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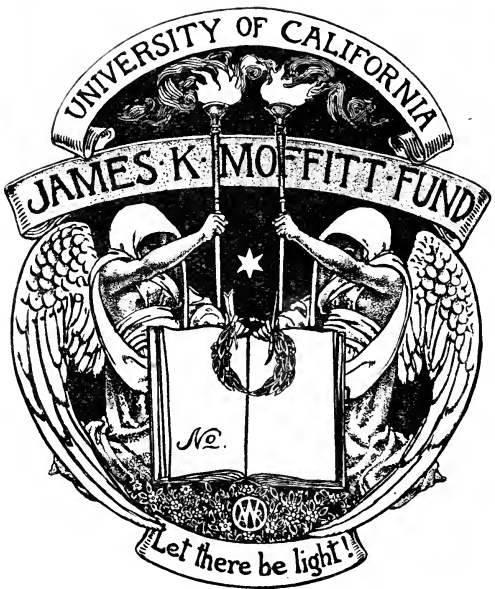
THE
ALPHABET
OF THE
UNIVERSE.

BY GURNEY HORNER.

YB 23102

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With the Author's compliments.

THE

ALPHABET

OF THE

UNIVERSE:

Elizabeth:

I think you're cute!

Have you a sister who

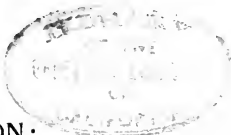
lives in Oakland?

Notes for a Universal Philosophy.

Thank you, Ma.

BY GURNEY HORNER.

"There are certain ideas or forms of mental apprehension which may be applied to facts in such a manner as to bring into view fundamental principles of science; while the same facts, however arranged or reasoned about, so long as these appropriate ideas are not employed, cannot give rise to any exact or substantial knowledge."—Whewell.



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WOMEN

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"Whatever be the form or issue of the search (for the Great Secret), no man gifted with the endowment of a contemplative and questioning turn of mind can reach mature life without earnest meditation on the great problem of himself and of the world, the inner and the outer universe ; without seeking whence he came and whither he is bound :—

' The Hills where his life rose
And the Sea to which it goes.'

He yearns to know the meaning of existence ; its aim and purport ; in what light he is to look upon it, in what way he is to use it. The necessities of his nature forbid him to lead a provisional life, either mentally or morally ; he wants to *sail*, he cannot be content to *drift* ; he must know his haven and steer his course. Sentient and conscious existence to him is a problem to be solved, not a summer day to be enjoyed—at least he must ascertain whether it is this last, before he can tranquilly accept even its joys. He is and must ever be

— ' a Being holding large discourse—
Looking before and after.'

What then is Human Life, its significance, its aim, its mission, its goal ?"

Greg—" *Enigmas of Life.*"

PREFATORY NOTE.

A FEW words are needed to explain the fragmentary nature of what is contained in the following pages. As a matter of fact, the principal conclusions here set forth were arrived at by the writer some twenty-five years ago. As the subject was then becoming of too absorbing a nature, and was interfering with other needful studies, its active pursuit was reluctantly discontinued, and the writer put away his notes with the intention of committing his views to writing, in a formal way, when a time of more leisure should arrive. Having now turned the age of fifty, and being burdened with professional cares, the writer recently realised that there was no near prospect of his being able to give a tithe of the time required (even if he had the capacity) to fully discuss the wide range of topics involved in a First Philosophy. In these circumstances, he felt it to be his duty to put on record, in a communication to a friend, the bare results of what has been, to him, a life-long search for, and verification of, a practical religion or philosophy of life. In the course of writing out such record, there has been a revival, in contemporary publications, of discussions upon topics here dealt with, and the writer pleads this as an excuse for now publishing what are, and were only intended as, skeletal and informal notes, which might in due course form a basis for a more imposing and better-proportioned fabric. As Cuvier was able, from a few scattered bones, to fill up the full outline of animal structure, so it is hoped the nature and hope-inspiring possibilities of the "Alphabet of the Universe" may be gleaned from the very imperfect delineation here given.

With an abiding conviction that "Truth is one—everywhere—and always consistent with itself," the writer has ignored the conflicts of doctrines and creeds, and has acted upon a simple and single-minded desire to find a reconciling conception of things.

The comparatively barren results of existing philosophical systems is chiefly due to their failure to reduce the vague and indefinite conceptions of the universe, which exist in the mind, to definite and practical objective conceptions which can be easily comprehended by man. The writer feels that it has been permitted to him to solve this vital problem by the discovery of what, he ventures to think, will readily be perceived to be the natural and ultimate laws or forms of all being and all action. If this be the case, then such ultimate principles will necessarily constitute a touchstone and criterion of truth in every direction, and will shed new light upon, and link up, many old problems. As this is intended to be a harmonising philosophy, such old-established ideas as appeared to accord with what is new have accordingly been incorporated, so as to furnish herein an outline of the chief topics embraced by philosophy. It is to the unprejudiced seeker after realities that the writer particularly addresses himself. Of the innate vitality and potency of the seed he has ventured to scatter, he has no doubt whatever; of the shortcomings and omissions of the sower he is fully conscious; but trusts in this to receive charitable consideration.

In short, the writer is humbly confident that the following sketch embodies that long-sought-for objective "Something" which was needed to link up our daily life with the Supreme Unity, and that it truly sets forth the ultimate grounds, forms, and elements of the only universal and practical Philosophy of the Universe.

CONTENTS:

	PAGE.
I.—INTRODUCTORY	7
II.—THE NATURE OF MAN	10
III.—THE UNIVERSAL OBJECTIVE “SOMETHING”	14
IV.—THE UNIVERSAL LAWS OR FORMS	17
V.—WHAT IS LAW OR FORM?	19
VI.—THE FACULTIES OF “PURPOSE,” “METHOD,” AND “FORCE”	21
VII.—THE “ACT,” AND ITS THREE ELEMENTS— PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS TO MAN	22
VIII.—THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE	29
IX.—NATURE; OR SPACE, TIME, AND MATTER	32
X.—GENERAL APPLICATIONS	33
XI.—CONCLUSION	38
XII.—SYNOPSIS	43

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THE ALPHABET OF THE UNIVERSE:

Notes for a Universal Philosophy.

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

THE following notes are intended to give, in as plain and untechnical a manner as possible, an outline of the results of simple, but earnest, attempts to straighten the paths of life, and to find a way out of the labyrinth in which mankind is wandering, as evidenced by the existence of numberless forms and schools of religion and philosophy. What is needed is a chart or compass upon which man can confidently rely as a guide to the wished-for haven.

The purpose of these notes is to demonstrate the existence of a Chart of Life, and to show how it is based upon the universal and primary laws of the Universe. These laws—so long sought for—are now revealed as definite and objective ideas or forms readily to be grasped by the finite mind of man, and constituting resting places for the mentality.

In present circumstances, all that can be now given is a brief record in, it is feared, a disjointed and imperfect manner, of the substance of the conclusions arrived at. It may be advisable and helpful to make a free use of definitions and quotations of views from various sources as fitting in with our chief aim, which is to find a common basis for reconciliation of human thought and action.

A foreshadowing of the simplicity of the universal laws is contained in the following extract from Ferrier: "The necessary constituents of all knowledge, the cause of all

truth lie at first buried under our very feet, but as yet we are not privileged to find them."

As the subject concerns what is generally known as Metaphysical Philosophy, it may be well to adduce some definitions of what should be the marks or characteristics of a true philosophy :

In Fleming's "Vocabulary of Philosophy" (edition by Calderwood) it is stated : "The object-matter of philosophy may be distinguished as God, or Nature, or Man. Philosophy has been defined to be the science of causes and principles. It is the investigation of those principles on which all knowledge and all being ultimately rest. It is the exercise of reason to solve the most elevated problems which the human mind can conceive. It inquires into the causes of all beings, and ascertains the nature of all existences by reducing them to unity."

Fleming also says : "The inquiry into causes was called by him (Aristotle) the first philosophy—science of truth, science of being. It has for its object, not those things which are seen and temporal—phenomenal and passing ; but things not seen and eternal, things super-sensuous and stable. . . . There is a science of matter, and there is a science of mind. But metaphysics is the science of being as common to both."

"Metaphysics is the knowledge of the one, and the real in opposition to the many and the apparent" (Aristotle).

"Philosophy is a rational explanation of things existing and of things occurring" (Calderwood).

There are other definitions of the requisites of Philosophy, and which, although they cannot for the moment be traced to their authors, may be summarised as follows : That they—

Should find the one universal "something" ;

Should have a practical bearing on the affairs of life,

and should furnish a universal doctrine by which a man may guide himself ;

Should show what is the ultimate ground of all existence ;

Should be a criterion of truth, and a test of evidence ;

Should be a foundation and basis of morals, of reasoning, and of criticism ;

Should explain the universe, and generalise its phenomena according to an order to be readily grasped by the intellect of man ;

Should be a path of transit to unite the spiritual world with the material world—mind with matter ;

Should show some common quality, or qualities, belonging to all the different kinds of being, so that we may be able to refer all things to their most simple and general laws ;

Should reconcile the individual with the universal ;

Should show the one in the many, and the many in the one ;

Should expound the alphabet of nature, and make the world intelligible ;

Should show what is unalterable and eternal in phenomena ; and

Should discover the method of Creation. — ?

Although some 2,000 years have elapsed since the time of Aristotle, yet, in spite of the marvellous progress made in particular sciences, there has been no substantial advance made towards the discovery of the universal laws of being. It is impossible, however, to set a seal upon human aspirations and hopes, and it is only necessary to refer to a history of philosophy to realise how deeply seated in human nature is the craving for order and unity in thought, in life, and in being. The failure of the attempts of philosophers to solve the great problem may probably be chiefly attributed to their failure to banish

preconceived notions from their minds. The attitude and habit of mind needful in such an investigation as this is well indicated in the following extract from Bacon :

“No one has yet been found of so constant and severe a mind as to have determined, and tasked himself utterly, to abolish theories and common notions, and to apply his intellect, altogether smoothed and even, to particulars anew. Accordingly, that human reason which we have is a kind of medley and unsorted collection, from much trust and much accident, and the childish notions which we first imbibed ; whereas if one of mature age and sound senses, and a mind thoroughly cleared, should apply himself freshly to experiment and particulars, of him better things might be hoped.”

To follow out our subject we will, in the first place, briefly refer to the prominent characteristics of the nature of man.

II.—THE NATURE OF MAN.

The nature of man, as you well know, has at all times been a fruitful theme of speculation, and the many differing views propounded on this topic, bear witness to the deep human interest attaching to the subject. As you well know, a very common division of man is into “soul” and “body” ; but this is a definition which does not appear to be practically helpful, or to be truly representative. In our case, we hold that the most obvious qualities, or elements, of man’s nature may be best described as (1) Moral, (2) Intellectual, and (3) Physical. We leave for the moment the question of the “Ego,” or man in his unity, which will be dealt with presently. It is generally admitted that man possesses a moral (or ethical) nature or faculty, an intellectual (or mental) nature or faculty, and a physical nature or faculty. In this connection it may be remem-

bered that, in his book on "Education," Mr. Herbert Spencer (who certainly could not be charged with making sentimental distinctions), by treating the education of man's innate powers under the three heads of Moral, Intellectual and Physical, has shown that he regards these faculties as the primary qualities of man for practical purposes. Many other modern writers by adopting this classification, give proof that they regard it as the only natural division. Annexed are definitions.

The term "Moral" is defined by Professor Calderwood as follows: "Moral is concerned with the nature of the laws of right conduct, with the knowledge of them, and with the application of them."

Whewell says: "The doctrine which treats of actions as right or wrong is morality."

Sewell says: "There are in the world two classes of objects, persons, and things. And these are mutually related to each other. There are relations between persons and persons, and between things and things. And the peculiar distinctions of moral actions, moral characters, moral principles, moral habits, as contrasted with the intellect and other parts of man's nature, lies in this; that they always imply a relation between two persons, not between two things."

The term Intellect is defined by Calderwood as follows: "Intellect (*intelligo*, to choose between, to perceive a difference) is, more exactly, the understanding regarded as a power of comparison; more widely, the whole rational nature of man."

Stewart, in "Active and Moral Powers," says: "It is by those powers and faculties which compose that part of his nature commonly called his intellect, or understanding, that man acquires his knowledge of external objects; that he investigates truth in the sciences; that he combines means in order to attain the ends he has in view; and that

he imparts to his fellow creatures the acquisitions he has made."

With regard to the term "Physical," a definition is given in the "Encyclopædic Dictionary" as follows: "Physical, pertaining or relating to that which is material and perceptible by the senses; relating to natural and material things as opposed to mental, moral, spiritual or imaginary."

In the sense in which we use the word "physical," as applied to that faculty in man, we ignore man's body as body, and which we regard simply as a temple or tabernacle in which are lodged not only moral and intellectual, but also physical power; each of these powers being centred in the vital principle in man, and the body being only the medium through which such powers or qualities are manifested. Confirmation of this view is offered by phrenology. There is no power in muscle in the absence of the vital principle of life. All force is mental or will power.

Having referred to what we regard as the three primary qualities, or characteristics, of man, we come to the question: What is it in which these faculties inhere?

Mr. Herbert Spencer has dealt with the education of the moral, intellectual, and physical faculties of man. If these are qualities of man, they must of necessity inhere in something—some uniting principle which we prefer to call the spirit of man—the Ego—the Personality.

For the present, it must suffice to put down our instinctive feeling, and belief, that in man there is "an animating, separable and surviving soul."

Although the word "soul" is here quoted, perhaps the word "spirit" better expresses what is the uniting and animating principle in man; the term "spirit" being intended to include Will, the higher Reason, the Ego, attitude of mind, disposition, character; in short, the individual man himself in his personal unity.

The spirit, having the most intimate connection and interaction with the Moral, Intellectual and Physical natures, gives to, and, in turn, receives from, those natures. While animating and acting through those channels, it is, in turn, built up and developed by acts of consciousness of the ideas or facts brought from these three sources, each after its kind.

If to what we know as the moral faculty be given the innate (or educated) power to distinguish right and wrong in conduct (irrespective of a high or low state of morality), it is the Will which moves or refrains from moving, and it is in thus acting, or not acting, by which a man is judged, and by which he has to stand or fall by standards human and divine.

We take the same principle of action and counteraction to apply as between a man's will and his physical and intellectual natures. The physical nature would suffer but for the guidance furnished by the moral and intellectual natures, and these two last would cease to operate but for the support given by the physical nature.

We therefore take the "spirit" or personality of man to be the sum, result, expression, and unicalised totality of his three natures, moral, mental and physical, in their existing state of development at any given time. The spirit is developed by, and through, the exercise of these three functions, and on the other hand the spirit of man has a natural adaptation for communion with the One Great Supreme Spirit and should, in a state of human perfection, be the channel for the Divine Will. By the law of polarity all things are in motion to or from Spirit as unity.

"Speak thou to Him, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet;

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

The three faculties of man might be regarded as subordinate minds, or souls; each having a distinct and separate part to play. The inter-relations of each to each, and their relations to man's spirit, or what Tennyson calls "heaven-descended Will," constitute a marvellous phenomenon.

"Nothing in this world is single.
All things, by a law Divine,
In one another's being mingle."

III.—THE UNIVERSAL OBJECTIVE "SOMETHING."

We now approach our main object, which is to explain a new and objective basis of philosophy, being the result of a process of induction—informal it may have been, but none the less real—arrived at by me, after numberless experiments, during many years of "wandering in the wilderness." The task before us is to find the one universal objective "Something"—a quest in which humanity has hitherto been baffled and defeated. We have to find the one reconciling idea or conception which will represent and include, and can be predicated of any, and every, thing in the universe, collectively and individually; it must be the one convertible term of which it can be said that it is "the one in the many, and the many in the one." Having found that one idea, or kernel, our next step will be to analyse it, and ascertain what are its primary elements.

I postulate that the one universal, convertible and eternal thing in the Universe is an "Act." In the term "Act" we include deed, performance, effect, result, end, and also every form of being and existence; in fact everything that exists in the Universe, nay, the very Universe

itself. In the word "Act," with the meaning here given to it, is comprehended everything that has been done, what is done, and will hereafter be done by the Supreme Deity, and by man.

The general tendency of philosophers, particularly within the past two centuries, has been to take the product of man's intellect only; viz. : thoughts and ideas as the basis and ground-work of their researches, and thence to develop the most minute and abstruse distinctions. As the intellectual principle is only a part of the nature of man, it will be obvious to you that it is not representative of the whole of man. It will not be difficult, upon a little reflection, to realise that an "Act" is the only complete outcome or representative product of a man. We shall see that the word "Act," or a term of similar meaning, is the only word that can properly express any effect of Divine, or human, action. If I ask myself: "What shall I do?" I am conscious that I have been "doing" things, and performing "Acts," of some kind during the whole of my life. Whether these have been done by instinct or from motive is immaterial to the point at issue.

Take the cases of an infant when absorbing nutriment, or when crying: there may be instinct only, or may be intelligent thought; but there can be no doubt as to the reality of the act or acts. Man's life is made up simply of a series of acts, and it should convince us that acts form the only proper basis of philosophy, if we bear in mind that the acts of a man are all he can truly call his own, and that they are the only things by which he can properly be judged by God, or fellowman.

In the "Encyclopædic Dictionary" are the following definitions of an "Act": "The exertion of power, whether physical, mental or moral; doing, acting, action. An operation of the mind supposed to require the putting forth of energy as distinguished from a state of mind in which

the faculties remain passive. Anything done." Being is, by the same authority, defined as "existing, living as a sentient being, or existing as a thing inanimate."

In Monboddo's "Ancient Metaphysics" is found: "Being applies to everything which exists in any way, whether as substance, or accident; whether actually or potentially; whether in the nature of things or only in our notions."

"Acts or ends have been distinguished as 'supreme,' and 'ultimate,' or 'subordinate' and 'intermediate.' That which is sought for its own sake is the supreme and ultimate end of those actions which are done with a view to it. That which is sought for the sake of some other end is a subordinate and intermediate end" (or act) (Fleming).

IV.—THE UNIVERSAL LAWS OR FORMS.

Having defined the term "Act," we proceed to the vital question of what is comprehended in every act, effect, or existence.

Every act and effect, and every animate or inanimate being in existence, resolves itself, or can be resolved, into three elements, or laws; namely: "Purpose," "Method," and "Force"; and every such "Act" or "Being" may be defined as the result of the successive operation of conscious or unconscious *Purpose*; of conscious or unconscious *Method*; of conscious or unconscious *Force*. These three elements, or laws, are the primary and immutable forms or models by and through which the Universe was created and is upheld; they are the methods of action of the supreme Deity, and also, in an infinitely smaller degree, of His creature Man. They are to us the universal and natural elements, ideas, forms, laws, or causes of existence, being, and action. They are (to use the words of Plato): "The eternal realities of which visible things are but the shadows"—they are "the thoughts of God who has pro-

duced all things according to the type of these ideas." They are the supreme working laws or methods immanent in all things and take up and include all sciences and all other laws, and jointly converge into unity. The form and extent of these laws is threefold and infinite in the case of the Deity and threefold and finite in man. They are the representative forms corresponding to the threefold nature of the Infinite Personality of God and also to the threefold nature of the finite personality of man.

Dealing now with the three cardinal constituents of an "Act," it may be convenient to give short current definitions of each.

First in order is the element of *Purpose*.

In the "Encyclopædic Dictionary" the ordinary meaning of "Purpose" is given as: "That which a person sets before himself as the object to be gained or accomplished; the end or aim which one has in view in any plan, measure or action."

As relating to man, we should define the word "Purpose" as a term applicable to the form or state of the mind when, by impulse of the conscious or unconscious Will, it is bent towards the attainment of an end. It is a *provisional* state of mind, being really a *tentative* end; for, assuming the purpose to be reasonable (and other things being commensurate), it should, from being simply existent as an intention, become merged and transformed into a veritable and attained end or "Act."

In general Nature the term "Purpose" is applied to what may be called the tendency, direction, inclination, or predisposition of every being or existence, animate or inanimate, towards a certain end; the evidence of purpose being that only a certain calculable result is reached.

We now come to the second of the great laws of life, viz.: *Method*.

In Fleming's "Vocabulary of Philosophy" we find the

following definition: "Method means the way or path by which we proceed to the attainment of some object or aim. In its widest acceptation it denotes the means employed to obtain some end." The adaptation of means to ends is often termed "design."

Thirdly as to *Force*.

In the "Encyclopædic Dictionary" is to be found the following definition: "Force is an influence or exertion which, if made to act on a body, has a tendency to move it when at rest, or to affect or stop its progress if it be already in motion. The strength of man's arms is a force, so is the power of a horse or ox to pull a vehicle or turn a wheel, or set in action an agricultural machine. Gravity, friction, elasticity of springs or gases, electrical or magnetic attraction or repulsion are forces."

The foregoing definitions, which are the best available at the moment, are obviously imperfect, but may suffice for present purposes.

It is our task to show that the three elements, laws, or forms, of "Purpose," "Method," and "Force" are not only included in the term "Act" as defined, but that in a real and practical manner they take up and conjointly exhaust every substantial element in an "Act." If, as we believe, this can be substantiated, then we have surely found the necessary, universal and invariable laws of life and being.

It has been laid down that the measure of truth is its universality, and that in this universality alone certainty is to be found. The universality of an "Act," and of its constituent elements, does not admit of any doubt. "The universal and unchanging are capable of infinite variation, but the principles always remain constant in quality" (Billing). If we have discovered the ultimate laws of the Universe we shall find them applicable to every conceivable thing, whether it be in the realm of Theology, of Ethics, of Science or Physics. Laws must of necessity

have relation to something, and in our case the needful test is that such laws should have reference to the Universe as a whole, and to every unit in it.

V.—WHAT IS LAW OR FORM?

“The word Law is used to signify not an essential and self-efficient power, but an expression of the general fact from which all the particular facts proceed as results; the cause, principle, or propension by which from a derived, though invariably acting tendency individual facts are educed. If then by an attentive surveyance of any series of distant individual facts, we can attain to a knowledge of the general fact on which their manifestations proximately depend, and, by our acquaintance with this fact, can reproduce other similar products by placing them under the same proximately-efficient agency, such knowledge must of necessity be highly conducive to human happiness” (Neil).

Plato in Euthydemus, 6 D.E. (quoted in Thomson’s “Laws of Thought”) says: “Remember, then, that I directed you not to teach me some one or two holy (original meaning “whole” or “perfect”) acts out of many, but that very *form* by which all holy acts are holy. . . . Teach me then the nature of that *form* itself, that looking to it and using it for our example, I may declare any of the actions of yourself or any other, which partakes of this nature, to be holy, and any not so partaking, not to be holy.”

