

it, but according to its excellence as an æsthetic entertainment. While Du Bois treats his audience at great length to disquisitions on the wondrous performances of the genius of Laplace, he afterwards glides over the most important part of his subject in eleven short lines, and makes not the slightest further attempt to solve the main question he has to deal with—as to whether the world is really “doubly incomprehensible.” For my own part, on the contrary, I have already repeatedly sought to show that the two limits to our knowledge of nature are one and the same; the fact of consciousness and the relation of consciousness to the brain are to us not less, but neither are they more puzzling than the fact of seeing and hearing, than the fact of gravitation, than the connection between matter and energy.—[Monism.]

Immortality and Deity.

BY REV. J. P. BLAND.

I am grateful to our friend, Mr. Wakeman, for his sincere and candid criticism of some of the views I have tried to express in my “Gospel of Evolution,” and with which he does not entirely agree. And yet, after a careful reading of his strictures, and a like consideration of the points they traverse, I do not see how I could conscientiously move from any of the positions he attacks.

Our friend demurs because I state the scientific proofs that seem to clearly and certainly show that man is simply and solely a physical organism, and that what we call his soul is merely one of the products of this organism's vital action; while I decline to “absolutely and conclusively” affirm that this soul must forever cease with the ceasing of the living organism whose changes apparently caused it. But will our good friend kindly name any eminent scientific authority, living or dead, who “absolutely and conclusively” does so affirm? I think I am familiar with every important line which has been published on this theme, from the scientific side, since Spencer wrote his classic and immortal chapter on “The Transformation and Equivalence of Forces,” and I know of no such “absolute and conclusive” affirmation on this point from any eminent scientific man, as Mr. Wakeman calls upon me to logically make. In the chapter under discussion I try to clearly, strongly and completely state the scientific grounds for the denial of the soul's survival of the body's death. I illustrate from the impossibility of producing sound in a vacuum and from the improbability of a mosquito's surviving its body's death, the seeming impossibility and improbability of man's post-

mortem survival; and in thus doing I go as far as Spencer, Huxley, Haeckel, Tyndall and other scientific men who have the right to speak, have gone, for none of these “absolutely and conclusively” affirm that man's conscious existence ends with his body's death, that being an assertion which the facts—almost overwhelmingly strong as they are—yet do not warrant. And they do not warrant, as I hinted, if for no other reason, because our scientific knowledge of man and the universe is by no means co-extensive with the actualities or possibilities of either.

Passing now from Mr. Wakeman's strictures on my view of the possibility of our immortality to those on the Power which the universe manifests, I do not know that I can add anything of value on the subject to what the chapters in the serial that have appeared since he wrote contain. In “The Gospel of Evolution,” as in other recently published matter of mine on the Energy or Deity—call it what you will—the all reveals. I have simply taken the ground to popularize the views that Spencer, Huxley and those who agree with them hold. In doing this it is, of course, possible that I have sometimes misconceived their teaching. It is possible, too, that both they and I have erred, but I really see nothing in these somewhat careless, superficial and seemingly self-confident assertions of our good friend on this particular matter that calls for serious reply. The subject is one of which the less one usually really knows, the more “absolutely and conclusively” dogmatically does one usually speak, and nothing would delight me more than to be able to say that to this rule our well-intentioned friend was a conspicuous exception.

Prof. Wakeman's Question.

BY MARIE HARROLD GARRISON.

The article by T. B. Wakeman, in the Investigator of July 21st, is something of the nature of an index-hand, and it certainly had the effect of sending the present writer to the Investigator file to search out and re-read J. P. Bland's article of June 23rd.

Along in June, when first reading the lines of Mr. Bland which state that “Evolution is that system of thought which regards all things as proceeding from an immanent and omnipresent Deity who eternally creates and decreates by the ceaseless and orderly movings of his indwelling presence,” I wondered whether or no some well known scientific evolutionist would not take Mr. Bland up on that point, for if there is one idea inconsistent with scientific evolution (as I understand it), it is the idea that is put forth by the word “Deity” and the

word “God,” with the dependent pronouns, him and his.

