

Immortality



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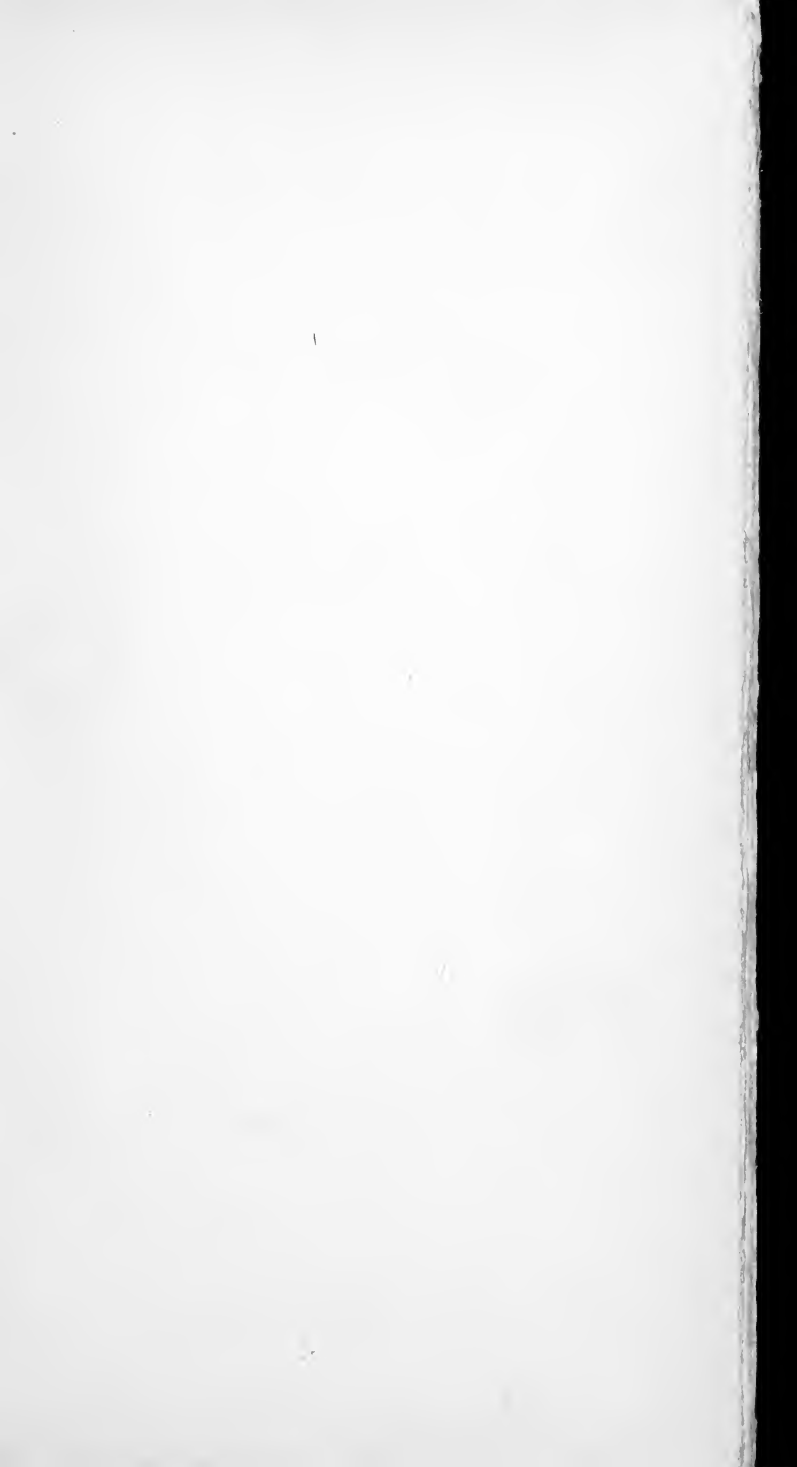
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Spring Lodge Publications

Philosophy of the Great Unconscious.

Science and Superstition.

The Economy of Misery.

Immortality.

The Pantheist — A Quarterly.

By Samuel Eugene Stevens, M. D.

☐ Stevens, Samuel Eugene ☐

Immortality

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To the Connecticut River.

Dear Old Connecticut! —
Unfailing source of pleasure and
delight: —
Reflecting back the pine-clad granite
hills from whence ye sprang;
Serenely winding southward to the
sea!
Streams there are more classic,
Other climes more rare —
But nowhere stream more beautiful
Mirrors scenes more fair!

Spring Lodge

1913

Is Man the measure of the Universe? — Is Mind the Primal — the Ultimate? — Can Infinite Nature be expressed in terms of Consciousness?

HE WHO can rightly and clearly define and account for Consciousness, will have rendered pre-eminent service to Psychological Science, and acquired enduring Fame.

“Philosophy of the Great Unconscious” — recently published — is an effort to solve this great problem in a Rationalistic manner .

It is therein maintained that Mental Phenomena have a purely Physical basis ; that Thought or Cerebration is in the last analysis, a Material Mode of Motion, Electro-atomic in nature, generated by Ganglia of Consciousness — sensitive to impressions transmitted thereto by external or Special Sense Organs, in immediate contact with Environment, — the prime function of the Central Sense Organ or Brain being to co-ordinate cogitate and

control — to receive register generate and transmit Thought Waves, or the Mental Mode of Motion.

Viewed in this light the Brain may be properly designated as the Compound Sense Organ of Consciousness or Thought-Sense, — evolved and developed in connection with the Special Senses, — themselves developed by the various material forces and phenomena of Nature, — the combined functional activity of both Internal and External Sense Organs being essential to complete Consciousness.

* * * *

A true Psychology must be based on the Science of Biology — which in its broadest significance, stands for the study of all living things.

A correct understanding of Life and Consciousness can only be reached by a careful study of their inception and development in primitive organisms.

THE development of Life on our Planet must have originated 100 000 000 years ago, in the Laurentian or Post Silurian Age.

When conditions were right, Organic Substance was evolved from inorganic matter, and out of this, Living Substance arose.

As animal and vegetable organisms are traced downward, they are found to gradually converge. . . And in the developments of Organic Chemistry many of the distinctions between organic and inorganic matter have disappeared: — giving support to the affirmation that all Organic Life primarily arose from non living substance, in the Natural course of "Cosmological Change."

An infallible Record, found in Fossiliferous Rocks — the Earth itself is at once the source and sepulchre of all Living Things.

PROTOPLASM, the basis of all Organic Life, is composed of Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Nitrogen and Sulphur, — a small amount of mineral matter — principally phosphates and sulphates of potassium, calcium, and magnesium, with an indefinite quantity of water.

It is a product of the Natural vibratory action of Light, Heat, and Electricity on stagnant solutions of inorganic matter.

The continued action of these three great Life-compelling Forces of Nature on Protoplasmic Matter produce, at length, Animal Life; one of the lowest or most simple forms being known as Amœba, a unicellular organism, from which higher multicellular organisms are developed.

And finally, in response to environment and exigencies of existence, and by a perfectly Natural process of

Cell Specialization, yet more complex animal life is evolved, with a Nervous System — special sense organs and a Central Sense Organ or Ganglion of Consciousness, — the Ego.

In thus establishing the fact of Natural Evolution in place of Supernatural Creation, Modern Biological Science has completely revolutionized Medieval Speculation — Inspiring Supreme Reverence for Nature alone as the source of all Life and Being.

Although the Evolutionary Order of Nature was taught, theoretically, by Greek Philosophers over two thousand years ago, it is only in the last half century that this great Cosmological Truth has been fully verified by Experimental Methods.

The impulse of Evolution inherent in all Nature, is potent in Mankind, leading from Savagery and Superstition to Civilization and Science.

THE oldest writings extant on the subject of Biology are claimed to have been inspired by the "Creator" Himself and penned by Moses, some thousands of years B. C. purporting to give, not only the origin of all Animal and Vegetable Life but of the whole Physical Universe.

These writings were standard authority in all Jewish and Christian Schools and Colleges until the publication of Darwin's Biological Works about the middle of the last century.

At the present time, however, no student in pursuit of exact knowledge would think of consulting the Mosaic Record for any fact concerning the Origin of Life on the Earth, or for any Vital Truth whatsoever. And it is extremely doubtful if these Writings can be found in the Reference room of any Biological Laboratory in the world today.

IN STUDYING the Problems of Existence, physical or psychic, our appeal is to the revelations of Nature rather than Scripture, — to Science rather than Theology.

Nothing is of any account or of any practical value whatever unless based on some known Law of Nature.

There is nothing concerning the origin of the human race, — a complete and Infallible record of which may not be found in Nature alone.

The testimony of Natural Facts is the only one by which searching minds can be satisfied.

Science is bound to account for all phenomena of Nature in a way that can be clearly reasoned out and understood.

Human knowledge must eventually become universal, when the Natural Sciences shall have made the compilation complete.

ALL phenomena of Nature, Sentient and Non-sentient, Physical and Psychic, result from Natural Causes. . . In the last analysis, all Matter, all Substance, all Force, is some modification of atomic motion — correlated, reciprocal, — forever interchangeable. . . In Her infinite Laboratory, Nature hath power to evolve Sensation, and Consciousness of the same, — Reflex Irritability being the first step in this direction.

Light is an emanation of the Sun, Thought an emanation of the Brain — as perfume of flower — a subtle form of radiant matter, or mental mode of motion, which Ganglia of Consciousness alone can generate.

* * * *

We conceive of things in connection and consonant with the Perceptive Senses, developed by things perceived.

Perceptive sense proves the existence of things perceived. . . . Doubt not the Senses. . . . Pathological conditions may render one or more of them unreliable, at times, but as a general rule they are to be trusted.

Knowledge consists of impressions made on nerve cells of the Brain, primarily through the perceptive senses.

