to carry out his divine purposes, and bring in the millenium which is at hand." He then gave him a roll, containing a brief sketch of the aborigines of America. Having so done, he told Smith where certain sacred plates were deposited. It was on the west side of a hill about four miles from Palmyra, Ontario. Five years rolled on from this time before Smith

was allowed to have the plates in his own keeping, although he was permitted occasionally to look on them. In September, 1827, the angel told him he was then sufficiently holy to be trusted with the sacred documents, and the record was placed in his hands. The plates were eight inches by seven, not quite so thick as sheets of tin; the whole made a pile six inches in thickness, and they were strung on three rings running through the whole of them. The writing was "Reformed Egyptian," and as Smith could not decipher the character, a pair of interpreting spectacles, called "Urim and Thummin," was given him. The record thus "miraculously" revealed contained a history of America from the confusion of Babel, written by the "prophet Mormon" in A.D. 421, but buried by the command of God till the fulness of time had come. Smith, by the aid of his interpreting glasses, read the plates to Oliver Cowdery, who wrote from his dictation, and in 1830 the whole was printed and circulated. Having no longer need of the original, the angel fetched away the plates, and deposited them in the treasury of God. Of course this marvellous tale was challenged in these infidel days, when men will not always take on trust even miraculous stories; and it was found that the "Book of Mormon" was almost a verbal copy of a MS. romance written in 1816 by Solomon Spalding, but never printed.

It would be wearisome to pursue this subject further, nor would it answer any good end. If these examples do not suffice to prove our point, the mere addition of twenty or thirty similar ones would not avail to do so. Jew and Christian, Brahman and Pagan, the worshipper of the sacred tooth and the believer in the prophet Mormon, Moslem and Guebre, all affirm their sacred laws were revealed by the Almighty, and their Scriptures were inspired records, eternal in God's purposes, infallible, and indispensable for the everlasting welfare of mankind, to question which is treason to the majesty of heaven, and the greatest crime possible of which apostate mortality can be guilty.

SECTION IV.

TRUTH DESIRABLE.

THAT truth is desirable may seem at first sight a self-evident statement, but if self-evident it is rarely accepted, and still more rarely acted on. The rule is not truth, but fashion, prestige, the stamp of society—not what is true, but what popular opinion and the influential part of the community choose to countenance. Few would blush to do or think evil provided they followed the multitude in so doing, but many would blush to think or do what society pronounces to be unconventional and of bad *ton*.

Truth is for the infidel, the reformer, whose conscience revolts at untruth; the “good, easy world” runs with the stream. Those who think for themselves are generally considered dangerous members of the community, as Julius Cæsar held Cassius, and all who think or act differently to the accepted formula for the time being are looked on as mischievous and wrong-headed.

Truth has always to fight its way, and to fight hard, because it is the few against the many, conviction against prejudice, the rebellion of novelty against established custom. It is always unpopular, because it has no direct and immediate rewards in its gift; neither place nor ribbon, honour nor emolument. These prizes belong to the dominant party, and are bestowed not on those who are most faithful to truth, but on those who best uphold the prestige of those in power. Truth is slow of growth, and what is more, must spring from sober self-knowledge, an honest heart and clear-thinking head. Kings cannot command it, priests cannot claim it as a heritage; it must be searched for diligently, and peer or peasant can find no favouritism there.

Yet is truth desirable, and must in time prevail. To it the future belongs. It fears no curious, inquisitive eye, it courts investigation. Try it as you may, it will bear the test; weigh it, it will never be found wanting. It asks for no sacrifice of fact, no compromise of reason; it requires no blind assent, it fears no rival, it entrenches on no neighbour-truth. As the walnut-tree is the more fertile for being beaten, and the aromatic leaves of the warm south the more fragrant for being bruised, so truth is the more brilliant when being laid bare, and the most spotless when exposed to the most searching light. It asks no patron to shore it up with the prestige of a

great name. It requires no inspiration to discover it, no revelation to announce it as "past finding out," no stamp or superscription to give it value. Nothing can make it or mar it; it is wholly independent. It is truth, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Dynasties may change, nations be born, flourish, and decay, fashion may vary, laws and systems may have their hour, but truth is of all times, all climates, all nations, one and the same for ever.

Although it is not of the court and hierarchy, nevertheless it has immense advantages, and indirectly can make both rich and great. It is a power of strength which error, however graced and flattered, always trembles at; and though unfriended and despised, is "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds," mighty in "casting down imaginations, and everything that exalteth itself against knowledge," mighty in "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience" of its discoveries. Every truth becomes an axiom, and a finger-post to more truth. Truth leads to truth, as surely as error leads to error. Nay, more, truth leads to sincerity and virtue, as surely as error leads to deception, hypocrisy and ruin.

