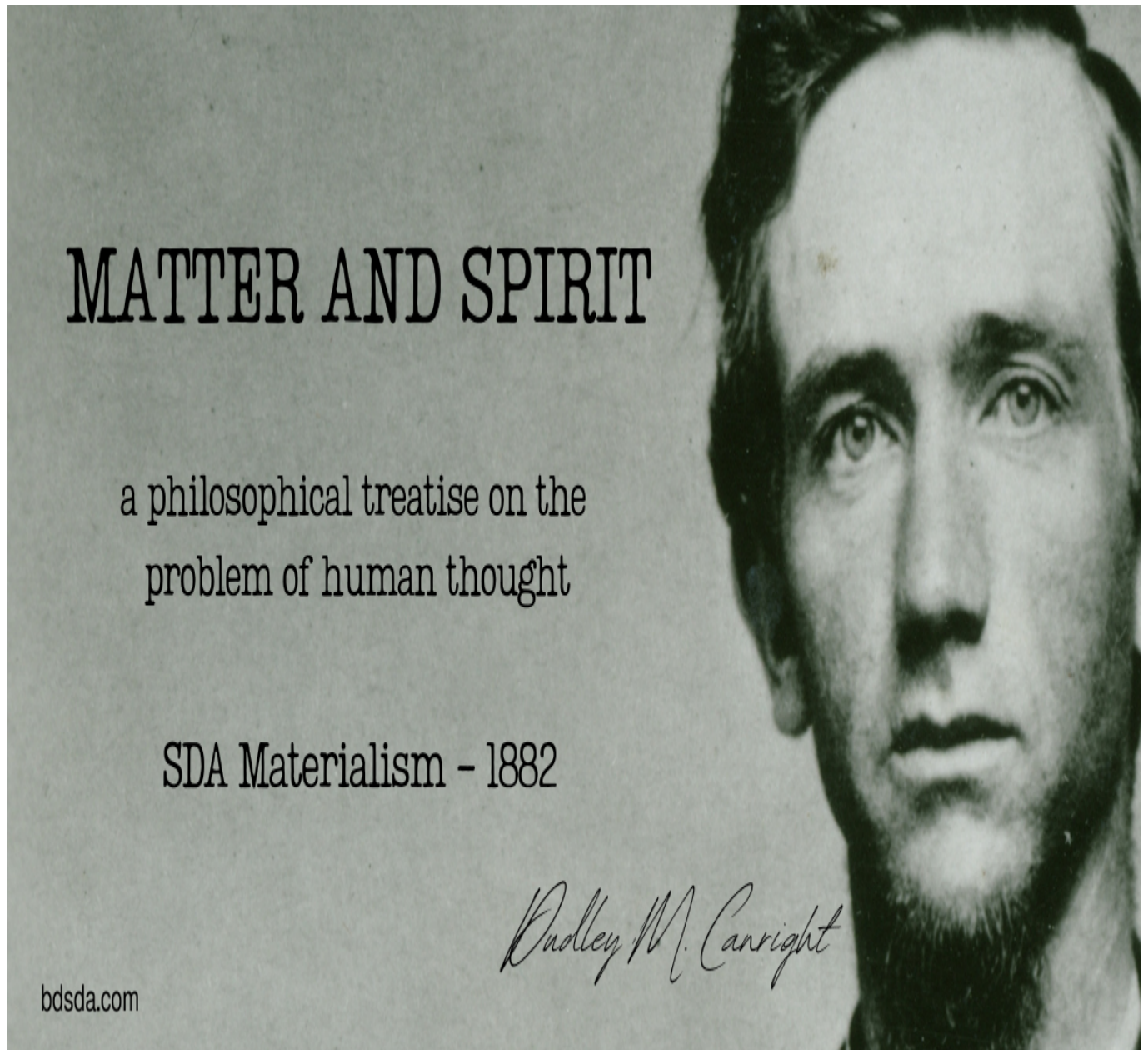


Matter and Spirit: The Problem of Human Thought

Description



MATTER AND SPIRIT

OR,

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN THOUGHT.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT.

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BY ELDER D. M. CANRIGHT.

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“I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

—*Psalmist.*

BATTLE CREEK, MICH.:
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1882.

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## 2022 INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet was written by one of the most prominent early Seventh-day Adventists and represents a clear explanation of what was, at the time, a well-known doctrine of the denomination: materialism. Materialism is the view that all that exists is exclusively made of matter; negatively stated, it is the view that nothing immaterial (non-physical) exists. While this doctrine is popularly associated with atheism, the fact of the matter is that, historically, most atheists have never been materialists and most materialists have never been atheists. While most Christians assume substance dualism (the belief in the existence of both material and immaterial realities), there have been some noteworthy Christian materialists, such as Joseph Priestley, Thomas Cooper, and Thomas Jefferson. The first generation of Seventh-day Adventists was unusual in that they were an organized body of Christian materialists. Indeed, materialism was one of the doctrines that played a formative role for the denomination. Like earlier Christian materialists, SDAs maintained that materialism was the doctrine of the ancient Hebrew prophets and that of Jesus and his apostles. For a sampling of articles by early-SDAs promoting materialism through argument, empirical facts, and especially Scripture, see [Materialism: Our Forgotten Foundation](#).

*Matter and Spirit* argues for the same conclusion as all early-SDA writings on the subject; that is, materialism is true. Yet, it argues for this conclusion from a more overtly philosophical angle, addressing the subject using logical argumentation and empirical facts without exploring the scriptural side of the question.

The content of the pamphlet originated as a series of articles called *Can God Organize Matter to Think?*, which James White published in *The Signs of the Times* in 1879 (original scans available here: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)), possibly as a continuation of Canright's series [The Personality of God](#). James and Ellen White had personally assisted Canright with *The Personality of God* in 1878, and the series was published in *the Review and Herald* that same year. Curiously, its final article ended with the note "(To be continued.)" yet the series did not continue in the following issues of *the Review*. The most likely continuation of *The Personality of God* is *Can God Organize Matter to Think?*, a.k.a. *Matter and Spirit*. It is, quite literally, a continuation of the themes and content of the previous series, maintaining connection, especially with the last article. It even builds on the same illustrations. This should be significant for Seventh-day Adventists today given Ellen White's involvement with, and endorsement of, *The Personality of God*.

Regardless of whether or to what extent Ellen White may have had direct involvement with the content presented here, *Matter and Spirit* clearly represents the official early-SDA view on materialism as will be plain to anyone who examines a wide range of their publications on the subject. Materialism went unchallenged within the church until Kellogg introduced spiritualistic theories. And even then, materialism wasn't so much challenged as it was obscured and eventually forgotten. And while Kellogg had begun entertaining spiritualistic sentiments even prior to the writing of *Matter and Spirit*, materialism was still the unquestioned philosophy of the denomination when it was published and for years afterward.

Evidently, *Matter and Spirit* was being prepared for publication before James White died but was delayed by his death in 1881. This is known thanks to a letter from George I. Butler (then president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists) to W. C. White (Ellen and James' son), dated Feb. 22, 1882, in which he said,

"Canright had matter here for a pamphlet on the question of whether matter can be organized to think. It was all prepared before your father died by Sr Davis, for the press, and was about to be printed. But his death stopped it. Canright says Waggoner thought it should be printed. He put it into my hands and Amadon, Smith and myself read it over together and thought it not good it is in the printers hands. I meant to have written to you about it before, but have not got to it." – [George I. Butler to W. C. White, Feb. 22, 1882](#)

This short statement connects the preparation of *Matter and Spirit* to an impressive list of some of the most prominent people in the denomination. Obviously, there are George Butler and W. C. White, but also Mary Ann (Marian) Davis (Ellen White's literary assistant and close companion), Joseph Waggoner, George Amadon, Uriah Smith, and James White (who originally published the same content as *Can God Organize Matter to Think?* anyway). I should clarify an expression of Butler's that some may misunderstand. He said that Amadon, Smith, and himself "thought it not good it is in the printers hands." It would be incorrect to interpret him as saying they thought the book was not good. We have positive proof they did think it was good since they publicly endorsed it and since their own writings manifestly agree with its contents. So, what did Butler mean? Simply this: he, Amadon, and Smith thought it wasn't good that the manuscripts for *Matter and Spirit* were merely sitting in the printers' hands rather than being printed and spread abroad. This is, in fact, the reason why Butler was mentioning it to W. C. White – to get a move on publishing it. And that is just what they did. Just two months later it was already being published, and Butler himself wrote an endorsement to advertise it in *the Review*. Here's his ad in full:

"New Pamphlet.

*Matter and Spirit; or the Problem of Human Thought.* This is the title of a pamphlet of sixty-four pages, written by Eld. D. M. Canright, which is just being printed at this Office, and is now ready for orders. Perhaps the headings of some of the different chapters will give as good an idea of its contents as anything: What is Matter? Organization of Matter Imparts to it New Qualities; What is Vegetable and Animal Life? God has Organized Matter in Certain Forms so that it does Think; The Beauty and Power of Matter Lies in its Organization; Material and

This pamphlet touches one of the most interesting problems of human thought. The relation of mind and matter is one which has engaged the attention of the greatest scholars, divines, and philosophers; and many volumes have been written upon this theme. So far as the teaching of inspiration is concerned, our people are quite familiar with it. We have many publications treating upon that branch of the subject. This pamphlet takes up the subject from a different standpoint, – that of philosophy and common sense. Can matter think? The immaterialist says No. He talks learnedly upon the subject of the immateriality of the spirit and the mind, of the impossibility of the inanimate stone thinking, and of the dead clay reasoning, and confuses the mind of the common people. And because they know not what reply to make, they feel almost forced to the conclusion that the thinking part of man is what he claims it to be – an immaterial spirit, without body or parts, which tabernacles in the body and departs at death to its final reward. This thought is impressed upon the mind from very childhood. As he comes to manhood, he hears it from the pulpit and the forum, and accepts it as the truth. When that is really accepted, many other errors of popular theology naturally and almost necessarily go with it. This error thus becomes the corner-stone of a vast edifice of false doctrine. When we preach in communities that have never heard the truth concerning the nature of man, and present the Scripture argument upon his nature and destiny, the minds of many are hardly prepared to appreciate the arguments advanced because of this hoary-headed pagan notion of the immateriality of the soul, and the impossibility of matter thinking. They cast aside the Bible argument as unphilosophical and absurd.

