

BL

220

H5



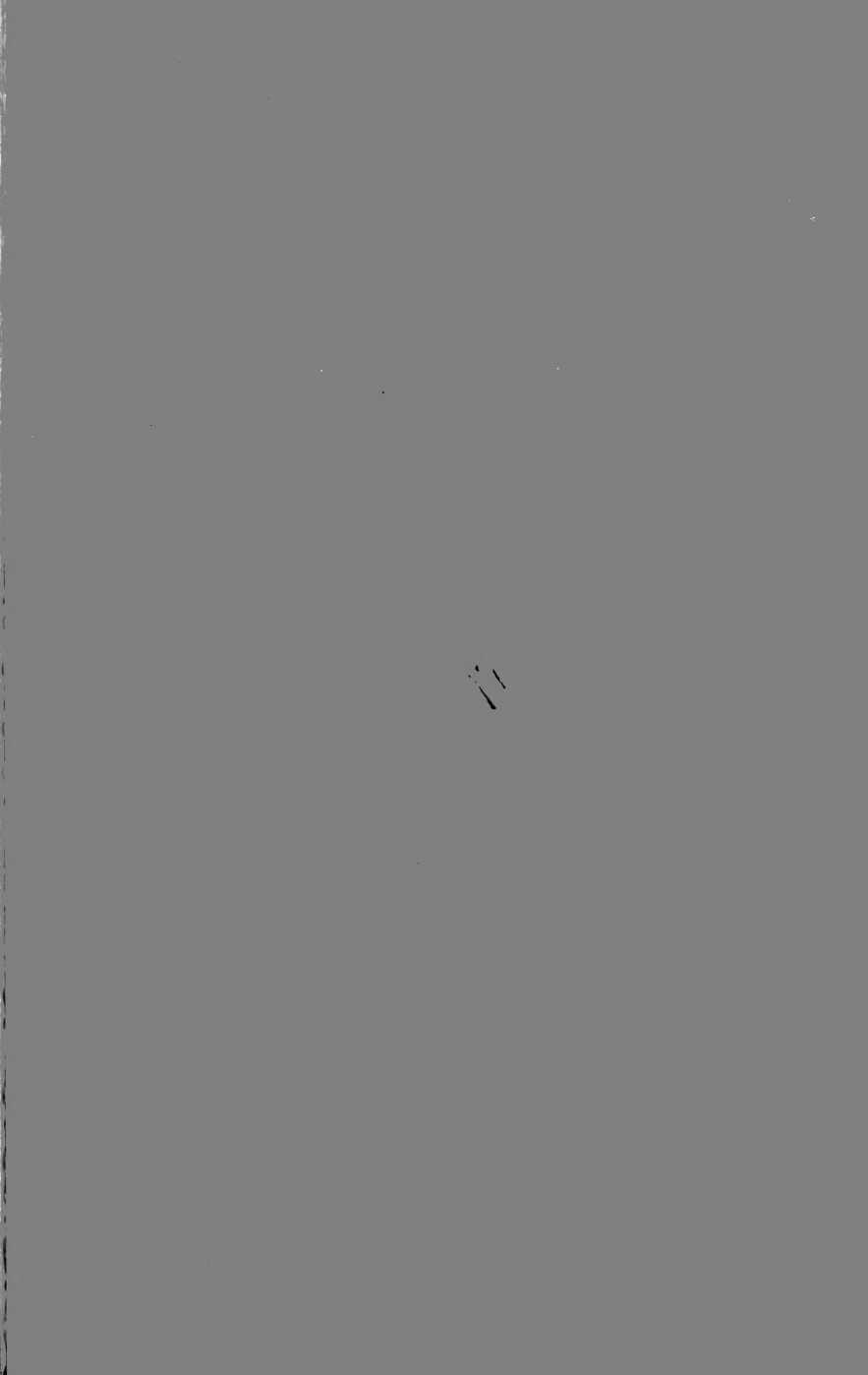
LIBRARY
OF
CONGRESS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

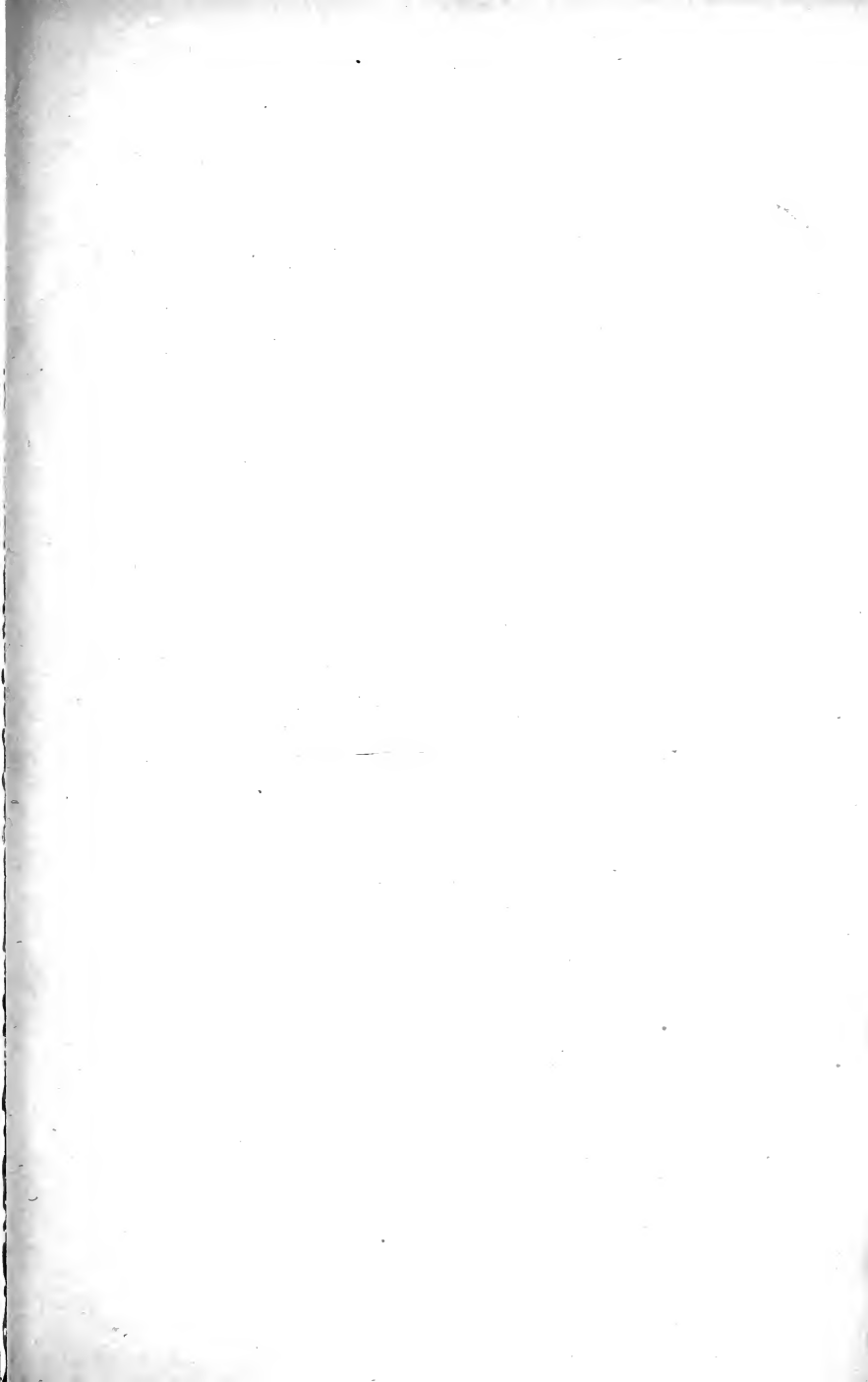
Chap. BL 22

No. 445

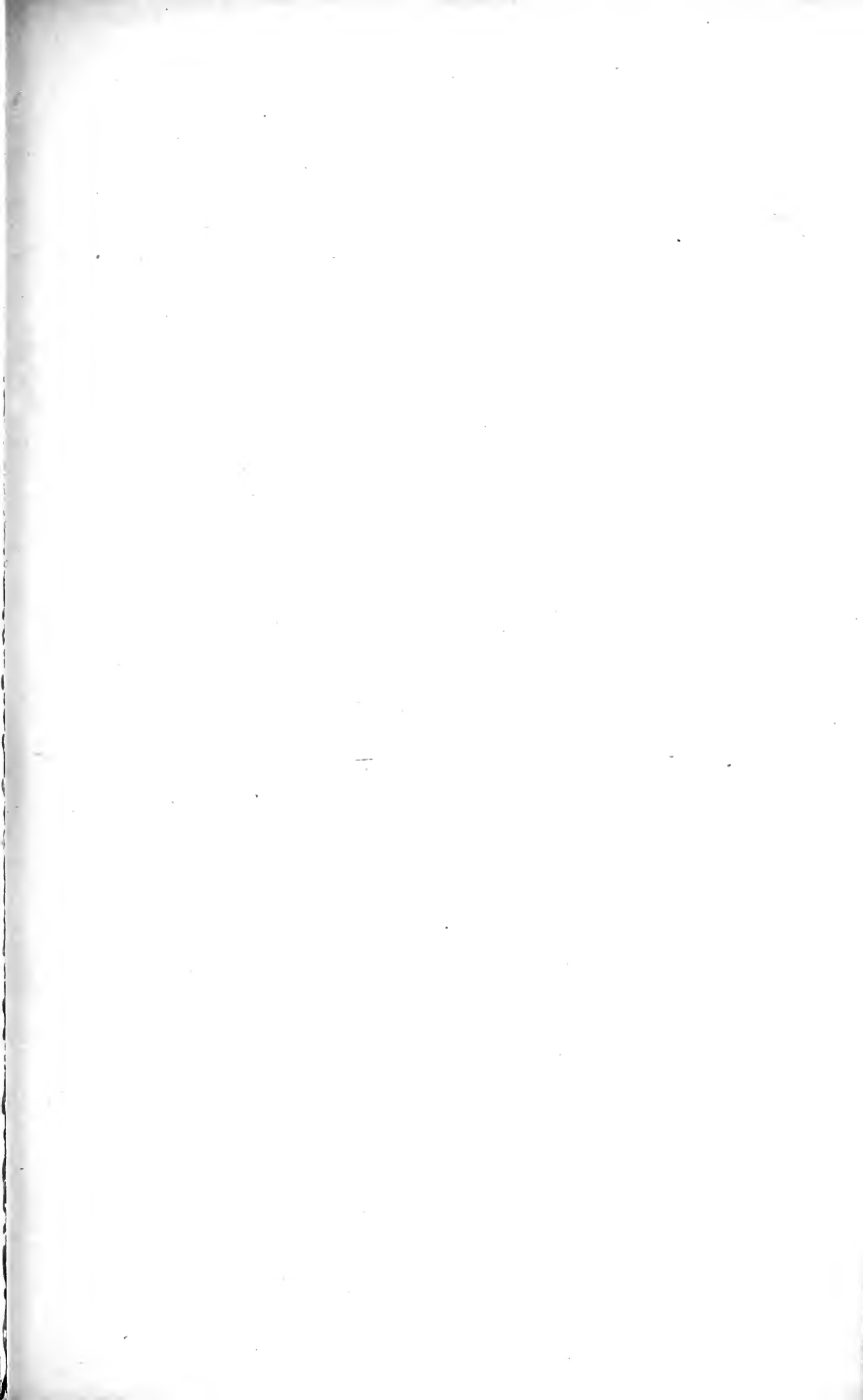
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

















A P L E A
FOR
P A N T H E I S M .

By JOHN S. MITTELL.



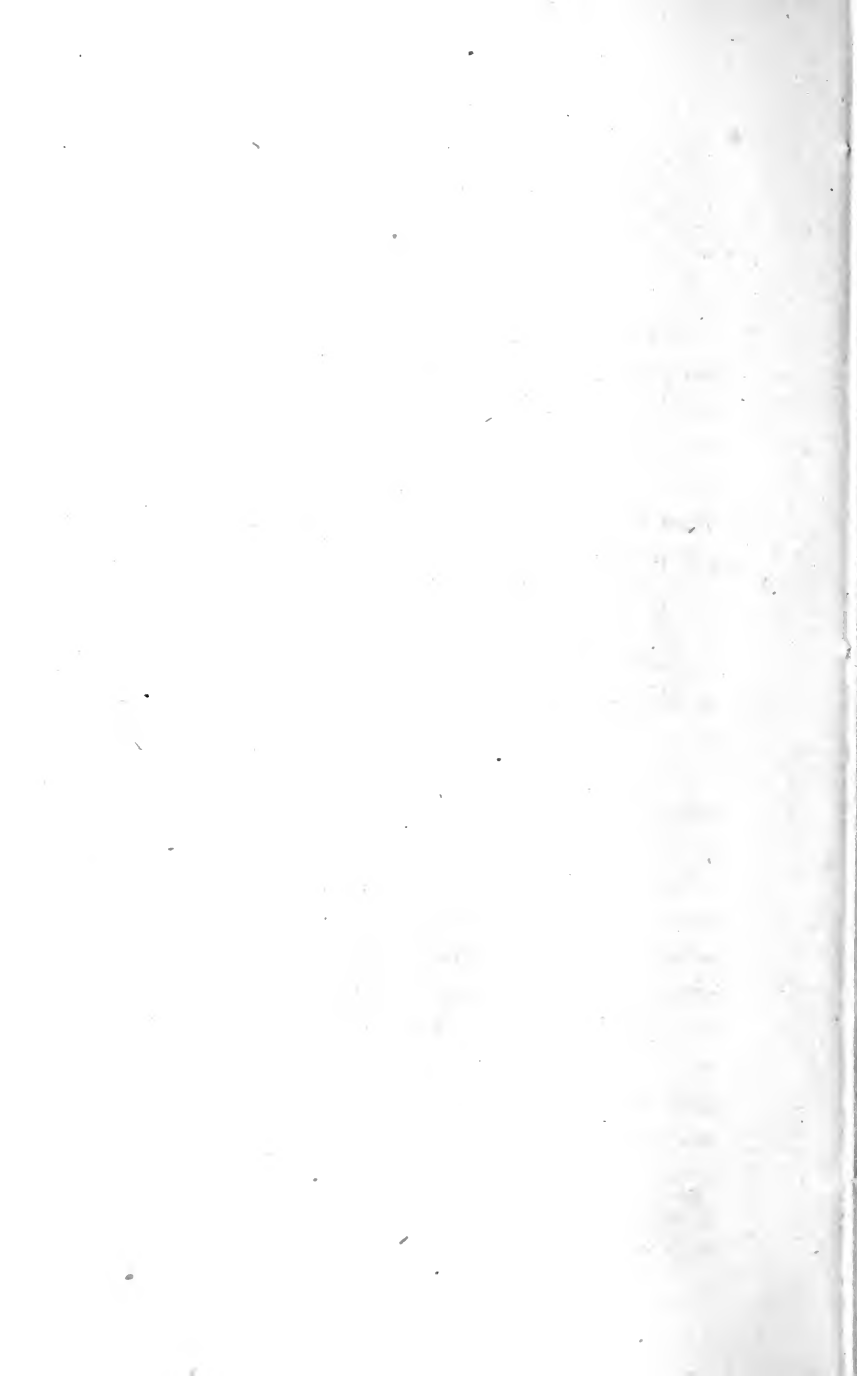
New York:
CALVIN BLANCHARD,
76 Nassau Street.
1857.

BL220
H5

ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by John S
Hittell, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the
United States, for the Southern District of New York.

CONTENTS.

	page
Preface,	iii-x
CHAP. I. Physiology vs. a Future State,	1
- II. Pantheism vs. Anthropomorphism,	24
- III. Moral Responsibility,	38
- IV. Absolute Truth Unattainable by Man,	45



PREFACE.

