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# THE PROBLEM OF LIFE

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## A SOLUTION

BY

FITZGERALD BROAD

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# THE PROBLEM OF LIFE

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# THE PROBLEM OF LIFE

## A SOLUTION

### I

IN undertaking this elucidation of the problem of life, I would have it clearly understood that while I am not to be regarded as a Christian, yet I am essentially a man of very earnest religious convictions. There is perhaps a natural tendency in a Christian country for people to confuse and confound the terms "religious" and "Christian," but the words are not synonymous. Furthermore, let me say that my outlook on life is essentially optimistic. Recently I read a sweeping indictment by some pessimist who in a diatribe against death impugned the earth as "one vast charnel house," yet if, as he insists, death overshadows all phenomena and is the most dominant note in nature, necessarily then populations and all animal and vegetable species would have decreased in the course of ages—whereas, from their persistent increase it is obvious that life and birth

must be a more dominant and insistent note than death.

Assuredly any thinker in his fifth decade who is a pessimist has been traveling on the wrong highroad. But although today I am an incurable optimist with a sense of humor that in itself provokes a certain cheery outlook on life, nevertheless, in years gone by it was only after a prolonged struggle that I emerged from pessimism—an upward and triumphant step that I took solely by the force of logical reasoning.

I am inclined to believe that at one time or another all educated men in their inmost thoughts ponder and puzzle over the mystery of life, and indeed I have frequently been surprised by expressions of occult opinion from apparently the most superficial of men, of a type that one would never suspect of deep thinking. That there is less of such thinking than there might be is probably due to a general impression that thoughts of this kind lead only to an *impasse,* but I myself am a refutation of any such notion.

On the other hand, I would by no means claim that the haven I have attained is a completely satisfying repose, that is to say, I am not sure that the definite happy conclusions I have reached have led me to a more quiescent

mind than I possessed years ago, when the problem was still a problem to me. I think my natural restlessness has merely changed its cause and I find myself today tending to an impatience with the present, and with a wish to hasten the future.

It may seem somewhat incredible that a thinker claiming to have solved the problem of life and to have reached an optimistic conclusion, should yet be subject to disquiet and dissatisfaction; such, however, is my case, and I submit the fact as evidence that my optimism as to the purpose of the universe has really been acquired by hard reasoning and in spite of a natural tendency in the opposite direction.

I quite anticipate some scepticism as to an everyday plodder and worker of my average calibre solving the enigma that has baffled the greatest thinkers of the past, yet presumably in the course of thought and progress somebody, some day, was destined to arrive at the truth, and on the theory that "lookers-on see most of the game," it may be that my eyes have been opened.

Under the classification "lookers-on" I would include all observant thinkers who are not actual scientists and philosophers by profession. Most philosophers and scientific en-

quirers hitherto have been specialists in some single department—in chemistry or geology, in astronomy or physiology—whereas it early became apparent to me that no single thinker would have the time or power to specialize thoroughly without lessening his capacity to contemplate the whole as a whole. I therefore conceived that the most hopeful course to follow would be to investigate in a general way in all directions, striving always to maintain a breadth of thought, and to consider the phenomena of the universe collectively.

It is particularly my earnest wish to be of assistance to any who are in need of a faith, and who find the world's popular and established religions lacking in the light of reason. I would encourage any such seekers and enquirers and instil in them a preliminary hopeful confidence by suggesting that as I have successfully overcome all the doubts and questionings of my own very sceptical mind there is reasonable anticipation that I may be able to satisfy their minds, too. In any case I invite the reader at the outset to accept whatever I write as being dictated by earnestness, and to believe that I never advance arguments merely for the sake of arguing.

There is in most minds a certain percentage of religious instinct, and in defining what I

mean by "religious instinct" let it be recognized that there necessarily exists a relation between all effects and causes and therefore between our being and the Cause of our being. "Religious instinct" may then be defined as the hunger or instinctive desire to recognize and acknowledge and especially to understand that relation.

In most minds religion tends to ally itself intimately with the emotions and especially with gratitude and a wish to express that gratitude—I am even prepared to believe that sooner or later this association must take place in every religious nature. I admit to being at times religiously emotional myself when the full force of the truth becomes vividly apparent to me, nevertheless, I never allow emotion to control my reason.

Possibly a self-calculating interest promotes or taints the religion of some people, but with me I enjoy religious feeling as I enjoy beautiful music or a glorious sunset or an exquisite flower—calculations do not enter into any of these sensations.

As for my tendency at this late day to chafe at the present life and to hanker for future spheres, such is simply the natural outcome of contrasting earthly conditions with better ones. Conviction that the most favorable conditions

here bear no comparison with the circumstances of the life beyond, necessarily takes the gloss off this world's ambitions and pleasure.

It is fairly obvious that man's earthly career is deliberately designed to train him in philosophy and endurance and in a wise use of his powers, and I am convinced that if anyone succeeds by persistence in rending the veil and acquiring knowledge of the life beyond, it nevertheless shall not deprive life here of its designed and salutary purport;—there may possibly be a temporary elation but presently things will readjust themselves to a normal level, and the old disquiet will be apt to bestir once more having merely readjusted and shifted its cause.

Let me admit then that whereas formerly I had to endure an unsettled desire for knowledge and a seemingly unfathomable mystery, today I am enduring with what patience I can an unsatisfied craving for the higher and better conditions of life that I know to prevail over the border.

## II

It would be a sound foundation at the outset to submit some grounds for my belief in a God at all. Let me therefore at once say that I believe in God on the excellent evidence of my own existence.

I certainly did not cause myself, and to argue that the operation of nature's laws caused me and caused everything, is merely to shift the point of enquiry, for we remain still confronted with the question as to what caused and causes nature's laws.

Obviously these laws are and always have been, but let it be recognized that the variety of their demonstration is continuous and continuously new, and always from the intricate and interwoven wonder and marvel of them it is manifest that some vast intelligence causes and directs their operation.

Most people, of course, are blinded by custom and use and by what to them is the commonplace; but it seems to me impossible that anyone who investigates nature's laws closely can assume that their cause lacks intelligence.

It is sometimes argued that because nature's laws are in force permanently and never have been out of force, there is therefore no evi-

dence that a cause must be at the back of them; but to dispose of any such fallacy, the fact is manifest that the motive power of all those laws operate in an exhaustive or slowing down process, and consequently there always is and must be a renovating force at work operating from somewhere; otherwise in the portion of eternity already over and past, everything would have become exhausted and have ceased long ago.

Astronomers tell us that even this earth of ours is slowing down in pace and revolutions, but this need not disturb our optimism, for the phenomena manifested and its variety of species are greater today than they were in earlier geological epochs, and the old earth is obviously fulfilling its purpose, whatever that purpose may be, more abundantly in the present than it did in the past.

Photography and the telescope are exhibiting to man's enquiring eye what are evidently the nebulous birth of fresh suns, from which in due course fresh solar systems will evolve with planets to replace older earths that may be approaching exhaustion.

My confidence then is based not a little upon the replenishing power of the universe and on the progression and development of species, and perhaps most of all on the de-

velopment of the average power of intelligence and man's persistent and continuous mastery of nature's forces. Facing these facts I unhesitatingly plunge into the depths to the very foundation of all and am confronted with the Cause of nature, and therein I salute the Deity. Or let me say that I regard nature as the outward or demonstrable sign of a great intelligent plan and that I salute the great and ceaseless evolving power.

I use the word "salute" here in preference to the word "worship" inasmuch as the act of worshipping is commonly associated with a certain attitude of body and mind which does not happen to be my habit or method, although my natural attitude toward the Creator is a profound acknowledgment and tendering of love and service. Moreover, let me explain that the occasional sensation of devotion and worship I allow myself is always very brief and more in the nature of a salute, for the power of the conception is so overwhelming that to permit myself a full indulgence in it, might tend to reaction. Also it is my experience that the surest day by day strength lies in quietly maintaining a steady mental poise.

Nevertheless, I by no means decry a more orthodox method of worship for my neighbor —I heartily approve of each individual vent-

ing or restraining his emotions, whichever he finds has the healthier effect on his own constitution.

It is, I think, quite a mistake to regard a tendency to emotion as an indication of effeminacy, for I believe there are some men capable of feeling so deeply that an outlet or relief is essential at times. As a matter of fact, since I have come to know more clearly and understand the truth, my adoration has become as it were constitutional and a normal part of my personality and assuredly the Omniscient will recognize my soul's attitude without expression from me.

Let me make it clear here that in my demonstration or argument for the truth I would not have anyone accept any emphasis of mine as an authority. In other words, while I would perform the office of minister I disapprove the function of a priest, and am convinced that a doubting or questioning attitude of mind will, in the long run, establish an enquirer upon a surer foundation.

If at times I may seem to speak arbitrarily it will be because I have good personal reason for what I claim to know—but I do not wish to impose any fiat. Occasionally my readers may find themselves trying to classify my views and to attach me to some particular

school of thought, but I am not aware that I have any close affinity for any special body of thinkers nor is it of much interest inasmuch as truth cannot become more true merely by virtue of the numbers who know or recognize it. Nevertheless, I agree that eventually the community must benefit by their knowledge of the truth. On the other hand, so long as mankind continues to pursue its competitive life, and the few, by annexing more than their fair share of the earth's bounty, compel the many to struggle for an existence, so long will it be some discomfort and deprivation to the individual to adopt a higher and better way; for it is inevitable that he who assimilates the truth as it is known to me will forthwith cease to compete with and push against his fellow, whereby and correspondingly he will tend to be pushed himself.

Anything, however, that a pioneer of truth may lose in a material sense will be assuredly compensated for by his wider intellectual scope and outlook on life. Personally, I would not part with the knowledge I have attained for all the wealth, luxury and power the world could offer me. It is also a pioneer's pride and conviction to believe that the ground he treads today will be the highway on which the whole community will follow in years to

come. Looking back into the past we see how century after century the world has been discarding errors and defects in religion and in its knowledge of nature—hence, in the course of time it will inevitably eliminate and eliminate until it attains the truth. It shall be my endeavor to open this truth herein with the support of reason and argument at every stage, but it will be essential first to uproot all weeds before we undertake the sowing of the seed.

## III

It happens that I am doing a considerable portion of this writing upon Sabbath days or Sundays, and a word seems appropriate in regard to the sanctity of so-called holy days. All days are alike so far as I am concerned, all of them Sundays in the sense that every day I am conscious of the infinite. To me all nature is a place of worship—Christendom in general attends its church edifices once a week, but the Universe is my temple and altar and in that sense I am never out of church.

Not that I disapprove of special places of religious meeting for those who desire it. If flocking together into a building feeds the religious craving or instinct, and if people's

hereditary consciences demand it of them, it is probably worth their while to obey the call and secure their own comfort and peace of mind.

But my own special case is different—to me the quiet contemplation of a growing flower as holding within itself that mysterious superforce called "life" as surely as we do ourselves, such a contemplation feeds and satisfies my soul more than all the churches and gatherings ever could do, and being enlightened to something so much higher and better than all these popular religions, I would not have my presence seem to endorse or subscribe to their ideas. Not that I actively oppose their rites and creeds, for I hold that every man's religion should be sacred to us all inasmuch as it is that individual's best effort to approach and worship his Creator. Yet while I never actively attack a religion, we are all, nevertheless, entitled to help forward the general average of intelligence, and should anyone appeal to me for my opinion or challenge me as to my own religion whereby I see an opening to raise his standard ever so slightly, I always feel called upon to speak freely and answer his demand—yet without aggression.

But above all things I am no iconoclast; I never demolish without the power to rebuild

and reinstate something both higher and better. All religions assuredly contain some truth, yet let us bear in mind that none of them have a monopoly of truth. Some necessarily are far ahead of others, and yet it must be remembered that every religion on earth satisfies the cravings of some earnest souls and helps them in their approach to God.

As fast as civilization awakens to the fact that its religions are cramping and restricting it begins through its spiritual teachers to widen them, to evade the cramping dogma, and tend toward principles and morality—begins, in fact, to answer the soul's healthy appetite through the intellect and reason rather than the senses. All the religions of Europe and America have widened and mellowed distinctly within our lifetime, and we know that this process will go on and go on.

A mere appeal through the senses may be poor enough provender for the soul, but then again we have to consider that at the present stage of advancement many natures in this world are genuinely assisted in their religious tendencies and helped to crave for a higher life through their sense organs—the theatrical display of ceremony and vestments, the suggestion of mystery in architectural effects and in the whisperings, and play of light and

shadow, the perfume of the censers and the volume of sweet sounds or enthralling music, all this and such like takes the commonplace individual out of his commonplace workaday surroundings and does for him in a restricted degree what my little primrose or violet does for me—and thus is his soul awakened to the enjoyment of adoration.

In this I refer not to the different denominations of Christianity alone, but to the various religions of the entire world, not only in the west but in the far east, that cradle of nearly all religions excepting in particular the one that is now at its dawning and of which all truly free thinkers are pioneers.

Surely one of the most unreasoning and futile efforts of the various religious communities hitherto has been to lead all men to one way of religious thought or belief—as well might we look to find duplicate faces or forms or characters—the project is contrary to the whole scheme of nature. The entire Creation condemns monotony and any attempt made to fashion two minds alike as to religious conception is to risk stultifying one of those natures.

On the other hand, it is unquestionable that eventually there will be evolved some fundamental bedrock for all men to build upon as a

religious basis. What that wide bedrock basis will be it is open for us at this point to consider.

In the first place, I would again lay stress on the tendency religions have to broaden with time and how leading thinkers of successive generations remodel their own conception of the God to whom they bow the knee. The early Hebrew conception was a God of supernormal human attributes, a vacillating Being who made man and subsequently repented that He had made him, a Being that was both a jealous God and a wrathful God, not by any means the same yesterday, today and forever, but sometimes with wrath kindled and sometimes placid by comparison. He was moreover a God of partialities who had made the Philistines and their minds and methods just as surely as He had made the Hebrews, and yet was partial to the Hebrews at the expense of the Philistines.

Thinkers are so apt to overlook the fact that the Creator made the minds and ideas and religious beliefs of the whole world as certainly as He made their bodies.

Subsequently the early Christian conception was a God who had to be propitiated by sacrifice and who was capable of patching up one injustice by sanctioning another. He was positively supposed to approve of one of His off-

spring suffering undeservedly to enable others of His offspring to escape deserved suffering—as if two blacks could possibly make a white.

* * * * *

Even the Christians of today, while admitting the omniscience of God, and His omnipresence in every nook and cranny of His universe—as near to each of us as is the very centre of our beings—are yet so illogical as to seek for saints or saviours to come between God and themselves, as if, in fact, God were not omnipresent but omnidistant and omniabsent.

It is, nevertheless, comforting to realize that all the Christians, and the Jews as well, are nearer to the truth today than they were a decade ago, and that they were nearer to the truth even then than they were a century ago, and thus it will go on and on with the logical inference that a thousand years from now men will stand immeasurably nearer the truth than they are at the present moment, and will probably by then have all established a common basis of religious agreement, the wide bedrock basis that shall end religious controversy and friction.

And it is logically to be foreseen that this bedrock basis must be the apex of all possible human conceptions, inasmuch as it will be the

outcome of a progressively higher and higher degree of development.

Many years ago the thought occurred to me that as man's conception of God has been improving for thousands of years it might safely be concluded that that process would continue still for other thousands, and furthermore that there was no conceivable reason why any thinker might not direct his mind into the regular channel of that scale of improvement from the past to the present, and following the same general directions on upward lines the way would be open to him to look ahead and gain some glimpse of the apex—the ultimate zenith of human conception that I feel will eventually be the fundamental common agreement of all men as a religious basis.

It was also clear and evident that in this universe the Power is inconceivably stupendous, the Wisdom is measurelessly great, Justime is acclaimed and hungered and struggled for by nations as well as individuals, and Love is emphatically the mainspring of all movement and continuity and consequently of progression, and in its ultimate or higher phases is entirely ennobling and inspiring. Correspondingly I perceived that in some degree of these four attributes, Power, Wisdom, Justice and Love, man's best conceptions of the day

had already clothed his Maker and therefore taking these four as the road or direction to that apex which man's universal conception is on the way to eventually reach, I bridged at one leap all the centuries ahead and prefixed each of those attributes with the word "Infinite."

Here then was the apex or zenith toward which man's conception of his Maker was obviously on its way, namely, Infinite Power, Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Justice and Infinite Love.

## IV

Strange as the assertion may sound, it is none the less a truth that the infinite has a closer affinity for us and for all things than the so-called finite has.

It is a scientific axiom that all matter is eternal and cannot be destroyed, can, in fact, at the most be chemically dissipated only to re-form again in some other combination. We also know that all that we now count as substantial and solid material was at one period fire mist, a nebulous gaseous vortex of inconceivable heat, and that all these solids can again be reduced to gaseous dispersion, but

yet not one particle or single iota of it will have ceased to be.

We know, too, that in the correlation of forces no power is ever lost or can be lost, and if eternity is an attribute of matter and forces, which of us would have the assurance to affirm that life is finite—life which subjects to its will and its use both forces and matter, and is consequently superior to both. Let it be understood that I am referring here to life in all its degrees and phases, for assuredly life, the greatest of all mysteries, is as inexplicable in a tiny violet or a dancing midge as it is in a human being and the convolutions of a human brain.

"As sure as death" is an idiom in common use but I impugn the phrase and claim that death is a mere semblance, the moment of dissipation before a re-forming in some other combination, I maintain that ever since man could reason and think, death has been challenged and doubted, and instinct has claimed it as the gateway to another life. I affirm that death is very far from sure as being a cessation of existence, which is the sense in which it is commonly and superficially regarded. I contradict the phrase "as sure as death" and insist that life is the only certainty. Of all the knowledge we possess, the

surest is that we are alive, but death is a matter of dispute and speculation and has ever been so.

The Infinite which is so vague and poetic and unsubstantial to most minds, has in reality a close affinity for the deep thinker. If there is one fact more obvious to the thinking mind than another it is the fact of Infinity.