A fitting comment on this last is found in Bacon’s “Advancement of Learning,” Book 3, c. 4, as follows: “To metaphysics we assign the inquiry of formal and final causes. But an opinion has prevailed, as if the essential forms, or real differences of things, were absolutely undiscoverable by human means; granting, at the same time,

that if they could be discovered, this of all the parts of knowledge, would be the most worthy of inquiry. As to the possibility of the thing, there are indolent discoverers who see nothing but sea and sky, absolutely deny there can be any land beyond them. But it is manifest that Plato, a man of a sublime genius, who took a view of everything as from a high rock, saw in his doctrine of ideas, that 'forms were the true object of knowledge'; though he lost the advantage of this just opinion by contemplating and grasping at forms totally abstracted from matter, and not as determined in it; whence he turned aside to theological speculations and therewith infected all his natural philosophy. But if with diligence, seriousness, and sincerity, we turn our eyes to action and use, we may find, and become acquainted with those forms, the knowledge whereof will wonderfully enrich and prosper human affairs." To this we add a definition of form given by Lord Monboddó: "Form is the essence of the thing from which result not only its figure and shape, but all its qualities."

It will be found upon investigation that the analysis of an "Act" as submitted in this paper is not merely an ingenious invention, but that it has a firm foundation in nature and fact. The formula of "Purpose," "Method," and "Force" explains the natural course and process in the production of an "Act" or effect. Our immediate aim is not to point out what "Acts" men should perform, but how they can act in the most efficient and perfect way by conforming to laws implanted in their very being.

It is necessary to note the great distinction between the matter of the "Act" and the manner of the "Act," in order to realise what is meant by laws of action.

The doctrine of the "Act," with its three essential elements, constitute the rock basis upon which must be reconstructed the philosophy of God, Nature, and Man, and all that is included in those terms.

VI.—THE FACULTIES OF “PURPOSE,”
“METHOD,” AND “FORCE.”

Having referred to the primary constituents of man's nature, and also to the highest generalised product of man, a few words may be offered by way of connecting links.

Taking our stand upon the definitions of the Ethical (or moral), Intellectual, and Physical, elements of man, and having regard to the nature of each, we are impelled to call them respectively the “Faculty of Purpose,” the “Faculty of Method,” and the “Faculty of Force.” What is a Faculty? Crabb says: “A faculty is some specific power which is directed to one single object; it is the power of acting according to a given form.”

Calderwood's definition of the term is as follows: “Faculty is a distinct power of the mind, by the action of which a distinct order of mental phenomena is produced. Properly, it is power belonging to our rational nature. The correlative designation is capacity—the capability of being influenced or moved under the action of thought, or by external objects.”

Reid says: “The word Faculty is most properly applied to those powers of the mind which are original and natural, and which make part of the constitution of the mind.”

Jouffray says: “A faculty is the natural power by which phenomena are produced by a person—that is an agent, who can direct and concentrate the power which he possesses.”

We are born with the three powers or faculties of “Purpose,” “Method,” and “Force,” which are specially adapted, each after its kind, to the eduction of an “Act,” and this correspondence of the three several faculties to the several constituents of an “Act” affords one of the

most striking instances in the Universe of adaptation of means to ends.

The Moral (or ethical) faculty of man is by its natural function concerned with choice between good and evil purposes or ends. It asks "What ought I to do?" "Is the purpose, end, or object, good or desirable?" This faculty may, therefore, be fittingly described as the faculty of "Purpose." The work of this faculty is in the sphere of Ethics and Religion.

The Intellectual faculty being, by its natural function, specially adapted to the ascertainment of knowledge of means and methods, its natural language is "What is" or "What is the best way of doing it?" This faculty may, therefore, be properly called the faculty of "Method," and is concerned with the sciences, and psychology, and it links up Ethics and Physics.

In a similar manner, in view of the natural function of man's physical nature, this may rightly be termed the faculty of "Force." This faculty concerns itself chiefly with physiology, physics and applied Arts.

VII.—THE "ACT," AND ITS THREE ELEMENTS. —PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS TO MAN.

It is here proposed to give a few homely illustrations of the application of the doctrine of the "Act," with its essential laws or elements, to man's daily life. We must bear in mind throughout this paper that the measure and test of truth and certainty of the idea or thing we are seeking, must of necessity consist in the universality of that idea or thing; for it must show some common quality or qualities belonging to all things. Further, it should have

"a practical bearing upon the affairs of life." Any philosophical theory which failed to comply with these requirements would be a vain invention, as not furnishing "a reconciling idea or conception," which would bring all things to the point of unity.

This is the test by which we must stand or fall.

It will hardly be needful now to go far in the way of illustration, for, with the definitions already given, you will, without difficulty, be able to test the principles which have been laid down, and to any extent you may desire.

Most of our "Acts" are of an intermediate nature, being subsidiary to other more general acts; but they are "Acts" all the same, however simple they may be, and will be found to be resolvable into the three named elements.

As an instance of the operations enshrined in a more or less degree in every "Act," take the simple act of writing a letter. In the first place there is the intention, or "Purpose," to write; the "Purpose" might be inspired by a business or social sense of duty, although in this particular case the doing or not doing might involve in only a slight degree the question of right or wrong. In the second place there is a "Method" of doing it, and the method would, or should, be qualified by, and made subservient to, the "Purpose." For instance, the purpose in view would qualify the method in regard to the mode of address, the tone and contents of the letter and in other respects. In the third place a certain amount of physical "Force" would have to be possessed and exercised by the writer, or the letter could not be written at all. Taking the letter as written, and as a completed "Act" in itself, it can be most usefully criticised in the light of the notions, principles, or laws here stated, by considering whether the purpose in writing was proper or improper; the method of wording, etc., judicious or unwise, and whether sufficient pains (which means physical force) were taken in composing and

writing it out. We think it will be found in this, and all other cases that our system has a well-founded claim to be the only true and practical basis of criticism. Still keeping to our letter, such letter, while being a complete "Act" in itself, may probably be only one of many subsidiary acts performed with the view to the realisation of a greater act or operation, and merely forming part of correspondence leading up to the carrying out of a business transaction. In such a case this letter or "Act" would, in its turn, take its place as part of the "Method" or means of carrying out the business transaction, which would be the ultimate "Purpose" in view. When the business transaction is a completed operation or "Act", the act would, in the ordinary way, and in its turn, take its place as one of a man's "Methods" in the "Purpose" of making a living, and so on. Still keeping to our illustration of writing a letter, and going back to more minute distinctions in order to show the universality, and consequently, the truthfulness and accordance with the nature of things of our three laws, there would be complete acts in the way of preparation before beginning to write a letter, such as the choice and obtaining of a sheet of paper; of a pen; of ink; each of which might be absent at the time when wanted, and would in reality involve the exercise (although, of course, done almost mechanically) of "Purpose"—such as getting them from another room, or from a stationer; the law of "Method" would be found in either fetching these articles one's self, or sending for them, and also by paying for them, or getting them upon credit. The element of "Force" would be exercised in the act of walking into another room, or to a shop.

These distinctions, although they may seem puerile, are not so if considered in the light of illustrations of the universality of the laws we are treating of. Indeed, so simple and elementary a thing as putting one's foot for-

ward in a particular direction may be regarded as a complete "Act" in itself, and embody purpose, method and force.