Take an example; take the Polytheism of old Greece and Rome. Every aerial phenomenon was ascribed by the Greeks and Romans to Jove, and every phenomenon of the sea to Neptune. Instead, therefore, of investigating the causes of thunder and lightning, daylight and dark, the recurrence of the seasons, the sources of the winds, the meteors, the waves and tides, they were content to believe that Jupiter or Neptune willed it so, and all further investigation was arrested. Even Socrates thought it profane to investigate the works of nature; it was presumptuous intrusion into divine *arcana*. Hence the small progress made by these nations in all the natural sciences. Their notions of nature were wholly erroneous, and all their interpretations of natural operations were mere fable. So in modern times, so long as the Church was the prevailing power and the overlord of kings, investigation and progress were rebellion and profanity. Every fresh truth developed was a fresh enemy to be resisted, and instead of "rejoicing in truth," they hailed it with suspicion and hatred. They hated whatever did not coincide with their preconceptions; they hated whatever threw doubt or discredit on their supremacy, based on ignorance; they hated the curious, inquisitive eye which would not accept on their unverified

authority what they pronounced to be fact and truth. Never was a darker age of gross ignorance, never a more vicious age of overbearing tyranny and social impurity, never a more heartless age of cruelty and selfishness, than the miserable Middle Age, when kings and kaisers, lords and people, were alike enslaved to the infallibility of supernatural dogma and dogmatic orthodoxy. The only freedom is the freedom of truth, the only civiliser is the power of truth. The true millenium is the diffusion of truth, that noble infidelity of creeds and systems which would lead reason captive to the mere dictum of stereotyped and stagnant opinion and custom. That, and that alone, will be the millenium, when system is nothing, creeds are nothing, dictatorial authority is nothing, the *haut monde* is nothing, mere fashion is nothing, the prestige of name and rank is nothing, but truth is the all and all, the only creed, the only object of search, and reason is at last exalted above credulity and blind faith.

SECTION V.

WE BELIEVE MANY THINGS WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

MAN can form no judgment of anything beyond reason, and it is plainly unreasonable to ask me to believe anything beyond the region of human intelligence.* It may be true, but I am not in a position to know it. Faith is a reasonable service, and belief in anything else is mere credulity and imagination. Thus, if I am asked whether fairies can change their state, and become men and women, I can only answer, I do not know. I have never seen a fairy, and know of no one who ever did; I know not whether they are palpable or impalpable, flesh and blood like ourselves or airy nothings—in short, I know nothing about them, and can give no opinion on the subject.

If now you demand of me to believe that a good fairy did once lay aside its fairy nature, and take a human form, and go in and out among men doing many wonderful things, till an ill-disposed rabble hunted and hounded it to death, all I can say is this: It may be so, I cannot tell. It is wholly out of the pale of my experience, wholly beyond the

* That is, beyond himself.—R.L.

limit of my intelligence; and if I once give up reason to fancy, I quit the narrow path of truth for the broad road of illusion.

So again, if you ask me whether spirit can exist independently of matter, I can only answer, I do not know. I know nothing of disembodied spirit. I do not even know whether there is such a thing, and if there is, whether it has form and feature, sensibility and motion, growth and decay. I can compare it with nothing. I have no data to go upon, and therefore I can neither believe nor disbelieve anything about it; but this appears to me beyond dispute, that it is absurd to compel me to accept a dogma, as an article of faith, on the truth or falsehood of which it is impossible for me to form a judgment. As well ask a blind man to believe that blue and yellow make green, or a deaf man to believe that the tones of a chromatic scale are not all equal.

It is often urged in rejoinder that we do actually believe many things we do not understand. Thus, we believe in life, but no one knows what life is. We believe in identity, but no one can explain what constitutes it, or how a body should be ever changing and yet remain the same. Again, we believe that grass in the body of a sheep or ox turns from vegetable to animal substance, and that which was growing in the field yesterday becomes to-day bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, but cannot explain how.*

We reply that the two cases are by no means parallel, and it is a total confusion of ideas to suppose there is any analogy between them. Life, growth, and the conversion of food into animal substances are familiar to us as sunrise and sunset. It is what we see every hour of our lives, and to disbelieve it would be to ignore the universal observation and experience of all men; but to disbelieve what no one ever saw or can see, what is wholly and substantially different to all things we are conversant with, is quite another matter. The life of an animal I see daily, its growth I see, I see that it feeds on grass, and grows. I cannot doubt it. Fairies I have never seen, no one has ever seen them. Disembodied spirit I have never seen, nor any one else with a sound mind in a sound body; and therefore I have nothing to go upon, there is no evidence except the worthless testimony of delirium, dream, or disordered imagination.

* In the strict sense of the word, we can explain nothing, final causes being beyond the sphere of the human mind.—R.L.

Because I have no knowledge of the composition of water, is no reason why I should not believe in its existence ; but because I believe what I see and do not understand, is no reason why I should believe what I do not see, and what contradicts everything of which I have any knowledge. Because I believe in life, growth, and nutrition, although my present knowledge cannot completely fathom the *rationale* of those mysteries, is no reason why I should believe in mysteries of a wholly different character, and wholly contradictory to the recorded experience of all mankind.

