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## PHILOSOPHICAL AGNOSTICISM AND MONISM.

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST.

BY DR. LEWIS G. JANES.

THE articles of Mr. Wakeman and Dr. Carus in *The Open Court* of August 13, are of interest to all students of philosophy, inasmuch as they clearly suggest the point of divergence between the objective monism of the writers and the agnostic monism of the disciples of Mr. Herbert Spencer. If the first-named writer is carried by the heat of his conviction into an attitude of controversy rather than of cool, philosophic argument, and manifests a somewhat premature joy over "the hopeless condition of practical philosophical bankruptcy" into which Mr. S. H. Wilder—"a well-known philosophic and spiritualistic writer"—and himself, in unnatural and unholy alliance, have reduced the system of Mr. Spencer, this defect in his statement is offset by the calm and logical comments of the editor. With a view to correct one or two misapprehensions, and to clear up, if possible, a little of the intellectual fog which obscures the mental horizon of the objective monist whenever Spencerian agnosticism comes within the field of his vision, the writer ventures to make a few suggestions bearing upon this discussion.

As it appears from the articles above referred to, the editor of *The Open Court* takes his stand clearly upon positions furnished by the data given in the modern science of psychology; in regard to which, however, the mind of Mr. Wakeman seems to be in a hopeless state of confusion. "When some forces of nature stored up in food are changed into the vital energy of nervous tissue and utilised in nervous action," says Dr. Carus, "there is not one molecule of matter and not the least particle of energy changed into the subjective state of feeling. All the forces of objective nature remain objective. The law of the conservation of matter and energy holds good in the empire of matter and energy. The phenomena of feeling . . . are subjective states unobservable and invisible, but going along with objective processes of visible motion. They are not motions, not forces, not energies, but states of awareness."

This is a lucid and admirable statement of the doctrine set forth by Mr. Fiske nearly twenty years

ago, in "Cosmic Philosophy,"—a doctrine which Mr. Wakeman interprets as essentially spiritualistic in its implications, and which, to his mind, necessitates the relegation of all logical explanations of psychical processes to the realm of the "unknowable." Now, since both Mr. Spencer and Mr. Fiske explicitly place these processes, equally with those which we call physical, in the realm of the knowable, and have devoted much time and thought to their logical explanation, there must be a mistake somewhere in Mr. Wakeman's understanding of the matter. That this mistake lies in a want of clear apprehension of the thought of Mr. Fiske and Mr. Spencer, appears, I think, in the confused and distorted way in which he has reported Mr. Fiske's explanation of the phenomena of consciousness. (*The Open Court*, p. 2907.)

What Mr. Fiske actually said upon this subject in his Brooklyn Lecture is substantially as follows:

"In tracing the correlation of motions into the organism, through the nervous system, and out again, we are bound to get an account of each step in terms of motion. Unless we can show that every unit of motion that disappears is transformed into an exact quantitative equivalent, our theory of correlation breaks down; but when we have shown this we shall have given a complete account of the whole affair, without taking any heed whatever of thought, feeling, or consciousness. In other words, these psychical activities do not enter into the circuit, but stand outside of it, as a segment of a circle may stand outside of a portion of an entire circumference *with which it is concentric*. Motion is never transformed into thought, but only into some other form of measurable (in fact, or, at any rate, in theory measurable) motion that takes place in nerve-threads and ganglia. *It is not the thought, but the nerve-action that accompanies the thought, that is really the 'transformed motion.'*"\* I say that if we are going to verify the theory of correlation, it must be done (actually or theoretically) by measurement; quantitative equivalence must be proved at every step; and hence we must not change our unit of measurement; from first to last it must be a unit of motion: if we change it for a moment our theory of correlation collapses. I say therefore that the theory of the correlation and equivalence of forces lends no support whatever to materialism. On the contrary, its manifest implication is that psychical life cannot be a mere product of temporary collocations of matter." (*Popular Science Monthly*, Sept. 1891.)

This is Mr. Fiske's statement of the case in his own words, in the lecture which Mr. Wakeman has attempted to interpret to the readers of *The Open Court*. It will be seen that Mr. Wakeman's interpolated clause: "the rest of its circumference we could

\* The Italics are Mr. Fiske's.

never know: it vanished into the Unknowable Reality behind all phenomena, etc., etc.," is wholly without warrant in the language of Mr. Fiske and is a manifest distortion of his thought. It was the mental commentary, doubtless, of Mr. Wakeman as he listened to the lecture,—the product of his own vivid imagination and strong positivistic bias; but it has not the most remote warrant in the terms used by the lecturer. The comments of Dr. Carus in so far as they are based upon Mr. Wakeman's unauthorised interjection into the argument of Mr. Fiske are of course irrelevant, save as protests against the ghostly philosophical creation of Mr. Wakeman's vivid imagination. As a "spook" raiser Mr. Wakeman has few or no equals. The phrase "with which it is concentric," which we have italicised, indicates clearly that Mr. Fiske's rhetorical figure implied a definite and constant relationship between the psychic and physical processes, though not one of quantitative equivalence.

As to the nature of the relations between the psychic states and the corresponding physical processes, therefore, there does not thus far appear to be any substantial difference between the Spencerian agnostic and Dr. Carus. Speaking of feeling and motion elsewhere, Dr. Carus declares: "The abstract conceptions form two parallel systems." ("Fundamental Problems," p. 338.) He again asserts: "All our concepts, matter and mind included, are *only symbols* to represent certain features abstracted from the fact of experience. *Our abstract concepts are not realities*, but ideas; mere noumena, things of thought, invented for the sole purpose of comprehension. . . . To declare that force and feeling, and consciousness and thought are material does not prove the boldness of free-thought, it betrays an immature mind. . . . Matter, force, mind, spirit, form, feeling, are mere abstractions. To look upon any of these . . . as something else than terms or symbols, to look upon them as 'omneities' or all-comprehension realities, is a self-mystification."

All this, as we understand it, admirably expresses the idea of Mr. Spencer. The essentially disparate conceptions of material processes and psychical states, and the essentially symbolical character of each, are familiar thoughts to the student of the synthetic philosophy.

We are brought back, then, to the consideration of the nature of the Reality of which these processes and states are disparate mental symbols. That there is such a Reality is agreed both by the objective monist and the philosophical agnostic. Completing a sentence already quoted in part, Dr. Carus says: "The abstract conceptions form two parallel systems, *but the real thing can be represented as parallel only in the sense that it is parallel to itself.*" And he further declares, in terms which no Spencerian will contravene: "We

must never forget that all our scientific inquiries *deal with certain sides of reality only.*" ("Fundamental Problems," p. 348.) It therefore appears that all mental and physical processes are disparate abstractions or symbolical interpretations in terms of consciousness of certain processes which constitute or appertain to a Reality the nature of which is not otherwise revealed to us. For if otherwise revealed, *how* otherwise? Save material processes and thought processes what can possibly constitute the object of our conscious apprehension and investigation? Does any conceivable synthesis or commingling of these two symbolical and disparate processes constitute the whole of Reality? Manifestly, not. Confessedly not, in a scientific sense; for Dr. Carus admits that "*all our scientific inquiries deal with certain sides of reality only.*" Logically not: for no synthesis of disparate symbols can possibly constitute a complete knowledge of unified Being. Actually not: for it is impossible to form a concept of such a synthesised symbol in thought.