This pamphlet is just the thing to put into the hands of such people. It is an eye-opener. Its points are very clear and forcible. It contains the confessions of many eminent men on this subject, and shows that they recognize the difficulties of the popular view, and could not explain many things in harmony with it. It is just the thing to put into the hand of the investigator when first becoming interested in this subject. It is well calculated to create an interest. Those who have long studied the subject will be delighted with it. It is written in plain, simple language, which a child can understand, and contains many rare and valuable thoughts. We predict for it a large sale. All our ministers will want it in their tent-meetings the coming season. Our tract societies will all need it in their work. It should be at all our camp-meetings, and, in short, all our people will want a copy. Let the orders come in at once, that thousands of them may go forth on their errand of enlightenment. Retail price only 10 cents, with the usual discount by the quantity.

G. I. B.” – [Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, April 11, 1882](#), p. 234

With this endorsement ringing in our ears, let’s move on to the publication!

{5.1} PUBLISHERS’ NOTE.<sup>1</sup>This note is by the original publishers – the Review & Herald Publishing House – in 1882.

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{5.2} The subject treated in this work is intimately connected with many of the problems that are being freely discussed in the religious world at the present day. The publishers believe that the plain and logical method with which the author has dealt with the question will greatly assist the reader in the solution of these problems, and divest them of many of their intricacies by establishing correct premises upon which to base conclusions. Commending it to the careful consideration of the candid reader, they send it forth on its mission, asking the blessing of Heaven on its perusal.

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MATTER AND SPIRIT;

OR

The Problem of Human Thought.

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{7.1} INTRODUCTORY.

{7.2} Is anything too hard for God? Is he not almighty? Certain persons limit the power of God when they claim that matter cannot be organized by the Almighty so as to be able to think and reason. They take up a stone, they weigh it, measure it, and divide it, and then ask if that thing can think. Of course not. Examine that piece of wood. Can it think? Take a handful of the dust of the ground, from which all things grow. Is there anything here able to think? They analyze a dead body, and find that it is made up chiefly of water, nitrogen, a little phosphorus, a little sulphur, and some lime, with a few other earthy materials. Go farther, and analyze a man's brain. It is found to be composed of eight-tenths water, with a little albumen, a little fat, phosphorus, sulphur, etc. Then they ask us if these elements can think. Can sulphur reason? Can water love? Can oxygen hate? No. Hence they conclude that no matter, in whatever form or organization, can be made to think. And, therefore, all intelligences, whether men, angels, or Deity, must be immaterial. So heaven is fancied to be a vast region entirely void of matter. God who dwells there has no body, no form, no visible parts, but is a mere essence pervading all space. The angels are the same in essence, having no bodies, being nothing that can be felt, or handled, or seen. The souls of men are the same also in kind,—bodiless, intangible essences. All matter is incapable of thought, and all intelligence proceeds from immateriality. One more assumption, and the hard labored conclusion is triumphantly reached; namely, Whatever is immaterial is indestructible and therefore immortal. Hence the thinking part of man is immortal.

{8.1} But let us examine this pretentious fabric. If God is without body, parts, or shape, a mere essence filling all space, and if angels and the souls of men are the same, only smaller, then how can either be a person, or have a separate existence from the other? But waiving this, where is the proof that an immaterial being cannot be destroyed? Has God said so? No. Do they know it by experience? No. Then it is a mere groundless assumption. This theory of the immateriality of the soul is a modern invention to sustain the tottering notion of the soul's immortality. But the most noted theologians now confess that immateriality does not prove immortality. That which had a beginning can have an end. What God has made, he can destroy.

{9.1} But to the question, Can God organize matter so that it can think? we answer, *Yes*. But our opponents say, "A stone, a stick, dust, water, iron,—these are material. They have no intelligence. Hence matter cannot think." True, matter in these particular forms cannot think; but it does not follow that it cannot in a different form, or when differently organized. A ball of snow is very white and very cold. It is material. Shall I therefore conclude that all matter must be white and cold? A piece of coal is just as material as the snow-ball; and yet it is very black, just opposite in color from the snow. Again, burning coal is very hot, just the opposite of the cold snow. Has it ceased to be material? Lift that block of lead. How very heavy! Now handle those feathers. How light! They seem to be just the opposite of each other, yet both are matter. One form of matter is sour, as a lemon; another is sweet, as sugar.

{9.2} Indeed, the various combinations of matter may be said to be almost infinite. Yet it takes only a very few original or primary elements to make all these. "The number of the elements, or simple substances, with which we are at present acquainted, is sixty-four. These substances are not all equally distributed over the surface of the earth: most of them are exceedingly rare, and only known to chemists. Some ten or twelve only make up the great bulk, or mass, of all the objects we see around us."<sup>2</sup>Wells' *Natural Philosophy*, pp. 11, 12. But God has so variously arranged and organized these few elements that many forms seem the very opposite of others, as we have mentioned; as heat and cold, black and white, light and heavy, sour and sweet, and yet all are material.

{10.1} ORGANIZATION OF MATTER IMPARTS  
TO IT NEW QUALITIES.

{10.2} It is objected that no combination or organization of material particles can give to matter any new qualities it did not possess before. But nature furnishes a thousand illustrations contradicting this statement. One of the characteristic properties of steam is its remarkable elasticity; but when it is condensed into water, this property of the matter entirely disappears, and is replaced by an exactly opposite property called incompressibility. So hardness and brilliancy are distinctive properties of the diamond, yet both these totally disappear when the gem is converted into a gas, though not a particle of the matter is lost. So a cold piece of steel is hard and brittle, but when heated, is soft and ductile. Here is a cold lump of lime. I pour upon it a quantity of cold water, and immediately both become extremely hot. Who has not seen two colorless liquids when poured together become of a bright color, as red or pink? A candle is burning in a room. I blow out the blaze, and all is total darkness. Have I destroyed a particle of that matter? No; yet I have destroyed the light which was a property of that matter in that condition. A change of condition in matter, then, does change its properties. So it is reasonable that by the organization of particles in the brain, thought may be produced when none of those particles separately could think.

{11.1} I hold in my hand two kernels of corn exactly alike. I plant one, and it has the property of appropriating to itself the particles of matter which surround it, and of building up a stalk of corn. The other kernel I break up fine, and carefully bury every particle of it together. Can it sprout? Can it grow? Will it now build up a stalk? No, indeed. Why? Simply because I have broken up the peculiar arrangement of its particles which gave it the property to do that. The particles are all there, but differently arranged. In crushing that kernel to meal did I drive out a living, immaterial spirit entity which now goes off to live somewhere else? No one claims such a thing. Organization, then, does give to matter qualities which it does not possess unorganized. Now take a higher organization, —a living man. He is thinking. A timber falls and crushes him to death. Can he think or reason now? No, and why not? That organization which gave him this attribute is destroyed, and hence thought ceases.

{12.1} We utterly deny the distinction between matter and spirit which is claimed. We believe that everything is material, and that these diversities previously mentioned are only different conditions of matter. No man can successfully deny this. The wisest and most scientific men freely admit that they know but little about matter. The more they study, and the deeper they search into it, the more they are convinced that its different attributes and capabilities have been but partially understood. Because a certain fact is true of matter in one condition, it is argued that it must be true of matter always and everywhere. But this is illogical and false, for matter is capable of infinite diversity. Matter in one form may even seem to be the opposite of the same matter in another form. For instance, I have before me a piece of ice. I put my hand upon it; it is exceedingly cold. It is a square block; I can cut it with a knife, or saw it with a saw into blocks. It is solid. But I put this ice into a vessel and warm it. It soon becomes water,—a liquid. It now looks very different from that piece of ice which I held in my hand a few minutes before. I closely confine this water in a tight vessel, and heat it very hot. It now becomes steam, a vapor, and is invisible. Says Mr. Wells, “Steam, which is the vapor of boiling water, is invisible, but when it comes in contact with air, which is cooler, it becomes condensed into small drops, and is thus rendered visible.”<sup>3</sup>Wells’ Natural Philosophy, p. 238. It is so hot it would scald your hand in a moment. It can neither be cut, nor poured from vessel to vessel. It now seems to be precisely the opposite from that piece of ice, and yet it is the very same material, only in another condition.

{13.1} If a man had never seen ice thus converted into steam, he would pronounce such a change impossible. Let him examine a piece of ice, put his hands upon it, and then let him examine steam in its most heated condition; let him try it with his hand, then tell him that they are both the same material, and he would pronounce it the greatest absurdity imaginable. Yet we all know by actual observation that ice, and water, and steam are only different conditions of the same material.

{13.2} There is apparently as great a difference between steam and ice as is claimed by our opponents between spirit and matter. We claim, therefore, that they cannot show that a spirit is not one form of matter. The Bible nowhere says it is not. On the other hand, it plainly shows that it is.