Let us consider this matter and take the indisputable facts, space and time.

Astronomy with the telescope has enabled us to perceive tracts of space of an extension beyond human imagination, thronged with material or stellar bodies and though we multiply that space by millions still there can be no approach to the confines, for space is obviously limitless—there can be no alternative to it, and being limitless it is infinite.

In like manner time is merely a convenient annotation of eternity, a means for making records and giving cohesion to man's idea of the past, the present and the future, to man's knowledge that one moment always succeeds another and precedes the next. Millions of years ago, whether this world had then begun to coalesce or not, had begun to whirl in its first rhythmic nebulous course around its parent sun—whether sunrises in regular succession had commenced or otherwise, yet one

brief space of time was always then as now following the preceding one and preceding the next—a continuity that obviously cannot cease, has always been, and will always be. Clearly here again we have Infinity submitted to our reason as a fact.

As for the school of reasoners and thinkers who argue that we cannot claim time as eternal, and who speak picturesquely of the cosmos in chaos before time was, they are to be answered by the confident use of our reason, for in the use of our reason, as of all things, there is a right way and a wrong way, a sound method and an unsound, and if it were not possible to reason in a foolish and incorrect as well as a wise and correct method the reasoners would not and could not be free agents.

* * * * *

Once in my life I had an argumentative Irish neighbor who claimed that we might really all of us be part of a dream and not in existence at all, who claimed that we veritably knew nothing, and that we did not even know that we knew nothing, and on my reeling under such a tangled proposition and falling back for illustration upon mathematics, on my urging that at least we knew that the sum of two and two made four, he took exception to even that fact and claimed that there might

be stellar worlds in the universe where the sum of two and two made five.

A right or sane way of reasoning, and a maintenance of poise or reasoning balance is essential to our healthy development and to progress. Those that seek the truth must watch always that they do not stray into eccentric by-paths, else their thoughts will easily find themselves in a *cul de sac* and succumb.

Once more then I affirm and clinch the point that man with his reasoning power has a more natural affinity for the infinite than for the finite, for if space and time are infinite in extension and if material and forces and the laws that govern them are eternal, surely the life that is in us which is capable of intelligently comprehending and subjecting all four to scrutiny, must be eternal, too.

I repeat that life uses matter and harnesses forces and is therefore superior to both and it is hardly reasonable to deny capacity to the superior which we know to be an integral attribute of the subordinate and inferior.

## V

Concerning our conception of Deity as infinite power, wisdom, justice and love, although

Christians will contend that this conception is quite in accord with their own Biblical theories and dogma, it is, nevertheless, a fact that Christians are not satisfied with an unqualified infinite degree of those attributes. They tack onto that Infinite all sorts of fables and fictions and superstitions and beliefs of the past.

Laboriously and slowly for nearly two thousand years Christians in spite of themselves have had to clarify and improve and raise their own ideal and their own conception of the Creator, but always they have been building onto and maintaining their God's identity with the same primitive Jewish deity that inspired Joshua in his cruelties, and moved him to the slaughter of his fellow men and to shameful horrors for the defenseless widows and daughters of the slain.

In some vague kind of indefinite way Christians persuade themselves that though the God of Joshua was and is the one and only God and is absolutely identical with the God they all worship today, yet nineteen centuries ago His relation began to change toward mankind, began to be gentler. True He was still reputed to have first favorites among His creatures, but the chosen people were now the Christians, while the Jews, comparatively

speaking, had lost first place, and were almost if not quite as much outside the pale as the vast majority of mankind.

The whole theory is so puerile, so unnecessary, such an appalling libel on the glorious truth that it is difficult to maintain one's patience. How much better with one clean sweep to hurl all the past foolish futile records and beliefs into oblivion—to forget it all and turn our gaze upward and onward to the present and toward the future and see the glory—the measureless glory of Infinity—see the All-Father of all creation speaking direct to us through nature every moment. Why not abandon once for all all the old nursery tales about that wholly inadequate Hebrew deity and his treatment of Joshua or Jesus or any other of those well meaning but mistaken leaders of long ago.

Not that Jesus was mistaken in counseling man to love God with all their souls as their Father and to love their fellows as one great brotherhood, not that he was mistaken if he could see God as Infinite Love, Wisdom, Power and Justice, but he was certainly entirely mistaken in trying to identify the All-Father with that primitive impossible tribal deity of the Hebrews that never did exist or could have existed, and terribly mistaken if

he deliberately allowed himself to be executed as a criminal in order to propitiate or please that deity. From his puzzled cry near the finish "My God why hast thou forsaken me?" it would seem as if at the last moment he was becoming dimly aware of the disapproval of his own conscience. Not that any of that doubtful and perhaps fabulous history is seriously worth consideration.

Let man untrammeled by tradition search and think on his own account and he will assuredly come to know that the Cause of all things does bear the relation of a producer or Father to all creation—that the Cause of all things and of man's cravings for power, wisdom, justice and love must be and can only be an Infinite Love, Justice, Wisdom and Power, and such being the very obvious truth let us also realize that it is not made one whit the truer by Jesus or anyone else having perceived it or said it, and if eloquent sermons upon the mount had been preached by the dozen or gospels written by the score, the fact remains that nothing could be added to enhance the glory of Infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice and Love, and nothing could guide us better than the knowledge that we are all of us one great brotherhood, sons of that Infinite Being—offsprings and inheritors of Infinity.

While admitting that the old Mosaic records have a considerable historic value and that the ten commandments in particular are of interest, as having been a preliminary basis upon which a social community was established, let us at the same time remember that those were never Commands except in the mind of the legislator who propounded them. The relation of Deity to man is not that of a despot issuing commands to a subjugated lot of serfs but is that of a Father counseling his sons.

The "Thou shalt nots" of Moses and the "Thou shalts" of Jesus both overlooked this fact.

Wherever commandments are issued by Infinite Power we may rest assured that no beings are able to disobey them, and that they are in the category of actions that we have little if any desire to resist, in fact, that it would be physically destructive for us to disobey—such, for example, as passing beyond the earth's centripetal restraint. In other words, it is only when we reach the limit of possibility that we are confronted by the obvious commandment of the Creator—"Thus far and no further!"

In all moral or will departments God advises us but issues no command. He speaks

as a Father speaking to his son, and it remains open to us to do as we will and so to learn where our best happiness lies.

Personally, I would not preserve a single portion of any of the old traditions except as historical curiosities in a museum. I would serve them all alike; Bibles and Talmuds, Korans and Zend Avestas, Lun yus and Kojikis, Shastras, Vedas and Tripitakas, one and all of them have a like retarding influence. Not only do they fail to give a conception of Deity that is equal to the instinctive inner prompting of the thinkers of today, but they retard by luring the mind to look backward for its God.

It is for man to know his God as with him and in him now and forever, and never should he foster the conception and delusion that God, truly the same yesterday, today and forever, was at any period of the earth's history different in his method of approaching, guiding or counseling humanity than He is today.

There never was a special period on earth when saints or prophets or messiahs were more present or were more possible than they are here and now.

No miracle ever recounted by an evangelist is more miraculous than nature's methods, so infinitely marvelous are the simplest meta-

morphoses or phenomena of nature to the eyes that are open.

The common tendency of the human mind is to marvel at unfamiliar phenomena and to be callous to any process in nature familiar or accustomed. To realize this and to compel one's mind to clarify itself in this respect is perhaps the greatest and first essential for the seeker after truth.

## VI

Probably Christ's point of view and principles were best indicated in his celebrated Sermon on the Mount—usually according to the fashion of his day he was more indefinite and apt to express himself by imagery and parable. A little more plain speaking on his part would possibly have saved a lot of controversy among his followers, and maybe if he had written his own gospel he would not have left behind him such a vague indefiniteness as to his true status. In those Sermon on the Mount benedictions it is likely that Christ meant to indicate that people of the characteristics stated were on the best ethical track, and we have no grounds for supposing that he used the term "blessed" in the narrow sense of the primitive churches who counted

the "blessed" or "saved" as a very small minority of mankind.

In centuries gone by when not one person in a dozen was believed to be saved from eternal torture, the distinction between the "blessed" and the "cursed" was quite important. Seeing, however, that it is manifest that all men are part of Creation and the outcome or offspring of the Creator, it follows that all are blessed by the fact of coming into being at all.

In this regard it is appropriate here to say a word as to the lot and status of the criminal, and I wish to advance and insist that the only distinction between the criminal and ourselves is his position in the upward climb. If he be many rungs lower down on the ladder it is his ignorance alone that is responsible—in other words, the criminal is only a criminal because he so far knows no better.

If criminals knew that every wrong action would inevitably carry with it corresponding pains and penalties it is reasonable to suppose that in their own interests they would refrain. Their views, however, are strictly limited by their earthly experiences, and in their opinion they will certainly escape correction unless their crimes be discovered.

As for the possibility of a future life of

punishment for transgressions, all such considrations are very vague and unpractical to the criminal, and as a matter of fact his instinctive repudiation of the idea has a sounder foundation than he wots of.

There is no question that all men alike may count upon an eternally continuous existence in which all will be learning by happy or unhappy experience to do wisely and recognize the better way. It is evident to any unfettered reason that we never can or shall reach a stage of being where it would be impossible for us to do or think incorrectly, because under such conditions we should have lost our freedom of action and have deteriorated into automata capable of only moving in one direction. An existence of such a kind would scarcely be heavenly to an Anglo-Saxon here or hereafter.

On the other hand, this is not to be taken to indicate that we shall necessarily always be sinners to a degree, for while it must always be possible for free agents to do wrong or make mistakes, yet in a progressively superior stage of existence, we shall probably be wise enough and sensible enough to do right.

Let us proceed a little further upon this line of thought and consider the classification "criminal" from an ethical standpoint.

Human laws are one thing and ethical laws another. It is, of course, essential to the health and prosperity of a community that a given set of actions should be approved and others disapproved, and that human laws for general guidance should be made and enforced accordingly.

Any individual thereafter breaking those laws would be humanly entitled to the designation "criminal," but a criminal in the eye of human law may have rather a different standing in the light of Infinite Justice.

If we debit a man with his advantage in heredity, parentage, education, companions, environment and health, and credit him with his value as a member of the community, it may be that many men in jail today have a bigger credit balance than some of our religious leaders or most honorable social members.

Civilized man must, of course, welcome to his home the socially fit, that is to say, those whose value to the community is definite and apparent, but in the eyes of Infinite Justice the classification into degrees of deserving may be and must be a different matter.

Therefore, as I say, we must distinguish in our minds what we truly mean when we think of a man as a criminal.

From a point of Infinite Justice no human

being can judge his fellow—the records of each of us are in the keeping of Infinite Wisdom.

The lessons of life which are of moment to our eternal career are those that we know by experience to be of value to our character, such as sympathy and unselfishness, such as patience and endurance and pertinacity, and there is some comfort in the thought, therefore, that hard work or even crowded tenements and struggling poverty are more apt to produce a good crop of those virtues than a life devoted to amassing wealth or to selfish pleasure and indulgence.

## VII

That Christ was just a human being of high moral and idealistic instincts there can be no reasonable doubt, for if he possessed infinite knowledge as his adherents claim, and yet kept the secret of anesthetics to himself, any few healings he may have performed were a mere aggravation of his offence.

For myself I must admit that in these days I am profoundly uninterested in the personality of Christ or of Buddha or Confucius or Mahomet or of any of those religious leaders who stirred the world thirty to fifteen cen-

turies ago. I am so alive to the urgency of mankind throwing off the shackles of the past that to me a study of that period seems a superlative futility.

I would have thinkers awaken to the fact that our knowledge of God lies in the present and that God speaks to us every moment with the voice of all nature and through our inmost being.

I would have thinkers awaken to the fact that our more and more intimate knowledge of God is to grow in us by our experiences through the centuries ahead and not in the consideration of past periods.

I would have thinkers break away from all inherited notions of the sacred past and realize that it is in the sacred future we shall become conscious of the actual presence of God. Man's best hope of progress is to turn his back upon the past and seek his religion in the present, looking confidently and only forward. Christendom might well take a lesson from nature's practical and sensible arrangements in furnishing her creatures with eyes in the front and not in the back of their heads.

The only records of the past which are of serious service to us are recent ones, and our own.

My own individual quest for the truth began when I was a mere lad. I had gone out from England to New Zealand sheep farming, and my sleeping quarters were in an isolated little wharé or hut where I had ample opportunity for solitary thought. I had been brought up by a loving mother on strictly orthodox lines against which even in childhood my intelligence had secretly chafed.

In the course of my solitary cogitations it had gradually become apparent to me that no written evidence could be of serious authority to a strictly uncompromising thinker, to one, in fact, who sought undiluted truth at all costs. Young though I was, I had already come to the important realization that the mere fact of a saint declaring a thing as true by no means proved it to be true, but at the most denoted the saint's honest and conscientious belief in its truth, which argument, of course, would as strictly apply to the combined testimony of a multitude of saints. Wherefore at one comprehensive sweep the whole of the Bible's records were entirely put out of commission.

I remember that my attitude at the time was further strengthened by the weakness of Christian evidence, by the fact that, firstly, no original documents of any of the Bible books

were in existence, and secondly, that even if they had been in existence nobody could be absolutely sure that they were written by the saints to whom they were credited, and thirdly, that no one could be certain of the sanity or judgment of the writers whoever they were.

I was even then as now an uncompromising seeker for pure and undiluted truth, and I remember as though it were yesterday how I stepped out one night from my wharé door under the silent stars, and as I looked up at them I realized that they had a cause, and I called upon the Creator to show me the truth. I recollect that in the great stillness of that southern night, I was so deeply in earnest that the appeal was uttered in a spirit of challenge—I felt that I was challenging the Infinite Power to give me personal evidence in view of the fact that I was stranded with all recorded testimony valueless to me. Little I thought at the time that I should attain my end and know the truth as few yet know it.

With the fear that my mind might become prejudiced, I early as a youth decided to avoid reading any article or work for or against religion and my reasoning in this regard was a sound and sensible one. I argued that if some powerful thinker who had spent half a

lifetime arriving at a certain conclusion, were to take perhaps months in composing a weighty treatise in support of his conclusion, that I should have small chance of maintaining an unbiased view if within a few short days I subjected my juvenile brain to the sledge hammer blows of his convictions. Nevertheless, I gladly welcomed every opportunity for fair personal discussion with my elders, and although I eschewed all books of a religious tendency, yet brief extracts from the works of great thinkers and their condensed conclusions always interested me.

## VIII

Before we proceed further it is probably desirable that we should dispose more fully of the question of Christ's normal or abnormal status. Considering the story of his life as it is narrated even when the miraculous and improbable have been expunged he seems to have had a distinctly impressive and extraordinary personality. Regarded from the point of my own experiences, he was evidently conscious of psychic contact with the next world, and I am of opinion that this faculty will some day be comparatively general

on earth, when once man has learned to live in brotherhood and harmony with his fellows, and has therein established a closer affinity betwixt the manner of life here and the life in the great beyond.

Man has yet to awaken to the fact that the whole universe is one vast educational scheme —the higher tutoring the lower.

Notwithstanding any abnormal psychic gifts that he may have developed, it is not my wish to convey the impression that Christ was in any sense superhuman, for with our modern scientific knowledge of all that goes to compose a human being and his unspeakably marvelous physical and psychical structure a superhuman man is scarcely a logical conception. I simply contend that in his occult faculty he was only in his day what hundreds of people may become in ours, though, of course, without Christ's eccentricity and ambitious pretensions.

When I say ambitious pretensions, I refer to the tendency that that type of enthusiast has to regard himself as especially favored and selected by the Creator. Any persistent human thinker is apt to reach a point where he becomes conscious of the work and presence of some higher intelligence than his own influencing or taking a hand in his life, and he

is very apt at that stage to dart off at a tangent and to imagine himself as especially elect or missioned. He begins to feel unique and as likely as not to conceive that he has been entrusted with a message to mankind. Actually the psychic sense that he has begun to develop is probably only in the regular process of general human progression, and it does not or should not single out the individual in any eccentric direction—on the contrary, a newly developing psychic or sensitive should simply recognize his growing faculty as a natural gift, just as some people born with a natural faculty for music find it developing with proper use and expert tuition.

It is well also to realize that all the account about Christ's miraculous origin and about his dramatic appearances subsequent to his execution was probably a tradition which arose long after the personal witnesses of his career were dead and gone; nevertheless, there may still have been a substratum of truth regarding the apparition reports, for in all ages, and especially during the past few decades, cases of the kind have been on record and instances have been authenticated.

But as regards Christ's miraculous and unusual origin, a little consideration soon exposes the utter futility of the entire idea. In the

light of modern knowledge and investigation one must recognize that there can be nothing more stupendously miraculous and wonderful than the birth process of any human being from the embryo to the completed stage. There is nothing which could conceivably be a greater miracle if we can but free our minds from their blindness to the marvelous in familiar phenomena.

The futility lies in taking the stupendous miracle of everyday childbirth, and then regarding a reputed variation in the regular process as a token of divinity. Even supposing that some such variation had occurred, it could not possibly enhance the actual normal marvel.

Let us contemplate for a moment the developing of the embryo. It is not commonly realized that all the material that goes to the making of the delicate bones, cartilage, membrane, muscles, nerves and sense organs of a child is quietly attracted, concentrated and gradually fashioned into its required form by a definite power quite outside the human will or design—by, in fact, nature's creative power, or in other words, the power of the Creator. The child in all its parts is actually fashioned from the material masticated and absorbed during those months by the mother, and it is

enlightening therefore to realize that every child inherently in itself is the distinct outcome of the Creative power, that is to say, of the power of the Creator, and therefore is of veritable Divine origin.

Hence the futility in regarding any supposed variation in the regular birth process as an indication of Christ's Divinity. Nothing could be surer or clearer than the fact that we are all the direct and distinct progeny of the same creative Power that created the entire universe, and let it be ever remembered that there could be no higher source.