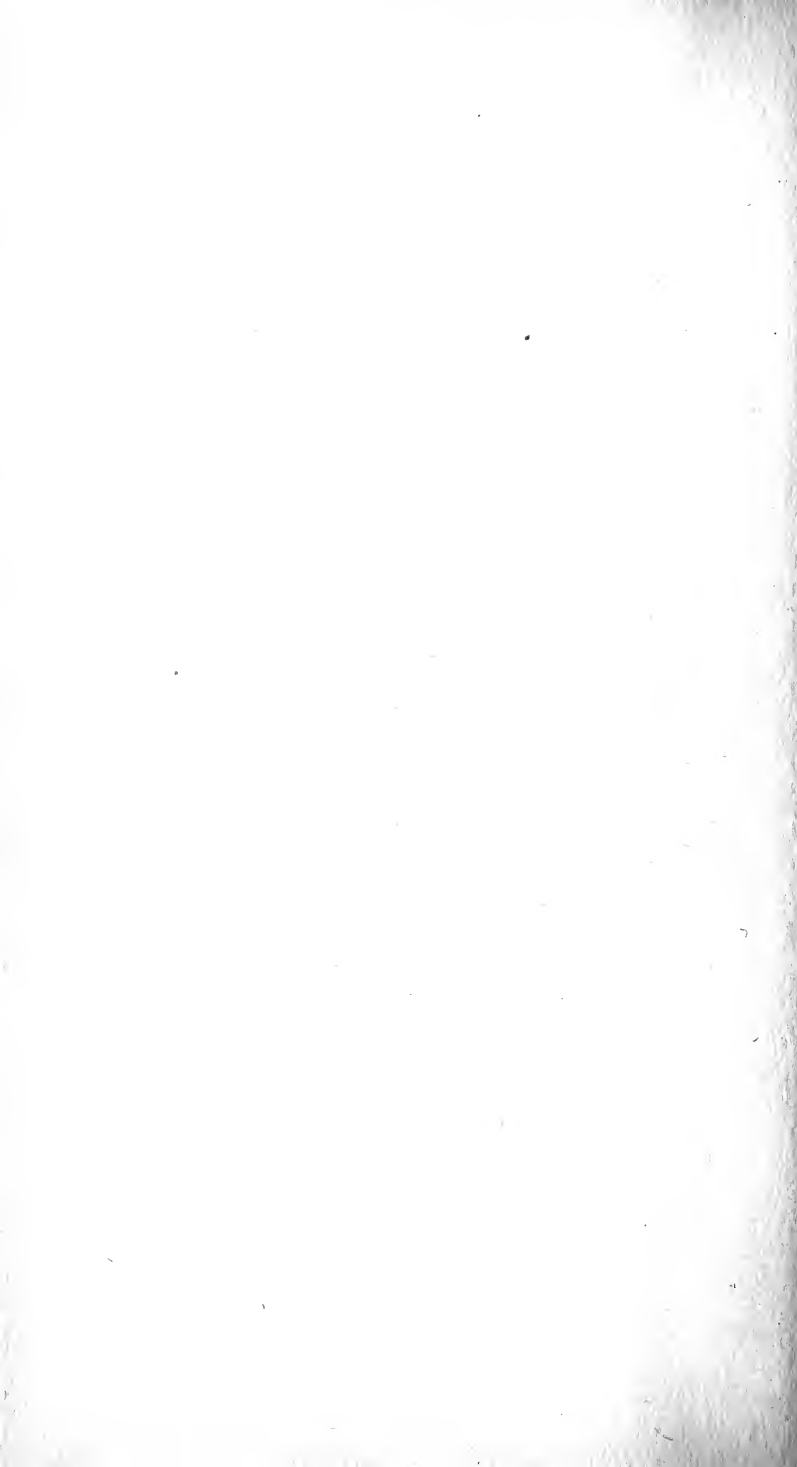
All thought and effort to understand is disciplinary, increasing Gray Matter and consequent Mental Power.

* * * *

Are mental faculties in process of development towards wider possibilities of comprehension?

Are there Phenomena in Nature of which we are not now cognizant?

If so, and if knowledge of such Phenomena is essential to human welfare, then will larger powers of sense perception become developed.



The shadow of the Great Unconscious is upon us, — infinite, incomprehensible! — Desirous of knowing — groping, guessing, — shall we ever know and understand, — or are we stepping-stones for others — far off — yet to come — willing to be such, as others have been for us, — in the endless unfolding of things?

*Facts of Nature alone are worthy of
our Supreme Thought and Devotion.*

FNDLESS Argumentation over Words instead of Facts has ever been the Vocation of Metaphysical Pedantry.

Language loses its Value as a Vehicle of Thought unless Words have a Uniform Definite Meaning.

By its Interminable Terminology and outrageous distortion of the Commonly Accepted Meaning of Words, Metaphysics prevents all possibility of getting at Facts.

To speak of a "Primal Mind" is a piece of this Learned Claptrap!

A Primal Mind is a Primal Humbug! — Mind Stuff, Stuff and Nonsense!

The term Mind can only be used properly, or intelligibly, in the sense of being a Physiological Function or Product of the Brain.

IT is by no means admitted that phenomena of Mind, or Consciousness of any kind is Primal. — Science gives no support to the assumption of a Higher Intelligence, or of the existence of any Spiritual Substance Essence or Entity whatsoever superior to Nature.

We claim what all Science is clearly showing that the Great Unconscious Forces of Nature are Primary and Dominant and are Doing Things.

There is no Primal Mind or Conscious Power in all the unfolding life of Spring and Summer-time, or of the Fading Year — no Primal Mind or Conscious Power in Immeasurable Depths of Space — in Sun or Stars or Revolving Worlds — no Conscious Power in Crystalline Forms, or Incipient Life, in Wind or Cloud or falling Rain, in flowing Stream or never resting Sea!

HAVING a purely physical basis, Mind is a Supplementary Natural Force, peculiar to Animal Organisms — appearing and disappearing with Animal Life — dependent on a Nervous System, consisting of complex ganglia, intimately united by Sensory and motor nerve fibers extending to all parts of the body. . . A wonderful mechanism primarily evolved by the various Forces of Nature, and further developed in response to environment and exigences of existence.

A product of the Physical — the Psychic is conditional, finite, limited, selfish — a function, a phenomenon — fleeting, failing, passing, — with need, with use, — with the Organism.

Inseparable from Animal Life —
Consciousness has no Past no Future.

HNABLE to account for Consciousness, and overestimating its significance, mankind have been led to suppose themselves possessed of a Dual Nature, Physical and Spiritual — the latter being destined to survive physical dissolution.

If this is so, it is a Fact revealed in Nature and discoverable by Science.

But all Revelations and Discoveries thus far, clearly indicate that Consciousness depends entirely on the Action of the Brain — and cannot therefore be the action of an Immaterial Principle.

* * * *

If there is a Future State of Personal Consciousness for man, it can only occur as a Miracle — itself inconsistent with the Immutable Order of Nature — therefore utterly impossible and out of the question.

THOSE holding the doctrine of Dualism, or the existence of Matter and Spirit as distinct phenomena, have been puzzled to determine at what definite time in Embrionic Life the Spirit, so called, enters and takes possession of the Organism.

* * * *

Vital and Vegetative functions are gradually developed *in utero*: — the Special Sense Organs also, are fully formed before Birth and perform their functions as soon as they come in contact with the various elemental forces which primarily evolved them.

Immediately after Birth the Child is sensitive to Light, Sound, etc, — that is, the Special Sense Organs begin to act: — consonant with which the Compound Sense Organ of Consciousness, or Ego, is gradually Exercised and Developed.

BIOLOGICAL Science does not sustain the Idea or Assumption of a Pre-existing Independent Spiritual Entity or Psychic Force — evolving Brain and Organs of Sense through which to act and manifest itself. . . . But it does show, clearly and definitely, that different phenomena of Nature, primarily Evolved all Life — developing A Cerebro-Spinal Nervous System in conjunction with that of the whole Physical Organism.

Physicists tell us all about Light — its source, its analysis and synthesis. . . . The Biologist has traced the steps in development of Visual Organs by the action of Light on primitive animal life through a process of cell adaptation. . . . He has also traced and defined the development and adaptability of all the other Senses to Natural sources — includ-

ing the sense organ of Consciousness — separate from which it would have no function — could not have been developed.

What possible use of Perceptive Senses without a Controlling Sense to utilize impressions for the good of the Organism?

Having a Physical basis and Natural origin — when Vital Action ends Mental Phenomena cease.

A part of the Great Indestructible Atomic — dominated by the Universal Instinct of Self Preservation — it is not strange that Mankind Dream of Immortality?

* * * *

When Man can exist and subsist on the Imperishable then will he become Imperishable. . . Continuing to live on dead animal and vegetable matter he will be subject to Decay and Dissolution.

THE inception, development and inevitable decay of both physical and mental power is inconsistent with the idea of continued Consciousness .

* * * *

The Initiative is with the Unconscious! — Mind is a consequence, not a cause. . . All animate life of varied conditions and environment — of Sensibility and Sense — are alike products of Nature — with no Prenatal or Post-mortem Personality or Possibility .

Shared more or less by the entire Animal Kingdom — brief, uncertain, subordinate, — dependent on the primary vital and vegetative processes of Circulation Nutrition and Procreation, — Mental Faculties are the natural result of Evolution in the line of Material Well-being — not for any far away Super-mundane Purpose .

THE fact that Consciousness has been developed in so many Organisms would indicate that it is a Physical Function only.

If it were possible or reasonable to conceive of Conscious phenomena proceeding from an Incorporeal Entity and that Man were the only Animal through which it was ever manifested then it might be more reasonable to suppose a Conscious Personal Immortality of some sort.

The relation between Mental Activity and Cerebral Change is intimate and inseparable.