We have looked in vain through the accessible writings of Dr. Carus for any adequate definition or description of the innermost nature of the monistic Reality of which mental and physical processes are, by his own explicit admission, disparate and symbolical representations in consciousness. We find, indeed, such formal definitions as "Reality is the sum total of all the facts that are, or can become, objects of experience" ("Fundamental Problems," p. 254), but this is a definition which does not define; it amounts to no more than saying "Reality is everything," and gives us no information as to its intrinsic nature. It even helps to befog the subject rather than to enlighten it; for if mental and material processes are not "realities,"\* as he assures us, how can "realities" become objects of experience at all? Our experience is transformed in consciousness to a knowledge of these symbolical processes; and such knowledge would therefore appear to be the whole subject-matter of our conscious experience.

The philosophical agnostic does not seek for any such definition of the essential nature of Reality. He recognises and confesses the futility of such search. The same psychological principle which compels the confession that mind and matter are mental abstractions or disparate thought symbols of this Reality, proves to him that it can only be known indirectly, by and through the interpretation of these symbols. What it is in its innermost constitution can never be revealed to a finite being. Such a being can only know this Reality symbolically, as it is related to his own limited

\* [This is a misstatement of my position, which for brevity's sake may be corrected at once. Mental as well as material processes, in my opinion, are realities. They are no realities if considered by themselves as abstract ideas.—EDITOR.]

psychical faculties. This symbolism constitutes the very nature of our knowledge. And the recognition of this fact is the irrefragable foundation of philosophical agnosticism.

The philosophical agnostic may consistently deny, with Dr. Carus, that "legitimate problems exist that are insolvable"; but the question of the intimate nature and constitution of Reality is not, he claims, a legitimate problem for the human intellect, since its data are wholly out of relation with that intellect. All problems involved in the study of mental and material processes, on the contrary, are strictly legitimate, and such problems are undoubtedly solvable. In these regions of investigation there may be a vast unknown, but there is no "unknowable."\*

Dr. Carus tells us that "unknowability is not a quality inherent in things." To affirm the contrary would be to posit an absurdity—of which neither Mr. Spencer nor any of his intelligent expositors are guilty. Manifestly, the ability or non-ability *to know* is a quality of minds, not of things. It is the limitation of mental capacity which renders Reality, in its essential constitution, unknowable, not the nature of that immanent constitution. Things or processes are knowable under the conditions by which they are related to the psychic nature, and are thus capable of responding to its prescient interrogations. In so far as they are not so related, they are, to the possessors of finite psychical natures, unknowable.

If, therefore, as Dr. Carus assures us, "Reality is. It is undivided and indivisible. And parts of reality [only] are symbolised in words" ("Fundamental Problems," p. 300), will he not kindly define for us the intrinsic nature of this Reality as a whole? The editor of *The Open Court* is an acute thinker, and a master of clear and intelligible forms of expression. He has lucidly defined the nature of mental and material processes. If, as he has repeatedly asserted, the incomprehensible is the non-existent, will he not render comprehensible, in clear and definite terms of the known, the nature of the one reality? Without such a clear definition which shall at once explain Reality, and differentiate it from those verbal and symbolical abstractions known as "mind," "matter," "force," "motion," etc., the word "reality" is no more intelligible as a designation than is the word "unknowable." It is equally a term used to veil or expound our ignorance.

\* It is strange that the critics of philosophical agnosticism should understand the advocates of that doctrine to assert that Reality *per se* is unknowable, since to do so would constitute the complete negation of their own philosophy. It would affirm a knowledge of the nature of Reality which their philosophy expressly disclaims. Expressed syllogistically, the argument would proceed as follows:

1. Finite minds cannot know the nature of Reality.
  2. The human mind is finite.
  3. Hence, the human mind *knows* that Reality *per se* is unknowable!
- The third term is evidently a *non sequitur*

The philosophical agnostic cannot agree with the objective monist that the incomprehensible is necessarily the non-existent. If the "incomprehensibility" were in the nature of Reality, then indeed this might not be an unreasonable assumption, though a dogmatic assumption it would be in any case, not a demonstrable fact. But since that which renders Reality incomprehensible is the finite and arbitrary limitations of man's psychic nature, the determination of the truth that Being or Reality, in its essential constitution, is unknowable, is a simple logical deduction from the proven facts of psychological science. There is no "mystery" or "metaphysics" or "supernaturalism" involved in it whatever.

Dr. Carus informs us dogmatically that "A transcendent existence that exists by itself without exhibiting any effects is no existence. It is an impossibility. Existence without effects is a mere phrase without any meaning, not realisable in thought." Inasmuch as no one—at least, no Spencerian agnostic—assumes an existence "that exists by itself without exhibiting any effects," we may pass by the dogmatic character of the statement. All that appears in consciousness is the effect of the immanent presence and potency of real existence. It is admitted that Reality, to beings possessed of psychic self-consciousness, always exhibits effects which are symbolically reflected therein. It is claimed, however, that these effects are not competent to reveal to the consciousness of finite beings the intrinsic nature of Reality.

Nor can the philosophical agnostic admit that "absolute existence is impossible." Science assures him that the material world was evolved long before any individualised form of consciousness had an existence. Being could then have had no "manifestation,"\* unless we conceive of the Universe itself as possessing a psychic self-consciousness. To assert that Reality can have no existence apart from manifestation in any other sense is pure idealism.

Neither Mr. Spencer nor any other advocate of philosophical agnosticism asserts that Reality is unknowable *per se*, or in any other sense than the one heretofore indicated. On the contrary, that it is known as existing, as the immanent source, life and nexus of all those disparate symbolical abstractions which are included in mental and material processes, is affirmed as knowledge of the highest assured verity—fundamental to all our other knowledge. Should man develop

\* [This is a misconception of my position. Manifestation has been explained in *Fundamental Problems* as "the effectiveness of things in their relations." The term manifestation is often, perhaps mostly, used in the sense of becoming manifest to some sentient or thinking being. At the time when I used the expression, I gave the following explanation in No. 121 of *The Open Court*, Dec. 19th 1899: "Existence is real by manifesting itself somehow. It need not manifest itself to *me*. A pebble on the surface of the moon which perhaps no living creature has ever seen, manifests its existence by a pressure upon the moon, a reflection of sunbeams, and in innumerable other ways."—EDITOR.]



more and acuter faculties of sense-perception, new and finer modes of psychical abstraction and synthesis, this Reality would be related to him in ways of which he can now form no conception. The term "matter" might, in such a not inconceivable event, cease to adequately represent his symbolical interpretation of its objective relations to his consciousness.