SECTION VI.

WHAT MAN CAN AND WHAT HE CANNOT KNOW.

WE often talk of knowledge, but rarely ask ourselves what we exactly mean by it. In a strict sense man knows nothing, or next to nothing. He cannot comprehend and explain the very simplest question in the mighty scheme of nature—What is matter? how came it into being? is it self-existing? what are its ultimate parts? is it simple or compound? how does it move and act, how multiply, how communicate and receive? We know nothing of matter in the abstract; the veriest dunce could puzzle the wisest man in such a field of inquiry. But there is a range, and a pretty wide one too, in which by constant or careful observation we know many things; we know, for example, that certain changes are invariably preceded by certain conditions, or in other words that certain facts and phenomena are always preceded by certain antecedents. Some persons call this sequence “cause and effect,” but it is no more necessary for an antecedent to be the cause of what immediately follows than for A to be the cause of B inasmuch as it invariably precedes it in the English and many other alphabets. The antecedent may or may not be the producer of the change which follows, but it can in no wise be accepted as a general rule; and in every case it is very dangerous ground to stand on, dangerous especially for this reason, that future knowledge may wholly upset many of our present conclusions, and what we now think we know may be proved by posterity to be radically and fundamentally wrong.

Take a very plain example: Suppose we had been living in the days of the old Romans, we should have said with

confidence that the cause of day and night is the motion of the sun above or beneath our earth. When he goes to sleep in the lap of the sea-goddess, it is night; but when he drives in his chariot through the vault of heaven, it is day. Plausible as this might seem to the sages of Greece and the senators and people of Rome, we now believe that day and night are due simply to the revolution of the earth round its own axis.

Take another example: The ancients believed matter to be "absolutely inert," hence, when material things showed a disposition of activity or manifestations of life, this activity or vitality was ascribed to a spirit independent of matter, living and growing with the material body, and using its several organs as its instruments and slaves. Every active and living body was supposed to be made active and living by this indwelling spirit. It was the wood-nymph in the tree which made it a living plant, the water-nymph in the river which made it flow, the rain-nymph in the clouds which made them pour forth showers. The lakes had their lake-nymphs, the meadows their meadow-nymphs, the hills their oreads, and the glens their valley-goddesses. The ocean was filled with its sea-deities, the winds and the storms, the heavens and all the hosts thereof. It was the god in fire which made it glow with heat; it was the god in Etna or Vesuvius which made them active volcanoes; it was the god in malaria which filled it with pestilence; it was a nymph in the air which gave back echo, and a god that acted on the "spirit," when life was to be restored.

Man, of course, was no exception to this universal rule. The body was lifeless and motionless till the Spirit of Deity came into it, and the living man had a dual nature. All that is active in the brain and other organs of the body was supposed to be energised by the divine spirit, and hence St. Paul speaks of being "in" and "out" of the body, which he elsewhere calls the temple of the living—*i.e.*, actively interfering—God. Of course, the writers of the several Books of the Old and New Testaments were no wiser than the rest of men in geology, astronomy, and other branches of natural science. No theologian would maintain they were; indeed, it is one of the most common apologies for the notorious blunders of the "sacred penmen" that they accepted these things as they found them, and spoke of them as they were generally understood. They spoke of the earth as a solid, immovable mass, of the clouds as an ocean of water similar

to our seas, of the sun as moving round the earth, and of the living body as inert matter vivified by the indwelling Spirit of Deity. Granted. How could they do otherwise? No one pretends that they knew the Newtonian system of light and gravitation; no one pretends that they anticipated the discoveries of Priestley and James Watt in air and water; no one pretends they were wiser than their contemporaries in any true theory of nature. But what then? Admit this, and the axe is laid to the root of the tree. Man as man-god and man as material man are so widely different, so entirely unlike, that the whole fabric of revelation designed for the one is unsuited to the other. If the body of man is already the residence of an independent spirit, there is no reason why it may not be the temple of two, and the Holy Ghost may share with the divine soul the broken tenement; but if the body is a material body only, there can be no indwelling of the third person of the divine triad. Again, if the body is the temple of a "vital spark of heavenly flame," the vital spark at least must be immortal; but if not, the body must resolve into its simple elements to recombine into other bodies, but can never be built up again into the same individual.

We now know that matter is not "absolutely inactive." We know that nerves can feel, that brain can think, that a material body can perform all the functions of the body, and there is no need of a ruling spirit to give it energy and life. Here, again, is an example of what was once assumed to be undeniable knowledge proved to be no more worthy of belief than the sun-car of Apollo, or the day-god sleeping in the lap of Thetis.