Take the case of making a journey. Take it that, being in the City of London, I wish to go to Richmond. This is the "Purpose" upon which would arise the consideration as to its necessity, desirableness, or justification. As to the means or "Method" of achieving my purpose—this might be done by walking, cycling, motoring, or going by omnibus, or by train. If I decide to take a cab to Waterloo Station, and go thence by train to Richmond—that is the main "Method" of reaching my objective or "Purpose." But I have to get a cab, which is an intermediate and subsidiary "purpose," and to attain that purpose I have a choice of "methods"—that is I can beckon, or call, or whistle, to a cabman, or ask a policeman to call one for me. Whichever method is adopted, the act of calling a cab involves the exertion of physical "Force," slight though it be, as also does the act of getting into a cab. Having arrived at Waterloo Station there are the subsidiary acts of taking a ticket, and the choice of class, etc. Indeed, as you will realise, there is a continuous series of acts throughout; sometimes acts of purpose, sometimes acts of method, sometimes physical acts; all, by the marvellous interactions of our operative faculties, concurring by various combinations in the attainment of certain ends. And yet with all this seemingly complicated machinery of the mind there need be no confusion. If we but take the doctrine of the "Act" as the light of man's Reason, we shall indeed realise that our philosophy can be taken as a "universal doctrine by which a man may guide himself."

To turn from small things to great, let us take the case in war of a General entrusted with the conduct of a great campaign. The General's chief objective or "Purpose"

is to overcome the opposing forces of the enemy. In his case the moral factor which should rule in deciding on any object or purpose is practically limited to the virtue of obedience to the orders of his Sovereign. His Sovereign has already incurred the responsibility of deciding on the necessity or justice (often, alas! decided by motives of pride and aggrandisement) of such a stern "Purpose" as War, and the Sovereign would, in the course of coming to a decision, naturally consider possible "Methods" of carrying on a war, and the sufficiency of "Force" at his command. But we are taking the case of a General Commander-in-Chief entrusted with the carrying out of the campaign. First, there must be a clear general plan of the various objectives or purposes to be aimed at. In other words, what are known as strategical considerations constitute the "Purpose," the one chief purpose being to conquer the enemy.

The carrying out of that plan belongs to the province of "tactics," and as this word implies the consideration and employment of the best and most effective means and methods of achieving the "Purpose," it is synonymous with "Method." But no purpose, however clearly thought out, and no tactics or method, however wise or clever, would be of any avail but for the employment of adequate physical "Force" in the shape of an army sufficiently numerous and effectively trained, and having proper arms and ammunition. But think of a General Commander-in-Chief with perhaps a quarter of a million of men under his command, as was the case in the recent Russo-Japanese War. Alike with the Commander-in-Chief himself, and with the great number of generals and officers holding subordinate commands, the duties of each and all, down to the private soldier, resolve themselves into, and are comprised in, the formula of an implied proper objective or "Purpose," a wise "Method" and an effective "Force." These, at any

rate, are the proper ideals of every Commander. When the final result or completed "Act" of victory or defeat is reached, the propriety of the "Purpose" aimed at, the wisdom of the "Method" adopted, and the adequacy of the "Force" employed, afford the only natural and exhaustive basis of criticism of success on the one side, and defeat on the other.

Take now an instance of handicraft—the table at which I am sitting. There is enshrined in it a "Purpose." We intuitively know that the end or purpose to be served by it was conceived by the designer before he began to manipulate it, and that the consciousness of this purpose conditioned and regulated the plan, design, or method, of its construction. The method of making might differ in shape, size, and material, according to whether it was intended to serve the purpose of a writing-table, a dining-table, a billiard-table, or a toilet-table, etc. We also intuitively know—although we did not see the making of the table—that its construction necessitated a certain amount of physical effort or "Force."

When we consider man's "Acts" in the spheres of Religion, Philosophy, Society, and business, the element of "Purpose" takes a higher level of sanctity, for the reason that it more deeply involves duty, conduct, and everything included in Ethics and Religion. The natural language of Ethics and Religion is "What ought I to do?" or "What ought to be my purpose?" and not merely "What do I wish to do?" We are here concerned with "the relations, rights and duties by which men are under obligation towards God, themselves, and their fellow-creatures."

In the systems of Ethics or Moral Philosophy we possess ready constituted inspirers of "Purpose," and in our Bible we have a vast store-house of inspiration towards good ends, purposes, hopes and aspirations.

It is in the exercise of the moral function, and the

formation of purpose, that we have to be on our guard against what Locke describes as: "This great and dangerous impostor Prejudice, who dressing up falsehood in the likeness of truth, and so dexterously hoodwinking men's minds as to keep them in the dark with a belief that they are more in the light than any that do not see with their eyes." When one considers how great a part prejudices and prepossessions play in the sphere of human nature, it is only by remembering that "self-deception is a favourite pursuit of humanity," that one can understand the little attention that has been given in the past to Bacon's doctrine of the "Idols of the mind." Inasmuch as Bacon therein deals with the very sources and causes of men going astray in the voyage of life, namely, the worshipping of moral and mental "idols," this is a subject that demands the most urgent attention from those who would aim at purity of purpose, and the avoidance of prepossession, bias, passion, or prejudice in their aims and actions.

Bacon defines "Idols" as so many false deities who receive the homage which is due only to truth, and as such "must be solemnly abjured and renounced, and the mind wholly freed and purified therefrom."

You may remember that many years ago I dealt with this subject in a separate paper, and time has only confirmed the view then held of its vital importance to the real progress of humanity, by removal of the chief obstacles to unity of human thought and action. A sincere study of Bacon's doctrine of "Idols" would be the most certain method of realising the truth of the saying of Him who walked by the Sea of Galilee, "He that would save his life must lose it"—the life to be saved being his ideal life, and the life to be lost being his actual life of prepossession and prejudice. As Kingsley somewhere says, "You must empty yourself before God will fill you." In short, before we are in a proper frame of mind to answer the question,

“What ought I to do?” it is necessary to brush aside the prepossessions, passions, and prejudices to which, in the weakness and pride of human nature, we are liable, and not until that is done can any man reach the highest type of human life, which consists in following out purposes which are good, right and true. To recapitulate—in every “Act” the “Purpose” should be good—the “Method” wise, and the “Force” should be adequate, and the extent to which these several laws or elements are acted up to, will be the measure of perfection or imperfection of the completed “Act.”

The supreme importance of this tabulation of the three constituent elements of that practical unity, the “Act,” consists in thus putting into an external or objective form what has hitherto been, as it were, lying hid in the mind of man. Most of the ineffectiveness and incompleteness of our work, or attempted work, in this life may be ascribed to the indefinite and unsystematised shapes our impulses take from the varying moods of the mind, coupled with the absence of definite and practical rules or objectives towards which our natural activities can be confidently directed, so as best to secure effectiveness of effort.

VIII.—THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE.

Our allotted course leads us now to speak of the Great First Cause and Upholder of all things. We have also to indicate the resemblance between man’s finite nature, and acts; with the Infinite nature and acts of the Deity. We infer the existence of a Deity from our own intuitions, and from the instinctive recognition by all mankind of a super-human Power of some sort. How shall we speak of the great Cause but as the Author, Ruler and Sustainer of all

things, the ever-present and indwelling life of the world, the underlying and all-comprehensive Unity who is eternally operating in an efficient and multiform manner through natural Laws?

Darwin in his "Zoonomia" says: "The Great Creator of all things has infinitely diversified the works of His hands, but at the same time stamped a certain similitude on the features of nature that demonstrates to us that the whole is one family of one Parent." Carpenter, in his Presidential Address said: "All analysis tends to show the oneness of design in Creation—the dependence of each fact on the purposeness of the whole, and thus we are irresistibly compelled to admit the unity of the power of which phenomena are the diversified manifestations."