{14.1} So because matter in one form does not reason, it is no evidence that it cannot when organized in some other way. Look at that coarse, filthy mud in the road. That is matter. Shall we conclude that all matter is like that? How absurd! For here lies a beautiful gold watch, measuring off the seconds, minutes, and hours in exact time! The watch is as material as the mud, but how different! Again, there is a piece of black charcoal, hardly worth picking up. Here is a diamond of priceless value, one as large as a thimble being worth millions. Two small diamond earrings sold for \$75,000. One diamond owned by Napoleon was worth \$1,000,000. The king of Portugal has one worth \$28,000,000. Now, that charcoal and that diamond are not only both material, but, wonderful to tell, they are both of exactly the same material, only differently arranged. The contrast between senseless matter and thinking matter would not be greater.

#### {14.2} CONFESSIONS OF EMINENT MEN.

{14.3} How presumptuous for puny man, with his narrow range of vision and almost utter ignorance of the ways and means of the Almighty, and the endless capabilities of matter, to say what God can do with matter and what he cannot do! Though for six thousand years men have been using matter, handling matter, eating it, drinking it, wearing it, surrounded on every side by matter, and they themselves are made of it; yet how little do they know about it!

{15.1} The most profound philosophers, the keenest students of nature, the sharpest chemists, acknowledge their ignorance of the simplest forms and operations of matter. Bishop Clark makes this confession: "If it is asked what is meant by matter, or what matter *is*, we must confess that we know not what constitutes its *essence*. In this respect its ontology is beyond our reach; and the only advance we find it possible to make is to point out *some* of the properties of matter as discerned by our senses, and to exhibit *some* of the laws by which it is governed." <sup>4</sup>Man All Immortal, p. 21.

{15.2} Yes, all that the wisest man can do is to tell a few of the laws and properties of matter. Here they are stranded on the shore. The great ocean lies beyond them, all unknown. So said Sir Isaac Newton, the prince of philosophers. Another learned author says: "All the great forces or agents in nature, those which produce, or are the cause of, all the changes which take place in matter, may be enumerated as follows: Internal, or molecular forces, the attraction of gravitation, heat, light, the attractive and repulsive forces of magnetism and electricity, and finally, a force or power which only exists in living animals and plants, which is called *vital force*. Concerning the real nature of these forces, we are entirely ignorant.....In the present state of science, it is impossible to know whether they are merely properties of matter, or whether they are forms of matter itself." <sup>5</sup>Wells' Natural Philosophy, p. 21. When scientific men make such confessions of their ignorance of matter, others would better be more modest in their statements.



{16.1} All confess that they know as little about what spirit is as about what matter is. Here is what a believer in immaterialism says, “Now we are frank to confess that we do not know precisely what a spiritual body is. Some of its characteristics may be, perhaps, pretty well defined, and that is about as far as we can go.”<sup>6</sup>N. V. Hull, Editor *Sabbath Recorder*, Aug. 30, 1877. A doctor of divinity says, “It must *not* be thought amiss, nor awaken surprise, if we confess that we know not in what the essence of soul, or spirit, consists.”<sup>7</sup>Man All Immortal, p. 29. They can neither tell what matter is nor what spirit is, so they are all compelled to confess. Then how do they know that spirit is not one form of matter? Is not the spirit located in the body? Certainly. Well, whatever has locality must have extension, must have a center and circumference, and hence must be material. Newham writes: “We do not consider the question of the materiality of the soul as being very important, because what we call spiritual may, in fact, be an infinitely fine modification of matter, far too subtile to be apprehended by our present powers.”<sup>8</sup>Body and Mind, p. 97

{17.1} Dr. Knapp says: “This doctrine respecting the immateriality of the soul, in the strict philosophical sense of the term, is of far less consequence to their religion than is commonly supposed. The reason why so much importance has been supposed to be attached to this doctrine is, it was considered as essential to the metaphysical proof of the immortality of the soul. But since the immateriality of the soul, in the strictest sense, can never be made fully and obviously certain, whatever philosophical arguments may be urged in its favor, the proof of immortality should not be built upon it.”<sup>9</sup>Christian Theology, Vo. Ii, p. 372.

{17.2} To these pertinent testimonies we add one more, that of the renowned philosopher, John Locke, who says: “We have the ideas of matter and thinking, but possibly shall never be able to know whether any mere material being thinks or not; it being impossible for us, by the contemplation of our own ideas, without revelation, to discover whether Omnipotence has not given to some systems of matter, fitly disposed, a power to perceive and think, or else joined and fixed to matter so disposed, a thinking, immaterial substance; it being, in respect of our notions, not much more remote from our comprehension to conceive that God can, if he pleases, superadd to matter a faculty of thinking, than that he should superadd to it another substance, with a faculty of thinking; since we know not wherein thinking consists, nor to what sort of substance the Almighty has been pleased to give that power which cannot be in any created being but merely by the good pleasure of the Creator. For I see no contradiction in it, that the first eternal thinking Being should, if he pleased, give to certain systems of created, senseless matter, put together as he thinks fit, some degrees of sense, perception, and thought.”<sup>10</sup>Essay, Book iv., chap. 3. Then, for all that the wisest men can tell, it may be matter after all which thinks.

#### {18.1} WHAT IS MATTER?

{18.2} Who can tell what light is? You are in a dark room. You hold in your hand a match. It is nothing but a bit of wood and a little phosphorus,—both gross matter, and no light in either of them. You scratch the match, and lo! the whole room is full of light. What is that light? It is not a living thing, an immaterial intelligence, is it? No; it must be matter in some form, or some action of matter. But why does it give light? We see that it does, but it is hard to tell why. Is not the production of light out of these dark materials in the above case as wonderful as the production of thought by the human, material brain? The one is as inexplicable as the other. Light travels with the velocity of 180,000 miles a second, that is, seven times around the earth while you are winking your eye once! Yet this same light is either material or some action of matter; for it can be analyzed. Pass a ray of light through a prism, and it is separated into seven distinct parts; *viz.*, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.<sup>11</sup>Wells’ Natural Philosophy, p. 326. Can the body of an angel be of a purer or higher substance than this? It may be; for perhaps God has matter in his great laboratory far more refined than any with which we have to do.

{19.1} “As there are forces in the universe unknown and even inconceivable to man, so there may also be celestial bodies called spirits totally unlike what he sees about him, real and substantial each in its kind, but too subtile for human understanding. Science asserts that there is no such thing as pure space. The air is displaced by our walking through it, and the ether may be cut in twain by an angel’s winged form, our eyes perceiving neither air, ether, nor angel. Man’s ignorance of the essence of things is too patent. Spirits, good and bad, belong to the realm of the supernatural, are of the order of the celestial material, but not gross. I think God may have some other substances besides ‘oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon’ out of which to make them. Science, very probably, could neither ‘weigh, analyze, nor measure’ Gabriel. Nevertheless, this royal being is somebody, and immateriality, as referred to him and his heavenly fellows, is a misnomer, a theological blunder.”<sup>12</sup>D. T. Taylor, in *Bible Banner*.

{20.1} But it is not necessary to suppose any other substances than those with which we are already acquainted. A being created out of light, electricity, air, and heat would be sufficiently elevated to meet our highest conceptions of even a seraph. What is heat? I enter a cold room. The stove is cold, the wood is cold, the match is cold. I light the match, ignite the wood, and shortly the room is filled with heat. What is that? From whence did it come? It is produced by gross matter and nothing else. We can feel it, we can see the effects of it; but here our knowledge stops. Neither heat nor light has any weight. Take the most powerful burning-glass, and pour ten thousand rays of light upon the most delicate balance, and they will have no perceptible weight. So an iron rod as cold as ice, or white hot does not vary a particle in weight.<sup>13</sup>Wells’ *Natural Philosophy*, pp. 293, 207. What are they then? Not immaterial, intelligent spirits certainly. They are either a subtile kind of matter, or the action of matter in certain conditions.

{21.1} Brand’s “*Encyclopedia of Science*” says, “The cause of the phenomena of heat is unknown; but they are supposed to depend upon the presence of a highly attenuated, imponderable, and subtile form of matter, the particles of which repel each other, but are attracted by other bodies.”<sup>14</sup>Art., Heat.

{21.2} That wonder of all wonders,—electricity, —what is it? All nature is running-over full of it, —the earth, the clouds, the metals, our own bodies; yet who can explain it? It is easily produced by rubbing two pieces of matter together, as glass and silk, or a child’s hand and a cat’s back. See the electric sparks fly! Take this simple fact, now of every-day occurrence. A man stands in New York. He touches the end of a wire, and a man across the ocean in London immediately perceives the fact. He cannot explain how this is done. We say it is done by electricity. Ah! but what is electricity? Is it an immaterial, intangible, conscious spirit from the other world? Three centuries ago it probably would have been explained as such, but now we know it is simply an action of matter, wonderful as it is. It is produced from matter; hence it must be either a subtile kind of matter, or the product of matter. Any way, its whole origin is material. It is not an immaterial intelligence. Says Mr. Wells, “Neither do we know whether electricity is a material substance, a property of matter, or the vibration of ether.”<sup>15</sup>Wells’ *Natural Philosophy*, p. 369

{22.1} The nature and action of electricity is just as marvelous as that of thought itself. It is no more wonderful or unreasonable that the natural brain should produce thought than that a piece of glass should produce electricity. Every year scientific investigation is revealing new wonders of matter. A man only exposes his ignorance when he says matter cannot do this and cannot do that. He is simply asserting that of which he knows nothing. It is our humble opinion, well founded, we think, too, both in revelation and science, that angels and the celestial beings are as material as men, only that they are more highly organized, more refined,—matter on a higher plane. Who that has carefully observed the wonderful and infinite diversity of matter, even as seen in this earth, will deny the reasonableness of this position? It cannot be disproved, to say the least. When we have found out God to perfection, have entered into his secret laboratory, when we have explored earth, heaven, and hell, and have fathomed all the infinite diversities and capabilities of matter, then, and not till then, will it do for us to say what God can do with matter and what he cannot do.