THOSE, who have had a clear view of the field of religious philosophy during the last half century, know that all the heights of that field have been the scene of a bitter warfare between Pantheism and Anthropomorphism. They have seen that the former has become master of many of the securest strongholds ; that she has gained new ground and strength and courage, with every succeeding year : that she is confident of remaining complete master of the field at no distant time ; that her entire defeat, judging from the past, is a matter of impossibility : and that the struggle must continue to be the main occupation of polemic religionists in Christendom for several decades of years.*

Pantheism is older than history. Hindoo philosophers, who lived before the foundations of the pyramids were laid, taught that Brahm, the universal spirit and force, pervaded every particle of matter from all eternity, and was inseparable from it. The same idea was adopted by some of the speculative Boodhists. In Greece Democritus, Anaxagoras and others refused to acknowledge the Zeus of popular mythology and taught that the only God was the soul of matter. Indeed, Herder says, that none of the ancient philosophers conceived God as a being distinct from the world : and certain it is, that those most inclined to anthro-

* PEARSON the author of the latest and ablest work on the Anti-christian Philosophy of the day says that Pantheism is "in christian lands the most dangerous foe to Christianity."

pomorphism (among whom may be reckoned Socrates, Plato and Aristotle) used many expressions which are decidedly pantheistic. In modern Europe Bacon may be considered the first influential author who was unwilling to admit a deity independent of matter, but he was too much of a time-server to speak his sentiments clearly, and the sincerity of his professions of Christianity was scarcely doubted until the present century. His pantheistic opinions, however, were discoverable in many passages, which did not fail to excite much thought among those who studied him carefully. Spinoza was the teacher who gave Pantheism a secure foothold in modern philosophy. His writings were models of speculative argumentation; and his doctrines were extensively adopted notwithstanding the abuse, misrepresentation and persecution to which he was subjected. Goethe seems to have been the first great follower of Spinoza, but he did little more for Pantheism than to express incidentally in his poems, his pity for the creed which could place its deity outside of nature. But the founder of all the schools of Pantheism, now in flourishing condition was Fichte, whose system was altered from that of Spinoza, and was itself subsequently subjected to other alterations by Schelling, Hegel, Oken, Cousin, Emerson, Strauss, Feuerbach and a multitude of others. Carlyle too should, perhaps, have a place in this list; but beyond the fact that his religious system is pantheistic, nothing is discoverable about it. These metaphysicians entered the fold of Pantheism through the gate of Idealism: while Byron, Shelley and Wordsworth seem to have entered through the gate of poetic inspiration. It appears to have been assumed for a time that Pantheism was peculiarly the creed of the

high class of speculative philosophers, and Coleridge spoke of it as the "inevitable result" of the system which makes the mind the centre of its own system, and declares that the external world has no existence, as perceived, independently of the mind which perceives it. But of late years a number of the leading naturalists have entered the pantheistic fold through the gate of experimental investigation, and they claim that Pantheism is not the religion of Idealism but of science. The metaphysical and the scientific schools are not in entire harmony, but they agree in all the important points and each is making considerable progress. In the meantime their teachings have reached the workshop and the field, and a general interest is felt for a further acquaintance with the doctrines which have received the homage of the mightiest men of the age. In Germany particularly, pantheistic ideas have been widely disseminated among the people, and the leaven appears to be rapidly extending to Britain, France and America. Even the Chinese are subject to a similar influence, if Huc's assertion be true that many of the learned celestials "have fallen into a true Spinozism."

It is my purpose to make the masses intelligent partisans in this war between Pantheism and Anthropomorphism, if possible. It is not to be doubted that the victory will decide in favor of the more enlightened party. Philosophy, by its very nature, is destined to be the common property of all mankind; and the perspicuous teaching of a truth, so as to be intelligible to the many, is a matter of almost as much importance as the original discovery and promulgation to a few. If this essay should not possess the clearness, in which its chief merit should consist, I may

hope at least that it will attract attention to the subject, and perhaps indirectly induce some abler person to do the work in which I have failed.

It is no part of my plan to advocate the establishment of a church or organized society. The time appears to be fast coming when all churches, as the theatres wherein certain mummeries are performed for salvation or edification, before a lot of persons standing on a certain platform, shall be obsolete. I am ready to confess with Emerson that "all attempts to project and establish a *cultus* with new rites and forms seem to me vain," and I rejoice that it is so. Religious formulas and mental freedom cannot well exist together; and the downfall of the former is the certain harbinger of the rise of the latter.

By "Pantheism" I understand the doctrine that matter and its qualities or conditions are the only existences, and that the forces, pervading matter and inherent in it, are the divine existence, which comes to consciousness only in man. Opposed to Pantheism is Anthropomorphism—the doctrine that a person exists who possesses omnipotent power, who created the universe and governs it, and who has a physical form and a mental constitution, similar to those of men. The Christians form the chief body of Anthropomorphists, and it is particularly with them that the Pantheists must struggle for the mastery of public opinion. It will perhaps not be out of place that I should introduce a few texts here to show the christian doctrine in regard to the divine nature.

God has a human form. According to Genesis (I. 26. 27) man was created in Jehovali's "image:" and since man is a biped, Jehovali must be the same. It was the

common belief in ancient times that the gods have bodies like men, and if Moses had had a different opinion he would not only have said so in unequivocal language, but he would have carefully avoided any assertion that divinity and humanity are encased in similar "images." Jehovah not only has the biped organization but he also uses his organs as men do. He walked "in the garden in the cool of the day" (*Gen III. 8*), selecting an agreeable time for a promenade. He "appeared" to Abraham, and took dinner with the patriarch, the meal being composed of veal, butter and milk. The two had a long conversation, which is preserved word for word. The mortal biped gave some very good advice to the immortal, who was about to "go down and see whether" Sodom and Gomorrah were so wicked as people said (*Gen XVIII*). So too he went "down" to confound the Babelites. He "spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (*Ex. XXXIII. 11*), and afterwards he was so gracious as to show to the law-giver his "back-parts" (*Ex. XXXIII. 23*), whereby the latter was no doubt highly edified. As becomes a great potentate Jehovah has reception days, when he welcomes angels who are employed in carrying his messages and attending to his business in places where he cannot attend in person. It was on such a day, "when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them," that the conspiracy was formed between Heaven and Hell for the overthrow of Job (*Job. I. 6*). That Jehovah has a voice is clearly implied by the numerous conversations which he held with Abraham, Moses and others: and we learn that his voice bears a great resemblance to that of man. Samuel, when he heard it, supposed that it

was the voice of Eli (1. S. III. 8). The Almighty is not without mechanical skill, for it is written that "unto Adam also and unto his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin and clothed them" (*Gen III. 21*), and as the Father thus tried his hand at tailoring, so the Son subsequently became a carpenter (*Mark VI. 3*). After work, rest is required for Gods as well as men : and so "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth and on the seventh day he rested and was *refreshed*" (*Ex. XXXI. 17*). He dwelt only among his chosen people, never making himself manifest to the Heathens unless when fighting for his followers. Judea was his country, Jerusalem was his city, the Temple was his house, and the Ark was his throne. The Jews exclaimed "Oh thou God that *dwellest* between the cherubim" (*Ps. LXXX 1*), which were figures on the ark. Jesus said his Father was in "heaven," and when he was baptized, the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove came down from the home of the Three : and the divine Jesus "is gone into heaven, and is on the *right hand* of God" (1. *Pet. III. 22*). So far as we can form an opinion from the language of Genesis, the authors of that book supposed man's mental constitution to have been originally different from that of Jehovah chiefly in the knowledge of good and evil ; and after that difference had been removed by eating the forbidden fruit, the creator remarked that the mortal had "become as one of us" (*Gen III. 22*). Such is the doctrine which Pantheism must vanquish. Final victory is certain and perhaps not far distant.

The essays which compose this pamphlet were written for the second edition of *The Evidences against Christianity* by the same author, and will be inserted in that work.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSIOLOGY VS. A FUTURE STATE.

“Frown not upon me, churlish priest ! that I
Look not for life, where never life may be :
I am no sneerer at thy phantasy ;
Thou pitiest me,—alas ! I envy thee,
Thou bold discoverer in an unknown sea,
Of happy isles, and happier tenants there :
I ask thee not to prove a Sadducee.*
Still dream of Paradise, thou knowst not where,
But lov’st too well to bid thine erring brother share.”
BYRON.

§ 1. The New Testament asserts that the human mind or soul, will live forever after the death of the body, in the possession of consciousness and sensation, with the personality and individuality which characterize the man on earth, with thought and memory, and with capabilities of feeling pleasure and pain. That is to say after dying upon earth, every man will awaken to a new life, in which he will continue to be the same man as before, so far as his mind and thoughts are concerned. Jesus “came,” as his followers say, “to bring life and immortality to light,” to save men from infinite pain, and to secure to them infinite pleasure, in the future state of existence: and thus, the dogma becomes one of the most important of the Christian creed. When it falls, Christianity must fall with it. I shall endeavor to prove it to be false, and I shall base my arguments against it, principally on the facts of physiology.

* I place the words of the great poet at the head of this chapter, without adopting all his sentiments. Although he was a decided and active enemy of Christianity, he did not see fit to carry his hostility very far. I should be sorry, to deprive any one of the pleasures they may find in the hope of a future life, but the fear of any such result shall not prevent me from endeavoring to do justice to the cause of science, and intellectual freedom. The poet does not ask the priest “to prove a Sadducee,” neither do I; but I ask that men shall make themselves familiar with all important truths of Physiology, and if they become “Sadduces” thereafter, they may thank natural philosophy—not me.

All known natural objects are divided into three kingdoms : the mineral, vegetable, and animal. These three kingdoms are intimately related to each other in many respects,—so intimately that the most learned scientific observers have been unable to discover the lines which separate them. Each class is composed of innumerable millions of individuals, different in rank and character from each other, and yet so marked that they can be arranged in groups gradually increasing in complexity and beauty of structure from the coarse, shapeless, primitive rock, up to crystal, more elegant and regular in form than some low vegetables which are connected in the same kingdom by numerous and evident bonds of relationship with the mighty monarchs of the forest, with the sensitive plant and the fly-catcher ; and these latter are apparently superior in every thing, except the peculiar faculty called animal life, to some individuals of the worm and reptile classes, which again have their undisputed place in the same kingdom with the highest orders of the brute creation, and with man himself. Beginning at the rock, and ascending to the man, there is a chain of many links, and not one link wanting. Linnæus remarks truly that nature makes no leaps. She has gone forward step by step ; the successive footprints are recorded in indelible characters on the face of the universe. None of her productions are kinless ; all are as though they had grown from one seed, which bore in its own bosom the faculty of developing itself into higher, more numerous, and more complex forms every year.

The vegetables and animals are composed of elements which are to be found in the older kingdom. As its children, they have taken its substance. The carbon, the oxygen, the hydrogen, the nitrogen, which exist in mineral form, are also found in the plants, which dig into the earth for their support. The same materials compose the greater portion of the frames of the animals, which devour the plants or their plant-eating brothers, and both plants and animals, as a general rule, must every day have new support from air or water, or they die. The same general qualities mark the objects of the three kingdoms ; all have weight, extension, and inertia. The same natural forces appear to prevail through, and to support, as they are, the

three kingdoms. All are subject to similar mechanical and chemical influences ; all are influenced by heat, electricity, and concussion. It was supposed, for many ages, that animal life was owing to a peculiar power, or vital force, unknown in the other kingdoms, and radically different from all the forces which exercise an influence therein. But this theory is now rejected by all the ablest physiologists. They can find nothing to support it ; they find much to contradict it. Every process, every force discoverable in the animal frame has its kindred process or force, in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, in the chemist's laboratory, or the mechanic's workshop. The eye is a daguerreotyping establishment ; the heart is a pump which forces arterial blood to the extremities, and sucks back the venous blood ; the liver is an acid factory ; the stomach takes the liver acid to dissolve the food ; the brain is a galvanic battery which telegraphs thought and sensation along the wires of nervous fibre with a kind of electricity similar to that which New York uses in speaking to New Orleans ; and the muscles, when required to act, are filled with electro-magnetism, so that the ends may be drawn together, just as the opposite poles of a steel magnet would approach each other, if its material were not stubbornly inflexible.

§ 2. Among the various kinds of animals, man is one. His body is material, and it possesses the distinguishing feature of the animal kingdom—a nervous system. His frame bears a close resemblance to that of other animals. It is composed of the same elements, and is divided into the same organs with the same functions. Man has muscle and bone, skin and hair, feet and mouth, stomach and heart, senses, and blood, and brain ; and a dog has the same. And he is a pretty good chemist who will distinguish a slice of human muscle, or brain, or a drop of human blood from similar portions of the canine system. Men and brutes are alike produced by generation, supported by nourishing food placed in the stomach and by a constant supply of air ; and they die from similar causes, either mechanical or chemical violence, or the exhaustion by age of the life-sustaining power of their organs. The quadruped and the man have minds differing in power, but not differing substantially in kind. The brutes have reason, memory, and passion ; they are

evidently actuated in many of their movements by motives similar to those which govern men. When young, they are playful, and grave when old. Their countenances and actions at different times show plainly that the mind is filled with doubt, anger, revenge, fear, content, exultation, shame, joy, pride, love of frolic, and maternal love. They not only show these sentiments, but their characters are marked by the general predominance of certain mental impulses. They are "envious,* irascible, placable, [faithful, affectionate,] courageous, cowardly, vain, sober, haughty, humble, vindictive, generous, cunning, candid, [clever,] or stupid, just like human beings. According to the divisions laid down by phrenologists, they possess benevolence, self-esteem, cautiousness, love of approbation, hope, wonder, comparison, and many other of the faculties possessed by man. There is scarcely one of the ingredients of mind which is not bestowed upon them, and they have perversions of the faculties from disease like man. They [more particularly dogs, horses, swine, and kine] *go mad*, and the mother destroys her offspring† under the influence of puerperal insanity, as women do."

Brutes learn by experience, and that learning implies not only memory, but the faculty of reasoning by analogy. It is said that brutes and men are distinguished from each other in the possession of reason by the latter, and "instinct" by the former; but the probability is that both possess instinct and reason, differing only in the different degrees of development. That brutes reason is shown by multitude of facts recorded in every work on zoology: and that men have instinct is also a fact scarcely to be denied by those who will look at the evidence. A singular case is related by Carpenter in his work on *Human Physiology*, of an idiotic girl in Paris, who, having been delivered in solitude of a child, when found, actuated doubtless by the same instinctive impulse which guides the brute-mother, had gnawn off the umbilical cord of her offspring. Man's very

*WIGAN.—On the duality of the mind. Ch. XXVI.

† This offspring-murder is a frequent occurrence in the swine-raising counties of Ohio and Indiana. Sows which ordinarily show great affection for their young, when provided with an abundance of food of every kind, set upon their offspring and devour them.

great mental superiority in a state of civilization, and his evident superiority, even in the lowest state of barbarism, to the brute, is owing to a great extent to faculties which do not belong to the mind—to the hand capable of grasping, to the erect form which leaves the grasping hand at liberty, and to the tongue, throat-muscles, and ear which give him the faculty of communicating his thoughts. By the aid of these faculties he is capable of educating himself, and of rising to a greatness far beyond the condition in which he now is. Without these he would be as near to the chimpanzee as the latter is to some of the lower orders of monkeys.

