

Somatopsychonologia : showing that the proofs of body life and mind considered as distinct essences cannot be deduced from physiology but depend on a distinct sort of evidence : being an examination of the controversy concerning life carried on by MM. Laurence, Abernethy, Rennell, & others / by Philostratus.

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SOMATOPSYCHONOLOGIA

SHOWING THAT THE PROOFS OF

BODY LIFE AND MIND

CONSIDERED AS

DISTINCT ESSENCES

CANNOT BE DEDUCED FROM PHYSIOLOGY

BUT DEPEND ON A

DISTINCT SORT OF EVIDENCE

BEING

AN EXAMINATION

OF THE

CONTROVERSY CONCERNING LIFE

CARRIED ON BY

MM. LAURENCE, ABERNETHY, RENNELL, & OTHERS.

By PHILOSTRATUS.

Ipsæ et Personæ.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. HUNTER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1823.

J. Moyes, Greville Street, London.

PREFACE.

WHAT is comprised in the following sheets being only the amusement of a few leisure intervals of professional occupations, which the author employed in examining the controversy respecting Life which arose out of the Hunterian Orations, would never have been laid before the public, but for the following reasons.

A sort of indirect aspersion seemed to be thrown out by the advocate of the Hunterian Doctrine of Life, against a scientific adversary, implying motives on the part of the latter by which it is hardly possible to suppose he can have been impelled, and involving, by an obscure use of the words *The Party*, a number of other persons of similar opinions. The author considering himself as included in the sweeping but ambiguous charge, by having emerged originally from the same school of anatomy, and having pursued physiology to similar conclusions, and being at the same time conscious of no other motive than the advancement

of science, feels disposed to lay before his medical and literary friends his view of the subject, well assured that the *Party*, as it is called, never had any intention of invalidating the public religion of any nation, nor any power of doing it, if they had possessed the wish.

In considering the wholly distinct nature of the evidences on which religious dogmas are founded, the author has taken an example for illustration from the catholic religion, for this reason, that it is the original and general faith of Europe; while the different little protestant heresies of a local and fugitive nature are merely branches of the great vine, however altered in their complexion and fruits by the soil on which they have struck root. Whatever argument, therefore, applies to the support or destruction of any of the offspring in particular, must apply with a more consistent and universal force to the great mother church in general. Moreover, the author has ventured to introduce the adverse party to notice as protestant writers, not only because they belong to that profession, in common with most of their countrymen, but because, from an impartial survey

of history, he is induced to conclude that the method adopted by certain protestant christians of mixing their own peculiar modes of profane reasoning with religious mysteries is one of the means of ultimately destroying the holy doctrine ; and that this method, combined with the mutual contradictions of dis-united schismatics, has been slowly sapping the foundation of religious faith ever since the reformation. He by no means intends hereby to commit himself to any particular belief ; but the above remark has resulted from the history of christianity studied as a matter of general information, previous to the adoption of more contracted professional pursuits.

The author is desirous of showing the completely distinct nature of physiology, and its harmlessness as far as respects any religious dogmas, and at the same time of exposing the total inefficacy of the hypothesis of the Hunterian party to uphold the latter in case of an emergency.

Added to these considerations, there is an apparent spirit of persecution in the mode of attack and conduct adopted by other persons who have joined in the cry against the sup-

porters of materialism, which every lover of science must hold in abhorrence, convinced that truth is never brought to light by any safer means than a free and unrestrained examination of its evidences. To disarm, therefore, certain nonprofessional antagonists of spurious weapons, is another duty imposed on the defenders of the freedom of discussion.

Finally : the author conceals his name, because he wishes the argument of the Essay to stand on its own merits or demerits unprejudiced, and because, not being personally named in the attack, he is unwilling to enter the list of combatants on a subject which admits of so little positive proof.

INTRODUCTION.

As I think, in common with the illustrious leader of the other party, that it is desirable to place the object aimed at in any treatise, in such a distinct point of view in the beginning of it, that the reader may be at once apprized to what end the subsequent arguments are directed, so have I thought it fit to state briefly, in my Preface, what I consider to be the main drift of the various arguments contained in the ensuing pages; and this mode of proceeding has been deemed particularly necessary in the present instance, because I have all along neglected the trouble of submitting to a second perusal, before going to press, a manuscript which was not originally intended for publication. It is not, therefore, in order to solicit the reader to anticipate the result, and waive the discussion, but to assist him throughout in forming an estimate of the real force and bearing of each argument employed, that I am induced to forewarn him of the conclusion at which I have arrived, and to state distinctly my own opinion, and my reasons for entertaining it.

After an almost unremitted attention to the anatomy and functions of the animal machine, for

many years, it seems to me, that physiology can be correctly employed only to represent our perception of the various phenomena of living bodies, considered in their mutual relations to each other: that this perception of phenomena leads to the inevitable conclusion, that every vital action, as well as every propensity, every intellectual and reflective faculty, and every sentiment of the mind, is the necessary consequence of the active state of an appropriate material organ. This opinion is the result of such an uniform and consistent experience of the relation between each organic part and its proper faculties, that I have long regarded it as an incontrovertible maxim of physiology. At the same time, our single consciousness with a duplicity of organs, as well as the individualization of objects whose various qualities having no apparent affinity are perceived by different organs of sense and intellect, together with the power we are conscious of possessing to direct our attention to various sensations and to exert our will accordingly, naturally force on our minds the belief in some common centre of sensation. Correct analogy obliges me to regard such a centre as existing in the brain, and being, like the other organs, a modification of matter.

But though physiology leads me no farther for a cause of vital intellectual phenomena than to appropriate organs, I am nevertheless conscious of a personal identity, which no argument can annul. I

have always believed, and do still believe, that I am something distinct from the circumexistent matter of the universe, of which my body forms a part, and that I am likewise distinct from the moving principle of the surrounding universe, of which my vitality may be a modification. This consciousness of being is, however, no deduction from physiology; it is an intuitive feeling, and resolves itself, after all the vain attempts of philosophers to explain it, into a conditional principle of existence. I believe that this very consciousness of a distinct being is itself dependent on the activity of some material and cerebral instrument; perhaps it is connected with the common centre of sensation. For, strange as it may appear to those who are unacquainted with forms of insanity, this belief of our individual existence, this very power of discriminating between ourselves and the surrounding world, is weakened and nearly destroyed in particular cases of hepatic irritation and cerebral disorder, just as other powers of the Mind are, of which I have given examples in the course of the following inquiry.

The consciousness of identity of self relates only to past and present perceptions, and does not involve the belief of the future existence of the identical percipient, after the dissolution of the Body. Almost all nations, and all religions, however, entertain this hope of futurity, and have professedly referred it to Inspiration: and we may observe, that the reanimation of the material *Body*

is the doctrine of Scripture, founded on the miracle of the Resurrection.

The most definite notions on the subject above alluded to, may be found in the volumes of the Bible. The Jewish historian, at an early period, distinguished the Life from the Body of animals; and the Christians repeatedly recognise the distinct nature of perishable Body, from the eternal Soul of man. As neither physiology, which relates to organism, nor natural conscience, which persuades us of mental identity, have any thing to do with these doctrines of religion, they ought to be regarded as distinct objects of research. The dogmas of religion should be established on the fulfilment of prophecies, the performance of miracles, and on other historical and mystical evidences on which their professors have always founded them;* while philosophy should be left free to speculate on the infinitely varied phenomena every where displayed by the surrounding world, and to draw her own conclusions as to their origin and nature.

* Those who desire to enter minutely into the detail of these evidences, may consult an extraordinary, but prodigiously able work, entitled, *The End of Religious Controversy, &c. by J. M. Keating and Brown*, London, 1818. — The intelligent author of this work, said to be an eminent bishop, has, however, omitted one strong argument in favour of some of the austere religious institutions of celibacy connected with catholic faith, I mean that afforded by M. Malthus, in his unanswerable Treatise on Population. The arguments of J. M. also respecting purgatory, and the invocation of saints, admit of some further philosophical illustrations and defences.

CONTENTS.

	Page
SECTION I.	
The Origin of the present Essay - - - -	1
SECTION II.	
The very Inference, that a Philosophical Deduction from Physiology in favour of an immaterial Principle is necessary to the Support of Christianity, shown to imply Scepticism -	11
SECTION III.	
Examination of M. Abernethy's Opinions respecting Matter, Life, and Mind - - - -	15
SECTION IV.	
Some difficult Questions proposed to the Somatopsychonological Theorist - - - -	37
SECTION V.	
Part of M. Rennell's Argument shown to be erroneous, and the rest superfluous - - - -	50
SECTION VI.	
The futile Enquiries concerning Matter, Life, and Mind, under present Consideration, are referrible to the faithless and sensual Character of the frivolous Age in which our Lot is cast - - - -	61
SECTION VII.	
A few Remarks on M. Abernethy's "Phrenology of Gall and Spurzheim, &c. addressed to the College" - -	68
SECTION VIII.	
Conclusion - - - -	112

CONTENTS.

SECTION I.

SECTION II.

SECTION III.

ERRATA.

Page 8, line 14, *for* question rendering, *read* doctrine constituting.

Page 51, line 5, *for* anthropoietic, *read* anthropopoietic.

SECTION IV.

SECTION V.

SECTION VI.

SECTION VII.

SECTION VIII.

ΣΩΜΑΤΟΥΥΧΟΝΟΟΛΟΓΙΑ.

SECTION I.

The Origin of the present Essay.

IN perusing some recent publications, in which was comprehended a strange controversy between MM. Laurence, Abernethy, and Rennell, on the subject of Organization, Life, and Mind, I was forcibly struck with the following remark, which almost immediately suggested itself:—That M. Laurence was accused of publishing irreligious doctrines, which, in fact, were not anywhere discoverable in his works—that M. Abernethy had opposed to these pretended irreligious doctrines, arguments drawn from a particular

and obscure physiology — and that M. Rennell had joined himself to the controversy with similar weapons, but had advanced what every good anatomist must know to be misconceived; having, by a strange misunderstanding of facts recorded by medical writers, actually asserted that the Functions of the human Mind could be carried on in certain cases without the Brain!

It shall be my endeavour in these pages to trace the ideas which were present in my mind during the course of my inquiry into this extraordinary controversy.

I perceived that, when M. Laurence's lectures at the College of Surgeons were first published, a certain party of the protestant persuasion took alarm, and apparently on the following grounds, that he had indirectly, in the course of his lectures, inculcated the doctrine of Materialism; and that this doctrine, being once established, would tend to over-

throw that of the independent nature of the Soul, and blast the prospect of future existence, entertained by christians in common with religious persons of many other persuasions. I was startled at the idea ; for let the doctrine of materialism be established ever so firmly, it would not afford the slightest proof, to believers, of the destruction of the Soul at the death of the Body. We are made conscious by memory of personal identity, and we may as easily conceive that this identity is to be continued hereafter in another Body, as that an independent Mind will go on existing without any Body at all, as was observed by the heretical, but ingenious, philosopher Priestley *. But M. Laurence has not even gone so far as to identify the Mind with the Body ;—viewing phenomena in their relation to one another, and infer-

* Priestley on Materialism.

ring causation from their regular conjunction, it could not escape him that those functions ascribed to the Mind, like those attributed to the principle of Life, seemed invariably conjoined to their respective and peculiar organs. The organic parts of the Brain seemed therefore to be as much the cause why the Mind perceived, thought, and reasoned, in this state of existence, as the external senses are acknowledged to be the cause why we see, hear, or feel; that is to say, their instrumentality is necessary, and constitutes the invariable medium between the Mind and the external world; or, as Professor Kant expressed it, the Relation between the Subject and the Object. But it does not hence follow, when Nature shall dissolve the necessary bond of connexion between the Mind and this World, that another medium may not be established between the Mind and another and more perfect world.

