

The claims of psychology to a place in the circle of the sciences / sessional address of the President, Mr. Serjeant Cox.

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Cox, Edward W. 1809-1879.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

[London] : [Longman], [1878]

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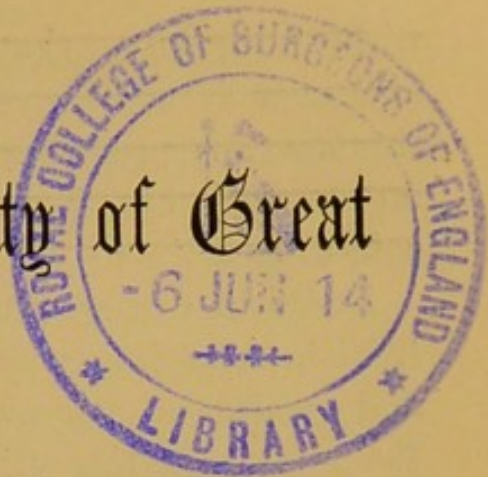
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Psychological Society of Great Britain.



THE CLAIMS OF PSYCHOLOGY TO A PLACE IN
THE CIRCLE OF THE SCIENCES.

*Sessional Address of the President, MR. SERJEANT
COX, on the opening of the Fifth Session of the
Psychological Society of Great Britain, Nov. 7,
1878.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I propose to devote this Fifth Sessional Address to a consideration of the claims of PSYCHOLOGY to a place in the *Circle of the Sciences*.

That it has not yet received such a recognition is sufficiently obvious. The conspicuous representative of the Science of the time is the British Association. This Society, by its all-embracing title and by the formal admission into its programme of more than one department that has not the slightest connection with physical science, practically asserts that no subject designed for the investigation, however remotely, of Nature and her laws will be excluded from its platform.

Wherefore, then, is Psychology rejected? The answer of the Association is, in substance, this: "Our business is with the tangible material Universe. Psychology deals

with something that is immaterial, intangible—whose existence is not proved nor capable of proof, and which, therefore, is unknown and unknowable. Psychology has no foundation of fact and upon fact alone can a Science be constructed.”

I dare to dispute the assertion and the argument. The British Association does not preserve its own boundaries and maintain its own definition. It admits Political Economy and Education. It does not prohibit occasional wandering into the wide field of Art. Speculations verging closely upon Theology are permitted and even welcomed in Presidential Addresses. *Theories* are not always scouted because they are wild. A section is invited to discuss the best manner of educating a human being; but investigation into the existence, the nature, and the capacities of *the mind* to be so taught, its relationship to the body, its past, its present and its future, is sternly prohibited, as not being a part of Science. If any member dares to moot incidentally any question, however interesting and important, bearing upon the Mind or Soul of Man, he is instantly shouted down, and rules are made with express purpose to prevent the introduction of the subject in any shape. Psychology is not merely refused admission into, it is positively scouted from, the British Association for the Advancement of Science!

Even more strange, illogical, and unphilosophical is the treatment of Psychology by another Society of lesser note. Anthropology is the Greek name for the Science of Man. There is an Anthropological Institute, whose profession is the pursuit and promotion of this Science. It was after many years of claim, advanced and rejected, that Anthropology obtained for itself a place—even then grudgingly granted—upon the platform of the British Association, which had, from the beginning, established a department for Natural History. Think of this! The associated Scientists of our time accepting discussions on

the structure of a bug and rejecting a debate on the mechanism of a Man!

But what the British Association did to Anthropology the Anthropological Institute does to Psychology. The British Association rejected the whole Science of Man. The Anthropological Institute rejects the Science of that part of him that makes him Man. It gives long debates to the shape of his skull—not a word or a thought to the structure of his *mind*! It listens to dull and learned essays upon the barrows that preserve his bones; but it will not promote an inquiry into the spirit that animated those relics, the mind that moved those bones, nor if that handful of dust be all that really remains of a being whom high authority declares to be immortal!

The study of Man, omitting the Mind and Soul of Man—Anthropology without Psychology—is surely the caricature of a caricature—the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet omitted by particular desire.

For Anthropology should properly be divided into three branches. First, *Human Physiology*, the structure of the body of Man. Secondly, *Psychology*, the forces by which the actions of that structure are directed. Thirdly, *Ethnology*, the geographical distribution and history of the races of men. The Society that omits either of these has no right to the large title of “Anthropologist.” It is Ethnological merely. There is in truth no Anthropological Society promoting Anthropology—as the *Science of Man*—and of the *whole Man*.