Man belongs to a certain class of animals : he is placed by naturalists among the "mammalia"—that class which give birth to their young alive, and suckle them at the teat—that class which includes the ape, the elephant, the lion, the wolf, the mouse, the opossum, and the whale. The unscientific observer might say that nature had made a great leap from the disgusting brutishness and vile form of the ape to the beautiful and majestic body, and all-comprehending mind of a Goethe. But that vast distance was not made at one leap ; there are many steps between the two points. The infant and the idiot, connected by steps, infinitely small with the greatest philosopher, are inferior in intelligence to the ape : and Solly, a physiologist and author of high and undisputed merit, declared that there was a greater distance between the minds of a Newton and a common hewer of wood and drawer of water, than between the mind of the latter and that of a dog. But the idiots, children, and uneducated persons of the Caucasian family are not the only humans, nearly related to the brutes. The lowest tribes of savages connect* "with the beasts in the most unmistakable manner by a multitude of the most striking resemblances. The long arms, the form of the foot, the thin calf, the long narrow hands, the general leanness, the projecting lower jaw, the low sloping forehead, the small head running far back, the short neck, the narrow pelvis, the prominent belly, the beardless chin, the dark skin, the abominable smell, the filthiness, the grimaces in speaking, and the sharp shrieking tones of the voice are

* BUECHNER, Kraft und Stoff.

so many marks of his near relationship to the ape.' And through his kinship to the ape and the other man nalia, he is akin to the bird, and the fish, the snake, the shellfish, the bug, the worm, and the polypus. Indeed, physiologists say, that man is a member of different lower orders at different times—so far as can be distinguished by external signs. While in the progress of formation, previous to birth, the human brain takes first the form of the brain of a fish; then that of a reptile; next that of a bird, then that of a low-class mammal, and finally, after having gone through all those stages, after having, as it were, belonged to four inferior orders, it is developed one step farther, to humanity.

There is one more point in which the near relationship of man to the lower animals is clearly observable, and although the consideration of it is necessarily in itself disagreeable, yet it should be looked at, since this professes to be a treatise on a matter of science, and science knows no feelings of bashfulness or delicacy—much less of prudery and false modesty. There are many records in history of hybrids—half man, half brute. The human had crossed breed with the beast mammal; and the offspring bore witness that the parents were made of live flesh and blood. But mammal and bird cannot produce a hybrid, neither can bird and fish: there is not enough relationship between them. Man is nearer to the dog than the dog is to the bird—nearer than the bird is to the fish—nearer than the fish is to the mollusca.

§ 3. The animal frame, in all its parts, appears to us to be made with an evident adaptation to certain ends, so far as we know, and much study has been devoted to the subject, and progress made in accumulating and comparing facts; every particle of the human system has its use—its purpose. The frame is divided into parts which differ from each other in form and material, and each of these parts or organs has a different function. The bones serve to stiffen the frame and shield the most delicate and important of the vital organs; the muscles give mechanical force and the power of locomotion; the stomach manufactures from the food new material to mend the constant wear and tear of every part of the system: and the nerves of sense enable the body to perceive its relations to other bodies beyond itself. No

two organs have the same function : the heart cannot secrete bile ; the liver cannot pump blood through the arteries and veins ; the stomach cannot do the work of the kidneys. This division of the animal frame into various organs with different functions is almost infinite in many portions of the body, minute particles of flesh, invisible to the naked eye, have tasks to perform, different from those of other, equally minute particles at their side.

The most noteworthy of the larger divisions of the animal frame is the head. It is the exclusive seat of the majority of the senses—sight, hearing, taste, and smell—the special organs of which are among the most delicately organized parts of the body. The head is also a vital organ ; there is no method of taking life quicker than by wounding it. The largest portion of the head is the brain, a mass of matter with an exceedingly fine organization, surrounded and protected by a strong case of bone. The delicate material and guarded position of the encephalon and its vicinity, to the most sensible parts of the frame, would lead us, without knowing anything of its functions, but reasoning, according to the general analogies of nature, to believe that it is one of the most important organs—that it exercises some of the most important functions of the system : and physiologists assert that it is the organ of the mind, and as a necessary corollary in physiology that the mind is the function of the brain. We shall look at some of the evidence, on which they found their belief.

§ 4. The most important of all the animal faculties is the mind. By its means the animal is conscious and sensible, capable of feeling and thinking, capable of knowing the present, remembering the past and anticipating the future. Rank among brutes as among men, depends to a great extent upon it ; and it is justly entitled to the elevated position in the brain and the strong protection of the skull. That faculty—mind—is the function of an organ, as all the other animal faculties are ; and although it differs in its nature from all the other animal functions, yet these again differ from each other : digestion, muscular power, sight, smell, feeling, and blood-pumping have as little resemblance to each other as they have to the mind, yet they are all animal faculties.

§ 5. Observation has established the fact that certain relations exist in all cases between the organs and their respective functions: and where those relations are found to exist between a faculty and a part of the frame, it is presumed, unless there be evidence to the contrary that the former is the function of the latter. Thus it is a general rule of physiology that the function is dependent for its normal action on the healthy condition of its organs. If the stomach be disordered, it will not digest well. If the heart be pierced by a sword through the centre, it will be unable to send the blood through the system. If the muscles of the thigh be divided transversely, they cannot sustain the body. To injure the nerves of sight, smell, and hearing, is to injure those functions, themselves. And a similar relationship exists between the brain and the mind. When the former is diseased, the latter is disordered. The blow which wounds the brain, wounds the mind. Perhaps the injury to the function is imperceptible in some cases, but it is, in all probability, none the less real. When the brain is irritated by the presence of intoxicating liquor, the mind becomes drunk, loses the clearness of its perceptions and does things which it would never do, which it would shrink from with horror, while sober. If the skull be broken so that the finger can be pressed in upon the brain, the pressure will render the man unconscious and insensible, and while the pressure continues he has no more mind than a chicken with its head cut off. The experiment has been tried frequently and the same result was always found to follow. So too a pressure on the brain produced by other causes may produce unconsciousness. The bursting of a blood vessel in the brain causes apoplexy and sometimes death, by the pressure of the blood on the organ which is the true seat of life.

“ We know* the simple fact that all the manifestations of mind depend on physical structure — that every change therein is accompanied by a greater or less change in the mind—that its qualities, its sentiments, its opinions, its affections, its belief, its propensities and its passions are permitted to be influenced, strengthened, weakened or perverted by disease in the physical structure of the system—that

* WIGAN.

a blow on the head shall entirely alter the moral character of the individual—that slight inflammations of its structure shall change modesty, reserve and devotion into blasphemy and obscenity—that a small spicula of bone from the internal surface of the skull, shall transform love into hatred—that other diseases shall make the sober-minded man vain and silly, turn the hero into the coward or the coward into the ferocious bully—shall make the tender mother destroy her own offspring, and the loving husband put to death the object of his long-tried affection.”

The mind is affected directly by the condition of the brain and not by that of any other organ. The loss of an arm or a leg, or of both arms and both legs, does not perceptibly injure the thinking faculty. Any part of the body below the chin may be seriously injured, without immediately affecting the mind. It is true that any obstruction in the flow of blood to the brain affects the mind, and a total stoppage causes a loss of consciousness, and death : but this fact affords no evidence against the theory that the brain is the organ of the mind. All the fleshy fibres of the animal's frame must have an uninterrupted and sufficient supply of good blood to enable them to act in a healthy manner : and if that supply be not furnished, the muscles, the stomach, the liver, and the kidneys will “strike” work as quickly as the brain.

§ 6. Another general rule, prevailing in the relations between organs and functions, is that the latter are strong in proportion to the size of the former. A large muscle is stronger than a small one : a large liver secretes more bile than a small one : a large stomach digests more food than a small one : and a very large olfactory nerve is usually considered indicative of a very acute sense of smell. The same rule prevails in the relationship between brain and mind. The fact may be perceived most readily by comparing different classes of animals. The long ladder of animal life, reaching, as it were, from heaven to earth, with thousands of rounds, beginning at man and running down step by step in the scale of physical development, gradually decreasing in beauty, strength and complexity of frame, and variety, vigor and grace of motion, is marked by an equal decrease in intellectual power and the amount of brain. Man is far

superior in intelligence to all the other animals, and his brain is absolute larger than that of any other except the elephant and whale : and it is also larger in proportion to the size of his frame than that of any other animal, with a few exceptions of the sparrow species ; and these exceptions are more apparent than real. The sparrow owes much of his relatively large brain to the full development of the sensory ganglia, that part of the brain which is the seat of sensation and consciousness, while the thinking part—the Cerebrum—is proportionately smaller than in man. The difference between the brain of the man and that of the dog, between the brain of the dog and that of the sheep, and between the sheep's brain and the tortoise's brain is as good a measure as we have of the respective difference between their mental capacities. The same rule may be observed among men. The brain of women is usually one tenth less than that of men, and their mental faculties may be that much weaker. Infants have small, soft brains, and very weak minds—at first scarcely minds at all—and as the brain grows large and solid, the mind grows in activity and strength. A very small brain is a certain sign of idiocy, and very great talent is always accompanied by a very large brain.

§ 7. A third general rule of the relationship between the functions and the organs is that those organs, whose functions are under the control of the will, must rest about one third or fourth of the time. The heart, the lungs, the liver, and some other organs not under the control of the will, can not be driven by the will to go faster, nor compelled to stop ; and they work, or can work, always without rest. But the muscles are under the control of the will, to a considerable extent at least ; and they must have rest six or eight hours out of the twenty-four. So the mind is under the control of the will liable to be driven to great exertion or over-exertion, and requiring also for the brains its share of rest every day.

§ 8. A fourth general rule is that in old age the organs lose their vigor and strength, and the functions suffer a similar decay. The general loss of physical power, the *decline* of life in men after the age of forty or forty-five, is a matter of universal observation. All the organs appear

to lose ; bones, muscles, stomach, liver, and the organs of secretion generally. The brain decreases in weight also, but not so much as the muscles ; and therefore the brain, according to the experiments of Solly, is, on an average, heavier in proportion to the body at sixty years of age than at forty-five. And as the brain decreases in solidity, so does it lose force. Notwithstanding the constant and valuable accumulation of knowledge and experience, there is probably no human mind so strong at sixty as it was at forty. The majority of great intellectual works have been planned and executed by men in the blossom or bloom of manhood. The memory of events begins to fail before forty, and continues to fail rapidly after that age. At sixty the mind ordinarily becomes perceptibly weak, and if a man lives to eighty without falling into decided dotage, he is considered fortunate. Shakspeare, in his Seven Ages of Man, makes second childhood the natural termination of human life, and the truthfulness of his picture has been admired throughout the civilized world.

§ 9. A fifth general rule is that the exercise of the function wears away the organ, and that the wear and tear is proportioned to the amount of the exercise. The muscles are worn out by physical labor ; the worn-out material is carried off through the pores of the skin and the kidneys. The chemist knowing the material of which the muscles are composed, and knowing approximately the amount of waste caused by great or little exertion, can, by examining the secretion of a man's kidney, and knowing the amount of time in which it was collected, may guess pretty near the truth at the amount of work done by him in that time. So, also, the exercise of the mind is always accompanied by a proportionate wear of the brain ; and the worn-out matter is carried off through the urine, where it may be distinguished and its amount discovered.

§ 10. The sixth relation to which I shall here call attention, prevailing between mind and brain, as well as between animal organs and their functions generally is, that over-exertion of the latter causes pain and disorder in the former. Pain in the muscles is the consequence of extreme exertions of the physical strength ; pain in the eye follows undue exertion in the visual faculty ; pain in the stomach is

the result of overloading the digestion; and in a similar manner severe application of the mind causes pain in the head.

§ 11. A seventh general rule is, that, when a function is in active exercise, the organ demands a larger supply of blood than when at rest. This is true of the stomach, the liver, the kidneys, and the sexual organs. Its truth is confirmed by many facts within the knowledge of every observant man, and is recognised in all the works on physiology. The large supply of blood is necessary to carry off the greater-than-usual waste, and to meet the increased demand for new material. The rule extends also to the brain and the mind. When the latter is active, or excited, the blood flows through the encephalon with greater rapidity and force than when the mental faculties are at rest. Sir Astley Cooper observed and recorded a case of this kind in a youth, whose brain was laid bare; and the learned surgeon gave his students the sensible advice, that, in treating wounds of the brain, they should be careful to keep the mind quiet.

§ 12. Another general rule is that organs and functions are different in nature, the former being material, and the latter immaterial. The optic, the auditory, and the olfactory nerves, the stomach, the muscles, and the kidneys are material, and have qualities belonging only to matter, such as extension, weight, and color; and they are divisible into certain elementary substances, such as phosphorus, carbon, and so on; but their respective faculties,—sight, hearing, smell, digestion, physical strength, and secretion,—are immaterial, cannot be weighed, measured, or felt, nor be separated into substantial elements. Qualities of matter are in their nature immaterial; if they could cease to be immaterial, they would cease to be qualities. The strength of a stick, the length of a block, the weight of a stone are things immaterial in themselves, and they cease to exist when the matter on which they were dependent, takes a new form. A function in its very nature is a mere quality of matter,—the office, employment, or faculty of a material organ. Such is the definition of the word “function,” as given in our dictionaries, and we have no reason to deny its correctness. Like other organs and functions, the brain is material, and the mind is immaterial. The thinking faculty

has never been discovered by the knife, the scales, or the microscope, and like all other faculties, it will forever remain undiscoverable, except through its actions. Great importance is often attached by theologians to the *immateriality* of the mind, as though that were the only immaterial power which man possesses, whereas, on the contrary, there can be power which is not immaterial. Mind has no peculiar superiority in this respect over a thousand other functions of the animal frame.

§ 13. The *immateriality* of thought is often spoken of as something without analogy in the animal economy; but every act of an organ, or exercise of a function, is immaterial in the same manner. Thus, a movement of the arm, which is an exercise of the physical strength, as the function of that portion of the body, is immaterial, and, indeed, every motion, or action, from its very nature, must be so. Thought is an act of the mind, and like all other acts, can not exist as a substance, in and for itself.

§ 14. Physiology informs us not only that the mind is the function of the brain, but that different parts of the mind are the functions of different portions of the brain. The encephalon is composed chiefly of two divisions: the *Cerebrum* or upper part of the brain, and *Cerebellum* or lower and back part. Each of these parts has its peculiar mental function.

The Cerebellum is the seat of the power of governing the muscles in harmonious action. "We* find its degree of development corresponding pretty closely with the variety and energy of the muscular movements which are habitually executed by the species; the organ being the largest in those animals which require the *combined* effort of a great variety of muscles to maintain their usual position, or to execute their ordinary movements; whilst it is the smallest in those which require no muscular exertion for the one purpose, and little combination of different actions for the other. Thus in animals that habitually rest and move upon four legs, there is comparatively little occasion for any organ to combine and organize the actions of their several muscles; and in these the Cerebellum is usually small. But among the more active of the predaceous fishes, (as the

* CARPENTER.—Elements of Physiology.

shark,)—birds of the most powerful and varied flight, (as the swallow,)—and such mammals as can maintain the erect position, and can use their extremities for other purposes than support and motion—we find the Cerebellum of much greater size, relatively to the remainder of the encephalon. There is a marked advance in this respect, as we ascend through the series of quadrumanous animals; from the baboons, which usually walk on all-fours, to the semi-erect apes, which often stand and move on their hind-legs only. The greatest development of the Cerebellum is found in man, who surpasses all other animals in the number and variety of the combinations of muscular movement, which his ordinary actions involve, as well as of those which he is capable, by practice, of learning to execute.

“ From experiments upon all classes of vertebrated animals, it has been found that, when the Cerebellum is removed, the power of walking, springing, flying, standing, or maintaining the equilibrium of the body, is destroyed. It does not seem that the animal has in any degree lost the *voluntary* power over its individual muscles; but it can not *combine* their actions for any general movement of the body. The *reflex* movements, such as those of respiration, remain unimpaired. When an animal thus mutilated, is laid on its back, it can not recover its former posture; but it moves its limbs, or flutters its wings, and evidently not in a state of stupor. When placed in the erect position, it staggers and falls like a drunken man—not, however, without making efforts to maintain its balance.

“ When the Cerebellum is affected with chronic disease, the motor function is seldom destroyed; but the same kind of want of combining power shows itself, as when the organ has been purposely mutilated. Some kind of lesion of the motor function is invariably to be observed; whilst the mental powers may or may not be affected—probably according to the influence of the disease in the Cerebellum upon other parts. The same absence of any direct connection with the psychical powers, is shown in the fact, that inflammation of the membranes covering it, if confined to the Cerebellum, does not produce delirium. Sudden effusions of blood into its substance may produce apoplexy or paralysis; but this may occur as a consequence of effusions into

any part of the encephalon, and does not indicate, that the Cerebellum has any thing to do with the mental functions, or with the power of the will over the muscles."