What is the nature of this one creative Power? The Goodness, Wisdom and Power of the Creator are commonly spoken of, but these are attributes, and simply express what in the feelings of a large part of mankind are the qualities to be ascribed to the results of the operations of the Creator. These terms imply by the Creator and Governor of the Universe a manifestation of Himself in a threefold form or nature; namely, as (1) Moral (directly concerned with Purpose, the virtue and highest attribute of which is Goodness); (2) Intelligence (directly concerned with Method, the special virtue of which is Wisdom); (3) Force (the special virtue of which is to be exactly adequate to requirement).

The Great Power we speak of is manifested in and through the Universe by the production of phenomena, in regularities, adjustments, pre-conformities and harmonies, to an infinite extent. The general trend of these mighty activities is, by general consent of mankind, towards Order, as opposed to Chaos. This appears as the Divine "Purpose," consummated into Acts by Divine "Methods" and Divine "Power."

It would appear that in the idea of order is contained the essential element of "Purpose," Divine and human. What is worship and reverence of the Deity but to give Him His due place and order in the Universe as Creator and Sustainer thereof? What is the result of the omission by a man to do justice to his neighbour but to provoke anarchy, disharmony and strife? In this connection should be quoted a striking passage from Malebranche (*"Traité de Morale"*): "There is one parent virtue, the virtue which renders us just and perfect, the virtue which will one day render us happy. It is the only virtue. It is the love of the universal order as it eternally existed in the Divine Reason, where every created reason contemplates it. The love of order is the whole of virtue, and conformity to order constitutes the morality of actions."

The old argument that the existence of evil in the Universe is a reflection on the Divine Omnipotence and Benevolence seems to ignore the fact that the Universe is governed by laws. King Edward rules over this country by laws, the spirit and intention of which are to promote the safety and welfare of all his subjects. There cannot be any just reflection upon the justice or benevolence of the King, or of the law if, for instance, a child should be killed in a railway collision at Carlisle, or a man should be run over by a lorry in London.

It must be borne in mind that our aim is to discover realities—the real moving and creative Power or subsidiary powers, principles or laws at work in the Universe—those powers, and those powers only, which necessarily combine in the production of phenomena. How can these principles, or laws, as manifested throughout all nature, be generalised and objectivised in our minds but as the Eternal and Infinite "Purpose," the Eternal and Infinite "Method," the Eternal and Infinite "Force" or "Energy?"

IX.—NATURE ; OR SPACE, TIME, AND MATTER.

Here let us interject some remarks upon Space, Time and Matter.

With regard to Space—Willm, in “*Histoire de la Philosophie Allemande*,” says : “The idea of space has no objective validity ; it is real only relatively to phenomena, to things in so far as they appear out of us ; it is purely ideal in so far as things are taken by themselves, and considered independently of the forms of the sensibility.” Now what is here said of Space we must surely apply not only to Time but also to Matter, in spite of the existence of a great number of varying theories upholding the all-sufficiency of Matter.

The more modern researches of science appear to be bringing Matter to occupy in the scheme of the Universe a similarly neutral position to that occupied by Space and Time. We must look upon Matter, Space and Time (which may be said to unitedly constitute “Nature”) as simply the media in, through, and by, which God operates and manifests Himself.

Our chief concern here is as to what is real, and actual, in opposition to the uncertain and the apparent. The peripatetic Philosophers contended that Matter and Space existed potentially, but not actually.

Sir Isaac Newton held that God, by existing, constitutes Time and Space (query, also Matter). But you are asked to regard Space, Time and Matter as constituting “Nature” in, through, and by, which are worked the works or acts of the living God. Says Carlyle : “What is Nature? Art thou not the living garment of God? O Heavens! is it, in very deed, He then that ever speaks through thee ; that lives and loves in thee ; that lives and loves in me?”

It will help us to understand the “mighty acts of the

Lord" if we first try to realise the immensity of the Sphere in which He acts.

The science of Astronomy gives us some conception of the vast amplitude, in furnishing us with data respecting the planets, stars, and suns scattered through space. When we consider that the distance of the sun from the earth is put at ninety-three millions of miles, that by the computation of astronomers there are at least a thousand millions of stars in space within the range of the great reflecting telescope of Lord Rosse, and that the distance of some of the nearest fixed stars is not less than 20,000,000,000,000 miles, it is sufficient to give us some faint apprehension of the extent of Space, and of the Infinite and boundless sphere in which the Great Architect works.

Time, like Space and Matter, is a condition of phenomena. If the Deity works in what to us is an infinite extent of Space, we know also that He works in Time of infinite duration.

We are told by Geologists that the Earth has existed, with conditions necessary for life, for at least 100 millions of years, and that man himself has probably existed for a million years. To this vastness we add the vastness of Matter. Although assuming multifarious shapes, Matter (now generally held to be composed of one substance, "Ether") is extended throughout the Universe, and is also to be regarded as one of the media through which the Deity manifests His "Purposes," His "Methods," and His "Power."

X.—GENERAL APPLICATIONS.

It is in and throughout this enormous range of Space, Time, and Matter (the trine of Nature) that the Supreme Deity works as He will, and displays His powers to an

infinite extent. There is a continuous objectivising, a continuous methodising, and a continuous energising, and in infinite variety.

Conscious as we are of the old objection to a finite being attempting to define a Being of Infinite capacities, the craving for a final cause so deeply rooted in human nature, coupled with the fact of man being endowed with the power of reasoning, seems to us to be not only a justification, but also to impose an obligation on man to employ himself in searching after the truth and order of things. Although man cannot comprehend, he can apprehend infinity.) There is a text in the Psalms which has been with me from early days, "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that would understand, and seek after Him." The human soul shrinks from the idea that it is isolated, apart, and alone, in the wide world, with no kinship with something higher than itself, and with which it can have communion. This, and this only, can be sufficient explanation of the countless number of attempts which have been made by the brightest of human intellects during past centuries, to find the universal truth of things.

What we are brought to see is that this underlying unity (whether we term it God, or, as put by Mr. Spencer, "the infinite and eternal energy from which all things proceed") operates in moulding and unfolding phenomena in and through Matter, Space and Time, in three directions or modes, or on or by three principles or laws—the law of "Purpose," the law of "Method," and the law of "Force." These are the very laws or models after which God fashioned the world out of Chaos.

We can take instances from all animate and inanimate things in the world, and we shall find them compact of, and resolvable into, a Triad of Purpose, Method, and Force. Such, therefore, are the three supreme, and all

embracing elements of the "Acts" of God, and in an infinitely less degree, such are the elements, or constituents, of the "Acts" of man. In the case of man, we have already pointed out that his personality is naturally educed by the formulas of Purpose, Method, and Force. By reflecting on what we see of the works of the Deity, we are irresistibly impelled by the very force of things to ascribe to Him faculties of "Purpose," "Method," and "Force"; but augmented without limit.

Here then we realise at last, in an intelligible sense, in what manner, in spite of the limitations of his nature, man is made in the image of God. What visions will not the full consciousness of this truth raise in poor humanity, and what bright hopes and anticipations of progress towards a more effective life? No longer will man feel an alien and outcast in the world, when he knows that in his nature are impressed (not merely as symbols) the very laws by which the Creator sustains the Universe. Man cannot but feel encouraged and exalted by the knowledge that, in his little way, he is called to observe the same laws of action as were adopted in creation by the Triune Deity, and that to the extent to which he acts up to all that is implied by those laws, models, or patterns, will he realise the destined end or purpose of his existence. What is the chief purpose of existence but to live conformably to the will of God? The Stoics expressed it that the chief end of man was to live conformably to Nature. With finite man, the result falls short of the "Purpose," while in the Infinite, it is always realised.

