

condition, that it would never go out of essential existence, but that it could be brought into relation with the world of matter by certain acts,—that while there it could operate in a certain way, controlling the motion of bodies, interacting with forms of energy, producing sundry effects for a time, and then disappearing from our ken to the immaterial region whence it came,—he would be saying what no physicist would think it worth while to object to, what many indeed might agree with.

Well, that is the kind of assertion which I want to make, as a working hypothesis, concerning life.

An acorn has in itself the potentiality not of one oak-tree alone, but of a forest of oak-trees, to the thousandth generation, and indeed of oak-trees without end. There is no sort of law of “conservation” here. It is not as if something were passed on from one thing to another. It is not analogous to energy at all; it is analogous to the magnetism which can be excited by any given magnet: