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The Unreality of Matter.

LEO VIRGO.

This question of the status of matter in the realm of reality is as old as the race, and all the ground which to modern metaphysicians seems so new was gone over thousands of years ago and the most abstruse conceptions of today fully anticipated. The oldest philosophy extant has for its foundation stone the *total unreality of matter*. This, the Hindu, clearly teaches that the whole material universe is illusion and not only these myriad forms which we behold with the natural eye, but beyond and interior to these they tell us there exists a realm of forms far transcending this in every way—but which is all *maya* or illusion. This religion counts among its adherents some of the deepest thinkers and most profound metaphysicians the world has ever known. It has 150,000,000 followers, more than any other system many times over, and has in the past few years taken a fresh hold upon the minds of Western people and is now sending its emissaries to this country. In *Esoteric Buddhism*, it is said of one of these sensuous, but to us invisible realms. "The person whose happiness of the higher sort on earth had been entirely centered in the exercise of the affections will miss none in Devachan of those whom he or she loved. But, at once it will be asked, if some of these are not themselves fit for Devachan, how then?

The answer is, that does not matter. For the person who loved them *they will be there*. It is not necessary to say much more to give a clue to the position. Devachan is a subjective state. It will seem as real as the chairs and tables round us; and remember that above all things to the profound philosophy of occultism, are the chairs and tables, and the whole objective scenery of the world unreal and merely transitory delusions of sense. As real as the realities of this world to us, and even more so, will be the realities of Devachan to those who go into that state."

It will easily be seen from this that the Oriental philosophy accords with that which we are now trying to analyze. It recognizes and has in a measure located states of consciousness far outside of the so-called earthly existence. Yet when carefully analyzed and stripped of all intellectual illustration, it is found that it agrees exactly with the universal conclusions of all abstract philosophers, that all externality is in the seeming and has no existence as to time, place or extension outside of the mind that in imagination beholds it.

Leibnitz taught that sensation was *not* an impression on the body coming from without, and affecting the mind, but it arose from within.

Evans says: "All that we know of the properties of matter are affections of ourselves. When I say that an orange is sweet, the sweetness is a sensation in myself.

It is the same with other so-called properties of material things—as redness, hardness, roughness, smoothness.

These are only affections of myself, my own mind, and thought and feeling; and, by the operation of a law that we do not fully understand, they are transposed out of ourselves into space, and regarded as the qualities of things existing independently of ourselves. So with regard to

the human body, all its apparent changes, conditions and qualities are within the mind, and are only modes of thinking and feeling. The body with all its varying states of health and disease, pleasure and pain, strength and weakness, is only the externalization, or ultimatum, or projecting outward in appearance to ourselves, of our inward condition."

This view is also clearly stated by the German philosopher Fichte. He says, "I am compelled to admit that this body, with all its organs, is nothing but a sensible manifestation, in a determinate portion of space, of myself—the inward thinking being—that I, the spiritual entity, and I, the bodily frame in the physical world, are one and the same, merely viewed from two different sides and conceived of by two different faculties, the first by pure thought, the second by external intuition. And this thinking, spiritual entity, this intelligence, which, by intuition (or sensation) is transformed into a material body, what can it be, according to principles, but a product of my own thought, something merely conceived of by me, because I am compelled to imagine its existence by virtue of a law to me wholly inconceivable."

These views of Evans and Fichte are virtually representative of those held by nearly all metaphysical students.

They all agree that every phase and shade of externality depends for its existence and all the properties which it seems independently to possess upon the mind that perceives it. This truth is now accepted and taught in a general way in our common schools. Yet there is a point upon which there is no settled and definite conclusion, and that is the apparent fixity and permanence of the external universe. One school of philosophers hold that the phenomenal universe has an existence independent of

the mind that beholds it, and another that it has no existence outside of the beholding mind.

Evans and Fichte both clearly see that the beholding mind makes its own externality by the "operation of a law we do not understand," or, as Fichte says, "by virtue of a law to me wholly inconceivable." Just here is the gist of the whole question, the rock on which so many philosophers have split and parted company.

This failure to understand the relation between the internal and the external is the cause of all differences between the schools that on the one hand advocate "there is no reality outside of matter," and on the other "there is no matter."