On a further perusal, I found not only that M. Laurence had never asserted the final dissolution of the Soul, but, on the contrary, that, with a clearness of perception which does honour to his discriminative powers, he had pointedly guarded his readers against any application of his doctrine detrimental to christianity, and reminded them that the proofs of spiritual things rested on an entirely distinct species of evidence, intangible by any anatomical researches, and, at the same time, totally independent for its support on any whimsical doctrines of individuals concerning the nature of the living principle*.

* Whoever is led to imagine, by the recent attacks of his adversaries, that M. Laurence has written against revelation and the historical and miraculous proofs of the eternity of the soul, let him refer to what the author says himself on the subject. He expressly says, that the proofs of the Holy Doctrine are not *physiological*, but dependent on other sort of evidences. "These sublime dogmas

The opponents of M. Laurence not only assumed a false inference from his lectures, but combated it with weapons so ineffective, that they only marred their own cause, by giving an additional publicity to his doctrines, and, at the same time, presenting the public with an assumed inference injurious to christianity, which their own arguments were insufficient to countervail.

What I have stated above I trust I shall, without difficulty, be able to

could never have been brought to light by the labours of the anatomist. An immaterial and spiritual being could never have been discovered amid the blood and filth of the dissecting room; and the very idea of resorting to this low and dirty source for a proof of so exalted a truth, is an illustration of what we daily see—the bias which professional habits and the exclusive contemplation of a particular subject give even to the strongest minds—an illustration of that *esprit de métier* which led an honest currier in a threatened city to recommend a fortification of leather.” — See LAURENCE on *Physiology*, &c. London, 1819.

prove in the following sheets, and shall show that the doctrine of future life must be rather injured than advanced by such endeavours to support it, as those made by M. Laurence's opponents. In short, while I believe, on the one hand, with MM. Laurence, Gall, Spurzheim, and others*, that every distinct faculty of the mind has its appropriate organ, as much as the senses have; nevertheless, I do not *in limine* mean to identify the ORGANISM either with the LIFE which moves it, or with the MIND which, by the mysterious intervention of the two former, becomes acquainted with the external world. But I assert that no opinion, founded on philosophical research, has any thing to do with the question of eternal existence. The resurrection of the Body to Life Eternal is one of the Miracles: it is an article of religious faith, and

* See Spurzheim's Physiognomical System, and Forster's Phrenology. London, 1815.

not a subject of profane speculations. The inference drawn by M. Laurence from facts, and which coincides with my own opinion — that every faculty has its respective and necessary organ, leaves the question of futurity just where it found it — where it always has been, and will be to the end of time — in the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church, in whose written and traditional evidences are said to be found all that concerns the salvation of mankind.

Imagine then my surprise when I found that a question, rending the very groundwork of christianity, one which involves the belief in JESUS CHRIST's Resurrection, — one which so many Miracles have been wrought to uphold, and which so many Saints and Fathers of the Church have for ages past laboured in all countries to preach and inculcate on the divine authority : — that this doctrine should be declared in danger from any fancied inferences from a

lecture on Anatomy at the College of Surgeons of London! and that the counteraction of this imagined danger should be undertaken on the half intelligible principles of psychology, which certain ingenious persons have laboured to extract from the medical writings of M. Hunter!!!

I will not pretend to say, among the heretical mobs of conflicting sectaries which have sprung up from time to time and marked the progress of protestant disunion, what new grounds of Faith may have been discovered! But, among the members of the universal church, the tide of divine grace seems not yet come to this low ebb. And while the good Catholic has the Miracle of the Resurrection before him, and such a succession of authorized expounders of the Divine Will as have watched with Episcopal Vigilance over the Church for centuries, for unerring Guides of his Faith, he will not feel under any necessity of

raking up argument from physiology ; neither will any catholic think it expedient, when he feels his religion relax, to take a walk to Windmill Street in order to search for incentives to Faith among the records of an obscure school of Anatomy.

Since, however, it has been endeavoured to place Faith on this sandy foundation, and to call in the aid of that forbidden fruit, metaphysics, I shall try to expose the futility of each argument separately, and to show that the only genuine result of metaphysical speculation is to convince us of our inability to penetrate, by the light of human science, beyond the objects of our senses in their various relations :—that when the subtle Serpent of Curiosity doth tempt us to eat of this Tree of Knowledge, we shall surely die — our philosophy failing as it were on the very first gust of a fruit “ *whose plant grows not on mortal soil.*” Wandering thus beyond the area

by which our researches are limited, we get a faint and glimmering view of the bounds of human knowledge. Ought we not, then, either to seek for the desired Truth from other sources, or else to abandon a fruitless inquiry?

SECTION II.

The very Inference, that a Philosophical Deduction from Physiology in favour of an immaterial Principle is necessary to the Support of Christianity, shown to imply Scepticism.

A MIRACLE is said to be some act, which being out of the usual course of phenomena, that it has pleased God to present to our perceptive faculties, excites admiration and wonder, to the conviction in our minds that Omnipotence can exert his power in other modes besides that which he has instituted for the ordinary regulation of the universe. We view these latter phenomena in their relation to

one another as cause and effect. And seeing that each effect has the productive functions of a cause exerted in giving origin to yet other effects, and that this process seems bound up by some rules laid down and established, so do we speak of these causes and effects, viewed collectively, as constituting the LAW OF NATURE, or the Rule laid down for *the phenomena about to be*.

In contemplating this constant order of appearances, as the links of the great chain pass before us we lose sight of the great cause of the whole; and we should inevitably be lulled into a belief that the material atoms of the universe contained within themselves the necessary causes of their own phenomena, were it not for the doctrine taught us from our infancy, that there existed a spiritual Being who had caused and who maintained the whole.

The correctest deductions from mere natural philosophy made ordinary men

among the antients at most only polytheists; while the philosophers were atheists in every thing but the mere profession. The name of atheist the heathen philosophers could, in fact, never assume, as it implies the denial of that Being, the very existence of whom had never occurred to their minds. For a mere universal cause of surrounding effects,—a *spiritus intus alens*,—a soul of the world,—co-existing with it, and producing all its phenomena by necessary agency, cannot in any sense be called a God, much less is it the God of the christians. Neither can we discover the doctrine of a moral God, nor any idea of an eternal Soul belonging to man, unconnected, in any nation, with the belief of miraculous proofs to support it.

The ancient Sabeists believed in the final agency of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, because to their presence and light the other phenomena could be traced. While the chosen people of

Israel acknowledged Jehovah, for to them—*The Sun stood still in Gibeon, and the Moon in the Valley of Ajalon.*

The belief in the existence of God, in his Incarnation, and in the future existence of the soul, being all articles of FAITH supported by Miracles; the very apprehension that deductions from natural philosophy could injure them, borders, in my humble opinion, on scepticism: for it seems to imply that they are founded on the basis of natural reason. On the other hand, the philosopher who, amidst the depth of his physical investigations, fears to trespass on the divine threshold, and stopping short, says:—*Here ends philosophy,—this is the prerogative of theology,—my speculations have nothing in common with the divine Mysteries,*—evinces a modest and humble spirit, and exhibits an instructive contrast to those who vainly imagine it their province to prove, by profane reasonings, Dogmas which re-

ligious people all over the world consent to ascribe to some sort of spiritual revelation. Far be it from me to doubt the sincerity of motive which impelled the opponents of M. Laurence to this strange controversy. I believe them to be highly honourable and intellectual men, exalted in their professions, and happy in the esteem of mankind; but I am desirous to confine physiological inquiries within their proper boundary, in order that they may neither become ridiculous in the estimation of philosophers by the assumption of an importance to which they have no just claim, nor odious by being made the vehicles of persecution.

SECTION III.

*Examination of M. Abernethy's Opinions respecting
Matter, Life, and Mind.*

It is not my intention to trace the whole history, in chronological order, of the

strange and irrelevant controversy about the human soul, that has become interwoven with the Hunterian Lectures, and which has called forth separate publications from persons of a far different profession from that of anatomy; but I shall briefly examine the substance of those opinions and arguments which the lectures of M. Laurence called forth from his medical brethren, and from others of the protestant persuasion.

I have already adverted to apparent grounds of difference between M. Abernethy and M. Laurence; and the opinions of each of these gentlemen may be found in their own words in their published lectures delivered at the College of Surgeons. To compress the substance of the arguments as much as possible, I may observe that M. Abernethy makes a sort of division of the disputants into his own party and that of his opponents. The notions of himself, and those who think with him, are deduced from the

opinions of the late John Hunter, the Surgeon, respecting Life; and I think they may be thus briefly comprehended:—Man is composed, like the rest of the universe, of Matter, peculiarly organized—this we call his Body: but the organization of the Body not accounting for the vital activity which it exhibits during the progress of its development, maturity, and decay, so we are taught to ascribe Life to a separate principle which pervades the organic structures of matter, and produces their vital phenomena in all animals and vegetables. This vital principle, then, causes all the automatic functions, supports the animal machine against the decomposing powers of numerous chemical agents, resists the effects of frost on plants, and, in short, wherever it exists, conjoined to organization, it constitutes the living state. For the vegetable kingdom, this principle seems sufficient; but we observe in animals phenomena of a yet higher

order — an Intelligence whereby they become acquainted with the world, and conscious of their own existence. Now as Vitality alone does not account for Intelligence, so we must refer the latter to a third source, which we call Mind,—a principle which distinguishes animals from vegetables, just as Life distinguishes vegetables from inorganic matter, formed, figured, or destroyed by chemical agencies alone. M. Laurence appears to maintain a different opinion, in substance this:—That there is no proof to be deduced, physiologically, of the separate and independent nature of these three principles: to particular organisms we invariably see particular functions connected, during a certain progress which the animal machine makes through growth, maturity, and decay, to eventual dissolution. The vital energies, as well as the intellectual, keep pace with the progress of the organic machine, and are, to all appear-

ance, destroyed with it. As we have never become acquainted with either the living or the intelligent principle unconnected with organization, so we have no philosophical reason to regard them as separate existences. They may be properties of peculiarly constructed matter.

Now the numberless speculations to which these views of phenomena give birth, might be amusing enough to philosophers, had religion and morality been kept out of the question, and the religious historian would have let them alone ; but when the advocates for one view of the question accuse those of the other of undermining doctrines established on the basis of miraculous inspiration, it then becomes the theologian to expose their mutual fallacy, and to remind mankind of the real groundwork of faith.

Again ; if M. Laurence's party had in any way impeached the veracity of Holy

Writ, or had pretended that their view of the mode in which intelligence manifested itself in the natural laws of mundane existence, militated against the proofs of those laws being suspended in the production of miracles, then would they have justly fallen under the censure of the church. But as the matter now stands, it is the other parties who have sinned against scripture, by implying the necessity of their view of things to the doctrine of the Soul,—thus limiting the miraculous Power of the Creator to protract into eternity such Beings alone as are necessarily dependent in this life for personal Identity on a distinct principle. The Socinian Priestley never even went this length; for he endeavoured to show that Identity was all that was wanted, and that even if this depended on some form of matter, God could continue it hereafter in some other form. But sincere catholic christians cannot be even beguiled into the belief

induced by these dogmas, that any thing is impossible with God, who has declared himself “ *able even of stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*”

I shall now proceed to a closer examination of the doctrines of both parties concerned in this controversy, and endeavour to show that as neither of them can prove their opinions by physiological evidence, we must have recourse to another species of proof for all we know of the human soul. Moreover, that physiological inquiry ought to stop where the senses cease to furnish evidence, and that the moment we pursue it beyond the area of actual observation, we transgress the limits which nature has assigned to philosophy, and trespass on the exclusive prerogative of inspired persons.