Mind is the result of Cerebral Impressions — Personality, the sum of these Impressions.

Large Mental Capacity is always attended with deep Cerebral Convulsions and more extensive Vesicular Matter, — which is the source of Nervous Power.

FACTS of Nature rather than
the Assumptions of Theology
should be the Standard of
Thought and Belief.

Assurances of Immortality based on
the Authority of a Static Religion
can be preserved only until that
Authority is Shattered by the Dy-
namic Power of Science.

The Great Elemental Unconscious
alone is Immortal: — Evolving all —
Absorbing all!

THE supreme thing about Intelligent Conscious Existence is, not faith or hope in Personal Immortality, but a realizing sense of an inseparable Union and Unity with all Nature — “here and now”.

While Conscious it may be a Joy at times to Feel this Union, — when once Unconscious it matters not! — Satisfied, in passing, to know that we are and always will be an Elemental Part of an Infinite, All Embracing Universe — Forever at Home! — An Indestructible Part and Product of the Great Impersonal Unconscious!

A part of Nature — of Earth and Air — of Sun and Stars: — we own our Kinship and claim our Heritage to all that is or ever was or ever will be — in Time and Space and all Eternity!

ALL that affords Satisfaction in Life is inseparably associated with the Physical. — Eliminate Sensation and you Eliminate all possible Pleasure.

All the hopes desires and impulses of Mankind — of all that have ever Lived or ever will Live — are Essentially Animal and Selfish, — comparatively few Aspire or have Developed Capacity for any Enjoyment above the Sensuous.

The governing Instincts and Motives of all Savage Races, constituting a large fraction of the Human Family, are of this nature: — not fit or capable of anything — of any Thought or Action above that of a Brute, — unless it be Rapine and Plunder.

Fortunately for Them and for Us and for All Conscious Life that it Goes Out Forever — to be Restored

again to the Great Elemental Unconscious. . . An End of Unrest, of Uncertainty, of Weariness, of Pain, of Fear, of Bitterness, of Regret! —

A River hastening back to its Primal Source the Sea, with whatsoever of Filth and Pollution — Purified, again to rise in mist, Rainbow-tinted — kissing Grass and Flowers and Hills and far off Mountain Tops. — A Part of The Infinite! — A Glorious Immortality! — Forever Changing, but not Destroyed!

That the elements composing man's body are imperishable and will forever continue to be integral parts of Nature is certain. . . That his Mental peculiarities survive in his offspring, and in the influence he may exert over others, is positive. — Whether this Survival is Endless is Extremely Doubtful.

HOWEVER Attractive Life may be, or become — however Repellant — it must Forever Pass. . . Poor, Apologetic, — for what purpose — to what End?

A Physical Mental and Moral Inconsistency, — Mankind alone are Vile, — breeders of Vice Filth and Rags, — unfit for Life on Earth, much less for Life Hereafter!

Conceived in Sin, Shapen in Iniquity, — an Incident, an Accident, a Mistake, a Blunder, — the result, in most cases, of Blind Passion!

An aggregation of Habits Customs and Cant, — of Art and Artifice, — Human Life — Social, Civic and Religious is A Sham — A Pretence — A Discouragement!

Wisdom, whether pessimistic or otherwise, hath truly said that the Day of Dissolution is Better than that of Birth.

THE Remembrance of not one in a hundred thousand — either of Ideas or Acts — Survive the Generation in which they Live.

What is there about any one — about any animal life worthy of Endless Perpetuity: — what Conservation or Utility in Conscious Immortality.

It must be just as well or better to close our eyes at once and forever on the Intolerable Conditions of Existence.

The Deep Thinkers of India and Wise Men of Judea thought so, ages ago, when Mankind had time and inclination to Think.

That Twentieth Century Science should have reached similar conclusions is not so very "Strange or Appalling."

IS it for the purpose of Righting Real or Imaginary Wrongs of the present life that a Future State of Existence seems needful or necessary? — An Eternity in which to adjust the Mistakes of a moment — an Eternity in which to Ruminate over the Blunders of a brief Earthly Career of Animal Selfishness and Passion, much better forgotten?

In accord with Hebrew Tradition and Hindo Philosophy, and the best Modern Thought — To Be as though We Had Never Been, is the Highest Good, the Greatest Blessing.

From wild unrest, — from pain and passion, — from dreams unrealized and friendships lost, — from unrequited love and blighted hopes — from sorrow and bitterness, the Great Unconscious giveth Oblivion at last — to all.

A Moment — A Million Years
are just the same — when
once Unconscious! — When
again Compounded with the Univer-
sal — it matters not!

To be Conscious for the sake of
being Conscious — what use?

To avoid the Unconscious from
whence evolved — how futile!

An inevitable sequence — Birth
and Death are alike perfectly Nat-
ural phenomena.

* * * *

The Great Darkness will fall — the
Great Silence come at last to all!

As Cloud Shadows drifting across
a summer landscape leave no trace
behind, — so Generations vanish, —
Suns and Systems fade!

HOOR, worn-out, tired! — The
Great Mother is calling —
calling thee to Rest. . . Be
not apprehensive — hast thou done
Well or Ill: — Restored again to
the Elemental there will be no
Reviewal — no Recall!

NOTWITHSTANDING the vast progress made in Natural Science, the Supernatural is still believed in: — Voices and Visions still haunt the Imaginations of Men — pampering to a depraved mental taste for the Marvelous.

However involved in mystery there never has been and never will be any Psychic Phenomena without a perfectly Natural Cause.

If not fully able to account for a Thing, we should not accept or be satisfied with an explanation more Unaccountable than the Thing Itself but keep on Thinking.

We only Know that Consciousness is developed in association with Animal Life, Its manifestation elsewhere is an Empty Dream — Discarded by both Science and Common-sense.

SUPERNATURALISM or any form of Mysticism are not found in the Vocabulary of the Natural Sciences, nor are they recognized by Exact Knowledge.

If any claim to have seen or heard Things outside the Actual — witnessed psychic phenomena independent of the physical — it can be set down as the result of Fraud or Delusion — “The Society for Psychic Research” and Sir Oliver to the contrary nevertheless.

Imagination is Such Stuff as Maniacs are made of — forever on the border line of the Sane and Insane, the Conscious and Unconscious, the Living and the Dead.

This Border Line is often indefinite and difficult to determine.

The Investigation of Psychic Phenomena from a Spiritualistic point of view, while extremely fascinating, is apt to Unbalance the Mind.

A Shoarless Sea — The Great Mystery Beyond invites — seeking to solve — unless securely Anchored to Reason and Common-sense, one may drift in Starless Night!

A mass of testimony is produced, ancient and modern, to show actual communication between the dead and the living.

But When all these so called Spiritual Manifestations are watched and studied by unprejudiced observers there are found to be no Facts that cannot be fully accounted for on known Laws of Nature.

Error on the part of an observer is far more probable than any variation in the regular course of Nature.

NO doubt there is possibility of Thought Transference other than by Speech, when conditions are understood and rightly complied with.

A Radiant form of Matter, Electro-atomic in nature, Thought may be transmitted direct from one Ganglion of Consciousness to another alike Responsive to mental impressions.

Essentially a material mode of motion, this "mind stuff" proceeding from and reaching other Sensoria, has been Spiritualized by Mystics of all time, — unable or unwilling to account for Natural Phenomena other than Supernatural.

Thus Theology and Religious Mysticism continues to Bank on an Incorporial Metaphysical Nonentity.

A bewilderment! All metaphysical speculation and all theological assumption are alike misleading.

IN nothing is the Theologico-Religious mind more irrational than in the ordinary view of Existence, or of the reality of things. — A mass of Abstractions, Absurdities and Obscurities, — of Tradition and Fable, — with no clear conception or exact knowledge of Nature, or of the Universe.

The very Life of Religious Mysticism depends upon finding a Supernatural explanation for all phenomena of Nature. . . Learning that will lend itself to foster and perpetuate any such system is Pernicious.

As before intimated, everything concerning the Origin and Destiny of Man is clearly revealed in Nature. — With this Limitless Field open before us how can we continue to waste time on "The Traditions of the Fathers" or any kind of "Spiritism" — ancient or modern.

IT is not Religious or Spiritualistic Speculation but Facts of Nature that should engage the minds of men.

The Natural Sciences furnish the only reliable grounds upon which to base conclusions. . . . Whatever of truth may appertain to any system of Philosophy or Religion must accord therewith.

As a general thing, it may be said, that the more people know the less they believe, — the more ignorant, the more credulous.

A large majority in all Christian and Mohammedan countries believe in a Future State of Rewards and Punishment. . . . A large majority of mankind everywhere do not Think or Reason but believe as they are taught or told.

NOW, in order to establish the Doctrine of Personal Immortality, it must first be proven that Consciousness is due to an Independent Incorporeal Entity.

If the existence of a Soul Substance can be demonstrated, its Past and Future is assured.

Immortality can only be predicated of the ultimate elements of Nature.

If Human Consciousness is Elemental then is it Imperishable — without beginning and without end: — but to all intent and purposes, there was a time when we as Individuals did not exist, and the probabilities are that this State of Non-existence will again supervene.

* * * *

It was not until the time of Plato that a distinction between Mind and Matter, together with the Survival of the former, was definitely

put forward: — since when, Volumes have been written on “The Nature of the Soul” and the possibilities of its survival.

Energy has been wasted in pursuit of the Unreal, — the present made miserable seeking to avert imaginary ills, or to gain some uncertain good in the future.

However, Religious notions of an Immortal Soul or of Futurity have now ceased to possess any Psychological significance with Men of Science. A purely Scientific Psychology has no concern whatever with Spiritualistic Conceptions: — hence the term Soul or Spirit has no special meaning distinct from Phenomena of Mind.

The question of the Pre-existence or Survival of the “soul” is not a rational problem, because there is no such Thing or Entity as a Soul.