That consciousness, or the internal thinking, spiritual quality, does recognize a difference between the freedom of its inherent state and the limitations of its environment, is patent to all, and we can, by tracing them back step by step, locate in this consciousness of difference all the opposing forces of the universe.

Every religion and system of philosophy of which we have any record postulates one original cause from which flows all existence. This first cause or God is also always invested with the attributes which we call good, and incapable of directly acting otherwise than good.

That most ancient teacher, Zoroaster, in speaking of creation by Ormuzd—God—said: "The first best, highest place he created was the All Possibility and the second best highest place he created was the All Good. With him are all things possible, with him are all things good."

Yet in all these religions God is said to have created his opposite, that which to man seems evil.

In the less enlightened races, or those in whom sequential and consistent reasoning is lacking, God creates the *devil* premeditatedly,—

as it were, "with malice aforethought," while in those where greater consistency is sought, he creates an angel of light who afterwards revolts and becomes the devil. In the many philosophical systems built up by those who reflected within and then looked without, we also find the two opposing realms, one pitted against the other.

But as we get an apprehension of the inconsistency of a position that attributes a positive evil to a cause absolutely *good*, we are forced to widen our horizon of consciousness until we can see the point of reconciliation.

Now we all intuitively make this statement of God:—Self Existent Being having no anterior or cause. That is, First Cause. All Intelligent, All Wise, All Good, All Present, All Life and All Free. This is a universal statement of Being—which is accepted by everybody. Some locate God as a person, with the foregoing attributes, while others deny the personality.

The vital point is that God as *Cause* is *One*, and ever remains *one*, yet he is manifested as many, but that manifestation as the many must in essence be *one*, because God cannot separate or cut himself up into parts, but ever remains the indivisible unit.

What we term *creation* is the God consciousness forming within itself centres, which it seeks to endow, through orderly procedure, with all its attributes. "In Him we live, move and have our being." Humanity as a whole is the orderly arrangement of these centres and each individual is the concrete expression of the Universal God, and has in potentia all the attributes of its cause.

We must assume that in Mind, Spirit, God, all things are possible—that is, that through its inherent possibilities it can make conditions necessary to carry to fruition its ideals. God's

procedure in creation, as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, is accepted by metaphysicians as an accurate description of the movements of Mind in the process of externalization.

The Infinite must ever remain beyond adequate description and it can never be true to say that God is matter or in matter, or that God is even *Spirit*, if by the term spirit the consciousness carries a picture of some sort of substance. God must ever remain the incomprehensible *Principle* above and beyond and back of all concepts of Him.

Moses does not attempt to describe God, in which he showed the great wisdom of the adept—he simply *assumed* that self-existent and undefinable Principle, and described what he saw as true of its action in the sphere in which his consciousness was cognizant. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Now these two conditions are always the accompaniments of Mind—the ideal realm, "heaven"—and the matrix in which those ideals are cast—"the earth without form and void." It is not possible to explain, nor profitable to speculate upon the why and wherefore of the existence of these two original manifestations of Mind. The important consideration is to avoid confounding them with *Mind* itself. In this we find the cause of many delusions on the part of speculative philosophy—the assumption that because God is ever present in substance and action, that he therefore *is substance and action per se*. Mind is always that which is superior to the act and that which is acted upon.

Mind is that from which the manifested comes forth. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are always coincident and ever present yet differ in degree, because *Mind* is always Father—*Son* is the idea that rises with-

in the Father, and Holy Spirit is the substance in and through which action takes place—but all are always included in the Father-Mind.

The testimony of those illuminated to a state where they come into planes of consciousness superior to the senses, is that there exists a universal light which proceeds out of God, and in which all forms take shape. They all agree that the nature of this light corresponds exactly with the consciousness of him who beholds it. To the one who is very close to God in the purity of his thought it is the scintillating glory of Infinite Love, and to one who has dwelt largely in mind upon the omnipotent power of God as exhibited in the Universe, it is the *akasa*, or astral light.

It is only very recently that our modern physical scientists have caught a glimpse from their quite limited standpoint of this "earth without form and void."