My satisfaction was boundless this morning on discovering Prof. Wakeman's article under the title of the question: “Are We to Be Word-Tripped Always?” One may pause a long time on Prof. Wakeman's question. The expression “word-tripped” is suggestive and the idea might be carried out to the working of a general reform.

Last summer, a progressive-minded minister in the Methodist Episcopal church told me that he found the names Deity and God working often as stumbling-blocks in the Sunday school and the church, but mostly in Sunday school, where it was only too easy to inculcate idol-worship and fix a mental image in the mind that to all intents and purposes was as material as the ancient idols of brass or stone.

Existence this side the grave is the great sacred certainty for us before death and our lives here are not long enough to give this world the study and sincere attention it deserves.

Even if there be a conscious immortality beyond the grave I believe our most sacred duty is to refuse to turn our attention that way. It must be admitted that concerning a continuity of conscious existence there is as much ground for being “word-tripped” as there is concerning the underlying causes of things. Please note I say CAUSES not cause, for in spite of the assertion of science that all elements of science may be resolved back into one, I believe that no conscious existences that are capable of self-study, of self-realization and of analysis of environments, can logically refer back to one source only as to a being taking cognizance of them and to which they are under obligations to such an extent that feelings of thankfulness and acts of worship are a part of moral compulsion.

I believe it is simply stultifying to both heart and intellect and “soul” (if you desire the poetic symbol that designates a peculiar output that one's individual ego seems to generate from co-working of brain and heart, as the rose puts out an odor that is seemingly distinct from its sources—bush and petals and color), I say I believe it is stultifying to human growth and right development to give way to the hypnotism of One-Cause idea—the Imperative-God-person idea.

The Christians and Jews of today think with tolerating pity of those religious classes in India who fix their minds' eyes on the Deity of their land till their intense feelings reach the point of self-obliteration and they faint away (if they do not out and out die), but our church people refuse to fit the shoe to their own feet, whereas the truth is that

the Orthodox to a certain extent are still in a condition of having fainted away through the paralyzing hypnotic condition of having fixed its gaze on “God.” A fainted-away-world is of no use either to itself or the sources from which it came. I believe the people who have “come to” and are walking about in their full senses are the scientists in particular and Free-thinkers generally, yet even they, as Prof. Wakeman intimates, are only too often “word-tripped” and are given to “tripping” their audiences with “God,” “Deity,” “Omnipresent Being.”

During the three times in my life when I had the honor of listening to the celebrated Prof. Fiske, I was struck by his almost ludicrous fatherly condescension toward what he evidently considered the rather imbecile intelligence of his hearers where he said something like this: “Now as to these facts being as they are, I simply cannot explain it to you in any better way than simply to say, God desired it should be that way.” I do not believe for an instant that John Fiske held to the old conception of the origin of creation, yet he seemed to feel that he must talk down that way.

This “talking down” to an audience has come to be quite a fad, has it not? This seems to be particularly the case among progressive ministers. There is evidence today that audiences are beginning to resent it, as indeed they ought.

The world is in need of men of clear conscience and so much self-respect that they will respect their audiences by giving them credit for being on an equal mental footing with themselves.

When such men predominate, then will cease the injurious indulgence in the practice or “fad” designated by Prof. T. B. Wakeman as “word-tripping.”

Do the Rev. J. P. Bland's “Immortality and Deity” Really Exist?

BY T. B. WAKEMAN.

When the Investigator of August 4th came I was out on the ocean and rivers, mountains and valleys, of our wondrous Pacific coast, and so the pleasure of reading Marie Harrold Garrison's article on my questions to Mr. Bland and his reply to them in his “Immortality and Deity,” was delayed. But such subjects are not “perishable goods,” and an account of stock is always in order.

The lady's article was simply delightful. The way she paints out those “talk down” and “faint away” lecturers and the snob variety of Liberals who try to gain the favor and pelf of Christian Pharisees by ignoring or sneering at their less fortunate Liberal brethren, is a