

THE QUEST OF THE SPIRIT

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THE QUEST OF THE SPIRIT

By
A PILGRIM OF THE WAY

Edited and arranged by
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J. F. Schulz

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To
FIDELIO,
With thoughts too sacred
for words.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

THE manuscript, of which this booklet is an epitome, was placed in my hands to prepare for the press, by one whose friendship I have enjoyed for many years.

What is here presented is less than a fourth part of the whole, but omits nothing that is vital to an understanding of the Author's comprehensive philosophy of life and action. Much that has been omitted would to-day be superfluous, as the contentions and teachings on the subjects discussed have already become demonstrated facts in science, or are accepted *as probable* by eminent philosophical thinkers.

Throughout, the style of the Author has been strictly preserved, and, as the conclusions reached are also the deepest convictions of my soul, in editing the work, I feel that it is the expression of my own thought and aspiration, though voiced by another "pilgrim of the way."

GENEVIEVE STEBBINS.

PREFACE

THE basic ideas in the writer's mind, and the key therefore to the whole trend of his thought, may be briefly summarised thus :

1. That all sound speculation of a true philosophy of life must be based upon the metaphysic of experience ; and this must include all experience, psychical as well as physical.

2. That this metaphysic is identical with that view of the world and its activities which is expressed in the mind of the educated layman as common sense ; but, as such, is always to be distinguished from those ideas of the uneducated mind which may arise from common ignorance.

3. That common sense, being the synthesis of all past experience, and the dominating attitude of mind by which the sanity of the world is preserved, is, in any final estimate, the only legitimate standard by which to evaluate those speculative ideas which rise beyond the foundation of facts.

4. That abstractions, not being substantial

things, must not be accepted or mistaken for reality : must not take the place of facts in laying a foundation of thought. Abstraction piled upon Abstraction forever remains Abstraction. No matter how elaborate, fascinating, and logical the structure, it is only a castle in the air, an unsubstantial bubble of the brain. The pathway to reality does not lie through its portals.

5. That contradiction and strife are inherent in, and, therefore, a part of existence ; which itself is the manifestation of opposing movements. The shadows of life are proportionate to the light.

6. That the tragedy and reality of good and evil in the world being a fact of universal experience, its explanation can only be found in the assumption that the ground of existence is alogical—neither moral nor immoral but non-moral. That the evolutionary movement of life moves on without design—flowing along the lines of least resistance. The ends attained under apparently identical conditions are always different, and never foreseen where life is the factor.

7. Thus grounded in experience, legitimate speculation will be based on truth ; and the verification of this truth will be the reality we seek, for **REALITY IS THE VERIFICATION OF EXPERIENCE**. There is no reality in the universe which cannot appear.

So much for the writer's part! For the reader, we hope he may escape the illusions of all metaphysical fog, and in voyaging into the unknown, ever keep a good breadth of clear cold water, and the healthy glint of the deep blue sea between himself and the God-forsaken wilderness of "Devil's Island."¹

¹ *Alchemy of Thought*, L. P. Jacks.



CONTENTS

PART I

	PAGE
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION	17
CHAPTER TWO	
A BRIEF SURVEY OF SOME FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS	41
CHAPTER THREE	
THE LESSON OF EVOLUTION	64
CHAPTER FOUR	
THE NATURE OF THE SOUL AND THE SOUL-WORLD	79
CHAPTER FIVE	
THE SEARCH FOR THE FINITE GOD.	95

PART II

CHAPTER ONE	
THE MISSIONS OF THE SPIRIT	109

	PAGE
CHAPTER TWO	
THE MISSION OF BUDDHA	116
CHAPTER THREE	
THE MISSION OF JESUS	139
CHAPTER FOUR	
STRAY LEAVES FROM THE DIARY OF THE QUEST	151
CHAPTER FIVE	
THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM AND THE KING'S HIGHWAY THERETO	159
APPENDICES	
I. A CASE OF SPIRIT IDENTITY	179
II. NOTES UPON MAN'S PSYCHICAL CONSTI- TUTION	182
III. THE GROUND OF NATURE	185

Part I



CHAPTER ONE—BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OBJECT OF THE QUEST

THE age of chivalry arose out of the primitive subsoil of feudal barbarism, established its ideal of knightly honour, achieved its glory, then lost its spiritual grip and became conventional. Convention, ever false in heart to the ideal, became the mask of honour, courage, and chastity; behind which treachery, lust, and cowardice flourished. And as true knighthood retired, to live only in that golden age of "Once upon a time," so is it in all the affairs of men, change and decay are involved in each achievement. Phoenix-like, the ashes of one idea give rise to another. The mail-clad seekers of the Grail sank into the grave of the past to give rise to other forms of the Quest, whose seekers, instead of sword and shield, are armed with the test-tube and microscope. Nevertheless, though unknowingly, they seek the same treasure, veiled in the mystery of

existence. For the precious blood of the chalice and the Elixir of Life are one.

We are seeking the Truth. The Quest of the Spirit is the search for the meaning of Life underlying Appearance; and Reality in a world of relativity.

Before us, looms high a pile of manuscript-notes, relating to widely-different branches of research; to strange psychical phenomena of an abnormal nature; to the conflicting intellectual vagaries of professional philosophy; to the still wilder speculations of that scientific materialism which passed the zenith of its power with the close of the nineteenth century; and last, to the rise and development of religious ideas.

In attempting to prepare a digest of this garnered fruit of years that shall present an epitomised, but faithful view of the results achieved, we find that what appeared, at first sight, an easy task, becomes in the actual performance almost Herculean.