Prof. Dolbear, of Tufts University, in "Ether and its Newly Discovered Properties" says: "The vital statements are these:—It fills all space, is not molecular, and possesses an immense amount of energy. That it is *not* made up of minute individual particles is indicated by the character of the wave motions of light which it transmits. There is no evidence whatever that bodies of matter are retarded in their motions while moving in it. Neither is there any evidence that the ether is subject to the law of gravitation. If the ether be a substance which is boundless in extent, not made up of particles, frictionless, and not subject to gravity, then it ought not to be confounded with a substance that is limited, is frictionable, and is subject to gravity.

While reflecting upon the properties possessed by vortex rings such as one may see projected from the lips of a smoker and sometimes from a locomotive. Sir William Thompson, now

Lord Kelvin, considered whether it were not possible that the atoms of matter might be similar rings of ether. As the ether is frictionless, such a ring in it would be a permanent structure; that is, it would be indestructible, as we have reason to believe matter to be. It would have energy, momentum, inertia; it would be elastic and capable of vibrating at periodic times. Its two sides would possess different properties corresponding to polarity. Different volumes of ether and different rates of volume would give characteristic atomic differences. Other characteristics of atoms have been noted. The evidence for such a theory has been accumulating fast within a few years, and there is a growing conviction that something like it must be true.

See, then, to what degree of simplicity the apparent complex phenomena of nature may be reduced—a simple space-filling medium in which different kinds of motions produce all the variety of phenomena. An atom is a whirling ring of ether in the ether. Its vibrations constitute heat; its rotations constitute electricity. Light is an undulation in the ether; magnetism is a whirling motion; gravitation is ether pressure. The ability of such a ring to absorb ether waves of all such kinds as itself can produce results in exchanges in energy, and every atom has a hold upon every other atom in the universe, and every motion it makes affects every other particle; and all this through the same agency, the ether. The latter is an unlimited reservoir of energy. If every atom of matter should be annihilated, there would still be a universe filled with energies of various kinds, and if matter were itself alive, there is no corner of the visible universe where abundance of energy for its maintenance is not present. This is a hint that physics gives on the question of immortality. This concep-

tion is a long remove from the ideas prevalent not long ago, and, indeed, not uncommon now, of *forces* in nature such as heat, light, electricity, etc., which govern phenomena.

They have one and all been discharged from service, and there is left but matter, ether, and motion as the factors; and if matter itself be resolvable into ether, as is highly probable, there is left but ether and motion.

The sympathetic relation between matter and the ether before alluded to, by which any given kind of motion of a given atom or molecule tends to produce the same kind of motion in another similar atom or molecule, has a significance apparent at once when stated. Grant that mental action is accompanied by molecular motions of any sort, and it follows that there must be corresponding ether waves; and similarly constituted molecules in other bodies must as necessarily move in consonance with the first as if the source was heat motion upon a similar molecule, and such phenomena as thought transference would be looked for and explained as simply as the phenomena of the exchange of heat."

Here we have the statement of cold science "that if every atom of matter should be annihilated there would still be a universe filled with energy of various kinds," and that matter is a mode of motion, and not, according to the common idea, created particles endowed with certain properties. Could the advocates of the unreality of matter ask for a stronger endorsement?

Here is the analytical scientist ready to demonstrate in his laboratory that what to sense seems an indestructible and everlasting substance, is but a combination of movements of an invisible energy.

Just here is where the metaphysician steps in and adds another link in the explanation of

the chain of existence. The physical scientist describes different effects which he witnesses, but gets no conception of their cause, while the mental scientist through a *study* of Cause comes into conscious relations with it, and thus is bridged the heretofore awful chasm between Spirit and matter, or God and the devil. Now when we know the mode or manner in which God imparts his consciousness to man we have the key to the whole situation, and with it we may unlock all the mysteries of the universe, and explain the gulf between Spirit and matter. This key is *action*, or energy—which is the visible manifestation of that God quality which we term Life.

God has created and finished in the *ideal*, or heaven, the perfect Man—Christ—and that perfect man is now in process of externalization in the earth as the many; in which comes forth the Christ Jesus. That ideal Man now *lives* in the bosom of the Father—and he thinks it not robbery to make himself equal with the Father, so he manifests through the power of the Word that life principle which was his from the Father. He moves upon his own centre of consciousness, and the concrete or personal man is the result. This is the chain from cause to effect—Father, Son, Holy Ghost—Mind, Idea, Action,—and the last in the trinity is the seat of all differentiation and consequently of separation.