IN trying to get at the Reality of Things we should bear in mind the fact of Infinite Continuity: — not only of an infinite past but of an infinite future.

We must also recognize the fact that Creative Energy is a Fundamental Attribute of Nature.

A Law Unto Itself! — There is no Personality or power superior to Infinite Nature. The Deep Thinkers of Antiquity held this view, and it is substantially in accord with the Best Thought of today. Neither Science or Philosophy lend support to Theistic conceptions of a Personal Creator, or of an Immortal Soul.

While no warrant can be found for a Future Life, — the present conditions of the Human Race, moral and physical, may be immeasurably improved by using Scientific Methods in Procreation.

SINCE the Affirmation of the Great Evolutionary and Developmental Order of Nature, a radical change has taken place in the Ideas and Estimates of Existence, held through the Ages.

A higher altitude has been reached: — A wider vision — A grander outlook attained.

Not only the Scientific, but the Social, Civic, and Ethical world today, Think, Talk, and Act in terms of Evolution: — even our friends the Clergy — expert Opportunists — have “caught on” and, as usual, are claiming Priority.

Evolution Accentuates a Monistic Philosophy; recognizing the Monism of Mind and Matter and consequent Elemental Unity of the Universe.

Thus the Problem of Existence becomes the same for Molecule Monera and Man.

ONLY as we know the Simple are we able to understand the Complex. . . Only by the study of primitive forms of Life has the development of higher forms become clearly defined.

The Beginning of Life denotes its End — the Source of Life presages its Doom: — Earth born, Earth bound!

No sooner has matter become organized then it begins to disorganize: — no sooner does man commence to live then he begins to die!

The more complex the more perishable — the more simple the more enduring. . . Ameba, one of the most simple forms of animal life, Multiplies by Division, — thus, in a way, this lowly organism has the distinction of being Immortal in the Flesh, so to speak.

THE period between Monera and Man is much greater, the difference more marvelous than between man and any possible Deity.

Therefore we may reasonably infer that if there be Gods or Super-men anywhere in the Universe they are products of Natural Evolution: — and in no wise Supernatural.

James Mackaye, in his remarkable book "The Happiness of Nations" speaking of the utility of man, says "To develop a god or race of gods is the supreme goal of evolution, and an essential aim of the universe. Not otherwise can the means of the universe be completely adapted to its end; and if it is the aim of the universe, it should be the aim of man.

The human race may indeed be considered as occupying a stage in the evolution of a race of gods —"

FOREVER moving forward —
The Great Unconscious hath
evolved an organ of mind
having immeasurable powers and pos-
sibilities, to be used and developed.

The result of Natural Evolution —
there is no Psychic influence in the
Universe superior to the Mind of
Man! — There is no Knowledge he
may not acquire; — no Wisdom he
may not gain; — no moral or Intel-
lectual eminence he may not attain.

While affirming the possible devel-
opment of unlimited brain power in
connection with moral and physical
perfection — the Evolutionary Order
of Nature does not recognize the ex-
istence or possible evolution of any
such thing as a Spiritual Essence or
Entity and therefore gives no support
to the Doctrine of Immortality.

NEITHER Nature or Revelation
furnishes proof of Immortal-
ity. . . Neither Wisdom or
Faith renders man Immortal: — in-
sures endless existence of the Hu-
man Mind in continuous possession
of its Consciousness.

THE dead know not anything!
— Their love, and their
hatred, and their envy, are
now perished.

That which befalleth the Sons
of Men befalleth Beasts: — as the
one dieth so dieth the other.

They have all one Breath, or
Soul, so that a Man hath no Pre-
eminence above a Beast.

For all is vanity: — all go unto
one place: — all are of the Dust,
and all turn to Dust again!

Thus sayeth the Scriptures.

IMPOSSIBLE of verification, —
the pre-existence and survival
of human Consciousness has
been a matter of conjecture by man-
kind in all ages.

A brief survey of ancient as of
modern philosophic and religious
speculation will show how varied
and indeterminate have been the
grounds for an affirmative position.

While religious faith is of no sig-
nificance whatever in determining
Truth or getting at Facts, — yet a
comparative study of religious belief,
held by people of different Times
and Civilizations, is of much inter-
est, showing progressive development
corresponding with wider and more
intimate knowledge of Natural Phen-
omena, and of the Universe.

BELIEF in some form of Personal Immortality, although widespread, has by no means ever been universal.

It varies, from belief in an indefinite conditional survival, to endless conscious existence — the latter being the legitimate sense of the term.

Paleontology would indicate that some notion of a Future Life was entertained by the most primitive races of men. . . In the Neolithic Period, not only the weapons and food placed beside the dead, but tombs built for them, testify to a belief that some at least for a time continued some kind of existence.

* * * *

It is not strange that Prehistoric Man — our Ancestry of Post Glacial Times — should have been led to Deify Phenomena of Nature, and to postulate a Nether World of Shades.

COMMON to Primitive Races of men — Belief in Immortality appears to have taken a more definite shape and to have been held more strongly by the Persians and Egyptians than by any other of the Earlier Civilizations.

In fact the Doctrine of the Resurrection and a Future Life originated with the Persians — Ages before any part of Hebrew or Christian Tradition had been written — or dreamed of.

The Greeks and Romans held this Belief very lightly, and the Jewish People not at all.

It was not a part of Buddhist Faith, nor did it enter into the Philosophy of Confucianism.

The existence of an Immortal Soul in Man — or of a Personal Deity in control of the Universe — is denied or ignored by both of these Great Ethical Systems.

DUE to prevailing Animism: — the Savage mind ascribes a Spirit or Soul to every phenomena of the Universe.

Many Aboriginal Tribes do not restrict a Future Life to man or even to animals; they believe in the rebirth of all Inanimate Nature as well: — that all things will be made anew and appear again in a Land of Fadeless Bloom — Beyond the Setting Sun.

There are, however, Primitive People who have no conception of a Spiritual Existence or of a Supreme Being: — yet they possess, not only Moral and Ethical Characteristics of the Highest Order, but are also remarkable for having formulated a Social System, and reached a stage of Physical Perfection unequaled by any Religious Community on Earth. For centuries they have lived thus — in Love and Peace with all mankind.

LONG before the era of Buddhism in India, speculations as to the Future had developed belief in Metempsychosis, which became a fundamental doctrine of Brahmanism — the religion of the Priestly Caste among the Hindus.

Without losing its identity, the Spiritual Substance, supposed to exist in man, was thought to enter other forms of life, higher or lower in the scale of being in consequence of deeds wrought and character formed.

Transmigration of the Soul implied eternal existence before as well as after any appearance on earth as a human being. This endless round of existence may well have become intolerable to the mind of man: — Deliverance from which Buddhism afforded relief in the hope of *Nervana*.

WITH Semitic nations man's fate after dissolution was of small concern. The Babylonians and Assyrians appear to have believed in a semiconscious future existence, but with no distinctions based on character or conduct.

Similar ideas of the future were entertained by the ancient Hebrews.

There is no trace of a belief in Endless Existence — or in a Future State of Rewards and Punishments found in the earlier records of the Jewish People. They did not occupy themselves at all with the possibilities of a Future Life. Neither the Prophets nor Legislators or Great Thinkers of Israel seem to have attached any importance to the future of the Individual, but were concerned only for the welfare of the Race.

A high type of piety thus flourished without Hope of Immortality.

THE Doctrine of Personal Immortality, or of a Future Life, is not found in "Hebrew Tradition" nor is it held by Orthodox Jews of today.

If a Future State of Rewards and Punishments was part of the "Original Plan" as nearly all Evangelical Christians assume, — one would suppose a matter of such vital concern, not only to the Jewish People but to all mankind, — would have been clearly and emphatically revealed by the "Creator" during the first three or four thousand years when, according to the Record, in immediate control of affairs, — promulgating Laws and fulminating Penalties for disobedience, — Always of a Temporal Nature, — no Heaven to gain or Hell to shun or Never Dying Soul to Save!

The fact is the Doctrine is Apocryphal — borrowed from the Persians

and was only held by a small sect of the Jews after the time of the Babylonish Captivity. 608-538 B. C.

ON the other hand, the Doctrine of Immortality — The Resurrection of the Body and The Life Everlasting — has been written into the Creeds of Christendom! — And, however Irrational or Indefensible — is today, the leading Tenet of Christian Theology.

The Doctrine is defended, not only by people who accept The Bible as authority, but by men who base their reasons on evidence gained by Metaphysical or Spiritualistic investigation.

* * * *

Among the most common proofs relied upon by the popular mind is a natural desire to live forever, and the apparent incompleteness of this present life. These sentiments find

expression in various religious formula, which the Unthinking Multitude accept without question.

* * * *

Great weight has heretofore been given to all Scripture in support of belief in Personal Immortality. But as a more Learned Exposition renders an appeal to the Old Testament of no avail, — it is generally the New Testament — and more especially the words ascribed to Jesus Christ Himself that furnish authority.

It is maintained, however, by Scholars who attach importance to these writings, that Uncertainty Exists as to the actual words and teachings of the Founder of Christianity: — Furthermore, that the Apostolic Writers, while denying to man Inherent Immortality — distinctly announce Endless Life as a Special Gift, bestowed by the Deity on the finally faithful.

BELIEF in the Resurrection of the body in connection with the Doctrine of Immortality is held far more strongly by Christians and Mohammedans than by any religious bodies of modern times.

Although subject to grave doubts by some members, — it is generally accepted, and continues a part of the creed of both Moslem and Christian.

Some maintain that all men regardless of religious belief will be raised from the dead, while others claim that only adherents of certain forms of religion will be deemed worthy to share in the Resurrection.

Some maintain that the Resurrection will be Psychic only, — others believe that it includes the Physical as well. Some regard the idea of a Resurrection in a figurative sense, — most religious people have hitherto looked upon it as being actual.