Collections of thought find a close parallel in the collections of a more material nature. The objects brought together are of a widely-different value. So the student who has devoted the best part of a long life to the study and collection of the facts of human experience, finds himself in somewhat the same position as might a collector of gems. As a whole, the collection of a life-time

may be such as to create a just pride in the various treasures brought together. Thus viewed, the devoted collector may feel that his life-efforts have not been in vain. Nay! he may even think that his reward has been great. This state of mind, however, comes only when the entire field of labour is surveyed as a whole. When we come to look over these possessions separately, our pride begins to diminish. When we begin to examine them under the intellectual microscope critically, we feel humiliated and reduced to our just proportions. When so examined, not one single treasure of thought is seen to be perfect; not one single stone of fact without some tiny flaw, unnoticeable to any but the expert. Deep down in the heart of our most precious gem, there lurks some unknown substance. That erstwhile perfect jewel, "The pearl of great price," is perfect only in comparison with some greater imperfection. Why is this always the case with human effort? How is it that we are forever brought to a pause with the "*Ever not quite*"?

The most spiritual religion evolved by man degenerates into degrading superstition. The glorious dreams of ancient philosophy dissolve like rising mist before the onward march of science. The proudest boast of science that denied immortality to the soul and conferred it upon the atom, descends into the common grave of human

thought with the advent of radium. And, as we advance, we begin to perceive that the first recorded spiritual intuition of the race that granted a soul to every living thing, is the simplest and truest explanation of the facts of nature *as we know them*. Before we pass through this "Realm of Ends"¹ is it possible that we may have to return and re-examine those primitive records made in the Book of Beginnings?²

To these questions, the only answer is that man, like the rest of the universe, is moving onwards, is not static, but ever in a state of becoming that which he never was before. Our ideal of perfection to-day may be attained to-morrow, or a millenium hence, but before that standard is reached our ideal will have also moved on—will have grown with the rest of things. Our standard of perfection to-day will become the "Ever not quite" of to-morrow.

We may be well pleased with the whole collection when viewed as a sum total, but never with the individual units of which it is composed. Small personal imperfections become lost in the crowd. The majestic grandeur of creation is revealed in its cosmic *unity*. The glory of the heavens in their shining constellated *mass*.

As Theists we may see in the starry frame-

¹ James Ward.

² Egyptian "Book of the Dead," trans. Wallis Budge.

work of the sky the fiery blossoms of a Divine Idea—in the ether of space find the invisible garments of God. As Idealists we may ascend upon the wings of the spirit to still greater heights of vision, and see, in this *man projected Absolute*, the living light of a Fighting Soul, who, in the millions of eons of the past, was what you and I are to-day, and is now, what you and I may become in the unknown eons yet to be: Not the all-pervading God at the centre of creative life, but an arch-angelic soul—a pro-consul of the Spirit in the fathomless immensities of Being.

There never was a time in the past history of man when the best religious thought, as a whole, had a higher conception of God, or a nobler, broader outlook upon life than we have to-day. But we should be sadly disappointed, if we tried to find this spirit incarnate in any particular form of religion, or universal in any particular church. It is becoming dominant only, in the spiritual thought of the time, slowly working through the minds of religious men.

The top-most pinnacle of knowledge will never be scaled. As we advance, those truths which we fondly dreamed to be absolute resolve themselves into the relative. The more we know, the greater the unknown looms up before us. Eternity itself will only create vistas of further achievement. Height beyond height, possibilities of

greater life and still greater freedom await us. There is no end to the "Realm of Ends."

In view of the undoubted facts of experience that truth like everything else changes its form and aspect with time, is not static, hence not absolute, but relative, the reader can well understand that the writer finds it difficult to express with any degree of clearness the illusive and chameleon-like aspects of his own collection.

To write upon the abstruse problems that surround the mystery of existence, especially those relating to the life, mind, soul and destiny of man, is difficult. We find ourselves at once confronted with the inadequacy of words to express those inner experiences and deeper intuitions of the Spirit which, while luminous in their reality to the soul, at once become blurred, ill-defined and vague when we attempt to body forth their nature and meaning in precise terms to the intellect. There are truths which we can apprehend in the spirit, but which we can never clearly explain to our reason. Though equally valuable—and both necessary for progress—the intuition and the intellect are divergent paths to the realm of reality. Deep within ourselves, we feel that we know some of the fundamental truths of our present existence; but how give this inner revelation to others? Seeing the swift changing flow of life, and realising its deeper

spiritual meaning to the soul of man, we try to clothe these truths in the garment of language, but fail to convince even ourselves that the literal meaning of the words we are compelled to use expresses half the truth.

In this respect physical science—the supreme reward of the intellect—occupies an entirely different position. Created for the special purpose of dealing with the so-called practical realities of life—matter, motion and mechanism—its formulas can be expressed in precise terms about which there can be neither two opinions nor any doubts as to their exact meaning. But who shall attempt to define the invisible spirit of life—which is at once *the law and the eternal movement of being*—in symbols that convey the same meaning to all? How portray in language, crystal-clear, those spiritual illuminations that flash upon the awakened soul and reveal a momentary glimpse into the mystery of things, (yielding a knowledge which we feel rather than know,) when there are no words adequate to give such insight form?

Did any medical writer ever define such a common experience as physical pain in words that would convey any true image to the mind of one who had had no experience of pain? If this be true, how depict to those without similar knowledge, pure mental suffering—the anguish

of the mind? No effort of words will express the true meaning of colour to the blind, or the pleasures of music to the deaf. We translate the meaning of everything into the terms of our own experience. To understand spiritual things means to have had spiritual experience. Only those with sorrow in the soul can understand the full meaning of religion. In this way, we are brought face to face with the limitation of language to express the meaning of truth, or the nature of reality. To see the truth and to feel the reality of life, are functions of the intuition which can never be accomplished by the unaided intellect, because the intellectual faculties can only deal with definite ideas, or objects in terms of name, form, and number. The movement, the quintessence of things, escapes it.

At the very beginning the writer would therefore premise that only those possessing this intuitional sense of the soul will understand him. To others he will appear inconsistent in statement and therefore illogical in thought. But those who can see beneath the written word, or the symbol of a phrase, and intuitively grasp the writer's meaning, will quickly realize that the apparent inconsistencies are only on the surface, due to a defective medium of expression. Nature, ever working along the lines of least resistance, is not logical nor her vital movements mathe-

matical. Invented by the intellect for dealing with purely material things, logic and mathematics are artificial systems of formal thought—a mental scaffolding for surrounding the symbols of reality.

Therefore, to avoid misconception as far as may be, this introductory-chapter is devoted, mainly, to an explanation of the writer's meaning of the terms used, and his general attitude toward current systems of philosophical thought.

LAW: Let us first consider the word Law. We use it in ordinary conversation in a very lax or, at least, flexible way.

In speaking of the law, we are apt to think of an invisible, but powerful agency that controls and governs in a sense which implies both law-giver and instruments of execution; confusing our ideas of laws in nature with laws of the civil and criminal codes. No scientific thinker makes such a mistake, knowing that the so-called laws of nature are, at their best, but brief descriptive formulas of theory.

For instance, the present writer uses such terms as "the law of the possible" to cover unknown operations in the present, and, also, operations that may become known in the future. Laws, *not, necessarily, manifesting their activities through matter as we know it*, but through movements in which life, mind, and matter have their being.

Laws, then, are not "Things in themselves": Not entities doing work, but concepts; brief descriptive summaries of the way things appear to happen. In the strict meaning of the word, there are no such things, or powers in nature as laws that are universal and all pervasive in every state of existence. The supposed inflexible reign of law in a rigidly mechanical world is the lifeless skeleton existing only in the mechanical minds of materialistic thinkers. In the realm of reality, in the swift, changing, elusive, flexible tendencies of the spirit, such mechanical determinism can find no place.

There are tendencies, but not laws in Nature. We must admit at once that the so-called laws of Nature are purely human conceptions formulated by man to meet the requirements of his practical needs in systematic thinking.

Here the reader may well express his scepticism as to the absence of any universal law in the world, triumphantly pointing to the reign of gravitation over every known material thing. Exactly: That mysterious power called gravity is the special, or fundamental endowment of matter as it is known to us. Within this form its power is universal; but the moment this form is transcended its power vanishes. With the disappearance of atomic matter gravity ceases to exist.

Gravitation has no power over the ether of

space. The universal ether is a form of substance—the basic mother stuff of physical creation—and when, in the surge and conflict of opposing movements, the degraded energy of the conflict is changed in form, and matter is born into the world, gravity is the invisible twin of the dual birth, and attraction is that bond of unity, which later in organic life blossoms forth in *love*.

Were the ether of space endowed with gravitational power, its illimitable extent, and consequent force, would render the stellar movements of the physical universe impossible. It is because the ether is without gravity that it offers no resistance to the moving bodies in space.

The law of the possible is the only unknowable feature of the cosmos. We can realise the impossible, (the past cannot be recalled,) but neither in the present nor in the future, can we fathom the possibilities of creative life. We can only know that which is, or that which has been. We may to a certain extent, from what has been, predict and anticipate what may be, but we can never know what might have been; or what in the distant future will be.

We will conclude this note upon law by saying, that just as primitive man created gods in his own image and thought them spiritual, so modern man has formulated a code of physical laws in the image of his perceptions and calls them natural.

28 THE QUEST OF THE SPIRIT

A distinction without any serious difference, seeing that in both cases, it is an attempt to account for the facts of their experience.

SPIRIT: Surely, the different meanings attached to this word are legion. According to the writer's conception, Spirit, briefly stated, is the *Formative principle of Life*. More broadly defined, Spirit is the supreme principle of existence. The Tao of the Chinese mystic LaoTzu: the immanent, all pervasive, formless power that is, at once, the primal source, the impulse, and the law through which we live and move and have our being.

The *ground*¹ of the universe is an illimitable ocean of formless *substance* in which the supreme spirit is the immanent principle. From this arises a psychical movement of unlimited extent which may be called the World Spirit. And this World Spirit is the psycho-physical basis of all movements, the source of all form visible or invisible. The old Chinese philosopher was right when he said "Tao is without limitation. Its depth is the source of whatever is. . . I know not who gave it birth. It is more ancient than God."² This Tao, or Spirit, then, is the formless which manifests itself through form. Is immanent in matter, as energy, and gravity.

¹ See Appendix III. ² The "Tao Teh King."

In organic life, as pro-creation, and love. In Art, as inspiration, and sympathy. In Science, as the insatiable thirst for knowledge. And in Religion, as faith and self-surrender to the highest ideal—*“I and the Father are one.”*

EVOLUTION: This magic word appears to the man in the street as the universal passport, the open sesame, to every species of knowledge, and seems to offer a ready explanation for every conceivable mystery. Not one in a hundred knows the exact meaning of this Latin term. Nor one in a thousand, the various meanings that popular writers have tagged on to it. In fact, it may be said without much exaggeration, that the general sense in which the word is now used is almost the reverse of the precise meaning; which is, that everything which evolves, or unrolls, and comes forth, was potentially involved and latent within. The modern use of the term implies all this—as in the development of an organism from the ovum—but it means much more. It means, also, Epigenesis, or what Bergson has so aptly named *“Creative Evolution,”* whereby there arises forms and features entirely novel,—creations *de novo*,—so that progressive advancement from lower to higher forms of existence is not only the evolution of that which lay potential within the germ, or primarily due to the Darwinian idea of variation, but is chiefly, if not wholly, the result

of continuous creation all along the line of vital activity—Life, ever working out the law of the possible on the lines of least resistance.