Therefore it is clear that Christ was not of higher origin than his fellows, yet nevertheless if some people prefer to picture Christ as of perfect character and disposition, such would after all be merely a matter of degree, and provided Christendom will leave us to our own convictions and permit us to work away undisturbed upon the development of our own characters, we need have no objection to there being one or a score of Christs many degrees higher up in the scale than ourselves. High in the scale or low in the scale we remain none the less the offspring of the Creator, which is surely a sufficiently satisfying inheritance for anyone.

Not only in the matter of childbirth, but in

all departments the marvel and miracle of nature's phenomena is apparent—gloriously apparent—to unprejudiced and truly free thinkers.

Ninety-nine men in every hundred are prejudiced by habit to regard nature's processes as uninteresting and commonplace.

They are born into this world with five main senses and a clear record for impressions. They arrive staring little babelets, and through the medium of their senses all nature's usual phenomena have been recorded and have ceased to hold their particular attention before they are out of the nursery. At an early stage of their childhood they wonder in an aimless way at all fresh phenomena that comes under their observation, but by the time they reach boyhood they are taking all nature as a matter of course and are settling down unconsciously to their real purpose in life. Probably from their boyhood to their graves they remain quite unconscious of the real significance and infinite marvel of all nature's phenomena.

It is at least some gratification to be living awakened and conscious among a semi-dormant community, and there is some humor in the thought that people in general probably regard men of emancipated minds as dreamers.

But conscious or unconscious of nature's

marvels, every man just as surely accomplishes his purpose in life and achieves the growth of his own character whereby he shall best fulfil his allotted use in the Divine economy.

Nature at the human or early stage of an individual's career does not demand of him an excessive wonderment or too conscious a discernment, and hence mankind comes under the yoke of the commonplace quite unresistingly, and it is questionable if one man in a hundred succeeds in detaching himself from that mental inertia during his earthly career.

Probably nothing but a passage from the earth life to the next, with new and startling phenomena and fresh and acuter senses, will awaken the average thinker from his apathy and unconsciousness.

We must admit that the general obtuseness is discouraging at times, yet why should it disturb us when man is manifestly not intended to be awestruck and staggered by his earthly environment. We are all assuredly placed here to learn to be and to do—to take each his little part in the whirling vortex of the universe—and it should be satisfying to realize that, consciously or unconsciously, such is exactly what every living being is effecting in some degree.

* * * * *

Let us imagine that, instead of beginning

us all as wide-eyed infants, the Creator had started us here with our present level of intelligence minus our sense faculties, and that suddenly He had opened our eyes, ears and other senses to the glorious wonders of nature and its unerring laws—how vividly then the full force of the wisdom and the power and the providence of the Creator would have come home to us, bringing our souls to the salute.

Doubtless some such sudden method would have been adopted if the main end and object of the Creator had been to reveal Himself and attract adoration; but for the development of individuality and character the slower process, without any dramatic awakening, would commend itself as the safest and surest. None the less it is probable that some such sudden awakening will occur when we pass out of this life into the next, when doubtless our characters and strength will be matured enough for such an experience.

And be it noted that in the natural course of progression the day will assuredly come on earth when men of a vividly conscious type will be the rule rather than the exception. In those days the wisdom, power, providence, love and justice of the Creator will stand revealed to every man by the prompting of his own

reason, by which time civilization will be ready and ripe for such a population.

Even in isolated cases today men of well-balanced personalities can let their minds soar to the Infinite, and their logical imaginations pierce and penetrate the unseen, and yet not lose their working utility to the community; but while civilization is at its present crude and primitive stage, mankind in the main needs to be driven by the lure of ambition, competition and desire before they will bestir themselves to penetrate nature's secrets and utilize them.

It is the task of science to acquire the proper intelligent control of nature's forces and to suppress all that is malevolent and encourage all that is beneficent, and slowly but surely man is effecting this while the plaudits and favors of his fellows stimulate him to effort.

To do and dare from a pure sense of service and duty to our fellows and to our Creator, will be a sufficient motive for progress in the age of enlightenment that is some day coming. It is a truth that the commonplace in nature is an absolute demonstration of the Divine and Infinite, but the few to whom this is manifest must preach as yet to but small congregations and to still fewer who fully comprehend.

## IX

It may be advanced that there is no such vast difference between the Infinite Ideal and the Christian ideals, and that while thinkers of uncompromising and analytical mind may have to reject Christianity because of its obvious errors, yet for the average man of unpracticed reasoning possibly a comparatively imperfect system of religion may suffice.

If Christianity or any other religion suffice a man, certainly nothing more need be said so far as he is concerned—being genuine, his convictions should be sacred to us—but progress and the elimination of error is by no means to be stayed, and mankind, with the help of conscious or unconscious reformers, have constantly readjusted or raised the conception of Deity at all progressive stages of civilization—raised it, in fact, to the instincts of their own need.

Let it be granted that real religion consists essentially of what a man is and what a man does, rather than of what he believes; nevertheless, what he believes is of serious moment to the community, inasmuch as it must tend to influence his actions.

Christianity and its finest ideals might pos-

sibly suffice to ensure general peace to the earth were it not that the authorities and thinkers who direct the policy and laws of the nations all tacitly regard its principles as impracticable. Nor is it to be denied that they are impracticable, but let it be recognized that the fault lies in the defects and errors associated with those principles. There is both fallacy and falsehood at the root of Christianity, and consequently the practical common sense of mankind refuses to regard Christian practice as possible for everyday working.

It is found so impracticable, in fact, that the world, instinctively recognizing the appetite and judicious necessity for religion among its peoples, has developed the astonishing expedient of suspending business for one day or half a day in every seven in order to then practice and perform its religion. For a few short hours it enters a higher moral atmosphere and then once more sets the great mill of commerce and production in motion—the machinery of swindling and deception, of misleading, oppressing and enslaving which is unfortunately only too accurate a summing up of the financial, commercial and manufacturing system of Christendom.

The indictment may sound intemperate, but if I am scathingly severe it is because the laws

and practice of all Christian countries permit a certain degree of such immorality to flourish and continue unchecked. Gross and flagrant cases are checked and punished, but minor immoralities are permitted, and even applauded, provided the letter of the law is not overstepped—the commercial world, in fact, seldom if ever expects the same candor and accuracy outside a court of justice that is insisted upon within its walls. The cream of business men tell only part of the truth in their daily transactions, and would be astounded at the notion that their suppression or concealment of any facts which might benefit their neighbors is thoroughly unworthy and immoral.

Some communities and countries may be worse than others, of course, but it is unquestionable that the commercial morals of the entire world have a long upward road to travel yet.

Nevertheless the nations, consciously or unconsciously, are approaching a sort of *impasse.* In practice, as I have said, they all tacitly admit that Christianity is unworkable and Christendom actually carries on its everyday affairs with no intrusion of its religion into its business.

Christianity being founded on tradition and unsupported by evidence or even common

sense, will not and cannot stand the criticism of reason or the questioning analysis of a high ideal of truth; therefore, Christianity being weak, is thrust aside by the practical sense of the twentieth century, which accordingly carries on its daily affairs without religion at all.

* * * * *

But clear, penetrative thinking and a study of the past discovers the real hunger at the heart of humanity for high ideals, and the ideals of Christianity, being faulty and associated with fable and falsehood, naturally fail to satisfy that intelligent hunger today.

In the days of chivalry and even of recent years among Asiatics, religion formed part of the everyday life of the people, and if we awaken to the facts as facts and realize and admit that we are created—that there exists a creative power—that we are sentient beings —and that there is a cause for our being, it is obvious that the relation between Deity (the Cause) and ourselves (the effect) cannot healthily be left out of the scheme of events day by day, as religion is left out in Christendom.

It is, in short, my contention that Christianity fails because its ideals are not high enough for man's present-day acceptance. Man may not be aware of the fact, but he is assuredly awakening to the need of something higher,

and this notwithstanding the popular conviction that the elimination of Christianity in business affairs is due to the ideal being impracticably high.

The ideals and theories that Christianity offers to us are in reality quite illogical, are too crude and based upon weak testimony and false arguments, and in fact are largely unsupported by reason.

Man in his blind yet fundamentally sound sense recognizes that such weakly supported ideals will not and cannot do. Man today, at his modern stage of education and reasoning, must have truth preached to him that is undiluted and undoctored and that will bear the light of science and the criticism of the ultra-critical.

Do not let it be supposed that I am an advocate for the introduction of a new religion—very far from it. Ideal truth is nothing new and was as true and complete and simple æons before Christ's time as it is today and ever will be.

The mere fact that Christ called attention to a modicum of that truth neither established it as more true nor made it Christ's own particular patent, and the like may be said of Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mahomet and all the other diggers who burrowed in the

depths until they saw some light and proclaimed it.

Of course the principle modicum of truth to which Christ called attention was Love as an attribute of the Deity. Christ's recipient mind not only seized hungrily upon that glorious fact, but he furthermore realized and proclaimed the relationship between Deity and man as that of a Father and his children.

So far as records go, Christ's revolutionizing contentions were unsupported by any attempt at reasoning or argument; he seems to have launched his revelation imperiously. His religious laws of life were wide and excellent, being comprised in the simple exhortations to love God as a Father, and man as a brother; but his ministrations to his followers do not seem to have extended to the matter of reasoning and to the implanting of wisdom by deduction. He never appears to have tried to demonstrate the wisdom and justice of God, or, at any rate, he seems to have made no attempt to show his followers in what respect that wisdom and justice were applied to the world.

If Christ had really comprehended all that was implied in the Divine attribute—Infinite Perfection—he would have scarcely counseled his followers to beg for forgiveness—forgive-

ness necessarily having no affinity with ideal justice.

Apart from attributing love to his Father he seems to have been content to accept the Talmud conception of God as the true representation. The bloodthirsty, cruel and savage behavior of the Jews when they annexed Palestine was all attributed by them and their descendants to the prompting of their God, and naturally a deity of such a nature was supposed to delight in the blood-shedding of domestic animals. Not only was this impious libel never contradicted by Christ, but he appears to have accepted and believed it himself, in fact to have expected his own bloody death to propitiate his Father and benefit his followers.

If the purity and unselfishness of his psychic nature fitted him to receive the divine impression from higher spheres—"God is Love"—it seems strange that he could not also have realized that the old Mosaic conception was utterly impossible. Perhaps with some shrewdness he may have seen a better chance of tacking the new attribute onto the accepted traditional God of his countrymen than of remaking their entire conception. On the other hand, his affinity for higher spheres may have rested mainly upon his natural love and un-

selfishness, and he probably lacked the faculty of clear reasoning and intelligent criticism.

A very little critical thought makes it apparent that forgiveness—the very keynote of Christianity—has no affinity with ideal justice.

Forgiveness as a mental attitude necessarily calls for a prior phase of anger or resentment, and while it may be insisted that there are certain wrongs which it would be impossible for human nature not to resent, let it be recognized that resentment is only felt by man by reason of the imperfection of his nature, whereas a being of infinite perfection could neither resent nor feel anger in any degree. Christ manifestly did not realize this or he would not have begged the Infinitely Perfect Creator to forgive.

Any action flagrant enough to compel a good man's resentment would necessarily be the action of a deformed or deficient mind, and if a crippled body naturally awakens our sympathy and pity, surely a like compassion should be aroused when we contemplate a mind that is distorted and cruel.

Moreover, it is clear that if we worship Infinite Perfection we must, and do, worship an infinite degree of Justice, and if we worship Justice in its purest and highest conception, it is certain that we shall willingly take

and accept any penalty or punishment that we truly merit—nay, that we shall even seek that punishment in order to discharge our debt.

It is inconceivable that a worshiper of Ideal Justice would consent to escape or forego any just punishment strictly his due. Thus we see that forgiveness has no affinity with Ideal Justice, and thus one of the main tenets of the Christian theory is discovered as unsound and a fallacy.

The intercession of Christ as a mediator is still another weak feature to be impugned. Inasmuch as the omnipresent God must necessarily be infinitely near to us and infinitely and constantly present, how is it logically possible that Christ or any other saint could stand between God and ourselves as an intercessor or in any respect?

That Christ did not quite realize the Creator's infinite and invariable presence is well illustrated by his despairing complaint on the Cross at being forsaken, nay even the opening words of his popular prayer—"Our Father which art in Heaven"—conveys a suggestion of God at a distance.

Nor is that the only respect in which "The Lord's prayer" is open to criticism; the phrase, "Lead us not into temptation," indicates a

lack of confidence in the Father's wise treatment of us. Assuredly, just as our muscles develop by the lifting of weights and the resisting of forces, so the strength of our character will find its growth by overcoming difficulties and withstanding temptations, and instead of possessing a sure confidence that no temptation or difficulty beyond our strength could ever be allowed to assail us, "the Lord's prayer" invites us to beg for the elimination of temptation altogether.

In justification of the freedom of our criticism let us remember that honest and unprejudiced questioning is always healthy and wholesome, and that it behoves us to search for and recognize every respect in which Christianity falls short of the ideal, that thus we may comprehend why the common sense of Christendom should resist the introduction of Christian tenets into everyday life and intercourse.

When once we recognize that we are all sheltered by the ideal love of an ideal Father, supplication will cease to be associated with our attitude to God, and we shall accept the fact with unquestioning confidence that just such things as are good for us and best for us will happen to us under all circumstances.

To some degree any prayer in the form of

a request must savor of a lack of confidence, but, on the other hand, we surely cannot indulge too wholeheartedly or too often in prayer of a communing nature—in prayer that is the uplifting of one's desire toward the Creator—in prayer that is the straining of one's soul to be more conscious of that Infinite Presence that surrounds us, and is in us, and is of us—in prayer that is a thanksgiving felt in the inmost fibre of our being, and is a love and a confidence surging up in us and seeking expression.

Not only Christendom of all creeds, but humanity of all religions are on their way to a truer appreciation of their "Pater Noster," and it is surely to those two words that "the Lord's prayer" owes the sanctity with which it is regarded.

## X

Having thus sufficiently indicated my attitude in regard to Christianity, and made it clear that to me it is a mere unimportant side-issue in the matter of religion, let me now proceed as rapidly as may be to the justification of my own confidence in the Creator, in the face of and notwithstanding the existence of sin, disease and suffering.

Though these have ever been a stumbling block in the way of thinkers, I am convinced that the same course of reasoning that has satisfied me will as fully dispose of the reader's scepticism and doubts.

Of all unworthy attitudes, sycophancy is surely held in the most general contempt, and I would have it understood that until my own mind had grasped a satisfactory explanation for sin, disease and suffering, it was not possible for me to render worship to the Creator, notwithstanding an inherent tendency to gratitude that is natural in me.

And in passing from the negative side of the question to the positive, that is to say, from my reasons for rejecting the popular religions of the day to my reasons for accepting the religion that is mine, let me crave the reader's consideration and give my assurance that, however halting and ineffectual my language may be, I am yet deeply in earnest and am striving to give expression to thoughts that are clear enough to me.

Also please bear in mind that it is not my desire to proselytize or seek converts, but that, happening to know something which it is good and glorious to know, I am glad to share my knowledge with any seeker after truth.

## XI

Let me, then, in the first place invite the reader to give some scope and flight to his imagination, and to soar with me mentally to an imaginary point on the confines of the universe.

Space being infinite, there can, of course, be no confines; but let it be imagined that the comprehending faculty in us belongs no longer to the universe, but has miraculously attained a point of vantage from whence it is possible to contemplate and comprehend the universe as a whole, stretched out for our delectation and study.

We are not to be lost in speechless awe or wonderment at what we witness, but it is to be understood that our comprehension is already accustomed to the limitless effects of Infinite Power, and that we are poised together in repose with our critical faculty centered upon discovering the wisdom in and the reason for all things.

Let it be understood that the fulness and yet limit of my undertaking is to sketch out and submit a comprehensive solution which shall reasonably and adequately account for all the phenomena of life and of nature.

At first thought some of the proposition may appear as unsupported theorizing, but it is advisable to postpone criticism in detail and to concentrate attention upon the scheme broadly, and in due course, later, we may consider whether nature's various common phenomena appear to contradict it or can be made to dovetail with it harmoniously.

A little preliminary latitude may be reasonably conceded in facing so overwhelming a topic when it is realized that we are confronting an enigma that has nonplussed sages of all periods since man began to reason and to think, and that none hitherto have successfully reconciled all the facts and phenomena and been able to fill in the gaps with such a comprehensive and yet simple theory, that the whole fabric is of consistent pattern.

It is my personal contention that in effecting the success which I claim, I have been in touch with intelligences higher than the human, of which fact indeed I have been physically conscious. Nevertheless, my attestation to that effect is not of vital moment to the theory or argument—my own piercing of the dark veil, that hides higher spheres of life from us normally, is essentially my own concern and need not affect the views of others. It is my understanding that in the long process

of my investigations certain salient touches were needed here and there to convey to me the necessary proofs and conviction, and hence they were forthcoming.

## XII

Here, then, we stand, two centres of intelligence, freed as it were of the material restrictions of our senses, that is to say, of the mechanism that feeds those senses, and yet with the sense faculties themselves a hundredfold more keen and alert for their freedom.

Cosmos stretches before us limitless, above us, below us and around us—space that we perceive to be permeated with vibrant material, which in this, its extremest attenuation, is known to mankind as ether. From countless points in that ether light ploughs its undulating way in waves of a velocity computed as 185,000 miles in a second of time. All these waves of light take their rise from their central points of origin and eddy forth in ever-expanding circles, or more accurately speaking, in ever-expanding globes of radiance, merging the one into the other and blending into a universal softness whereby the faculty of sight may demonstrate facts to our consciousness.

Here let us diverge to accentuate the truth that all wisdom is generated in our consciousness by knowledge and experience, either that of ourselves or of others, and that all knowledge and experience is or has been gained by observing effects and linking them with their causes.

We know instinctively, but unerringly, that for every effect there is and there must be a cause, and the mental process by which we trace causes and link them to the known effects, or trace effects from the causes that we know to be in operation, is called reasoning.