§ 15. The Cerebrum is the seat of intelligence and memory. "The results † of the removal of the Cerebral Hemispheres, in animals to which the shock of the operation does not prove immediately fatal, must appear extraordinary to those who have been accustomed to regard these organs as the centre of all energy. Not only Reptiles, but Birds and Mammalia, if their physical wants be supplied, may survive the removal of the whole Cerebrum for weeks, or even months. If the entire mass be taken away at once, the operation is usually fatal; but if it be removed by successive slices, the shock is less severe, and the depression it produces in the organic functions is soon recovered from. It is difficult to substantiate the existence of actual sensation, in animals thus circumstanced; but their movements appear to be of a higher kind than those resulting from mere reflex action. Thus they will eat fruit when it is put into their mouths: although they do not go to seek it. One of the most remarkable phenomena of such beings, is their power of maintaining their equilibrium; which could scarcely exist without consciousness. If a rabbit, thus mutilated, be laid upon its back, it rises again; if pushed, it walks; if a bird be thrown into the air, it flies; if a frog be touched, it leaps. If violently aroused, the animal has all the manner of one waking from sleep; and it manifests about the same degree of consciousness as a sleeping man, whose torpor is not too profound to prevent his suffering from an uneasy position, and who moves himself to amend it. In both cases, the movements are *consensual* only, and do not indicate any voluntary power; and we may well believe that, in the former case as in the latter, though *felt*, they are not *remembered*; an active state of the Cerebrum being essential to *memory*, though not to sensations, which simply excite certain actions."

It is supposed that consciousness, which is not destroyed by the removal of either the *Cerebrum*, or the *Cerebellum*, must reside in the *Sensory Ganglia*, which are masses of nervous matter at the base of the brain, in front of the *Me-*

† CARPENTER.

dulla Oblongata ; but physiologists have not yet been able to obtain so much evidence to prove its connection with any special portion of the brain, as they have found in regard to intelligence and the power of movement. That consciousness has its seat in some part of the brain, is considered as conclusively established by the fact that pressure on the brain deprives the animal of that faculty.

§ 16. We have thus traced all the more important, general bonds of union between the animal organs and functions from the consideration of which we could hope for any light upon the relation between the brain and the mind ; and we have found that every analogy leads to the belief that the latter is a mere function of the former. The condition of the mind depends upon that of the brain ; the strength of the mind depends on the size of the brain ; the brain, like other organs, subject to the control of the will, must have rest a third or a fourth part of every day ; the mind decays with old age ; the brain is worn away by the exercise of the mind ; when the mind is excited, the brain requires an unusually large supply of blood ; and over-exertion of the mind causes pain in the head. All these facts furnish strong evidence of the immediate connection of the thinking power with the encephalic matter. Upon the theory that the mind is the function of the brain, we can explain all the mental operations as well, at least, as by any other means, while, if we adopt a contrary supposition, we become involved at once in a multitude of serious difficulties. Dreaming is explained very satisfactorily by supposing that part of the brain is asleep, and part in action ; and it cannot be explained at all, if the functional nature of the mind be denied : for dreaming is evidently a mental operation. The same remarks may be made of somnambulism, and cases of "double-consciousness." The phenomena of "unconscious cerebration," as Carpenter styles it, can be explained only on this theory. The most prominent of these facts is that the mind thinks unconsciously. Thus scholars frequently lay aside unfinished problems or dissertations for a few weeks, and in the mean time occupy themselves with other matter ; and when they return to their former labors, they find that their ideas are much clearer than while they were at work previously. The brain has been thinking on the

old train of ideas in the meantime, while the man has not been aware of any such operation.

Against all this evidence, no rebutting testimony of any scientific weight can be adduced, not a particle worthy of a moment's attention. The works of the natural philosophers may be sought through in the vain search for any such testimony. "No physiologist," says Carpenter, "could venture to deny, in the face of the crowd of facts, which force themselves on his attention, that all mental operations are inextricably linked with vital [material] changes in the nervous system."

§ 17. If the mind be a function of the brain, it follows as a matter of course, that it must expire with its organ. All functional activity and existence in the animal kingdom depend upon the animal life of the organs. When the eye is out, there is no sight; when the auditory nerve is destroyed, there is no hearing; when the muscles are cut to pieces, there is no physical strength; when the liver is dead, there is no secretion of bile; and we may safely say, that, when the brain dies, the mind dies with it, and dies forever. The grave is an eternal sleep.

§ 18. That a contrary doctrine prevails extensively among civilized nations, and that powerful religious interests and vulgar prejudices are interested in sustaining it, are facts known to all; but nevertheless, before such contrary doctrine can obtain any scientific foundation, it must overthrow not only the analogies heretofore referred to, but also other analogies drawn from physiology, and the domain of nature.

§ 19. If the soul live after the death of the brain, it must exist either with, or without the body. In the former case, how should the body be recalled to life? How should all its scattered particles be collected? Suppose that the scene of a battle had been turned into a wheat-field, and that the matter which formed the blood, flesh, and bones of the soldiers, fills the heads of the grain, and thence is transformed into bread and into the systems of thousands of other men, who die with that matter in their bodies—to which man would the matter belong, the first, or the second owner? And suppose there were a dozen owners? The slaughter of Waterloo served to enrich not that field alone;

the bones were carried across the channel, and the English man grew strong again on the remains of his brother. In cases of famine, in shipwrecks and sieges, where men have eaten human flesh, digested it, and shortly afterwards died—to whom would the flesh belong in the other life? When do the atoms collect? and where? What becomes of the body? Does it remain on earth imperceptible to mortal senses, or does it bid defiance to the laws of gravity, and fly off to another planet? Does it wander about naked, hungry, and shelterless, or is it furnished with food, clothing, and houseroom by some mysterious arrangements of Providence, intelligible only to the perspicacious minds of the elect? Do those who were infants, cripples, and men in second childhood, when physical death overtook them, become capable of moving about with ease? A thousand other questions, which should be answered, if we are to believe the existence of the mind in connection with the body in another life, might be asked, and never can be answered reasonably.

§ 20. But it may be said that the soul exists independently of the body, after death. If so, it must be such an "existence" as is now unknown to us. There are but two classes of "existences" known to philosophy and science—matter, and its qualities or conditions. Every existence belongs to one or the other of these classes. Time, eternity, space, forces, laws, and motions are the conditions and qualities of matter, without which they do not and can not exist. It was at one time supposed that heat, electricity, and light were "immaterial substances;" but it is now pretty well established that they are only peculiar oscillations or conditions of matter. If the mind exist after death independently of the body and brain, we must suppose it to be immaterial—that is a "thing" which is neither matter, nor a quality of matter, and which has no analogical relative in nature. It may be asserted that it has a related essence in God; but science and positive philosophy have never been able to discover God, much less to determine what his "essence" is: and the adoption of the wild suppositions of the theologians in opposition to the firmly established facts of science, would be much like philosophic suicide.

§ 21. Again, all known forces are qualities of matter. The mind is a force, and as such should likewise be a quality of matter. Scientific investigation has never discovered force, of any kind whatever, which existed of, for, and by itself. Every known force depends upon matter, and its strength is measured, as a general rule, by the amount of the matter in which it is generated. No force exists without matter, and no matter without force. Animal force, chemical force, and mechanical force are all alike in this respect; all depend upon matter for their existence, and upon the amount of their matter for their strength; and we have no evidence to justify the assertion that mental force forms an exception to the rule.

§ 22. Every thought in life is accompanied by a change in matter, and every action of any force implies such a change. Mind is a force, and exists, and manifests its existence only in thought. Now, what reason can we find for believing that it shall think and act in another life without those material changes which invariably accompany its thought and action here? No such reason can be found in the domain of science.

§ 23. The existence of mind necessarily implies animal life. We never have seen, or in any way perceived a thinking being, which was not an animal, possessed of a material body and a nervous system, and subject to that peculiar kind of combustion, which we call animal life; nor have we any scientific evidence, any clear philosophic evidence, any evidence at all, to justify us in supposing that a mind can exist without animal life, or that there is any other kind of animal life than that recognized in our physiologies.

§ 24. Man, during mortal life, can not think without brain. Shall it be different after death? Shall the dissolution of the body set the function free as from a prison? What virtue is there in death to release the mind from dependence for its sanity on the health, for its strength on the size, and for its existence on the animal organization and activity of the encephalon? Shall the man possess memory and intelligence beyond the grave without Cerebrum, and consciousness without Sensory Ganglia? Shall he see without eyes at all, when a mere bandage, over them here, makes him blind? Shall he hear without ears, smell without nose,

move without muscles, and talk without tongue? Or shall he live in utter darkness, loneliness, and quietude, unable to communicate with any thing beyond himself, and sit forever thinking of nothing? Shall the passions which are portions of the mind here, and which act only to demand gratification for physical wants,—shall they be active without reference to a material body? Shall the faculties which are necessary in earthly struggles, find a new sphere of action in the field beyond the Styx? Do the other animal functions, as well as the mind, exist independently of their organs? Do they journey together to the Elysian Fields? Do they, which were here united by the bonds of a material body, preserve their partnership there, or do they separate, and each go prowling about, seeking whom it may devour? Have the souls of brutes admittance to the human heaven? Are the apes admitted into genteel society? Do the defunct pursue the same occupations, are they governed by the same tastes as when in mortal life? Does the sainted cat chase, and tear, and torture the sainted mouse? Does the dog still worship the man, or is new light furnished in the higher spheres, so that he sees the imperfections of the featherless biped, and the folly of caninorphism? Are the sublimated souls dependent for their happiness upon mental occupation, and what is the subject of their thoughts and studies? Do they love and hate, fear and hope? Do they read the morning papers, and worship tailors? Alas! tell me, how do they live, ye who know so much of their existence!

§ 25. But if the soul be immortal, is it not rather singular that the immortality had a beginning? Would not such an immortality be somewhat like an eternity with one end cut off? And surely, nobody will assert that he lived in his present selfhood, before he was begotten by his parents in the flesh. And without his present selfhood, *he* could not have existed before. He was not himself, if, previous to his life, he had an existence, of which he now knows nothing.

§ 26. Some authors, particularly physiologists, who have seen the utter impossibility of denying the absolute dependence of the intellectual powers on the brain * have

* WIGAN, GARTH WILKINSON, and others.

argued that the mind and the soul are distinct, and that the latter is immortal, while the former dies with the body. They have, however, failed to tell us what the soul, as they conceive it, is ; they have failed to tell us whether it manifests itself in this life,—whether there is any proof of its existence ; they have failed to tell us, whether it can think, and remember, see, hear, and feel ; they have failed to tell us the proof that its powers and qualities, and the manners of its action are such as they think. This whole theory of the possession of a soul by man, independent of both mind and body, is too absurd to deserve an argument. It is the last turn of the doomed hare of immortality.

§ 27. The evidences which the theologians advance as proof of the future life, are man's desire for immortality, his curiosity to know the cause and end of his existence, his conceptions of perfection—implying the existence of such perfection—his tendency to connect himself with a personal deity, and an invisible world, and the necessity of a future life in which divine justice, whose requirements are not observed in this, shall be vindicated in rewards and punishments. As to the longing for immortality, I deny that there is any feeling in the human mind, except as the creature of superstition. Many nations have existed for centuries without the belief of another life ; and many of the present day have no expectation that their thinking powers will continue to exist after the death of the Cerebrum. Man has naturally no such longing ; his greatest longings are for happiness and sympathy on earth, and in those cases at least he generally finds that his longings do not furnish proof that they will be gratified. Man longs for pleasure, but he does not get it here ; why should he believe that he will get it elsewhere ? If longing may serve for proof of another life, it may prove also the conditions of that life, and one of the first conditions would be infinite and endless joy for all. The Christians may assert that this longing takes such a shape in their minds that they are certain—by an inward consciousness—that they will live forever. But this assertion is belied by their whole conduct ; they fear death as the king of terrors, and they can have little faith in another life, or they could not be so selfish, mean, and tyrannical to their weaker brethren, as they

are. If man had a longing for immortality, it would be as good proof for immortality in this life as in another.

We may conceive of a future state which might be the scene of endless pleasure and joy, intense beyond our present capacities and conceptions, indeed perfect, and if there were a possibility of our attaining such a condition we could not but hope for it, and look forward to it as an abundant recompense for the temporary sufferings of this life. The poet says that,

“If, as holiest men have deemed, there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore ;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labors light!
To hear each voice we feared to hear no more!
Behold each mighty shade revealed to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian, sage, and all who taught the right !”

Sweet indeed it would be ; but if as most Christian men have deemed, nine-tenths of the human race go to hell, how bitter 't would be to find one's self there ! And perhaps it were not entirely sweet to find one's-self in heaven, and to discover that all one's dearest relatives and friends, and the greatest benefactors of the human race, were broiling in the fiery furnace below, in full sight of their writhings and in full hearing of their groans !

Curiosity for a knowledge of the causes and ends of existence can scarcely serve as evidence of a future life—especially while men are making so much progress as at present in this life in gratifying that curiosity.

But it is said that divine justice is not satisfied in this world, and a future life with rewards and punishments is necessary for the settlement of the accounts of good and evil, run up by man while in the flesh. I shall elsewhere attempt to prove that there is no personal divinity, as this argument would assume, and that, if there were, man's actions could be directly traceable to him, and therefore not punishable by him. If there be any assumption at all that justice must be done, the reasonable presumption is that the doing must take place where the evil is committed—and the assumption that justice will be done in another life, merely because it is not done in this, is most unreasonable.

“Are* there any marks of a distributive justice in the world? If you answer in the affirmative I conclude that, since justice here exerts itself, it is satisfied. If you reply in the negative, I conclude that you have then no reason to ascribe justice in our sense of it to the Gods. If you hold a medium between affirmation and negation, by saying that the justice of the Gods at present exerts itself in part, but not in its full extent, I answer that you have no reason to give it any particular extent, but only so far as you see it at present exert itself.”

We have thus looked at all the testimony, worthy of note, for and against the dogma of the soul's immortality. That the evidence is all on the negative side, must, I think, be clear to every one. It was a bold and wonderful conception, and has served as a keystone for all the great creeds manufactured in the last twenty centuries, but mankind shall soon see the day when it will be reckoned among the cast-off garments, which the human soul has outgrown and found to be no longer wearable.

* Hume.

CHAPTER II.

PANTHEISM VS. ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

“ All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is and God the soul ;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze
Glow in the stars and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”—POPE.

§ 27. The Bible indirectly asserts, or is said to assert, the existence of an anthropomorphic deity called Jehovah, who is personal, conscious, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, self-existent, and independent of all other existence—who has or is a mind with thoughts and feelings similar to those of mankind—who created the material universe out of nothing by an act of his volition, and who now governs it by his will.

The belief in some anthropomorphic deity or deities, more or less similar to the Christian conception of Jehovah prevails, and for many ages has prevailed, among the greater portion of the human race. I deny the existence of such an anthropomorphism, and shall endeavor to show that belief in it is contradicted by many well-known principles of philosophy and science, and that its alleged evidences are mere assumptions.

§ 28. The *first* assumption of the anthropomorphists is, that because the mechanism of a watch proves that it was constructed by an intelligent personal maker, therefore, the much more wonderful mechanism of the universe and its various parts, proves that it was made by an intelligent personal divine creator. This assumption is the great, and it may be said, the only evidence which the Christian theologians have of the existence of their personal deity. Paley's *Natural Theology*, which is the best work on the anthropomorphic side of the question, is occupied almost exclusively with this assumption.