The reader, then, must bear in mind that we use the word Evolution in this double sense. In our view of Nature we have no use for any form of *predeterminism* except within strictly defined limits; that which emerges to the surface of existence does so by virtue of its *might*. Its survival, or extinction, is not predetermined, but decided by its own inherent power to live. The weakest, be they kings or cockroaches, ultimately go to the wall.

THE CENTRE OF CONSCIOUSNESS: THE SPHERE OF CONSCIOUSNESS: Both these terms have, practically, the same meaning, and are used to denote that sphere of psychical activity through which we become aware of existence, of ourselves, and of our environment. This field of awareness is strictly limited, but naturally, differs widely in both power and extent of vision in different individuals. We cannot be clearly conscious of two things at the same time. Only one thing can occupy the illuminated centre of our attention; but the lightning-like rapidity with which the mind flashes from one object to another renders, for all practical purposes, the intervals of change non-existent. The centre of

consciousness, then, is equivalent to the *Self*—the *I am* of Egoism—It is the seat of memory, for in the last analysis *memory is consciousness*.

DIVINE IDEA: We use these words in a double sense to mean either the exalted ideals of man here on earth, or a transmitted idea from other spheres of life, existing in super-mundane states of being, whether human or otherwise. By *super-mundane*, we mean exactly what the word super implies—superior or higher. Anything below the *best* on earth, we should term sub-mundane.

In all super-normal, or exalted states of mind and soul, we can never exactly define that mystical border-land wherein *our own idea*, flowing outward from the centre, blends, then becomes absorbed, and finally returns to us transformed into those higher and nobler conceptions of the spirit which are ever flowing inward, illuminating our whole conscious being with a purer light. This psychophysical fusion with higher spiritual existence introduces the personal equation into all inspired revelation, and reveals the limitations of the seer. With common clay, the potter is limited in his attempts to reproduce the delicacy of outline possible in porcelain.

It is such states of thought and feeling that we call divine because it is the only form of divinity of which we have any experience. "Thus saith

the Lord," is the ignorant egoism of the childhood of the race.

With the foregoing explanations, we think we have reduced serious misconception upon the part of the reader to a minimum, and will now give, in brief outline, our attitude towards modern philosophical thought.

A careful survey of ancient philosophy from Plato and Aristotle to the Summa of St. Thomas of Aquinas, and, (together with the more important recent writers), the modern school from Berkeley to Hegel, convinces us beyond the peradventure of a doubt that a true philosophy of life is the work of the future, in which the great philosophical systems of the past will form but a very subordinate part of the structure. We are convinced that the chief foundation-stones will be discovered in the works of Eucken, Bergson, and James.

Plato failed, because he, like many another, attempted the impossible : a complete explanation in outline of the whole of existence. The construction of a spiritual mechanism under the conception of pure forms which become universal ideas, was a grand achievement of thinking. To posit this order of potencies as independent of time and space, and therefore the fundamental reality of the world, was the god-like leap of an unbridled imagination. Before the rise of modern science, these ideas were the height of intellectual achieve-

ment in speculative philosophy. But it was speculation, and for the sake of the "Glory that was Greece," we will say nothing more. Plato's dream has been dear to all thinkers, and fascinating to not a few.

Ideas, universal or otherwise, must have had a prior mind to generate the movement of their being ; pure forms exist only in minds capable of conceiving them. To say that nature geometrises, is the reverse of the truth : man projects his subjective geometry into the objective world of his perceptions.

We must abandon those hair-splitting metaphysics which always leave a surd, refuse to acknowledge the existence of that which refuses to appear when called upon to qualify ; for time, space, movement, and form, are the cardinal features which envisage the compass of that reality, the magnetic pivot of which is existence.

The great first Cause fails to appear. A transcendent Creator is ruled out of court upon the same ground ; while an impersonal intelligent power is an absurd contradiction, unless conceived as the composite over-soul of a group of thinking personalities. At this point we are in contact with possible reality.

Aristotle, the father of logic, set out with the purpose of completely refuting the fundamental

principle of his master, but with the strange irony of fate, he finished by becoming more platonic than Plato.

From the time of Aristotle to the present day, the chief work of the various philosophical schools has consisted in breaking each other's metaphysically heads; fabricating cosmic schemes of Reality, and calling, and thinking them, the realities of God; projecting various forms of the Absolute into some region at the "Back o' beyond" and calling *it* Reality; viewing the only form of reality which the living world presents, and proving it illusive, and non-existent. Finally, as a fitting climax to this wonderful stream of philosophical thought, we are told that there are no such things as sin, suffering, and contradiction in the Abstract. These very self-evident and overwhelming factors in the life which we live—the only form of reality which we know—are, we are told, only inadequate ideas of ours, only inverted forms of thought; illusory, and, therefore, unreal. Later, somehow and somewhere, through some miraculous alchemy of the mind, they will transform themselves into the "Divine Reality," the "Absolute,"—where all contradictions are harmonised—where the one is the many, [and the many are the one: for in it nothing exists but the Good, the Beautiful, and the True. A trinity of terms expressible in one

—the Good. We will not insult the reader's intelligence by calling it the *True*!

Needless to say that this ideal oasis of the blest lies within that fairy realm of enchanted thoughts wherein, forever, flows the fountain of eternal youth, in which all things are possible. The impossible begins to dawn when we reach maturity, and as we advance in years looms large and red.

When we carefully review the various militant brigades of philosophy, we note the ranks of Idealism drawn up under their several banners, (united only in one idea which is to capture the standards of the enemy,) the opposing groups marching under the flags of Dualism, Pluralism, Theism, and Materialism. Each militant brigade divided into wings; neglecting both truth and reality in their dialectical attempts to out-flank each other. When we witness such serious conflict of thought, we are compelled to ask if they know, definitely, what it is they are fighting over. Granted, that the problem of philosophy is the problem of truth, and that truth rests finally upon the problem of Reality, will a verbal war of party tactics clear the mind for its perception? Will Reality be discovered in a war of words? Is it not quite possible that in the heat of the conflict, and the enthusiasm of the different schools, they have drifted out to sea in a metaphysical fog! We believe so. Fighting for a non-existent island

to add to the empire of thought, a new continent of reality has escaped their notice. In their campaign to capture the safe anchorage of Absolute Reality, they have allowed the living prize to slip between their lines.