The three ultimate laws to which everything must be referred in life and action constitute the uniform *modus operandi* which has been impressed upon phenomena by the Creator of phenomena. The world is, beyond all, a world of action, and there is persistent purposive advance

in all things by certain methods and physical energy towards certain ends.

In the case of a flower, for instance, from the seed which is the "unity" there is a trending, inclination, or predisposition towards a certain end, which constitutes the "Purpose"; the development proceeds in a particular way—this constitutes the "Method"; there must be sufficient underlying vitality or energy—this constitutes the "Force." Each of these elements is necessary and nothing more is necessary (if we except the neutral elements of Matter, Space and Time) to produce the flower. The seed contains in its constitution the capacity to be that one thing, and nothing else. If the method of development be imperfect—if the physical conditions are defective—we shall get a dwarfed and stunted plant; but it will not alter the qualities with which it was originally endowed.

The same laws can be applied alike to the creation or evolution of a planet at the instance of the Creator, and to the making of a pin at the instance of a man; and although the Creator works in and through matter, and the man works upon matter, the laws of action are the same in quality though not in degree. You will ask in wonderment, why have the labours of the numberless searchers after truth been barren in the past? The following extracts may give some idea of the reason of this. Whewell says: "There are certain ideas or forms of mental apprehension which may be applied to facts in such a manner as to bring into view fundamental principles of science; while the same facts, however arranged or reasoned about, so long as these appropriate ideas are not employed, cannot give rise to any exact or substantial knowledge." Carlyle says: "Fail by any sin or misfortune to discover what the truth of the fact is, you are lost, so far as that fact goes. If your thoughts do not image truly, but do image falsely the fact, you will vainly try to work upon the

fact. The fact will not obey you ; the fact will silently resist you, and ever with silent invincibility will go on resisting you till you do get to image it truly instead of falsely. No help for you whatever except in attaining a true image of the fact. That is the one thing needful. With that it shall be well with you in whatever you have to do with said fact."

What we claim is that an "Act" is the universal and convertible term for everything in the Universe, and that the three laws of Purpose, Method, and Force, explain the natural operation of God, and of man, in realising "Acts." The truth and correctness of this claim is within the power of every man to test and prove. The laws, as stated, represent the invariable forms of Divine and human activity, as developed in accordance with the constitution of the Divine Mind, and, in an infinitely less degree, of the human mind, and thus should be of the greatest benefit to humanity in assisting them to act in the most effective, because the most natural, manner. To paraphrase the words of the Rev. F. D. Maurice, in "Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy," in regard to Syllogisms, this classification of laws does not necessarily tell us *how* to act in any particular circumstances, but how we *do* act when we do not violate the laws of our being as much as we should violate the laws of our body, if we tried to walk upon our heads, instead of upon our feet.

In the case of man's "Acts," it will be obvious that their effectiveness and merit can only be in proportion to the original power of his will, exercised through his inherent faculties of Purpose, Method and Force, and the subsequent strengthening he may gain by exercise. The more thoroughly a man develops his moral, mental and physical natures, from spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical sources, and assimilates the food which each, after its kind, brings to his consciousness, and the more perfectly and

accurately he acts in accordance with the laws or forms impressed in his nature, the more perfect and complete will his "Acts" be. It will also be obvious that if we know the very essence of the laws or forms of human action, the better fitted we shall be to overcome any obstacles which may retard our progress in any and every department of life. The laws we lay down are not a mere fanciful doctrine, but constitute a practical guide and route-map for every act of our lives; because they describe the manner in which an act is naturally evolved. The object we have in view is not merely to put forward some particular plan of acting, but to set out what is the method which a man, by the very constitution of his nature, is called upon to employ, if he would get the best results out of himself.

In short, the state of perfection or imperfection of a man's existence—his littleness or greatness—is determined by the presence or absence, the exercise or non-exercise in the acts of his life, of a good Purpose, a wise Method, and an adequate physical Force.

This is the Alphabet of the Deity—the alphabet of progress, hope, and aspiration.

"And man, at whose creation God rejoiced,
No more in darkness of the Spirit dwell,
But with a bright recovered soul appear."

XI.—CONCLUSION.

At the beginning of this paper are set out definitions of what have been held by various authorities should be the marks or characteristics of a true philosophy; it is submitted that the method propounded in the foregoing

pages substantially complies with the requirements laid down in such definitions.

The one idea impelling me throughout has been to practicalise the problem of life, and, in following the allotted course it has been my duty to dispense, for the time being, with everything I could not understand, or apprehend the meaning of. In the present paper my aim has been to use the simplest language.

To every earnest man there comes a consciousness of the anarchy that exists in the domains of religion (or what passes for religion), civil government, literature, and in every department of social life. This state of things can only arise from the absence of a generally accepted criterion to which everything can be referred, and by which everything can be tested. Hence, for instance, we get unjust criticisms of men, and of books, through lack of the essential appreciation of the purposes of such men or books. The only remedy for this and other evils is that "the order of thought should be made one with the order of nature," as is done in our philosophy.

Our formula should prove of the most vital importance in the world of social activity, for it will be found to embody the science and art of human development, alike of the individual and of the race. "All sciences must converge in the grand science of life, and all arts must lead to the art of living." We find here a definite plan of action for every department of life; applicable alike to every individual act contributory to the carrying out of a complicated business or undertaking, and also to such business or undertaking as a whole. Hegel says: "Only the knowledge that subserves the ends of life becomes a working power."

The entire universe is made up of "Acts"—of God's "Acts," and man's "Acts." When, therefore, we have discovered the necessary constituents of an act we have found the eternal laws or essences of all things vital to us.

If there are such things as universal laws of action, it must obviously be of the greatest importance to be acquainted with them. No doubt many men act fully in accord with the order of things instinctively, but although a man might be, for instance, a good carpenter, from natural talent, it cannot be denied that his efficiency would probably have been much increased if he had served an apprenticeship. The value of law and rule may be instanced by the superiority of skilled over unskilled labour. Man's blood circulated before Harvey's discovery, but this did not diminish the importance of the discovery.

Not the least of the benefits to arise from the knowledge of a real system of Nature, such as this is believed to be, should be to the cause of Education. The over-riding importance of "Purpose" in all things, receives little practical recognition in our educational systems. The natural food for the development of "Purpose" is that knowledge which relates to conduct and character. In Germany, and I believe also in Japan, conduct and character stand first of all in importance in the education of youth. In our country (and not only in our country) there has, in recent years, been noticeable a distinct increase in a flippant and mocking spirit, to which nothing is sacred. In the Grand Old Book (or rather, collection of books), there are no stronger denunciations than those against mockers and scorners, and we are beginning to realise in the world of trade that there is nothing more fatal to commercial prosperity than indulgence in such a spirit.

Our task was to ascertain first of all what was the one general idea that could be held in common of everything that exists. We take "Act" to be the highest generalisation of the product of a man. We next seek to ascertain what is the nature of the principles, causes, or laws necessarily concurring in the production of what we term "an act," and which may be called an objective Unity. We

find there are three primary principles or elements, each of a different nature, to be found in every act of man; namely, an element of "Purpose," an element of "Method," and an element of "Force."

Turning to the existences, or acts, of God, around us, we find the same elements lying latent in them all, and we can see for ourselves that each has been developed to its respective end or unity in accordance with these principles or laws.

We thus arrive at the conclusion, that, except in the matter of degree, the method of God and the true method of man are identically the same, and that certain primary principles exist universally, and are consciously or unconsciously conformed to by, and in, all things. These principles thus constitute firm and secure resting-places and *points d'appui* for the mind of man, and from the citadel of the "Act" we can use them as searchlights to illuminate what have hitherto been the dark places in the ocean of Truth. The truths which have hitherto been subjective, and have existed, if at all, only in the mind of man (and therefore only half truths), are now brought down into our common life as real and practical objectives, and form a true basis upon which all knowledge can be systematically reconstructed.