ANCIENT Persia — prolific in Religious Sentiment — contributed the Thought of a Resurrection to the world. Whether the Idea originated with Zoroaster or already existed before his time, cannot be definitely stated. Various customs would seem to indicate that the earlier Iranian People expected a reconstruction of each human being from actual constituent parts scattered throughout the elements.

Among all other Civilized Nations in the world at that period, with the exception of Egypt perhaps, the Idea of a Resurrection of the body was entirely absent.

The Under World was looked upon as "The Land of no Return."

For the multitude there was no expectation or hope of anything but a shadowy existence Beyond, Involving neither Rewards nor Punishments.

THE Greeks, more than any people that ever lived, furnished the world with Ideas. They analysed human nature more keenly than any, but failed to find an Immortal Principle.

The speculations of Socrates and Plato on the subject, represent a critical attitude rather than positive acceptance, — seeking to find reasonable grounds on which it might be maintained, if at all.

Plato's statements are somewhat involved but on the negative side of the question.

Socrates believed that Dissolution frees man from the power of the Natural.

Aristotle believed in the Immortality of Intelligence, but did not accept the idea of life after Dissolution: — With him the Soul is simply the Vital Principle.

Pythagoras believed in the Reabsorption or return of the Vital Principle to the Absolute and consequent loss of Individuality.

From among many Great Philosophers of Ancient Greece, these few names, familiar to every School-boy, are worthy of mention, as holding views antagonistic to belief in Personal Immortality.

Although the Homeric Poems tell of Elysian Fields, and of a Barren and Cheerless Hades, — yet Greek Mythology puts no special emphasis upon a somewhat Vague and Shadowy Existence Beyond.

The Romans, likewise, attached but little importance to a Future Life.

While partial to the Ancestral Cult and to Established Customs, they were hospitable to all Schools of Philosophy and to all Religious Ideas which were not Subversive of Law and Order.

CONCERNING the attitude of Men in the present time — most Thinkers and Writers, outside of Religious Circles, hold a negative position towards the Doctrine — contending that the only possible Immortality is in Ideas and Offspring.

The recognition of Evolution as a Fundamental Fact in the Economy of Nature, and consequent awakening of interest in the Natural Sciences — especially that of Biology — has led to the Formulation of a more Exact Psychology — Radically inconsistent with the Idea of Conscious Immortality, — and today the possibility of a Spiritual Existence, or of *Thought*, apart from a Brain or bodily organism, is denied by all Great Students of Mental Science.

Intelligent People everywhere, realize that Immortality has not been Demonstrated — as yet.

THE principle argument against Conscious Immortality is the fact that Thought is a Function of the Brain: — when the Brain ceases to act Consciousness will vanish: — this fact alone carries with it the Negation of any possible Immortality.

Not only Consciousness but Life Itself depends on Physical Functions that Fail at Once — Go Out like a Flame — when Nutrition is Cut Off.

All Psychic Phenomena — all Conscious Life will cease when Physical Conditions that justify them cease.

* * * *

In any event, we may rest assured that the Great Unconscious Developmental Order of Nature is Supreme, working on through the Ages towards the Conservation of Totality. — That nothing is lost, or wasted, or “walks with Aimless Feet” — *or Suffers* — but Subserves the Highest Good!



WERE there no Ignorance there
would be no Mystery. —
Were there no Mystery there
would be no Religion.

Offspring of Ignorance — engendered by Fear! — The different kinds of Religion mankind have professed is only exceeded by the diversity of Gods they have worshiped.

THE beginnings of all Reliigious Mythology lies back of Authentic History — and beyond possible credence.

The Egyptians perhaps, more than any other Ancient People, postulated the existence of Divinities. — To the multiplication of Gods there was no limit. Chief among these Divinities was the Sun-God Re — source of all Being: Progenitor of all Living Things: and of all the Lesser Deities that crowded the Egyptian Pantheon. . . The oldest conception represents the Sun-God as sailing across the heavens in a ship — the Bark of Dawn. At sunset He stepped aboard another vesel — the Bark of Darkness, which bore Him back from the west to the east during the night.

Legend tells how he rose as a babe from a Lotus-flower that floated on the Primeval Sea. Another Legend relates his Act of Self-procreation.

According to Tradition it was not uncommon for the Gods to consort with the wives and daughters of men. Some of the most renowned personages of antiquity are said to have been thus begotten. . . In fact no one was thought capable of doing Great Things unless he was a God, or the Son of a God.

* * * *

IN the remotest period of their history the Egyptians believed in a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, based on the metaphysical view that the Human Soul is of the Divine Substance — an emanation from a Primal Cosmic Soul — and on the ethical view that the present

life is a probationary period in which moral fitness for reabsorption into the Universal Soul, or Divine Substance may be attained.

At death the Spirit descended to the Under World for Judgement before the Supreme Tribunal of Osiris, God of the Dead. The Good were permitted to dwell with the Gods, while the Wicked were consigned to fiery torments amid perpetual darkness.

It seems to have been believed by many, that after the lapse of ages, the Spirit would again return to the Body, which was therefore carefully Embalmed. . . The assurances of a Future Life for those properly Embalmed was very strong; whether the common masses, who were too poor to pay the cost of Embalming were thought to long survive Physical Dissolution is doubtful.

U CONSCIOUS Personal Immortality was supposed to supervene only with the Reunion of Soul and Body at the time of the Resurrection. . . The Doctrine of Metempsychosis, held by the Egyptians, imposed a Period of Purgation after Physical Dissolution — in which the Soul became fitted for Reembodiment — or Reabsorption.

Tombs were the earliest Temples and the Ancestral Cult the earliest form of Divine Worship. . . This Cult as the basis of Hope for Survival, maintained itself to the latest period of Egyptian Chronology.

The Pyramids of Egypt were Tombs — built for Kings. It is said there is still to be seen in the middle of the largest, an empty Sepulchre: — once occupied by a Rameses or Pharaoh — waiting — alone in this Vast Mausoleum, the Souls return. —

HENERATION of the Dead and desire for Immortality led to the art of Embalming and construction of Costly Sepulchral Monuments.

As well known, the Ruins of Ancient Egypt have been ransacked, her Tombs and Temples profanely plundered to enrich the Museums of the whole world. — The resting place of her most illustrious dead have been impiously invaded and their Embalmed Remains exposed to the Idle Gaze of the Multitude.

There is this to be offered, however in Extenuation of such Sacrilege: — the Old Egyptian Race and Religion are now Extinct: — furthermore Egyptian Remains are not alone Objects of Curiosity — but are of much Educational Value. —

That Modern Metropolis or Great Seat of Learning is indeed destitute which is not in possession of an Egyptian Obelisk or Sarcophagus.

EGYPT was known to all the world in early times, as the most celebrated School for Wisdom and for all Rare and Valuable Knowledge.

The Ancient Egyptians were Indigenous; having a National Existence of more than Ten Thousand Years. They were the first people who rightly understood the True Principles of Government; — they devoted their highest efforts and best thought to the improvement of Mankind — everywhere. —

While the Religious System they evolved has gone to decay long since — the Arts and Sciences they elaborated and fostered — the Wisdom and Learning acquired and spread, yet survives to lead and illuminate the world.

In the imperishabl grandeur of her Ruins, Ancient Egypt represents the most Venerable the most Renowned the most Marvelous Civilization of Recorded History.

D OUBTless many of the Deities of Remote Antiquity were actual men, who by superior ability and genius became great leaders and were afterwards deified.

On the Conquest of Egypt — Alexander the Great was accorded Divine Honors as the Son of Jupiter Ammon.

Osiris is said to have been the First Ruler in Egypt, and to have reclaimed his subjects from a barbarous life, — taught them agriculture and enacted wise laws. He subsequently traveled into foreign lands, spreading wherever he went the blessings of Civilization.

Isis, his wife, instituted the cultivation of grain. She was looked upon as the Goddess of the Earth, whom the Egyptians called their Mother.

The Historian Herodotus states that Osiris and Isis were the Principle Divinities of the Early Egyptians.

AMONG the innumerable Deities
hitherto recognized by the
Religious World, — those of
Ancient Egypt, Persia and Hindustan
were the most powerful, and exerted
a more widespread and long con-
tinued influence than any — either of
Ancient or of Modern Times.

IT would require volumes to treat fully of the Religious and Philosophical Systems of Antiquity — we can only touch briefly at this time, on points refering to the Doctrine of Immortality.

* * * *

Brahmanism — derived from Brahma — supposed Supreme Being — is the Religion developed by the Priestly Cast among the Hindus.

It is fully set forth in the Veda — their Holy Writ — and as the Veda regulates the Legal Social and Political Life of the Hindus — the history of Brahmanism is largely involved with Hindu Civilization.

The Sources from which this Religious System sprang, like many others, are Remote and Mythical. . . Belief

in a Soul and Spirits — Occultism and Magic, — were combined with Theosophical Notions, — Intuition, Divine Illumination, and Spiritual Ecstasy.

These Ideas and Beliefs crystallized at length around an Elaborate Ritual Fostered by the Priestly Order.

The Veda represents all these numerous elements — and their import may be only understood in the light of their Historical Evolution.

In a broader sense the Veda, signifying To Know, are the most Ancient Sacred Writings of the Hindus, embracing all of the Revealed or Canonical Literature of the Brahmans.

It is made up of Ten Sections or Books — added to the Canon at various periods. . . The earliest and most important are the Rig-Veda and Soma-Veda: — containing more than a thousand Verses or Hymns: — many of them of great value and beauty.

The later books are composed of esoteric treatise and metaphysical speculations on the nature of things: and from their position at the end of the Veda they are called Vedanta: a term which is also used to designate a School of Pantheistic Philosophers.