It is by unerring confidence in seeking causes when the effects stand patent to us that every scientific discovery has been made, and that, slowly but surely, not only is man gaining an ascendancy over inferior forms of life, including diseases, but he is mastering and subjugating to his use, his pleasure, and his will all the forces of nature.

And all this dominance and progression, let it be marked, is the outcome of his instinctive confidence not only that there is always a cause, but that there is always a good, sensible and wise cause. And let us moreover note and realize that no sooner does man discover and earmark a cause for any observed effect, than straightway his mind pigeonholes

that cause as itself an effect, and he is at once ready and eager to seek the prior reason for that discovered cause.

In view, then, of man's sure and certain knowledge that there must be a cause in detail for every effect, I exhibit before you the entire universe and invite you to force or trace this same reasoning process to its logical foundation, and to recognize that there is a great first, constant, ceaseless and entirely inclusive cause for the whole.

Herein is demonstrated and herein we stand in the presence of Deity revealed, and thus is the universe driven, cornered and compelled to demonstrate the Uni-cause, and thus we reply to the old doubting and stumbling question, "Can a man by searching find out God?"

It is our reason that raises us above the rest of the animal kingdom, and surely of all the puerile follies of the past centuries the most infantile was the insistence that man should suspend his highest faculty—his reason—in seeking to recognize his God.

The day is past when the exercise of the freedom of thought carried with it a reproach, and if shackled slavery of the body was a disgrace to civilization fifty years ago, dogmatical slavery of the mind should be no less so today.

## XIII

And now let us resume our vantage point of observation on the apocryphal confines of the Universe.

As we observe the points of light more attentively we note that they vary greatly in intensity, and that while some have a more solid and central effulgence, and are in fact suns or stars of a definite shrinkage or concentration, turning on a comparatively steady axis, others are but whirling masses of gaseous fire at an incredible intensity of heat and vibration. Probably only the most central portions of their gaseous mass as yet show signs of solidity, and their whole expansion embraces a volume of ether space thousands of times greater than the more advanced and concentrated suns.

Others again of these countless sources of light are as yet but spiral wheels of vibrating heat becoming definitely opaque only at the centre of their formation, and including in the area of their embracing coil a still greater extent of the mother ether upon whose limitless resources they are drawing for their demonstration.

And to our abnormal discernment it becomes clear that one and all of these suns in embryo,

or suns at varying stages of completion, have not only for their foundation but for their whole composition the entirely adequate and resourceful material of ether itself.

It also becomes apparent to us that the creative process begins in all cases by centripetal and centrifugal forces together with the force of gravity and of positive and negative attraction commencing to operate over a definite ethereal area—an ethereal vortex, as it were.

Other points of light of much smaller magnitude we find to possess no illuminative vibration of their own, but to be merely reflecting from their surface the light they receive from the larger orbs, and we note that these lesser lights are subsidiaries or dependents of the suns or parent bodies, and are in fact planets in all degrees of advancement from boiling lava mud to the coolened solidity of spheres which generate life.

And it is vital that we should picture these facts in their true significance, and resist any tendency to regard them merely as items in an interesting scientific study.

These heavenly bodies and their source and composition are indisputably existent at this moment, more or less, in the state and conditions I have described, and they are the mills

in process of erection or in full operation for the ceaseless work and purpose that is being effected by the Wisdom and Power behind the entire design.

The common object that they are collectively effecting and are obviously designed for is the developing and nurturing of Life itself, and to the awakened mind they speak of Omniscience, Omnipotence and Deity.

Thus we have observed and recorded ether as the initial material source of all objects in space, and the next vital fact that catches and holds our attention is the absence—the absolute absence—in that space of one single point or atom at a standstill.

Who talks of death as a dominancy in a universe teeming with eternal activity? Not only is the ethereal matter itself everywhere vibrated and swept ceaselessly by the undulations of light, but every sun with its system of satellites, and every satellite around its sun, is careering in perfect rhythm through space and in complete harmony with the laws of gravity. Even this little earth of ours which we have so often observed on a quiet night to be resting in a profundity of stillness and of peace, is even then and ever rushing onward and around our welcome old sun at the incredible speed of a thousand miles a minute.

It is difficult and almost disturbing to grasp the stupendous truth that there is not one atom of matter, not one particle in the whole universe of creation, that is not in motion from one point forward to another with subsidiary motions in conjunction. Yet let us grasp it and hold it, for such a universal fact cannot fail to speak to all intelligent ears if they will but open—nay, must surely shout its significance so that the deafest of dull perceptions shall hear it and realize its glorious indication. The fact speaks of Progression—it proclaims the glad gospel of progress—forward from point to point—such a simple fact—such an infinite significance!

Critical cavil may protest that the earth's circling the sun is an illustration of retrogression counteracting its advance, but as we stand at our vantage point of observation and witness our solar system's own forward flight in its orbit around its parent star, the demonstration is at once apparent not of the earth's return to any former point it has occupied, but merely of its spiral progression, its inevitable, even if spiral, progression.

If we run continually forward whirling a lariat around our head, that lariat has traveled forward as surely as we have ourselves. Multiply this spiral orbiting of the moons around

planets and planets, around suns and suns, around still larger stellar bodies, until in your conception you are even whirling the Milky Way itself like an infinite lariat through space around a moving central progressive point, and still Infinity shall proclaim, "No limit!" and still you shall have failed to prove a retrogression or a contradiction to the Progress that all phenomena proclaim.

And just as surely the manifest difference in the ages and stages and degrees of development of the stellar phenomena themselves preach the same glorious gospel of Progression.

Detach your mind from the human habitual bondage to the commonplace and it shall recognize the same gospel preached by the geological strata of this little world from the eocene up through the miocene and still upward to the pliocene, each in succession increasing in the variety of its fossil records, even to the present surface, where artists revel in the vast diversity of its flora and its fauna never equaled in earlier geological layers. In the simple products of more ancient strata and the complex products of more recent strata, Progression speaks, and is ever the same glad truth for man to find and man to read.

If it be necessary to dilate still further on

so manifest a truth, let us realize that civilized man in this twentieth century knows Progression as the surest of sure prospects, without probably realizing the significance of his own knowledge. He counts today with a sublime certainty on mankind attaining ever greater and greater power over the forces of nature, and on the certainty of continually greater and greater scientific victories and discoveries. If we ventured nowadays to question the likelihood of future centuries exceeding the present in scientific knowledge, our neighbor would question our sensible, practical intelligence—and yet he is probably unaware of the real significance of his own attitude of mind in this. Already his is a sublime faith in the gospel of Progression, and it is doubtful if that word of glorious and divine import has ever occurred to him as a gospel atall.

And the next impressive fact that catches and compels our attention in our survey of the universe is the wisdom of the design throughout.

Students of physiology are apt to draw a wrong inference from the tendency of species to adjust themselves to their environments; they are apt to regard all nature as a succession of accidental happenings in which, during the struggle for existence, the fittest predomi-

nates and survives. The true emphasis should be laid upon the fact that among all the varieties which in succession meet the changing environments, it is always the one which is most wisely equipped that is preserved, and thus an unbiased thinker is constrained to give the salute to Wisdom.

It is entirely a subordinate issue to argue that all equipment of species is the outcome of their own effort to attain certain ends. It is not for a moment to be denied that all created creatures contribute some effort to their own creation, but this in no whit lessens the marvel and the wisdom—on the contrary, it adds to them.

It is an exhibition in fact of the presence of the creative power or Creator in all objects created.

Although the production of species has been progressive from the simple form to the complex, it is manifest that no inferior power could have designed and produced a superior one, and hence all things created have either made themselves or have been made by a power superior to them.

Self-effort, contributing its small quota to development, is no indication that Creation on the whole is spontaneous, for creation begins in inanimate matter, where voluntary effort is

necessarily non-existent. If, for instance, we were shown an intricate piece of machinery, and, in response to our inquiry for the engineer, we were assured that there was no engineer, but that the machine had spontaneously evolved itself, we should smile.

Hence we are logically forced to admit the existence of a creative Power superior to creation itself, whilst the wisdom dominating all things is evidence of the designs having existed in the conception of the Designer before they found expression in concrete form.

Thus mind or thought is established as the foundation of Creation, while the object of our further search is to discover creation's purpose. The wisdom that is so manifest in all nature's providences makes it obvious that there must be a fundamental purpose at the back of the entire construction.

To take a few instances at random from nature, the creation of trees with their twigs was a precursor to the creation of birds with the wondrous mechanism of their feet, which enables them not only to alight on a branch, but to retain a sure grip of it mechanically in sleep. Or, again, the webbing in the feet of aquatic animals, birds and reptiles is a planned and deliberate contribution to their swimming powers. Even the lay of a bird's feathers or

the scales of a fish are purposed to facilitate their forward movement, while the direction of the protective thorns of a rose-bush resists an uprooting of the plant. The multiplying of instances is not necessary; the tale is as thoroughly told in a few examples as though we had spent years in the study of zoology.

Some superficial free-thinkers are given to lighting upon here an instance and there an instance, where nature appears to be acting cruelly, improvidently or wantonly, and they forthwith decry the infinite wisdom that is so generally apparent to deeper thinkers; but if such minds were conscious of the wondrous providence and design in the millions of instances which they are overlooking daily as commonplace, they might credit the seeming exceptions with possibly some wise, if at present hidden, purpose. Later on, when we consider the subject of Principles, we may touch again upon these seeming exceptions.

And as for the shortsighted critics who would decry the wonders of creation because of the slow process of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, I can only suggest that the mind which fails to marvel unless it be confronted with startling and sudden surprises is surely a narrow, restricted one.

Yet even here again we cannot fail to recog-

nize that both the survival of the fittest and natural selection are themselves in thorough keeping with the same glorious gospel of Progression, progression from one temporarily efficient type to still a better and more effective one.

Here on this earth we find ourselves equipped with five or more senses whereby we may become acquainted with phenomena and make deductions, and correspondingly we find the phenomena themselves exhibited for us in a bountiful and infinite creation—surely the design and intention must be that we should glean knowledge from our observation and its inferences—nay, we may go still further and add that the phenomena are available for our study at such unthinkable distances in space that the purpose is obviously to accustom our minds to Infinity itself as a fact.

Furthermore, as it is clear that the same laws of light and gravity which are applicable to this earth are applicable everywhere in the universe, we may safely conclude that, in general essentials, we may count upon the laws of nature which are prevalent here being also prevalent everywhere in space.

Hence we may confidently recognize that the glad and glorious gospel of Progression, which we have shown to be so generally dominant,

must be an infinite law applicable to infinite space and conditions; indeed, so dominant and universal is this progression that we shall only be within the just limits of sound sense and reasoning if we finally conclude that Progression is the grand keynote applicable alike to all matter, all forces, and all life.

Infinite and eternal being seems such a logical and glorious inference from infinite and eternal space, infinite and eternal time, infinite and eternal forces and infinite and eternal matter.

## XIV

And now once more we resume our attentive scrutiny of this universe from our imaginary vantage point on the confines.

Let us centre our observation upon some developing planet similar to our own native earth, whose dense and hardening matter at this period of its progressive growth has recently reached a definite solidity under the action of the persistent forces at work upon it.

Just as stratum upon stratum of lesser density from the depths to the topmost layer go to form the crust of the infant planet, so do the accurate proportions of the hydrogen

and oxygen almost entirely envelop that crust in a vast tidal ocean, sustaining a stupendous pressure in its depths and lightening in gradations toward its surface, and so again is the whole planetary form and its ocean encompassed by layers and layers of atmosphere possessing a density or pressure at the surface of the earth of fourteen pounds upon every square inch, with continually lighter and lighter aerial strata upward until they merge upon the purity of ether itself.

And it is in the depths of the ocean, among the slime and the ooze, that we first detect a new and interesting movement, differing quite essentially from the movements of inanimate matter which are produced by the primal creative forces. This new movement is seemingly intrinsic in certain matter which has combined by a chemical law of affinity with other matter into cellular shape, but whereas forms such as crystals or snowflakes attain their completed structure in the arbitrary course of solidifying, we observe that these cells are pervaded by a continuous spontaneous activity, and they moreover exhibit a capacity for increasing and multiplying themselves. Here we are witnessing the first demonstration of life upon a planet.

It is not necessary for us to trace the de-

velopment of this life in the single cell to life in all its progressive stages higher and higher through greater and greater combinations of cells, leading up to types of a more and more pronounced individuality, until it culminates in the earthly master type—Man.

The scientists have traced this for us, and we can accept the fact with a certainty based upon man's own experiments in developing complex types of species from simple ones, such as the cultivated chrysanthemum from the wild daisy and the marigold.

It is demonstrated that nature develops species under given conditions, and it is therefore a simple matter of arithmetic in millions to trace back the complex to the simple, and the myriads of cells combined together in one growing organism to the original unit cell.

Thus we have seen that in the curriculum of his education and his search for the truth, man finds in exhibition: primarily, "Ether"; secondly, "Forces" at work on the ether; thirdly, "Matter," a development of the ether under the action of the constructive forces (not only the arbitrary action of gravity with centripetal and centrifugal force, but the suasive action of light, heat, electricity and magnetism); and fourthly, "Life."

There is yet to be, in due course, a fifth

exhibit in the scale of creation for us to consider, namely, "Moral Perception," embracing the abstract phenomena of good and bad, high and low, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain; but we are here in contemplation of phenomena in regular sequence and a progressive and orderly development, and although we have taken cognizance of "Life," from its first demonstration in protoplasm to its zenith in man, we have much to enlarge upon yet under that heading before we can pass on to the next stage.

Nevertheless, let the interest here be whetted by the interesting fact and sequence that Moral Perception is an outcome of consciousness, which itself is a product of brain, which again is the governing centre of the vast combination of cells which go to form an individuality.

Let us try to realize in all its marvel that the highest type of cells which compose and contain the personality of man are the cells of his brain tissue, which are computed as three thousand million to each human being, with every brain cell fed by its own artery and relieved by its own vein, through the marvelous capillary system. Is it possible to even attempt to conceive this fact without a dilation of soul?

## XV

We now rapidly pass on to consider "Life," the fourth demonstration in creation, under which heading I shall presently submit a theorem which may seem a somewhat startling innovation, but which is nevertheless assuredly true in principle, as furnishing the one essential link in the sequence of development.

It would be fruitless to begin our consideration by inquiring what "Life" intrinsically is of itself, for that question is necessarily unanswerable. The utmost that can be comprehended humanly is the demonstration of life and its relation to other phenomena.

It is on record that a certain philosopher, in opposing the Christian conception of Deity, declared that while he might not know what God is, he certainly knew what God was not, and we must be content to recognize that life, of which we are a potent part, is neither matter nor force, but is a power superior to both —a superiority demonstrated in the fact that life uses and subordinates matter as well as forces.

Touching at this point upon the topic of "Death," as Life's antithesis, I take exception

to death being regarded in the sense of a negation of life; "Death" is a mere designation of an action or condition—of the separation of life from matter.

Death as an intrinsic fact cannot be proven to be, but is simply a convenient expression for indicating that life has ceased to permeate collectively a certain combination of cells.

If, in using the word "death," our minds from habit and education conceive of life as having ceased to be, let us at the same time admit that we are taking some liberty with pure truth, for we have absolutely no proof of the existence of death in that significance.

Death, in plain words, as an annihilation of life is a mere assumption—unprovable. On the other hand, it is quite logical to describe death as a separation of matter (still existent) from life (theoretically no longer existent), but that word "theoretically" has a considerable relevance in the statement.

If the sceptic insists that death should be regarded as an annihilation of life, inasmuch as it has that seeming, he might as rationally subscribe to the ancients' belief that the sun circled the earth. Likewise the solid material of the mineral kingdom is rigid to all appearances, yet science demonstrates that its molecules are in ceaseless violent vibration, from

which let us recognize that the superficial and apparently obvious is quite frequently the reverse of the truth.

The next feature to consider in relation to life is the vast diversity of the guises under which it is demonstrated, and let us in due humility remember that, however wide the chasm that divides one grade of life from another, the same profound mystery applies to all and remains as inexplicable in each independent tuft of grass existing in a meadow, or in each individual dancing midge sporting with its mate, as it is in the politician or autocrat who directs the destiny of nations. Each is a demonstration of "Life"—that mystery of mysteries—and therein we must recognize a kinship common to them all.

This kinship or oneness should suffice to give the thinker his clue, that in the study of life, if we detach the human from the animal or the animal from the vegetable kingdom, and pursue our research in one department alone, we shall be limiting our quest to a narrowed groove and be apt to discover only partial truths.

In all religions and all ages man has had a pardonable tendency to be autocratic toward the rest of creation, and we even pander a little to this natural weakness when we men-

tally classify the earth's phenomena into a mineral, a vegetable, an animal and a fourth or human kingdom; and I would point out that the mere fact that we subordinate and live upon the other three kingdoms by no means justifies our regarding ourselves as singularly detached and entitled to special consideration from the Creator. Assuredly the animal kingdom has as good a claim to benign consideration as the human, for life is alike difficult for all and a struggle for all, and carries with it pleasure and pain for animals no less than for man.

Let us modify our presumption by remembering that while we quite rightly support our physical bodies by annexing the material which has been previously in use by vegetable and animal life, there is also in nature both a microbe and an entozoa sub-kingdom, who in their turn fatten upon our organism and find us a fruitful grazing ground.

In our unwillingness to contribute to the benefit and upkeep of such associates we make war upon them and designate them "disease," but possibly the animate mutton of this world, if it had the intelligence to realize the matter, might regard the human species as a disease of a somewhat fatal character.

Depend upon it, that in searching for the

solution of the enigma of the universe, the surest method is to study creation as a whole, and that we are narrow and mistaken in any mental reservations we may cling to which shrink from classifying man as a mere upper stratum of the animal kingdom to which he certainly physiologically belongs. Truth is truth and allows of no compromise.