We are dealing with Philosophy, and not with Religion as generally understood; but it will not escape you that the predominant and controlling position shown to be occupied by "Purpose" in the nature of things, accords with Religion, the essence of which consists in Goodness as the one aim of "Purpose." In the Founder of Christianity, the Divine Exemplar of ultimate "Purpose" (which may be expressed either as doing the will of God, or as acting up to our allotted position in the Universe), we find divinely exalted purpose realised in "Act." It is for Philosophy to expound the nature of things; it is for Religion to supply

motives for man to act in accord with the nature of things, *i.e.*, conformably to the will of the Creator of all things. It will be quickly realised that the doctrine of the "Act" as here outlined constitutes a definite and practical basis for far-reaching thought and action in the domain of Religion.

It is by acquaintance with our natural functions that we shall know our duty, and it is, and will be, the high mission of Ministers of Religion, by furnishing lofty motives, to stimulate mankind to live up to the eternal laws. What does our philosophy bring to light but that in every object around us there is enshrined the laws of the living God? Be it an animal or flower, or other phenomenon of nature, or an article of human workmanship, we have in the knowledge of the universal laws a standard of criticism ready for our instruction and use, and can judge, by the completed act, of the extent to which completeness or perfectness has been attained in the exercise of the three elements of "Purpose," "Method," and "Force." We shall, indeed, find "sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Tennyson had an instinctive feeling of the truth of things when he wrote :

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

Finally, it is claimed that this system of Philosophy, as exhibited in the "Synopsis" opposite, will embody, among other things, the following :

(1) One universal reconciling idea, or model, which can be predicated of everything in the Universe.

(2) The primary eternal and immanent principles, laws, forms, patterns, modes, or notions, by or upon which the

XII.—SYNOPSIS.

<p>GOD - - - - - by three-fold manifestation as </p>	<p>{ as Personal Spirit } in Unity—operat- ing in and through</p>	<p>NATURE - - - - - constituted of (A) Matter (B) Space (C) Time</p>	<p>- - - - - revealing - by infinite - consummated by operation of immutable laws of</p>	<p>ACTS - - - - - of </p>	<p>ATTRIBUTES - - - - - (1) Infinite Benevolence (2) Infinite Wisdom (3) Infinite Potentiality</p>
<p>(1) Moral - - - - - (2) Intellectual - - - - - (3) Energetic - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>
<p>MAN as <i>Subjective Unity</i> with </p>	<p>{ as "Ego" or personal Unity, } working in and upon }</p>	<p>NATURE as <i>Passivity</i> constituted of (A) Matter (B) Space (C) Time</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>ACT as <i>Objective Unity</i> consummated by observance of immutable laws of (1) Purpose (2) Method (3) Force</p>
<p>(1) Moral faculty - - - - - (2) Intellectual Faculty - - - - - (3) Physical Faculty - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>	<p>- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -</p>

Universe was created, and by which the Universe and everything in the Universe is sustained.

(3) The characteristics which all created things, and all works of man, have in common, and which constitute a criterion to which to refer the endless multiplicity of things.

(4) A transformation of what have hitherto been indefinite mental conceptions into the form of definite mental objectives.

(5) An intelligible and practical proof of how man was made in the image of God and demonstrating the consonance of Personality with the Infinite.

(6) A practical method of life by which a man may guide himself.

(7) Reconciliation of the individual with the universal, and mind with matter.

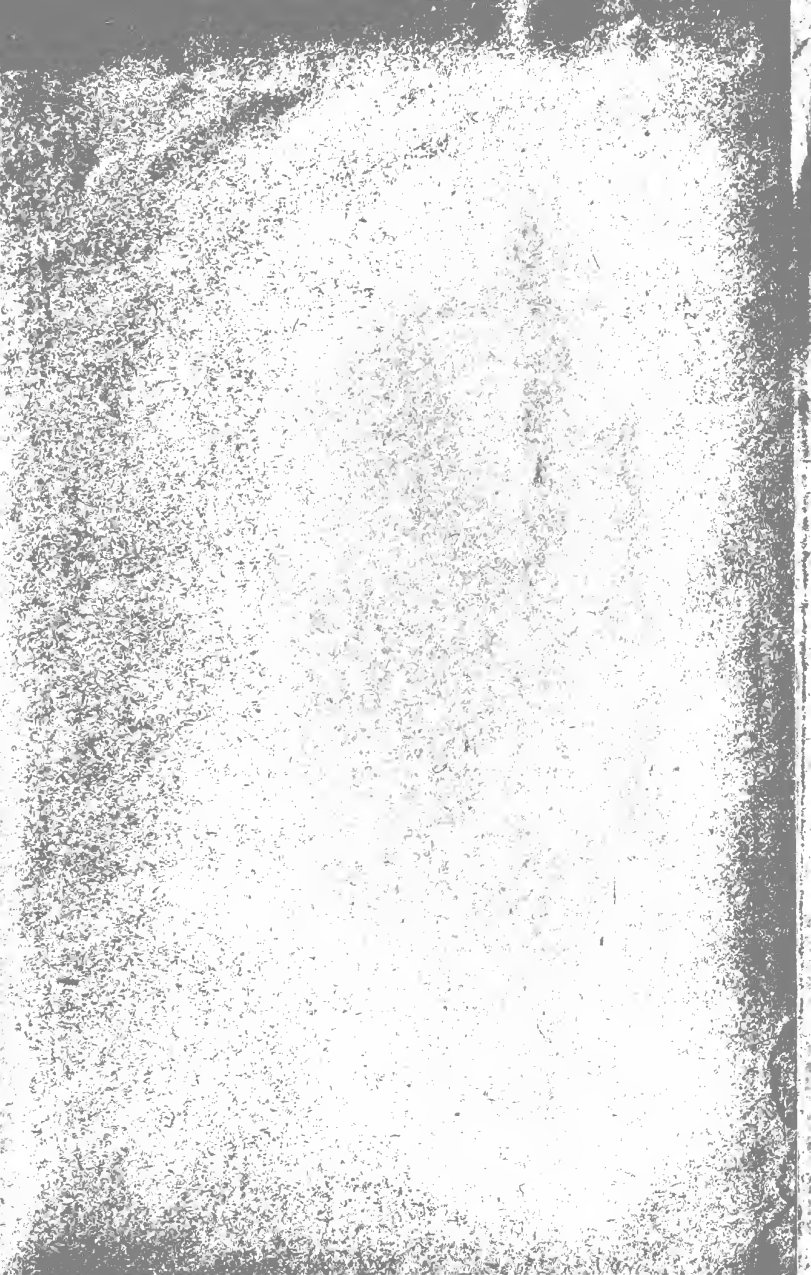
(8) A criterion of, and for, morals, education, politics, criticism, etc.

(9) A basis for social and religious unity.

By the foregoing is shown—after the travail of centuries—how, in a practical way, the primary activities of man are in direct connection and correspondence with the primary laws of God. It is for man to realise that, by conforming to the true meaning of such laws, the individual and the race may gradually rise to a higher and more perfect grade of existence. Moreover, those who believe that man's spirit survives bodily dissolution, will find new hope in our philosophy. This foreshadows that there would be no sudden break in the continuity of real existence, but simply a continued and wider development of the then untrammelled consciousness, in physically - modified accordance and harmony with the same eternal forms as are models and conditions for finite and probationary acts upon earth.

(END.)





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