Only those who have waded through the mud know the toilsomeness of the march. Only those who, like L. P. Jacks, have been stranded on "Devil's Island" know the hollow worthlessness of the goal. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Measured by this test, we judge, from their barren wilderness of words, that the territory they claim is not worth disputing; is interesting only as a psychological curio.

That a spiritual form of atavism is in the world is quite evident. Primitive man believed in many gods, but, in the dim background of his thoughts, there was a mysterious god-like power, or fate over which his own greatest gods were powerless. And deep down in the abyss of the philosophical mind there lurks a belief in the existence of some definite realm of the Real at the centre of things—transcendent to the things—the All-embracing One. This form of the Absolute naturally assumes different aspects, according to the intellectual bias of the thinker. To Haeckel, it was "The iron-bound law of substance." At the opposite extreme this final unity is "Divine Love."—"The end of the ends" for James Ward. If we

were compelled to choose, we should not hesitate to grasp the hand of Ward.

This psychological will-o'-the-wisp, this *ignis fatuus* of the philosophical brain is however more frequently the base, or starting-point, from which they spin their imaginary web of reality. Thus, they lay their foundation upon the quicksands of a surd. Make an assumption instead of stating a fact. And then, from this assumption, they descend down a spiral staircase of evolution in the strict meaning of the word; from the unknowable to the known. Everything rolls out of this metaphysical mill like a web from the loom, because they have taken good care to assume that every possibility of evolution was potentially involved at the beginning.

“The outward doth from the inward roll,
And the inward dwells in the inmost soul :”
And the inmost soul is the inmost mind,
Of the inmost thing at *the back of behind* : ;
But this back of beyond is a land, it seems,
Where the inmost things are the utmost dreams.

But accepting all this in a cosmic sense, for the sake of argument, we are at a loss to explain, in a rational manner, how the perfect unity can manifest itself in such infinite diversity. How such infinite perfection can be reconciled with the manifest rule of the imperfect ! Beginning with an assumption, they end in a maelstrom of

contradiction when brought face to face with the facts of experience ; which, again let us emphasise, *is the only form of reality we can know.*

Good and evil are relative features. But so is all knowledge. One cannot speak of beauty without bringing in the idea of ugliness, etc., but, nevertheless, the conflict is there. Good and evil are opposing forces. First there is friction, then the struggle for existence begins. The ground of nature is alogical and sub-conscious. Nature pays no attention to the end of the contest. *She has none.* The result is always the survival of might. It is because the power we term good is more lasting in its effect upon life than its opposite that, in a nearly balanced struggle, the good finally wins.

There are metaphysicians in plenty who, if you admit any one of their unverifiable assumptions, will offer you portentous volumes of logical arguments to explain all the contradictions in nature. According to their school of thought, they admit or reject an external world. It is logic, perhaps, but not truth. We have not forgotten the race between Achilles and the Tortoise ! But we must protest against the sophism and verbal jugglery that lead by a false logic to self-deception.

Speaking in a general sense, the philosophical idol of materialism is "The iron-bound law of

Substance": Of Idealism, "The impersonal Absolute": Of Theism, "The Infinite Omnipotent Creator GOD": Of Pluralism, the incomprehensible monads or "Things in Themselves." But when examined closely, they are all resolved into different branches of the same antiquated article, which is a philosophical conception of the Unknowable. And the unknowable is non-existent.

All ultimate questions are futile, because there is no ultimate "thing in itself" on which to base an answer; no *simple* substance from which complex substances arise. Everything is infinitely complex.

Only upon broad, general lines—or rather outlines—can we know the ultimate reality. Just as in a broad general way we may know the sun or the stars. What we know will be real, but almost, infinitely short of embracing the whole of the real. We may proceed from one point to another in a legitimate path—ever keeping the stepping-stones of the facts of experience in sight—until we reach heights of knowledge and experience at present undreamed.

But when all is said that can be said of our human experience, we are brought face to face with that abstract reality: MOVEMENT. Here again the number of possible movements in the universe are infinite, and their forms inconceivable:

Hence the insanity of the attempt to grasp an idea of the ultimate whole! Even if we could be certain that motion was the only screen between the manifest and the unmanifest, what sort of a reality should we obtain for our labour! Merely a something which would be unreal in comparison to the richness of our experience. It is this realm of relations, as well as movements, that creates the richness, and grandeur—the sublimity and mystery of life.

Warned therefore by the failures of the past, we shall attempt the building of no system of thought. Admonished by the vagaries of intellectual speculation, when based upon the non-existent, we shall ever rest upon the foundations of experience. Chastened in mind by the fantastic creations of an unbridled imagination, we shall conjure up no enchanted image of a final solution; but, keeping in view the finiteness of the self, and the infinity of the world, unbiased, enter upon the quest. With a humble and a contrite heart, we begin the journey as pilgrims of "The Way."

CHAPTER TWO—BEING A BRIEF SURVEY OF SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS

§ 1. TIME : Space : Movement : Form : these are the cardinal features of the eternal reality. Time and movement are the same, viz. : Duration. Form and Space are the same, that is, imply each other ; and the whole, inter-related, and co-dependent, are relative terms to express the one ultimate and fundamental fact of existence—which is Life.