Not, however, until he shall cease utterly to be a finite being, not until all limitations to his modes of sense-perception shall be wholly abrogated, not until he shall become in fact omnipresent and omniscient, can he ever know the ultimate Reality through and through, in its full essential constitution. He cannot know it otherwise than relatively, by means of abstractions and thought-symbols determined by his own psychical nature, and responding to its finite limitations. The unknowability of Reality in its immanent constitution is a logical and inexpugnable corollary from the admitted truth that the psychical nature of man is finite and limited.

#### AGNOSTICISM IN "THE MONIST"

BY ELLIS THURTELL.

THE pages of the first volume of *The Monist* contain several criticisms of Agnosticism, as understood by Dr. Paul Carus, that are of great interest and importance. Dr. Carus seems bent on demonstrating that however anxious any Agnostic may be to take rank among the Positive Monists, he can by no means consistently do so without forfeiting his right to the title of Agnostic. Well, I for one should be very sorry to think that this conclusion is the inevitable result of really clear cogitation on the matter. And when so competent a reasoner as Dr. Carus assures us that it is—despite my own conviction to the contrary—I am glad to harbor the hope that our difference of opinion may after all arise rather from explainable distinctions of definition than from inherent incompatibility of ideas.

To start with, in the first number of *The Monist* we are told: "The negative features of Descartes's philosophy naturally found their ultimate completion in Agnosticism. The assumption of the existence of a subject led to the doctrine that this subject is 'unknowable.'" Now I am in entire agreement with Dr. Carus—following Kant—in holding that "Descartes's famous syllogism *Cogito ergo sum*" must be held to contain a fallacy, so far as it is supposed to prove the positive existence of a subject apart from thought and feeling. Indeed that the state of consciousness expressed by the verb *Cogito* does not necessarily imply anything underlying itself; still less that this underlying something is unknowable.

Again we read: "The assumption of something 'that underlies the acts of thought leads to the assump-

"tion of something that underlies objective existence." But neither do I pin my philosophic faith to any such underlying something. The walnut table at which I write is, I am convinced, that very sort of object which it seems to my subjective self to be. For I wholly accept the dictum of Dr. Carus that "The data of knowledge are not mere subjective states, they are relations between subject and object." And am certainly of opinion that whatever different impressions the table may produce upon different people are due not to any unknowability of its actual nature, but simply to the differences observed to exist between the brain and senses of one person and another—the subjective factor, namely, that forms one, and one only essential half in every act of knowledge. "Objectivity," indeed, as Dr. Carus says, "is no *chimæra*; "and we are very well enabled to establish the truth or "untruth of objective facts." Nor can I see anything in my Agnosticism to prohibit my believing that "the philosophy of the future accordingly will be a "philosophy of facts; it will be *positivism*: and in so far as a unitary systematisation of facts is the aim "and ideal of all science it will be *MONISM*." The prince of Agnostics, Herbert Spencer himself has spoken of the "tacit implication\* [in his scheme] that philosophy is completely unified knowledge"; and that "unification is possible, and that the end of philosophy is the achievement of it."

Now this view of the function of philosophy—common as it evidently is to Herbert Spencer and to *The Monist's* editor—leads us on to what seems to me a prime misconception of that Spencerian type of Agnosticism by which, in the main, I hold. In the fourth number of *The Monist* Dr. Carus gravely observes: "Agnosticism is in our opinion no sound basis upon which to erect ethics." Nor is it in ours, nor in that of any one else so far as we know. Why indeed should Agnosticism be brought into the question at all? "Mr. Herbert Spencer who for some reason "or other tried to escape the consequences of his Agnosticism in the ethical field," would, I fancy, be very much surprised to hear of this suggested effort. Dr. Pfeiderer—in his "Development of Theology," recently written for an English Library of Philosophy—well remarks: "The Agnosticism which Spencer "adopted from Hamilton and Mansel forms but the "one aspect of his philosophy; to a certain extent the "convenient background into which all metaphysical "problems can be relegated, so as to construct with "fewer hindrances a system of natural evolution from "the results of modern science." He goes on to point out that the idea of Evolution is the mainspring of the whole matter which Herbert Spencer has to impart. And that "he has placed the doctrine of the incogni-

\* "First Principles," 5th Edition, p. 539.

“sability of the Absolute as a wall of separation between philosophy and religion that an eternal peace may be concluded between them.”

For Herbert Spencer holds, as Dr. Pfeleiderer observes “that in every one of the three main [cosmic] theories—Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism—is shown the impossibility of a satisfactory solution that is not self-contradictory. It follows that God, the Absolute, the Unconditioned is not for us cognisable.” So far, in point of fact, and no farther does Herbert Spencer’s Agnosticism extend. It has relation only to the three prevailing theories of ultimate Causation: and it simply and solely consists in the passing of a verdict of “non-proven” against each and all of these. Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism are formally declared out of court as altogether too dogmatic. And the conclusion comes to us, that about their several theses nothing can be positively known. To this conclusion—however arrived at—Professor Huxley has happily enough given the name of Agnosticism. And though the word is not mentioned in the “First Principles,” Herbert Spencer has in his “Ecclesiastical Institutions,” definitely adopted it as descriptive of his creed. He may indeed consider, as Dr. Pfeleiderer believes him to do, that the unknowability he posits is not merely relative but absolute. Here many of us would probably not follow him, deeming ourselves to be deciding more in accordance with the evidence by declaring that we do not know how that may be. Herbert Spencer, however, has anticipated some such objection to any assertion of an unknown that is also absolutely unknowable. In the last page of his “Ecclesiastical Institutions” he speaks of “that analysis of knowledge which while forcing him [the Spencerian] to Agnosticism, yet continually prompts him to imagine some solution of the great enigma which he knows cannot be solved.” The only satisfactory answer to any Agnosticism, whether absolute or relative, surely must be to show that there is some actual solution of the great enigma. And this, upon any other than already discredited supernaturalistic grounds, has never yet been done. Until it is done I for one must take leave to declare myself an Agnostic while claiming at the same time, and without any sense of self-contradiction, to be considered a Positive Monist—by belief and tendency, if not by any assertion of certainty or completed knowledge.

Prof. J. R. Seeley, in his “Natural Religion,” has remarked that the most embittered war of words is usually that which is carried on between those whose differences consist only in words. Let us hope that the conflict between Spencerian Agnosticism and *Open Court* Monism is not destined to illustrate the truth of this observation. I say Spencerian Agnosti-

cism advisedly. For there is a type of Agnosticism—not altogether unfamiliar I believe to Dr. Carus—which certainly tends to be gnostic where Herbert Spencer is agnostic, and agnostic (through want of perfect sympathy with sound science) where Spencer and all strong psychologists are gnostic. It is not the Agnosticism in fine of every rhetorical writer upon my own side that I feel called upon to defend. But that Agnosticism only which, following (with the slightest modifications suggested by individual thought) the profoundly philosophic lead of Herbert Spencer, owes its existence simply to the scientific principle of judgment suspended until sufficient evidence appears. In this light the absolutely unknowable, which has hitherto been the great bugbear barrier between modified Spencerian Agnosticism and the Positive Monism of *The Open Court*, is transmuted into the merely actual unknown. That the recognition of this relative and subjective Unknowability on the part of Agnostics could ever have been a line of separation can be believed by no one at all familiar with the writings of Dr. Carus. And that all definite Agnosticism has seemed to him so essentially antagonistic to his own philosophic faith must arise from something of misrepresentation on one side and misconception on the other. Surely the time has come for this unnecessary and unfortunate misunderstanding to be removed.