In the wonderful scale of beings, from the least to the most perfect, we see that variety of organization regularly accompanies variety of functions; and in

ascending this scale we constantly find that the degree of perfection in the organization of each species is always proportionate to the measure of its vital and intellectual excellence. Those who have minutely examined the comparative anatomy of the Brain, and particularly the phrenologists of the school of Gall and Spurzheim, are eminently qualified to attest this fact, to the knowledge of which they have patiently and slowly arrived by the labours of the scalpel. But they have never discovered those two supposititious existences, Life and Mind; much less have they perceived differences in the scale of Lives and Minds; for the question of this secondary discovery is merged in that of the former. Therefore, according to the strict rule of philosophizing laid down by Sir Isaac Newton, they were compelled to look no farther for a cause of the different vital and intellectual phenomena of each Being than to its respective organization.

For though our notion of causation is an intuitive feeling, and is dependent, as Doctor Spurzheim observes, on a determinate Organ of the Brain ; yet an application of it to particular effects is founded on the observance of the regular conjunction of phenomena. In our investigations, therefore, into the causes of Life and Mind, philosophy leads us to Organization, and no further. And I believe the notion of a separate Mind independent of Matter, however varied in different countries, and transmografied by different systems of philosophy, has been derived from some distinct source, and never from philosophical inquiry.

When M. Abernethy speaks of the three principles, Body, Life, and Mind, as all united, yet all distinct and independent of each other, he seems to forget that so far as natural proofs go, their independence is completely a gratuitous assumption, and that there is not much more evidence of their dis-

tinctness. A writer, in a new publication called the "Inquirer*," endeavours to defend this opinion concerning the distinct nature of the Mind by a curious argument, deduced evidently from a sophism of Condorcet. He says that we only know Matter in its sensible qualities or effects, and not in itself; and that in like manner we know Spirit by a consciousness of other effects. Now while I admit the primary assertion, I must reject the deduction: for though we know Objects only in their relation to the Subject, yet this relation, as far as Matter is concerned, is uniform and constant, otherwise there could be no such thing as systematic knowledge. The natural construction of our Brain likewise obliges us to infer from this knowledge of the sensible qualities of Objects, their actual existence in the external world, and to individualize them. But

* "Inquirer," the first Article in No. II.

I cannot in any way see the application of all this to the separate existence of the Mind. Suppose I grant the writer that we know the Mind in like manner by its qualities, — let us see how far this will bear us out in the discovery of its spiritual and distinct nature. I will take the mental quality of Imagination. I imagine, for instance, a golden ball, and being conscious of the power of producing it in recollection after the Object is removed, I am told that I am hence to infer a Mind of which this imagination is a quality. Now, according to our above admitted philosophy, when the golden ball was really present I saw and touched it, and thence knew it by its sensible qualities, and by intuitive inference believed in the existence of the Object. When the ball was removed, and its image nevertheless reproduced by imagination, I inferred hence the existence of the Subject, that is of my mind, of which this reproductive power may

be called a quality: all this I admit; but I do not by this mode of inference dispossess myself of the belief that the Subject is both material and mortal; I may as well suppose it to be the Brain as any other thing, at least as far as *this* argument goes. The same will hold good of reasoning, comparing, *holding in mental review*, or any other quality of Intelligence.

I grant, with M. Abernethy, that we have a sort of intuitive consciousness of our own personal identity that is independent of all systematic proof; but I deny his position, that the correctness of this consciousness is confirmed by physiological inquiry. Indeed, the difficulty of conceiving Matter and Spirit as things totally different and yet co-existing, seemed so great, to some philosophers, as to induce them to embrace the counterpart of materialism, and to refer every phenomenon to Spirit, to the exclusion of Matter altogether. Such

was the metaphysical philosophy of the acute Bishop Berkley, who endeavoured, by a set of extraordinary arguments, at once distinguished for their ingenuity and fallacy, to overthrow what he conceived to be the materializing tendency of the arrogant mathematical philosophy of his days*. As the mass of mankind are somewhat more capable of appreciating the weight of authority than of reasoning for themselves, so the learned Bishop's opinions gained ground for a time, and he would have, perhaps, acquired a longer posthumous reputation, had he not, by some fatality, almost unaccountable, concluded a solemn treatise on the Holy Trinity with an elaborate eulogium on the panaceatic virtues of tarwater.

To return to M. Abernethy. He reminds us of various other subtle exist-

* See "Hylas and Philonoos," by Bishop Berkley ; also his "Theory of Vision."

ences, besides Life, which pervade matter, as Air, Light, Electricity, and the Galvanic Fluid. Now if these principles produce such surprising effects on one class of substances, why may not they, under certain modifications, become the moving principle of the nervous system, and the Brain? The ancient Persians ascribed every thing to these principles, and worshipped the Spirit of Fire.

All these are admittedly mere hypotheses. I am conscious of Time and Space; but they cannot be defined. I know not the mode or measure of them; and when I attempt to reflect on the infinite extension of the one, and the eternal duration of the other, I am lost, and find that the subject outstrips the measure of power allotted to a limited organization. In like manner, though I am conscious of my own personal identity, I am wholly incapable of conceiving the mode and future duration of it, having no data to go upon. Moreover,

I am contented to dispense with a vain philosophy involving all kinds of absurdities, and to rest my faith in spiritual things, on a distinct species of evidence.

The paragraph I am now writing is an interpolation, written after the rest of these sheets, and was suggested by a letter from a friend, calling my attention to some observations on Doctor Barclay's and M. Abernethy's opinions, in the "Medical Repository*." Some authors speak of our knowledge of matter as involving the belief of a substratum or Essence independent of its sensible qualities, while others contend that we ought to regard only the qualities of matter as having a real existence, which we perceive by our senses, and deny any such substratum. I am compelled to quote these observations, in order distinctly to apply to them what I have already said of Object and Subject. I

* "Medical Repository," for 1822, p. 191.

am ready to grant that, in perceiving the colour, the visible and tangible form, and the smell and taste of objects, we have a pretty tolerable knowledge of their existence, which is so far a positive knowledge, that while our senses continue to act, we cannot doubt of it. If these qualities, in a given object, were always constant, if, in other words, the extent, figure, and colour of a given globe were at all times recognised as the same, then might we almost identify these qualities with the existence of the Object. But here comes a difficult question. When I view a building, as for instance, a church, at a great distance, it appears a confused speck, having no perceivable form or colour, and subtending no sensible angle; when, however, I approach, and take a near view of it, then it seems a large perfect building, having windows, a portal, a spire, &c. Now which *is* it *really*, a speck or a building, since it *appears* this or that according to

its distance from the beholder? I admit, with Berkley, that at either the near or the far distance, my experiences enable me to *recognise* a church. But then follows this inevitable dilemma: — either that a church is one thing at one distance, and another thing at another, on the supposition that the perceived qualities constitute its existence; or that the object actually has an existence independent of its qualities perceived by the mind. These considerations seem to have suggested the “Objective and Subjective Reality” of Kant’s philosophy. I confess my own opinion inclines the same way; and while I am invariably conscious of a belief of the actual existence of the object, the qualities of which I perceive, I am induced to ascribe that belief to some determinate law of nature, whereby we are made to connect together the evidences of the different senses, and to believe intuitively in the existence of the objects that excite their activity: an

opinion which has been confirmed by the discovery of an Organ of Individuality placed in the centre of the forehead, amidst those Organs by which we know the different qualities of matter. Now, in order to clear the way to that fortress where M. Abernethy's mind delights to lodge, I shall put this sweeping question:—Does he mean to say that the percipient principle in man exists unconnected with any sensible qualities? If so, then how am I, who receive all my natural knowledge by the senses, to become convinced that there be such a thing? Suppose he should answer me by saying—You are conscious of perceptions, therefore there must be a percipient. I should then reply again—Yes; but they are perceptions of the qualities of matter; and if I should even concede so far as to allow, with Kant, that these perceived qualities of colour, figure, &c., belonged to objects which have an independent

existence in the external world, and constitute the relation between those objects and a percipient subject, still it by no means follows from hence that the subject which perceives has any higher pretension to immateriality than the objects which are perceived. I will repeat the question in yet other words, and allow the doctrine of Darwin, that form, colour, and other qualities of bodies, were configurations of our organs of sense. M. Abernethy would perhaps add, that though this might, in one sense, be true, there must be something else that perceived these configurations; the eye is a camera obscura, and the objects are painted on the Retina, but there must be an ulterior something to see the said retinal picture. Seeing and feeling may be effected by motions of the organs of sense, and reflecting and reasoning may be owing to motions of the organs of the brain; but there must be an ulterior Intelligence to per-

ceive them. That this proposition itself is quite proofless appears evident to me, as it is as easy to conceive how the brain can think, as to shift the difficulty on another unproved percipient principle. A parallel question may be put with regard to the cause of the world. Is it not as easy to believe in an uncreated world existing from all eternity (as Frederic the Great believed), as it is to imagine an eternal Spirit, who created it out of nothing?

But even if a percipient principle in man, superadded to organization, were conceded, it would not follow necessarily that this principle was either immaterial or immortal. Neither can I discover that we are assisted by the supposition of this *tertium quid*, this mediating principle, placed in the scale of importance between Body and Mind, called Life. The *Σωμα*, *Ψυχη*, and *Νους*, of some of the ancient philosophers, agree very well with the Somatopsychonologia (anato-

mists will not censure me for hard names) of Dr. Barclay, M. Abernethy, and other physicians; and I do not object to it myself as a hypothesis, by no means at variance with the opinion of the ancients. I feel too as if I were something more than my organism implies; but whether or no I should have believed thus much, had I not been told so from my infancy, I cannot pretend to say; but of this I am certain, that I should never have admitted the doctrine in question as a legitimate deduction from physiology.

Volney, in his "*Ruines*," and Dupuis, in his "*Origine de tous les Cultes*," endeavour to trace the belief in a creative Spirit, and in the separate existence of the Soul, to physical causes, and the progress of reasoning; while the christian, disdaining their profanity, appeals with confidence to the miracles so often performed, in attestation of the sanctity of the Holy Catholic Church, as proofs of her divine authority, and seeks in

her councils for the explanation of those purely spiritual truths, which sceptical Philosophy labours in vain to resolve into doubts, and which certain well meaning protestant writers have inadvertently placed in a problematical point of view by the obtrusion of irrelevant arguments in their support.

I cannot conclude this chapter without adverting to the high and distinguished virtue and talents of the gentleman whose opinions are herein canvassed. No one can read his works, now become the basis of medical practice, and not at once discover the medical philosopher, and the benevolent man. I trust, therefore, from his known character, that he will reflect on the real tendency of his theological writings, and that he would excuse me, should he ever become acquainted with me, for this imperfect and humble attempt to point out to him and his readers the true path which leads to glory — unlimited freedom of inquiry.

SECTION IV.

Some difficult Questions proposed to the Somatopsychonological Theorist.

OUT of the theory of Matter, Life, and Mind, which we have just been considering, there arise some difficult questions in physiology, which no researches seem hitherto to have promised the slightest chance of solving. I shall proceed to state a few of these questions, as it seems to me that the rationality and probability of the theory must in some measure rest on their capability of solution; a task which appears naturally to devolve on its supporters.

Admitting Life to be a principle independent of the Body, it would follow, I think, that this vital principle in one individual must be independent of the vital principle in another; every man's life must have its own separate existence. Now it is granted by all that the forma-

tive nisus in generation is an effect of the same principle as other phenomena in the animal economy are. I ask, then, of the Somatopsychonologists, whether they admit a point of time at which the foetus in utero ceases to be upheld by the living principle of the mother, and begins to perform its functions by means of its own life alone?