But to return. We started with the observation that it is always hazardous to call the immediate antecedent of a change the "cause" of the new condition, inasmuch as further knowledge may wholly upset our present notions. Of real cause and effect we know nothing, but careful observation gives us a wide range of the knowledge of sequences. There are many changes which have been observed to be preceded by certain antecedents, and that so invariably that any one may, with absolute certainty, calculate on the change when cognisant of the antecedent condition. This is called an invariable law of nature, and no conceivable power can alter it.

How fatal is all this to the notion of cause and effect, cause and effect pushed back in unbroken series till we

come to the end of the line, and are then driven to rest in the cause causeless? We maintain that ordinal succession may be and often is quite independent of cause and effect; and if, instead of supposing each series to be a straight line, beginning with the last phenomenon and pushed back into the "cause causeless," we conceive it working in a circle, the difficulty no longer exists. Let us explain our meaning. The air carries vapour to the clouds, the clouds drop rain upon the earth, the earth from its water sheds fills the rivers, and rivers run into the sea, when the series begins again in never-ending succession. This is a series working in a circle, and needs no cause causeless to start from. Again, animals die, and revert to their original elements; these elements recombine into the food of animals, so that animals turn to food and food to animals, and that in never-ending succession also. Once more, plants absorb carbonic acid gas, retain the carbon, and restore the oxygen to the air; man appropriates the oxygen of the air, and exhales with his breath the carbonic acid gas of which the body has no need, so men feed the vegetable world, and the vegetable the animal world, in a circular series, ever changing, ever mixing, ever taking and giving, and never continuing in one stay.

These smaller circles form parts of the series of larger circles, and these in turn of others, enlarging and widening till the whole universe is brought in, all being parts of every other part, all being items in the one grand universal series, rolling in ceaseless circles through infinite space, filling its immensity, leaving no void, circling in mutual circles, ever changing, but preserving one unbroken series, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

This, it will be perceived, is very different from the idea of phenomena traced as it were in straight lines from effect to cause, and each line ending in something wholly independent. The one is an infinite number of straight lines, each having its special series, the other is a grand, sympathetic, universal, unbroken whole, including each minutest item in the general scheme, and filling all space with its eternal series. There is something unutterably sublime and solemn in the idea that "all are but parts of one stupendous whole," the tiniest insect as well as the hugest mammoth, the mole-hill no less than the planet, the daisy of the field as well as the sun which warms it into bloom. All belong to the great, the universal series, the dewdrop that hangs on

the leaf, as well as the thunder which shakes the mountain, the stars as they roll in their courses, man and his fellow-mite, the reed and the oak, the wren and the eagle, the limpet and the whale—no matter what, no matter where, all are essential and integral parts, all roll on in the eternal series, each exists for each, all pass into each other, circulate through the boundless universe, links in the same endless chain as the blood in the animal body. None can say, "I have no need of thee." Were one link broken, tenth or tenth thousand, no matter; not only all the system to which it specially belonged, "but the whole, must fall." This is immortality; this is life eternal.

Compare this with the gloomy isolation of man taught us by the divine—man cut off from the rest of creation, sent on the earth an exile and alien, in bondage under "sin." If he fails to fulfil certain arbitrary conditions, he is severed for ever from the general universe by a deathless death; if not, he is taken from the world to which his nature is adapted, and is placed in a sphere where he is an entire stranger to his surroundings. Heaven is as much cut off from the general universe as hell is. All is isolation. Heaven is one isolation, hell another, earth another, every star and planet are others. Man on earth stands alone; his very nature is different to that of everything around. He belongs as man neither to earth nor heaven; he is an exile, a bondman on his trial. Instead of all creation being linked together in a chain of love and sympathy, each separate part is isolated and stands alone; and when the end comes at the great consummation, the earth is to be burnt up, and the family of man, divided into the sheep and the goats, to be severed by a blank, impassable gulf. All nature disorganised, all harmony destroyed, all systems thrown into confusion, nature herself assassinated, and her laws scattered to the winds like the leaves of the ancient oracle of Dodona! Look at this picture and at that, and tell me which is the more desolating and cheerless!

SECTION VII.

MAN A MATERIAL BEING SURROUNDED BY MATERIAL OBJECTS.

BEING material beings, living in a material world, and surrounded by material objects only, we are able to examine only things that are material, and can know nothing else.

But it is asked, is it possible to explain a tithe of everyday phenomena without recourse to a supernatural Agent—an Agent infinitely our superior in knowledge, power, and forethought? For example: Creation itself shows there must have been a Creator, as plainly as a watch shows there must have been a watchmaker. The preservation of nature shows there must be a guiding and directing hand. The mind of man, so capable of thinking above material objects, so capable of soaring beyond the limits of time and space, seems to demonstrate that there must be a Mind or Spirit independent of matter.