#### SPENCERIAN AGNOSTICISM.

##### 1. IN REPLY TO MR. ELLIS THURTELL.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER as a philosopher and as a thinker is a power in our age, not only because he understands how to deal with deep problems so as to impress his conception of them upon the reader, but also because his views strongly coincide with the *Zeitgeist* of the present generation. I am fully aware of the fact that on many most important subjects the tenets of *The Monist* and *The Open Court* are in perfect sympathy with the spirit of Mr. Spencer’s philosophy, but at the same time I recognise that there are points not less important in which there is no agreement, and perhaps the most important one is the doctrine of agnosticism.

We should be very glad to learn that Mr. Spencer’s agnosticism was such as Mr. Ellis Thurtell represents it. In the light in which he views the subject, “the absolutely unknowable which has hitherto been the great bugbear barrier between modified Spencerian agnosticism and the Positive Monism of *The Open Court*, is transmuted into the merely actually unknown.” I am fully in sympathy with this “modified Spencerian agnosticism,” and I wish that Mr. Spencer had consented to the modification himself. If Mr. Thurtell’s conception of Spencerianism is different from

mine, it may arise, as Mr. Thurtell suggests, from a misconception on my part, but I doubt it. The question however is easily decided by looking up Mr. Spencer's First Principles. Let him declare in his own words whether his idea of the unknowable is merely relative and not absolute, whether it consists simply and solely of a verdict of "not proven" with regard to the several theses of Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism.\*

The first chapter of the First Principles (p. 46) ends with the following sentences:

"And thus the mystery which all religions recognise, turns out to be a far more transcendent mystery than any of them suspect—not a relative, but an absolute mystery.†

"Here, then, is an ultimate religious truth of the highest possible certainty[!—a truth in which religions in general are at one with each other, and with a philosophy antagonistic to their special dogmas. And this truth, respecting which there is a latent agreement among all mankind from the fetish-worshipper to the most stoical critic of human creeds, must be the one we seek. If Religion and Science are to be reconciled, the basis of reconciliation must be this deepest, widest, and most certain[!] of all facts—that the Power of which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."‡

† This passage, it seems to me, is sufficient to disprove Mr. Thurtell's allegation that I had misconstrued Mr. Spencer's position. Mr. Spencer's unknowable is not merely an unknown, it is a "transcendent mystery" and "utterly inscrutable." And this idea I deem indeed to be "essentially antagonistic to the faith of Monistic Positivism."

The importance which Mr. Spencer attributes to the Unknowable in his theoretical world-conception ought to give it a prominent place also in his ethics, for ethics is nothing but the practical application of a theory. Mr. Spencer's philosophy is not a unitary and consistent system, but an amalgamation of several incompatible systems. A consistent ethics of agnosticism would be mysticism, i. e., a theory which holds that we feel impelled to do our duty without being able to explain the nature of duty; what conscience, justice, morality, etc., really are can never be known. A consistent ethics of the philosophy of evolution would be evolutionism, i. e. the proposition "good is that which enhances the process of evolution, bad is that which hinders it or prepares a dissolution." Mr. Spencer neglects his theories, agnosticism as well as evolutionism, entirely in his ethics, and I cannot help considering this as an inconsistency on Mr. Spencer's part.‡

\* By the bye, we do not believe that the propositions of atheism, theism, and pantheism lie outside the pale of science. The problems of the existence of God, the personality of God, etc., are not subjects concerning which we can never come to a definite conclusion. Indeed they are no longer open questions to him who has taken the trouble to inform himself about the present state of investigation.

† Italics are ours.

‡ Mr. Spencer's philosophy is lacking in more than one respect in consistency. This is a truth unknown only to his blind followers, which will appear as soon as anyone attempts to condense his views. Ueberweg, for in-

Of "the great enigma which the Spencerian knows cannot be solved," Mr. Thurtell says "there is an actual solution." It has not as yet been found; until it is found, he says, he for one must take leave to declare himself an agnostic. This agnosticism which recognises our own ignorance, the agnosticism of modesty as I called it in some previous articles, is a most recommendable attitude, which will help us to do away with our ignorance. I am far from having objections to the agnosticism of modesty because, on innumerable subjects, I shall have to take rank myself among this class of agnostics. We have no quarrel with the agnosticism which is simply "the scientific principle of judgment suspended until sufficient evidence appears."

This settles the point at issue between Mr. Thurtell and myself. Yet I feel urged to add a few comments concerning Mr. Spencer's philosophy.

## II. THE RECONCILIATION OF RELIGION AND SCIENCE ON THE BASIS OF THE UNKNOWABLE.

Mr. Spencer's reconciliation of Religion and Science on the basis of the Unknowable appears to us very unsatisfactory; and it will be seen to be impracticable, because it rests upon erroneous premises. It is not true that on the one side religion is based upon the unknown or unknowable, and on the other side that the ultimate ideas of science are inscrutable and representative of realities that cannot be comprehended.

Religion is everywhere based upon the known and knowable. The savage worships the thunderstorm not because it is something inscrutable to him, but because he is afraid of it; he actually knows that it can do him harm. The obvious danger connected with a phenomenon makes man anxious to adapt his conduct to it, so that he will escape unscathed. If a phenomenon is not sufficiently known in its causes, this will breed erroneous conceptions or superstitions, and there is no conciliation possible between the latter and science. It is true that the facts of nature which have made man religious were misunderstood by the savage and most facts are still little understood by the scien-

stance, says in his *History of Philosophy* (Translated from the 4th German edition by Geo. S. Morris, p. 432) in a synopsis of Mr. Spencer's views about matter and mind, which are declared to be unknowable in First Principles:

"As to what matter and mind are, he [Mr. Spencer] replies sometimes that we can know it, because a being is required to manifest phenomena, sometimes because persistence in consciousness supposes correspondence in permanent forces, sometimes because the two conceptions are the same, sometimes that matter and mind are simply bundles or series of phenomena and nothing besides. Sometimes he reasons as though causality were a direct and self-evident relation, and sometimes as though this relation were nothing more than an order of sensations and our belief in it were the growth of inseparable associations."

Ueberweg sums up his review of Mr. Spencer in the following paragraph: "The system of Spencer is still under criticism, and perhaps may not have been fully expounded by its author. Possibly it has not yet been completely developed. Should Spencer continue to devote to philosophy his active energies for many years, it is not inconceivable that new associations may take possession of that physiological organisation which he is accustomed to call himself, and perhaps be evolved under another system of first principles which may displace those which he taught hitherto."



tists to-day. But it is not this lack of comprehension upon which religion was then and is now based; on the contrary, religion is based upon the more or less clearly conceived idea that we have to conform to a power not ourselves. The conciliation of religion with science, as we understand it, can be brought about only by a purification of our conception of the power to which we have to conform. That religion will be the purest and highest which holds forth the simple statement of provable truth as the basis of ethics; and this religion cannot be in conflict with science, for it is to be based upon that which we know, and not upon that which we do not know. If a religion, based upon that which we do not know, be found to be reconcilable with science, it will be mere hap-hazard, a matter of pure chance, and at any rate the principle of such a religion will under all circumstances be antagonistic to science.