The Vedic Period is estimated to be about two thousand years before the Christian Era.

LESS venerable or credible than the Veda are a mass of writings embodying Sacred Tradition: — the most famous of which is the Code of Manu.

There are also two Great Epics: — containing a prodigious quantity of Religio-Philosophical Lore. . . These writings were cotemporaneous with the establishment of Buddhism.

The Code of Manu relates that the

Universe was in a chaotic state: — order was brought about by the Divine Spirit or Intelligence: — this created water by meditation, and from water, Impregnated with the Divine Force, sprang out a Golden Embryo from which Brahma was born.

Thus engendered, the God Brahma is a Personification of the Absolute All-pervading World-spirit.

In later developments He represents the Essence of the Universe — from whence all things are Evolved and into which they are Reabsorbed.

As a Divine Being He Manifests Creative Activity, sharing with Vishnu and Siva, the other two members of the Hindu Trinity, in producing maintaining and dissolving all things.

To Know Him is a Step Towards the Imperishable and Supreme Soul.

This Universal Soul — the One and Only Reality — remains to this day the ultimate element of Religious Belief of Intelligent India, of whatever Sect or Philosophy.

HINDIC Religion is pervaded with a devout faith in the efficacy of Invocation, Asceticism and Sacrifice. The Hindus believed that through these instrumentalities they could be raised to the rank of Divinities — become Gods, and thus approach the final goal of Hinduism — the loss of Individuality in the All Pervading Brahma — or as with Buddhism in Nervana.

The attainment of final Emancipation depends on perfect knowledge of the Divine Essence. . . This knowledge can only be obtained by complete abstraction of the mind from external

objects, and intent meditation on the Deity, — which of course presupposes total extinction of all sensual desire.

The few who succeed in gaining absolute mastery over their senses and a full knowledge of the Divine Nature become Absorbed into the Universal Soul immediately on the dissolution of the body.

Those Devotees, on the other hand, who have still a residuum, however slight, of ignorance and worldliness left remaining in them at the time of dissolution, pass to a state where their souls, invested with subtile corporeal powers, await reunion with the Eternal Being.

DEEP Thinkers, and Observers of Nature! — It is evident that the Problems of Existence, — the Origin of Man and the Universe, — had early engaged the Hindu Mind.

The state of Religious Thought among the great Poet Philosophers of Ancient India as reflected in the Rig-veda, is that of a worship of the grand and striking phenomena of Nature, regarded in the light of personal conscious beings, endowed with a power beyond the control of man.

It is a Nature Worship, more pure than met with elsewhere — leading to a simple well ordered Pantheon — less cumbered with empty Formulas of Priestcraft: — representing a stage of Religious Development which must have preceded Hinduism, — probably that of the Aryan Invaders of India.

* * * *

Prominent in early Vedic Worship, Pantheism, as observed, found its most zealous advocates in one of the Orthodox Schools of Philosophy — the Vedanta — considered Orthodox inasmuch as recognizing the

Veda as the revealed source of Religious Faith — even though involving denial of the existence of a Personal Creator, and of Survival.

In fact Speculative Thought came to be so prevelant among the Leaned, that no attmpt appears to have been made by the leading theological party to check or prevent the propagation of heretical doctrins, so long as the rights and privileges of their Cast were not openly called in question.

Yet doubt and dissention on cardinal points of belief, could not but weaken the authority of the Hindu Hierarchy: — and as these Sceptical Ideas spread among the masses, the time came when it wanted but a man of moral and intellectual power to render them fatal to priestly pretentions.

Such a man arose in the person of a Saka Prince of Kapilavestu — Gautama — recognized as Buddha.

GREAT men are products of human events — of environment — of times and conditions — of demand and development.

* * * *

Had it only been for the Philosophical Views of Buddha, they might not have caused much uneasiness to Intrenched Orthodoxy. . But he went beyond Vedanta Philosophy by denying the Existence of the Soul as a Substance: — admitting only certain Intellectual Faculties as Attributes of the body — perishable with it.

The Institution of Cast was recognized by Buddha: — yet on the other hand he altogether denied the Revealed Character of the Veda and the Efficacy of Ceremonials derived therefrom. . He also rejected the claims of the Priestly Class to be the repositories and divinely appointed Tachers of Sacred Knowledge.

GAUTAMA — “ *The Enlightened One!* ”



IT is thought in India that a Buddha, — meaning in Sanscrit the Wise, the Enlightened, — appears at intervals in the world to proclaim the True Doctrine.

At length this Truth becomes corrupted and lost, and is not restored till a new Buddha appears.

The last Historical Buddha is recognized as Gautama. This Pre-eminent Ethical Teacher and Reformer of Ancient India, flourished some twenty five hundred years ago. . His home was in the region of India to the north of Benaris. . His native town was Kapilavastu, modern Kakena, not far from the border of Nepal.

Early Tradition states that he was born in a Garden, Sacred to the Goddess Lumbini — which has recently been found to be a Fact.

THE name of Gautama's father is given in the Sacred Text as Suddhadani, a Chief of the Sakys: — and his mother is known as Maya. . It is generally thought that he was a Prince of Regal Blood.

His mother died when he was but seven days old, and he was entrusted to the care of her sister, Maha Pra-japata. . As a child he received the name Gautama — he is also known as Seddatha and Saky-muni.

We know little regarding his youth and education: but abundant Historical Facts concerning his early manhood and after life, justifies all and more of the Ideal and Beautiful — which Legend has woven into the record of his youthful attainments and activities, — his Talents and his Virtues.

Something of this is portrayed in Sir Edward Anold's famous poem — The Light of Asia.

GAUTAMA was early married to his cousin, and had a son, named Rahula. . . It was shortly after the birth of this son, in his thirtieth year, when he had fulfilled the obligation which the Hindu Creed required to be discharged to one's ancestors, that he saw the vision that led him to devote himself to the study of Religion and Philosophy.

Paternal affection threatened for a time to interfere with the divine call.

At length, however, in a pathetic parting from his sleeping wife and child, Gautama completed his Great Renunciation. . . Leaving home and kindred, wealth and power, to become a penniless and despised student and homeless wanderer — to take up the life of an Ascetic. . . This was the mode of procedure that the Brahman faith prescribed — this was the manner of seeking the Path of Salvation.

AFTER a time Gautama gave himself up solely to Meditation and Thought — which gradually led to the evolution of his Religious and Philosophical Theories regarding the nature and existence of Evil — its origin and its eradication.

The place where the Light dawned upon him is still pointed out. . The tree beneath which he was seated has ever since been Sacred as the Botree.

The emancipation of his mind found expression in rhythmical stanzas: and he found at that moment even while alive the perfect peace of Nervana.

Having thus attained the Buddh-ship — Gautama sought the five disciples with whom he had been associated: — he wished to first tell them of the Great Enlightenment he had found: — after that to his kindred — and to all mankind.

BUDDHA'S, or rather Gautama's life was a long one — eighty years — more than two thirds of which was devoted to his ministry.

The place where he died was near Kusinagara, some eight miles to the east of his birthplace, and about one hundred and twenty miles to the northward of Benares.

A detailed and affecting account of his last moments is given in the Buddhist Scriptures.

Several of his Disciples are mentioned as being with him — especially the beloved Ananda.

The most Divine and Lovable Personality that ever walked the Earth! — The Comradeship and Affection existing between Gautama and his more immediate Associates was Ideal. — Even now, in looking up the Story of his Life, one can but become his Devoted Follower.

PROBABLY no person ever lived unless it be Confucius, who's Thoughts and Teachings are more Voluminous than those of Buddha. And the continual publication of Pali Texts, Tibetan Writings, Chinese Records and Cylonece Accounts is adding new Material each year, — while fresh Archeological Discoveries and Researches are contributing constantly to knowledge already gained regarding His Life and Teachings.

* * * *

The Buddha is represented on various occasions, during His long Ministry, to have been so much moved by some event, that he gave utterance, as it were, to his pent up feelings in short exstetic sentances, expressed for the most part, in one or two lines of poetry, charged with religious emotion, or high ideals of life. — A collection of these Gems of

Thought and Deep Sayings of Buddha introduced with the words "Thus was it spoken by the Exalted One" constitutes the richest and most illuminating garland of word painting contributed to Ethical and Philosophical Literature in Human History.

* * * *

To Gautama's Enlightened Mind the cause of all Misery and Sorrow is Desire, — the only relief is to eradicate this Lust, and he pointed out and led the way. — Wandering up and down the Ganges region, the Holy Land of India, he continued to impart by precept and example the plain tenets of Redemption. . . The purity of his life, the gentleness of his manner, the earnestness of his teachings, and the firmness of his convictions won thousands to accept his simple creed. — Even during his lifetime his doctrines spread widely through India.

FORTUNATELY, abundant Records of Gautama's Ideas and Teachings have been preserved — including his Discourses to the five Disciples who first accepted his New Found Faith, — in which he expounds the main features of his System. . . There is no reason to doubt its substantial accuracy. . . It is what the Compilers of the oldest extant documents believe Gautama to have regarded as the most important points in his Doctrines.

It is incorporated into two divisions of their Sacred Books, — a few transcriptions of which are here given.

In the first of the collection of Dialogues of Gautama, he discusses and completely refutes all the current theories about the existence of a Soul.

In the series of Conversations between the Greek King Menander and

Magasena — found in the earlier Buddhist Books — this question of the Soul is also taken up, — describing how the King is convinced that there is no such thing as the Soul, in the ordinary sense, — therefore no Conscious Immortality.

* * * *

HERILY — there is no Being — there is only a Becoming! The state of every Individual is unstable, temporary — sure to pass away.

Every person or thing is a putting together, a compound, — and in each Individual — without exception — the relation of their component parts is ever changing — is never the same for two consecutive moments.

It follows therefore that no sooner has Individuality begun than Dissolution also begins.