{23.1} Attraction of gravitation, what is it? It is that power which holds all bodies down to the earth. It pulls the apple off the tree, and causes it to fall to the ground. I hold a stone in my hand. I let it go, and it falls to the ground. Why is this? Because attraction pulls it there. Attraction operates upon all bodies in the universe, however distant. The sun attracts the earth, and holds it in its orbit. Says Wells, “Every portion of matter in the universe attracts every other portion.”<sup>16</sup>Natural Philosophy, p. 30

{23.2} Attraction, then, is either a very subtle kind of matter or else the product of matter. Its source is wholly material. Imagine the tremendous power with which the sun attracts this huge earth. Hitch ten thousand monster ropes and chains to Jupiter, fasten the other end to the earth, and then let the earth drop. How quickly all would be snapped in twain! Yet the sun, by the simple power of attraction, holds this same earth as easily as a boy holds his kite. But can you dissect attraction? Can you cut it and carve it? Can you see it and handle it? Can you hear, smell, or taste it? Can you say it is so long, so wide, and so high? Is it black or white, sweet or sour? No; it is just as indefinable and inscrutable as thought itself. Yet no one claims that it is a living being. Its root and source is in matter and of matter. Till our theologians can explain some of these wonders of matter, they need not come to us with their assumptions that matter cannot think, because we cannot tell how it thinks.

#### {24.1} WHAT IS VEGETABLE AND ANIMAL LIFE?

{24.2} Who can explain so simple a thing as vegetable life, that force by which all vegetables grow? I have in my hand a seed. It is round, hard, and apparently lifeless. I can weigh it, measure it, open and dissect it. I now take a handful of common earth, mere particles of dust. There is no life here that I can see. This dust I can weigh, measure, divide, and analyze. I put the seed into it, and add a few drops of water. The water I can handle, measure, and analyze. It is composed of oxygen and hydrogen,—common matter in its crudest form. All these elements are nothing but matter. Now can matter do anything? Can it stir itself? Can it move? Can it arrange itself in a different manner from that in which you place it? Our immaterialist friends say, No, never; but we say, Yes, when vitalized.

{24.3} Now look. Shortly that seed swells out,—becomes larger. A little sprout begins to put forth, and tiny roots are thrown out. Particles of that water are taken up, and atoms of matter are appropriated. Day by day a stalk grows up inch by inch, until it stands six feet high and two inches through. Is not all this matter from beginning to end? Is it not all done by matter? Yes. None would be so foolish as to claim that that stalk inclosed an immaterial, intelligent entity, to which this action is due. It is done by the power of vegetable life which the Creator has stored in that little seed, a particle of matter. Ah! there is the secret of it. The principle of life, vegetable life, has been placed there by God. Then inanimate matter can be endowed by the Creator so as to move, and act, and live. Open that green stalk of corn, and you will find that the sap is constantly running up through all its pores. There is life and action; yet it is nothing but matter after all,—matter vitalized. So we see a brain growing larger and stronger and developing thought daily. How and why we don't know any more than why the plant grows. If we assume an immaterial spirit to do the thinking in the brain, we may just as reasonably assume one to do the growing in the plant. But can that stone, that piece of iron, grow? No; God has never bestowed that power upon these, but he has upon other matter, or rather matter in other forms. Is it, then, any harder for God so to organize and endow matter that it will think and reason, than it is to give it vegetable life so that it will grow?

{26.1} But going a step higher than vegetable life, we have animal life. First we have matter in its crudest form, a mere lifeless mass. The next step higher, as we have seen, is matter in the vegetable form, with vegetable life. The next and third step in matter is when it is organized in the animal. This is seen in the dumb brutes in common with man. Some orders of vegetable life and of animal life are so nearly alike that it is sometimes difficult to mark the dividing line.

{26.2} But what is animal life? Take that little flea, that fly, that mosquito. Each has animal life, is possessed of sensation, of power to do, to move, and to propagate its species. Yet these are nothing but matter organized. No one claims that they have immortal souls. Indeed, believers in the immortality of man's spirit generally agree in denying even intelligence to the higher brutes, much more to the lower.

{26.3} Now we ask them to tell us what animal life is? It is not reason, it is not intelligence, it is not an immaterial person, an intelligent, thinking being, dwelling in all these fleas, flies, and gnats. No; they say it is simply animal life. Well, then, gross matter can be endowed with life so as to move, eat, drink, propagate, etc. Can these wise spiritualizers put their finger on that animal life and tell us what it is? How long, how wide, and how deep is it? How much does it weigh? Can they open and dissect it, can they analyze it chemically? No; yet they are compelled to acknowledge that it is an attribute which God has bestowed upon certain organizations of matter. Simple matter has been endowed by the Creator with this wonderful faculty.

{27.1} Now we appeal to any candid man to say whether this attribute of matter is not just as mysterious, just as incomprehensible, and just as difficult to conceive of, as that God should also organize matter in certain forms so as to be able to think, reason, and be intelligent. We cannot tell how matter can think, neither can they tell us how matter can live, and yet it does both.

#### {27.2} HOW DIFFERENT SPECIES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS ARE PERPETUATED.

{27.3} Inorganic matter has not the power of producing a living animal, or even a plant; but at creation God made the first specimen of all vegetables and animals, and gave each the power to reproduce its kind, some one way, some another. Plant a thousand different seeds in the same soil, and out of these same material elements each will construct a plant like itself; so each animal begets another after its own kind. How this can be we cannot possibly say, yet there is the fact.

{28.1} I hold in my hand six little seeds. They do not seem to differ much in size, weight, or color. They are nothing but matter, at the best. I place them all side by side in the same soil. They are moistened by the same dew, warmed by the same sun, and they grow up together. But how marvelous! Each little seed has produced a plant quite different from all the rest. Then look at the various shapes and colors of the flowers as they open their leaves and blossoms. One is red, one is white, another is pink, another violet. Who can explain this mystery? Nobody. Yet this is all the work of mere matter vitalized by the power of God six thousand years ago. Look at that apple tree. It bears sour apples. I take a twig from a sweet apple tree, and graft it into one of the limbs. On that little twig grow sweet apples, while all around it on the same tree the apples are sour. The same sap rises up from the root, and feeds all the limbs alike; but when it comes to that limb, the same sap is made into sweet apples instead of sour. What does this? Is there a mysterious intelligence in that little limb? Oh! no. It is nothing but matter at work, and gross matter at that. Cannot the God, who can make matter work such marvels as these, make it think.

{28.2} Our pleaders for immateriality see such a difference between matter in its higher forms, as when organized into an angel or the higher classes of men, and the grosser forms of matter as seen in the lower animals, plants, and minerals, that they conclude these cannot both be material. But we fully believe that the whole difference lies in the quality and superior organization of the matter which the Creator has given one over the other.

{29.1} Take another simple illustration. Here sits a skillful painter. Before him are his canvas, his brushes, and several kinds of paint,—all nothing but gross matter. They do not look very beautiful in that shape. But now he commences his work. He puts on a little of this paint, a little of that, and some of the other. In due time, lo and behold! there is the figure of an angel. The innocence and loveliness of heaven sit upon it. We cannot admire it too much. Again he takes up the same brushes, with the same paint, and on the same canvas soon is represented the hideous form of a horrid devil. What a contrast in the two pictures! Can they be of the same material? Oh! yes: the only difference is in the way they are put together, or at most, a little tinting of some other paint is added. With the same material he can paint a plant, a beast, or a man. Then cannot God do as much? Yes; we know he does, for we see it every day. Gather up promiscuously a hundred pounds of vegetable matter, a hundred pounds of brute flesh, and as much human flesh, and analyze them all. They will be found to consist largely of the same materials.

{30.1} Then, reader, it is the organization that makes the plant, the beast, or the man. Yes, sir; and it is the organization that makes the mind, which neither the stone nor the plant possesses.

{30.2} GOD HAS ORGANIZED MATTER IN CERTAIN FORMS SO THAT IT DOES THINK.

{30.3} If a false theology had not utterly blinded our eyes to reason and the plainest facts of every-day observation, it would require no argument to prove this proposition. There sits a fly. Is he not material? Is he anything but matter? Will any be foolish enough to claim an immortal soul for him? No: all any one claims is that he has animal life, but no spiritual or immaterial nature. Well, I carefully reach out my hand to put my finger on him. He sees the motion, and, conscious of danger, flies away. Man in danger acts the same as that fly. We know that he reasons in doing so; so does the fly, or else it would not move. I raise my hand to strike that chair, but it does not try to move. Why not, as well as the fly? Because it knows nothing, while the fly understands its danger.

{30.4} Here is my dog. He thinks. I know he thinks, for I see the fullest evidence of it. I speak to him, and he moves his head, wags his tail, and comes to me. Could unthinking matter do that? No. I tell him to do this or that, and he obeys me. This shows that he knows, that he understands what I say. But our opponents say this is nothing but instinct; there is no thought, reason, or intelligence about it. This is sheer nonsense, for which any reasonable man ought to blush; but be it so, it only helps our case. For according to their own position they must admit that matter can be organized so as to hear, see, feel, and act. I run a pin into my dog, or I strike him. See how quickly and keenly he feels it. He cries out for pain. See his flesh quiver. There is feeling here: none can deny this. So our opponents must now admit that matter can be made to *feel*. There is no possibility of avoiding this conclusion.