Considering, then, the vast diversity of the guises under which life is demonstrated, and accepting the scientific theory that all these diverse species took their origin from protoplasm, we have to face an interesting question as to why, if one complex species be the outcome of a simpler species, both the complex and the simpler species exist coevally today; or, to point the argument, if man is an ascent from apes, why have not all the apes disappeared long ago in the selfsame developing process of heredity?

Actually, however, we may reasonably contend that, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, and that so long as there shall be protoplasm developing from inanimate matter in the ooze and slime of the ocean bed, so long shall there be species continually developing upward in all the progressive stages. A million years more or less would be but one in a multitude of epochs in the existence

of this planet, and in such a period a good deal of development could be consummated.

And, furthermore, if we are confronted in the gospel of progress by the entire disappearance of ichthyosauri, plesiosauri and such prehistoric uncouth monsters, it should be remembered, firstly, that those leviathans were the outcome of a more strenuous environment, and a condition of cataclysms and colossal upheavals which no longer exists upon the surface of the globe, and secondly, that most, if not all, of those giant lizards are represented today by miniature specimens of their type. Let it be remarked, too, that the diminution in size must not be instanced as degeneration —the proportions and symmetry remain as correct, if not more so, and the size itself is simply an adjustment to improved and more genial conditions. Not, however, being Figuiers, we will restrict ourselves to generalities and to surveying the subject as broadly as possible.

It is an interesting fact, which, of course, will be regarded as commonplace, but should be considered as of momentous significance, that life permeates at one time countless varieties and species, from the single cell of the moss upon the decaying fence to the many millions of cells which compose a human being.

It is an apropos question, therefore, which naturally arises as to whether or not man is the ultimate or apex in the scale of distinct species, and as to whether in millenaries to come there is likely to be existing on earth a distinct and superior scale of being side by side with mankind, just as mankind exists today contemporaneously with the apes.

Seeing, however, that man is proving himself capable of comprehending the workings of nature's laws, and is extracting her secrets and utilizing them to the amelioration of pain and the increase of comfort, and is also steadily exterminating animal life of a savage nature and replacing it with domesticated animal life, and seeing, above all things, that he is capable of aspiring to comprehend the Infinite Author of the universe, it may be confidently anticipated that man is the ultimate so far as type goes.

Necessarily the future holds for his posterity a progression, but this would naturally take the direction of mental power, toward which he is even now tending with possibly the development of some already latent sense, such as animal magnetism and thought transference.

That man as a physical form has probably reached his ultimate—in type, at any rate—in

the highest specimens extant, is illustrated in the fact that the most perfect truncal proportions known today are to be found in the masculine negroid, and that no general superiority of the white race can show an advance upon the colored and inferior race in that respect.

As to the inner economy of the human frame, we may reasonably look to the future for the final disappearance in mankind of some minor disused organs, and, of course, in outer as well as inner respects, there is plenty of scope for the average human being to advance to the highest level already existent.

And now we return to our point that life permeates at one time millions of varieties and species, and we reasonably wonder why.

That they all contribute to the upkeep of each other can scarcely be advanced as an adequate reason, inasmuch as this is merely part of the plan of the entire universe, wherein no single particle exists that is not interdependent upon other particles. (From the exchange of light and gravital support betwixt solar systems to the adhesion of microns by affinity.)

Even if the endless chain of worm, man, animal, bird and worm subsisting upon each other were submitted as a necessity in the

matter of material replenishment or food, this could not be advanced as a sufficient reason for the millions of species and varieties and their immense diversity in characteristics and instincts.

The actual cogent reason is based upon the very diverse characteristics of man himself, to which corresponding traits in the animal world are designed to contribute. I will particularize this matter of the transmigration of character presently, but first let me submit the startling innovation mentioned a few pages back.

## XVI

Once more we will resume our pose of detached spectators while the universe pursues and effects its purpose under our scrutiny.

It is necessary now to imagine ourselves as endowed with a new and supernormal faculty —a faculty enabling us to discern the permeating presence of life itself without the demonstration of movement to proclaim it. It must also be an imaginary function of ours to be able to see pervasive life as an essence.

Thus equipped we are enabled to perceive, with an absorbing interest, that the life power

inundates alike the earth's atmosphere and the ocean's density, and that even the surface of the soil to a slight depth is submissive to its penetration; we perceive, in fact, that life blankets and overlays the entire surface of the globe, and appears to our observation like an uninterrupted atmosphere of vitality. Not a thimbleful of water nor a phial of air can be scrutinized but we find it teeming with living organisms, permeated in fact by the life essence, though so far as normal human senses go it is only demonstrable in the organisms themselves.

We are conscious at the same time of the presence in nature of electricity and polar magnetism influencing and encompassing the earth in a very similar embrace, and we recognize the close kinship betwixt all three and yet quite distinct rôles they are designed and called upon to fulfil. We are witness to the force of electricity being released from one material battery of a certain timbre and expanding from that point in undulations until it finds its bourne in a fresh material storage attuned into affinity with the one from whence it took flight, and incidentally we are led to recognize in this phenomena an analogy to life's own flight, from the human form to the psychic body or next encompassment.

And we become further aware of this permeating power of vitality seeking always expression and productive action in cells designed, formed and ripened for its reception. And it is of vivid interest to note that, while the vital power which encompasses the growing cell seeks entry to it all the time and thereby attracts fresh molecules of matter to the embryo of it (which will presently complete it), yet the life does not wholly enter and engross it until a completed organism has been produced. Cell is added to cell by the encompassing ministrations of the life power and the energy of its instinct for action, until at last the machinery of the given organism is completed in a general likeness or reproduction of the parent form within which it has been swaddled to completion.

In the higher or more complex organism it is to be observed that the desire or instinct of the nursing or parent organism is an additional factor in influencing the precise architecture and disposition of the ripening form. This variable, if minor, factor serves to ensure a slight variety in all instances and seconds nature's evasion of monotony, eventually resulting in the fascinating diversity of fauna which delights our artistic sense.

It may be advanced, in this regard, that

there exists as great a diversity in flora as in fauna, when obviously there can be no intelligent desire or instinct on the part of the parent plant, but we are not to suppose that the individual instinct of the parent organism is the only influence that leads to variety—there is no reason why the production of species should not come under the expert direction and control of the psychic world, who may be reasonably expected to share with mankind in the pleasure of nurturing and developing varieties.

* * * * *

With the completion of an infant animal organism, that is to say, a combination of cells of varying kinds into a machine capable of independent action, the life power quickens or wholly enters it, centering itself at the point of governance or control known in the higher types as the brain, and every cell being saturated to completion with vitality there is a shutting off or detachment from the enveloping life essence and the quickened organism commences its independent existence.

Yet to our absorbed attention it is apparent that this independent career is only relative, and that just as corpuscles possess a certain individual isolation in the liquid of the blood of which they form an essential part, so do all organisms of life pursue a certain independ-

ence of action, and yet are part and parcel of the all-pervading life essence which encompasses the entire globe.

It will, I think, be found that the deeper we go into the subject of the life essence the stronger will be the supporting arguments.

It is surely remarkable that while sages have constantly puzzled themselves and others over the evasive mystery of creation, they have none of them ever consistently tried to arrive at a solution. Their energies seem to have exhausted themselves in disproving popular religious theories and in demonstrating what a series of contradictions nature embodies, and how quite impossible it must be to understand her.

One of the most interesting and instructive features in nature is the system of correspondences that prevails, and a reliance upon that system has unquestionably given many a clue to scientific investigators in their research along new bypaths. Let us ourselves make a venture of the kind in relation to matter and life.

Recognizing that matter is ether under certain conditions, and that ether is the basis of all matter, it is a scientific truth, in fact an axiom, that the sum of matter in existence must always be the same—no more and no

less—varying only in the variety of its demonstrations. Synthetic thought upon this point will make it obvious.

We are aware that all solid matter can be chemically dispersed, and yet we know that, whether it be dissipated into a gaseous state, or into a liquid, or into dust particles, the original sum and substance must ever be still existent in some form, and seeing that there is nowhere but the universe for it to disperse and escape into, it clearly must be present in the universe, be it ever so impalpable.

It is easier to compel our minds to acquiesce in this fact if we remember that every single atom and electron of this globe of ours was once in a state of gaseous heat and expansion. All created objects being thus a demonstration of matter which has been drawn from the universal ethereal supply, let us now proceed according to a system of correspondences to consider the source of life.

First, then, the phenomenon of birth should be dealt with in relation to the manifest truth that something never has been and never can be made from nothing. When a child comes into being and existence we find it in possession of life and matter, although the mother, whose organism has been nursing and fostering it, remains in full possession of her own mat-

ter and life, as complete and intact as it was before the embryo's inception.

It is palpable, therefore, that the material of the child, instead of having been taken from the mother's material, has in fact been evolved from all surrounding nature through the mother—she having been merely the masticating machinery which has levied toll upon nature's resources.

In like manner, then, and in correspondence with the advent of the child's material, it is consistent to conclude that through the mother's organism the life that is in the child has been drawn from the pervading and encompassing life essence—that very ample reservoir which is ever being replenished by death and drained by birth.

Let it be realized in what a different light the phenomenon of death may be regarded when we thus behold it, whether it be the death of a plant, or an animal, or a human being, in every instance we are witnessing not an annihilation of life, but a life's escape into the surrounding life essence, in the embrace of which we all exist.

And now let us observe the reason for this life essence thus freeing itself from the material organism that had been detaining it.

Just so long as that organism was in work-

ing fettle, capable of energy and action, the life clung to it tenaciously and willingly, but immediately the mechanism became completely out of order and could no longer respond to the inherent demand for activity, the cluster of life poured forth and forsook its tenement.

According to the scientific doctrine of the conservation of energy, no smallest fraction of force is ever lost in the universe, however it may change in form or character, and if this rule of physics applies to energy and forces in general, how much more is it likely to apply to the ruling power "Life."

Life is the power of all powers and the greatest of all energies, for which sufficient reason it neither can nor will long consent to detention without action; wherefore, as an organism breaks down in its machinery and action becomes impossible, life must necessarily shake itself free. Forth, therefore, the life issues, mingling once again with the essence that is its source, and from thence by the law of affinity it will be attracted here and there to some new and progressively superior organisms quickening into birth.

In order to observe the action of the life essence in another interesting particular we will now resume our post of observation and our abnormal sense.

In the proper course of relative importance it is natural that in each created being the highest form of cell should be those composing the brain tissue, within which the governing and controlling centre of the individual is ensconced, and assuredly we are each conscious that within the brain dwells the very pith of our personality. Also let protozoa and protophyte illustrate the fact that a single cell can and does contain life of a complete nucleus. And proceeding from these two commonplace facts, I would support my contention that every single brain cell contains in itself a certain definite modicum of life analogous to the nature and character of the cell.

It is appropriate to point out how science recognizes that the cells in the convolutions of a brain possess in groups a definite function in relation to different offices of the body and to different senses and memories, also that the sensory nerves and motor nerves, in connection with these various parts of the body, are linked to the corresponding groups of brain cells. This fact serves to support my argument that all brain cells possess a distinctive character or nature of their own, or an affinity with certain character.

We are in observation, be it understood, of a human organism whose brain is composed of

some three thousand million brain cells, each, as science demonstrates, possessing its own attendant vein and artery and subject to independent exhaustion and resuscitation, nevertheless, in a minor degree, the same facts would be as evident if we were observing the brain of some organism not so high in the scale of being. It becomes apparent, then, that the modicum of life in each single cell and in kindred groups of cells is pursuing a progressive education, and that throughout the career of the organism of which it forms a part that modicum of life stores experience for itself and advances in capacity and development by virtue of that experience. Not only, therefore, is humanity in general with its two thousand million members advancing and progressing on the average in wisdom and power, and in a sense of justice and brotherhood, but the personality of each individual member contains millions of life nuclei, all in like manner progressively engaged or with scope to be so. Surely we must recognize in this a most interesting example of correspondence, and admit that it contains nothing as an argument which is illogical or out of keeping with nature's general methods.

Let us also give attention to another most interesting fact known to everyone, but real-

ized by few, and which very particularly carries with it an inference. It is a well-known physical truth that a human body in all its parts becomes entirely changed during a period of from seven to ten years, and it consequently follows that the body which I personally am inhabiting must consist entirely of matter which I have masticated and consumed during the past decade, and hence, moreover, that all the matter of which my body is formed has been previously in use by vegetables and animals.

Even the most prosaic thinker will admit that his personality consists of a partnership between life and matter, and, as we have shown that the material of his body has all previously formed part of a multitude of animals and vegetables, there is nothing incongruous in the contention that the life which is in him has likewise previously formed part of a multitude of animals and vegetables. In criticizing this point let full weight be given to the remarkable system of correspondences prevalent in nature.

It is by no means to be understood that the identical life of the identical vegetables and animals we have masticated and consumed have become part of our personalities, for, of course, at the time we devour the material, life is no

longer connected with it. The life that is in any of us, as I have already explained, made its original entry into the brain cells or controlling centre of the new personality immediately the new organism quickened, or in other words, as soon as the infant organism became a workable machine. The infant child forthwith and at that moment came into complete possession of its miniature brain with its many millions of cells, and the life that then permeated each of those cells would naturally remain tenanted in those cells from the period of birth to the moment of death or release.

In accentuating the kinship of a child to nature in general, both in regard to the material of its body and the life that permeates its body, it may perhaps be felt that I thus lessen the bond between mother and offspring, but I will try to make it clear that the contrary is the case. In order to examine into this question of the maternal link, let us once again have recourse to our abnormal power of discernment. And it is intensely impressive to note that the attitude of the mother's mind during pregnancy influences and almost dictates the nature of the child—a fact that was well known to the ancient Greeks, whose practice it was to surround the prospective mother with happy and agreeable influences and with

harmony and beautiful statuary. It is true that there are certain hereditary tendencies which descend through generations on both sides of the family, but over and above this there weighs the influence of the mother's thoughts, desires and actions. Within the child's ripening brain are cells corresponding in nature with those thoughts and desires of the mother, and we are a witness to those particular cells being strengthened and developed more than other groups. And thus it is that a mother's relation to a child is of a spiritual or psychic nature, and thus it is also that the Omniscient Author of the universe contrives that mankind shall actually take an active part in influencing the creation of his own kind.

Also this privilege is by no means restricted to man, for the higher organisms among the animal kingdom shed just such an influence over their progeny not only as to disposition, but materially, a fact that is well appreciated by expert breeders of stock. The individual and variable characteristics and disposition among domestic animals are so well known that they need little comment, and the interesting works of the Canadian naturalist, Ernest Thompson Seton, give similar attestation as to animals in the wild.

When we realize that, by a kindly and considerate treatment of animal life, we are actually fostering the moral tone of the source of supply upon which mankind draws to replenish his own species, it is not only encouraging, but it illustrates the far-reaching influence of justice throughout nature. Hence also mankind, in the development of domestic animals with their gentler traits, and the suppression of wild animals of venomous and cruel instinct, is fulfilling a deeper purpose than he is aware.

And it becomes clear to us, with the aid of our abnormal sense, that just as surely as the average character-tone of life in the animal kingdom which is passing out affects the budding human kingdom, so in its turn does the moral-tone of life in the human kingdom which is passing out contaminate or raise the tone of the psychic kingdom which draws its constant supply of life from the human. Later we will record how the psychic kingdom, or scale of existence next above the human in power and resources, exercises a mental influence over mankind and thereby fulfils a retributive justice in the Divine economy.

Let us now close the argument of the passing of the life essence from species of the animal kingdom into species of the human

kingdom with a simple example, one illustration being as effective for its purpose as many. Let us observe a ripening embryo, whose brain cells are in process of formation and in which the mother's inherited temperament and attitude of mind have especially developed cells appertaining to endurance and engineering ability, and at the moment of quickening, when the now fully ripe organism draws upon the general life essence which swathes and surrounds the whole earth, we perceive that these two groups of cells draw their supply from life essence which has been previously developed in the organisms of a beaver and a draught horse, the former with its phenomenal constructive ability, and the latter of all animals the most patient and reliable. The scope for humor and gibe that there is in this proposition is, of course, apparent, but man need not shrink the humble origin that founded the highest spiritual beings just as assuredly.

In support of my contention, it is of interesting significance and of considerable bearing that we find in the animal kingdom every possible attribute in an embryo stage which we find existent in the human character and disposition. Even the instinct of religion or man's attitude toward his Maker is represented in the attitude of a dog striving with all the

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power of its canine mind to comprehend its master's meaning and tendering to him alike love, confidence and fidelity.

Let us also consider the circumstance of certain life essence which may have served its due progressive apprenticeships through vegetable, animal and human organisms to eventually emerge in a rather backward stage of development at the disintegration of the human owner. The question may arise as to whether such life essence may not then need to take a retrogressive step and pass by the attraction of affinity back into some animal organism to amend arrears.

No such necessity will, however, arise. In the first place, there would be no rational occasion for retrogression, because whatever opportunities may exist in the lower kingdoms for self-education and the mastering of undesirable traits, must necessarily exist in as potent a scope in the superior kingdoms—else of what avail would be their superiority? And, in the second place, we may confidently conclude that low human tendencies do form part of psychic organisms, i. e., of the organisms next above the human in the scale of progression, inasmuch as we find low animal tendencies in like manner forming part of human organisms.

Consequently, life essence in a backward stage of development does pass on to the psychic organism to continue its education and purification, and does not need to traverse the animal kingdom a second time, the Buddhist theory notwithstanding. Do we not frequently meet people in whom the virtues of fidelity and unselfishness seem to be lacking, while, on the other hand, these very characteristics are commonly well developed in the canine, and hence we may infer that if low-grade instances of the human genus possess certain moral qualities inferior to high-grade instances of the animal genus, then we may naturally expect correspondingly that there are low-grade instances of the psychic genus possessing certain moral qualities inferior to high-grade instances of the human genus.

The theorists, therefore, have a weak case who argue that the animalness of a human soul may occasion its retrogression at death and its return into an animal body by the force of natural affinity. Whatever affinity and tendency a soul may retain of a low nature, there will also be powerful affinities attained in the matter of experience and of a developed and intelligent individuality, and the life whose organism has secured a certain progression in the power of its personality is not to be rele-

gated unnaturally a stage upon merely moral grounds.

