

Thus, metaphysical speculations founded on the nature of reality and consciousness cannot, I think, lead to any positive assertion respecting the truth of immortality. And experimental science, in the shape of physiological psychology, of which so far nothing has been said, goes to show that there are no facts which prove that consciousness survives the cessation of the vital, that is, certain chemical, processes. It is this consideration which weighs heavily with most people at the present time, owing to the increasing definiteness of the correlation established between the mental and physical, and which may eventually make itself felt even in the circle of the Idealists, with the exception of those who embrace the fantastic doctrine that the brain is only an idea. Mental processes are always found associated with physiological changes; and following intense physiological changes consciousness totally disappears, temporarily at least. Experience shows that A (physical process) and B (mental state) frequently occur together, and that A may occur without B; but does not show the appearance of B without A. For, even admitting, for the moment, that the hesitating utterances of certain drivelling mediums show that we can communicate with the spirits of another world, they do not prove that the alleged spirits are discarnate, that their activities are not in any way connected with, and hence independent of, material changes. The phenomena described are quite compatible with a crude materialism. And it is doubtful that any tests can be conceived which could establish the identity of these alleged spirits in view of the unknown, and even unimaginable, sources of deception arising out of the presumed other world. It is quite safe to say that all the personalities which have hitherto appeared in the communications transmitted through even the most reliable mediums are creations of the mediums' activities rather than reincarnations of departed, finite minds. Even Sir Oliver Lodge, whose most recent utterance on the general problem at the last meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science affords an excellent but not subtle illustration of the fallacy of the burden of proof, tacitly