The example of these two Societies has been followed, as of course, by the outside world. Psychology is tabooed. Reports of discussions on Psychological questions are by the Journals who profess to report the “Proceedings of Scientific Societies” denied a place, expressly on the ground that Psychology has no pretension to be deemed a Science. If questioned why, the ready answer is, “Your province is with something the being of which is not

proved—whose very existence the greatest Scientists among us entirely deny. There can be no Science in a thing that is not. Therefore it is we refuse to give you a place among the reports and records of the Scientific Societies of the time.”

Hence it occurred to me that this fifth Sessional Address could not be more usefully employed than in answering these objectors and setting forth the true claims of Psychology, not merely to be deemed a Science, but to take a foremost place, as being one of the greatest and most important of all the Sciences.

The definition of PSYCHOLOGY, as adopted by this Society, is perfect. It expresses precisely, clearly, emphatically, and truly what is designed by that title. My purpose this evening is to set forth the subjects for research and discussion that are properly embraced by that definition. I repeat it :

PSYCHOLOGY IS THE SCIENCE THAT INVESTIGATES THE FORCES BY WHICH THE MOTIONS OF THE MATERIAL MECHANISM OF MAN ARE DIRECTED AND DETERMINED.

Although allied to BIOLOGY, or the Science of Life, with which it is often confused, it is in fact essentially distinct. Intelligent motion is not in any manner associated with the motions that indicate the presence of “Life.” The province of Biology is to trace the difference between the things that have life and the things that have not life; to determine the points of divergence, and the laws that regulate the beginning, the progress, and the end of life; to solve, if it can, the problem whence life comes and what it is. The range of Biology is sufficiently large and perfectly definite, but by no stretch of definition could it be a substitute for Psychology.

The *Biologist* having shown us what a living thing is; the *Physiologist* having taught us the structure of that living thing and the functions of its organs, whatever these may be—the *Anthropologist*, directing his attention to MAN,

having opened to us his history, as revealed in the relics of his various works—actions manifestly not automatical but the product of some Intelligence—a great and grand region still remains to be explored. What *is* the Intelligence directing the action of the MAN described by the Biologist, the Physiologist and the Anthropologist? If that Man be not merely a machine—an automaton—there must be something within him or without him that intelligently directs the motions of his mechanism to definite and intelligent objects. The motions manifestly obey a power within the Man we call his WILL. What that force is, whence it comes, how it works, what are its powers and capacities, the mechanism, if any, through which it acts and how the direction is determined of the force that moves the mechanism—here, indeed, is a vast region in the Science of Man for which no provision has been made, but which nevertheless is actually rejected by the British Association for the advancement of Science, and ignored by the Anthropological Institute, while professing the Science of Man, and by the Journals that call themselves the reporters of the sayings and doings of *all* the Sciences.

Perhaps to some minds the definition of Psychology, which this Society has ventured to advance, and for which it challenges discussion by any who object to it, may appear somewhat vague. “What is a force?” they may ask: “Is there anything moving us but muscular force, which the chemists tell us is produced by the conflagration of the muscle itself? What contracts the muscle? The nerves. What sets the nerves in action? The brain. Nothing can be more simple and obvious. The brain wills, the nerve carries the command, the muscle obeys and contracts, as ordered, and the limb moves in the desired direction. The Mechanism is perfect and so is this explanation of it. What need to go beyond it for something we cannot see, hear, or touch? Why perplex the mind with questions incapable of solution and conjectures

you cannot resolve into certainties? Be content with Physiology, which will teach you all about form and function. Be satisfied with *our* happy conclusion, that Mind is a secretion from brain and Soul a myth—a fancy—the invention of Priestcraft, the paradise of fools.”

Such are the objections raised to the recognition of Psychology as a Science and from the stand point of Materialism they are very powerful. Psychology, on the other hand, asserts emphatically that Mind is something more than a brain secretion, and that *evidence* can be adduced of the existence of Soul—(meaning by this term—the CONSCIOUS SELF—the I—the YOU) as a definite and distinct entity, the bodily structure being only the mechanism by means of which the communication is maintained between itself and the material world in which it dwells; the molecular structure, perhaps, being nothing more than an incrustation of the non-molecular Self, crystalised, as it were, about it in healthy life, dropping slowly from it in disease and parting wholly from it in death.

This is a conjecture—and only as such is it advanced. Little more than conjecture is possible in the present imperfect condition of our knowledge. We want more *facts* before we can dare to dogmatise. It is the proper province of Psychology to make search for those facts. The Scientists affirm that, Mind and Soul being myths, there can be no facts, and, therefore, that search after them is time wasted and folly.

At this starting point of our Science we join issue with the Materialists. We affirm, with absolute confidence, that there are facts and phenomena, innumerable and indisputable, that point directly to the existence of Mind and Soul, as the only probable solution of them—phenomena wholly inexplicable by and entirely inconsistent with *any* theory of Materialism—phenomena which almost compel to the conclusion that Intelligence is not molecular nor a condition of molecules—that Consciousness is not merely a function of matter—but

that the thing, whatever it be, we call the Soul, or Mind, is an entity quite other than the thing we call the Body!

Mark, now, how wide a range there is for investigation and deduction by Psychology, and then say if it has not a title to be a *Science*—and a very noble Science.

At its foundation is LIFE. What is Life? What marks the distinction between the living thing and the thing that has no life? Are they specifically different, or do they pass one into the other? According to the Darwinian theory of evolution, when did life begin, and how was it evolved? Or is the Universe a huge living whole, its parts taking the various forms of life according to the conditions under which the development occurs? In Man, what is the beginning of Life? what are its functions? what relationship has it to the other forces that control the mechanism? From what source is the vital force fed, why does it fail, and how does it cease?

Then for MIND. What do we intend by the term? Is Mind identical with Soul? Is it distinct from Soul? Is it an entity? Or is it, as I venture to contend, the collective name given to the actions by which the Soul expresses itself upon the external world through the mechanism of the brain and nerve system? Thus viewed, Mind is not a whole, but a congeries of parts, each part having a distinct function. It is not an entity but only the action of some other thing—or rather a name for the collective functions of the material organ of that other thing—which other thing is the entity—the being—that is conscious of its own unity—of its own identity—of its own distinct existence in a definite form—in brief, the I that, conscious of its own personality, is conscious also of the independent personal being of You.

What a field for Psychology is here! The relationship of brain to mind;—the functions of that organ;—the mental faculties—their operation individually and in combination;—the Mind in health and in disease—the influences of the Mind over the body and of the body over the Mind—these are but a few of the special vocations of Psychology.

Then comes the great question of the Duality of the Mind. We have *two brains*—have we two Minds? Is each mental faculty enjoyed in duplicate—so that there may be paralysis of one half of the Mind, as of one half of the body, with all the curious problems that grow out of such a condition and the light which, if real, it must cast upon many mental phenomena otherwise inexplicable.

Next comes the question upon which ancient and modern mental philosophers are at issue;—Does the *whole* Mind act in every mental operation, or only specific parts of the mental mechanism—that is to say,—are the process of reasoning, the emotion of anger, the sentiment of Hope, products of the *whole* Mind, or has each its special mechanism in the brain? A vast multitude of facts have been already gathered together, throwing light upon this question. But more are wanted, for the metaphysics, that have been for ages accepted by mankind as knowledge, stifling Science and staying progress, can be banished only by an overwhelming array of *facts* that must compel assent by all minds not closed against conviction by “prepossession” and “dominant idea.”

If the conclusion be, that the Mechanism of the Mind is structured of parts, each part having a distinct and definite function, then comes the no less important, but more difficult, inquiry, what are those mental faculties? These can be learned only by long and accurate observation of the minds of many men, as exhibited in their actions, and something will be gathered from *self*-examination. Those faculties found—and they are undoubtedly many—do they admit of any and what classification? Psychology must inquire if there be any and what specific differences between them. Are intellect and emotion identical? Do the various faculties exhibit their simultaneous presence or absence in the same person? Are not some possessed of great reasoning capacity and no passions? Are not others found to be strong in passion and frail in intellect?

And if there be many mental faculties, an inquiry almost

more interesting than any for the Psychologist will be, what relationship they bear to each other—in what manner they combine to produce the infinite varieties of character in Man, whether viewed as an individual or as belonging to some race of Man. This involves, not merely the closest observation of character, but the most skilful analysis of it. It is the unfailing charm of this study of MAN that it may be best pursued, not in the solitude of the chamber, but in the busiest haunts of Society—wherever men “most do congregate.” In this the Psychologist possesses a perennial source of enjoyment. Here he finds active employment for all his own faculties. It is a study of which he never wearies.

Think for a moment how vast is the region Psychology thus opens to the intelligent mind. Nor is any profound knowledge of it necessary to its enjoyment. Every step the Student takes is fraught with interesting and attractive objects.

In trivial, as in the most important, sayings and doings of those about him he recognises a meaning and finds a lesson of value. He asks himself what structure of mind prompted this act, or inspired that speech or writing? The presence of what faculties do I trace here? What group of them has combined to create such and such a character? He cannot read history, or drama, or fiction, without finding in it abundant material for practical application of the principles of his science and ample food for thought. Even the personages of fiction serve to him for illustrations.

To analyse any one character of Shakespeare is a *psychological* study, and no better exercise than this could the Student set before him.

The effects of disease upon this marvellous mental mechanism—its action under its many abnormal conditions—supply a new and wide field for examination, knowledge, and reflection. In due course, the Psychologist must investigate the phenomena of *sleep and dream*, of *insanity*,

of *somnambulism*, in its natural or in its induced condition, the mystery of *mental sympathy and communion*, and that curious consequence of the double brain and double mental mechanism, the action of one brain without the other, or the action of both brains in divergent directions, the Individual being conscious of the action of one brain only, his attention being engrossed in receiving the impressions of the one brain that is most active at the moment.

Not less within the province of Psychology are the phenomena of *Memory* and *Recollection*. What are they? What is the process that stamps the passing impression upon the everchanging brain and so preserves it that it can be reproduced long years afterwards? This mystery of *Memory*, and the still more marvellous process of *Recollection*, are problems which it is the proper province of Psychology to solve—or attempt to solve.

All this vast field of knowledge relating to the individual Man is the proper province of Psychology. But our science has a work even beyond this. It searches into the history of the past, as presently we shall see that it projects itself into the future. Was Man always what he is now? Is the Darwinian theory true, that he is the lineal descendant of a mollusc, grown to be what he is by a slow process of evolution, continued through æons of years, under the action of the universal law of the survival of the fittest, being thus gradually adapted to the ever-changing conditions of the world he has inhabited? If his corporeal mechanism grew to be thus, how and where did *mind* come to him? Mr. HERBERT SPENCER, with admirable ingenuity, has sought to apply the Darwinian theory of the evolution of the body of Man to the development of his Mind. He has devoted extraordinary labour to the collection of facts in the history of Man, from which he hopes to deduce conclusive evidence that Intelligence also has been evolved. He does succeed, to some extent, in tracing the gradual growth of brain structure; he shows

how one mental faculty might be the outcome of another or others; and in the survivals of manners and customs he finds traces of a time when they had a real life and meaning, and which, although their uses are outgrown, linger still in habits that have quite lost their meaning now.

Turning from the past to the future, a new region opens to Psychology. What man *was*—what he *is*—suggests at once the reflection what *will he be*? Without raising for the present the much disputed question, “If there is for him a life after the dissolution of his body?” the Psychologist encounters the too-neglected question of *Heredity*. To what extent does the child resemble the parent? Is mind inherited? If so, is it, as the popular belief is, derived from the mother? Why sometimes are there resemblances to both parents—sometimes to one only—sometimes to neither? Again. What causes a likeness to some remote ancestor to crop out suddenly in a far following generation, or why should only one feature be preserved (as in some families) the single surviving index of their race? These and a hundred other queries of equal interest and importance it is the proper province of Psychology to answer, or endeavour to do so—not by theorising merely, but by observation and collection of facts.

Lastly comes the question, greatest of all, is the Mechanism of Man constructed of anything other than the body we see and the brain we dissect? Is that brain the ultimate Intelligence? Are all our Inspirations and Aspirations merely secretions from that wonderful pulp? Is Consciousness of individuality, of unity, of being *ourselves*, nothing more than a succession of molecular conditions which we mistake for identity? Although, let me say it here, it is difficult to understand how any succession of independent actions could cause *consciousness*, I ask again, as I have asked before, What is *the thing* that is conscious of the molecular action that by no stretch of imagination can be conceived to be conscious of itself. This is the true battle

field between Materialism and Psychology, and here the main fight must be fought. Psychology says, "we see in this Consciousness the existence of something that is conscious—conscious of itself—conscious of the external world—itself always, whatever irregularity attends the action of the molecular mechanism. This *something that is not the body* Psychology supposes to be an entity, and that entity is the true Man. We call it *Soul*, for lack of a better name, but we attach to this name no foregone conclusions of its structure, its faculties, its capacities—nor even of necessity for existence after the dissolution of the body. At this point we affirm only that the *thing we call Soul* exists—but what it is, what it does, what it can do, where it is at present, what it is to be in the future, are questions for Psychology to answer, as they can only be satisfactorily answered, by *extensive and accurate observation of PSYCHIC phenomena.*"

Materialism replies to this, that there are no such phenomena, and that there is absolutely no evidence of the being of Soul—that it is purely mythical—that it is imperceptible by any sense—that it cannot even be imagined—that it is not only unknown but unknowable.