{31.1} But further. My dog can see. Look at his twinkling eyes. He has as good sight as man has. Doesn't he hear also? How acute his sense of smelling! You may deny him a mind and reason, but you cannot deny that he sees, hears, smells, and feels. Well, he is wholly material, as we both agree. Then here we have proof which cannot be evaded in any possible manner that matter can be organized so as to see, hear, smell, and feel. This gives us the whole question; for if God can organize matter to see, to hear, and to feel, he can as easily organize it to think. Unless they admit that the dog has an immortal soul, which they will by no means do, they cannot resort to the favorite evasion which is employed when we argue that the human eye does see. They reply that it is not the eye that sees, but the immaterial spirit behind it, which sees through the eye as we see through a telescope. But the dog has no such immaterial entity back of his eye, yet he sees; so it must be the material eye that sees after all.

{32.1} Take another familiar illustration: Here are a dozen hen's eggs. I open one, and find nothing but common matter, largely water with a little phosphorus, lime, etc. I can see no signs of thought or even animal life here, nothing which can see, or hear, or move itself. I put another of the eggs under a setting hen. In a few days I behold a living animal breaking out of that shell. It now has eyes, ears, and can run around, and feed itself. It can see, hear, and feel. What has wrought this great difference in the matter which was in that egg? Has God sent an immortal soul down to animate it? Oh! no. Simply the latent animal life in that egg has been developed. It is just the same matter that it was before, only it is differently organized. Now that matter can see and feel.

{32.2} Let us carry this further. A man is asleep. Prick his foot with a pin. His foot feels it, and the nerve immediately carries the impression to the mind, and the man awakes. In this case it is the material flesh which feels the pin and informs the mind of it. It is claimed that the immaterial soul is of the same size and shape as the body, and hence it is present in all parts of the body, and that it is after all the soul that feels, and not the flesh? But this theory will not work well for our opponents. According to this view, the immaterial soul of a child can only be the size of a child. Hence it must grow larger as the child grows to man's size. But how can an immaterial thing grow? That which can grow larger must be composed of parts. Hence it can be divided, separated, and thus destroyed, and therefore is not immortal any more than the material body. But to return to that foot. We can positively demonstrate, beyond any contradiction, that in this case it is the material flesh, not the soul at all, which feels the prick of the pin. Here is the proof: Cut off that material leg. Have you cut off the leg of the spirit body which they claim is inside of the material body? Of course they dare not admit that; for if you can cut off the leg of the immaterial body, you could also cut off its head and cut it all up! No, that will not do; so the leg of the spirit body must be there still, hanging out after the material leg of flesh has been amputated! What a predicament that must be for the unfortunate spirit leg!

{33.1} But the point is, which feels, the material fleshy leg, or the immaterial spirit leg? We will try it. When the flesh was there, the prick of a pin, the blow of a cane, could be felt. But now that the flesh is gone, thrust in the pin, strike at it and through it with a cane; is there any feeling? Not a particle, as any man will tell you who has lost a limb. So one told me yesterday, when I asked him, and tried the experiment. Then it is not the immaterial body, but the fleshy body, which feels. Take another case. A man's limb is paralyzed. The nerves no longer act. The leg or arm is still alive, but it has no feeling. You may prick it, freeze it, or burn it; but the man feels nothing. I know a person in just this condition. He has frozen all his fingers off because he could not feel when they were cold. What is the difficulty in this case? The material nerve of flesh, the one which feels, is paralyzed and inactive; hence there is no feeling in that limb, though the limb is alive. Now if it is the spirit which feels, and this is present in all the body, why does it not feel as well as before? What can our opponents say to this? Nothing; for it utterly demolishes their immaterial-spirit theory.

{34.1} But further: we positively know that their pretended spirit-man inside can neither see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel. How do we know this? Put out a man's material eyes, and can he see anything now? No, nothing at all, as any blind man will tell you. So of all the five senses. Destroy the material, physical organs of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or feeling, and the soul can neither see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel. This demonstrates that it is the material man which sees, hears, etc. If the spirit can see, why does it not do so? Why does not the soul of the blind man see? Why does not the soul of the deaf man hear? Oh! you say, it is cumbered with the flesh. Then it cannot see through matter, can it? But it has been always asserted that the immaterial spirit is so superior to matter that it can go through the most solid matter, as through a wall, through a board, through glass or iron. But now this has to be given up, and it is admitted that it cannot even see, nor hear, nor smell through so thin a material substance as the human skull! Poor weak thing! the material ear can do better than that. Reader, that boasted immaterial spirit man inside is all a fable. There is no such useless tenant there. God has organized the material, physical man to see, hear, and think; and we see him in the exercise of this power every day.

{35.1} In the case of an amputated limb the person still feels it to be there for a time. This is merely because the mind has so long been accustomed to having it there that it still seems that it must be so. Gradually the brain and nerves become accustomed to the new arrangement, and the sense of the limb's still being there ceases.

{35.2} It is a favorite argument with our opponents that matter cannot possibly be organized so as to think and feel. Take as a specimen of all this reasoning the following from Rev. D. W. Clark, D. D., Bishop of the M. E. Church, in his book, "Man All Immortal." He has here stated their side as forcibly as it can be done. He says: "We are accustomed to say the eye sees, the ear hears, the finger feels, and so forth; but such language is used only in accommodation to our ignorance, or from the force of habit. It is incorrect. The eye itself no more sees than the telescope which we hold before it to assist our vision; the ear hears not any more than the trumpet of tin which the deaf man directs toward the speaker to convey the sound of his voice; and so with regard to all the organs of sense. They are but instruments which become the media of intelligence to the absolute mind, and it uses them whenever it is inclined or obliged to do so." [17](#)Page 75

{36.1} This is the doctrine of the immaterialist. It will do very well for them to reason that way in the case of men; but they cannot do it in the case of the dumb beast, because, as does Bishop Clark in this very book, they claim that brutes have no mind, no soul; hence in these cases they are compelled to admit that the dumb animal does see, and does hear. They have never answered this argument: they never will. They must either admit that every flea, every musquito, every little gnat, has an immortal soul, or else they must admit that a material animal does see. But if the Almighty can organize matter in a dumb brute so as to see, hear, feel, then can he not do the same in man, and also organize it to reason? But they squarely deny that it is possible for the Almighty to do this.

{37.1} Hear Bishop Clark's argument upon this point: "The opinion that even *organic matter* could, by *any possibility*, be made to exhibit such power, cannot be received without the most clear and indubitable evidence. What is there to be found in the composition of the brain and nervous system, or in their organization, that would lead us to look for the development of thought, feeling, or conscience in them? The brain has been analyzed, and more than eight-tenths of its substance has been found to be water. Indeed, this, mixed up with a little albumen, a still less quantity of fat, osmazome, phosphorus, acids, salts, and sulphur constitutes its material elements. In all cases, water largely predominates. Take even the *pineal gland*—that interior and mysterious organ of the brain, supposed by Descartes, and by many philosophers after him, to be the peculiar seat of the soul—even this has been analyzed. Its principal elements are found to be phosphate of lime, together with a smaller proportion of carbonate of lime and phosphates of ammonia and magnesia.

{37.2} "If the brain at large constitutes the soul, then the soul is only a peculiar combination of oxygen and hydrogen, with albumen, acids, salts, sulphur, etc. Or, if the pineal gland constitutes the soul, then the principal element of soul is phosphate of lime!" [18](#)Man All Immortal, pp. 57, 58.

{38.1} To immaterialists this may sound like good reasoning; but to us it seems wholly inconclusive. It is simply setting aside the power of God entirely, and arguing that what we cannot do, cannot be done. How foolish!

{38.2} Try his argument on the organization of dumb beasts. I have in my hand a little live mouse. Behold how bright his eye, how keen his sight. Look at his ear. How sharp his hearing. Prick him with a pin. How quickly he feels it. Again, how acute is his smell. How soon he will find a piece of cheese, or detect the presence of a cat. Here we certainly have sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, and, indeed, all the senses. Let us analyze this little animal as the bishop did the brain, and what do we find? "Eight-tenths of its substance has been found to be water. Indeed, this, mixed up with a little albumen, a still less quantity of fat, osmazome, phosphorus, acids, salts, and sulphur, constitutes its material element. In all cases water largely predominates." We have found simply "a peculiar combination" of oxygen, hydrogen, sulphur, etc.

{39.1} How unreasonable to suppose that these gross materials could ever see, hear, or smell! No: it cannot be so. There must be an immaterial, immortal, never-dying soul in that mouse, which did all the seeing and hearing. The mouse must have an immortal soul, and the mosquito surely has a never-dying spirit! Reader, to such absurd conclusions are our opponents driven, to maintain their immaterial theory. It is simply a square denial of the power of God and the common-sense observation of every-day life. Such reasoning is mere appeal to the vulgar prejudices against matter. Let me try it in a different manner.



{39.2} Here is a fond mother with a dear sweet little girl of four summers, whom she greatly loves: nor can we blame her for being fond of so beautiful a child. The little girl has bright, twinkling eyes, plump, rosy cheeks, curly hair, finely shaped, dimpled hands, and a fair complexion. She is neatly dressed in the most tasteful manner. How the mother loves to throw her arms around her, and press her to her heart! But stop. Let us put this lovely object into the chemical laboratory, and analyze it. A thorough analysis shows that four-fifths of that body is nothing but water, a few parts albumen, sulphur, phosphorus, salts, acids, and a little fatty matter. Lay them out here each by itself. Is there anything very lovely here? Would you like to embrace and kiss these? Oh, no; the loveliness is all gone. And yet but a few minutes ago, that mother was caressing these very elements in the most affectionate manner. Was she then so much in love with a little water, phosphorus, and sulphur? How ridiculous this seems to be! It is no more absurd, however, than the arguments of our opponents, —that a little water, sulphur, etc., cannot think.

{40.1} THE BEAUTY AND POWER OF MATTER LIES IN ITS ORGANIZATION.