I propose to the same party a still greater difficulty with regard to the independent nature of Mind. Do they admit that there is a moment of time wherein the foetus is first endowed with consciousness by the gift of an independent intellectual principle?

If they admitted this question to be capable of an easy solution, another would arise respecting the Soul, yet more intricate. At what period of uterogestation does the offspring acquire a separate and independent soul that is to exist for ever?

Again: does an independent life, and

an eternal soul, belong to every species of monstrosity? or, are there limits beyond which nature cannot err in producing monstrous organisms, capable of becoming the receptacle of independent vital and intellectual principles?

All questions respecting generation involve great difficulties; but I will ask any candid philosopher, whether the objections to the solution of the above questions are not more glaringly difficult, on the supposition of the three independent principles of Body, Life, and Mind, than they would be if we were to regard both vitality and intelligence as inherent properties of the atoms of matter? since we find that both are manifested by imperceptible degrees, in proportion as matter acquires organic form and consistency, from the very first impregnation made in the ovarium of the mother, to the evolution and eventual perfection of the child? Another question that suggests itself, is, whether, in

the scale of beings, there are more than one sort of vital principles, and more than one sort of minds? For the differences observable in the character of individuals being referred to their organs, it may be supposed either that the mind is always the same, and its different manifestations depend on the instruments it is possessed of, or the mind itself may be subject to variety, and may have its organ in each individual adapted to its own inherent peculiarities. On the latter supposition of *mens cujusque is est quisque*, as Cicero says, every different animal has a different mind, and an idiot or weak man has no natural hope, *when the soul leaves her mansion in this fleshy nook*, of an equality of condition with the man of ability. On the former hypothesis, the mind itself of a fool is the same as the mind of a philosopher, only the one is chained down in this carnal bondage of earth to a more perfect organism.

Again: I ask, since the Somatopsychonologist admits a distinct and independent mind on the grounds that vitality will not account for perceptiveness, must not, therefore, mind equally belong to other animals as to men? For animals perceive; and that they can reason also has been clearly proved. Indeed, though the gap between the most perfect animal and man seems wide when we consider only perfect specimens of each, yet if we compare an idiot with an ouran outan, or with a sensible dog, we shall find the intellectual powers much the strongest in the animals: the nature of the proud lord of the creation being thus, by the casual imperfections to which he is subject, made to stoop to the level of the beasts, and thus fill up an apparent hiatus in the scale of living creatures.

If the animals have minds, have they also souls; that is, are their minds to be everlasting? For all these inquiries are legitimate on the principle that we are

to look for physiological proofs of spiritual things.

Perhaps there would be no great objection on the part of religionists to admitting animals to have eternal souls, as we are no where informed to the contrary ; our religious creed and duties relating to our own souls alone. But then where is this to stop ? Are we to regard polypi, hydatids, and starfish, as having souls ? If animals, on the other hand, are admitted not to have any thing immortal belonging to them, this admission would leave the doctrine of human immortality in a very awkward predicament, at least as far as we are enabled to judge of things by natural reason.

Let us now examine what are called Life and Mind in a state of derangement. For though the bodily fabric be the visible seat of disorder, both in diseases of body and mind, yet we always refer the cause to the irregular operation of the vital principle, either primary, or

in consequence of some violence done to the bodily organs ; and till within a few years insanity used to be ascribed to a faulty operation of the mind. I need not take the trouble to remind physiologists that they know of no disorders of life except such as are manifested by unnatural conditions of some one or more of the organic parts of the body ; nor need I bestow much more pains to satisfy my medical readers that we know of no species of madness independent of disordered action in the brain. The increasing knowledge of anatomy is every day adding fresh proofs of this. The skulls of madmen are found to be of an unusual density and hardness, while the brain exhibits marks of much inflammation. Particular species of insanity correspond to the disorder, or loss of particular organs ; and so far from the fact asserted by some unprofessional writers being true, that the functions of intellect can go on without their par-

ticular organs, it has become notorious not only that no faculty has ever outlived its organ, but also that no faculty of the mind is ever powerful where its appropriate organ is naturally small. Now, seeing that the manifestations of mind are deranged, weakened, or destroyed, with the respective material instrument of each, it follows that if the physiologist admits an independent and distinct mind, he must yet allow it to be under the constant control of matter.

It has been said, again, that perceptiveness is not in the material organs, because a person whose organ of vision is decayed, may have recollection of visible objects, or mental phantasms, as they are called: that, moreover, if the rays of light do fall on the retina, so as to produce figures, there must be another and a perceptive eye behind to see them. This is in one sense true; that is, the perception of visible objects, as well as the recollection of them, is not in the

retina ; but it may, and probably is, in some other part of the brain, with which the nerves of the eye are in communication. The same may be said of all the other senses : a man will sometimes refer sensations to the extremities of a limb, which has long been separated from the body. There may be a common centre of sensation, and on this common centre may depend the consciousness of identity ; but if this were granted, I have already shown that the spirituality and everlastingness of this central part does not follow. Can the advocates for the questionable physiology of the new Hunterian school bring forward a single case of deranged intellect, and at the same time prove their pretensions to such a knowledge of minute anatomy as shall be capable of demonstrating that the said mental derangement occurs in a perfectly healthy organism ?

In opposition to this question, I ask, Does not daily experience prove the

invariable connexion between deranged intellect and the diseased state of the brain and nervous system?

In conclusion, I shall propose to the physiologist to consider what happens at the death of animated beings. Does the vital spark always go out in an instant, and thus momentarily set free the soul from the body? For if Life and mind be independent existences, they must either be attached to the body or not, and there can be no intermediate state. Appearances, certainly, in some cases of natural death, seem to favour the notion that the fatal process is going on slowly and gradually, without there being any distinct point of time separating life and death. What will be said, again, of the state of a distinct perceptive principle in cases of suspended animation? Where is then the mind? And if reanimation had never taken place, at what point would the triple union of principles,

maintained by the somatopsychonologist, have been dissolved?

Again; I must allude to momentary resuscitation of vitality. I remember once seeing a cruel experiment on a kitten, when, after the animal had been to all appearance killed by a sufficient cause, the brain was suddenly contused, which was followed by violent and apparently painful contortions of the body. Similar phenomena are familiar to those puny imitators of John Hunter who disgrace and render ridiculous the medical profession by brutal experiments on the nerves of living animals.

If many of these animals, resuscitated by subsequent violence done to their apparently dead carcasses, had been left to putrify in quiet, when would the *momentary* solution of life and mind have taken place which seems so essential to the new Hunterian physiology under discussion? Lastly; Do not all these, and many other similar facts in the

natural history of the production, life, and death, of organized beings, admit of an easier solution, on the supposition that the atoms of matter possess the properties gratuitously ascribed to distinct principles therewith conjoined, and that these atoms acquire, maintain, and lose vitality and perceptiveness by degrees?

Having thus left these *quæstiones difficiles* to be solved by those who support the doctrine out of which they naturally arise, I feel induced to close this part of the subject by stating, that notwithstanding all the high *natural probability* of a material cause of phenomena, the good catholic doubts not of the mysterious union of body, life, and mind, on an authority which commands his faith, but deigns not to direct his reason; and that the merit of so believing this doctrine as a christian, varies in the *inverse ratio* of his view of its probability as a philosopher.

In conclusion, I will for a moment imagine myself performing the honourable functions of an advocate for justice, and the philosophers and moralists of Europe shall be my jury. In pleading the cause of the materialists, I say then, The labours of M. Hunter have mainly contributed to call forth those physiological inquiries, the philosophy resulting from which has been so much complained of; and the honest student, in a splendid museum, is called on by the Hunterian school to examine his subject patiently, and to draw his own conclusion from facts. Is it then just, that certain advocates for the Hunterian physiology, who view things in one particular manner, should censure those who candidly avow a different conclusion from the same premises? Or that a particular school of physiology should first excite investigation, and afterwards persecute my clients or inferences which inquiry has forced upon

their notice, and obliged them to assent to?

I may moreover regard my clients as directing me to plead only in this court of justice against the physiological and moral charges. For the alleged grand offence against Heaven, they are willing to await the awful judgment of a higher tribunal.

SECTION V.

*Part of M. Rennell's Argument shown to be erroneous,
and the rest superfluous.*

I NOW come to consider M. Rennell's extraordinary mode of defending the independent nature of mind against the supposed injurious consequences of M. Laurence's materialism. M. Rennell seems to go a step farther than M. Abernethy, and to advance positions which, if they were tenable, would un-

link the chain of the latter gentleman's somatopsychonology.

One of M. Abernethy's main doctrines, is the mysterious union of the three anthropoietic constituents, *Σωμα*, *Ψυχη*, and *Νους*, and he never doubts of the necessary agency of the organs of the brain in all the mind's manifestations in this world. M. Rennell, however, in a sort of clumsy attack on MM. Gall and Spurzheim's craniology, actually goes the length of inferring, that a man can think independently of the brain ! And he draws his inference from misunderstood medical cases. It is well known, that after portions of the brain have been destroyed by casualty or by disease, the functions of the mind have been for a time continued. M. Rennell seems to regard this circumstance as affording an unequivocal proof that the mind is not necessarily dependent on this organ. Now the error in this instance is the counterpart of that which

is detected in the last chapter; for while we there catch the physiologist going astray into the mazes of theology, we are now equally surprised to find the theologian running wild in the unknown regions of anatomical science. Both the parties alluded to justly command our esteem and regard in their own province; but if the *Ne sutor ultra crepidam* can be *respectfully* applied, this glaring instance of the gratuitous interchange of professions will afford a very good case in point for its application.

I beg leave here to refer M. Rennell to any good anatomist for a refutation of his position. All the organs of the brain are double; there being an organ of similar functions in each hemisphere of the brain: and no instance was ever known of any given function of the mind being carried on after the loss of both its appropriate organs.

The natural order of things now leads me to the consideration of dreams.

These nocturnal phantasmata which disturb the soft embraces of Morpheus with their playful and visionary forms, so far from testifying to the independence of spirit, rather confirm its dependence on matter. They are suggested often by pain, by sounds, and by various bodily sensations, in the same manner as trains of waking ideas are. There are all kinds and degrees of dreaming, from the imaginations of half sleep in an easy arm chair after dinner, to the ephialtes. We sometimes dream that we are dreaming, and that we have so dreamed before, making a sort of voluntary effort to awaken ourselves; we feel surprise in our dreams at viewing combinations of things we never saw before, which could not be the case if one undivided independent soul produced the appearances; but which is reconcileable to the doctrine, that a multitude of organs, in different states of sleep and vigilance, produce, by their own internal activity and power of novel com-

bination, images which are viewed by another percipient organ with astonishment. What I have said does not settle the question whether or no the percipient be material; but it goes to prove the material nature of the organs wherein the images are perceived, and destroys the argument of Baxter* and others, who would infer the independent nature of the mind from dreams. Some curious facts in dreaming, too numerous to be detailed here, seem to show that the organs of one hemisphere sometimes become vigilant, while those of the other remain dormant. In proportion, however, as the Will becomes active, we dispel the illusion, and at length awake. And what is this power of which we are conscious, which can awaken and can control the subaltern organs? and what is the extent and nature of this control? In Doctor Forster's "*Phrenology*," he has regarded the Organs of Comparison,

* Baxter's Enquiry, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1745.