These cardinal features are accepted as undeniable facts of experience. A metaphysic that would deny the reality of any one of them is unworthy of any sane thinker. Nevertheless, we are reminded that there are those who would question each and all. "Doubting Castle" is no myth, but a mighty fortress in the wilderness of the mind, and many there be who dwell therein. There is also in that strange and "hollow land" a great shrine most wondrously fashioned by cunning craftsmen, called the Cave of Solipsism, in whose sub-mundane gloom

there is reflected nothing but the images of self. Each worshipper, being his own idol, is blind to everything but the phantasmagora of his own creating. The atmosphere is mephitic! Let us pass on! We have not forgotten the days of captivity on "Devil's Island," and need a breath of pure ozone from the sea.

§ 2. What am I myself? We think of organic life, and at once, the matter of fact mechanical intellect answers, "An organism." Quite true, an apt word, a rhythmic expression that sounds so grand, comes so near to the body, and yet carries the mind so far beyond. And we ask, what kind of an organism? Turning the spiritual light of intuition upon the lens of intellect, we dimly see, through their penetrating rays, the machinery at work behind the outward screen of matter. So viewed, man is an individual vortex of vital activities in the psychical stream of life—a microcosm within the macrocosm of Being—a living centre of self-consciousness upon the shoreless ocean of the sub-conscious—a focus, wherein myriad rays of the intermingling relationships of the world converge, react upon this psychical vortex, and create a *living light*. This illumination is "the magnetic field" of consciousness, or sphere of mind, wherein memory, thought, and feeling have their birth.

We are dazed with the vision! We are in the

presence of one of the innermost secrets of life ! But, before we can grasp its meaning the whence ? the why ? it is gone. The movement has escaped us. A veil is thrown across the sight. The intellect reassumes control. And there remains unanswered, the age-long question : " Whence ? " whose apparent simplicity marks a problem of world-wide complexity.

Myself ! How shall we question this microcosm of mystery, and bring this self-conscious organic unity of spirit and matter to an inward revelation of itself ? Some things, or features we already know, and some, as yet, we only feel through that subliminal sense of inward evidence.

We have before us a form, constantly changing as a whole, yet retaining a continuous identity of self-hood. Subject to dissolution as a unit in the struggle for existence, yet possessing the possibility of survival through measureless eons of time which can only be voiced in words as the gift of immortal life. Verily we have much to learn. That ancient Delphic command :

" Know thyself " is the task of Eternity.

§ 3. What is the consciousness of myself ?—that which sits enthroned upon the egoism of the *I* ? There is no permanent unchangeable *I* ; no imperishable ego of the self. This is the great illusion—to be more fully considered in a later chapter.

Reflect! The child thinks as a child, lives in the mental atmosphere of pure innocence and acts in consequence. Later he is a different being ; he has become a youth, has all the romantic dreams of youth. Experience in the world has tarnished the mirror of his mind. In no sense of the word can these two be called the same individual. There is only one link that continues the identity. In manhood, again, the youth has disappeared. He has become to a great extent disillusioned. The romantic possibilities of earlier years turn out to be the impossible, and are relegated for safe keeping to his castles in the air, to be dreamed over again when he has reached that second childhood that hopes for their realisation in his children's children.

Remember this : There is an eternity behind us, as well as an eternity before us. If the indestructible ego is a fact, this monad must, also, have existed from all eternity ; must have already passed through innumerable existences ; hence, without change, must be the same in childhood, youth, and manhood. This we know is not a fact. We are distinctly different in thought, deed, and ability. There is but one link which binds the changing states from infancy to age into one continuous identity, and that is *memory*. We have no memory of any previous state of

existence ; therefore this *I of myself* is a very fleeting personality. The consciousness of the I of myself is limited to the memorable period of the life which I now live ; and this consciousness is growing and changing daily, nay, every minute of existence. It is not a static ego looking on ; not an indestructible monad gathering experience in the world, to be sealed and signed, and then stored up in the pantehnicon of the sub-conscious for future use.

The I of my conscious self is memory ; that which we remember is a part of this self ; and the character which is the centre around which these memories drape themselves is the only ego we possess in a conscious form. The form of this consciousness is that magnetic field of psychical awareness of which we have already spoken.

But there is a deeper, much more fundamental self than this surface field of awareness, and questions regarding this sub-conscious self, and our relations with the sub-liminal order of being will come before us anon.

§ 4. What is Truth ? Truth, like life, assumes many forms. Truth is a conception, an idea of consistency in statement. It is the observation of a fact, or of the co-ordinated result of a series of facts. It is a perception of the meaning of the facts of experience to ourselves. Every truth, under whatever form it appears, is founded upon

some order of facts. For instance, the psychological facts of religious experience are just as true, on their own plane, as the physical facts of science are upon theirs. Natural appearances are more real to our senses than are the abstract realities behind them to our intellect. In the fervour of religious ecstasy, the saint may have visions. They may be real in the sense of being visions of a super-physical order of reality, or they may be the hallucinations arising from pathological conditions. Under any circumstances they are true for the seer as a form of experience. Finally, Truth is the expression of Reality to the mind.

§ 5. What then to us is *reality* in a world of relativity? The answer is simple and direct:—*Reality is Life*. There is no reality in the universe apart from the changing complex movements which are the manifestations of life; and the meaning of life for each living soul can only be found in that centre of our being wherein lieth the Kingdom of God. The whence, the why, and the whither can only be surveyed from that centre. The wider our horizon, the broader the view, and the deeper we can extend our feeling of life, the greater is the grasp of Truth.

Truth and Reality, for man here on earth as a centre of consciousness, consists in the flow of life in the appearances of things as they surge to the

surface of his sphere of awareness, and materialize themselves into the facts of experience.