The argument from design, as proof of a personal designer, implies that we see a necessary connection between

cause and effect, whereas it is a well-known philosophic principle that we can see no such necessary connection.* We can discover only that one natural phenomenon is invariably followed by another; and we call the former "cause" and the latter "effect." We can discover only the sequence, not the absolute necessity of it. We may discover intermediate causes, and when we do so, we find in them the "why" of natural phenomena, but as for the relation between the cause and its immediate effect we are as blind as ever so far as necessary connection is concerned. If we see something new we can not have any knowledge of its qualities or effects by mere *a priori* reasoning; and the only means we have of obtaining such knowledge is by arguing from the qualities and effects of other substances to which the new thing appears to bear an analogy. If we have never seen anything to which it is in any way analogous, then we can have no knowledge of its qualities or effects, until we have learned them by experiment.

Now let us apply this principle to the assumption under consideration. We argue from the watch to the human maker, because we have often seen men, we know that they work according to certain rules which we call design, and we are familiar with their works. But if we argue that Gods work according to similar rules, we make an assumption which has no warrant in philosophy. No man has ever seen, or in any way perceived a God, or any work known to proceed from the hand of a God. To assert that Gods work according to design as man do, is indeed to assume the whole question at issue—whether there be a personal God. The apparent design in nature is admitted by all pantheists, but they assert that so far as we know the design exists only in our minds. We perceive a harmony between the processes of our thoughts and the processes of nature, and forgetting that we are products of nature, we measure her by ourselves. "Man designs, nature † is." "The adaptation of means to ends," says Kant, "was brought into the world by man's reflection, which

* This principle is admitted by the anthropomorphists. See BROUGHAM'S Natural Theology, Note III. There has been no attempt to refute Hume's great argument on the subject.

H. G. ATKINSON. Man's Nature and Development.

was then astonished at the wonders itself had created." Design implies the use of means for the attainment of ends ; whereas we must suppose that an omnipotent and perfect being (if we are to argue about his existence and nature on assumptions from our own constitution as the anthropomorphists insist) would attain his ends without the use of means—that in fact his thought of the end, and the desire of its attainment would be its attainment.

But if the adaptation of means to ends be so apparent in the universe, what is the end of its creation ? We can not judge that the adaptation of means is good unless we know the end in view. So far as I know, God is represented by theologians as having only one purpose in the creation of the universe, and that is his own glory. Jonathan Edward's expresses part of the Christian doctrine when he says that Jehovah "glorifies himself in the damnation of the ungodly men."* The Bible says (*Prov. XVI, 4*), "The Lord hath made all things for himself—yea even the wicked for his glory." On this doctrine John Adams † comments thus : "He created this speck of dirt and the human species for his glory ; and with the deliberate design of making nine-tenths of our species miserable forever for his glory. This is the doctrine of Christian theologians, in general ten to one. Now, my friend, can prophecies or miracles convince you or me that infinite benevolence, wisdom or power, created and preserves for a time innumerable millions to make them miserable for ever for his own glory ? Wretch ! What is his glory ? Is he ambitious ? Does he want promotion ? Is he vain, tickled with adulation, exalting and triumphing in his power and the sweetness of his vengeance ?" Perhaps the Christians will say that their opinions are misrepresented here ; but where shall we find them represented truly ? If they pretend to find in the universe a wonderful adaptation of means to ends, they must tell what the great end is. Will they confess that any end, which they can imagine, implies an absurdity ? Does their creator intend to furnish them with proof of his

* Sermon entitled "The Torments of the wicked in Hell no occasion of grief to the Saints in Heaven."

† Letter to Jefferson, Sept. 14. 1813.

existence and nature in his works, and yet leave no purpose perceptible in creation ?

§ 29. The *second* assumption is, that the forces inherent in matter, inseparable from it, and generated by it, can not suffice to explain all the phenomena of nature. This assumption is not only wanting in every kind of evidence to support it, but it is in direct contradiction to the whole teachings of natural philosophy. Science is "the region * of universal law." She asserts that the law reigns throughout the universe, that every natural phenomena occurs under a law, as the effect of a sufficient natural cause, and she denies most emphatically the existence of any force, which is not inherent in matter. Science recognises no supernatural force, and wherever she has seen the superstition of the supernatural entrench itself in a stronghold, she has laid siege at once, and has succeeded in blowing it up, or, at least, she maintains a rigorous blockade, varied with occasional fierce assaults, which can not fail to be successful at last. She was told that every natural occurrence is the immediate act of a supernatural anthropomorphism, and she proved the assertion false in a vast number of instances. She was told that there are no forces inherent in matter, and she proved the assertion false. She was told that there are no natural laws, and she proved that there are such laws. She was told that rain falls, because Jove wills it, and she proved that rain falls, because vapor is condensed in the air. She was told that Jehovah made the rainbow by an immediate act of his will ; she proved that the rainbow is the necessary result of the qualities of light and water. She was told that the earth was fashioned in its present shape by the hand of Elohim ; she proved that it had grown to its present shape without help from any hand. She was told that the power of an omnipotent anthropomorphism was shown in the government of the motions of the heavenly bodies ; she proved that those motions are governed by the power of gravitation. She was told that God made the universe as it is ; she proved that the universe had whirled itself into shape. She was told that the present animal and vegetable kingdoms were commenced

and turned out complete in one day from the workshop of Elohim ; she proved that they attained their present position by growth, from lower conditions, as gradual as the development of the man from the child. She was told that God made man a living soul, and breathed into him the breath of life, and she proved that there is no force or power in man which is not the necessary result of his material organization ; that there is nothing in his material organization which does not belong to the mineral kingdom, and that in his growth there is no evidence of any supernatural power, or of any power, except such as is inherent in matter. Supernaturalism has seen ten thousand of her strongholds destroyed, while she has never gained the smallest victory ; and she has no reason whatever to hope that the future will be more favorable to her than the past. Wherever superstition has asserted that it saw the hand of a personal God, there science has shown that the hand of God was not, and that the hand of the natural law was. She has proved that force is inherent in all matter, and inseparable from it ; indeed, that matter is conceivable and discoverable only by its conditions, qualities, and forces. She traces force above force, and law above law, following up the chain of causes through thousands of links ; but instead of discovering, or even approaching an anthropomorphic deity, she removes further from the conception of him every year, until it has become proverbial, that of three natural philosophers, it may be safely assumed that two are atheists—that is, unbelievers in anthropomorphism. Natural philosophy spoke her opinion truly through La Grange, when he asserted : “ I have searched through the universe for a God, but in vain.” Science believes in, and worships no God, save the natural forces, and the universal law. She has sworn eternal and unrelenting hostility to all sects which do not bow to her divinity, and she is now engaged in a successful war of extermination against all forms of supernaturalistic superstition. She asserts that every natural phenomenon is the effect of a natural cause ; and although she is not able in many cases to tell what that cause is, or, if she know the cause, to explain its mode of operation, she can at least appeal for the truth of her assertion to the corroborative testimony of a thousand analogies, knowing well

that the supernaturalists can produce no evidence, either direct or indirect, in support of their theories.

§ 30. The *third* assumption of the anthropomorphists is that the dominion of universal natural law, and a personal governor of the universe, are compatible with each other. If there be universal and invariable natural laws, as science says there are, then they govern all natural phenomena, and there is no room for the influence of a deity. If these laws have prevailed throughout matter since the origin of the universe, then the divine anthropomorphism can do nothing except, perhaps, wind up the great machine like an eight-day clock. If these laws are eternal, as science says they are, then he could wind his clock but once. The employment of natural laws and forces implies finitude in the creator, if there be one. Man uses secondary means, because he has not the power to do all his work directly; and if we are to argue from human analogies to the existence of a God, we must suppose, that, when he uses laws and forces as his agents, he does so because he finds them necessary as aids in the management of an extensive and complicated establishment.

§ 31. The *fourth* assumption is that the universe and the different classes of natural objects, more particularly living beings, *must* owe their original *creation* to a designing personality. Most of those who make this assumption admit that all the present phenomena of nature occur by the influence of natural forces under natural laws, but they say that the blind forces could never have produced thinking beings. It is upon "thinking beings," animals, &c., that the anthropomorphists now specially rely, for it has been pretty well established that all the changes and conditions in the mineral kingdom can be entirely accounted for by the principles of science. They argue that the cause must be greater than the effect, that the cause must contain the effect within itself: and they assert that the forces of dead matter do not comprise consciousness, sensation, thought and wisdom. But this last assertion is not justified by facts. We have no reason to assume that our consciousness is greater than the forces which pervade the rocks and seas and clouds. Suppose we take a fresh egg and examine it. There is nothing in it but such elements as are known

to chemistry—but such elements as are found in earth water and air : and these elements have no power or qualities except such as they would have in the mineral condition. The egg has neither sensation nor consciousness. It is as dead as the pebble from the seashore or the rain-drop from heaven. We place that egg in a warm place, where it is subjected only to natural influences, without the interference of any supernatural power, and a chick is produced which has sensation, consciousness and thought. It follows that the natural forces in the egg with the aid of external heat must have been greater than consciousness and sensation. Now man is only a chicken of higher development : his sensation, consciousness and thought are not radically different from those of the feathered biped ; and we can trace his generation as we can that of the chick. Every portion of his system is mineral, and his mineral elements possess none save natural forces—operating differently indeed from any process in the mineral kingdom, because the arrangement of the particles is different. But the pantheistic evidence does not stop here. It is not only probable that there are no supernatural forces in man because we can discover none, but it is as good as proved that those manifestations of thought, supposed to be superior to the blind forces of nature, are traceable directly to the latter as their cause. Electricity is evolved in thinking, and every thought is accompanied by a change of matter, such as accompanies, and indeed necessarily causes electrical action. The brain is a galvanic battery and the mind is its peculiar power. Thought is not greater than the flash of lightning in the sky : they are different developments of the same force. It may be considered a scientific certainty that gravity, electricity, magnetism, galvanism, affinity and the mental power are only different modes of action of the same natural force*, which pervades all matter, is inherent in it, inseparable from it, coëxistent with it from all eternity and to all eternity, and the only cause of all natural phenomena. It produces crystals, dew drops, turnips and chicks to-day from rude matter ; and we know that it might have given shape to the globe and to the uni-

* CARPENTER. Hum. Phys. §. 120.—GROVE. Correlation of the Physical Forces.

verse, as we are well satisfied that it did, though we were not eye-witnesses of the process. We have no reason whatever to assume that the matter which exists now, was once non-existent, that the forces, which pervade it now did not always pervade it, or that the causes, which now suffice to produce all the changes in nature, did not always suffice.

§ 32. The *fifth* assumption is that when the chain of causes arrives at a God, it must stop there. If we are to reason from the phenomena of nature, according to the analogies of human works, until we arrive at a divine anthropomorphism, must we not go on and argue that that divinity is the effect of a greater one? If man must have had a personal creator because the watch had one, will not the same argument prove that the creator of man must have had a creator likewise and so on in an endless chain? And if we assume that gods are like men in working according to design, may we not also assume that, like men, they propagate their species? What is there in our *knowledge* of the divine essence and nature to justify us in asserting that Gods are this and are not that? To assert that a God is perfect and therefore self-existent, and necessarily without parentage, is to assume that our imperfect minds can appreciate perfection in works; for unless the works be perfect we have no right to assume that the workman is. If we are consistent, after adopting the belief in a God, we must admit that he is only the descendant of an endless line of creators or progenitors.

§ 33. The *sixth* assumption is that there is only one author of natural phenomena. The anthropomorphists say that the harmony of nature is proof that everything was created by one divinity. But when they assert that nature is harmonious, they assert what is notoriously false. Nature is not harmonious. The whole universe appears to be the scene of an endless strife. Evil pervades every part of the earth. Wherever there is sensation, there is pain. Hostile feelings and hostile interests wage fierce and grievous war with each other not only in the bosoms of individual men, and between societies of men, but also among the brutes. The land, the sea, and the air are full of strife and torture and murderous death. An endless cry of woe is heard throughout all nature. One half of the animal crea-

tion is made so that it is compelled to murder the other half,—so that its pleasure consists in the sight of the torture of the other half. The history of humanity is a continuous picture of crime and suffering, and a correct description of the nations of the earth as they now are, would show, that one third of the human race obtain most of what they consider their comforts and pleasures by robbing and rendering miserable the other two-thirds. When I look at the record of the tyranny, the slavery, persecution, and superstitions which have prevailed among men, am I to find in them the evidences of the glorious harmony of nature, proofs of the goodness and infinite love of the author of the universe?

That the structure of the sound eye is wonderfully curious, and apparently adapted with skill far beyond that of man, to a purpose, I admit; but what shall I say of the eye which is blind? Does that exhibit design? If design be evident in healthy and intelligent adult men, where is the design in disease? Where is the design in that arrangement of nature by which a large proportion of the children born die before arriving at physical or mental maturity? Where is the design in abortions? Where is the design in the constitution of those women who are keenly susceptible to the attractions of love, but who are so formed that maternity is certain death to them? Who is it that shall set forth the wisdom and excellence of idiocy, malformation and insanity? If the various qualities, powers and beauty of the tender infant, the lovely girl, the ambitious youth, the loving mother, the great and good man demonstrate the existence of a perfectly wise and good God as their creator, what shall we think of the earthquake of Lisbon in 1755, destroying 20,000 such men, women and children at one blow. Did the joy and smiles which filled the city one hour before the event come from the same God who made the misery, excruciating torture and dying groans which followed? If so, the anthropomorphists must abandon their human analogies for once at least.

As the theologians argue from certain natural phenomena, according to human analogies, until they arrive at a personal deity, we may with as much reason argue from other natural phenomena of an entirely different nature, according to the same analogies, until we arrive at a differ-

ent deity. If love and peace, wisdom and healthy animal organization are the proofs of a good god, why are not war, and hate, animal disease, and malformation, the proofs of an evil god? When we see a large and elegant steamship, and are told that it and all its parts came originally from England, we infer that coal-miners, iron-miners, iron-founders, iron-forgers, lumbermen, sawyers, ship-carpenters, joiners, cabinet-makers, blacksmiths, painters, glass-makers, brass-founders, and a thousand other species of mechanics, who, as we know, aid in the construction and furnishing of steamships, must live there. Now, here is this universe, composed of parts, infinitely more varied and wonderful, and why shall we believe that it was made by one mechanic? When we examine the steamship carefully, and find that one portion of the joiner-work is done very well, and another very poorly, we say that different mechanics were at work here: one of them was a good workman, and another was not so good. If, after we had looked through this steamship, a person should tell us that it had been built by one man alone, and that his only reason for the assertion was the evident harmony of all its parts—that harmony implying the agency of but one mind—who would believe him? Would any sane man believe that the same mechanic had cut the trees, dug the coal, and smelted the iron ore? And yet men like ourselves, assert most positively, reasoning as they pretend from human analogies, and knowing nothing more than they can learn by such reasoning, that the same anthropomorphism makes the still-born and the live-born child, the healthy and the sick man, the well-formed man and the cripple, the philanthropist and the professional murderer, the master and the slave, the cat and the mouse, the wheat-field and the cholera, the quadruped, the bird, the fish, the snake, the shell-fish, the insect, the tree, the shrub, the sea-weed, the air, the water, the crystal, the aqueous and igneous rocks, the earth, the sun, the moon, and all the planets, stars, and comets. If we argue from the various phenomena of nature to their creation by mind, we should believe *that* mind to be in a vast number of beings, very different from each other in moral and intellectual character.

§ 34. The *seventh* assumption is that matter exists ab-

solutely, and independently of our minds, whereas it will hereafter be shown that we have no evidence of any such fact. We *think* that we perceive matter, but in reality we perceive only a thought of matter ; and whether the matter conceived by the thought really exists, or whether the matter be such as we perceive it, are questions for which we can obtain no solution. But unless it be proved that matter exist absolutely, how are we to argue from it to the absolute existence of its creator? If the matter exists only in our perception then God must exist there too, and he is no more than the hallucination which passes through the brain of a madman.