Progression in power and progression in morality are a separate and distinct issue proceeding independently and with no retarding connection the one over the other. Some of the strongest characters on earth are in gaol, though not perhaps as many as there should be for the protection of the community. The dominating note of the universe is progression, and all the forces of creation are designed and directed to effect progress in spite of all difficulties and opposition, but let it be noted that always the progression must be effected without compulsion or a sacrifice of individual freedom.

Unquestionably the process by which life essence passes in regular succession through vegetable, animal, human and psychic organsims is an organic law operating quite independently of moral laws, and the life acquires at each stage inherent magnetic affinity which directs and attracts it forward to the next class of organism, as death on each occasion releases it from the prior one.

It is interesting and appropriate here to notice the distinct and well-developed division between the several kingdoms. In the mineral kingdom life has no permeation or adhesion

whatsoever; in the vegetable kingdom life permeates matter, but movement takes place solely by the action of chemical laws, and there is neither central control nor brain cells; in the animal kingdom life directs all action through an immature brain, and a simple process of reasoning operates from effect to cause; in the human kingdom the brain development is mature and at a zenith, complex processes of reasoning occur, and a completed personality has been evolved embracing a capacity to comprehend principles. As a simple but marked distinction between animal reasoning and human reasoning, let us recognize that while animals undoubtedly think, only man has the power to think about thinking. Finally, in the psychic kingdom, or second stage of the completed personality, there will unquestionably be certain additions to the five senses which had sufficed for the education of the animal and human organisms, and by means of these the cause and ultimate end or design of all things will be made apparent, and thereby the acquisition of wisdom will be naturally rapid and an effective happiness attained.

## XVII

We have now considered in regular succession the philosophy of matter and forces and of life in its many stages, from primary protoplasm and the single cell to the highly organized animals culminating in man. It has been indicated that in the passing of life upward to man, through various inferior forms, our human brain cells at our birth obtain their vital supply from a number of animal organisms and not from any single one. On the other hand, it should be understood that in the human stage life has at last attained a completed personality toward which, in the various animal stages, it had been gradually working and developing, and that consequently life passing upward from man enters the psychic organism of the next existence intact. That such is the case is supported by the fact that a personality cannot be more than complete be it in the visible world or the invisible, and that, notwithstanding inherited and other influences bearing upon all of us, we are convincingly conscious that we are each of us definitely and completely ourselves with scope to develop in degree but not in identity.

Some theorists hold that life may be con-

tinued hereafter in the abstract, while they deny the likelihood of a personal immortality, but let it be realized that nature's indications distinctly favor the continuance of personality, inasmuch as the higher the organism the more and more pronounced is the individuality. Hence the plain deduction is that any stages of existence superior to the human would tend to accentuate and not lessen the personal element.

Nature in this same respect disposes of the abstruse theory held by a certain religious school, that in the course of eternity the sense of personality will be gradually lost in a Nirvana or vague condition of general being devoid of desires or their fulfilment. This unsatisfying theory may be forcibly contradicted on the grounds, that whatever may be the sensations of our personality in its vivid human self-consciousness, the All-wise Designer and Producer necessarily shares them, for Deity is omniscient and omnipresent. Consequently, if personal existence is as substantial a fact in the consciousness of Deity as it is in ourselves, it is not to be supposed that beings of intermediate grade will possess a vague existence unconscious of personality with its desires, hopes and ambitions and all that they lead to.

The universe is unquestionably thronged with worlds deliberately designed for the production of completed individuals which thereafter graduate through higher stages of existence. It follows, therefore, that if beings of advanced psychic grade have gravitated beyond affinity with personality, they must also have gravitated beyond an affinity with the universe itself, which is the cradle and school of personalities. This sufficiently exposes the weakness of the Nirvana theory, and indeed, very few of the old religious theories stand the criticism of pure reason.

But to proceed with the interesting consideration of life in the next grade above the human. We are distinguishing this as the psychic life, although necessarily human life is also psychic, the human body being the first habitation of the soul.

I have already stated that when once life has been segregated into a completed personality, with the varied peculiarities which go to compose a distinct character, that cohesion of traits is permanent, and the future states of existence will simply embody a modification of the initial personality, and eventually a development along those same lines which shall be altogether beneficial to the soul itself and therefore to the universe.

When popular religions refer to the human soul, their conception is somewhat vague, but in my contention that a man possesses a soul whereas animals do not, I wish it to be understood that when the life of an animal passes upward into the human organism it rarely if ever passes intact, but is likely to be distributed and form a portion of several personalities, or even if it should happen to make the passing intact, would be merely one contribution among many to some one personality.

On the other hand, when the life of a man passes upward into the psychic organism, it is my contention, that it makes that passing perfectly intact and quite without addenda, and hence remains a distinct entity or soul. Thus in the next life man continues his identical self, with the particular change, however, that the organism, which he there wields, is no longer the five-sensed human one, but a superior and freer organism of increased senses and distinctly greater power.

As for the thinkers who question the existence of any beings in the universe superior to the human, they would do well to give an unprejudiced and deeper consideration to the point.

Surely it must be most obvious that man, with all his modern knowledge, yet knows so

comparatively little. It is true that in the marvelously perfect chemical laboratory of his own body in which the meat and vegetables he consumes are turned into flesh and blood, muscular fibre and bone, man does take some active part, that is to say, he procures the food and masticates it; but there his personal assistance ceases, and he fulfils no conscious part in the rest of the process. The composition of the saliva, gastric and pancreatic juices and the bile, which alter the food into chyme and extract from it the chyle, which in turn is then changed into actual particles of the human body, all this marvelous metamorphosis is effected for man, and without his conscious agency.

Also let us realize that man has only a portion of his muscular equipment under his own control, and that all the most vital muscles working the mechanism of his heart, and his other important organs, are quite beyond his will power; in short, man's limitations are so manifest that illustrating them further is superfluous.

For our education and enlightenment nature submits to our notice and education every possible grade of existence below the human, from protophyte and protozoa upwards, and it is surely quite irrational and absurd to suppose

that this upward scale ceases at the grade of mankind whose limitations are so patent.

Admitting then the inherent probability, that there must be grades and grades of existences higher and higher up the scale of wisdom and power than our own, it is not difficult to recognize why those superior existences are hidden from our observation and knowledge.

From the mere fact that man is effecting it, it is clear that he is designed and intended to exercise initiative and attain some degree of control over the forces of the planet on which he is compelled to travel. It is equally clear from the way our characters grow, as years go by, that our own lives are meant to develop our characters, and that it is our efforts which strengthen them just as surely as a child's legs are strengthened by its own efforts to walk. If, however, we were conscious that living beings overlooked our affairs, beings as high above us mentally as we are above canine intelligence, it would certainly have a retardent and weakening tendency. Not only so, but if the existence of a higher state of being were known to the average human struggler, and if he also knew that on quitting this world he would inevitably gravitate to a superior sphere, it is not very likely that he would long submit to the earthly troubles that are so salutary

to his character, and thus suicides would soon begin to depopulate the earth.

I would here introduce the contention that moral considerations will have no influence over our location, and the powers we attain in the next life, but that as it is here so it will be there—the sun will shine alike on the just and the unjust. The general system of correspondence is once more our guide, and just as here a bishop or a burglar possesses five main senses and twenty digits, so we may depend upon it that, be we moral or immoral, we shall one and all possess identical powers and senses over there. Nevertheless, in the matter of happiness, there will naturally result a vast difference in that psychic life, for unquestionably a wise moral behavior will have led to a contented condition of mind, and the kingdom of heaven will be as surely within us there as it is on earth.

Perhaps but few thinkers appreciate here and now, that the physical, organic and moral departments exist to a great extent independently of each other, and that a wise physical behavior leads to physical happiness, a wise organic behavior leads to organic happiness, and a wise moral behavior leads to moral happiness. The doctor, who ventures forth on a wet night to succor a suffering pauper, must

not count upon escaping catarrh if he neglects to change damp boots.

A very practical point of interest for our speculation as to the next life is also the psychic organism. Let us absolutely disabuse our mind of the popular fallacy, that the inhabitants of the psychic world are vague or unsubstantial beings. The appearance of ghostly phantoms is undoubtedly responsible for this general error, the beholders very naturally imagining themselves to be face to face with the objective form of a disembodied spirit, whereas we have no sound reason to presume the existence of any spirit that is bodiless.

Let it be accepted that we are already, every one of us, thoroughly and entirely spiritual beings, and that it is an essential for consciousness that beings should inhabit or engross either an actual mundane body or an actual psychic and etherial body.

I am convinced by experience that every phantom or apparition is simply a dream or thought-form, portrayed upon our minds during our waking hours instead of in our sleep. From an outside source our visual power is hypnotized and controlled, either upon the retina itself or at the point where the optic nerve merges into the brain, and thus an

actual picture is produced upon our waking minds. A hypnotist by a similar process can coerce a willing subject to perceive any form that he desires. It is, I think, safe to say, that no phantom or ghostly appearance is ever an actual etherial organism or body.

The source of the etherial matter, which goes to form the etherial organism, is so far as I can comprehend it, an emanation from the human body during the process of death which re-forms into an ideal likeness of the original owner with the natural loss of whatever may be superfluous organs under the new conditions of life. Nothing can be simpler than the proposition that, just as denizens of the ocean depths are furnished with material bodies to withstand the enormous weight of water above them, and just as we human beings are furnished with bodies to resist the dense atmospheric pressure that encompasses us, so inhabitants of the psychic life are accommodated with organisms exactly fitted for the pure conditions prevailing in their etherial atmosphere.

Let it also be remarked, that the difference between ocean density and the comparative lightness of earthly atmosphere, is not greater than that between atmospheric density and the comparative lightness of the etherial strata

surrounding the earth, and therefore all three have an equal title to support life.

Moreover it may be conceived that the etherial atmosphere would prove an ideal and enjoyable environment, if the specific gravity of the psychic organism were very accurately and delicately adjusted to it, which is probably the condition prevailing, and however etherial they might both be the etherial organism would nevertheless seem substantial enough to the sensations of the psychic owner.

Here in this world the main cause of our exhaustion and slowness of movement is, of course, the relative density and great weight of the material bodies in which we are imprisoned as compared with the encompassing atmosphere.

I invite the reader to notice that, as far as possible, I am imposing no strain upon the imagination in picturing the circumstances of the life to come, but am seeking to reconcile possibilities with known conditions which, from the prevalence everywhere of a system of correspondences, are reasonably likely to represent approximately the unknown conditions. In any case, whatever the conditions, we may be quite certain that they are natural, and that they conform perfectly to the demand and necessities of the local life over there.

We may be equally sure that any new arrivals from this world would very rapidly find the new surroundings and conditions quite natural and convenient to them, and hence we are proceeding on logical lines in trying to reconcile conditions that we know here with those that are probable there.

Then again, just as we know that the human, the animal, the vegetable and the bacterial life are all closely in touch with one another and interdependent on earth, so we may reasonably conclude that the psychic life is closely in touch with ours. We must at least be in the vicinity of accuracy when we reason rationally upon such matters and keep within the confines of known phenomena.

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It is my personal conviction based upon investigations of psychic phenomena covering a period of several years, that higher life than the human not only exists but takes an active hand in all the affairs of this world. Naturally when we consider a future life, whose organism embraces extra senses over and above the usual five, it is impossible for us adequately to comprehend the condition prevailing there, and the functions of a new sense must be as far beyond our comprehension as sight would be to a man born blind;

no amount of eloquence could possibly bring the conception to his understanding.

Nevertheless, even in this respect, we may reason from inference and conclude that, just as we find all the attributes of the human kingdom existent in an incipient stage in the animal kingdom, so we may expect to find all the attributes of the psychic kingdom existent in the human kingdom. This instantly lends a particular interest to man's incipient and latent powers of thought-reading, of influencing others by his will, of telepathy, or the conveyance of thought without language, and of penetrating solid matters with rays of light. It is scientific to reason that if the mechanism of the human eye could be chemically and physically changed, so as to admit the X-rays of light in place of the ordinary light rays, we should no longer perceive the same material that we now see but should look through it as though it were non-existent. Hence it is a reasonable proposition, that the psychic bodies we shall possess in our next stage of existence may have eyes that enable the owners to perceive an attenuated solid matter to which our human eyes are blind, while at the same time their psychic eyes would be blind to the coarser material which to us seems so tangible. In like manner the actual material of which

their psychic organism is composed, would doubtless be of a kind to which our human eyes are blind.

I would have it particularly understood that the ideas here introduced in relation to the psychic life are actually based upon the general scheme of nature which is intended, of course, not only for our education and study, but to direct our inferences when we seek to penetrate beneath the surface. And let us remember that substantial truth is only to be acquired by searching the depths, and that the superficial or obvious is generally only half a truth, and is frequently misleading.

In the course of my psychic investigations and speculations, I naturally formed some general conclusion as to the manner of life in the next sphere, and their method of overlooking this earth and our affairs, but of course our very best comprehension of the subject must be a defective one in view of our limited senses. It at any rate became logical to me that all our acts and all our thoughts are known and understood in the psychic world, not necessarily known to all but certainly to our intimates and those most interested.

It might be argued that this world is so full of troubles all the time, that one would hope, on passing out of it, to be finished with it and

all its complications, or at the most to have a reawakened interest in the passing over of our friends when their time for release should come; but I am inclined to the opinion that each individual there is only associated with a few intimates here, and neither is the association so joyless, for in most people's lives on earth there is at least as much sunshine as shadow.

It is also to be realized that, whereas, we, on earth, are prone to face our troubles with our courage near zero, there, they can clearly recognize the benefit that these troubles will assuredly be to our characters and, in fact, the beneficent discipline that all troubles are, and thus while they would sympathize with our worrying and anxiety it would by no means distress or dismay them as it might do us.

Furthermore, I gathered and concluded that the bond which links up their conscious lives there with individuals here is, either a bond of love or of affinity of natures, and it must be borne in mind that should dear friends of ours be in trouble or suffering the desired and most natural thing for us all to do is to seek them and to strive to help them, wherefore it would seem to me that if an inhabitant of that happier life were shut off arbitrarily

from his friends on earth, in anxious or painful times, it would be more to his distress than comfort and especially so if some power to render help or counsel were part of his capacity there.

As to the interest in general with which the psychic world regards our earth, let it be realized that, when the Creator wills a course of action to take place voluntarily by us, He awakens in us a desire for it, and the act itself becomes associated with pleasure and is recognized by us all as an appetite. The Creator, for example, wills the propagation of species and the consumption of food to rebuild lost tissue, and everywhere we find that men gladly gratify those appetites.

Likewise there is considerable significance in the natural desire we all possess to lead or coerce other people to our own method of thinking—a curious incipient appetite of which very few people are fully conscious. Practically every argument in a conversation is an effort by someone to impose his opinions and views upon somebody else. If then we already possess here, in an incipient stage, all the attributes of the psychic world, this particular incipient attribute has an interesting import. Assuming that it is part of the plan of creation that every individual passing out of this

life into the next shall exercise from there a mental influence over someone left behind on earth, the fiat would certainly be enforced upon the psychic organism in a natural way as an appetite, and thus what had been an incipient instinct in man would develop into a craving desire in the psychic individual, a desire which he must not only gratify but which will afford him real enjoyment in the gratification.

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Let us imagine and picture some affinity of our own in the next life closely akin to our nature, but devoid of our tendency to spirituality, and at the same time another close affinity there devoid only of our animal propensities, and with these two influences constantly proffering suggestions to our mind, it is easy to perceive what scope there would be for the exercise and strengthening of our judgment. It is to be understood that each of these associates would be simply counseling us to a course of action which they would regard as both pleasurable and natural, and that the lower influence would by no means realize that his counsel might be harmful or retarding to us. And it would also transpire that if we threw our mental casting vote into the scale, in favor of the higher influence, we would not only afford that higher affinity

gratification, but we would impart a lesson to our lower affinity by the force of reasoning that would influence us in arriving at our moral decision, and thus we should take our unconscious part in the universal and Divine design that all should help each other.

There are probably many more than two influences constantly affecting us and all our thoughts—mere passing influences linked to us by affinity when we happen to be in a mood akin to their particular natures—but, in view of the very prevalent duality of all nature's phenomena, it would seem reasonable that there should be two main influences having a special proprietory and permanent interest vested in us and our career, and that it should be part of their task and occupation to shield us from irresponsible outsiders, and to negative any mental links that inconsiderate influences might seek to rivet.

Then again there would be the numberless links of a permanent virility based upon friendships and affections mutually formed in the earth life. Any resident in the beyond, who had had a love or friendship for us when he was on earth, would naturally remain in touch with us by a separate and individual attachment whereby any thought of him happening in our mind would instantly vibrate

in his own and be known to him. Nevertheless, such thoughts of ours would certainly need to find their reflection in his psychic organism, and even a link as close as a mother's for a son could not vibrate and detail to her his thought if he were unworthily occupied—in unworthy matters there would exist no affinity, and temporarily the connection would be severed.

In like manner, there is little doubt, that their thoughts of us in the psychic world would reach our minds here with the same facility as ours reach theirs; but always the source of our thoughts is hidden from us, and it is conceivably best that this should be so, and that we should regard ideas and promptings always as originating in our own human minds. It is plainly healthier for us to weigh all counsel and exercise judgment rather than to acquiesce blindly and automatically.

It will be interesting to proceed even further in the practical detail of probabilities and to consider the actual physical location of the inhabitants of the psychic world.

It would seem improbable that they would often enter the dense mundane atmosphere, for one could imagine no special advantage to them in doing so. Assuming that they have constant access to our thoughts they would

be, to all intents and purposes, as near us as they need be, much more so, in fact, than any human friend of ours could be who might be in actual physical contact with us. A psychic or etherial organism would be of such rarefied material that it would conceivably tend to rise upward in our atmosphere like an air bubble in the ocean until it had reached the rarefied strata where it would possess its natural poise.