On the one hand religion is not based upon the unknown, and on the other hand, the ultimate scientific ideas are not incomprehensible. How does Mr. Spencer arrive at the strange view that these ideas are representative of realities that cannot be comprehended? He proposes a number of conceptions of the terms space, time, matter, and motion, which are untenable and self-contradictory and then concludes that they "pass all understanding." Mr. Spencer however overlooks in all these conceptions that they are mere abstractions describing certain qualities, that these terms represent these qualities, and comprehension is nothing more or less than a proper and systematic representation. We know what matter, motion, space and time are, if considered as abstractions, although it is true we cannot know what they are in themselves. But we need not know it, for space, time, matter, and motion do not exist in themselves; they are not things in themselves; they are simply abstracts representing certain qualities of reality.

Let us take the term motion as an example. Mr. Spencer says:

"Here, for instance, is a ship which, for simplicity's sake, we will suppose to be anchored at the equator with her head to the West. When the captain walks from stem to stern, in what direction does he move? East is the obvious answer—an answer which for the moment may pass without criticism. But now the anchor is heaved, and the vessel sails to the West with a velocity equal to that at which the captain walks. In what direction does he now move when he goes from stem to stern? You cannot say East, for the vessel is carrying him as fast towards the West as he walks to the East; and you cannot say West for the converse reason. In respect to surrounding space he is stationary; though to all on board the ship he seems to be moving. But now are we quite sure of this conclusion?—Is he really stationary? When we take into account the Earth's motion round its axis, we find that instead of being stationary he is travelling at the rate of 1000 miles per hour to the East; so that neither the perception of one who looks at him, nor the inference of one who allows for the ship's motion, is anything like the truth. Nor indeed, on further consideration,

shall we find this revised conclusion to be much better. For we have forgotten to allow for the Earth's motion in its orbit. This being some 68,000 miles per hour, it follows that, assuming the time to be midday, he is moving, not at the rate of 1000 miles per hour to the East, but at the rate of 67,000 miles per hour to the West. Nay, not even now have we discovered the true rate and the true direction of his movement. With the Earth's progress in its orbit, we have to join that of the whole Solar system towards the constellation Hercules; and when we do this, we perceive that he is moving neither East nor West, but in a line inclined to the plane of the Ecliptic, and at a velocity greater or less (according to the time of the year) than that above named. To which let us add, that were the dynamic arrangements of our sidereal system fully known to us, we should probably discover the direction and rate of his actual movement to differ considerably even from these. How illusive are our ideas of Motion, is thus made sufficiently manifest. That which seems moving proves to be stationary; that which seems stationary proves to be moving; while that which we conclude to be going rapidly in one direction, turns out to be going much more rapidly in the opposite direction. And so we are taught that what we are conscious of is not the real motion of any object, either in its rate or direction; but merely its motion as measured from an assigned position—either the position we ourselves occupy or some other."

Motion is a change of place, but this change of place is not something absolute. It is nothing in itself. It is relative and can be determined only by a reference point. If we omit this reference point in our description of a certain motion we shall find ourselves unable to determine either its velocity or its direction and in this way truly "our ideas of motion" are "thus made illusive." To describe a relation without considering it as a relation to something, is impossible and nonsensical.

Let us take one more instance. Mr. Spencer says that "all hypotheses respecting the constitution of matter commit us to inconceivable conclusions when logically developed." Now it is a trite truism that we know little of the constitution of the elements and there are innumerable problems of physics and chemistry unsolved yet and our scientists have no hope to solve all these problems within any reasonable time. If this were Mr. Spencer's meaning, we need no agnosticism to be told so, for the world has known that long ago. Yet this is not Mr. Spencer's meaning. He declares that "matter in its ultimate nature is as absolutely incomprehensible as Space and Time." And the efforts, which he makes with the foredetermined aim that they should fail and end in contradictions are upon the whole attempts to think of matter, force, motion, space, and time not as abstracts but as absolute entities, as things in themselves. They become inconceivable not by being logically but by being illogically developed. He says for instance (p. 53):

"The idea of resistance cannot be separated in thought from the idea of an extended body which offers resistance. To suppose that central forces can reside in points not infinitesimally small but occupying no space whatever—points having position only, with nothing to mark their position—points in no respect distinguish-

able from the surrounding points that are not centres of force;—to suppose this, is utterly beyond human power."

If we suppose that centres of force existed as mathematical points separated from extended bodies, we forget that our ideas of force and of bodies and of extension are mere abstractions. To think of our abstract ideas as if they were things in themselves, absolute existences, will always and necessarily lead us into contradictions.

Things in themselves do not exist, they are ghosts. If we try to conceive the nature of ghosts, we shall naturally turn agnostics, but if we bear in mind that our ideas have been abstracted from reality, that they are symbols describing certain parts or features of reality, we shall soon learn to understand that these ghosts do not exist.

It would lead us too far here to show that Mr. Spencer's method of making every one of "the ultimate scientific ideas" mysterious is throughout the same. He tacitly neglects some of their fundamental features and upon the whole treats them as if they ought to be things in themselves. This method of dealing with the problems of space, time, matter, and motion will strongly appeal to mystic minds, but it will not further our insight. The aim of philosophy is not to confound our concepts, not to entangle our minds in hopeless confusion, but to clarify our ideas and render them precise so that we shall know what they represent and how to employ them.

The actual fact is that a partial knowledge of certain natural phenomena is the basis of religious action. Monists consider the positive element of knowledge as the main thing, while Mr. Spencer on the contrary eliminates the positive element of knowledge and retains the negative element of ignorance, the quintessence of which he calls "the Unknowable,"—oblivious of the fact that in reality there are no such things as negative magnitudes. While Monism leads to the formulation of a religion of Science, Mr. Spencer's conception of religion is the acquiescence in the Unknowable. Our conception of God is the recognition of that power to which we have to conform, and our knowledge of it increases with the progress of science, while Mr. Spencer's idea of God is the Unknowable.

It is just as erroneous for a philosopher to extract that which we do not know as the quintessence of religious belief, as it would be for a chemist to extract all those substances of a body which it does not contain and to consider them as the real thing.

The negative magnitude of the not-yet known is, as all mere possibilities must be, infinite. If this negative magnitude were indeed a positive existence and the essential thing in religion, it would dwarf all progress into insignificance and would stamp upon all our aspirations the curse of vanity.

Mr. Spencer's proposition of the Reconciliation of Science with religion is the assurance that science will leave always an unbounded territory for all kinds of unwarranted assumptions and superstitions, while our proposition implies the purification of religion from erroneous notions. It is the proposition of a great work to be accomplished.