It is quite true that below, or behind this flux of phenomenal appearance, there is a deeper reality—the ceaseless push of the invisible spirit—the ever-changing impetus of life as it arises from the psychical ground of Nature. But this ground is no unknowable mystery; it is what the appearances proclaim it to be: a continuum of infinitely complex movements and relationships in which we are carried along, unconscious of the whirl, through the majestic shadow-land of Nature. And these shadows are to us the realities of Life; for our conscious centre is our only direct, unimpeachable witness as to the truth, or falsity of things; our only undisputed view-point of the world and its content. From this standpoint, it is seen that things are true and therefore real, only upon the plane of their appearance, whatever that plane may be. The idea of there being some arcane centre of Reality at the “back o’ beyond,” where all appearances disappear, and the fundamental truth, alone, comes to the surface, we have already judged to be metaphysical absurdity, or mystical delirium. *The universal life has no centre apart from the psychical centre of each self-conscious being.*

§ 6. Are there “Things in themselves”?

Let us re-state the question squarely. We mean a thing in itself, and by itself, apart from its relationship with the rest of things. If the atomic theory of matter which postulated the eternal duration of the separate individual atoms, had been an absolute truth, then, these atoms would have been "things in themselves," independent of any series of relation they might form with the rest of the world ; hence, static and unchangeable, so far as structure and qualities are concerned. In other words, the atoms of physical science were "things in themselves" reduced to a conceptual point. We now know that they are not simple elements, but on the contrary possess a highly complex organisation. So far as material bodies are concerned, the "things in themselves" have vanished into the ether of space. There are, however, other and more subtle conceptions of the reality of "things in themselves."

One of the central ideas of Kant, and the foundation of much of his metaphysics, is that we cannot know things as they really are, that we live in a purely noumenal world, from which all true knowledge of the objective reality is excluded.

"Nothing," says Kant, "which is intuited in space is a thing in itself." He further declares : "that space is not a form which belongs as a property to things ; but that objects are quite

unknown to us in themselves ; what we call outward objects, are nothing but mere representations of our sensibility, whose form is space, but whose real correlate, the thing in itself, is not known by means of these representations, *nor ever can be.*" (The italics are ours.) Here the "thing in itself" means, of course, the original object, as it is, independent of the thinking subjects cognition. "For instance, a tree or a waterfall is not a thing in itself, but the appearance of a thing in itself. The colours of the rainbow, in fact all colours, sky, clouds, rocks, or living beings are sensations only. They are subjective appearances representing objective realities, but they are not those realities themselves. The world of sense around us is woven into the web of consciousness from the warp and weft of our sensations. It is mere appearance. This is not a question concerning which there is any doubt ; it is simply a matter of fact. But the question arises : Can we know things as they are independent of sensation ? Science is engaged with the problem, and with strangely remarkable results. Take colour, for instance : light is a sensation of vision ; but what is the objective process that takes place when the human eye perceives light ? This question, the physicist answers, by eliminating in his mind the sense element, and by describing the facts of the process in terms of matter and

motion. Objectively considered, his answer is: A certain vibration in the ether."¹ But the truth of such an answer depends not only upon the reality of the ether, but upon many other things besides which are purely hypothetical.

"In this instance, we may reasonably suspect that the physicist is simply substituting an intellectual conception for the sense impression; whereas, the reality of the subjective image depends only upon the indisputable fact that appearances appear, and that these appearances correspond with objective form. To the senses, the reality of a thing consists in that feature of its existence which we call matter; but it is not the matter, but the form this matter assumes that makes the thing that which it really is. That objective phenomena can be described in terms of form, or process, Kant himself would not have denied, but his fundamental error consisted in thinking that the formal quality of nature was purely mental and merely subjective."

Not one word can be said against the statements of Science as to the *modus operandi* whereby the objective world becomes known to us through our sensory organisation. All serious thinkers have long ago abandoned the idea that there is an independent entity incarnated within;

¹ Dr. P. Carus.

that the eyes are the windows of the body through which the soul looks out upon the external world ; and that this metaphysical entity is the thing that thinks through the medium of the brain as its organ, or sounding-board. All such conceptions, together with the various schemes of metempsychosis, must be relegated to the obsolete intellectual transcendentalisms of the past. But what must be protested against is the substitution of a scientific conception of process for the reality behind the appearance, and then calling the appearance a sensation merely, an illusion of the senses. By this scientific and philosophical method, pure conceptions are given for things, and replace direct experience with ideas of causes. To cap the climax, these intellectual models of process are held up as the reality of the phenomenal world. We know the appearance to be real upon the plane of its appearance—there is no psychical illusion going on within the lens of a camera. But we do not know and we have no certain means of knowing, that the conceptions of science are anything more than a working-model of possibility, a rational explanation of process in terms of matter and motion. As time advances, they may, and in all probability will, turn out to be, like so many other cherished ideas of the great, “ a figment of the brain.”

Let it be understood, distinctly, that *process*

of becoming is not the same thing as that which becomes—that the operations of Nature are not barely mechanical, but psycho-mechanical—that motion is one sort of reality and the product quite another. For instance, the physicist's explanation of the so-called reality behind the sensations of light is only (if it be a fact) the reality of the *modus operandi*, and not the thing in itself. The true reality is the light itself: And all that the light means to life must be included in a true conception of the whole reality.

The web of woven tapestry is entirely different from the loom and raw material from which it came; the physiological process of vegetable-growth different from the resulting vegetation.

The process in the oak and the blade of grass is the same, but the reality is widely different. To try to make reality out of an operation, and fiction out of the product, is to ascribe "The Origin of Species" to a process of physiological activity, and the mind and soul of Darwin to an imaginary appearance.

Appearances appear; and these appearances, within our conscious centre, possess an unique reality of their own of which the process behind is only a small part of the whole. Neither process nor appearance are things in themselves, but a complex, being of one tissue with the whole continuum of Nature.