There can be no Individuality without a putting together: there can be

no putting together without a Becoming: — there can be no Becoming without a becoming different: — and there can be no becoming different without a Dissolution, a passing away which sooner or later will inevitably be complete.

* * * *

Even while matter is becoming Organized — becoming an Individual — Dissolution and Decay have already begun to act. . . In other words Destructive action is inseparable from Constructive action — operating everywhere in Nature.

* * * *

The constituent parts of every Individual involves Pain: — that is to say, the conditions necessary to make an Individual are also the conditions that necessarily give rise to Suffering.

Birth is attended with pain; Decay is painful; Disease is painful; Death is

painful: Union with the Unpleasant is painful: — painful is separation from the pleasant: and any natural Craving Unsatisfied — that too is painful.

In brief, all Human Senses or Sensations, not only afford Pleasure but give rise to Pain.

* * * *

Verily! Sentient Existence is hopelessly Miserable! A Curse rather than a Blessing. . . Misery is not a mere taint — the removal of which might render Existence tolerable — Misery is its very essence — relief from which can only be found in Nervana.

* * * *

TO Be Born is to become Individualized from the Whole: — Individuality implies Limitation: Limitation implies Error: Error implies Ignorance: and Ignorance is the source of Misfortune.

Hence Birth is an Evil because it is

inseparable from Ignorance — and it is only the removal of Ignorance which can lead to the suppression of Desire — while only the suppression of Desire can lead to Peace.

* * * *

Now, this is the Truth as to the source of Human Misery: — Verily! — It is the Craving Thirst that causes the Renewal of Becoming — accompanied by Sensual Pleasure — and seeks satisfaction — now here now there — that is to say — the Craving for the Gratification of the Senses.

* * * *

Now, this is the Truth as to the passing away of the Sensual and Selfish. Verily! It is the passing away so that no Passion remains.

The giving up — the getting rid of — the being completely Emancipated from, — the Harboring no longer of this Insatiable Desire.

THERE are two aims which he who has given up the world ought not to follow after: — devotion on the one hand to those things whose attractions depend upon the passions: — a low and pagan idea fit only for the worldly minded — ignoble unprofitable: — and the practise on the other hand of undue austerity which is painful, ignoble, unprofitable.

There is a Middle Path discovered by Sedartha: — a Path which opens the eyes and bestows Understanding — which leads to Peace to Insight to The Higher Wisdom — to Nirvana! —

Verily! It is this Noble Eightfold Path: — that is to say — Right Views Right Speech Right Aspirations Right Conduct Right Means of Livelihood Right Effort Right Mindfulness and Right Meditation.

TO have Traversed the Path and reached the Truth: — to have Broken the Bonds, put an end to the Intoxications and gotten rid of the Hindrances of Life is to have attained *Aratship*: — “the state of him who is most worthy.” —

The harbor of repose, the cool cove, the island amidst the floods, the place of bliss, emancipation liberation safety!

The supreme, the transcendent, the uncreated, the imperishable, the unshaken, the abiding, the unending!

The farther shore, the home of peace the calm, the detachment, the ineffable — Medicine for all Evil. —

Nirvana — “the dying out” — that is the dying out of the fell fire of the Three Cardinal Sins — Sensuality Ill-will and Stupidity!

Teaching the means of arriving at the Other Shore — of reaching Nirvana — is Teaching Virtue.

THE Eightfold Path constituting the "Middle Way" to Nirvana leading between the two extremes of sensual gratification and asceticism was developed by Gautama into a set of practical precepts enjoining the various duties of common life and of religion.

They are all intended as a means of Counteracting the Chain of Causes that Tie Man to Existence.

Five are of universal obligation:— not to kill not to steal not to commit adultery not to lie not to be drunken.

The other five — for those entering on the Direct Pursuit of Nirvana, by embracing the religious life — are to abstain from food out of season, to abstain from dancing, theatrical representations and songs, to abstain from personal ornaments and perfumes, to abstain from luxuries, to abstain from taking gold or silver.

Besides the foregoing negative requirements, there are certain positive Virtues, fundamental to Buddhism.

The more essential of these are Love Charity Purity Patience Courage Contemplation and Knowledge.

* * * *

The life of a Recluse — wholly devoted to the requirements of Religion is held to be more conducive to a State of Serenity: — but a devout Layman who is unable to cast off the ties of home or business, is held in higher honor, and may yet “Enter the Path.”

* * * *

Much of the charm and force of Gautama's Discourses is due to repetition: — words clauses ideas, are elaborated and commented upon. . . Thus not content with the prohibition of Lying, Gautama enjoins the avoidance of all offensive or gross language, or saying anything to excite Enmity or Ill-will.

LOVE and Compassion are the Cardinal Virtues of Buddhism, boundless in their manifestations, extending to every living thing.

This spirit of Universal Sympathy and Compassion inculcated by Gautama gave to His Teachings a pre-eminence over all others.

He addressed himself to all classes of men "to Casts and Outcasts promising salvation to all: a sense of duty extended from the narrow limits of the house the village the country to the widest circles of mankind: a feeling of Sympathy and Brotherhood towards all men. The Idea, in fact, of Humanity was first propounded by Buddha."

While in his perfect peace of mind the Enlightened man is indifferent to pleasure or pain, and unmoved by the vicissitudes of life, he is filled with love and compassion for everything which is still in thrall of Desire.

ALL the means used as helps towards doing right avail not the sixteenth part of the Emancipation of the heart through Love.

As a mother even at the risk of her own life protects her only son so should we cultivate Love without measure toward all mankind. Let a person maintain this mindfulness all the while he is awake, whether standing or walking, sitting or lying down. This state of mind is the best in the world.

Our minds shall not waver: no evil speech will we utter: tender and compassionate will we abide: — loving in heart: — and we will be ever radiating our Loving Thoughts. And with this feeling as a basis we will ever be suffusing the whole world with Thoughts of Love, far-reaching, grown great, beyond measure, void of anger or ill-will. — *Thus was it spoken by the Victorious One — to whom all Truth is known!*

OF the three Cardinal Sins of Buddhism the last and worst is Stupidity — the others being Sensuality and Ill-will.

Intellectual Alertness, Contemplation and Knowledge of Cause and Effect are ranked as Virtues in Buddhism, and hold a prominent place among the means of attaining Nirvana. It is reserved in part for Abstract Thought to achieve the final step in Emancipation.

Thought is the highest faculty of man: — and in the mind of Eastern Philosophy, the highest of all Forces.

* * * *

Evil desires low ideals useless cravings idle excitements, are to be suppressed by cultivating right desires lofty aspirations and Kindly Thoughts.

The crowning object of existence is the extinction of Personality by Self-sacrifice Contemplation and Suppression of Desire.

Salvation is to be won in this world and in this world only by Self-sacrifice Self-culture and Self-control.

One who engages to lead a life of Renunciation, must refrain from all converse with Women of Frivolity lest any disturbing element should ruffle the serene indifference of the mind.

There is but one avenue to Abiding Peace: — many have already followed it — have conquered the Lust and Pride and Anger of their own hearts and found Repose.

A true Buddhist feels himself free and secure: and gladness springs up within him: and so rejoicing he is at ease and filled with a sense of peace and in that peace his heart is stayed.

* * * *

He who perceives the Supreme in all Nature, and acquires equanimity toward all beings, attains the highest state of bliss.

ONE of the most prominent and interesting names connected with the history of Buddhism is that of Asaka, King of Magada.

He was at first a Persecutor of the Faith but being converted in a marvelous manner, became a zealous promoter of the religion: — not however as adherents of other systems usually prpagate their creeds: — for it is distinctively characteristic of Buddhism that it has never employed Force: — rarely even to resist aggression.

* * * *

There exists in various parts of India, Decrees in the name of the King inscribed on rocks and pillars, inculcating the doctrines of Buddhism.

A remarkable spirit of charity and toleration runs through these Royal Edicts. "The King beloved" desires to see believers of all creeds living in all places. A man ought to honor his

} own faith only, but he should never abuse the faith of others. . . There may be circumstances even when the religion of others ought to be more honored, and in acting thus a man fortifies his own faith.

Yet alas! Today Proselyting Hoards of Ecclesiatics from all Christendom seek to destroy this Faith which has been for so long, and is still, the sole Light of so many millions of human beings: — and of which it may be said — for Purity Excellence and Wisdom it is Unexcelled.

The Equality of all Men, the opening of its ranks to all classes, and of both sexes, which Gautama sanctioned with regard to the final Goal, Nirvana — and that Goal to be reached — not by Dogmatic Belief or the Practise of Penance or Sacrificial Worship, but by Practising Virtue, — cannot fail to be acceptable to all reasonable people.

BUDDHISTS do not conceive of any God or Gods as being pleased or displeased with human action, or as assigning rewards or punishments. The very Idea of a God as Creating or in any way Ruling the world is utterly absent from the Buddhist System. God is not as much as denied — he is simply ignored! — Contrary to the opinion generally held that a Nation of Atheists never existed. —

It can no longer be questioned that the numerous Buddhist Nations of the world are essentially Atheistic, for they recognize no Being with greater Powers than Man is Capable of Acquiring by Virtue Austerity and Knowledge.

Buddha was not a Divinity or in any way Supernatural. He was the Ideal of what any man may attain by a Life of Rectitude. The great object of Buddhist worship is to keep this idea visible in the eyes of men.

SUCH, in brief, are some of the more prominent points in the Moral Philosophy of the *Great Teacher!* — Not a word about God or the Soul or Futurity: — so simple, yet so mighty and far reaching in results!

Covering a period of more than two thousand five hundred years: — Buddhism is the most extended religion in the world today. — Its adherents are estimated at upwards of five hundred million: — yet until the middle of the last century nothing was known regarding the origin or nature of this great World Religion beyond conjecture.