### III. THE WORLD-ENIGMA OF A FIRST CAUSE.

The simplest idea, if we misunderstand it, will become a mystery. And is not perhaps also the great world-enigma which can never be solved, a mistaken proposition?

Prof. W. K. Clifford in his lecture on "Theories of Physical Forces" endeavors to explain the redundancy of the question "why?" in science. Science teaches that it is so and that it must be so. Given one moment of the world-process, and we can calculate the next following or any other one with certainty: we can say that it must be such or such a state of things. But the "why?" of things, he says, does not lie in the range of science, for the question has no sense. We should prefer to say, The tracing of the "that" is the only legitimate conception of the "why?"

Clifford's proposition is directed against metaphysical philosophers to whom there is a "why?" of facts, that is to say, a reason for the world at large, or as it is sometimes expressed "a First Cause." Clifford's conception of the "why?" and the "that," it appears to us, is simply the denunciation of the so-called great world-enigma as a sham problem which has no sense. Knowledge means a representation of facts in mental symbols and comprehension means a unification or harmonious systematisation of these symbols. At any rate we have to start with facts. As soon, however, as we attempt to start with nothing and hope by some sleight of hand to create facts or to evolve them out of non-existence, we are confronted with an insolvable world-problem. Yet the proposition of this world-problem can bear no close investigation. It rests upon a misstatement of the case, for the very demand to produce positive facts out of nothing, is itself contradictory and is as absurd as the idea of a First or Ultimate Cause.

The idea of a first cause rests upon a confusion of the terms "cause" and "*raison d'être*." A first cause cannot exist, because every cause is the effect of a former cause, but we may conceive of an ultimate *raison d'être*. Every *raison d'être* of a natural process is formulated in a natural law and all these natural laws, if they were all known and investigated, would form one great system of laws which can serve as a means of orientation in this world. The most general of these laws, being the most comprehensive statement



of facts, would be the ultimate *raison d'être* or ground of the world.

The idea of an ultimate ground or *raison d'être* of the world is legitimate but the idea of a "First Cause" is spurious. A First Cause is inscrutable indeed, not because it is so profound an idea that "it passes all comprehension," but simply because it is a self-contradictory and nonsensical idea.

#### IV. THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE.

My reply to Mr. Thurtell is to a great extent also a reply to Dr. Lewis G. Janes. I am glad to see that he also abandons the idea of an absolutely unknowable, of something that is unknowable *per se*, but I find him still entangled in a strange misconception of the nature of knowledge. He maintains, that we cannot know the innermost, the intrinsic, the essential nature of reality and challenges me to define it. I must confess that I do not know what Dr. Janes means by innermost, intrinsic, and essential nature of reality and if he uses these words it is an unfair demand on his part to ask me for an explanation.

Dr. Janes says, "the philosophical agnostic . . . recognises . . . that reality can only be known indirectly by and through the interpretation of thought-symbols." This he says, after having stated my position as if it were essentially the same. It comes very near our position yet it differs from it in two important points. We say, the representation of reality in thought-symbols *is* knowledge. There is nothing indirect about it, nor is there any further interpretation of the thought-symbols needed.

If we speak for instance of reality in general we mean those features of reality which are common to all real things. The term reality in so far as it is most general is at the same time most empty; it is bare of contents, it is in its kind the most vague and the least definite of concepts. The term iron is more definite than the term metal. All the diverse qualities of iron are so many features of the innermost nature of this metal. The most general term "matter" is as a matter of course the least definite. It is a mistake based upon a misconception of the functions of our thought-symbols to expect that the most general terms shall contain an explanation of the world-problem. The term "reality" means nothing but actual being and cannot give us any information about the innermost nature of being. If we speak of reality as a whole, we cannot at the same time speak of the particular qualities of reality, because these particular qualities have been purposely excluded, and I see no use in forming a concept which shall at the same time be most general and indefinite and yet reveal all the definite details, thus defining at once the innermost, essential, and intrinsic nature of reality as a whole.

Knowledge is a description of facts, but not an interpretation of the description. Certain facts are depicted in mental symbols, they stand for and represent these facts. The simplest of these mental symbols are sense-impressions of certain forms, called sensations. Through a comparison of sensations and with the help of abstraction other mental symbols of a higher degree are formed which represent realities in terms of form, so that the things or processes can be represented with objective exactness in definite numbers by measuring and counting. But even these symbols, the abstract concepts of science, remain a simple description of facts. It is not clear to my mind why knowledge is to be called indirect or an interpretation of thought-symbols. It appears to me that only through these additional elements attached to the concept knowledge can we be led to the belief in an unknowable. Dr. Janes declares, that "the recognition of this fact (viz., of symbolism constituting the very nature of our knowledge) is the irrefragable foundation of philosophical agnosticism.

Cognition is possible only through limitation. We confine our attention to one particular feature, and form a mental abstract to represent it. All our senses are organs of limitation; every sense represents one kind of effect of reality upon our sensibility. To demand a knowledge which is independent of the conditions of knowledge, is to demand something which is impossible. Man is a finite being. Certainly! And the nature of his knowledge is always finite and limited. But knowledge is possible wherever a sentient being faces reality and is affected by reality. To be omnipresent is most certainly impossible to a limited being. Exactly so and not otherwise is it impossible to be omniscient, that is, to know also all the details of those parts of reality with which we do not come in actual contact. But this truth does not imply, as Dr. Janes declares that it does, "the Unknowability of Reality in its immanent constitution."

Reality *per se* means Reality in itself, and reality in itself means the nature of reality, or reality considered objectively. Dr. Janes says: "Finite minds cannot know the nature of Reality." Since all minds are finite, infinite minds being as impossible as immaterial matter, this means: "Reality *per se* is unknowable." The gist of the footnote on p. 2949 seems to be, "Reality is so utterly unknowable that the human mind cannot even know that it is unknowable." What a bottomless abyss! If that were so, man would have to cease thinking.

#### V. THE UNKNOWABLE, THE IDEA OF AN INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL, AND SPOOKISM.

That mind and motion are not convertible terms, is an old idea which so far as we know was set forth

for the first time with philosophical precision by Spinoza. It has been maintained by Locke and by Leibnitz and is the main foundation of modern psychology since Weber and Fechner, represented at present by Wundt in Germany and Ribot in France. It found among the English psychologists a staunch defender in George Henry Lewes. But it was strangely neglected by Mr. Herbert Spencer. Professor Fiske succeeded in converting Mr. Spencer on this subject and this change of opinion alone, it appears to me, would necessitate Mr. Spencer's recasting his entire psychology.\* It now needs Dr. James to convert Mr. Spencer to the idea that agnosticism does not involve any "mystery," and we should be highly pleased if he succeeded as well as Professor Fiske.

Mr. Wakeman has with reference to the unknowable spoken about spookism and mysticism, and Dr. James calls him a spook-raiser.

Dr. James adds concerning agnosticism :

"There is no 'mystery' or 'metaphysics' or 'supernaturalism' involved in it whatever."

This does not agree with Mr. Spencer's own words, who speaks not only of mystery but actually abounds in such expressions as transcendent mystery, absolute mystery, utterly inscrutable, incomprehensible, unknowable realities.