§ 35. The *eighth* assumption is that truth exists independently of man, and is discoverable by him. But we know that there is no truth except in the harmony of a proposition with our modes of thought. There is no truth in any proposition taken by itself. Then it follows that truth is merely a relative matter,—the creation, it may be said, of our own minds,—and God is reduced to a rank beneath ourselves. We make him, and then try to prove that he made us. He is at best a merely relative existence,—first me, then God. The nature of the existence of matter and truth will be considered further in a subsequent chapter.

§ 36. The *ninth* assumption is that infinity and personality may coexist in the same being. “You give,” says Fichte, “personality and consciousness to your God. What do you mean by ‘personality’ and ‘consciousness?’ certainly such qualities as you have found in yourselves, and marked with these names. But that they necessarily imply limitation and finite condition in their possessor, must appear clear to you, if you pay the least attention to the nature of the ideas attached to them. By making God conscious and personal, you make him finite and like yourselves, and you have not thought a God, as you intended, but only an image of yourselves.” “We feel and know ourselves to be persons,” adds Strauss,* “only as distinct from other similar persons outside of us, from whom we are separated as finite beings. Formed in and for this domain of finitude only, the word ‘personality’ loses every

* Christliche Glaubenslehre, § 33.

meaning beyond it. A being which has no other like it beyond itself, can not be a person. To speak of a personal divinity or a divine personality, appears from this point of view as a connection of ideas which exclude and annihilate each other. Personality is a self-hood fenced in against outsiders; absoluteness, on the contrary, is the comprehensive, unlimited, infinite, which excludes all personality."

§ 37. The *tenth* assumption is that creation is consistent with perfection and infinity. Creation implies that God felt a want, that he changed his purpose, that his mind became subject to the influence of new ideas, that at a particular moment he felt the necessity of doing what he had never done before—in short that he was not perfect.

§ 38. The *eleventh* assumption is that a personal divinity exists in some place while we can prove that he does not exist in any place within our reach. Here is a lump of coal. Will any of the anthromorphists assert that their divinity resides in it? If they will, I can prove the falsity of their assertion by scientific means. I can crush and burn, and weigh and examine and analyse it in a thousand different processes, but can find no mark of a personal or conscious God residing in it. Since personality and consciousness, as men understand the words, are always discoverable by certain signs not to be found in the coal, I conclude that no personal and conscious being resides in it. And I can go through all the earth in the same way, proving that the anthropomorphic God is not there. Where is he then? When I can prove that he is not in anything on earth, shall I believe, without direct or indirect evidence of the fact, that he is in some other portion of the universe? Why should he not be here as much as elsewhere? Shall I imagine that he dwells elsewhere, merely because I can prove that he does not dwell here?

§ 39. The *twelfth* assumption of the anthromorphists is that we can believe in their personal deity, independent of matter, consistently with the analogies of nature, consistently with the facts that we do not *know* of any existence save that of matter and its dependent qualities, that we *know* of no force which is not generated in matter, that we *know* of nothing which possesses life without material organization, that we *know* of nothing which possesses mind

without a material nervous system, that we *know* of nothing which can think without a change of matter, and that we *know* of nothing which can see and hear without eyes and ears.

§ 40. Such are the assumptions on which the anthropomorphist founds his faith, and with which he proves it; and most of them are absolutely necessary to his system. Other testimony he has none. The pantheist on the other hand makes no assumptions, but is ready to furnish sound and incontrovertible evidence for every principle which he advances.

§ 41. He says that matter and its properties or conditions are the only existences; that they have ever existed and will for ever exist, that the principal of these properties are forces which pervade every portion of the universe; that these forces are inherent in matter, inseparable from it, portion of its essence, and that they have given to it its present shape; that they govern it and produce all the phenomena of nature; that they act according to universal and invariable laws; that they are the soul of the universe; and that they arrive at consciousness only in the animal kingdom. They are the authors of all that is. They hold the stars in their places, swing the planets in their orbits and lead the solar system in its course through the universe. They create light and heat in the sun; they give life and motion to the earth; they lighten and thunder in the storm; they blow in the breezes; they keep the waters from stagnation; they rush madly over the precipice in the waterfall and burst from the bosom of the earth in the fires of the volcano; they roar in the torrent and murmur in the brook; they collect particles of carbon and crystallize them into the diamond; they embody themselves in the grand forms of the monster cypress, and pine tree of the Sierra Nevada; they show their capabilities of color and perfume in the flowers of the meadow; they give sensation to the worm, industry to the ant, intelligence to the bird and quadruped, masculine energy to the man, beauty to the woman, wisdom to the sage, eloquence to the orator, sublimity to the poet, and love to all the conscious beings of nature. They are the speed of the hare, the grace of the gazelle, the strength of the lion, the faithfulness of the dog, the courage of the

warrior, the devotion of the martyr, the light of the day, and the darkness of the night. They rejoice in the beautiful harvest, the warm sunshine, the refreshing breeze ; they rage in the battles, plagues, floods, and famines. They are the soul of all that is, of all that has been, of all that will be. Beyond them, there is nothing. They are subject to no dominion ; all existence is subject to them. They demand no worship ; they are deaf to all prayer ; they will be appeased by no sacrifice. They teach man to live for this life alone, and to recognize no duty except toward himself, or his fellowmen. They inspired their worshipper, when he wrote :

“ Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 't is her privilege
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy ; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.”*

* WORDSWORTH. Poem on Revisiting Tintern Abbey.

CHAPTER III.

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.

“The strongest motive always governs.”

§ 42. “Sin” is defined to mean a violation of a law prescribed by an anthropomorphic God, as “vice” is the violation of moral law, and “crime” a violation of criminal law. Christian philosophers assert that sin includes all kinds of vice ; and they assert also that all sins will be punished by everlasting pains in hell, unless they are excused according to Paul’s platform. On the other hand I say, that, if there were such an anthropomorphic divinity, which I deny, he could not in justice punish man for any of his actions. Men have a right to inflict pain as a preventive of crime ; but they have no right to inflict it for any other purpose. And the punishments, which they inflict, are very different in principle and effect from a hell, which, if it exists, being unseen, can not exercise its proper influence in preventing violations of the laws, and necessarily takes the character of a place where God gratifies his vengeance rather than vindicates his justice.

§ 43. Every man has a character of his own—a mental constitution, distinct, peculiar, and different from that of all other men. No two are precisely alike. Men born and bred together, under the same circumstances, are different from each other : one is brave, another cowardly ; one is talented, another stupid ; one is magnanimous, another mean. Their mental constitutions differ. The grand fact is that they have peculiar mental constitutions,—individual characters. Now, whence came those constitutions ? Did each man make his own mind ? Was it given to him by any person, for whose acts he is responsible ? Or was it not born with him ? Does it not depend for its nature and powers upon the brain ? That personal character has great influence on a man’s actions, no one will deny. A cowardly man does cowardly acts ; a brave man does brave acts ; a good man

does good, a mean man commits base actions. Men are not mean, brave, generous, etc., because they perform mean, brave, and generous actions ; but these actions are the consequences, the effect, the expression of a positive character : and that character does not change with the actions, but remains substantially the same through life. A cowardly man may, under the influence of an extraordinary impulse, perform a brave action, but that does not make him brave ; his character remains the same as it was before. A man's actions are influenced not by his character only, but also by external circumstances. Thus, if A. enter a crowd, and begin to strike right and left, B., who is a coward, will run, and C., who is brave, will stand and resist. No human action can be imagined which is not governed entirely and alone by personal character and external circumstances. But both these are beyond the control of the individual. A man can not become more or less brave, wise, generous, firm, prudent than he is. Among the many human inventions, there is none for altering a man's mental constitution. There is no imaginable process of hoping, praying, willing, or striving of any value for such a purpose. A man may change his position, but he can not change external circumstances. He may keep company with good, or bad men, but he can not, by a mere effort of mind, make them different from what they are. How then, since his actions are governed entirely by his character, and by external circumstances, both of them beyond his own control, how is he to be held responsible for those actions by a being who made the character and the circumstances ? But suppose that an exceptional case be found where an apparent change has taken place in a man's character,—that change must have been caused to a great extent by external circumstances, aided by forces existing in his own mind, which bore within itself the power to alter its mode of action ; and therefore, the change is not in itself a matter of merit or demerit.

Man is the slave of motives. He never acts without motive ; the very meaning of the word " motive " implies impulse to action. He must act with motives, and he can not act contrary to them. But a man's motives are not under his control. I have a hunger-impulse, a hate-impulse, a love-impulse, and other impulses which furnish the mo-

tives for my action, and which I can not get rid of, neither can I always determine with what strength they shall present their impulses. The strongest motive always governs. He who feels hungry, and has a palatable dish within his reach, and has no motive for not eating then and there, must eat, as a matter of necessity. Men cannot create motives by their will, and therefore are not responsible for their motives. In short, the will is governed by the mental constitution, and not the mind by the will.

§ 44. The purpose of all action is self-gratification. Every action is caused by a motive: every motive is the demand of a passion for gratification: every passion is part of the mind, part of the self. This man has a base mind; a mind in which base passions predominate; he has base motives, and commits base actions. His mental constitution tells him to be regardless of the pleasures of other men; to grasp greedily for everything which may conduce to his own immediate comfort. His neighbor has a magnanimous soul, magnanimous passions: his motives are generous, his actions are noble. He finds by experience that he has more pleasure in rendering others happy, than in looking merely after his own bodily comfort. He is generous not for the sake of making others happy, but because to make others happy, is to make himself happy; because the consciousness of having been generous, is one of his keenest pleasures, because the impulse to delight in the consciousness of noble actions, and in giving pleasure to others, is stronger in his mind than the desire for a small physical gratification. The martyr who dies at the stake, when he might save his life, and even be elevated to high honor, by deserting his religion, does the act in accordance with the dictates of his own mind; and by so doing gratifies it. He prefers glorious death to inglorious life. The man who jumps into the water, to save a drowning person, does it to gratify himself. He perhaps was present on a previous occasion when a man was drowned, and did nothing to save him; and probably spoke to himself, thus: "The danger is nothing; I do not fear it; to save him would have been a good deed; his death will cause deep pain to his friends and relatives; I might have saved that to them, and given them great joy; had I saved him, he would have always been a most devot-

ed friend to me ; his sight would have given me joy ; the remembrance of the act would be a source of inextinguishable pride and pleasure, so long as I live ; I would obtain great credit for doing a brave and noble deed ; the knowledge of such an action would follow me, wherever I should go, and confer an imperishable honor on me ; and the honor would be in proportion to the danger. The next time, I see a man drowning, I will try to save him, if there be any probability of success." If we imagine that a man can have any purpose in his actions, save self-gratification, we must suppose also that his motives do not come from his passions, or that his passions are not part of himself ; or that his will is independent of his passions.

§ 45. Philosophers say that every phenomenon has a cause, and that there is apparently a necessary connection between the cause and its effect. Now, if men's actions be the necessary effects of preëxistent causes, and those causes again the effects of other preëxistent causes, and so on up, mounting beyond the birth of the individual, he cannot be responsible for his actions. He is only a blind link in an endless chain. "According to the principle, which denies necessity, and consequently causes, a man is as pure and untainted, after having committed the most horrid crime, as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character anywise concerned in his actions, since they are not derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as a proof of the depravity of the other."* All those persons who argue that man is morally responsible for his actions to a creator, also argue that that creator is the great First Cause of every thing which exists, the necessary author of every particle of matter, of every movement of matter, of every natural phenomenon, and of every action. But "if human actions can be traced up by a necessary chain to the Deity, they can never be criminal, on account of the infinite perfection of that Being, from whom they are derived, and who can intend nothing, but what is altogether good and laudable. Or, if they be criminal, we must retract the attribute of perfection which we ascribe to the Deity, and acknowledge him to be the ultimate author of guilt and moral turpitude in all his

* † HUME, Essay on Liberty and Necessity.

creatures." And of course, in neither case, could he hold men responsible for their unavoidable actions, of which he was the necessary cause, the original author.

§ 46. Different mental faculties are the functions of different organs, which are distinct parts of the brain : and the strength of the faculty depends on the size of the organ. Thus the size of the organs determines the character of the man, and his character determines his actions : and as he cannot change his organs, or alter his character, so he cannot avoid doing as he does. Some phrenological writers have asserted that the organs were dependent for their size on the strength of the faculties, and not *vice versa*, but this statement is as absurd as it would be to say that the size of a muscle depends on its strength, instead of its strength on its size.

§ 47. Every intelligent man has a theory of duty which his reason teaches him, and his conscience urges him, to observe ; and which he desires to observe strictly, but in vain. He feels the struggle between the baser and higher impulses of his nature and he must submit occasionally to see the latter defeated. No man ever did on all occasions successfully resist temptation to do evil, no matter who or what he may have been, or how strongly he desired to do good only. And shall we believe that every man can do what all men would do if they could, and what no man ever did ? The idea is absurd. When all men have the power to resist every temptation to do evil, they will no longer be men.

§ 48. The theories of the theologians are founded on the supposition that there is a special mental faculty called the "Will," which has the duty and power to restrain all the evil impulses. But really, in most cases the impulses have more power to restrain the will than the will to restrain the impulses. The will is nothing more than "a vicissitude of the supremacy of the faculties ;"* and what the will shall determine to do, depends principally on the strength of the different parts of the mind. If any person suppose that he can govern his processes of thought, let him ask himself whether, when on some occasion, in the presence of a young and beautiful person of the other sex, a desire to possess her has not arisen in his mind,—a desire which

* Vestiges of Creation.

would recur to his thoughts in defiance of his most earnest endeavors, by willing to drive it away. The will, acting on behalf of various faculties, may exercise much influence on the thoughts, but is far from having the power to control them. If it had such power, men would banish from their minds the thoughts which cause them to be unhappy. Man is a free agent to a certain extent ; he can do as he pleases, but he must please to do what his character dictates. He may be compared to a chained bear : he is the bear, his character is the chain, and external circumstances are the post to which he is fastened.

§ 49. But the Christian deities are not content with threatening eternal and infinite misery for *deeds* done in violation of the alleged divine commands : they threaten similar punishments to those who do not *think* that the orthodox platform is the only safe conveyance to heaven. The Catholic tells me that, unless I believe the Church to be infallible, I shall go to hell ; the orthodox Protestant tells me that, unless I believe in three Gods, I shall go to hell ; the strict Unitarian tells me that, unless I believe in one God, I shall go to hell ; the Mohammedan tells me that, unless I believe in the Arabian prophet, I shall go to hell ; and the Mormons tell me that, unless I believe in Brigham Young, I shall go to hell. In fact, it matters not which way I go, I shall be condemned to at least a dozen hells, by as many different sects, disappointed of the little aid and comfort which they might have derived from my consenting to wear the yoke of their several creeds. If the rejection of any doctrine be a proper cause for punishment, then belief must be a matter of merit and demerit ; then belief must be subject to the government of the will ; then men should desire to believe *that* doctrine to be true which is the road to heaven, and not that which has the most evidence to support it, for in the latter case they would read the Bible and the Age of Reason in an impartial state of mind, with a disposition to give them "mere indifferent fair play" — a disposition highly reprobated by the Church. How a man can learn that a doctrine is the road to heaven, except because it is true ; how he is to find out that it is true, except by examining the evidence on both sides, with a mind as nearly impartial as possible ; and how he can assert that

he can control his belief by his will, are matters incomprehensible to me. The Christians tell me that I ought to desire to believe their dogmas, and that, if I should desire to believe, I could believe. That is to say, after I have made a full and, as I think, an impartial examination of their evidences and arguments, and after having arrived at the conclusion that their creed is false and prejudicial to the interests of humanity, it is still my duty to desire to believe it. Perhaps other men can govern their belief by their will, but I can not. The offer of ten millions of dollars cash reward for my belief, during the space of but five minutes, that the sky is green, would make me wish to have such a belief ; but the wish would be a vain one. No man, by the conscious influence of his will alone, can govern his belief—no man ever did—no man ever can—and without the possibility of such government, there can, according to human ideas of justice, be no merit or demerit in belief.