{40.2} But the falsity of this kind of reasoning lies just in this: It takes the unorganized, unvitalized elements separately, and reasons as to what these can do, and what these can be, and what they cannot do in this condition. It sets aside the very points at issue; namely, organization and proper combination. It is just like taking an exquisite painting, and undertaking to prove that there is nothing beautiful about it by the same process. Put that painting into the chemical laboratory, wash off the paint with an acid, analyze its elements; and what do you find? A little oil, a few ounces of lead, and several different minerals. Lay them out there side by side. Now I can sneeringly say, Where is its beauty? Where its comely form? Where is there anything to be admired? But how absurd would be such a course? The whole beauty of that picture is, not in the rough material, but in their skillful combination and arrangement. Destroy the combination, and the beauty is gone, the picture is destroyed.

{41.1} Just so foolish does he reason who undertakes to analyze a man's brain, and finding only water, phosphorus, albumen, etc., sneeringly says, "This cannot reason, this cannot think." No, very true; in that shape they cannot. But as God put them together, they can think, and they do. Further than this, we know that a man's brain does think; because in more than one case it has been seen in the act of thinking. A certain man had by an injury a large piece entirely removed from the top of his skull. It exposed two or three square inches of his brain, but did not kill him. Interesting observations were made in his case by physicians. When he was asleep, the brain would settle down, and become greatly contracted. It would be all quiet. The moment he awoke, the brain would grow larger and begin to quiver. As he entered into conversation, this motion of the brain increased. When his mind became agitated, this motion was very rapid.

{41.2} What does this show? It shows that the brain does think. The science of phrenology confirms the fact that the brain does think. It shows that the size and quality of a man's brain determine the capacity of his mind. A large brain, of a fine organization, always gives a giant mind. Even Bishop Clark thus inadvertently admits this fact: "A finer and more perfect organization in the human species affords finer development of mental power."<sup>19</sup>Man All Immortal p. 99. Look at the charts and busts exhibited by the phrenologist. It will be seen that the organization of the brain has been the measure of the mental man.

{42.1} “The average Hottentot is inferior in intellectual capacity to the average European; and this is not because an inferior kind of soul has taken up its abode in the Hottentot’s tenement of clay, but because his physical organization is less perfect. Among the lower animals, mental power is manifested in proportion to the size and quality of the brain; thus the superior sagacity of the monkey, the dog, the horse, and the elephant is owing to the possession of superior cerebral organization. ‘The size of the brain,’ says Dr. Gray, ‘appears to bear a general relation to the intellectual capacity of the individual. Cuvier’s weighed rather more than 64 ounces, that of the late Dr. Abercrombie 63 ounces, and that of Dupuytren 62 ½ ounces. On the other hand, the brain of the idiot seldom weighs more than 23 ounces.’”<sup>20</sup>Immortality, p. 75, by J. H. Whitmore.

{42.2} It is not the mere size of the brain that is the measure of mental power, but the fineness of the material and the way it is organized, must be considered. Hence it is that a practiced phrenologist can read a man’s character by simply feeling of his head. What is insanity? Generally the wildest ravings result from some derangement of the brain, a nervous disease, a fracture of the skull, or a derangement of the fluids in the system. Cure the nervous disease, restore the fractured skull to its position, and thus put it in order again, and the mental disorder at once ceases. But if the mind is immortal and indestructible, how can it ever become insane? How can it become diseased?

{43.1} Another fact proves that the mind results from the physical organization; namely, that the mind grows with the growth of the body, and decays with its decay. Hence, who expects to find a man’s intellect in the body of a babe or of a child? Paul truly says, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.” 1 Cor. 13:12. As the brain grows up to maturity, the mind also develops; and then in old age, as the body grows weak, the mind grows weak also, till you have second childhood, so familiar to everybody. This should not be so, if the mind of man is immaterial and separate from the physical man. But it is objected that in some cases the body is weak and sickly while the mind is vigorous and powerful; that sometimes the mind retains its full faculties, even to the last breath. But this is a very weak objection, easily answered. Cases like these are rare; they are the exception. All parts of the body are not always affected alike by health or by sickness. That is, a man may be dying of the consumption, his lungs nearly consumed; and yet his heart maybe sound and healthy, his eye bright and keen, his ear sharp to hear. Or a man’s eye may be very weak, but his hearing acute; his liver maybe wholly diseased, and his lungs may be sound. A man may be sick in any one part of his body, and well and strong in another. Hence the cases mentioned simply show that while other parts of the body are feeble, the brain is sound and healthy. But the general rule, the world over, is, “A sound mind in a sound body.”

{44.1} A further fact to be noticed is that the mind, the intellect, can be developed and enlarged by exercise and training, the same as any other part of the system. See that awkward, clumsy-fingered young man learning to write. What great awkward scratches he makes! What is the matter? His fingers have not been disciplined. They have not learned how to hold and guide the pen with ease. But after long training he can execute the finest penmanship with great precision. Or take it in a more physical sense. A strong young man undertakes to lift a heavyweight for the first time. He finds it very difficult. He cannot lift much; but he keeps practicing, training his muscles, till by and by he can lift several times as much as in the beginning. His muscles have grown stronger by exercise. Just so with the mind. An undisciplined, unexercised mind is very weak intellectually; but close application and continued training develop strong, vigorous powers of thinking. All these facts show that the intellect is wholly dependent upon the physical organization, the same as any other power of a man.

{45.1} If a child should be born into the world, and grow up without ever having the use of any of his five senses, viz., hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting or feeling, he could never have any thought, for he would have nothing about which to think. A babe's mind is a perfect blank. It knows nothing. Every idea it afterward has, it must learn from what it hears, sees, feels, tastes, or smells. This clearly demonstrates that mind, thought, and intelligence come from without, from the material world; and not from within, from the spirit world.

{45.2} CAUSE AND EFFECT CONFOUNDED.

{45.3} Those who deny that matter can be so organized as to think, love, hope, fear, etc., have contrasted this action or attribute of organized matter with matter itself; and because the distinctive characteristics of matter, such as size, form, weight, etc., are not applicable to these qualities, they have fallen into the inexcusable error of assuming that there must be an immaterial spirit to produce thought, love, hope, etc. They ask, Is love round or square? Is fear triangular or hexagonal? Is hope long or short? How much does anger weigh? Thus they entirely ignore the difference between matter and its operations. It is hard to credit that learned men should make such blunders, yet it is a fact. Thus Joseph Cook reasons: "When Caesar saw Brutus stab, and muffled up his face at the foot of Pompey's statue, was his grief round or square, or triangular. [Laughter.] When Lincoln, by a stroke of his pen, manumitted four million slaves, was his choice hexagonal or octagonal?" "These questions show that the terms which we apply to *matter* are totally inapplicable and meaningless when applied to *mind*." <sup>21</sup>Lecture on Biology, p. 224.

{46.1} This superficial reasoning would prove that not only beasts, but even vegetables, have immortal souls. The dog is angry, the ox hopes for his dinner, and the cat loves her kitten. Try the same reasoning on the sweetness of sugar, the sourness of a lemon, the elasticity of rubber, and the density of iron. Is sweetness round, or sourness square, or elasticity crooked, or density triangular? [Laughter.] Then these intangible qualities must be proof of an immaterial spirit in sugar, lemon, rubber, and iron, the same as intangible thought proves an immaterial spirit in man! What nonsense! As it is utterly impossible for sweetness or sourness, elasticity or density, to exist separate and apart from the material substances which give rise to these qualities, so it is just as impossible for mind to exist separate from the brain which produces it. Just try to imagine pure thought wholly separate and apart from any organized being! How would you describe it? Nay; how would you even conceive of it? You could as well conceive of motion without a moving body, or sweetness as an abstract thing without any material substance to produce it. It is astonishing how a false theory will blind the wisest men.

{47.1} But it is said with much show of reason, If intelligence is the result of organization, then organization must precede intelligence. Who then organized the first intelligent being? This is simply the old and always recurring question as to the origin of the Creator himself. It is a question which no theory of existence has ever been able to answer. It is no more difficult for us with our view than for our opponents with their view, for neither the one nor the other can answer it at all. It is infinitely beyond all human reasoning. The eternal pre-existence of God is assumed, and has to be assumed by all believers in a Supreme Being. The *how* and *why* of this incomprehensible existence none pretend to know or even guess.

{48.1} The assumption that God is a pure, immaterial spirit does not relieve the difficulty any; for even such an immaterial spirit essence, if there could be such a thing, must be organized into a person, or else it would be only a mere indefinite essence but no person at all. But the God of the Bible is a person, a real being, dwelling in a definite place, sitting upon a throne, etc. Furthermore, those who claim that God is an immaterial spirit, claim just the same for angels. But are not angels organized, personal beings? Did not God create them? To say that they are not organized beings is to claim that they are eternal, uncreated, self-existent, and equal to God himself! So even a spirit being must be organized. Hence, in assuming that God is immaterial, the difficulty is only shifted, and moved a little farther off, but not solved after all. In either case it must be admitted that organization must precede thought whatever be the nature of his essence.

#### {48.2} INSTINCT AND REASON.

{48.3} Our opponents are constantly decrying matter, and attributing all excellence to immateriality. But an examination of nature shows that the Creator has used this same matter to bring about the infinite diversity which is seen everywhere, from the grain of sand up to the highest intelligence. First we have matter in its coarsest and crudest condition,—mineral matter, unorganized matter, such as a handful of dust, a piece of granite, a wedge of gold. Next higher we have organized and vitalized matter in the vegetable kingdom. Going still higher, we have the same matter more highly organized in the animal kingdom.