Action implies relation, which must be governed by law, or discord ensues. Law necessarily implies limitation, because it is restraining in its nature—"a rule of action," according to Blackstone. Thus we may see how limitation, or the absence in consciousness of perpetually energized God qualities, may appear in that which must remotely have had its cause in God. God pours his Spirit out fully upon his Son, Christ, the perfect *Man Idea*—and that

Son works out the problem in the concrete—the personal man—through mental action—thinking—which is vibration. Thus the only creation of God is *Man*, the Perfect Idea, and that Idea externalizes its *idea*—"the Son of Man"—the limited or personal man,—through whom is expressed all forms. But these three are one, and we can get no clear conception of creation and its conditions by ignoring or separating the planes of action.

In this particular treatise we have to show how the narrowed consciousness of the concrete man has brought about that limitation of action called matter. We hold that man is Mind on all the planes of his consciousness and that he is not, nor never was, in matter or limited by it, only as he thought so. Here is just the point where our key, *action* or *vibration*, opens the door to the physical universe in which man has apparently imprisoned himself. He is Spirit and lives in a spirit world where all things are in solution, as it were; that is, there exists in the Universal Mind the ideals of everything that ever was or ever will be imagined by man, and he, through the power of thought, gives them visibility and form. He does not actually originate anything—simply receives the idea from the universal and by and through the power of thinking—which manifests in atomic vibration in the luminiferous ether, or "world without form and void"—he fixes it in form. And again, that form itself is but arrested vibration (as our physical science has universally accepted) and is not a permanent creation, but a transitory picture of the idea—crude or symmetrical, according to the mental touch possessed by the one who fixes the image onto the canvas of visibility. It is an axiom that the thought always precedes the act, or word, and we who have practiced thinking at a mark, as it were, know that the atomic vibration of the

atmosphere is greater than in audible speech. We also have all had many startling and wonderful manifestations of its power to produce effects both far and near. Our experiments with the power of the silent thought are being paralleled by those on the next outer plane—the audible word.

As an illustration of these experiments and the startling corroboration which they give to our doctrine of the formative power of the thought or word, we call attention to the following from *The Problem of Life*, compiled from a recent contribution to *Cassell's Family Magazine*:

Relation of Sound to Form.—How Sounds are Made Visible.

Among the most interesting results of modern science is the discovery that musical sounds can imprint themselves upon matter, and produce definite forms as surely and unerringly as the electric needle can record the motions of the force discharged from a distant battery. Sound is a thing so ethereal to fancy that its very nature has long baffled human penetration, and we cannot wonder that the recondite aspect of its power to which we specially allude should have remained entirely unknown until a comparatively recent period. Yet if we reflect upon the constitution of sound, we shall see nothing very surprising in the fact that it can produce form. When an elastic body vibrates it imparts vibrations to the surrounding atmosphere. The air vibrating in response to the movement of the body is itself the sound, though not recognized by us as such until these vibrations have been conveyed to our ears. But as a breeze will cause a twig to stir, and as the slightest whisper of wind will create motions among leaves and lift them to a new position, harmonious vibrations of air take effect in al-

tering the conditions of the body they impinge on. Experiment has amply proved that the human voice is capable of printing form upon matter as successfully and distinctly as a violin bow drawn across the edges of a plate. The discoverer of this fact is Mrs. Watts Hughes. The experiments are conducted as follows: A hollow receiver is procured, over the mouth of which is stretched an elastic membrane. The surface of the membrane is covered with a semi-fluid paste, of such consistency that very light impressions can be easily received. A singer sings into the surface of the membrane, exercising the greatest care that his notes are singularly steady and perfectly accurate. At once the musical note mirrors itself on the paste, and in the most unexpected forms. Forms of flowers, as perfect as if they were drawn, occur among the rest, they indeed constitute the majority of the figures. Daisies, with every petal exactly shaped, are common; lilies, equally symmetrical, are not rare. A change of note, or of timber, will produce a miniature tree on the paste. By some slight variation, impossible to estimate, the figure of a star fish will appear; another imperceptible difference of sound will produce an anemone. Occasionally the vibrations—presumably owing to an unconscious augmentation of force on the part of the singer—will imprint themselves in the form of shells, beautifully voluted, the wrinkles in the scroll being so incisively indented that when photographed they appear like creases in the picture. Suddenly deserting these marine forms as capriciously as they took them up, the sounds will create ferns, suspend bunches of fruit, and otherwise adorn the membrane. There is, of course, much room for conjecture regarding the production of these various forms. Some facts, however, we know for certain. When the sound is producing flowers