Causality, and Individuality, as constituting a sort of board of control, invested with voluntary power ; but many subsequent reflections by this time have convinced him, that the members of this board only sift and compare the evidence furnished by the senses and other organs of the knowing faculties ; but they are not the voluntary judges !* I here feel, as M. Abernethy does, that there may be a common centre ; a power somewhere, which perceives, and which controls the other organs. But I think no proof can be adduced, that this principle be not material. The organs of the brain have commissures, and as all the fibres never have been, nor ever can be, fairly dissected, we may as easily suppose a material as a spiritual common centre.

Dreams then are clearly cerebral phenomena ; but this doctrine will not invalidate the proof of the prophetic use

* Refer to his later publications.

God may have formerly made of them : for his omnipotence may excite material organs in a definite manner, so as to convey true prophecies. It is not the spectra themselves that are wonderful, but their coincidence with events. The same argument holds good with regard to ghosts and other apparitions. The phantoms themselves may, as Dr. Ferriar* observes, be referrible to motions of the organs of the brain, like ocular spectra in the retina, or the imaginary sounds and noises that some nervous people hear ; but their coincidence with the events which they seem to predict or accompany constitutes the astonishing part of their history. It is not wonderful that I should have a very vividly marked spectrum, either sleeping or musing, of an absent friend ; but it would become exceedingly impressive if I should next morning get an unexpected letter to say that he were just dead ! I

* Ferriar on Apparitions.

have felt it necessary to introduce this digression, in order to guard against any misapplication of my doctrine, to the detriment of the belief we are taught to entertain, that God has at different times operated at once on our minds, and conveyed information by dreams, by visions of angels, of bloody crosses seen in the air, by raising spectres of the dead, and by other unusual apparitions. For in whatever way these spectra may be accounted for, either as being real existences in some cases, or as being always mere nervous actions, their divine and miraculous character will ever be sufficiently marked by the future or coincidental development of the express object of their mission.

I have not thought it worth while to animadvert to the remainder of M. Renell's arguments, because I consider them quite unphysiological, as well as unnecessary to the support of the christian faith; since the catholic church, in

her written and traditional evidences, is acknowledged to possess all necessary proofs of the truth of christianity, and (by all catholics) of her right also to the title of being its true interpreter.

Thus then have I not only shown, that M. Rennell's and M. Baxter's arguments, drawn from injuries of the brain, and from dreams, are founded in error, but likewise that, had they been ever so well supported, they would only have led to a superfluous inference.

Leaving the impartial reader to judge from what I have said above how far, and in what sense, M. Rennell has proved that a man can form an opinion without brains, I shall proceed soon to discuss the merits of a small publication on the Organology of Gall and Spurzheim, in which M. Abernethy displays a point of discrepancy between himself and the worthy christian advocate with whom he has made common cause. But before I close this chapter, I cannot let the

opportunity slip of repeating my testimony to the high character and talents of the gentlemen in question; and, lest I should be accused of an anonymous attack on professional ability, I beg to remind my readers, that I have only animadverted on those parts of their arguments in which they quit their proper calling. As protestant advocate for christianity, I have not the least doubt of the ability and willingness of M. Rennell to fulfil the duties of his appointment: * and I could never be induced

* It seems that the office of christian advocate, admirable in itself when springing spontaneously out of a laudable zeal for virtue, is nevertheless, when it becomes a matter of formal emolument, subject to this abuse — that it may place its tenant in the embarrassing predicament of feeling obliged to write something in plea of his cause, when he has no able, and at the same time *new* argument to offer. How far M. Rennell may have too hastily complied with some such fancied demand that his voice should be heard in appeal, it is difficult to say; but this over conscientious desire not to render his place a sinecure, would be his best apology for not

to question the decided preeminence of M. Abernethy as a surgeon. In short, I have taken care to criticize the theologian only where he ventures to appear as a physiologist, and the physiologist only where he unweetingly plays the part of a theologian.

doing his work better. A similarly indulgent view may be taken of the motives which may have impelled a worthy predecessor to enter the forum with an antagonist so much his superior in science, learning, and genius. Every one will recollect the bungling attempt that was made to refute the doctrines of the *Œdipus Judaicus*: a work with which the Right Honourable Sir W. Drummond intended only to amuse his friends, but which, while yet unpublished, a trumpety harangue was put forth, publicly to gainsay, from a person who, if we judge from the production itself, was as sincere in his intentions as he was weak in his powers to overturn a wild astronomical argument which the virtuous catholic would have passed over in silent contempt.

The author of this said Answer, which, by the by, served to *advertise* the obnoxious work, was terribly mauled by a second reply by *Vindex*, who cut his opponent to pieces, and left him floundering in the slough of despondency.

SECTION VI.

The futile Enquiries concerning Matter, Life, and Mind, under present Consideration, are referrible to the faithless and sensual Character of the frivolous Age in which our Lot is cast.

ALL those who dwell in countries unenlightened by the catholic religion, and who are accustomed to hear and to credit the libellous and false aspersions of protestant writers on what they ignorantly term the dark ages, will probably be surprised at the assertion I am prepared to maintain; that those middle ages of the church above alluded to, so far from meriting the appellation of dark, were distinguished by the most stupendous energies of the human mind; by enlightened men, whose genius and perseverance were exerted not only in illustrating and defending their religious profession, but in giving origin to and perfecting the most beautiful works of

art and science; and all this with a degree of courage and perseverance of which history has recorded no parallel examples. The catholic church was then in the zenith of her power, and the advancement of her interests was before every other consideration; to this end the arts and sciences, and almost all the efforts of human genius, were made subservient. It was in these ages that some of the ablest commentaries on christianity were written; as the works of St. Cyprian, St. Augustin, St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, St. Bernard, and other saints and fathers, incontestably prove: it was then that the most austere religious institutions were founded, in which holy and spiritual men made what even heathen philosophers deemed the greatest of victories — the conquest of themselves; and devoted a life of fasting and meditation to the service of the church, illustrated in those ages by the most splendid miracles by which her sanctity was attested. It

was then that kings and earthly potentates bowed the neck in silent submission to her decrees; no one questioned her authority; and the philosopher had no higher aim than to approach her altar. The mystical character of the times gave a particular bias to the prevailing arts; while the temperate and unsensual life of the religious of those days preserved to them such a clearness of intellect as was capable of being successfully exerted on all occasions; and which contributed not only to the internal advancement of religion, but also to the construction of the most noble edifices and pious monuments, dedicated to the service of the church, that any age or country ever produced. Hence, for example, arose those sublime conceptions in ecclesiastical architecture, which we still see in old cathedrals and abbeys built by catholics, and which the devotees of the present rage for Grecian temples and Chinese pagodas have, from

a false opinion of their origin, absurdly denominated Gothic.

The lute of the minstrel, the voice of the chorist, the chisel of the sculptor, the pencil of the painter, were alike devoted to the holy cause, and with an unprecedented degree of success, during the middle ages. Where shall we find more beautiful pictures than those which Raphael, Michael Angelo, Rubens, and numerous other artists of the old Italian and Flemish schools, have painted in illustration of sacred history? or where do we behold more grand and inspiring buildings than those churches and religious houses which they were painted to adorn? I am aware that this digression may seem irrelevant, but it leads to the question:—Whence all this energy, this austerity of life, this sacrifice of sensual pleasures, this subserviency of every thing to the cause of a particular institution, which prevailed at the period under present con-

sideration? The attainment of Paradise is now, as well as it was then, the professed desire of Christians; and yet we do not now see similar energies displayed, nor the same systematic and ardent devotion and constant self denial practised — Why is this?

The advantage of every hope may be said to be the absolute value of the thing hoped for multiplied into the probability of its occurrence. The boon of everlasting happiness, which is the ultimate object of the hopes of the Christians, must appear of the same absolute value in all ages; hence the relative indifference, apparent in these days, to its preponderating advantage over all other objects of solicitude, can only be referrible to a diminished expectation of its probable occurrence. This I believe to be the true state of the case. From the period of the pretended reformation, the minds of men have become spiritually more and more darkened;

an increased love of natural knowledge, laudable in itself when restrained within its just limits, arose, and by degrees supplanted the love of religion; luxury and refinement kept pace with it: the mutual accusations of heresy preferred against each other by sectaries, and the lax morality which sprung out of Calvin's blasphemous doctrines, together with a rage for innovation, all combined to do the evil work; and at length the mind lost its spiritual character, forgot the real groundwork of faith and hope in the church, — the miraculous attestation of her sanctity; and the pride of philosophy at last made men try to reduce every proposition to a problem solvable by human reason. In this our frivolous and pseudophilosophic age, then, a few sensible and worthy persons, averse to annihilation, brought up in the habit of resolving every thing into a question of physics, and still clinging to the waning hope of everlasting life, try to support

its probability on arguments drawn from their own particular calling, with which they are of course better acquainted than with any other. Many persons, too, from being eminent in any particular branch of philosophy, or of the arts, by constantly dwelling with complacency on their own excellence therein, get at length such a high idea of its importance, that they suppose it capable of working wonders. And this is the only way I can account for the notion that some individuals seem to entertain, that they can derive arguments for the spiritual nature of the soul from the study of physiology. I remember a story of an old merchant's clerk, who wrote a remarkably fine hand, and who thought so highly of it that, under the idea that caligraphy must sooner or later supersede the press, he wrote out an entire copy of the Bible, for fear the sacred volume should ever get out of print.

I shall refer in the next chapter to

many much more powerful opponents, that the church has met with from time to time, than the materializing physiologists, as well as to her danger from many more untenable defences. All which she has triumphed over by a reference to her own proper evidence, and the four grand marks of her truth, Unity, Sanctity, Apostolicity, and Catholicity, illustrated by the frequent performance of miracles.

SECTION VII.

A few Remarks on M. Abernethy's "Phrenology of Gall and Spurzheim, &c. addressed to the College."

IN the "Reflections on Gall's and Spurzheim's Physiognomy and Physiology," one recognizes immediately the same distinguished talent for illustration, the same benevolence of sentiment, the same power of forcing opinion on the public mind, by entwining it round the moral

interests of society, that were found, on a former occasion, displayed in all the eloquence of the Hunterian Oration ;*

* I may briefly advert to a few of the principal enemies of religion, and to the partial mode of attack adopted by each of them respectively ; in order to show, that as it has sustained the shock of much more elaborate and learned writers than the physiologists, there appears, by an *argumentum à fortiori*, little danger of its being ruined by physiological remarks delivered as introductory to a description of the Hunterian collection.

Without going back to the earliest attempts against the Church in the commencement of christianity, I shall cut short the retrospect down to the infidel age of Queen Elizabeth. What did the Free-thinkers, as they were called, of those days, ever do, in the way of mischief, to be compared with the Puritans and Fanatics ? Who understood the quaint language of Hobbes of Malmsbury, or cared about the philosophy of Spinosa ? It was the apostate schismatics who divided the cause of the church and marred her moral evidences, and not the literati who assailed her with philosophy, that produced a change of sentiment in favour of infidelity.

All the splendid wit and sarcastic sallies of

but, alas! the critic soon finds himself immersed again in the very somatopsychonological stream in which the genius of that writer has always flowed.

Voltaire against the church — the forcible appeal to sensual nature made by Rousseau — the mathematical arguments of Hume against the probability of miracles — the atheistical declamation of the whole host of French philosophers — all these together did not do the holy cause half the mischief that Volney did in his romance of the “Ruins;” because, in this work, he compared together the conflicting doctrines of the numerous religions of the world, and confronted the various heretics, each pretending to the exclusive possession of the truth; and thus arming himself with their mutual contradictions, he boldly asked the inquirer after the true faith — which of the sects had possession of its proofs? Only one could be right, but all might be wrong!