Not that I would impugn all psychic phenomena as fraudulent which mediums exhibit at their séances and circles, but I am of opinion that the force then and there exerted is an extraction and projection of animal magnetism from the assembled company present. When concentrated in the accurate proportions of positive and negative and wielded by a capable will power, animal magnetism is probably a more potent agent than science has yet realized. Likewise, as with electricity, I should conceive that it could be quite conveniently operated from a considerable distance, and hence the apparent personal presence of the psychic being controlling the phenomena.

In regard to their freedom of location in the psychic life, it would not appeal to me as probable that psychic organisms are tied to the etherial strata of the earth as man is tied

by gravitation to the atmospheric strata. It is probable that the polar magnetism which encompasses the world, passing from the southern to the northern extremities of it, is simply a wave "en route" between two other planets, and that similar magnetic currents pass through all space linking together all worlds and solar systems.

There is reason to believe that psychic organisms are themselves intensely magnetic, wherefore these planetary currents would constitute for them habitable and convenient routes of travel. Adventures and excursions of such a kind would naturally prove a source of instruction and pleasure to all enterprising minds, and particularly to those interested in astronomy, geology and physiology.

We can readily understand that all new arrivals from the earth life must find themselves under the influence of a natural attraction for earthly matters which would tend to continue for a more or less lengthy period according to the spiritual tendency of their natures. The topics that interested them on earth would still interest them in the psychic sphere, and they would continue to take an active part in such topics and events through the medium of men's minds. It might possibly be a little humiliating for man to know how very little

of his own thinking truly originates with himself.

In the course of time we can conceive that the new arrival from the earth sphere would begin to find his interest in earthly ambitions, attainments and successes waning, and being replaced by an interest in principles. His very face and form would commence to reflect a higher nature and a development of his character, and we can conceive him eventually passing out of the earth-bound sphere upon some magnetic route to be translated to a higher plane for which his more matured nature would by then have acquired affinity.

From such higher sphere he would be no less in a position to overlook all creation below him, and his moral influence would be in powerful operation upon the minds of his recent associates. It would moreover be logical to conceive that the influence wielded by a psychic being of the second sphere would bear not only on the first sphere but would comprehend and include the earth sphere too.

It is only necessary in our minds to multiply this comprehensive influence higher and higher, sphere upon sphere, eventually to realize the apex, the Deity, as overlooking and directing all things and all beings.

## XVIII

We may find it of no little interest to consider also minor circumstances having bearing on the conditions prevailing in the psychic spheres.

Once, therefore, having given rein to our conception of the etherial form as being a veritable body to its inhabitant or owner, we are confronted with the natural question of clothing and of food.

Let it be correspondingly realized in this connection that psychic material of all kinds must be veritable material there, bearing more or less the same relation to the etherial atmosphere that our coarse earthly material bears to the dense atmosphere here. Hence fabric would be handily available there, and would be fashioned by the wearer quite easily into garb to his taste. Inasmuch as most of the arrivals would have been accustomed on earth to clothing, and as they would certainly continue as truly themselves as formerly in tastes and disposition, they would naturally feel more at ease rationally and appropriately clothed.

But as regards food, a considerable change

would certainly have taken place in conditions. In the first place few of us realize that oxygen is the most essential and vital ingredient of a man's body, and that his main and most urgent meals on earth are taken in his breathing. The carbon in the form of food that passes through his digestive process is only essential because his body is so much denser than the enveloping atmosphere, whereby all action calls for great exertion and occasions a corresponding breakdown of tissue which needs to be rebuilt.

In the psychic organism, however, the specific gravity being very closely allied with the etherial atmosphere, and exertion to effect action being correspondingly slight, all the food needed to replenish waste could conceivably be absorbed in the process of breathing. Nevertheless, we are not constrained to suppose that the pleasures of the palate would entirely have ceased—flavors of an exquisite satisfaction do not necessarily call for a substantial foundation.

It may also prove of interest to consider the opportunities in the next sphere for work and active pleasures.

In the main we may conceive that their occupation consists of influencing their earthly affinities and striving to coerce or persuade

them to an approved course of action. This course would naturally be whatever the psychic guide or mentor considered advisable or pleasurable, and if the particular psychic being happened to have passed over from the earth-life with the cravings of a drunkard or a glutton or a profligate, such naturally would continue to be his conception of enjoyment, and in persuading his unconscious pupil to gratify like tastes he would enjoy at second hand his pupil's own sensations.

Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that he would in any respect regard his pupil in the light of a victim; on the contrary, the psychic mentor's own errors and weaknesses are probably those of ignorance or thoughtless selfishness, and in the course of time and psychic experience, when from his superior altitude he will have learned the danger and decadence that always results from over-indulgence, he will assuredly be found striving to correct in his pupil the very vices that he had formerly encouraged.

For let it also be borne in mind that another and higher affinity will be striving simultaneously to restrain the same pupil, in addition to which an all-embracing moral influence from still higher spheres will be ever seeking to awaken the psychic mentor's own mind as

well as the pupil's mind to the wisdom of self-control and temperate habits.

In regard to the amusements and pleasures in the psychic spheres, it may confidently be conceived that the scope and catering is lavish.

It is interesting to realize that here on earth theatrical entertainments or tales of fact and fiction are a never-ending source of delight to all classes and all ages, and consequently it can be reasonably anticipated, that in the psychic sphere where the whole of life's earthly drama is performed under their direct observation and influence, and where every human mind is an open book for their perusal, interest and variety would be never likely to flag.

Perhaps in this connection we may think with some embarrassment of the possibility of having our earthly privacy constantly intruded upon from the next life, and we may therein recognize the wisdom that leaves mankind generally unconscious of psychic association.

In any case we may take modest comfort in the belief that the power of sight in a psychic organism would only take cognizance of the etherial matter pertaining to the psychic world, and consequently in looking upon us they would only perceive the psychic material which

permeates every human creature, and they would be conveniently blind otherwise to our earthly bodies. Nevertheless, in their observation and perusal of our thoughts, they would naturally be able to perceive every picture portrayed upon our retina, and thus would have opportunity to enjoy earthly scenery and features in addition to their own local surroundings.

Here another side issue of some interest is suggested. Assuming that the inhabitants of the beyond possess a complete facility in reading one another's thoughts it might be imagined that such a condition of affairs would render social life there rather impossible, and yet in some respects there would certainly be compensating advantages and a tendency to a very desirable social exclusiveness. The whole community would tend to locate by a natural attraction and repulsion into associations of a like moral character. Pretension and social insincerity would have become impossible, inasmuch as all would be in a position to recognize the true instinct and nature of everyone else.

At this point let us realize that our truest and most veritable characters consist of our tastes leavened by our aspirations, and that our history or the incidents of our past lives

is really of less moment to our neighbors than our present disposition, if it could be known. What we may have done or been in the past will cease to be of real moment to others when once our true characters and natures become palpable.

We can conceive that a psychic arrival would not have been long in his new sphere before he would realize that regrets as to the past are a waste of energy except as a spur to improvement.

Allowing that a common moral level probably establishes and locates coteries of the psychic community, social life would nevertheless continue to have all the charm of variety that it has on earth so far as individual tastes and characteristics go, and there would be an attractive mingling of the gifted of all kinds.

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After all, let it be remembered that the moral character of everybody in an earthly social circle is supposed to be of one general level.

In psychic social life, what each has been and actually is or wishes to be would be openly palpable to all, and all would equally know that such facts were discoverable and readable, whereby most certainly no humbug or pretence would be attempted, and no in-

trusion would be made upon circles of superior morale or refinement. Just as here each is happiest in the company of his own kind, so it would be naturally there, and none would seek or desire to go or intrude where his inferiority would be patent to all.

As to friends and associates of one's own circle in the psychic world intruding upon the privacy of one's own thoughts, merely because such an intrusion had become possible, it would be as thoroughly improbable and out of the question as it would be for a gentleman on earth to open a friend's personal correspondence and peruse it. Let it also be realized that the new sense or psychic gift would certainly work both ways, and that nobody there could intrude upon our thoughts and memories without our instantly knowing the fact. Let us be perfectly tranquil as to the psychic social life in which we shall each some day find our place; for a gentleman is a gentleman the world over or in the uttermost spheres.

We may now pass on to consider the production or existence of children in the psychic spheres; and let us be guided confidently by the faith that there are no exceptions in nature's fundamental methods. Every living psychic being will assuredly have had his in-

itial period as a living soul on some progressive planet.

Children, as they pass from the earth to the psychic life, are probably at once adopted by those having the strongest natural affinity for them, which would quite often prove to be some near and blood relative of the earthly parents.

There would also as surely be scope and opportunity for their education there with the whole of life's struggles and trials on earth available as daily object lessons. We all know what a multitude of women are passing over always to the psychic life who have had scant opportunity on earth to satisfy their natural craving for children, and we may well conceive them as being but little disturbed by the heavy infantile mortality rate which throngs the psychic world with infants of all ages.

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In a sense may we not also regard such children as fortunate in having escaped earth's hardships and crudest struggles. Yet, on the other hand, let us be content and count it salutary ourselves, to have traversed the long, long route and fulfilled our allotted years, notwithstanding all our stumblings and failures, for the outcome in character and scope must be more vigorous just as a garden plant

makes better wood than one that is hothouse reared.

There is an interesting Christian tradition to the effect that there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage in the psychic life, and we may accept this as substantially correct, always realizing, however, what we mean when we refer to marrying and the marriage tie.

All normal natures tend to a certain satisfaction in the company of the opposite sex. The two sexes are each the natural complement of the other, just as all positive and negative elements in nature fuse inherently. The actual incident of marriage by no means represents the sole earthly pleasure that the gentler sex find in the companionship of man and *vice versâ*.

In the psychic world the natural contour and general characteristics of sex would probably be perpetuated and true mating and association would take place based, however, solely upon an ideal and ecstatic companionship.

In a community where all may recognize the inmost characteristics and dispositions of others, and where there is a natural faculty of attraction between all, enabling each to detect an affinity beyond question, mistakes would be rendered impossible, and it would

moreover inevitably happen that ideal mates would sooner or later discover each other, and thenceforward their poetic instinct would enjoy a perfect and ideal unison.

There is more poetry in the average human nature than is perhaps generally realized, and in the next phase of existence the ideal conditions prevailing would certainly tend to develop this harmonious inclination. A true poet is a thinker whose thoughts are in harmony with the beauties of all nature, and every lover of music or the rhythm of harmony is a votary of poesy, consciously or unconsciously. Let us recognize with interest that practically all men have some love of music in their souls, and it will follow by a natural development in a higher life where harmony of thought and behavior and companionship will prevail, that poetry and sentiment will soon become a normal trait in everyone.

Is it not true that we are all of us constantly moved more than we permit ourselves to show or express, and it will not be the least among the joys of that life beyond that we shall all be able there to express our sensations to our fullest satisfaction with neither fear of a reaction of feeling nor of being misunderstood by our companions.

## XIX

In venturing as we have done into a consideration of the practically unknown sphere of life that succeeds our earthly career, it should be realized that this was and is quite essential in furnishing a reasonable and adequate explanation of the universe which necessarily embraces phases above the human as well as below.

Even if our speculations and conclusions may at some points be inadequate, nevertheless it is always very clear to the deep thinker that the process of creation which we behold in daily operation is only part of some great and intricate scheme—a chapter, as it were, in the middle of some book—and we are certainly upon legitimate grounds if we consider prospects ahead in trying to comprehend the story and to understand why the situation should have reached its present phase.

If I am challenged personally as to whether my conclusions are based upon my own experiences and experiments, I have no hesitation in admitting it—in short, I claim to have certainly penetrated somewhat within the veil by my own single-handed search for the truth. At the same time I am not willing to submit

details of my experience, having no wish to encourage others to experiment in a field that is generally outside the beaten track and unprofitable, where, however, I happen to have passed unscathed, presumably by virtue of the religious and disinterested motives that prompted my quest.

The suggestions that I offer as to the life beyond are sufficiently and at any rate fundamentally correct, and if they serve to indicate the general probabilities, they will suffice for the purpose of this book. I particularly wish to avoid any dogmatical pose and am anxious simply to promote thought and encourage hope; in fact, I would have my every suggestion or statement criticized candidly in the light of rational probability.

A few words here are perhaps necessary in explanation of my reference to psychic experiments as unprofitable and undesirable. I have already indicated that for the strengthening and developing of our characters here on earth a constant influence is in operation upon our minds from the next sphere, striving to coerce them to a crude or animal or unrestrained course of action. Correspondingly, I have also indicated that a higher influence continues to counsel us always to resist such primitive impulses. The psychic promoters of the animal

impulses are, I believe, individuals who have passed over from this life with their animalness largely unrestrained, and whose idea of pleasure and satisfaction consists of the gratification of animal propensities, including anger and violence under provocation.

Let it be further realized that so long as we are linked to our own animal organism we naturally possess a distinct animal affinity with lower psychic control. I use the term "control" here, although under normal circumstances we all of us instinctively resist any attempt to control our wills, for in the main we are more susceptible to being influenced than coerced. Directly, however, we commence to deliberately experiment upon occult lines, and seek to produce palpable phenomena, it is commonly a feature of such experiments that a novice is encouraged to remain impassive and to allow psychic influence to direct or prompt his action.

It is a well-known fact in hypnotism that if once an object or victim permits himself to be hypnotized he will prove thereafter an easier subject to control, and this applies in like manner and no less to psychic influence, which rapidly becomes a form of coercive hypnotism should a victim of his own initiative surrender control of his free will.

We all know that a complete self-control is the very crux of character, and thus the enervating and retarding effect of surrendering self-control becomes a real danger when the coercive influence proceeds from beings whose powers are superior to ours, while their morality or idea of right and wrong may be inferior. Not that such beings have any ill-natured desire to harm us or weaken us, but they are naturally desirous of gratifying their own regular appetites, and like a good many human beings they tend to think mainly of their own pleasure and are selfishly inconsiderate of those who cater to it.

The thought of such powers for vice and decadence being abroad in the land, potent for mischief, intentional or otherwise, may be somewhat disturbing, but it must not be forgotten that in accordance with nature's invariable compensations there are also correspondingly high moral influences around us and about us which are still more potent for good. That ultimately goodness is more powerful than badness is manifest from the fact that the world has progressed in kindliness and sympathy.

It is only when people are so indiscreet as to throw aside the protective armor with which the Creator has endowed us all, and to allow

their self-control to be borrowed from them, that abnormal conditions prevail and their normal strength of will and character begins to be sapped.

With our realization of the fact that literal help is available from the spheres beyond, the question is apt to arise as to why our friends there do not assist us more and oftener in our affairs and struggles; but it should be realized that for our own sakes their agency is seldom made apparent to us—things just seem to happen.

Also we must remember that every living soul on earth has his own potent friends working for his welfare from the psychic spheres, and consequently this or that benefit or favor that we may have set our hearts upon is, probably, also desired as keenly by others who are just as entitled to psychic help as we are.

And in regard to the wisdom of the veil being drawn betwixt this life and the next there is still another point to be considered.

Man is intended to, and instinctively does, maintain an attitude of proprietorship in regard to the whole earth—he persistently subordinates all the forces and material of it to his own advantage, and correspondingly his interest in the psychic question generally has the ultimate design of benefiting himself and

of using the psychic powers for his own aggrandizement. He fails to realize that however much he may control the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and even his own kind, immediately he touches upon and experiments with the psychic kingdom, he is in contact with a superior power, and in place of controlling he is in a position to be controlled.

Thinkers and investigators who discover the truth of psychic contact and influence would do well to forget it in their daily avocations and to live their earth lives on strictly normal lines.

It is interesting to recognize the delicate poise of the justice that entrusts to human fashioning the moral tone of the psychic power which is destined presently from the psychic sphere to influence the minds of mankind. In other words, let us educate our citizens morally to a man, and we shall raise the tone of the potent psychic sphere whose population is always replenished from the earth sphere. The possible danger in despatching extreme criminals to the next life, vicious and uncured, where they may be more powerful and prone to work us mischief than they were on earth, is so obvious that the marvel is that capital punishment has not been abolished long ago.

As a closing word on the subject of life in

its stages superior to the human, it is, as I have already sufficiently argued, quite irrational to suppose that human life is the highest form of life existent; and admitting, therefore, that there must be others, let us also realize that such others are necessarily and as surely in the universe and part of the universe as all the stars and planets are, and as we ourselves are, and hence we are on perfectly legitimate ground in linking together the whole into one harmonious uniform scheme.

The tendency that superficial thinkers have to treat such matters as unsubstantial or weird or uncanny is quite unphilosophical. Either the facts are so or they are not so, and as all argument and logic as well as a vast array of personal attestation go to establish the facts as true, then, in the name of common sense, let us reason about them and think about them in the light of fact, and not in the light of unsubstantial dreams and imaginings.

If mankind and his checkered career are a fact, then, assuredly, an advanced state of being must be doubly a fact, and it is high time in this twentieth century that man should break away from old foolish habits of thoughts and conceptions of psychic life that will not blend in with the rest of the universe.

Again let us give due weight and consid-

eration to the truth that throughout creation, wherever an appetite exists, there exists also the wherewithal to satisfy that appetite—the two are invariably created in conjunction and in linked vicinity. The inference, therefore, is powerful and obvious when we realize that all mankind for thousands of years have been hankering for eternity and for a knowledge of infinity. Whatever power made us, made also our cravings and desires, and it would have been as easy to have made us without a desire for eternity as with it. Having created the hunger, it were an inexcusable wanton omission not to have supplied the food, and in a world teeming with providences, if that food is not to be forthcoming it is a most astonishing and glaring instance of inconsistency and a flat contradiction to the rest of nature.

## XX

We now pass on to the question of morality, and in approaching this final phase of the argument we must not be restricted by any deference to Power or by any sense of our own infinitesimal consequence. We must use boldly whatever gift of reasoning we are endowed with, confident that our capacity for criticism indicates our right to the use of it.