The principle of economy is most recommendable everywhere, in practical life, in science, and also in matters of style. Would it not be quite an improvement in Mr. Spencer's writings if he dropped throughout the term "Unknowable" confining himself only to state that which is known. Take for instance the passage quoted and objected to by Professor Fiske.

Mr. Spencer says :

Those modes of the Unknowable which we call motion, heat, light, chemical, affinity, etc., are alike transformable into each other, and into those modes of the Unknowable which we distinguish as sensation, emotion, thought.

The same, unenumerated with "the Unknowable":

Motion, heat, light, chemical, affinity, etc., are alike transformable into each other and into sensation, emotion, thought. †

Would not this simplify Mr. Spencer's ideas and render his positive propositions more concise?

Agnosticism has not freed the world from the ghosts of metaphysicism, and cannot conquer supernaturalism, although it has confessedly nothing to do with them: it lets them alone. They live a safe life in the realm of the unknowable. Mr. Wakeman, it appears, is very impetuous in his nature, and granting his zeal in persecuting the ghosts of by-gone ages to

be exaggerated, granted that the ghosts of agnosticism are tame in comparison with the ghosts of the old times of witchcraft, I see, nevertheless, that there is after all some reason for his speaking of spookism. Professor Fiske who is so clear concerning the non-interconvertibility of matter and motion, drops at once into the very same confusion against which he has guarded himself and others, as soon as he discusses "transcendental subjects." He says :

"That the Infinite Eternal Power that animates the universe must be psychical in its nature, that any attempt to reduce it to mechanical force must end in absurdity, and that the only kind of monism which will stand the test of an ultimate analysis is monotheism."

Here is a confusion of ideas. If there is an Infinite and Eternal Power at all, it must be convertible into mechanical force. If a power cannot be reduced to mechanical force, we should not call it power; and if God, the Infinite Something, the Infinite Unknowable, is not at the same time mechanical force but purely psychical in his nature, how can he produce the world of motion—supposing that there is no correlation (as Professor Fiske maintains) between the psychical and motion.\* I do not intend to discuss the subject here, it is sufficient to point out that Professor Fiske's view of the psychical and of God is still different from the positive world-conception of Monism, and Professor Fiske's view cannot be said to be free from what in my mind appears as fantastic notions.

The expression that "the psychical activities do not enter into the circuit, but stand outside of it, as a segment of a circle may stand outside of a portion of an entire circumference with which it is concentric" admits of a transcendental explanation, as if the psychical could exist independent of the circuit of motions. And there are passages in Professor Fiske's works which corroborate Mr. Wakeman's idea that he believes in a transcendent psychical existence, a spirit which is not motion, a soul-being which has nothing to do with mechanical force. The psychical, in our opinion, is an abstract idea just as much as motion; it represents a certain quality of real things. And the idea of some purely psychical being, be it finite or infinite, is in our opinion a thing in itself, a chimera, a ghost. Indeed, that is the kind of ghost in the most limited and proper sense of the word. We shall be glad to learn that this is not Professor Fiske's view of the subject, but we must confess that his words strongly suggest this interpretation of his philosophy.

Professor Fiske says in his "Cosmic Philosophy" (ii, p. 445):

"But while the materialistic hypothesis is thus irretrievably doomed, it is otherwise with the opposing spiritualistic hypothesis."

\* Force is mass multiplied by acceleration, and power is the ability to do work. Work is force acting through a distance. Both concepts serve special purposes in mechanics. Prof. Fiske apparently uses the word either in a popular or a metaphysical sense where it may mean anything.

\* To replace the phrase "nervous shock" by "psychical shock" as Prof. Fiske proposes, will not do, for according to Prof. Fiske himself the psychical is outside the circuit of motions, and shocks are to be counted as mechanical. "A psychical shock" would be a *contradictio in adjecto*.

† Concerning my exposition that sensation and thought are not and cannot be transformed motion, Dr. James says (p. 2948) that it "admirably expresses the idea of Mr. Spencer." Why does Mr. Spencer then say just the opposite?

And in "A Crumb for the 'Modern Symposium,'" he says:

"It [science] does not entitle us to deny that soul may have some such independent existence."

Professor Fiske does not deny his theological bias and transcendental tendencies. He says:

"As regards the theological implications of the doctrine of evolution, I have never undertaken to speak for Mr. Spencer; on such transcendental subjects it is quite enough if one speaks for oneself. . . . I do not pretend that my opinion in these matters is susceptible of scientific demonstration."

Professor Fiske's view is at least not incompatible with Mr. Spencer's view. Mr. Spencer's philosophy is not monotheism, but the possibility of monotheism is not excluded. He says in his *First Principles* (p. 108):

"Some do indeed allege that though the Ultimate Cause of things cannot really be thought of by us as having specified attributes, it is yet incumbent upon us to assert these attributes. Though the forms of our consciousness are such that the Absolute cannot in any manner or degree be brought within them, we are nevertheless told that we must represent the Absolute to ourselves under these forms. As writes Mr. Mansel, in the work from which I have already quoted largely—"It is our duty, then, to think of God as personal; and it is our duty to believe that He is infinite."

"That this is not the conclusion here adopted, needs hardly be said. If there be any meaning in the foregoing arguments, duty requires us *neither to affirm nor deny* personality."

The doctrine that nothing can be known about these so-called transcendental subjects, that "duty requires us neither to affirm nor to deny" is perhaps not spookism itself, but is the soil on which any kind of spookism can prosper. Agnosticism gives to the ghosts of metaphysics and theology the right patent to exist.

\* \* \*

We do not wish to wage a war of words and should be very glad if we could come to an understanding with Mr. Spencer and the Spencerian agnostics. But this understanding, so far as I can see, can only be arrived at by agnosticism dropping some of those features which Mr. Spencer himself has made most prominent—especially the idea of the unknowable as being an absolute mystery and utterly inscrutable. And this idea it appears to me is based on a vague notion that knowledge is something more than a mere description of facts in mental signs.

P. C.

#### PROFESSOR HAECKEL'S MONISM AND THE IDEAS GOD AND IMMORTALITY.

FOUR LETTERS: PROF. ERNST HAECKEL TO MR. T. B. WAKEMAN.—PROF. ERNST HAECKEL TO MR. J. A. SKILTON.—DR. PAUL CARUS TO PROF. ERNST HAECKEL.—PROF. ERNST HAECKEL TO DR. PAUL CARUS.\*

*Mr. Th. B. Wakeman*, 93 Nassau St., New York City.

MY DEAR MR. WAKEMAN: My heartiest thanks for your *spendid* essay on my studies and also for the sympathy you extend to me.

\* Translated from the German.

Enclosed please find some theses for the session of the Brooklyn Ethical Association in answer to the request of Mr. Skilton.

With kind regards

Yours truly,

ERNST HAECKEL.

The enclosure reads as follows:

*Mr. J. A. Skilton*, Cor. Sec. of The Brooklyn Ethical Association.