The constitution of the human mind requires a man to have prejudices in favor of the form of faith which prevails among all those whom he knows, loves, and respects. The Brahmin youth is prejudiced in favor of Brahminism ; the Mohammedan youth in favor of Islamism ; the Boodhist youth in favor of Boodhism ; the Mormon youth in favor of Mormonism ; and the Christian youth in favor of Christianity. There is no more merit in one prejudice than in another ; and yet, just that prejudice determines the creed of three-fourths of the human race. The different creeds have their source in humanity itself ; “ they are only so many steps in the development of mankind.”

“ The two and seventy sects, on earth confessed,
Collective dwell in every human breast.”*

* ALGER.—Oriental Poetry.

CHAPTER IV.

ABSOLUTE TRUTH UNATTAINABLE BY MAN.

“All that we know is that we know nothing.”—SOCRATES.

§ 50. The purpose of this book is to seek truth, and the question now arises : “ What is truth ? ” The lexicographers say, it is “ conformity to fact.” But that definition gives no light, for the question immediately follows : “ What is fact ? ” There is a class of philosophers who say that man can not prove any thing to be *absolutely* true. We shall examine this proposition, and if we find it to be correct, we shall have to conclude, that Christianity is built on a sandy foundation. We learn, what is ordinarily called “ truth,” or “ the reality of things,” by sensation and reason,—and by those only. It was at one time asserted that men have “ innate ” ideas—thoughts born with them ; but this theory is now exploded, and metaphysicians agree upon the two faculties just mentioned as the sources of all our knowledge. Some metaphysicians say that there are two kinds of reason,—the “ practical,” and the “ pure ; ” but I shall use the word “ reason ” in its common and plain meaning, as understood by every man. Consciousness, which informs us of many facts, is a kind of sensation—that kind which perceives our own thoughts and impressions.

§ 51. First then we shall consider the senses as means of learning the truth. It is a well understood principle among natural as well as speculative philosophers that the impressions upon the senses are sometimes not trustworthy ; their reports can not be relied upon as infallible. Sound, light, color, heat, and odor are conceived by the barbarian as “ things,” material in their nature ; but scientific investigation has demonstrated that they are merely impressions upon the senses caused by different vibrations of the gaseous, or æthereal mediums, which surround the body. Bass sounds are caused by slow vibrations of the air, striking upon the tympanum of the ear · shrill sounds, by rapid

vibrations. So the various ideas of colors are the impressions on the retina, caused by the different kinds of oscillations imparted to the light-medium, by the object which we look at. Reason discovers the errors of the senses in these cases. In fact, the senses may be said to teach nothing clearly. If it were possible that a man should grow to mature years without the use of any of his senses, and could then be gifted with the use of all of them at once, he would at first derive little knowledge from them. Things seen would appear upside down, and as though immediately against his eyes; and it would require a long course of teaching, and reasoning, before he could know what he saw. His sense of touch would not teach him at first where the sensation was received; he would have to learn by experience to connect the reports of the various nerves with the different parts of the body. If hurt, he would feel the pain, but could not tell whence it came. And thus it would be more or less with all the senses: the teachings all have no clearness, until the mind has learned to distinguish the force and meaning of the different impressions after much counter observation, remembering, and comparing. And when once a certain sensation has become connected with a certain idea, it is almost impossible to separate them. Thus men whose legs have been cut off while they were under the influence of chloroform, on returning to consciousness, but before learning of the amputation, have complained of pain or itching in different toes of the severed foot, and have insisted that they were not in error as to the locality of the pain. When told that the leg was cut off, they have obstinately refused to believe it, and could only be convinced by seeing or feeling with the hand. The nerves which led to the amputated parts were irritated, and the sensation was referred by the brain at once to the place where the nerve came to the surface. So when a man's nose is mended with skin from his forehead, any sensation in the new flesh is at first referred to the place with which the sensations of its nerves were from childhood associated. The feelings of touch and pain are perceived as though the different parts of the body were exclusively conscious of those sensations which originate in them severally. Thus, if the finger be

pinched, the pain is felt there, and not in the head, or any other part of the body ; but the sensation is nevertheless in the brain. When the pain is perceived, the memory immediately discovers the place, by former experience, and the feeling is referred by the mind to that place alone. But if the nerve be cut which connects the finger with the brain, then the finger can be carved or bruised in any imaginable manner, and the man has no sensation in it, or from it.

§ 52. All the senses are subject to "illusions" and "hallucinations." It is a notorious fact that many very learned, upright, and strong-minded men suppose that they see, hear, and feel spirits. Socrates frequently heard a "divine voice" as he called it, warning him not to act, as he thought of acting ; and he heard this voice often from childhood until the time of his death ; and he always obeyed it. Joan of Arc frequently saw and conversed with angels, from the time she was thirteen until she was eighteen years of age, when she was executed. Tasso saw and conversed with a spirit in the presence of his friend, Manso. Luther saw the devil, and threw his inkstand at him. Swedenborg saw and conversed with spirits. Brutus saw a phantom which told him, it was his evil spirit, and would meet him at Philippi. There are not less than a thousand persons in the United States now, who say that they frequently see or hear, or both see and hear, the spirits of deceased human beings, and these persons—like those specially named above—sincerely believe in the positive reality of these ghosts, and are beyond the suspicion of any kind of dishonesty. This perception of ghosts is called a "hallucination" by the physiologists, and a special chapter is allotted to it in many of the medical text books on physiology and insanity, it being generally considered a species of cerebral disease.

§ 53. In dreams, too, the senses deceive us. We hear, see, feel, taste and touch, and within the space of a few minutes dream of living through long years. The dream-impression remaining on the mind, is often as strong as that made by the sensations in the waking state, and we can distinguish the recollection of the dream from the recollection of the reality only by seeing that the latter is

connected regularly with our memory of precedent and subsequent events, whereas the dream is cut off at both ends.

§ 54. We learn then by the comparison and criticism of our various sensations that the senses often deceive us, and that we must scrutinize their impressions closely with reason, before receiving them as trustworthy. The consideration of the nature of our perceptions, will also show us, that the testimony of the senses alone will not suffice to prove anything to be absolutely true. I perceive before me a small block of marble ; it is characterized by a certain length, breadth, thickness, color, weight, solidity, chemical nature of its elements, and mechanical arrangement of its particles. I perceive these characteristics, and, indeed, I do not perceive anything else. I perceive the properties of the matter, not the matter itself. But my idea of these properties is merely relative ; I can conceive the property of one object only by comparing it with another. There is no absolute length ; I arrive at the idea only by comparing things which differ in length. So too with color ; if I could perceive but one color, there would be no color for me ; it would be mere light and shade. The blind have no conception of color, and perhaps the nearest approach to such a conception was on the part of the blind man, who, when asked to give a description of scarlet, said, it was like the sound of a trumpet : and the same may be said of all the properties of bodies. Something depends, too, on the condition of the organs of sensation : in certain diseases all objects appear to the eye as if tinged with different colors, according to the nature of the malady. Things which appear soft to the tough hands of a man, are hard to the tender fingers of infants, etc. We cannot take cognizance of the ultimate nature of matter, "nor can* data be furnished by observation or experiment, on which to found an investigation of it." "Of things,† absolutely, or in themselves, we know nothing, or know them only as incognizable ; and we become aware of their incomprehensible existence only, as this is indirectly revealed to us through certain qualities related to our faculties of knowl-

* BRANDE.

† SIR WM. HAMILTON.

edge. All that we know is, therefore, phenomenal, phenomenal of the unknown." We cannot perceive matter itself, and we cannot prove the absolute existence of those properties which we connect with the idea of matter.

I say that I perceive not the matter, but only its properties ; and I can perceive the properties only as in relation to other properties. But do I really perceive the properties ? No ; I perceive only my idea of the properties. My perception is conscious of a thought, and of nothing more ; it is impossible from its nature that it should be conscious of any thing else. I think that I see the block of marble, and that thought is the only evidence which I can have that I do see it. I can not go beyond that thought to obtain evidence that the marble exists, and is such a thing as I conceive it to be. I can not discover any necessary reason why the thought should accurately represent the existence and nature of the marble. Man knows of his existence only by thinking, by an idea ; he knows there is a sun only because he sees it, because he thinks he sees it. He can not get beyond the idea ; perhaps the idea agrees to the actual fact ; perhaps it does not ; perhaps there is nothing but the idea. There is no positive evidence—not the remotest particle of evidence—that any thing exists independently of man's idea, or that, if there be any independent existence, it is as the idea represents it to be. "All the choir of heaven, and furniture of earth, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind," and subsists only while it conceives them. All things, as conceived by us, may be classed under two heads, the "Me," and the "Not-me." The Me is myself, the idea of my own thought ; the Not-me is my idea of matter and of all things, except my thought. For all that we can know to the contrary by absolute proof, the Not-me exists only in the imagination of the Me. The latter, considered philosophically, is not only the cause, but also the essence of all existence, and of all reality.* If substance exists absolutely, then the Me is the only substance, and the Not-me is merely qualities of it. Every thing exists only in and for the Me. Take away the Me, and nothing is left. It makes the conditions of all knowledge,

* SCHELLING.—*Das Unbedingte.* §§ 10. 11. 12. 13.

describes the spheres of every thing conceivable, and, as the Absolute and All-including, governs our whole system of thought. All phenomena are merely conditions of the "Me." The universe lies inside of the thinker, not outside of him. In referring all impressions to a *subjective* source, and denying *objective* existence, the idealist returns to his original mode of thought. "If," says Morell, "we could, by any means, transport ourselves into the mind of an infant, before the perceptive consciousness is awakened, we should find it in a state of absolute isolation from every thing else in the world around it. Whatever objects may be presented to the eye, the ear, or the touch, they are treated simply as subjective feelings, without the mind possessing any consciousness of them as objects, at all. To it, the inward world is every thing, the outward world is nothing." Such is infant's mode of thought, to which modern philosophy endeavors to return, in so far as such a thing is possible. Nearly all the metaphysicians of the last hundred years were idealists, and such men as Diderot, D'Alembert, Mackintosh, Dugald Stewart, Brougham, and Carlyle, have approved Turgot's opinion that he, who has never rejected the absolute existence of matter, has no talent for metaphysical reasoning. The great opponent of this idealistic theory was Reid, and he substantially confessed that it was impregnable against every possible attack. His great argument was that the idealists did not believe their own doctrines, for they would not run themselves through with swords. But there is really no inconsistency between the practise and theory of the idealists; they always have acknowledged the relative existence of matter,—such a kind of existence as for all practical purposes is the same as if it were absolute. Man is the slave of his dream—of his idea. He is governed by certain laws which must not be violated. The sword is a mere idea, and yet, to run a sword-idea through a man-idea, is to violate a rule of the dreamer's existence, and a pain-idea, or a death-idea, is the consequence.

§ 55. Memory may be said to be the present consciousness of past events—the reviving of old sensations. This is a kind of knowledge which, like other kinds, has its defects. We imagine sometimes that real events occurred only in dream, and that events dreamed occurred in actual life, and

in such cases, there is no certain criterion of absolute knowledge. Shakespeare* represents a certain Christopher Sly, a drunken vagabond, who had lived in misery and dirt all his life, as having been taken up while intoxicated and asleep, and placed in bed in the palace of a lord. When he had grown sober and awakened, he found a multitude of servants waiting upon him, and the principal ones asked anxiously how he was, expressed great joy at his recovery, and wished to know his commands. He replied that he was quite well, he was Christopher Sly, he dwelt in such a place. They told him that he was the hereditary lord of that castle, but had been crazy since childhood, and had supposed himself to be a certain Christopher Sly, vagabondizing, drinking bad liquor, keeping low company, and lying in the gutters. Finally Christopher was persuaded that all his past life was a dream, and he began to act the lord. He soon got drunk, his fine clothes were taken off, his old rags put on, and he was again placed in the gutter. When he came to himself, it was some time before he could get back to the idea that he was only Christopher Sly, and then he came to the conclusion that his lordship was only a dream. In this story Shakespeare has painted the nature of human knowledge truly. No man has any more secure knowledge of the past than Christopher Sly had : and *he* acted in accordance with the principles which ought to govern a philosophic mind. There is no man who, by skillful management, might not be brought to believe all his past life to be only a dream, an unreality,—the wild imaginings of insanity.

§ 56. We may now pretty safely say that the testimony of the senses can not suffice to prove any proposition to be *absolutely* true : and therefore we turn to reason and ask what she can do. She tells us at once that she is fallible : and in such case, we cannot rely upon her conclusions as infallibly or absolutely true. Truth is said, by metaphysicians, to be “necessary” or “contingent :” arguments are “demonstrative” or “probable.” The only truth which is “necessary” and the only arguments which are “demonstrative” are found in mathematics, or what are called the “*exact sciences.*” Men may and will differ in their opinions about moral, political and religious philosophy and about

* Prologue to ‘Taming the Shrew.’

natural science : but all men admit the truth of the proposition that two and two make four : and so of other mathematical propositions generally. But if we examine the nature of these propositions we shall find that they are "necessary" truths, and their "arguments" are "demonstrative" and their science is "exact" because the truth is implied in the definition of the original terms. No man will deny that two and two make four, simply because the word "four" means something made of two and two. The absolute impossibility of escaping from a definition was first discovered by a little boy in a Sunday school, whose class was told by the teacher that God could do anything. The scholar said he knew something that God could not do. After a proper expression of horror at the supposed blasphemy, the teacher demanded what it was that God could not do. The juvenile skeptic replied, "He can't make a four-year-old colt in a minute": and after some study the teacher concluded that the boy was right ; even Omnipotence must fail in attempting such a task.

§ 57. Perhaps in no point is the inability of the mind to discover absolute truth shown more strikingly than in the fact that we cannot discover any *necessary* connection between cause and effect. We speak of a necessary effect, but the necessity is a mere presumption. We know that certain phenomena are always followed by certain other phenomena, and we call the former cause and the latter effect : and because the connection is invariable we call it necessary. We learn the connection by experience : we never could learn it by abstract reasoning. If some new natural object were discovered to-morrow, we could not know what effect it would produce under certain imaginable circumstances except by experiment, or guessing from the result of previous experience with other substances to which the new object appeared to bear a resemblance. We may discover a vast number of intermediate causes intervening between remote causes and effects, but the necessity of the connection is none the more clear. A blow on the hand gives pain, because the flesh is bruised ; because the bruise prevents the healthy circulation of blood ; because without healthy circulation of the blood, the nerves are not supplied properly with the material requisite for their nor-

mal action, and because when they have not such material they complain of pain. But we have come no nearer to the discovery of the *necessary* connection after tracing all these intermediate steps than we were before. The physiologist will argue to you that the blow *must* give pain, because—and here he traces all the intermediate causes, and shows that these causes *always* have produced these effects, heretofore and *therefore* must always do so hereafter. “Philosophy” says Solly, “is the discovery of the universality of a fact.” We say that wherever one phenomenon is invariably followed by another, the former is the cause and the latter the effect. And yet we do not say that day is the cause of night or night of day. But in these cases we discover intermediate sequences which connect day and night with the changing positions of the sun, and not with each other in the relation called cause and effect.

§ 58. Reason cannot alone prove anything to be absolutely true, because in its very nature it can only draw conclusions from admitted premises. All argumentation, which is the only and exclusive domain of reason, may be reduced to syllogisms. Every syllogism is necessarily composed of three parts, a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Here is an example :

Major Premise.—All men are mortal.

Minor Premise.—James is a man.

Conclusion.—James is mortal.