The nature of this form of attack was always known to be the most dangerous, and accordingly we are encouraged and commanded to pray against Heresy and Schism; but I believe that no ritual or liturgy has yet got any form of prayer against the dangers of materialism, or the misdirected labours of the anatomist.

Again we perceive the same illusion whereby the author imagines that he has discovered, in his physiological acquirements, the true source of those elevated notions respecting man's most noble part, the Mind, which he has confessedly always entertained, and which were, in all probability, impressed on his mind in infancy, either by the perusal of books, or by the instructions of other persons, and were confirmed by a sort of connate consciousness of personal identity.

How vivid and how lasting are infantine impressions! how frequently do we see the fears, the hopes, the prejudices, which have once engaged the fancy of the child, subsequently direct the opinions of the man! How clearly does this show the necessity of removing children from all sources of groundless superstition and imaginary theories, and of storing their young minds with useful knowledge!

There is undoubtedly a great natural difference in the talents and in the moral sentiments of infants, which depends on varieties of organization; but the character is, nevertheless, capable of receiving a very strong bias from early impressions: hence the utility of beginning a good education soon in life, by directing the attention of young persons to important objects, and by exhibiting to them a good example of virtue. The unconquerable antipathy of some individuals to serpents, toads, and various ugly insects, brought on by early associations, is well known; and it is equally notorious, that old people often recollect distinctly the scenes and events of their childhood, after they have become forgetful of occurrences of more recent date. Moreover, it is true that superstitious notions and fears, which have been acquired in early youth from false impressions, but which have yielded to good sense during the

vigour of manhood, have resumed their empire over the weakened powers of tottering senility; and thus caused a once elevated intellect, in its progress of decay, to wane away miserably under ill grounded, and often unnatural apprehensions of danger, instead of evincing that calm tranquillity and composure with which a well regulated mind endures the fatal process of dissolution.

A curious, but well authenticated, case is recorded of a man who, while recovering from the effects of a concussion of the brain, could only speak Welch, which was the language of his childhood. This man gradually acquired the power of conversing in English, a language he had subsequently learned, in proportion as he recovered more completely. The laws of this superior power of early chains of ideas to resist the effects of time and of violence done to the brain, are not distinctly known; but to a similar principle,

I think we must refer many opinions and prejudices, which certain individuals entertain, without knowing why, and which they now and then erroneously ascribe to some incompetent source.

After the author under present notice has declared that he pretends not to any reflections absolutely new, but only introduces them in order to illustrate the varied effects of the vital principle, he goes on to present the reader with a short account of the organs of the brain, and their respective propensities, sentiments, and intellectual faculties, as discovered and demonstrated by Gall and Spurzheim.

Here then we find a trifling discrepancy between the opinions of our author and the learned Christian advocate, with whom he has made common cause. The former has certainly shown that phrenology is not incompatible with the distinct nature of Body, Life, and Mind; while the latter thinks it neces-

sary to attack it, in defence of his own opinion respecting the soul, to the promulgation of which he seems to regard organology as a fatal obstacle. As I have already exposed the fallacy of this latter mode of thinking, I shall not reiterate a tiresome argument, but examine a few new opinions contained in the little work before me.

The author tells us,* that he is convinced of the truth and importance of M. Hunter's opinions relative to the nature of Life; and is desirous of seeing how far physiological knowledge, obtained since his time, may have affected his sentiments in general.† Now I question, in the first place, whether M. Hunter had any particular opinions about Life, independent of his views of its phenomena manifested in the actions of the animal machine. I cannot discover, in his works, the recognition of a

* Abernethy's Reflections, p. 2. † Page 2.

separate principle of Life in the light in which M. Abernethy seems to view it. From the metaphorical nature and imperfect mechanism of language, one is induced to individualize and to personify a sort of supposed common cause of effects ; and thus we speak of the *Procreative Power*, the *Formative Nisus*, the *Ulcerative Principle*, and many others : we know only the effects, and are too apt, from viewing a number of these as possessing a real or fancied similarity, to ascribe them hastily to some identical common principle. Certain individuals who possess in a high degree the faculties of comparison and individuality, and thence acquire a metaphorical and generalizing turn of mind, frequently class a number of effects together, and suppose a common cause. The *Principle of Destruction* is said to be always actively proceeding in the Body ; while we usually refer another class of important phenomena in the animal machine to

the *Principle of Reparation* provided by nature against wear and injury. A greater activity of this metaphorizing disposition, combined with the individualizing power, induced the ancients to adopt a yet more perfect form of personification; whence Fortuna, or the *Principle of Chance*, Prudentia, or the *Principle of Foresight*, Jupiter, or the *Atmospherical Power*, together with Pallas, Neptune, Venus, and numberless others, were forms of identification afforded by language, in order to facilitate the communication of ideas, which were afterwards personified into deities by mythologists. I cannot help thinking that M. Hunter intended no more in what he said about the *Principle of Life* than to avail himself of this license of language, to give consistency to a description of similar effects, and to fix it on the attention, by ascribing them to a common principle of causation. It is precisely in these cases that philology becomes useful in

detecting the deceptions of language, and showing the process whereby we learn *to give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.*

Leaving the reader to apply the same explanation to the figurative descriptions of the intellectual, as I have shown to be applicable to that of the vital phenomena, I proceed to consider the Organology of the Brain.

After reminding his readers of the danger resulting from the abuses and misconceptions of the system of Physiognomy, the author admits the facts stated by Spurzheim with regard to the organs of the faculties of the mind. He allows that the brain may be considered as the organization whereby the sentient principle becomes possessed of various perceptions, faculties, and dispositions to action.* This, putting however the *petitio principii* of the *Sentient Principle*

* Page 3.

out of the question, is all the phrenologists contend for: they have never said that the organs themselves perceived, thought, felt, and reasoned, but always finding their respective presence necessary to each particular faculty, they stopped short in their *physiological* inquiries, at the place where experience ceased to furnish evidence. The singleness of perception, considering that the organs of the brain are double, the intuitive consciousness of our own personal identity, as well as the form of the commissures and uniting fibres of the hemispheres of the brain, all certainly force on our minds the belief of a common centre, as M. Abernethy calls it; but even this, were it proved, would not, as I have said before, establish the spiritual and eternal nature of this centre of union, or of any thing else connected therewith. The most patient and continued researches and reflections have convinced me, that

we have no physiological evidence for the distinct existence of an identical Mind; at the same time I am ready to acknowledge, that no similar researches can afford any directly contrary evidence, nor persuade me that what I feel conscious of, and that what mankind have always believed, namely, that the mind is something more than what organs imply, is really an illusion. That which so constantly directs our conduct, independent of any reasoning, that we are inclined to consider it as intuitive, I mean the belief that we are something always identically the same, seems, like the trust reposed in the evidence of the senses, to be resolvable into a principle of our constitution.

What follows in the pamphlet is chiefly an illustration, in the author's own sensible language, of Spurzheim's Organology, by examples of most of the thirty four distinct faculties, represented by their respective organs. All religious

objections against organology may be at once removed, by observing that these connate faculties are talents intrusted to us by the Creator, for the use we make of which, we are declared answerable: their anatomical structure no where implies the necessity of obeying the impulses of any particular organ, as all are under the control of the will, the consentaneousness between which, and the powers which effect its purposes, form admittedly an exceeding curious subject of speculation.* There is a question, however, respecting the will, quite unconnected with the seat of any common centre from which it may be supposed to emanate, that is of vital importance to religion; namely, whether the motives which direct our voluntary decisions, act by necessary and irresistible agency. If man had not freedom of choice, one can hardly conceive him responsible for his ac-

* Page 30.

tions; at the same time, all laws, human and divine, seem to presuppose that the ruled are to be influenced by a preponderance of motives. The nature of moral motives has employed in vain the metaphysical pen of so many able writers, that I shall not reiterate the course they have gone, nor attempt to explain it; but believing that this, like all other questions in which Mind is concerned, is not solvable by philosophy, I shall refer it to the decision of the Catholic Church. It may not be amiss, however, in this place to advert to some of the errors into which similar considerations have led different persons, in order to show more completely the futility and bad tendency of such inquiries. Some philosophers have gone the length of saying, that every event coming from a necessary cause or causes from the beginning, we must refer the whole of the evil, as well as the good in the world, either to the will of

the Creator, or else to some mechanical source of causation. This sort of doctrine is called philosophical necessity; it seems, at one time, to have been the opinion of Priestley, of Hume, and of many other writers. A particular application of this doctrine to the religious conduct of human beings, determining their final doom, is called Predestination, and was one of the leading principles of the blasphemer Calvin, of Geneva.

Fatalism is a supposed operation of this principle on a still more limited scale; it supposes those actions of a man's life which lead to great public events, and finally to his death, to be so under the particular direction of some overruling power, that, do what he will, he cannot avoid the ultimate calamity that is doomed to await him; while in regard to indifferent actions, he is left free. Persons who retain these ideas, are frequently men of great talent,

though they are not deep philosophers, or they would see the prodigious difficulty of splitting the question of Necessity, and leaving certain actions free while others are ruled by fatality. Many warriors have been led into this error from constantly viewing the uncertain events of their precarious life, and the many wonderful escapes of individuals. Nelson was said to be a fatalist; and even Napoléon frequently alluded in his intimate conversations with his friends to the irrevocable lot of mortals.

The advocate for religious obligation must, however, always admit the doctrine of free will, though he cannot comprehend the manner of moral causality. He must also believe that a particular career is allotted to each individual, at the same time that reason and philosophy throw no light on the mode in which the human will is influenced. We must leave it to the Councils of the Church to explain how truth is conveyed by inspi-

ration — how our guardian angels so influence certain actions as to stand our friend in time of need*? These are questions beyond the reach of philosophy, and are introduced here in furtherance of the opinion that I have contended for all along in these sheets, that human learning and inquiry cannot help us out in the solution of spiritual questions, with which philosophy possesses nothing in common †.

* The Greeks and Romans, in their doctrine of *Δαιμονες*, had a glimmering of the protection afforded by the guardian angels of Christians — the *Genius natale comes qui temperat astrum*.

† The anatomical theologian, Paley, was another writer who tried to establish spiritual things on the basis of physical proof. I shall let his bad anatomy alone, and proceed to take a single instance of the character of his reasoning from his proof of a God. He says something to the following effect: — If I find a watch, and examine its curious workmanship, I infer a watchmaker, and that he was an ingenious mechanic. In like manner, in contemplating the wonderful mechanism of the universe, am I led to believe in an omnipotent artificer. — To me this appears

I return with pleasure from this excursus to the pleasing strain in which M. Abernethy descants in page 37 on the organ of benevolence, from which spring virtuous and kind actions ; but I

false reasoning, for when I infer the existence of a watchmaker from the appearance of a watch, it is because I have beforehand found, by experience, that such instruments were made by watchmakers. But by what previous experiment can I have discovered that the worlds were made by God? Both the watch and the watchmaker are parts of the universe ; why, therefore, because I have found that two particular parts of the universe are uniformly conjoined in the relation of cause and effect, should I imagine the whole to be similarly conjoined with a something else of which I have had no previous experimental evidence?

Paley was no ignoramus ; but I have long been of opinion, that to a clear head, a tolerably empty stomach, if not necessary, were, at least, very conducive. I agree with Shakspeare, that

Fat paunches make lean pates, and dainty bits
Make rich the ribs, but bankerout the wits.

Now, Paley was known to be an extravagant gourmandizer ; and it is recorded of him, on good authority, that he often ate a whole shoulder of mutton

must remind him, that Sterne's disconsolate wanderer in the desert, who would fain find out some sweet myrtle or melancholy cypress to connect himself to and to court their shade, is influenced by the organ of attachment and not benevolence, and is seeking out a substitute for a Myrtilla or a Cytherea to engage his moody affections.