DEAR SIR: I thank you and Mr. Wakeman cordially for having kindly sent me the essay of the latter concerning my works. I am glad to see that the Brooklyn Ethical Association takes so lively an interest in the progress of Monism and Transformism in Germany. You wish me to send you some theses for your discussion on the doctrine of evolution its scope and influence, which is proposed to take place on May 31st. I have expressed my views on this subject at length in the last (the eighth) edition of my "Natural History of Creation." However the following points as fundamental theses, may perhaps be worthy of special emphasis:

1. The general doctrine of evolution appears to be already unassailably established.
2. Thereby every supernatural creation is completely excluded.
3. Transformism and The Theory of Descent are inseparable constituents of the Doctrine of Evolution.
4. The necessary conclusion of this proposition is the descent of man from a series of vertebrates (Anthropogeny).
5. The belief in "an immortal Soul" and in "a personal God" are therewith completely incompatible (*völlig unvereinbar*). Very respectfully yours,

ERNST HAECKEL.

*Prof. Ernst Haeckel*, Jena.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR: I just received from Mr. T. B. Wakeman, of New York, your letter and theses. He requests me to publish the letter and I am willing to do so with your permission, but I should like to have a few words of explanation from you.

The fifth thesis discards the immortality of the soul and the idea of a personal God. You confess monism but you identify the latter on the one hand with Goethe's and Spinoza's pantheism, on the other hand with Lange's and Büchner's materialism. In my opinion Goethe's pantheism is radically different from Büchner's materialism; I am ready to accept the former but I cannot adopt the latter. Materialism as I understand the term attempts to explain everything from force and matter. Goethe would never have considered sensations or thoughts as material things. By monism I understand solely the unity of the universe. The soul of man is a certain abstraction which exists in connection with his body; the body of man is another abstraction; and matter is by no means an exhaustive or all-comprehensive concept. According to my conception of monism there can be no bodiless soul, but soul for that reason is neither matter nor force but an abstraction *sui generis*.

Like you I consider the personality of God as scientifically untenable, yet the existence of God appears to me indubitable as soon as we understand by it Nature, in so far as it is not a chaos but one law-regulated whole, the cognition of which is the basis of our ethical actions. The God-idea in this sense is the cornerstone of what might be called natural religion, the religion of morality, or the religion of science. I should have no objection if anyone would call this conception of God atheistic theism. I am used to calling it entheism.

If by personality of the soul is to be understood the supposed unity of a mystical soul-being, I should deny it just as much as the personality of God. The soul is not an ego which thinks and feels, but the feeling itself and the thinking itself are the soul. To discuss the immortality of an ego-entity is senseless because it does not exist, but it is different with regard to the soul as being the



thinking itself and feeling itself. The soul being that special form in which we feel and think is transferable by heredity and education. There is a transference of the soul beyond death in this sense, and the conception of this immortality is not only a scientific truth but also of an incalculable practical importance. There are no individual souls or ego-entities. Each soul consists of a system of ideas and sensations which have reference to the surrounding world. The ideas of the soul are not the product of the activity of the individual but of human society. Man becomes man through the humanity which lives in him, the soul in this sense is a spiritual treasure which is transmitted from generation to generation and continues to live. The immortality of the soul, that is, the immanent immortality is the condition of evolution.

When our ancestors spoke of the immortality of the soul, they obeyed the natural impulse of self-conservation. The hope of this self-conservation is no delusion if it is but rightly understood. Certainly an ego-entity as which the soul was considered in former times cannot be preserved and we need not mind that. The grandeur and the beauty of a human soul, that is, the humanity in man, that which in reality the soul is, cognition of truth, together with human ideals are preserved even beyond the death of the individual, and they will be preserved so long as the conditions of the existence of humanity remain upon-earth.

These ideas are neither purely speculative nor are they fantastical. The spiritual life of man, the evolution of ethical ideals included, are just as well an object of exact science as are the physical and the natural of human nature. In considering the phenomena of the spiritual domain of life we must be just as careful in our terms as in physiology or in any other branch of the natural sciences. I know that you in spite of all the concentration with which you devote yourself to specialties have preserved a warm interest for philosophical and ethical questions, and you have pronounced your sympathy with the world-conception represented in *The Open Court*: therefore I wish you would give to your theses an interpretation that cannot be misunderstood. A few words of explanation concerning the points mentioned will be welcome.

In the hope that it shall again be permitted me to meet you personally. I remain with kind regards,

Yours respectfully,  
PAUL CARUS.

Dr. Paul Carus,

MY DEAR SIR: Long ere this it would have been my duty to write to you. First to thank you for sending me your highly interesting work "The Soul of Man," and secondly to answer the objections which you make in your letter of June 10th against several features of my monistic conception. However, I have had eight months of trial and labor behind me, first through the long and dangerous sickness of my wife who is now well again, and then through the revision of my "Anthropogeny," which will presently be completed. A tremendous amount of work! Having ceased work for twelve years in this province I had to read hundreds of essays, to recast thousands of sentences or to replace them by others. I can only complete such a great and difficult task by doing it at one stroke in a relatively short time to the neglect of everything else, and I hope that the book in its revised form will be more valuable than before. Many of your questions are answered in it.

It seems to me that your monistic world-conception agrees with mine in all essential points. Apparent differences rest, as is often the case in philosophy, upon misconceptions or upon a difference of definition. *Your God and your immortality are also mine*, but the mass of mankind wants above all their personal ego immortality, and everything else stands in second rank.

According to my conception, everything individual or personal is a passing phenomenon of the world-evolution. All philosophical systems are according to my conception—if worked out with con-

sistent logic—either monistic or dualistic as represented in the following table:

MONISM.	FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS	DUALISM.
Inseparable.	Matter and force. God and world. Soul and body.	As a matter of principle distinct entities.
Mechanicalism. Necessary evolution.	Life.	Vitalism. Teleological creation.
Universal (conservation of energy). Determinism.	Immortality. Freedom of will.	Individual. A person's will being absolutely free.
Causae efficientes. (Efficient causes.)	Causation.	Causae finales. (Final causes.)
Regulated by mechanical law.	World-order.	So-called "Moral."
Inseparable and subject to the same laws.	Inorganic and organic nature.	As a matter of principle distinct and subject to different laws.

I hope you will have an opportunity to visit me again that we may settle in personal discussion the possible differences of our philosophical convictions. It is impossible to do it in letters. I hope that I shall soon be able to write for you the desired article either for *The Monist* or *The Open Court*. I thank you for sending me both these valuable journals which interest me exceedingly, and I wish them every success. I am sorry to say that in Germany the greater number of the philosophical schools are still tugged along by medieval scholasticism.

In my new edition of "Anthropogeny" I expect you will be mainly interested in the lectures 17, 18, 21-24, 29, 30. As soon as the whole work is ready I shall send it to you. I shall send the proofs of the new "Anthropogeny" in a few days, the work itself will appear in about six or eight weeks.

At present I need a long vacation and shall disappear from six to eight weeks in the Alps and return to Jena at the end of October.

With cordial regards,  
Yours truly,  
ERNST HAECKEL.

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