on the paste, the singer can at pleasure increase the number of petals by gradually making the tone ascend. At each fraction of a tone on which his voice raises, a new petal is added to the flower. He can thus, by careful management of his breath, increase a pygmy daisy to a gigantic sunflower. In the other forms—*e. g.*, the shells—this addition piece by piece does not appear, and the scroll as once fashioned remains. The forms thus produced on the paste are photographed while the membrane is in sonorous vibration; or water-color impressions are taken, which are transferred to the works immediately. The advantage of the latter method is that the minute beauty and delicacy of the forms can be shown to perfection by the use of various colors for different parts of an object. Such phenomena as the preceding bring us to the threshold of an interesting inquiry into the reality of one of the most extraordinary ideas of antiquity. The Greeks held, in the person of Pythagoras, his school, and numerous natural philosophers who followed him, the doctrine that music is the principle of form in nature, and that every shape and natural figure in the animate and inanimate world was determined and created by the divine infusion of music into formless chaos. "By what ever means it was introduced," said one of the greatest of these ancient thinkers, "for on that point we are left entirely without a basis for speculation, music, and nothing but music, must have been infused into matter so as to bring the formless universe to harmonious order, and to produce the forms we see around us of landscapes, rivers, trees, flowers, instead of the everlasting chaos which preceded." In illustration of this ancient idea we find vibrations of musical sound at the present day producing the forms of flowers, trees, shells, and other natural objects, spontaneously and with-

out any previous suggestion of the form by the hand of man. We see the same power, when exercised upon a chaos of grains of sand, at once throw the sand into patterns of symmetry, whose lines and curves might very easily, if we were disposed to carry out the analogy, be construed into miniature models of winding rivers, sweeping mountain chains, and other objects which give order and outline to a landscape. Pythagoras, who went further than all others of the same school, proceeded to great detail in exemplifying the power of music in giving form to matter. He made the bold assertion—for which he has been called a madman—that the octave gave our globe its present form. In remarkable agreement with such a hypothesis, the experiments of Chladni have revealed that whenever an octave is sounded on a glass plate covered with sand, the sand, whatever its previous condition, invariably ranges itself in the form of a circle."

Here we have a visible demonstration of the way in which the formless is arranged into form by the power of the word. It is no longer a theory that we form the physical body by the thought or word, and we need no longer depend solely upon intuition and abstract reasoning to enforce the truth that all phenomena is the result of thinking. Another bridge has been thrown across the apparent gulf between the internal and external, and we are met at both ends by the one and indivisible Unit—Universal Mind.

When we get a clear concept of the discoveries of Hertz, the German scientist, as to the universal ether, and the conclusions which follow as to its nature, we are forced to the conclusion that what we call matter has no reality whatever. That conclusion is, according to Prof. Dolbear, "that if every atom of matter should be annihilated there would still be a uni-

verse filled with energy of various kinds." Could metaphysics ask a stronger endorsement from physics?

Yet metaphysics goes a great deal farther than physics because it recognizes that which the material scientist calls "energy of various kinds" to be *intelligence* as well as force, and that the intelligence and energy of man is identical with and a pulsating center in this "luminiferous ether" of science. This step is a vital one in accounting for the myriad modes and phases under which we behold matter, and its full understanding will settle the antagonism between God and the devil, and explain to Evans, Fichte, Hegel and that school of philosophers, the operation of that law by which mental sensations are transposed into space. The "luminiferous ether" having none of the properties of matter, such as extension, friction, gravitation, etc., but which is flexible to and can be moulded by thought into the various modes of motion which give that appearance termed matter, is always in touch with itself, and forms the bases of all those subtle, invisible sensations which have puzzled philosophers since the days of Plato.