{49.1} I have in my hand a school book, “The Philosophy of Natural History,” by John Ware, M. D. He has clearly stated many points bearing upon this question. He says:—

{49.2} “We have the most complete specimen of what instinct alone can do in such insects as the ant, bee, wasp, and spider; and of what intelligence can do in such animals as the horse, dog, beaver, and elephant, and more than all, in man. Instinct probably predominates in all the animals below man, and the presence of a true intelligence is not directly detected below the vertebral animals, except among the higher species of the articulata and mollusca. Its influence becomes more marked as we ascend through fishes, reptiles, and birds to the mammalia; but it is only among the most elevated of the last that it assumes an important rank as a directing power, and it is never a predominant one except in man.

{49.3} “Man thus stands on an eminence high above all other animals; and yet so far as we are able to analyze their character, their faculties are not specifically distinct from his, but appear to differ from them rather in degree than in kind. Animals exhibit the same sentiments, the same affections, the same emotions, the same passions as man. Their lives are governed by certain motives, and are directed to certain objects in common with his.”[22](#)Page 405.

{50.1} I believe that this author has candidly stated the truth in the preceding extract. We simply have an ascending gradation in the different forms of matter,—mineral, vegetable, and animal, lower and higher.

{50.2} Here I might give innumerable examples of clearly defined reason, intelligence, or mind in the lower animals. But waiving all this, we will grant just what our opponents claim, namely, that the dumb beasts never reason nor think, that they are wholly guided by instinct. Instinct moves them to eat, to drink, to open their eyes, to listen with their ears, to smell, to feel, to flee from danger, and to do a thousand things which we observe daily. This is all done by instinct, and the beast is merely organized matter, and nothing else. Now see what follows from this, —the Creator has so vitalized, so organized this matter that it can see and hear, can eat and drink, can rise up and lie down, can defend itself, can come at a call, or go at a command, can work, build houses, and do a thousand things. Even Bishop Clark, writing against our position, makes the following wonderful admission:—

{51.1} “In fact, surveying the whole ground, we can hardly wonder at the enthusiasm with which a modern writer, quoted by Mr. Brodie, kindles up: ‘There is,’ says he, ‘hardly a mechanical pursuit in which insects do not excel. They are excellent weavers, house-builders, architects; they make diving-bells, bore galleries, raise vaults, construct bridges; they line their houses with tapestry, clean them, ventilate them, and close them with admirably-fitted swing-doors; they build and store warehouses, construct traps in the greatest variety, hunt skillfully, rob and plunder; they poison, saber, and strangle their enemies; they have social laws, a common language, division of labor, and gradations of rank; they maintain armies, go to war, send out scouts, appoint sentinels, carry off prisoners, keep slaves, and tend domestic animals. In short, they are a miniature copy of men rather than of the inferior vertebrata.’ This description is highly wrought, but not so highly but that its substantial basis in fact will be readily recognized.”<sup>23</sup>Man All Immortal, p. 95.

{51.2} Reader, all this is done by mere matter! So the bishop argues; so our opponents believe. Now if the blessed God can vitalize and organize matter so as to do all these wonderful things, can he not just as easily go a little farther and organize matter so as to think, be intelligent, and reason? We believe the conclusion is legitimate, and that facts in connection with the human mind show it is the truth. God has organized a material brain which does think and reason.

#### {52.1} FROM WHENCE COMES THE IMMORTAL SPIRIT?

{52.2} We now have a few questions for our opponents to answer. If man has an immortal, immaterial, deathless spirit, we ask, From whence does it come? and how is it propagated? Was it conscious in a pre-existent state, in some other world, and from thence is sent into the human body at birth? Or is soul created by the Lord at the birth of every child? Or is it begotten, like the body, and perpetuated with the body? One of these three positions must be taken. Indeed, our opponents have always taken some one of these positions, though they are not all agreed which one to adopt. Shall we advocate the pre-existence of the soul, that it lived in some other world before it came into the body? If so, why do we not remember having living somewhere else? Strange that we should have so utterly forgotten all the past. Then, why does not the soul come into the body pure and sinless, inclined to holiness? How does it happen, moreover, that children are so much like their parents, in their souls as well as in their bodies, mentally as well as physically? But as none except the Mormons now hold to the foolish idea of pre-existence, we will let it pass.

{53.1} Shall we say, then, that souls are created in heaven and sent into each body at birth? This theory would involve a greater difficulty than the other. The Lord must be continually creating, every minute, additional immortal souls. More than that, this would make him sanction prostitution and adultery. A child is begotten in adultery, in the most wicked and corrupt manner. Must God immediately create a soul for that child? This would make God a party to sin. Moreover, if God thus creates immaterial souls, he must either make them pure and holy, or impure and sinful. The latter supposition is inconsistent with the character of God; and if the former be the true one, how shall we account for the natural depravity of the human soul? The evidence of our eyes proves that children are born predisposed to sin, some of them much more so than others. According to this theory a father is not the father of the soul of his child, for that was created in the other world. But how does it happen, then, that children are generally so much like their parents, mentally as well as physically? In fact, this immortal-soul theory breaks down everywhere you touch it.

{54.1} Then, again, if the soul is thus created a separate entity, an intelligent being before it is placed in the body, why do we not remember even that little time that we existed before we were in the body? And again, at what time is the soul sent into the body, and what is its condition before it is placed there? Is it just at birth, or a little after, or some time before? Does it come fully grown? or is it a baby soul that grows up afterward? If so, what makes it grow? On what does it feed? Does it grow out of the material which the body eats? Then it must be material itself. No: that won't do. Well, is it placed in the body fully grown—man's size? How, then, can it be cramped up in so small a space? And why does not the soul of a baby reason and think like a man's, if it is a man's?

{54.2} If the soul is not pre-existent, neither created directly at birth, it must be propagated with the body. Indeed, this theory has been held by many. Says Dr. Knapp, "The reason why this theory is so much preferred by theologians, is that it affords the easiest solution of the doctrine of native depravity."<sup>24</sup> Knapp's Christian Theology, p. 202. But the moment you adopt this theory you come upon our ground, and admit that the soul is material. For how could an immaterial soul beget another immaterial soul? Are these intangible souls male and female? and can they beget children? The very idea is utterly absurd and untenable. No. If souls are begotten, then they must be material. This is what all admit who hold this theory. Thus Dr. Knapp says:—

{55.1} "This hypothesis is not, however, free from objections; and it is very difficult to reconcile it with some philosophical opinions which are universally received. We cannot, for example, easily conceive how generation and propagation can take place without extension. But we cannot predicate extension of the soul without making it a material substance. Tertullian and others of the Fathers affirm, indeed, that the soul of man, and that spirit in general, is not perfectly pure and simple, but of a refined, material nature, of which, consequently, extension may be predicated."<sup>25</sup> Christian Theology, p. 202.

{55.2} But is this true that souls beget souls? and are spirits male and female? If they are material, and are begotten with the body, then the presumption is that they will also die with it. How much more natural and consistent is the simple truth, that man is a unit, that his mental powers grow out of his physical organization. A father begets a child of his own person; hence that child naturally partakes of the peculiarities of his father, both physical and mental. This we everywhere see to be the case. "Like father, like son." This accounts for our fallen natures, and inherited weaknesses of body and mind. The mental likeness of children to their parents is generally just as great as their physical likeness, and often even greater. With our view of man, this is just what we should expect; but on the supposition that the soul is an immaterial entity sent down directly from God, it is wholly inexplicable.

### {56.1} THE DISEMBODIED SPIRIT.

{56.2} It is claimed by the believers in the immateriality of the soul that the disembodied spirit is “an entity” or a “principle,” immaterial and without any organism. If the spirit is not an organized material body, then it has no head, no hands, no feet, no eyes, no ears, no tongue, and no brain. But how can a soul sing without a tongue, think without a brain, see without eyes, walk without feet, feel without nerves, and love without a heart? It is strange beyond explanation that a sane man should ever have conceived of such “an entity.” A queer kind of a world that spirit land must be! According to this theory as soon as the soul leaves the body it becomes deaf, blind, dumb, and idiotic, since it lacks every organ by which to gain an idea or to express one!

{56.3} What must be the shape of this immaterial spirit? As it has neither arms, legs, head, nor heart, is it a body? If so, what is its shape? Is it round, flat, square, oblong, or three cornered? But probably it has no shape, for if it has shape it must be material.

{57.1} What then is the *size* of the spirit? Is it as large as a horse or as small as a flea? But *size* is a property of matter, and therefore the spirit has no size at all. It is neither big nor little. What nonsense! a real man, and yet have neither form, size, shape, body, head, hands, nor feet!

### {57.2} MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL

{57.3} It is the weakest nonsense to talk about material and “immaterial substances.” There are no reasons for making such a distinction. The heaviest metal can be converted into gas many times lighter than the air. Beginning with the heaviest known substance, platinum, we have a regular gradation up through the metals, wood, flesh, water, air, gas, odor, magnetism, electricity, gravitation, heat, and light—all material substances as must be admitted. But are not light, heat, magnetism, electricity, and air sufficiently attenuated and powerful to meet the popular ideas of an “immaterial substance?” Certainly, and yet these are all either material substances or the action of matter.

{57.4} Magnetism is one of the most wonderful forces in nature. The magnetic rays will pass through solid wood, glass, or even platinum, and seize a bar of iron and move it around rapidly. You can see nothing, yet it must be material as the result shows. The air when at rest is unrecognizable by any of the senses. It can neither be seen, heard, felt, tasted, nor smelled; and even when in motion we only recognize it by its pressure on our bodies. It might almost seem to justify the term, “an immaterial thing.” And yet this same air is as material as a stone or a tree. It is composed of 1/5 oxygen and 4/5 nitrogen. It can be analyzed, weighed, and measured. It has an actual weight of fifteen pounds to the square inch upon all bodies at the level of the sea. It has been reduced by extreme cold and immense pressure into a liquid substance of the density of water.