In p. 45, M. Abernethy has confounded the Organs of Faith and Hope

at one meal. The learned Dr. Lambe, of London, has clearly proved that a light vegetable diet clarifies the intellect; and the classic author of *Pastor Fido* has long ago extolled the power of the *Cibo di latte e del frutto* over the wanderings of the enthusiast. So well was the great Newton aware of the clearness of head produced by "*Spare Fast that with the Gods doth diet;*" that when composing his *Principia* he ate only of a little bread, and drank only a little water. Now, may we not, after the perusal of Paley's Natural Theology, argue, that his inordinate meals made his mind stop short of those piercing and ethereal coruscations of genius which the late herbivorous Percy Bysshe Shelly displayed in advocating the cause he had espoused?

together. The discovery of the former, or Organ of Supernaturality, the subject of this pamphlet, having been made but recently, it was called by Doctor Forster Mysterizingness. These organs are placed close to that of Benevolence in the map of the brain; that of Hope rather behind that of Supernaturality.— Now I shall ask the question — Whether, when we find the material organs of these sentiments in the human brain, analogy would not induce us to believe that they were adapted to some specific object, and that the cardinal virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, were sentiments so implanted in the mind as to be part of our nature? If this be granted, then the discoveries of the phrenologists do not invalidate the doctrine of the Bible. We have an organ of veneration, another of hope, another of faith, another of benevolence: but the objects of these sentiments — the Being to be worshipped — the mysteries to have faith

in—the joy to be hoped for—the proper objects of charity;—all these become matter of information, to be derived from education and inquiry*.

It is now, in the course of the examination, the proper time to notice a very odd passage†, alluding, as it would seem, though in a very obscure manner, to the party adverse to our author's physiology. "Gall and Spurzheim," says he, "have represented the office of the superior intellectual faculties and sentiments

* The playful quill of the etymologist of Purley has inadvertently furnished religion with an argument against democracy.—If *right* means that which is *regitum*—*rectum*—or *directed*, it must spring from a *director*, from which evil is *wrang* or *wrung*, i. e. wrested from the right path, a word derived from the Anglo-Saxon verb, *Vpigan*, *torquere*. In ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΥΤΑ, vol. ii., on the parallel words in French, Italian, &c. &c. So likewise *just* and *justus* from *jubere*, to command, signify that which one is *jussus*, or commanded to do, which command must emanate from a source of justice.

† Page 51.

as affording motives and possessing powers that can and ought to control and educate the inferior propensities ; but there have been, and are, some who seem to wish it believed that human actions are under the control of these inferior propensities." He adds, " They also represent the absence of guilt but as the result of want of temptation," &c. This seems a strange assertion, and it is made with a specious sort of ambiguity that leaves the party assailed but little chance of making a suitable defence. But what soon follows is still more illiberal. After begging the question why opinions are inculcated which tend to weaken virtuous efforts? the author answers it himself, by saying, " We find that the authors of them, from a view of their own conduct, and that of the baser part of mankind, are convinced that there is no virtue in them, and therefore infer that others must equally want it. Thus do they presumptuously call Virtue hy-

pocrite, and pluck away the rose from the fair bosom of innocence, to place a blister there *.”

* Page 52.

I question much whether the belief in the doctrine of somatopsychonology, or in any other abstract principle, has much influence on the human conduct; at least, the proportion of natural benevolence which any individual possesses furnishes a much stronger motive to kind actions. The fact is notorious, that opinions have less influence on actions than sentiments and powerful passions have; and we daily see instances of the overwhelming power of avarice, superstition, and pride, over reason and sound doctrines. If any one doubt this, let him read the sermon of Jesus Christ on the mount, and then reflect that the professors of christianity waged the bloody wars of the Crusades, established in all its horrors the infernal tribunal of the Inquisition, and carried on, under the sanction of a professed Christian administration, the desolating traffic in African slaves. Let him add to these reflections, the daily observation, that every species of vice is committed by those who profess religion, and he will be convinced, without detracting any thing from the merits of christian precepts themselves, that their daily promulgation will not have much effect in deterring mankind from vice; and that, were it not for the dreaded punishments of the

Now, in the first place, it may be replied to this attack, that materialism is the utmost length that the adversaries of M. Abernethy's doctrine go ; but even materialists do not find in their doctrine any proof that the superior faculties may not educate and control the inferior ; all faculties being, according to them, the effects of material organs. Our author has here evidently mistaken his charge : the party alluded to only contend that they do not find in physiology any proofs of a *distinct* and *independent* principle of vitality and intelligence capable, according to M. Abernethy, of influencing and directing the material organs. I will venture to say that no deduction from physiology has been made in M. Laurence's Lectures, nor in the writings of any of those whom M. Abernethy considers as of that party, which are derogatory to the doctrine of the mind. If, however, we should find it difficult to persuade evil disposed persons to respect the liberties and property of each other.

tory to the general principles of Spurzheim's phrenology.

As to the latter part of the charge — if a large portion of society, professing the christian doctrine of peace, charity, and universal forbearance, nevertheless continue to act daily in such a base, selfish, and worldly minded manner as to injure the cause of christianity, by presenting a disgusting spectacle of its failure, there is no great stretch of *presumption* in now and then doubting the sincerity of pretended motives to action; and I think we may depend upon it, that if Virtue be called hypocrite, it is because Hypocrisy so often wears her mask. And much as a certain party may be imagined under the influence of the lower propensities, I can hardly think the benevolent author would willingly accuse them of being quite so demoniacal as wantonly to dismantle any bosom of its rose, unless experience had

taught them to look for a viper concealed beneath it.

The introduction of this remark here, may seem irrelevant in a treatise on physiology; but it is called for by that of the author of the pamphlet under consideration.

M. Abernethy demands*, whether modern physiologists believe what they call “nervous energy, to be different from vital energy in general?” I suppose that they do not mean or understand much, when they use these two forms of expression for animal actions; but certainly I have never yet seen a nervous principle and another vital principle expressly contended for. Again — “Or, that the organization of the brain and nerves is necessary for the preparation of vital energy; both propositions are unreasonable, and the latter is con-

* Page 66.

tradicted by our knowing that the lower kinds of living beings, which have neither brain nor nerves, possess vitality in the most energetic and permanent degree." In answer to this I must observe, that though we do not find a brain and nervous system in certain classes of animals, yet we always discover some sort of organization; and if we are allowed to reason by analogy at all, we must conclude that the material parts connected with their vital phenomena perform functions similar, though not precisely the same, as the demonstrable nervous parts of other classes. As a parallel argument I may observe, that though we allow nourishment to be carried on by vessels, we cannot demonstrate the smallest of the *vasa vasorum* — either vascularity must become smaller and smaller, ad infinitum, or else the smallest vessels must be nourished by some other means. The question of a distinct vital principle making the

first formative effects in the animal machine, is left undecided by this argument. For the materialist may contend with equal probability, that these functions are properties of the ultimate atoms of matter. The shifting the difficulty on the vital principle, is a similar evasion to that whereby philosophers, speculating on a larger scale, assigned the material universe itself to a spiritual creator. I think I need hardly use any more arguments to show that if we fail to discover grounds of belief in a vital principle in the anatomy of a man, we shall not establish it on the microscopy of a cockchaffer.

At pp. 66, 67, the author makes a very unexpected concession, after the strenuous manner in which he has always contended for distinct vital and intellectual principles. Referring to those actions which appear to result from the decision of the Will, formed on a comparison of the evidences furnished by

different intellectual faculties, M. Abernethy remembers that a gentleman once told him, that this trial of the weight of evidence, this comparison of the informations conveyed by different organs, which leads to a voluntary decision, was an office performed by a sort of board of control — a committee of superior organs ; and he adds, “ But if an intelligent, discretionary, and controlling power be granted, I feel no disposition to ask any more.” What then becomes of the importance attached to the distinctly spiritual and independent nature of this power ? No materialist ever denied volition’s existence, nor did any necessitarian discredit its decisions, whatever might be the nature of the impelling motive ; the important question is confined to its spiritual or material essence, and to the freedom or necessity of its choice of motives to action ? The board of control alluded to, is a whimsical expression used by Doctor Forster, in his *Phrenology*, to comprehend the joint effects of Indivi-

duality, Causality, and Comparison, in all that process of judging of the evidences of the senses and intellectual organs above alluded to. Now I am fully prepared to concede to M. Abernethy's somatopsychonology, that if one faculty compares, another individualizes, and a third perceives the relations of cause and effect, there must yet be an undivided percipient, or *president of the board for the time being*, in order to give effect to the decision. Indeed, the members of this board only compare and sift the evidence of the intellectual witnesses; I feel convinced that the Will, whether it emanate from a material common centre or not, remains as yet unexplained. I only wish to disunite the proofs of an identical principle of intelligence from physiological arguments which in reality tend to destroy it, as I have always thought the belief in it to be what is called intuitive: it may result from some functions of the central parts of the brain, or it may not; I am confessedly ignorant of the exact mode

by which I became possessed of this consciousness of my own identical existence. But of another fact I am physiologically made certain, that this very belief entertained by all sound persons, that they themselves are one thing, and the external world another, can be so weakened by hepatic irritation and other visceral disorders affecting the sensorium, that ordinary patients, wholly disentangled from any metaphysical flights of fancy, have suddenly become doubtful of their own separate existence: they have said — “ I *feel* as if I had no identity, as if material objects had no real existence, but that the whole phenomena of my past and present life were one vain dream almost identified with me the dreamer.” Moreover, these illusive ideas have been removed by small doses of alterative medicine. — So much for the power of physiology to prove the spiritual cause of consciousness. But I will not tire the reader with running through the whimsical imaginations of the spellbound hypochondriac,

nor dwell any longer on the tendency of misapplied physiological evidences to destroy, rather than to prop up, the consciousness of Body Life and Soul, which mankind believed before they had ever reasoned, discussed, or known the laws of physiology, and which the religionist would perhaps refer for its origin to some exceedingly antient inspiration from the spiritual cause of causes. I am induced in conclusion to state my opinion, founded on experience, and the history of mankind,—that the consciousness of personal identity resolves itself into a principle of our nature; and we have an evidence of it, similar to that whereby we know the external existence of objects; that is to say—it is one of the functions of some part of the brain in a state of health. But does this opinion invalidate the mystical evidences of a future life, and other religious doctrines depending on prophetic and miraculous proofs of a distinct sort?

Surely the same trust reposed in a superior power to instruct us, which can make us believe in the miracles professed by Christians, can easily make us admit the possibility of a material mind being embodied hereafter. Besides which, it should be remembered that the Resurrection of Lazarus, that of JESUS CHRIST on the third day, the Assumption of the Blessed VIRGIN, and all other miraculous proofs of an eternal Heaven, are represented to us in a bodily form, and we are told by St. Paul that *in a more perfect body we shall see God*. If we are to doubt that which is consonant to unenlightened reason, how can we believe the Trinity—the Immaculate Conception—or any other mystery?

Those who try to let in the sunshine of false Philosophy upon the pure Vestal Flame, will lessen the lustre of both: they are, in fact, wresting the Hope of Christians from the rock of Faith, and plunging it in a whirlpool of jeopardy.

SOMATOPSYCHONOLOGICAL

CATECHISM.

Q. WHAT is somatopsychonology?

A. It is the doctrine of the three zoopoietic constituents.

Q. What do you understand by those constituents?

A. Three elementary principles, all distinct in their respective natures, but all united in the organic machine of man and of other animals.

Q. By what names are these three principles called?

A. They are spoken of variously; as, *Body*, *Life*, and *Soul* — *Organization*, *Vitality*, and *Intel-
ligence* — or, more simply, as *Matter*, *Motion*, and *Mind*.