Here, also, Psychology challenges Materialism to the test. There are facts and phenomena, neither few nor rare, that may be found by all who make honest search for them, and for which they have not to wander far afield, but may see in their own homes, among their own families, nay, in their own personal experiences. These facts and phenomena, we say, Materialism can by no stretch of ingenuity explain, nor even rationally account for. They can be explained only by recognising the existence of something forming a part of the Mechanism of Man—something non-molecular and therefore imperceptible to the human senses, which are constructed to perceive only such part of Creation as is composed of the special combination of atoms that makes molecules. Now beyond dispute *mole-*

cules are the ultimate particles perceptible to our very limited senses, but certainly not the ultimate atoms, which doubtless compose an infinite number of other forms of being that are only not perceptible to us because they are of non-molecular construction.

It will be enough to refer to some classes of these phenomena to show on what a vast *foundation of fact* Psychology may be securely based, and to prove that it is not the shadowy pseudo-science that it is called. Behold, first, that most abundant class of the phenomena—the mystery of *Dream*—which only does not amaze us because it is so familiar, but which, if it occurred but rarely, and with a few persons only, would excite either wonder or contempt. There is not a person in this room who, if Dream were as rare as clairvoyance, would not be denounced as a lunatic or prosecuted as a rogue and a vagabond for asserting that, when he was asleep, he beheld the most marvellous visions, conversed with the dead—walked upon water—visited remote places. All of us do this nightly, and we are only not deemed to be the victims of “a diluted insanity,” because none can accuse another without condemning himself. But, viewed with scientific eye, what a marvel is dream! What new light would not the investigation of these phenomena cast upon the structure of mind and the being of Soul!

The phenomena of *Delirium* and *Insanity* are no less fraught with instruction for the Psychologist. It is not in the normal condition of the mechanism, when the whole is working smoothly, that the structure of a machine can be discovered. It is when the wheels are disordered, its parts thrown out of gear, that we learn the structure and the uses and functions of every part of it. So with the mechanism of Man. The Physiologist and the Physician can best learn the functions of the various parts of the body from observation of their *diseased* action. Even insanity reveals to us the various *mental* faculties, by exhi-

biting to us the consequences of paralysis or disorder of any one or more of them.

More curious still are the phenomena of *Somnambulism*—that strange condition in which the senses are sealed, or their communication with the Conscious Self suspended, and we are enabled to witness the phenomenon of the Mind receiving its impressions of the external world through some other medium than the nerve system. Psychology has not yet determined what is that substituted medium. But the almost certain conclusion is that the Self—or Soul—severed from its ordinary channel of communication with the external world through the mechanism of the senses, *perceives* by some other medium, probably by such perceptive power as it might be supposed to possess, if the body were to fall from it and it should have a new existence under new conditions. Fortunately for Science, Somnambulism, which is a rare natural product, may be induced artificially, not with a few but with a great number of persons, and, indeed, in almost every family circle. If any person can examine these phenomena without having his faith in Materialism shaken, he must be “prepossessed” indeed—the veritable victim of a “dominant idea”!

Then come the phenomena of *Mental Sympathy and Communion*, of which so many interesting cases have been reported to the Society, and of which we hope to be favoured with many more. The first question as to this is, if it be effected by transmission of mechanical motion from the fibres of one brain to the fibres of another brain,—as harp strings vibrate in unison,—or if it be a capacity of the Conscious Self or Soul, in certain conditions of the mechanism of the body, to communicate by some non-sensual medium with others subject to the same conditions with itself?

Lastly, we have the multitude of phenomena that have been called *Psychic* by those who object to a name that embodies a “foregone conclusion,” and who prefer to wait the

results of larger experience and more accurate experiment before they venture dogmatically to assert the source of them.

This caution is the more necessary as undoubtedly the conditions requisite to their production are such as almost tempt to fraud. As the consequence of such temptation, offered by the neglect of inquirers to apply reasonable tests, the most impudent impostures have been practised, and will assuredly be repeated, so long as phenomena, which are the proper subjects of Science, are made to minister to the credulity of the superstitious, to gratify a merely gaping curiosity, or to amuse the vacuous and the idle. It will be impossible to accept the Psychic phenomena as *proved*, for any uses of Science, until they have been subjected to the serious and laborious investigation of men who come to them with single-minded purpose to learn what truth is in them,—for truth's sake and for the sake of science alone;—who will view them with eyes coloured by no prejudice nor prepossession—who will insist upon the strictest tests they can devise and accept nothing as *proved* that is not secured by such tests, and then only after repeated experiments under various conditions. If such a course had been adopted from the beginning, opportunity would not have been given for the manifold “exposures” of impudent frauds that have done so much to discredit even the *proved* facts. If, at first, reasonable tests had been insisted upon and precautions taken, such as common sense would dictate, the most prevalent form of fraud could not have grown to the proportions which it has assumed, in spite of the protests of all sensible observers against the prohibition of the most ordinary precautions for protection from imposture.