Without doubt your knowledge and mine at present falls short of many things. We cannot satisfy ourselves of the why and how of a host of familiar objects. We have not yet found the key to unlock many of the secrets of the natural world. What then? Is that a reason why we should follow the example of clumsy playwrights, and bring down a God to help us out of our difficulty? Would it not be wiser and more rational to wait? Would it not be more rational to say, probably a little patience and a little more research may clear up these mysteries, as they have cleared up many others? Socrates was a wise man, pronounced by the oracle to be the very wisest of his contemporaries; yet Socrates believed the sun and moon to be gods, and accused Anaxagoras of impiety, because he presumed to calculate their motions and magnitudes. He thought it impious madness to pry into the secrets of the material world, and declared that the gods would be offended by such audacity. Men, however, have dared to lift the veil which conceals the secrets of the stars and the secrets of the earth, and have discovered that the sun and moon are not gods, and that light and heat are subject to fixed laws, as much so as the impact of a Nasmyth's hammer or the noise of a peal of thunder. Should we not learn wisdom from all this, learn

to wait with modesty and patience, to wait hopefully, that many now occult phenomena may in time be explained, as thousands have already been which once were insoluble mysteries? Surely it is only reasonable to say, I find, as far as is known at present, laws in operation certain, constant, comprehensible to man; I find, since the days of Socrates, the knowledge of these laws has very widely extended; I find that phenomenon after phenomenon, at one time attributed to the erratic will of some god, has been brought into the general category of matter and motion, and therefore it is only reasonable to suppose that all the other secrets of nature will in time be cleared up also. Is it not more rational, I say, to argue thus than to fly off into the unknown, and suppose that because we cannot reduce certain phenomena at present to known laws, they are therefore inscrutable by reason, and must be the arbitrary handiwork of some superhuman Agent who can make or break his laws at pleasure, now conforming to a general rule, and anon reversing it—now working in the unobtrusive routine of every-day experience, and anon astounding the world, and stultifying the patient observations of the careful student of nature by miracles as purportless as they are perplexing? Such a pretended solution, I affirm, is babyish—is more fit for a peevish schoolgirl than for men of mind and mature intellects.

SECTION VIII.

SENSIBILITY A PROPERTY OF ORGANISED MATTER.

LEAVING the sun and moon, the tides and seasons, heat and light, and coming to the animal world, including man, we find other energies in operation besides mechanical motion. We find, for example, sensibility, we find moral feeling, we find motion directed by some ruling power within the body, or under the control of that power, which is called the will. Can these operations be performed by mere material organism also? In other words, can mere matter be so organised that it not only moves mechanically, as a ball struck by a bat, but can also choose to move or choose to remain at rest in obedience to a living will? Surely choice must be the act of a ruling "spirit," which controls the material organs under its dominion, for it seems absurd to

suppose that a pile of bricks should be able to choose for themselves whether they will make a cottage or a palace, or whether they will remain unemployed. If I stir the fire, I make the poker obey my will; but if I use my hands or feet, surely there must be a corresponding spiritual agent to evoke the will, and exact obedience to its dictates. We can conceive of a ball flying through the air either because it is attracted towards some other object, or because it is impelled by blind external force; we can conceive of a flower throwing off from itself those subtle particles which we call perfume, just as the ocean, under the power of the sun, throws off vapour; but no power of choice is left to the flower to smell sweet or withhold its odours, and none to the wide sea either to evaporate or not, as it may think proper.

To the unthinking mind all this may seem quite unanswerable, but to those who grasp adequately the elements of the problem, it appears a perfect tangle of confusion. No one credits a body constituted like a ball or brick, a flower or the ocean, with the power of choice. It is quite impossible for such things to will, inasmuch as they have no voluntary apparatus for the purpose. But tell me this: Is it not folly to expect a common stone to smell like a rose? Is it not folly to expect an ordinary cricket-ball to skip like a lamb or fly like an hawk? And why? Simply because the stone has not the organs of the rose, nor the ball those of the lamb or bird. Give them these organs, endow them with the special apparatus, and it would be no more surprising for the flint to give forth a sweet odour than for the flower, or the ball to skip or fly like the lamb and hawk.

Carry this idea one step further. No one pretends that matter can think and will without a suitable apparatus, but it is the veriest folly to assert that a thinking apparatus cannot think, or a volitional apparatus perform the office for which it was specially adapted. Given the apparatus, and the work to be performed follows as a thing of course.

All, therefore, that remains is to show that animals which possess the power of will have an apparatus suited to the purpose. Rocks and seas, flowers and clay, cannot have a will, because they have no voluntary apparatus, consequently we ought to find in animals an apparatus which we do not find in bodies that have no power of free choice. Just so, and animals have this apparatus. They have what is called a nerve-system, and this new organic machinery has of

course its proper work. Inorganic bodies have no nerves and inorganic bodies cannot perform the same duties as those which have. Surely this is reasonable. Bodies without nerves cannot do the work of bodies which have, and bodies with a highly complicated nerve-system have functions to perform which are not expected from others that have a less complex one, or no such apparatus at all.