Without a major and a minor premise, expressed or understood, there can be no syllogistic conclusion—no sound argument. The truth of the two premises is always assumed in any single syllogism, but they may be proved in other syllogisms. The major premise in the above syllogism may be proved as follows :

1. All animals are mortal.
2. All men are animals.
3. All men are mortal.

By rising in that manner from one syllogism to another, we at last arrive at the great original premise, on which all knowledge is based—“I exist.” As this is the last of all premises, so it cannot be proved by reason. We must accept it for what it is worth in the testimony of

consciousness. "The absolute existence of the 'Me,'" says Schelling,* "lies beyond the possibility of objective proof ***. My selfhood implies an existence which precedes all thinking and representation. Its existence consists in its conception of itself, and it is conceived because it exists, because it exists and is conceived only so far as it conceives itself." "Except† some first principles be taken for granted, there can be neither reason, nor reasoning. It is impossible that every truth should admit of proof, otherwise proof would extend ad infinitum. If ever men attempt to prove a first principle, it is because they are ignorant of the nature of proof." Abercombie, one of the most acute of the late metaphysicians, whose associations and character were not favorable to idealistic prejudices, says: "Many ingenious but fallacious arguments were at one time wasted in attempting to establish by processes of reasoning" the propositions "that we exist, that external things are as they appear, that our memory must tell truth, and that every event must have a cause"; and in making that admission, he speaks the general opinion of the speculative philosophers of the age. "It is supposed‡ by many, that by means of reasoning we can arrive at conceptions, of which we have no previous idea, whatever. This supposition, however, it is almost needless to say, will not bear examination. Whether our reasoning be inductive or deductive, the conclusion of the whole is always virtually involved in the premises. To reason at all, we must have certain data, and must also employ distinct and intelligible terms; but it is evident these data and these terms always imply an amount of experience in the question, without which all our reasoning would be empty, and beyond which our conclusion can never go. Logical reasoning alters the *relations* of our ideas—it never transcends them. It makes our knowledge more distinct: it does not expand the horizon of our mental vision." Between the physiologists, who prove that mind cannot exist, except as dependent upon matter, and the psychologists, who prove that the existence of matter cannot be demonstrated, absolute truth seems to fare badly.

* *Das Unbedingte* § 3.

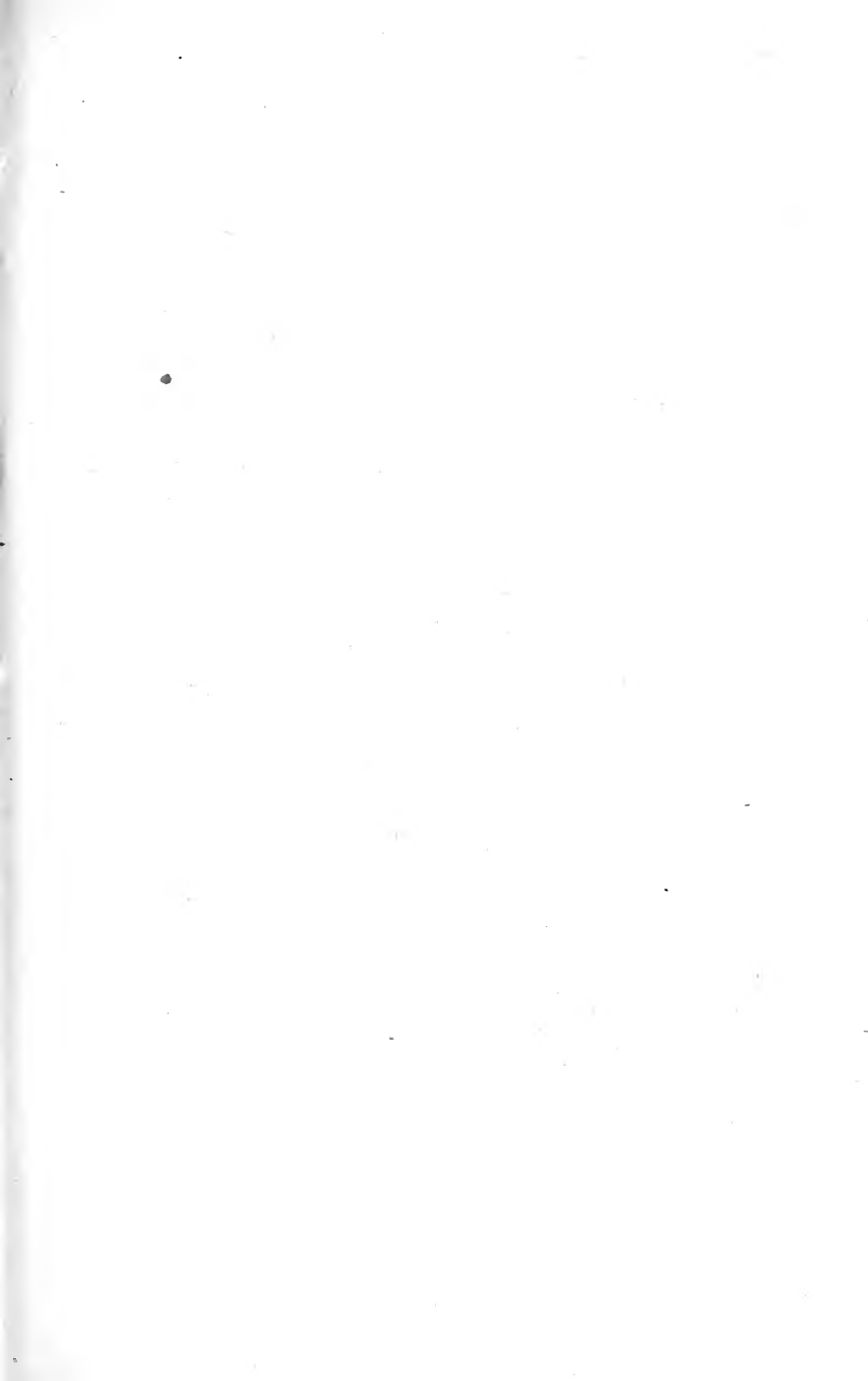
† ARISTOTLE. Translated in Abercombie on the Intellectual Powers.

‡ MORELL. *Philosophy of Religion*.

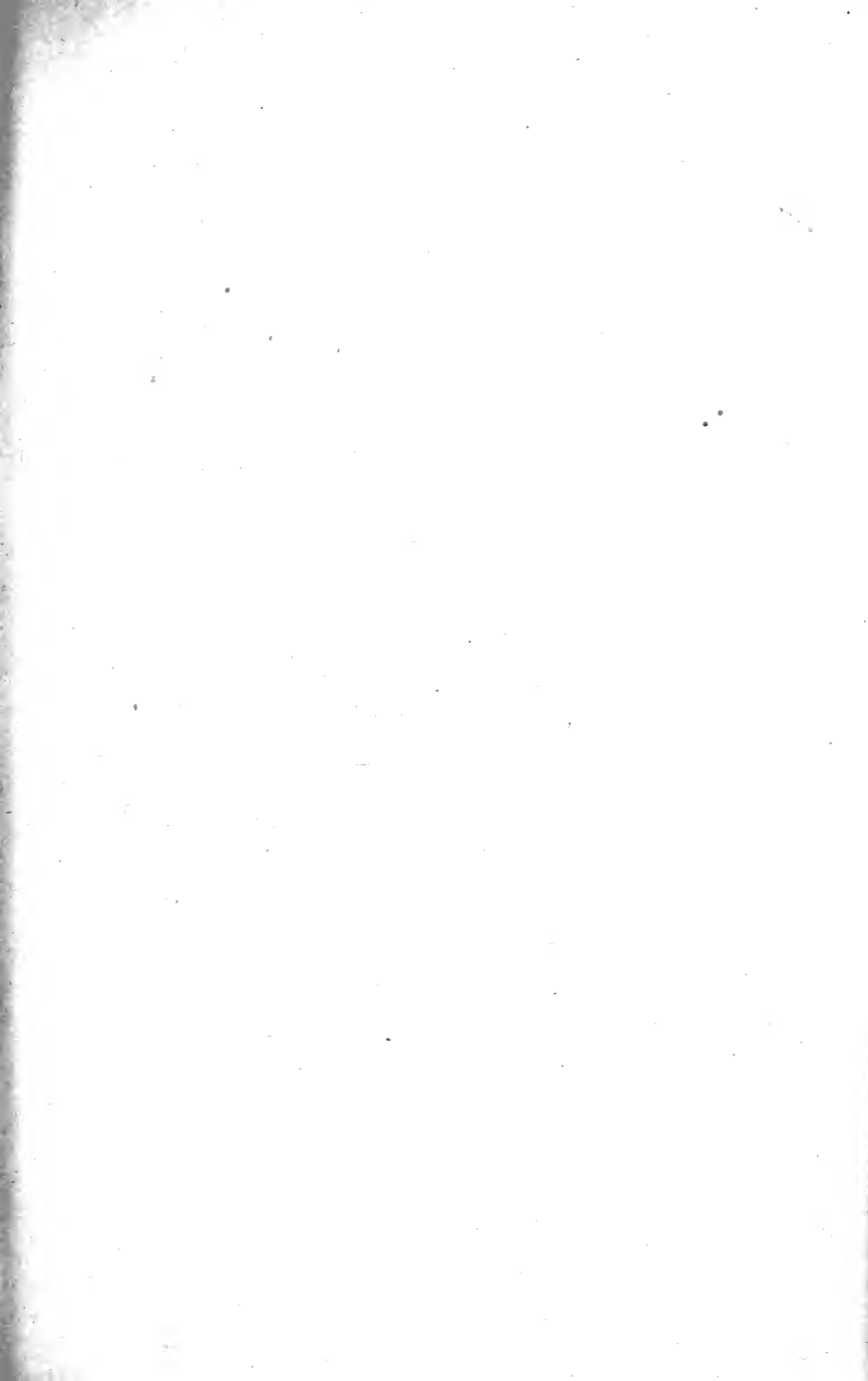
It may be asked, "If there be no truth, why this book?" But I have not said there is no truth; I have merely denied the possibility of attaining *absolute* truth; I recognize the existence and high importance of relative truth. I admit, that men must live as if there were an absolute, outward, material world; I do not wish a body to kick me, because I assert that he cannot prove himself to be an actual body, independently of my thought. I merely wish to question his absolute being, when he comes to dogmatize at me.

§ 59. But what is truth? The Boodhist, the Mohamadan, the Brahmin, the Christian, and the Mormon, each asserts that his faith is true, and each is ready to prove the sincerity of his assertion by martyrdom, if necessary. Is there no truth? Or may a dozen propositions, inconsistent with each other, all be true? How shall I know whether my neighbor is right or myself, when we come to different conclusions, reasoning from the same premises? Is there no criterion of truth, to which all mankind can resort for the purpose of harmonizing their opinions, as weights and measures are regulated according to standards fixed by government? No! there is no such criterion. The history of Philosophy may be sought through in vain for any touchstone by which truth is to be known. Christian theologians once pretended that they had found the standard in the Bible, but the pretension is now abandoned. Truth is not "conformity to fact," but it is "the conformity of a proposition, with the constitution of the human mind." What that constitution is, every one must discover for himself, in his own soul; and since minds are not all alike, so truth is not the same for all men. Beauty and morality are akin to truth, in so far as they are the conformity of moral principles, or of objects perceived by the senses, to the constitution of the mind; and in regard to them, too, there are diversities of opinions among men equally wise and benevolent. Much that is true for me, is false for my neighbor. Scarcely any proposition can be imagined more evidently true to a savage, than that the sun revolves round the earth, or moves through the sky from East to West every day; and it is just as evidently false to me. Why do we differ? Because our states of mental enlightenment

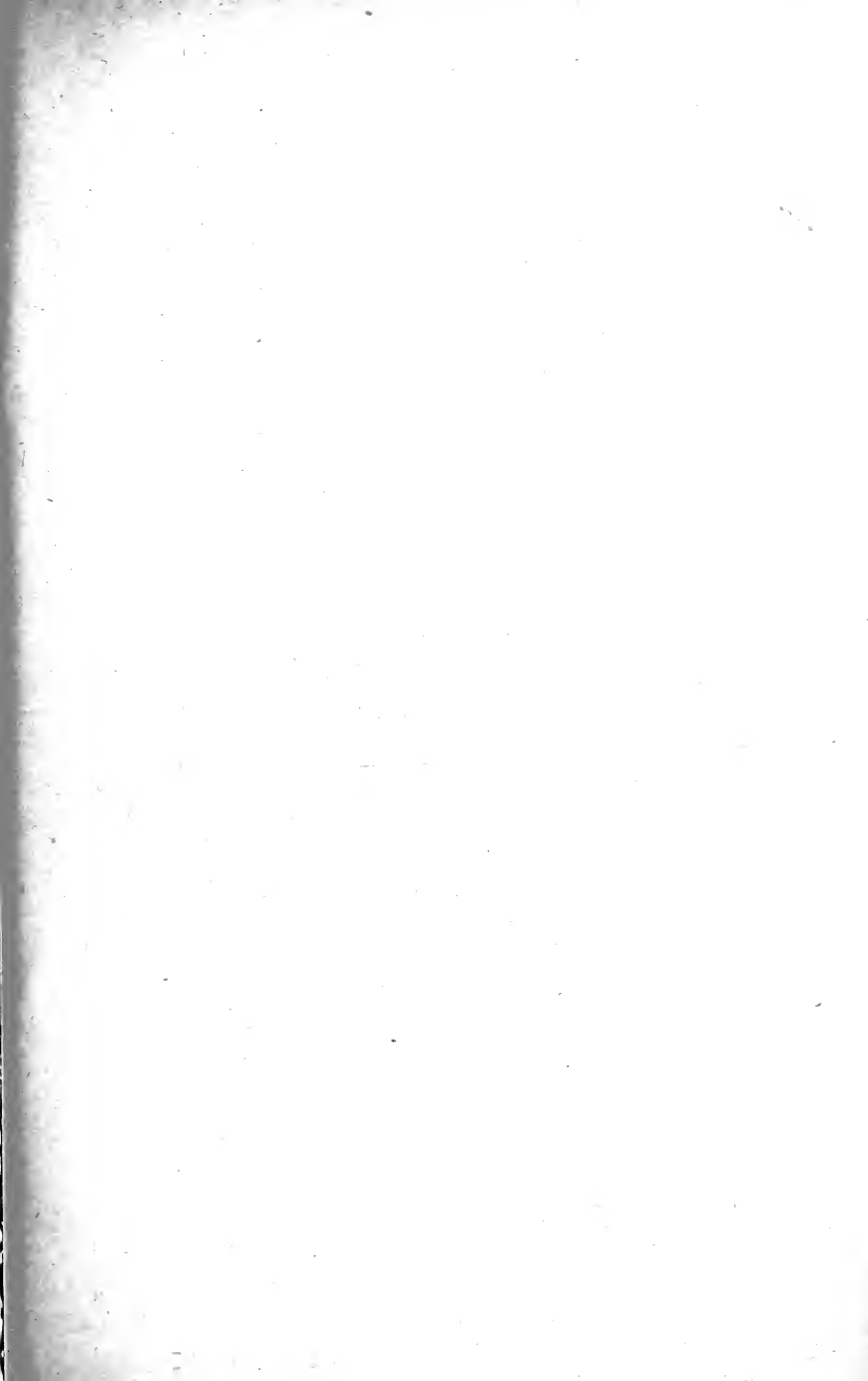
differ. Because I know more of the constitution of my mind, than he does of his. The investigation of truth is the examination of the laws of one's own mind. As Emerson says, the human soul is the text of all study. The books of the historians, poets and philosophers, are only the comments upon it. I read in them only, to find the meaning and capabilities of myself. When I read the history of the Athenian democracy, consider the progress of the American republic, study the details of Napoleon's campaigns, look at Carlyle's picture of the French revolution, or become absorbed in Faust or Jane Eyre, I am learning what there is in my own brain. All the great works of great men are to me as though done by myself,—unconsciously—in a state of mental exaltation; and I need to look over those works, to see whether I can not raise myself to the level of that exaltation, and preserve myself there. When I seek truth, I seek to know what is within me,—not what is without. When I am true to my convictions, when I speak and act according to my faith, I do my duty to my own soul,—not to some idol which exists outside and in despite of me.



















Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Dec. 2004

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BL
220

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 652 458 6