But if more caution in the future is taught by these catastrophes, Science will profit greatly by them. Psychology desires to be informed what phenomena are proved

by sufficient evidence to be *real*—what are still doubtful—what are fanciful merely—what are impostures. That *all* the tens of thousands of alleged phenomena, witnessed in all parts of the world and attested by experienced observers, should be illusions or delusions, would be a fact even more marvellous than the greatest marvel among the phenomena themselves. It seems to be forgotten that if but one of the vast multitude be true, that one proved fact lays the foundation of a new Science, for that solitary fact establishes the existence of a force in nature hitherto unrecognised—a force essentially differing from all the forces as yet known to Science in this, that it is an intelligent force.

If but one of these phenomena be established as a fact, how new a field is thus opened to the researches of Psychology! At once the questions arise for investigation and answer: Whence comes this force? It is developed only in the presence or near neighbourhood of some human being, endowed with a special nerve organisation. Does the force proceed from him without whom it is not exhibited? The force operates without muscular contact. Then we face the problem of “action at a distance.” At this moment our philosophers are in conflict if such a thing *can* be. But here it is. If the force proceeds from the Psychic, it certainly does not come from his muscles. Whence comes it then? If from him, but not from his *corporeal* frame, it must proceed from some other entity that is in him. What is that entity? If the conclusion of the inquiry should be that there is such an entity, then that entity is what we call his Soul—that is to say—the Conscious Self.

But suppose the force exhibited not to be *in* him, but *outside* of him—that it is not *his* force but the force of some other being. In such case, the conclusion is unavoidable that there *are* invisible beings capable of exercising force upon visible substances.

If such a force be, certain it is that there is some *intelligent* actor determining its direction. That intelligent actor can only be the Soul of the Psychic, or some independent invisible being. If the former, the existence of Soul is proved. If the latter, that actor must either be the disembodied Soul of some dead person, or some non-human creature, invisible and impalpable to us, inhabiting the world with us, and, in certain conditions, enabled so far to become palpable to our senses as to play the pranks—for the most part, the unmeaning and unworthy pranks—that nevertheless *are* played—as will be admitted by any person who has honestly and laboriously investigated the phenomena.

Here are a series of problems, *growing out of proved facts and phenomena*, the solution of which is the proper province of Psychology. If that province embraced nothing more than this, her claim to admission into the circle of the Sciences would be unanswerable and such, indeed, as few of the recognised Sciences could advance on their own behalf.

It must be admitted that if, after painstaking investigation, the conclusion of scientific research should be, that the phenomena called Psychic, when all forms of imposture are eliminated, are the work of some class of invisible beings inhabiting this earth with us, it will not give to us the same conclusive *proof* of the being of Soul, with a life not limited to the life of the body, as does the popular theory of the source of these phenomena. But happily our prospect of futurity does not depend upon the reality of Psychic phenomena alone, nor on the correctness of any theory as to their source. *All* the other abnormal conditions of the Mechanism of Man, to which I have directed your attention as coming within the province of Psychology, point more or less to the conclusion that as a fact in Science Soul is a reality. Some of them, indeed, admit of no other rational explanation.

I trust now to have shown, to the satisfaction at least of all who hear me, and as I hope it will prove hereafter, to the equal satisfaction of those who may honour me by reading this address—that Psychology is not a sham, but a *very real*, Science; that it has a vast province—far wider, indeed, than may have been imagined by those who have not devoted to it much time and thought. I trust that I have amply vindicated its claims to be admitted into the Circle of the Sciences—to be welcomed at the British Association, and to be made a branch of any study of Anthropology worthy of the name. Our Society, speaking by the voice of its President, puts forward this programme of its purposes, of the many great subjects it comprises, of their vast importance to humanity, of the profound interest that attaches to them and its ambition to enlist for them, not the sympathies merely, *but the active co-operation*, of all who take an interest in the general objects of its constitution—the investigation of the forces by which the Mechanism of Man is moved and the direction of its motions determined—the intelligent force of Mind or Soul—of one, or of both, or of any one or more of its many departments. The pursuit of Psychology is certainly as elevating as that of Materialism is degrading. The eyes of the Materialist are fixed upon the earth; Psychology at least looks up to the heaven. The regards of Materialism are only for the present; Psychology contemplates a future. Materialism despairs; Psychology hopes. Materialism deems us animals; Psychology makes us Men.