Sensibility in every form, whether that called sight or that called hearing, whether feeling or smell, is due wholly to the nerves. Sensibility, in fact, is the mere impression of external objects photographed on the organs of sense, or communicated to them by actual contact. This can be proved to demonstration. In nerveless bodies it does not exist, in all bodies with a nerve-system it does. If a nerve is injured, the corresponding function of that nerve is impaired also; if all the system is sound and healthy, all the operations of the system are carried on in a normal and healthy manner. What further proof is required? What further proof is even possible? We can see the nerves with our eyes, we can handle them with our fingers, we can exalt or paralyse their action by our drugs, we can repair them in many cases when they are feeble or unsound. This is no hypothetical something which is invisible and intangible, no mere shadowy incorporeal indweller to help out a theory, no imaginary spirit, but a visible and tangible reality. Nerve is as much matter as wood or stone, and it is the possession of this nerve apparatus which endows animal bodies with receptive and operative powers wholly unknown to inorganic substances.

He who sees not demonstration in all this is wholly unable to form a correct judgment. He is not convinced because he will not be so, not because the argument is weak, but because he is inaccessible to argument of every kind. With such no argument will prevail, and he must be left to his own wilfulness. Like the deaf adder he cannot or will not hear. He refuses to be charmed, not that the charmer charms not well, but that he will not hearken charm he never so wisely.

SECTION IX.

BRAIN AND BRAINWORK ALSO DUE TO MATERIAL ORGANISM.

COME we now to the brain. This mass shut up in the skull varies in different animals in size, shape, and texture.

Some of the inferior molluscs have only one ganglia, others have two, while men may have from twenty to thirty. So also in regard to the tubular convolutions, the brains of fishes have none at all, those of birds only faint traces of them, and in mammals there is a great difference in this respect between the brain of a kangaroo and that of man.

It might, *a priori*, be supposed that this new organ would have special duties to perform, and that as the brain varies so greatly in different animals, we should discern a difference in their brain-work. This is exactly what we find to be the case. The brain of a common mollusc has only one ganglia, and the intelligence of these animals corresponds; the brain of marsupials has fewer ganglia than that of higher animals, but the brain of man is familiarly known to be the most powerful and complicated in structure of all the animal creation. The intelligence of the animal is in every case *en rapport* with the brain. Every slightest change in the composition, the size, the convolutions, and the sensory ganglia of the brain infers a corresponding difference in the work which the brain is able to execute. It is not because Newton and Shakespeare, Plato and Homer, had a separate genius or Socratic demon in their heads that they were superior in intelligence to the Hottentot, but that their brains had more grey matter and more convolutions, and those convolutions more distinctly pronounced.

We have already spoken of sensibility seated in the ganglionic centres, and we now come to thought, emotion, and consciousness, seated in the ganglia of the brain proper. We have shown how sensibility is quickened and deadened, destroyed and repaired, by agents applied to the nerve-tissues; and we would now show how thought and memory, emotion and consciousness, are perfect measures of the state of the brain. In the first place, it is a familiar fact that the wise man may be reduced to idiotcy, and the man of most delicate feeling to moral insensibility, by simply acting on the brain. By slicing away that grey matter, stupidity and insensibility are induced, in exact proportion to the quantity of grey matter removed. By slicing away more or less of this brain-matter, the intelligence is more or less impaired, the moral feelings more or less blunted, consciousness and judgment more or less destroyed. If we find heat proceeding from burning fuel, and that heat diminished or increased in exact proportion to the more or less perfect state of the combustion, are we not justified in

concluding that the heat proceeds from the burning fuel? If we find light issuing from a gas-jet, and find that light more or less perfect according to the purity of the gas, are we not justified in saying that the purity of the light depends on the purity of the burning gas? If we find water reduced to ice when the temperature is below 32 degrees (Fahrenheit), and gradually increasing in warmth as the temperature is increased, till it ultimately expands itself in steam, are we not justified in believing that it is the increase or decrease of temperature which is accountable for these phenomena? And so, by parity of argument, when we find intelligence and judgment, consciousness and moral feeling, indicated exactly by the state of the brain, are we not justified in concluding that they are emanations from the brain, as much so as heat from the glowing fuel, and light from the burning gas? Are we not justified in the conclusion that the grey matter of the brain is the fount of thought and the palace of the soul?

So long as matter was thought to be passive and inert, it was quite needful to suppose there must be some energising agent to set it in motion and give it vitality; but now that it has been demonstrated that matter, in the form of nerves and brain, can feel and will, think and understand, judge and feel conscious, remember and foresee, calculate and analyse—do all, in fact, that was once attributed to soul—we may eliminate the unknown power altogether, and pronounce, with the certainty of a mathematical demonstration, that man is not a dual animal of body and soul, but a material animal only.