Shortly after the English occupation of India, a large set of writings in Sanscrit were discovered, forming the Buddhist Canonical Books. — Other books were also discovered in Pali text.

Copies of these books engaged the attention of eminent Oriental Scholars in London and Paris: — thus insuring their publication to the world.





The Sage of China

*“What ye would not that others
should do to you, do ye not unto
them.”*

— Confucius.

657.73.C



GREAT Ethical Teachers have redeemed all generations! — The most renowned Sage of China — or of the whole world! — Confucius appeared at a crisis in Chinese history: — government had fallen into decay, right principles were lost.

He was born 651 B. C., in the town now called Shan-Tze in the state of Lu where his descendants of the seventy sixth generation yet live. There was no higher lineage in China than that of Confucius — his ancestors were kings.

* * * *

The father of Confucius, a famous officer, died when his son was about three years old, leaving his family in destitute circumstances: — but the boy was most carefully reared and educated by his mother. . At an early age he gave evidence of extraordinary ability, and inclination for learning.

CONFUCIUS was married when nineteen and had a son. But, like many other great teachers, notably Gautama, he was not well adapted to family or domestic life, and after a few years the marriage was abrogated — yet with no impairment of friendship.

* * * *

The life work of Confucius began when he was twenty two. . . . Soon a school of young and ingenious students desirous of being instructed in the practice of right conduct, gathered round him. . . . From this time until his death — a period of fifty one years — he led the life of a Teacher.

* * * *

His Moral and Ethical Principles. — His Devotion to the Practical. — As Patriot Sage and Teacher. — He ranks among the Foremost Men the world has ever seen!

THEOLOGICO-Metaphysical speculation is entirely absent from the Moral Philosophy of Confucius, which is summed up in the five cardinal virtues:—*Humanity, Uprightness, Decorum, Wisdom and Truth!*

He was not, as some suppose, a Religious Teacher: — in fact, he did not concern himself with Religion. His Teachings were purely Ethical and Political. His attitude towards the “supernatural” may be inferred from his own words, “respect the Gods but have as little as possible to do with them.” — In accord with this position he expressed no opinion concerning Immortality or a Future Life.

This expressive silence clearly indicates disbelief.

If endless bliss is the reward of Virtue, or everlasting torment is held in store for Vice — the Sage took no heed of the one or the other.

Devoted to Practical Ethics and to the welfare of China, as Teacher Writer and Magistrate, Confucius at no time presented Motives for Right Action drawn from considerations of a Future State.

He recognized the fact that good and evil conduct are recompensed by Natural Results: — if not in the person of the actor yet in his descendants.

Leading men of China before the Era of Confucius did not believe in Future Retribution or in Personal Immortality.

THE Political disorders of his times directed the attention of Confucius to the principles of Good Government, and this became his most frequent topic of discourse.

Ethical and Social Science are indebted to him for the emphasis he lays on the Power of Example and the necessity of Benevolence and Righteousness of all who are in authority.

Studious of Chinese Antiquity Confucius was impressed with the fact that in the good times of the Ancient Kings, Peace and Prosperity were found hand in hand with Beneficent Government.

A Wise Ruler, centuries before, had eliminated Poverty and Ignorance and Evil from the Empire by Personal Example — in cultivating Virtue and observing the Rules of Propriety.

For a State to be prosperous, Mercy and all other Virtues are necessary and these qualities are to be manifested by the entire body of citizens.

The foundation of all Good is in the Virtue of individual men.

* * * *

Confucius taught emphatically that a bad man was not fit to rule. If a ruler was wicked he need not be obeyed; and his subjects are free to depose him.

It only requires virtue in the higher position to secure it in the lower.

FROM the time Confucius was recognized as the Sage of his Country—both in the Family and the State—his Precepts and Example have operated as an incentive to Good and a restraint upon Evil.

* * * *

Among his many Disciples there were eighty or more whom he designated as Scholars of Extraordinary Ability:—the most devoted were seldom away from him, and treasured up every word he uttered.

* * * *

It was doubtless the Moral element of his Teaching which attracted most of his followers, and still holds Chinese Men of Learning bound to him.

But the Concervative and Practical tendency of his Ideas, conspicuous in most of his Writings, is the great reason why Successive Dynasties have Delighted to Do Him Honor.

WE form a higher estimate of Confucius from the accounts given by his disciples of familiar intercourse and talks with them concerning the development of personal character, and the manner in which all social duties should be performed.

Foremost among many Wise Precepts and Pointed Aphorisms, was his Enunciation of the "Golden Rule" first Formulated by him 600 B. C.,

* * * *

For more than twenty five centuries the Ideas and Example of Confucius have been the Guide and Inspiration of the Chinese People.

There is in China at the present time a purpose to have the Philosophy of Confucius Recognized as the Official or State Religion and thereby hold the Masses, in this period of Political Change, True to the Old Standards of Ethics and Morality.

A Prolific Author, a Voluminous Editor, — Confucius was the founder of Chinese Literature. He instituted four of the “Five Classics”: the Book of Poems, the Book of Rights, the Book of Changes, and the Book of Historic Documents.

His own independent work, aside from his Apothegms, which were transcribed by his disciples, is Spring and Autumn — his last Literary Labor.

* * * *

There is no Character of Antiquity so well known as that of Confucius — largely due to the faithful care with which his disciples recorded not only his Sayings but his Manner of Life.

The common people have his maxims in memory — hundreds of thousands repeat them daily.

The Glory of the “Celestial Empire”! No Intelligent Self-respecting Chinese can be anything but a Confucian.

The Philosophy of Confucius is the best guide in the world for Human Conduct in all the relations of life: — yet it acknowledges no Personality or Power above Nature: — and lends no support to the Doctrine of Immortality: — in brief, it does not Stand for Supernaturalism. . . . China has no use for the Conflicting Creeds and Warring Sects of Christendom.

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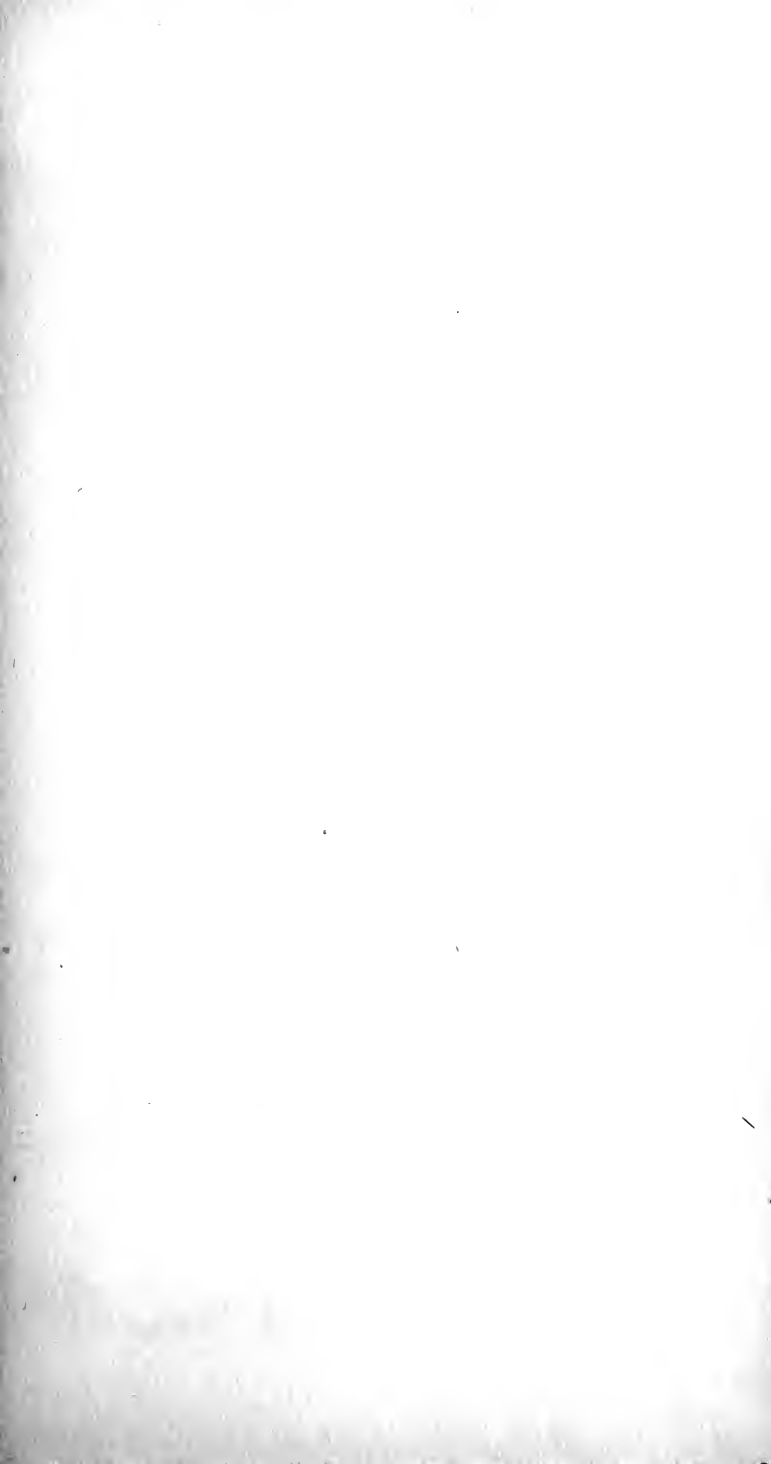
Time brought universal recognition of the great Moral Worth of Confucius.

When 52 he was made a Chief Magistrate, which gave him a chance to put his Theories into Successful Practice.

His last years were spent in retirement and Literary Pursuits. When he passed away, attention was called anew to the Nobility of his Life and Teachings, so that his Name has ever since been the most Honored in China — to which he gave his Supreme Devotion.







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