This Society was a bold, but a successful, experiment to combat the great and growing power of Materialism, not, as hitherto, by metaphysical abstractions, but with its own weapons of *fact and phenomena*, of *evidence and proof*. “Argue and dogmatise as much as you please,” said the Physicists, “modern Science repudiates such methods for the pursuit of truth. We demand from you

proofs sustained by evidence; realities, not fictions; facts, not dogmas; things, not dreams and desires. Until you produce such credentials, we cannot recognise you as Scientists or Psychology as a Science." This Society admitted the validity of the objection, accepted the challenge, and is prepared to fight them with facts, phenomena, proofs, realities, things. What it has already done—the subjects it has already examined—the *facts* it has already collected,—do therefore entitle it to the recognition it claims. Many attempts have been made, and still will be made, to discredit it by imputing to it objects other than its ostensible one. We entirely and indignantly repudiate any such design. We are embodied for the sole object expressed in our prospectus—"The investigation of the forces by which the Mechanism of Man is moved and directed." We have never departed, and do not intend to depart, from this public profession of our purpose. We have carefully observed it in all our papers and debates. Many of the subjects comprised in the wide range of great themes, of which I have in this address feebly attempted to present the merest outline, have been treated of in this room, and others of them will engage our attention during the present Session. It would, of course, be impossible to single one class of phenomena from out the multitude that belong to Psychology, and because it chances to be unpopular, refuse to subject it to the same scientific examination as we give to the rest. It would be at once cowardly and unwise to decline to view it, and prove it, and try what worth and truth there is in it. Nor, as Mr. GLADSTONE contends, is it sufficient cause for turning away from so much as may be true because charlatans have traded upon credulity and imposture has ministered to a frivolous curiosity. The plain duty of Psychologists is to investigate scientifically, with express purpose to eliminate fraud and falsehood, with the sole design of advancing knowledge, and to possess itself of the residuum of that

truth which is proverbially said to lie at the bottom of the well. In this sense only has this question been received and so only has it been treated.

And here let me throw out a suggestion. There has been, and in spite of experience there still is, much misunderstanding of the true objects of this Society. No small portion of the disadvantage under which it thus labours has been the consequence of an adoption of its title by a considerable number of associations in London and the Provinces who really do what we are supposed to do, that is to say, under the wide name of Psychology conceal a very limited purpose. All or almost all of the numerous "Psychological Societies" that have sprung up since the formation of this, do in fact limit their labours to the one most disputed and disputable class of phenomena, which, if admitting of one explanation, would not be Psychological at all, and in any case are nothing more than one small section of the large range of facts and phenomena which Psychology embraces. This incorrect use of a general title for a particular purpose has doubtless led to a public impression that our aims are only theirs, and that, although we call ourselves students of Psychology, we are merely curiosity-mongers. To remove this misapprehension, which operates against us to no inconsiderable extent, and to make our true design and character plain to all, without liability to the confusion resulting from the like name being adopted with quite different purposes, I would respectfully suggest to the members a slight change in our own name. The term "Psychology" is now unfairly used, and too often abused. Let us substitute the term "PNEUMATOLOGY." It is as correct etymologically, logically, and scientifically, although not so familiar. Its meaning is the same, but it has the great recommendation of not being as yet misapplied and misappropriated. "*The Pneumatological Society of Great Britain*" sounds as well and looks as well, and it is free from the cloud of prejudice that has not unnaturally gathered

about the term "Psychology" by reason of the many misuses of it.

That there is a growing interest in the great questions embraced by this Society is proved by the excellent audiences that have steadily gathered in this room—larger, let me say, than those usually present at the meetings of any scientific Society in London, "the Geographical" only excepted. Another proof of the spread of the taste for Psychological research and desire for knowledge of its principles is found in the recent establishment of no less than three Quarterly Reviews devoted to different branches of it. "*Mind*" is almost wholly metaphysical, giving comparatively little attention to *facts*; and, therefore, I regret to observe, it does little for the extension of our knowledge of Mind. "*Brain*" is a more practical periodical. It professes, as its name implies, to deal with the material mechanism of Mind, and to the extent of its limited scheme it will do good service to Psychological Science. But here also there is an unfortunate lack of records of the *facts* and phenomena attendant upon the various abnormal conditions of the brain and nerve system, wanting which as a basis, real progress in Psychological Science must needs be slow, for its theories, however ingenious, unless based upon facts, can be little other than conjecture and speculation. The *Psychological Review*, the latest in the field, promises to be the most useful. But here again the range of topics is somewhat too limited, and the most important of the material required in such a work—a collection of reports of facts and phenomena, without note or comment—such as are given by the Medical Journals of medical cases—is still wanting. But the experiment is yet young and improvements may be anticipated with age, experience and success.

In conclusion, I can only repeat what I have so often urged from this chair. All physical science must be based upon *facts*. Facts can be proved only by *evidence*. The

witnesses must be weighed as well as counted. If the information comes from one sense only, it should be mistrusted until it is confirmed by repeated observation under various conditions. If more senses than one give the same information, the value of such evidence increases in arithmetical ratio, because of the improbability of so many deceptions at the same moment. If there are two trustworthy witnesses, and both have the same perceptions at the same time, the testimony is more cogent still; but if more than two, then the probability of truth is overwhelming.

A fact cannot be combated by an argument. It is an answer to any amount of ingenious logic, contending that the fact *cannot* be, to show that *it is*. A fact may be howled down by ignorance, "put down" by authority, written down by dogmatism, suppressed by the newspapers; but it cannot be *killed*, for a fact is immortal. It will assuredly survive all its opponents. As it was yesterday, so it is to-day, and so it will be to-morrow. Closing to it our own eyes or the eyes of others will not banish it; no persecution can destroy it; no law, nor authority, can make it *not* to be.

And as it has been in the past, so it is now and so perhaps it will ever be. Vanity, and too often more practical interests, are naturally enlisted against the reception of new truths that threaten to disturb old theories and shake established reputations. It is the common weakness of human nature, from which Scientists are not more free than others. This is the true obstacle to the admission of Psychology into the recognised circle of the Sciences. It must be confessed that it does seriously shake the supremacy of Materialism and threaten the fame of eminent Materialists. It must, therefore, look for hostility. But courage and perseverance will subdue prejudice and conquer opposition, as it has done so often before. Materialism appears formidable now because it has so many eloquent and able supporters. But we believe it to be destined to fall before the nobler teachings of Psychology, going forth, *as here it*

does, armed, not with metaphysical abstractions, which only beat the air, but with the substantial and formidable weapon of *fact*. Let us remember that *one fact*, however small, will suffice to load the sling that will bring the giant to the earth. It is the business of this Society to search among the phenomena of their Science, not for one only, but for a whole armoury of such facts, each a death to Materialism. Be assured you will find them, if you will only look for them with zeal, with patience, with perseverance, with caution, and with care.

But Psychology offers to those who pursue it, in the large and liberal spirit which I have ventured to commend to your favour, a yet higher and holier pleasure. When the conviction has come to him, not by authority and dogma, but by the positive evidence of facts and phenomena, that there is a Soul in Man, the Psychologist learns to see a Soul in Nature. The proofs of it are patent to him. He finds its presence about him everywhere, underlying all substance, explaining many mysteries, solving a multitude of problems, wholly insoluble by Materialism. To the Psychologist the Universe wears a new aspect; this world has for him a new meaning; Nature, new teachings; life, a new mission; duty, a loftier aim. He contemplates a nobler present and hopes confidently for a greater future. As he makes that present he knows that so he will mould that future. He asks himself if it be not possible, nay probable, that if there be a Soul in Man and a Soul in Nature—A PRESENT DEITY, IN FACT— what is to us the material Universe, constructed, as the Scientists assert, of molecules, may be the surging up, as it were, in those infinitely various material forms, but true to a few types, of a Universe of Soul permeating and underlying the molecular structure of which it is only the perceptible embodiment, that is for ever changing its shape but remaining the same in substance still?

For there is no Death in Nature—because there is no

annihilation. It is only dissolution—change—separation of particles and reconstruction. No one particle perishes. The material mechanism is resolved into its elements and reappears. If there be a Soul in Man, that also cannot *die*. It must remain somewhere, under some condition of existence.

The Psychologist sees with awe and veneration in all this ceaseless round of dissolution and reformation, the presence of an animating, directing and intelligent power, very like that he is conscious of in himself. Recognising Soul as the intelligent force that is within him, he recognises the presence and the action of the like force without. Seeing Soul in Nature, as in Man, he feels what the poet has expressed for him, in thoughts that breathe and words that burn :

For I have learned
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, but of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the heart of man :
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains, and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In Nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thought, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.—WORDSWORTH.