Need we go further? Need we show how cerebral disease impairs the memory, impairs the intelligence, impairs the judgment, impairs the just perception of things in general? Need we show how cerebral disease may so far destroy the mental and moral powers as to induce delirium or stupor, madness or idiocy? Need we show that in suspended animation thought, conscience, judgment, memory, will, and every moral sense is suspended also, but by simply acting on the tissues, by imparting increased circulation to the blood, by restoring energy to the nerves and brain, animation returns, and with it the intelligent and moral faculties? They come with returning energy, they go as the activity of the bodily organs declines. They grow with our growth, they strengthen with our strength. In the infant they are infantine, in the child somewhat stronger, in the mature

body in their greatest perfection ; and though in declining years the mental powers may outlast the physical, it only confirms what has been proved by the results of death from starvation, in which very little wasting of this structure is found to take place, that the nerve-tissue is more indestructible than other vital textures of the organism.

SECTION X.

OBJECTION : MAN CAN THINK OF ETERNITY, AND THEREFORE IS ETERNAL.

"No man can think higher than himself," or "higher than himself can no man think." Granted. As man can think of eternity, eternity is not "higher" than man, and therefore man is eternal. *Nego majorem.*

The "major" of this syllogism is false. It proves too much in the first place, and is untrue in the second.

(1.) *It proves too much.* If because man can think of eternity he is eternal, then is he omniscient, omnipresent, and almighty, because he can think of these things in the same way as he can think of eternity. And if thought is the measure of man, then man is himself deity, because there is no attribute ascribed to deity which man cannot think.

(2.) *But the statement is utterly false.* Man can *not* think either of eternity or of infinite space ; that is, he can form no clear conception of duration without beginning and ending, or of space without limit. In fact, our ideas of duration and space are extremely limited ; and if they are to be taken as the measure of man, nothing could better prove that he is a finite mortal. Man, I say, can form no definite idea either of eternity or of infinite space. This is what he can do : Man has invented figures, and these figures being employed to express the measure of time or space, man can always add, or at least suppose, a higher number than the one expressed. Thus, if 1,000 is determined on as the limit, we can think of 1,001 ; if a million, we can think of numbers exceeding it ; but that is a very different thing indeed from forming a definite conception of eternity or infinite space.

Let any one try to think of a straight line without begin-

ning or end, and he will presently see how hopeless is the task. His line, however far extended in his imagination, will always be broken at both ends; and the more he tries to lengthen it, the more he will feel convinced that his fancy can extend it further. But so long as this can be done, his line is neither without beginning nor without end.

This must be obvious to any thinking mind. It must be obvious that eternity cannot be extended, that infinite space is space beyond all limit; so long, therefore, as we can think of extension to duration and space, we cannot form an idea of duration or space which cannot be extended. It would not be too bold to say that after a man has given the fullest possible scope to his fancy, whether of duration or space, when he has pushed them as far off as he is able, his mind can always overleap the limit, and think of a beyond. In truth, man's idea of time and space, except when expressed by figures, is extremely limited. He has the most vague conception of all high numbers, and when he tries to think of eternity or infinite space, his line of duration and his field of extent are wonderfully small. Think of William the Conqueror; he seems an immense way off, quite in cloud-land. Think of the Flood; the distance between William the Conqueror and the Flood is really pretty much the same in our ideas. We know they are not; we know that the spaces are nothing like equal; but our conception is unable to measure the difference with any degree of accuracy. Take a series of unequal lengths—say the Conquest, the Birth of Christ, the Flood, Creation, and the several geological series. How they crowd one on the other! How utterly is the mind unable to pace out with accuracy their different lengths! It thinks of them as a series; but whether the distance between any two was greater or less than between two others, whether the Devonian period was ten thousand or ten millions of years in length, is pretty much the same.

So is it in regard to space. The moon, the sun, and the fixed stars seem nearly equidistant to the eye, and even to the imagination. We know they are not, but the mind cannot realise the different distances. Practically, our thought of duration is inseparable from our thought of time. We cannot think of duration in the abstract. We can think of sixty, seventy, or one hundred years; we can think of years beyond any limit which figures can express; but we cannot think of eternity. If therefore the thought

of man is indeed his measure, he certainly is not for eternity, for he cannot form the remotest idea of extent which cannot be extended.

SECTION XI.

MAN IN NO WISE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ANIMALS, EXCEPT SO FAR AS THE ORGANIC STRUCTURE OF ONE ANIMAL MAY DIFFER FROM ANOTHER.