Now let us invest this "luminiferous ether" of science, with intelligence—Mind. By Mind we mean that in which inheres all the possibilities of existence—Life, Love, Wisdom, Justice, Truth, Spirit—in a word, God;—that universal and all-inclusive Principle which is the cause of all and which exists in all. In adding these qualities to the "ether" we are but investing it with potentialities which material science admits become manifest in the visible world through it, hence we give it the correct status when we dominate it *Manifest Being*, instead of "luminiferous ether." It is "unconditioned cause" from the standpoint of both science and religion, and all phenomena in man and nature

are its modes of motion, always accompanied by intelligence. Thus we see the close relation and sympathy between man and nature. The tree is a centre of energy in which is manifested a certain degree of the same life and intelligence that appears in man, and through that invisible Mind common to all, the sensations and qualities of the tree are both in man and also external to him on the plane of phenomena. Thus man, when he beholds himself in consciousness limited solely to form, is a center of energy and intelligence which includes in its manifestations all that which is externalized in nature. When, however, he arrives at a concept of his oneness with the universal ether in its inherencies as conscious intelligence, as well as energy, he at once exercises directive and constructive or destructive powers. He then has dominion over the whole world of visibility, including his own body, just in proportion to the degree in which he in consciousness recognizes *Mind* as the moving and directing power. When he centres his consciousness on his highest ideal of Love, Life, and Truth, he comes into mental relations with that Universal Mind which is God. Then he becomes a co-worker with God and can set in motion in the "ether" energies that will form in the visible not only types of purity and harmony, like flowers, but also make a like impress upon all nature. He can, by cultivating pure and loving thinking and speaking, change the whole face of nature and transform his own body into a centre of symmetry and light, that will radiate with its Divine Wisdom all the colors of the rainbow and every perfume of the field. It is his Divine right and privilege to do this and any appearance in his body or the natural world which is not fully equal to his highest ideal is to him pure nothingness.

If you conceive God to be Spirit, that is sub-

stance not bound by those limitations which we behold in matter, then matter to you is total unreality, and you will never be satisfied with any manifestation short of that held by you in the ideal.

If you conceive God or Mind to be *life*, then that radical change called death will never harmonize with your ideal, and before satisfaction is attained you must erase even the appearance.

If your concept of God is *love*, then you will never rest short of pure unselfishness.

You are the "unconditioned ether" of science, and the "All Possibility" of metaphysics—they are one and the same and there is nought beside them.

Do you in sense behold that which is liable at any time to lose its centre of energy and become a decaying, festering mass? Do you behold that same element manifest in discordant bodily forms, destructive tornadoes or fierce and venomous animals? When you do behold these forms of matter, remember that they are the *legitimate* results of *illegitimate* causes, and those causes lie wholly in the discordant mentality of man. Such results are not and never can be attributable to a perfect Cause. If they are not the creation of God, or Harmonious Mind, all that in them which in any way departs from your highest ideal of God must be erased. You can only know God through your mind, and his attributes are your highest ideals of what you would make your life and surroundings. If your life and surroundings are not in accord therewith, it is your privilege to make them so, and you may count as an illusion of sense everything about you which is not an exact representation of your highest ideal of existence.

Hence, from the premise of the ideal, as well as from the representative, as demonstrat-

ed by material science, we are forced to accept the statement, "there is no reality in matter."

[The foregoing appeared several years ago in our magazine *Thought*, and is republished by request.]

In a sermon Archdeacon Farrar said: "There would be the proper teachings about hell if we calmly and deliberately erased from our English Bibles the three words, 'damnation,' 'hell,' and 'everlasting.' Yes, I say unhesitatingly; I say, claiming the fullest right to speak with the authority of knowledge; I say, with the calmest and most unflinching sense of responsibility; I am standing here in sight of God and my Savior, and it may be of the angels and spirits of the dead—that not one of those words ought to stand any longer in our English Bible; for in our present acceptance of them they are simply mistranslations."

"There is an upper realm from which the masses may draw supply for all their needs. This realm is invisible to mortal sight. It can only be sensed by the truly spiritual mind. It can only be realized and used by the thoughts of the mind, when worldly possessions have given up their all-absorbing claims for precedence."

"There is an indestructible substance that pervades all things, from the highest archangel to the merest dust particle. This substance is so fine, so subtle, it can only be recognized by the mind, and can only be handled by the thoughts of the mind."—Emma Curtis Hopkins.