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Oliver Lodge

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### Ether and Reality

Among the widely agreed facts of physics in the late nineteenth century was the existence of luminiferous ether: the medium through which light was thought to travel. Theorised to be a highly rarefied substance, the ether accounted for the movement of light, gravity and even heat across a vacuum. It also had great implications for spiritualism. Where thought was not proven to be a result of chemistry in the brain, the presence of ether allowed for the idea that cognition and emotion might exist independently of a physical body. First published in 1925, this monograph by the eminent physicist and ether advocate Sir Oliver Lodge (1851–1940) was written for the non-scientific reader. With a focus on straightforward explanations rather than mathematical theory, his book still represents a fascinating introduction to the topic today.

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# ETHER & REALITY

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES ON THE  
MANY FUNCTIONS OF THE ETHER  
OF SPACE

BY

SIR OLIVER LODGE

F.R.S.

*D.Sc. (Lond.); Hon. D.Sc. (Oxon.); Hon. Sc.D. (Cantab.); Hon. LL.D. (St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh); Hon. D.Sc. (Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Adelaide, Toronto); Hon. M.A. (Birmingham); Mem. Inst. Elec. Engineers; Hon. Mem. Lit. Phil. Soc. (Manch.); Corr. Mem. Amer. Phil. Soc. (Philadelphia); Corr. Mem. Accad. Sci. dell' Istituto (Bologna); Corr. Mem. Bataafsch Genoots (Rotterdam); Hon. Mem. Inst. Elec. Engineers; President of the Radio Society; Rumford Medallist of the Royal Society; Albert Medallist of the Royal Society of Arts, as Pioneer in Wireless Telegraphy; Ex-President of the Physical Society; Ex-President of the British Association; Ex-President of the Röntgen Society; Ex-Professor of Physics in the University College of Liverpool; Ex-Principal of the University of Birmingham.*

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*Preface*

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REALITY is what everyone is keen to know about. No one wants to be deceived; all are eager for trustworthy information, if it be forthcoming, about both the material and the spiritual worlds, which together seem to constitute the Universe. The Ether of Space is the connecting link. In the material world it is the fundamental substantial reality. In the spiritual world the Realities of Existence are other and far higher; but still the Ether is made use of, in ways which at present we can only surmise.

An attempt to set forth in intelligible fashion something of what is known about The Ether and its Functions is made in this book: and although like everything human it is far from infallible, it represents the outcome of a lifetime of study and meditation, and may be acceptable as a guide until something still better is available. The spelling etherial or etheric is here used for the adjective, instead of the more poetic

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ethereal, because the ether is dealt with not as a rarefied essence but as a substance with ascertainable physical properties, to which the ideas usually and properly associated with the word “ethereal” are foreign. It has been impossible to treat all parts of the subject adequately in a small book mainly addressed to the non-expert, but this elementary treatment may prepare the way for a larger and more technical volume later in the year.

OLIVER LODGE.

11th March, 1925.

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[More information](#)

---

*Contents*

---

	PAGE
PROLOGUE ON SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY . . . . .	11
With Remarks on the Evasiveness of Reality.	
CHAP.	
I. THE ETHER AND ITS VIBRATIONS . . . . .	23
II. FUNDAMENTAL NOTIONS ABOUT AN ETHER . . . . .	33
How Matter is held together, and how we see it.	
III. ON WAVES . . . . .	47
IV. THE ETHER AS TRANSMITTER OF FORCE . . . . .	63
And what "Contact" is like.	
V. ACTION AT A DISTANCE . . . . .	77
VI. ELECTRICITY AND ITS ACTION ACROSS SPACE . . . . .	89
What an Electric charge is like.	
VII. MAGNETISM . . . . .	105
What Magnetism is like, and its analogies with Life.	
VIII. ELECTROMAGNETISM . . . . .	121
How Radiation is generated: and its problems.	
IX. MATTER AS ONE OF THE FORMS OF ETHER ENERGY . . . . .	135
What an atom is like, and what becomes of it.	
X. LIFE AND MIND AND THEIR USE OF THE ETHER . . . . .	151
The Ether's perfect properties, and service to Reality.	
EPILOGUE : THE ULTIMATE PHYSICAL REALITY . . . . .	171

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TO MY FRIENDS  
PROF. G. F. FITZGERALD  
LATE OF DUBLIN  
AND  
PROF. SIR JOSEPH LARMOR  
OF CAMBRIDGE  
WHO KNOW ABOUT THE ETHER MORE THAN MOST