WHAT, then, has been proved? If anything, this, that there is nothing supernatural in man—nothing but what is attributable to organic structure. He is in perfect harmony with his surroundings, and does not walk the earth as a monster—part man, part god, but neither wholly of the earth earthy, nor wholly of the heavens heavenly. He differs in no wise from the rest of the animal kingdom, except so far as the organic structure of one animal or race of animals may differ from another. If he has different powers to inferior animals, it is only because his body is more highly and elaborately organised. Trees are organised, and they grow, flourish, and decay, each according to its organic structure. Inferior animals have a more complex arrangement, and being possessed of brain and nerve, they have sensibility and volition, passion and desire. Man has a still more complex brain, and his thoughts can be more elaborate and complex; but from the primeval rock to man there is a perfect unity, nothing to destroy the oneness, nothing to remove one part from the rest. Special differences no doubt there are—such differences are the rule—but the same general principle pervades the whole. It is simply matter arranged in divers manners, each different arrangement having its special character. There is no new integer introduced from another sphere of being, nothing from another world lent to man to supplement his deficiency, nothing of the nature of soul, taken, like the fire of Prometheus, from the high heavens to kindle life in the clay image. The notion of a special loan of Deity to man, alone and apart from the rest of creation, of a spark of the divine essence shut up in man as a candle in a lantern, of a breath breathed by the Eternal into the nostrils of a mortal, is certainly the crowning delusion of visionary self-conceit. That Deity should lend man a piece of himself to

help out his man-nature is a craze so absurd that it would not be credible except we knew it to be believed.

If man really possessed this divine spirit shut up in his body, is it likely that the anatomist would be able to cut it away piecemeal when mutilating with his scalpel the cerebral organ? Is it likely it would be susceptible of inflammation and decay? Is it likely it could be affected by drugs or aliment, and destroyed by poison? Is it likely it could be suspended by immersion in water, and restored by friction? Is it likely it would grow and change, strengthen and decline, just as man's health or age may affect his material body? How could a divine essence be subject to the laws of matter? If *in* the body it would not be *of* the body, but would be wholly independent of matter however organised. Enthroned as spirit, no hand of man could injure it; incorruptible as Deity, no vice could defile it; unchangeable as perfection, it would shine with the same brilliancy in sage and savage, the infant in its cradle, the old man on his pallet, the king on his throne, and the captive in his dungeon. What could education do to improve deity in man? How could the vigilance of maternal care guide and direct it? How could the example of evil companions vitiate and degrade it? But so it is; we feel it is so, whatever be our creed; we know it is so, however we may strive to hide it from ourselves. We know that every part of man is acted on alike, that every part of man is amenable to the same laws. Man can exercise his power on the brain as well as on the nerves. He can mutilate and impair the thinking part as well as any other. He can attack with his knife and with his drugs the reasoning part, the moral part, the judging part, the conscience part, the most subtle of the subtleties of human nature, suspend their operations or restore them, play with them, or so reduce them that the brain of a Newton shall be no more capable than that of an idiot, and the finest conscience shall be dulled as if it had been steeped in Lethe. But if thought were really the product of a divine essence lent by Deity to man, would this be possible? Would man be able mechanically to injure a divine essence? Would he be able to suspend its energies and restore them? Would he be able to impair and destroy the Deity in man?

SECTION XII.

IF MAN IS NOT A DUAL BEING, THERE CAN HAVE BEEN
NO REVELATION.

IF body is all and all of man, as this body dies man dies, and as it returns to its native elements, man ceases to be man, and the notion of a resurrection or reconstruction of the same body, after it has passed into other material forms, is mere fable. This life is man's be-all, and death is his end-all, as far as his individuality is concerned. But if so, the very notion of a revelation must be given up. There is nothing to reveal, nothing that even Deity could tell which would in the slightest degree affect the future of man. He might tell him how the gases of the body would be dispersed, how the vegetable world would banquet on the carbon and nitrogen, how the phosphates would contribute to the bones of other animals; he might tell how the brain of the poet may ultimately form a part of the nightingale, and the hand of the painter help to arch the sky with a rainbow; he might tell how the sulphur and hydrogen would be disposed of, one gilding the coal with pyrites like gold, and the other hanging as a dewdrop on the rose; this and much more than this he might tell, and interest man intensely by revealing the changes of decay into the newness of fresh life, but this is not revelation. Revelation presupposes a thousand absurdities, beginning in Eden and reaching into eternity. It presupposes a man such as no man is, or ever could be. It presupposes that God and man made a mutual covenant together, and that each has a social interest of a private and special nature with the other. It presupposes that our bodies will be restored in their integrity, though every part thereof has passed into other bodies—that they will retain their identity, though the same identical body contributes to the identity of a thousand others. It presupposes such a host of self-contradictory incoherences that conjecture is lost in the hopeless maze, and poor bewildered human nature is glad to seek rest in any falsehood as a refuge from the hopeless confusion by which he is surrounded. If this is revelation, give me the simplicity of right reason. If this is orthodoxy, give me the logic of infidelity. If this is the teaching of the Church, give me the teaching of common sense. If this is the creed of the faithful, then may the faithful few be ever few; such fidelity to dogma is infidelity to truth, and infidelity to unreason is fidelity to nature and to man.