I think I have already sufficiently indicated that the ultimate purpose of this or any other world is the production of sentient beings to whom power and independence may be safely entrusted in degree. Life accordingly graduates through numerous subordinate stages prior to attaining its mundane zenith or the comparative control of its own career which it possesses in a human personality. Unquestionably there are as many psychic stages of education above the human as there are animal stages below it, but we are principally concerned now in considering nature's normal earthly phenomena.

Aspiring and benevolent thinkers are apt to say that if they were Creators, making a world or running one, they would have neither pain nor trouble in it and nothing but virtue and sunshine and joy. Yet it is clear that on such a plan the created beings would be comparative automata. If there were only virtue and sunshine and joy, there would exist no prerogative of choice, and as well might we strap a child into a chair and congratulate ourselves upon its model behavior in the respect that it was not running around getting into mischief.

The first and obviously necessary lesson for life to learn is activity and acquisition, or how to take care of itself. Subsequently in its

passage through the human phase it may discover that in taking care of and for its fellows it contributes as fully to its own advantage. Nevertheless, it is only when we possess the penetrating discernment to perceive the universe as infinite that we can know that justice must be infinite also, and that consequently we are bound to receive a corresponding recompense for every benefit we tender to others.

It is interesting to study and observe nature's operations and to note how all animal life is being constantly encouraged and trained in activity and acquisition. In one direction or another all stages of animal and human life are perpetually learning to acquire food for the body, food for the sensations, or food for the mind. It is obvious, therefore, as a general comprehension of the design, that we must recognize activity and acquisition as part of the Creator's purpose for His creatures.

Acquisition is alike the object of the animal voracious for its food, or of the human of high moral development, earnest to attain accessions of virtue, and the same hunger for acquisition accounts for the unreasoning blindness of those who hoard or accumulate wealth —the initial motive power in itself being natural and excellent, while its object is unfortunately misapplied.

Some reformers, confounding acquisition with selfishness, condemn both, but the distinction should be clearly recognized. The first call and duty of all life is to self, otherwise species would deteriorate and posterity would suffer. On the other hand, selfishness may be defined as an undue consideration for self, coupled with a lack of consideration for others. Activity and acquisition are assuredly destined to be an eternal factor in our career, for both moral and physical progression imply acquisition, and it is certain that we can never attain such a high level of being that we shall be surfeited with perfection, and necessarily tomorrow's degree of perfection must always lay alluringly ahead of today's.

A further and an equally impressive lesson that nature proclaims to us is the contribution of all to the welfare of others. We note everywhere the insistence of circumstances in compelling all life to contribute of its substance to the substance of its neighbor. Every weaker creature that is coerced to render up its body to the hunger of its captor is involuntarily obeying this same fiat of nature.

In the animal or lower stages of life the exercise of option in this respect only has temporary play, enabling the species for the time at least to evade the forfeiture, but in the

human or higher stage of life sacrifice of self for the general benefit may be accepted or rejected according to the moral perception and will of the individual.

In the human stage moral development is more pointedly entrusted to the creature for his own attention or neglect. Nevertheless, civilization points the same lesson, inasmuch as the food and clothing and conveniences enjoyed daily by each person are the product of the work of hundreds of his fellows, and perforce, therefore, in his mere consumption he is assisting the lives of others.

When once we comprehend the progressive eternity of all life, another point that becomes apparent is that every creature which levies toll upon its prey, and thereby benefits itself materially, actually at the same time benefits the victim by releasing its life and so freeing it to enter some higher organism.

When, too, we realize that in order to carry on a system of progression it is essential that life shall enter organism after organism, attaining in each certain acquisitions in the way of experience, and then passing on to the next, the prevalence of death in nature will assume a cheerfuller significance for us.

At first thought we assume a tendency on the part of all species to evade death, but,

nevertheless, it is a feline habit, at the approach of dissolution, quietly to seek solitude and face the situation in peace, while African travelers tell us of the wild elephant which ends its career solitarily in a cemetery of its species and lies itself down patiently among the relics of its kindred. The elephant, by reason of its size and strength, and the cat, from the domestic protection that man affords it, may succumb to senile decay, but the general rule in the animal kingdom is that one creature acquires death in involuntarily surrendering its material parts as sustenance to some more powerful animal.

Nor can it be correct to imagine animals as shrinking from death when they obviously possess no imaginative capacity to comprehend that condition. Clearly, therefore, whatever shrinking they exhibit must be from the pain or discomfort which they know by inherited or acquired experience to be threatening or impending. As a matter of fact, nature has carefully endowed each species with just sufficient cunning or protection to ensure its fulfilling a reasonable span of existence and acquiring its due experience. In the meantime every single organism is called upon by nature to exert effort for the preservation and upkeep of its body, and thus the character of the

modicum of life that is in it acquires a certain progression and strengthening.

And now as regards that suffering or inconvenience to which the whole of animal creation is subject. Individual effort being essential to the progression and benefit of all life, it is palpable that all species must be spurred to that effort by appetites, and, conversely, by pain when those appetites are neglected. Furthermore, the proper preservation of its organism being essential for a period, it is necessary, in like manner, to furnish that organism with pain as a protective guidance, whereby every detrimental action shall provoke suffering and warn the owner.

As for the degree of actual pain felt, this, of course, would depend upon the refinement of the creature's nervous system, and we can rest assured that no animal organism can compete in acute sensitiveness with the human one. Consequently, as we know that the less sensitive parts of the human body can be wounded with very slight inconvenience to our feeling, and as most pain is more of an after effect than a simultaneous one, it follows that the wound which leads to an animal's death will be frequently quite painless.

Of course, in man's own case the play of his imagination generally augments the actual suf-

fering; but, on the other hand, nature is merciful in relieving us of consciousness in an actual extremity, and moreover she furnishes many anesthetics in her lavish laboratory. Finally, as to human pain, let it be remembered that nature has left it to man's own option to vacate his body should its ailments provoke the wish and will. Hence, if the average of conditions here are not to his liking, there is no compulsion for him to remain, and the mere fact that men do remain, notwithstanding the squalor and poverty that the laws and practice of Christendom permit, speaks volumes for the attractions of this often over-disparaged world.

In the arrangement of a Creation for the propagation of free and independent life, such freedom and independence would naturally be doled out to individuals strictly in accordance with the amount of experience they had attained. At first in primitive forms the scope would be small, but later, in the organisms of higher creatures, the power and capacity would be fuller. And thus we witness in all life, up to and including the human, a school of experience for the production of graduates fit to enter upon the glorious freedom and scope of the life hereafter.

All earthly beings already enjoy consider-

able freedom, but need to be under a certain restriction and tuition, as they all possess delicately poised organisms for their temporary occupation, and they require to be advised and warned as to the proper or improper treatment of them.

Vegetable life has, of course, no options in its disposal, and may be likened to life in swaddling clothes, not yet promoted to the nursery or kindergarten. Animal life, however, has begun to enjoy a certain freedom, and in the process of its adventures needs at certain points to be encouraged or discouraged. The encouragement takes the form of a sensation of pleasure; the discouragement is a sensation of pain.

The explanation of the sensations pain and pleasure, therefore, lies in the fact that they are nature's guidance. Such is, of course, only a broad general designation, inasmuch as the exercise of judgment in special cases cannot be dispensed with. When life has reached its highest mundane stage there must arise all sorts of delicate distinctions as to whether certain actions or conduct, which are attendant with pleasure, are nature's temporary approval or permanent approval, or are nature's weakened guidance—guidance that has been abused and coerced by man's insistent will.

For example, an excessive indulgence in alcohol on the first occasion will be followed by nausea and a headache, yet if the indulger persists in his foolish practice, he shall presently coerce that effect and lessen or almost overcome it; and though eventually nature will reprove him just as surely with a breakdown in his nervous and digestive system, yet for the time being he has refused her counsel and headaches will no longer warn and restrain him.

By some sort of means in the scheme of creation the voice of wisdom requires to be heard, and thus pain may be broadly regarded as nature's "Don't!" Her lessons are often sharp enough, but in animal life they are generally effective, and seldom will a kitten place her tail in the fire a second time. Without the restrictive guidance of pain, creatures of all kinds would constantly and unwittingly destroy their own organisms.

And next we are confronted with the problem of Evil. This enigma has baffled and misled thinkers for thousands of years, and yet the solution is today within our grasp. Let us in the first place take Euclid's dictum that the whole is greater than any of its parts, and apply it to creation itself. Let us realize that the whole of Creation, visible and invisible, is

greater in its providence, greater in its perfection, greater in its justice, and greater in its wisdom than can possibly be indicated on the earth alone. Let us always remember that whatever we may be witnessing in nature is only part of the entire plan. A section of any mechanism may appear ungainly and awkward, and yet when fitted into its place it may be found to be an essential and harmonious part of the whole. Unquestionably the whole fabric of nature, from ether in its uncondensed diffusion to individual consciousness in the highest freedom of the psychic life, is a perfect design for its purpose and effect, though certain single parts or phases, considered separately, may seem unconvincing and defective.

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In the second place let us qualify the virulence of evil by acknowledging it as a relative term rather than an intrinsic one. Any action that is below the moral capacity of the doer merits the description "evil," and yet the act intrinsically of itself may not deserve such condemnation. An animal might destroy its rival and appropriate its widow, and we should recognize that it was simply obeying a natural desire, while it lacked moral judgment and capacity to consider the rights and wrongs of the action; yet we should tragically condemn

any such proceeding on the part of a human being.

Evil must also be recognized as a necessary corollary in Progression. Hailing Progression as the keynote to the universe, of which we have such overwhelming evidence, and applying a course of progression to principles or morality, we must recognize that where individual life is being educated in a free choice of its own conduct, both high and low lines of conduct must be available for its selection, otherwise there would be no freedom.

It is salutary for us to realize, too, that wherever we may ourselves stand upon the ladder of moral progression, the rung above us represents relative goodness, while the rung below us is relatively evil. Progression or an upward climb in behavior cannot possibly occur unless there exist a bottom rung to the ladder somewhere. And if we trace rung below rung to the very bottommost rung of all, we shall find that we are then only contemplating not evil of some fiendish degree, but merely some animal action or condition.

The depths of depravity would surely be plumbed if a mother were to devour her own progeny alive, and yet domestic animals are sometimes prone to this very act. It is, in fact, consoling to realize that the entire appe-

tite for evil which affects the human species may be traced to a sufficient source in animal life and in the potent existence of beings who have passed on from the human to the psychic life with their animalness uncontrolled.

It is therefore idle to imagine the existence of diabolical agencies in order to account for existent evil. We should probably possess a clearer conception of our bearings if the word "Evil" were abolished altogether and the word "Animalness" were substituted.

In the whole of Creation there is not a more impressive and significant fact than the glorious truth that our thoughts, criticisms, cravings and ideals just as surely emanate from the Creator as our bodies do. It consequently follows that the very prompting of our minds, which may lead us to condemn Deity because of the existence of pain and evil, has its source in Deity.

Seeing also that if we are moved to such a condemnation it is by the high moral instinct of charity or sympathy for others, and by a sense of outraged fairness or justice, this indicates that it is a wholesome, honest and proper prompting, and as Deity typifies to the thinker infinite perfection in all attributes, Deity must necessarily approve the condemnatory attitude we take.

In regard to our conception of Deity, we unquestionably do well to strive with all our power to comprehend the Infinite, for only by effort can power develop; nevertheless, at the same time, let us never lose sight of our limitations. Reverting again to Euclid's dictum, we must realize that each human mind is only an infinitesimal part of creation, and it is, of course, a manifest impossibility for the part to comprehend or encompass the whole. While, therefore, the tangible conception of Deity must be entirely beyond our scope, we may legitimately approach a certain conception and trust to our innate homage to the Ideal to direct us aright.

This homage to the Ideal is itself another immensely significant and glorious fact in nature. Whether we find ourselves moved and impressed by the beauty of a face or the coloring of a sunset, by the harmony of a Beethoven or the song of a nightingale, or still more by the nobility of an heroic deed, the greater the perfection the fuller our satisfaction, and yet always by a prompting from within we are conscious that there might be scope for still higher perfection, and precisely in proportion to the refinement of our artistic instinct, so does this truth become palpable.

Hence, if even the limitations of a human

brain can always recognize a higher and higher scope, and seeing that we are all existing in a universe whose marvels are infinite, we need only to add degrees of perfection to the finitely perfect in all directions, and we shall presently stand face to face with Infinite Perfection.

This Apex of Infinite Perfection in a universe of infinite space, infinite power, and infinite time may be beyond our present intimate conception, but is none the less a necessary, obvious and palpable inference and an actual demonstration to the uncompromising reason which reasons to a conclusion.

Establishing, then, in our minds Infinite Perfection as our abstract conception of Deity, the next impressive and significant fact that confronts us is the attitude of all species toward Deity.

There are no exceptions to the commonplace but stupendous truth that all beings are attracted by perfection, and therein, mark you, are necessarily attracted in their degree toward God.

It is true that each conscious being is mainly limited to appreciating the beauty and points of its own species; this, however, is a deliberate restriction, with an obvious and wise purpose, and the attraction of perfection remains the fundamental fact.

The wildest untutored savage acknowledges the sway of beauty and has his tribal code of right and wrong. The criminal ruffian of civilization is equally susceptible, and even his sense of honor recognizes the betrayal of his associate as contemptible—nay, the very force of the indignation which an unmerited sentence arouses in one of the convict class discloses in him an instinctive sense of the rights of justice.

Alike in Wisdom, Power, Justice, Beauty and Love, we are compelled to recognize the entire creation as consciously or unconsciously paying homage to the Creator. And as those attributes do most assuredly attract all species so far as they are able to recognize and comprehend them, we must acknowledge in the pull of the magnet an absolute evidence of the magnet's presence.

And thus by reasoning we may find out God, and claim to know what it is we worship. The attraction of perfection is a synonym for the attraction of God—recognized or unrecognized, such is the truth—and intuitively we all know and must admit that nothing short of perfection can ever wholly satisfy us. The pull of that magnet which influences all consciousness and all being, indicates, moreover, the universal voyage upon which we are all

embarked and the haven toward which all are steering and are being steered.

## XXI

As a closing word, let us consider whether at this still undeveloped period of man's history there is any practical possibility of formulating a scheme of life on a brotherhood basis.

Let us take courage in the fact that if one person can live always with a sense of brotherhood to his fellows, all can. And, therefore, all that truly wish it may establish it for themselves here and now.

The day is surely coming when a world-wide brotherhood will be established, not only in the statutes and laws of all men, but in their hearts. All, every one of us, shall witness that day, even if it be from higher spheres and many and many a century hence.

The postponement of such a universal elysium is also essential in our day and hour, for all civilization the whole world over is poisoned with what is known as the commercial spirit. Some of the leading nations today inculcate this misapplied motive into their children, almost from their cradles, and din it into them in their schools.

Let us admit that commerce is both laudable and legitimate, that it is necessary to distribute the world's output systematically among its people, but that is not where the canker lies. The foundation of the whole community must be established like the universe itself upon Wisdom, Power, Justice and Love. Men must acquire knowledge as a stepping-stone to wisdom, and they must study the forces of nature to acquire power to produce to the best advantage. Year by year more and more progress is being made under both these heads and, wars notwithstanding, there is assuredly a growing sense of sympathy for the troubles of our neighbors which is steadily affecting and elevating all nations. Pestilence or poverty in any one quarter of the globe occasions help from the whole of civilization. Take courage then, for we are moving onward.

The trouble and hindrance lies in man's failure yet to realize the meaning of true justice. The commercial spirit of the age prompts him in his selling to sell for the highest possible price and to buy labor or commodities at the lowest possible figure. Hence one man's need is another man's advantage, and herein is the blindness and moral obliquity of traders. It will be centuries probably before the commercial world awakens to the

immorality of ever paying less than an article's true worth—of ever selling for more than an article's true value, of ever withholding knowledge concerning values or the demerits of an article, of ever paying less than a man's services merit, or of ever charging more than a service's true value.

From the moment that mankind realizes that absolute and accurate justice will and must inevitably be worked out to the fraction of a farthing, in regard to our transactions with our fellowmen, and that the account must inevitably be balanced—if not in one existence then in another—and that our own individual happiness and honor in the psychic life ahead will be retarded and prejudiced until we have recompensed others for any injustice or deprivation we have occasioned them here—from that moment a new factor will enter into the commercial spirit, and the feverish anxiety of all will then be that others may be properly and adequately recompensed.

Christianity, with its "Love God and love man," is an ennobling religion, but in its inculcation of irresponsibility and the scope it offers for evasion hereafter, it is defective and fails. Only harm could come from a doctrine designed to enable man to evade the just consequence of sin. No honorable lover of ac-

curate and ideal justice could possibly consent to his sins or shortcomings being overlooked, cancelled and forgiven, far less could he be a party to their being charged to the account of another. Such a defective doctrine and crude idea of justice might serve the purpose for primitive man, whose mean motive for morality could be reward here or hereafter—but today, when our reason conducts us into the region of ideals, justice needs to be infinitely perfect and flawless.

The merely theoretical inculcating of a love for one's neighbor as a rule of life is, assuredly, not sufficient and has failed in the test of centuries. The Christian doctrines and scheme of salvation have been taught and inculcated for nearly two thousand years, with the consequence that the common sense of the community allows them to be accepted theoretically but in practice relegates them as impracticable. Willing workers, men, women and children, today are ground down to a starvation pittance in the midst of luxury and affluence, and Christendom's laws permit it.

The preaching of love by itself cannot possibly suffice for the successful and progressive solving of life's problem. The attainment of unselfishness needs to be bracketed with the attainment of self-control, and yet again

with the attainment of truth—reason-proof and consistent truth—and only then will man begin to know what he is about in governing and ordering the earth that cherishes and feeds him; only then, when Justice has entered into his daily practice, will he be able to look heaven in the face and begin to realize his glorious inheritance as the eternal son of the Infinite God.