Q. What are the proofs of the existence and distinct character of these three constituents; and in what cases should we make a selection out of the three synonymous terms, comprehended in the three sets of names that these three elements are called by?

A. The proofs are as follow: — Our senses and intellectual faculties make us acquainted with the

first principle, or matter, by the perception of its qualities, and the intuitive belief in its actual existence, which the faculty of Individuality simultaneously causes. Thus we know that the universe is composed of matter. Our bodies seem, in common with the rest of the earth, to be made of this substance; so that, when we speak of the matter of the animal machine, we call it Body, being a particular form of matter, composed of numerous organs. But the Body is not merely matter; we perceive a particular motion going on in it, which seems to accompany its growth, maturity, and decay, and to cause all its changes; thus we recognize a second principle. But the whole universe seems to be matter in motion; still, finding animal motion to differ from gravitation, electricity, chemical action, calorific expansion, and other modes of motion, we call that which belongs to animals Life, to distinguish the vital from other motions.

But we are further conscious that matter and motion are perceived by ourselves, and we feel conscious that we are something more than the *divisible matter* that we see exhibiting itself in *variable motion*; neither of these two principles seems adequate to account for that consciousness of that identical and indivisible being — our own self; we therefore believe that to the two above mentioned constituents the agency of another principle called

Spirit, is necessary to intelligence, figuratively described as residing in the common centre of all perceptions, the common origin of all volitions. Thus, the Body is matter organized, the Life is the vital mode of motion, and the Mind is Spirit, so embodied and connected with the two foregoing elements, as to become a separate, identical, intelligent Being. So, from Σωμα, body, Ψυχη, life, and Νοϋς, the mind, comes the compound word Σωματοψυχονολογια.

Q. How do you know that Life is distinct from Body?

A. I perceive that an organized Body has two states, the living, and the dead; or, in other words, the moving, and the motionless.

Q. How, then, do you know that motion is not the only thing necessary to render an organism of matter a living body?

A. Because motion is at times nearly suspended in animal bodies for a time, and afterwards resumed; but, during its suspension, the body does not putrify, but continues to resist chemical action: it must, therefore, possess some principle capable of resisting the destructive agents which after death eventually decompose it.

Q. But may not the ultimate atoms of matter possess the properties of motion and of rest, and of resisting, for a limited period, the effects of chemical agents?

A. They may; but as that property only belongs to the matter of organized bodies, and as it belongs to them only for a time, I find it easier to suppose the addition of another principle, than to suppose the particles of matter to obtain, and eventually lose, the properties we denominate vital.

Q. Are you not deceived by *words*, and have you clear ideas of *property*, and *principle*, as distinct things?

A. Perhaps not; but I have a distinct *idea* of *motion*, or the *change of figure in matter*: the terms property, principle, &c. are forms of individualization, caused by the activity of that same faculty by which I identify and individualize objects in general; and therefore in conceiving a distinct principle of vitality, I assume a separate cause of vital action acting *on* the atoms of matter, and contradistinguished from a power properly inherent *in* them. Out of these two hypotheses, I choose that which best explains the phenomena of animals, both in a state of perfection and of monstrosity.

Q. How do you know that Mind is a distinct principle?

A. Because I do not find that vital motion will render matter percipient. Matter and motion, that is, *matter in a state of rest*, and *matter changing its figure*, are things perceived, and therefore cannot be the same as that which perceives them.

Q. Your answer suggests to me, to bring the question into a smaller compass, and to ask you then—By what means you distinguish the *Percipient* from the *Perceived*; or how you know that you are something distinct from the qualities of matter which alone are the subject of your pretended perceptions?

A. Here I am lost. I am incapable of stating any other reason why I distinguish between myself and the object of my perceptions, than this—that I am, and, as long as I can remember, always have been, conscious of it. I cannot philosophically distinguish Time from the succession of events which measure it, nor Space from the objects filling it; at the same time I *feel* that Time and Space are different from the successive occurrences, and the occupation of place by objects, by which they are measured. In like manner, I can only know that I am one thing, and the surrounding world another, by a sort of intuitive feeling that it is so. I cannot prove, when I see the colour, and feel the solidity, of an object, that any thing more exists than these qualities; nevertheless, I feel compelled to allow an actual independent existence to the objects which thus, by its gustation, affect my sensorium. All that can be properly called the subjects of sensation, are those changing forms which we call the qualities of matter; and no article of belief which is not founded on our knowledge of them, and

the perceived laws of their succession and mutual relation, can admit of definitive proof. The belief in the external existence of matter, independent of its perceived qualities, the idea of time and space, and the consciousness of our own identical being — all these must be referred to connate principles of our constitution, which, like other effects of the active state of organs, carry with them irresistible conviction, while we are in a state of health.

Q. But you find proofs in the anatomy and physiology of the brain, that it is by the activity of material organs that you perceive the qualities of matter and believe in the real existence of the objects. You admit likewise, that the consciousness of your own Identity is dependent on a similar principle of constitution to that whereby you so perceive and know external objects. Therefore I ask, is it not by the agency of some material organism in the brain, that every species of knowledge and consciousness is effected?

A. Yes; and the somatopsychonologist is reduced to this strange dilemma—he is compelled to admit that an active organism, or, in other words, *matter in motion*, constitutes the only source of knowledge of his own mind. Therefore, either moving matter must make him conscious of spirit, or his own percipient and identical Being must be merely a material phenomenon.

In illustration of the position advanced, that we had no sensitive knowledge of any thing but forms of matter, and modes of its motion — I shall put a few philological remarks, to show that language is formed on this principle, and has relation to nothing else. Words are the representatives of ideas, and the etymology of them shows the genealogy and progress of ideas, from their real signification and origin; therefore, we must look to etymology for an account of original modes of thinking, which directed the opinions of men anterior to the deception practised by more complex and artificial forms of language.

ORIGINAL MEANING OF WORDS.

I SHALL not repeat the proofs adduced by J. H. Tooke, in his *Επεα Πτεροέντα*, in support of the position that all words are originally nouns or verbs. I consider them unanswerable; but it may, however, be agreeable to our present inquiry, to illustrate by a few examples, that language is composed of sounds or their representatives in letters, which are significant either of *Forms of Matter* or of *Modes*

of *Motion*; the former are the nouns, the latter the verbs*.

LIFE, the Anglo-Saxon verb *lȳfan*, the English *to live*, comes originally, as Junius asserts, from a Hebrew word signifying the heart. Life is, therefore, the action of the heart, and to live is to perform this action. This etymology, seemingly so far-fetched, receives collateral proof from the etymologies of words signifying life in other languages.

The ancients, not knowing the precise functions of the viscera, often confounded them together. The word *liver*, the Saxon *Lȳfen*, the Danish and Belgic *lever*, and numerous other words for this viscera in northern tongues, came from the same root; liver is what lives or makes to live, *vivit-or*: the liver being by the ancients considered the essential organ of life. Life then is visceral action, which is a *Mode of Motion*.

SPIRIT, *spiritus* in Latin, comes from *spirare* to breathe, another vital *Mode of Motion* — it signifies that which is breathed, and was applied in a physical

* The interjection forms no part of speech. The lowing of cattle, the bark of dogs, or the cry of an animal in pain, have an equally good title to a place in grammar.

sense to various *Forms of Matter* of a similar nature to breath. It may be here remarked, that the same root gave origin to both noun and verb; the latter expresses, in this instance, the action of breathing; the former the thing breathed. The compounds *inspirare*, to breathe in or inspire; *expirare*, to breathe out or expire; *respirare*, &c. speak for themselves*.

Inspiration is, therefore, the breathing of something either *into* or *within* us, and is used to represent that intercourse between the Creator and the creature which is believed immediately to communicate truth from the first cause of all things. I question whether the verbs *spirare* and *sperare* be not originally the same, and that the sentiment of hope might not have been represented by the deep-drawn breath of panting expectation; so that originally, *Dum spiro spero*, would have been superfluous tautology. It is clear that expectation comes from *ex* and *pectus*; a difference only of its moral application, and an additional word, distinguishes it from *expectoration*, (or *ex-pect-oro-ation*, i. e. *ex pectore et ore*.)

* See the excellent Analytical Dictionary of the English Language, published by M. David Boothe, and it is a pity he has apparently omitted the etymology also.

THING, and *to think*, have the same origin; *to think* is *to be thinged*; or we may say, *thing* is the subject of *thought*, or that which is *thought*: like the Latin *res*, from *reor*.

TRUTH, or Troth, is that which one *troweth*, or *believeth*. Consult the real meaning of the words *Conjecture*, *Intention*, *Hope*, *Despair*, *Revenge*, *Hate*, *Love*, and any other words, they will all be found to answer to my statement.

I need not multiply examples, but I will refer to Tooke's etymologies in the ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΥΤΑ, and ask the reader whether my position be not correct, that words are the representatives or signs significant either of *Forms of Matter* or of *Modes of Motion*.

SECTION VIII.

Conclusion.

FROM all that has been said above, I think it will appear evident, that of the two hypotheses adduced in explanation of animal life, that which supposes the vital properties to be inherent in the atoms of matter, is, at least, as tenable as that which assigns animality to a distinct essence; and that the self evident truth, that we exist as percipient beings possessing voluntary power and are something more than our material organs imply, will not receive any additional corroboration from physiological inquiries. As the holding either this or that opinion can never influence man's moral actions, I shall conclude by referring those who wish for a confirmation of their religious creeds, to the prophecies, the miracles, and the mystical proofs on

which our pious forefathers originally founded them.

In making use of the term catholic church, as I have done in the course of this paper, I do not mean to decide for other people which form of religion merit that name, the Roman or the Greek?—Whether a metaphorical or a real meaning is to be attached to certain passages in the Old Testament?—Whether Jesus Christ intended merely a spiritual or a ceremonial and positive institution?—What church has the distinguishing marks of unity, catholicity, apostolicity, and sanctity? With all these questions I do not herein meddle; I am neither a theologian, nor desirous of assuming that character; but possessing some knowledge of physiology, and being aware of the importance of free inquiry to the establishment of physical as well as moral truth, I was desirous of showing the futility of any attempts to

connect the dogmas of Religion with the demonstrations of Anatomy.

And while I am convinced that excellence of character is to be promoted by inducing moral habits in children and exhibiting to them a virtuous example of benevolence and rectitude, rather than by any precepts of philosophy, I am desirous that physiology should take its natural course, leaving abstract speculations concerning the mind to the metaphysicians. The truth or falsehood of any doctrine whatever, is a question which will always be perplexed by superfluous arguments, and can never be solved but by liberal and unrestrained inquiry, devoid of the odious shackles of persecution and literary censorship of any sort whatever. Let all parties follow the excellent precept of judging of the tree by its fruits; if we have recourse constantly to this mode of inferring good or evil principles from

good or evil conduct, we cannot much err. When we consider what powerful motives to action are the passions of hope, and fear, to which Religion appeals, compared with reason and intellect, which Philosophy labours to instruct; when we consider also the different kind of persons likely to be influenced by each of these respective sources of instruction, I think we need be under no apprehension that the cause of the faithful will suffer from any branch of natural history, much less can the theologian fear the encroachments of the physiologist. But past and woful experience must, one would think, have taught all parties to abjure interference, and to make common cause against persecution; and as the advocates of no party can justly claim infallibility, nor pretend to predict what may eventually turn out to be true, I would recommend them all to inscribe on the tablet of memory, as

an everlasting memorial of human frailty, that *GALILEO* was imprisoned in a dungeon, for instructing mankind in truths afterwards confirmed by *NEWTON*!

THE END.