{58.1} Any substance we see around us, as a piece of flesh, a garment of cloth, a stick of wood, a stone, or a silver dollar, can be converted into an invisible gas, and yet not a particle of the matter be destroyed. It is inconceivable how infinitely small are the ultimate atoms of which all matter is composed. “A grain of musk has been kept freely exposed to the air of a room of which the door and windows were constantly kept open, for a period of two years, and during all this time the air, though constantly changed, was densely impregnated with the odor of musk, and yet at the end of that time the particle was found not to have greatly diminished in weight. During all this period every particle of the atmosphere which produced the sense of odor must have contained a certain quantity of musk.”<sup>26</sup>Wells’ Natural Philosophy, p. 13.

{59.1} It is a fact worth noticing that from matter in an invisible condition come the most powerful agents in nature, such as steam, compressed air, heat, electricity, etc. It is not at all incredible, then, that God should create the higher order of beings, such as angels, out of matter in an invisible state; yet they would be material all the same.

{59.2} In a drop of water there are thousands of living, moving animals, each one perfect in its way, full of life and activity. And though they are wholly invisible to the unaided eye, yet they are as material as the water itself. With such facts before us, it is not best to hastily conclude that whatever phenomenon in nature we cannot readily comprehend, cannot weigh, measure, and analyze, must be produced by immaterial spirits. Ignorance, not knowledge, is the source of this unphilosophical notion of an immaterial entity. It is a relic of the superstition handed down from heathenism and the Dark Ages.

{59.3} Moreover, we would ask these wise men who are so positive as to what matter can do and what it cannot do, how it is that the immaterial, intangible essence which has not one particle of materiality about it, which can in no wise be grasped, nor held, nor handled by material organs, —we ask how this immaterial soul can come in contact with a physical body any way? What point of contact can there possibly be between such a thing and the material brain? How can it operate upon our organs of hearing, smelling, or tasting? In fact, how can it be so closely confined in this material form? Why can't it leave the body at will? But it cannot. If there is such a soul inside, we know that the body holds it with a death-like grasp; and however much the soul may desire to flee, it cannot possibly get away till the material body is dead, and has lost all its strength and power to hold even a straw. These difficulties, to our mind, are tenfold greater than those attending the admission of the simple truth that the material brain has been so organized as to think.

{60.1} The advocates of the immortal-soul theory freely admit that they cannot explain how the soul can act upon a material brain. Indeed, they admit that they cannot tell what the soul is. Bishop Clark himself thus speaks: "We confess that we know not in what the *essence* of soul, or spirit, consists. We readily acknowledge our ignorance of the *essence*, the *subject-being*, of matter. We make the same confession—and under the same limitations—concerning the soul."<sup>27</sup> *Man All Immortal*, p. 29. Another doctor of divinity says, "We do not understand the true nature of spirit, and cannot therefore determine what is or is not possible respecting it."<sup>28</sup> Knapp's *Christian Theology*, p. 202.

{61.1} How do they know, then, but that the soul is material after all? They do not know; and after they have argued and philosophized to the end of the subject, one confession like the above overturns all their speculations. They are arguing about something of which they know nothing.

{61.2} If the soul is a living, intelligent entity, capable of thinking, moving about, and acting as well out of the body as in it, we ask, What was the use of making the body for it any way? Why not leave it without the clog of this poor, gross, material body? Indeed, if our immaterialist friends are right, it would have been a great blessing to the spirit to have left it without the body; for they are always telling how the flesh weighs down the immortal spirit, and clogs its movements, and with what speed the disembodied spirit will travel when freed from the body, with what power it will then act. Then why do we have the body at all? Let those answer who can.

{62.1} CAUSE OF INFIDELITY AMONG SCIENTISTS.



{62.2} The intelligent reader is aware that modern scientific men are, to a great extent, becoming skeptical. I am fully satisfied that one great cause of this skepticism is found in the false view which theologians have held concerning mind and matter. Scientific men readily see that, given the first organization of each species to begin with, and all the phenomena of nature, vegetable, animal, and mental, can be readily accounted for in the physical organization. Hence physicians, physiologists, and phrenologists in particular, have been largely inclined to materialism. Says Dr. Knapp, speaking of the view that the soul is material, "It has always been the favorite theory of psychologists and physicians."<sup>29</sup> Christian Theology, p. 202 Seeing the absurdity of the doctrine of immateriality and natural immortality, they have given up their old theology, and thrown away their religion with it. Had they been taught the true doctrine of mind and intelligence, it would have done much to save them from their skepticism.

#### {63.1} IS MATTER NATURALLY CORRUPT?

{63.2} These immaterialists are always asserting how mean, corrupt, polluted, weak, and every way inferior, matter is. To hear them talk, you would suppose that matter must be very hateful to God. But if matter is naturally so corrupt and mean, why has God created so much of it? Who made of matter all those numberless millions of worlds on high? Every astronomer knows that they are all as material as our own earth. Ghosts do not cast shadows, but the moon and other heavenly bodies do. Who made the moon? Who made the earth? the air? the water? the dust? the rocks? the plants? the trees? the insects? the animals? and our material bodies? God made them all of matter; yea, and pronounced them "very good." Gen. 1:31. To these very things God always appeals as the highest proof of his power, glory, and Godhead. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Ps. 19:1. Again: "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion." Jer. 10:12. To the idolatrous Athenians he is introduced as the "God that made the world, and all things therein." Acts 17:24. Paul declares that "by the things that are made, his eternal power and Godhead" are clearly seen. Rom. 1:20. When the Lord would convince Job of his might and greatness, he pointed to the foundations of the earth, which he had laid (Job 38:1-6), to the sea (verse 8), to the clouds (verse 9), to the stars (verses 31-33), to the lightnings (verse 35), to the lions (verse 39), and to all of the beasts of the earth which he had made (Chap. 39). All these are material, made of the dust of the ground. God is not ashamed to appeal to these material things as the highest proof of his glory.

{64.1} Is it true, then, that the matter which God has made is so corrupt and naturally sinful as immaterialists claim? Then God would be the author of sin. God made man of the dust of the ground. Gen. 2:7. God made the beautiful and holy Eden of matter, of the ground. Yea; even the tree of life itself grew out of the ground. Gen. 2:8-15. God's divine Son, who came to redeem men, was a material being. He was born of a woman, had flesh and bones, walked upon our earth, ate its material food, breathed its material air, and drank its material water.

{64.2} “It is not wise to repudiate materialism till we see what connection it has with our final salvation. And here we inquire, How are we to be saved? From our opposers, as well as from the Bible, comes the answer, By the *death* of Christ. Very well. Then could we be saved without his death? All agree we could not. This paves the way for another important question, If we are saved by the *death* of Christ, and could not be saved without his death, are we saved by the death of a *material* Christ? or by the death of an immaterial Christ? Own the truth, let the result be what it may. Did an immaterial Christ die for us? You say No. Then was it not a *material* Christ that died? Certainly. So you admit that a material Christ died to save us, and that otherwise salvation would not have been possible, thus predicating your hope of salvation upon the death of materiality. No matter whether there was an immaterial entity within him or not, so long as that did not die; and we expressly read, “Christ died for us,” and “We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son;” so we are indebted for salvation to the death of that part of Christ which could and did die, even if he had forty entities that could not and did not die; and the part that died for our sins was *material*. Hear it, ye haters of materialism! The foundation-stone of the system of salvation, from your own showing, is *materiality*, and there is no escape from the conclusion.”<sup>30</sup>Bible Banner.

{65.1} Then in the resurrection, our material bodies are to be saved and immortalized. 1 Cor. 15:51-55. Yes, and finally, this material earth is to be purified from the curse, and made the eternal home of the saints. Rev. 21:1-5.

{66.1} But here I leave this very interesting question, having only glanced at a few of the innumerable proofs in favor of the materiality of all things. I have endeavored to avoid the fine metaphysical arguments which are generally employed on this topic, and use only those common facts of everyday observation with which every child is familiar.

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Web Publisher’s Note: For more on materialism and its implications, we encourage you to read [Are You Minding What Matters?](#)

If you’re interested in a concise explanation of how you can know that materialism is true, we recommend giving this a listen:

- 1  
This note is by the original publishers – the Review & Herald Publishing House – in 1882.
- 2  
Wells’ Natural Philosophy, pp. 11, 12.
- 3  
Wells’ Natural Philosophy, p. 238.
- 4  
Man All Immortal, p. 21.
- 5  
Wells’ Natural Philosophy, p. 21.
- 6  
N. V. Hull, Editor *Sabbath Recorder*, Aug. 30, 1877.
- 7  
Man All Immortal, p. 29.
- 8  
Body and Mind, p. 97
-

9

Christian Theology, Vo. Ii, p. 372.

- 10  
Essay, Book iv., chap. 3.
- 11  
Wells' Natural Philosophy, p. 326.
- 12  
D. T. Taylor, in *Bible Banner*.
- 13  
Wells' Natural Philosophy, pp. 293, 207.
- 14  
Art., Heat.
- 15  
Wells' Natural Philosophy, p. 369
- 16  
Natural Philosophy, p. 30
- 17  
Page 75
- 18  
Man All Immortal, pp. 57, 58.
- 19  
Man All Immortal p. 99.
- 20  
Immortality, p. 75, by J. H. Whitmore.
- 21  
Lecture on Biology, p. 224.
- 22  
Page 405.
- 23  
Man All Immortal, p. 95.
- 24  
Knapp's Christian Theology, p. 202.
- 25  
Christian Theology, p. 202.
- 26  
Wells' Natural Philosophy, p. 13.
- 27  
Man All Immortal, p. 29.
- 28  
Knapp's Christian Theology, p. 202.
- 29  
Christian Theology, p. 202
- 30  
Bible Banner.