As we write these words, a brilliant rainbow spans the sky. We look, and to our sense of sight and feeling, it is a beautiful and wonderful thing, yes, a reality; a snap-shot with the camera confirms belief in its objective existence. The form is something more than a subjective image; it is a formal reality of relationships; for, apart from sun, cloud, sky, and an invisible ethereal medium, the rainbow would have no objective existence. But the rainbow, as it shines within our own sphere of consciousness, is indescribably more than sun, cloud, sky, and vibration in the ether. The majestic arch spanning the heavens—the glorious bands of colour with their intermingling divisions, realised in the mind—though invisible to the sight—the richness of effect upon the entire environment, which words fail to express, surely, all these must be weighed. Now, while the objective reality before us embraces these features—is in direct relation to them, there arises within us an invisible but richer content: wonder, grandeur, mystery, and æsthetic pleasure. These must ever be included in a true measure of the whole of the reality to which the object gives birth. Before we realise the true meaning of reality to conscious being, a synthetic vision of the whole, together with our thoughts and emotions, must be taken.

Features or qualities abstracted from things,

are not things, but only features and qualities ; so that the final abstract of these abstractions, far from being the inmost reality of the thing in itself, is only the skeleton of a reality—and not even a real skeleton, but only the conception of a skeleton, utterly unreal to the whole of the object dissected.

In order to get down at once to the root of the subject, we will illustrate our meaning : Let us admit for a moment that we have a piece of gold before us, the reality of which, beyond all knowledge, appears to be a thing in itself. Very well ! How shall we prove the absurdity of this conception ! Only by asking ourselves what are the qualities of gold ? And we know these qualities because we have associated certain features of matter together and given them names which express to our mind certain definite qualities, so that when we find a certain particular group of these qualities in combination, they always present the same form of substance. Now, the subjective object of our consciousness must correspond, in every important particular, with the objective reality, because, under every possible change of time and place, gold, when it appears, always presents the same features. This permanent correspondence could not obtain without equally permanent reality behind it—could not appear to our consciousness as the same. All

word-jugglery aside, this is a fact! The reality of everything in existence, in the same manner, can be known through its formal qualities. Begin to eliminate in your mind colour, density, ductability, etc., one after the other, and the thing we call gold instantly disappears from sight; ceases to exist, because those features which made it what it was vanish with the abstractions; and with such disappearance, the thing in itself is reduced to an unsubstantial idea. The subjective images in the conscious centre are true reflections, particular features of the objective world of the realities in space.¹ Name, form, and quality are the psychical garments in which reality arrays itself before the conscious mind. Without these, there is no—thing. The abstract movement is not the reality itself, but the vital impulse from which reality is born. The “thing in itself” has no existence outside of the heads of those who think it.

There is, however, a still deeper and richer content in the psychical reality of our conscious awareness than we can find in the abstract, bare appearance of the objective thing. This deeper life is the flow of the sub-conscious strata of our being. This is ever rising to the surface to mingle with and enrich the illuminated centre of the mind with countless ramifications of thought and

¹ This is not “Parallelism.”

feeling connected with the direct object in view. But this is a noumenal embroidery—a world of our very own—having no existence, in the form we perceive it, outside of ourselves ; though it is as real and complex as the greater world to which it is related, and of which it forms an indissolvable part.

In summing up our thought upon this triune riddle of appearance, reality, and things in themselves, we are convinced, beyond the shadow of a doubt, of the existence of an external objective world which corresponds in all its important features with the world of our sensations. We are, also, equally certain that the psychical element—the sphere of consciousness—enriches and idealises much that it receives from without, and that the mighty abyss of our sub-conscious self, also, adds to and improvises, so to say, with forgotten experiences of the whole of our racial past, whenever some objective reality attracts that self to the surface, thus enabling it to well up and be recognised by the conscious centre. At the same time, undoubtedly, our limitations of sensibility leave out of our direct cognition a wealth of content existing in the whole of the objective reality—a richness of existence that we may never be able to fathom.

§ 7. MATTER : It seems almost unnecessary to say anything regarding the problem of

matter after denying the existence of things in themselves. We will, therefore, only add that it is a concept to account for the physical reality of the cosmos. Matter is that part of the universal movement that appeals to our consciousness through the physical senses as solid and real by reason of its inertia and resistant qualities. Upon this plane of its action it is quite true. Speaking comparatively, matter is a descending, condensing movement; life, on the contrary, is an ascending, expanding movement. Flowing in opposite directions, there arises resistance, friction, struggle, and its consequences. Matter is the dying energy, the defeated residuum of the cosmic strife, slowly sinking into the tomb of time to weave the crystallised garments of equilibrium and death. In this mausoleum of matter lie the vanquished forms of the fight, sleeping until the day of resurrection shall come.

But Life—the eternal victor—conquers, only to save. The formative mother-spirit broods over the vanquished and from the congealing shroud of death snatches the reeling forms of inertia, and transforms them into living substance from which she weaves the organic web of life. So the victor slays, only that she may bring forth a higher form, a greater life. Life, the deft spinner of the web, is ever at work to realise itself. The web of existence, from single cell to sphere of self-

consciousness, is the cosmic tapestry of Expression that issues from the living looms of time.

§ 8. COSMOS OR CHAOS? What then, in view of the foregoing, are we to think of the world order? Is it a cosmos, or a chaos?

As a whole, it is a cosmos of unknown limitations and innumerable dimensions of activity—a psychical whole. Our own world of matter and sense is limited to one aspect only—a universe of three dimensions. But there are other dimensional aspects of reality to which our ideas of time, space, and motion do not apply. To the mortal mind of humanity, the nature of the ground is such that it would, perhaps, be more correct to describe this cosmos as chaos, because of the turmoil, contradictions, and unpredictable contingencies that are ever surging to the surface in Nature.

According to our conception of the terms, in life, there is neither logical sequence nor mathematical movement. What we know and describe as disorder, disease, suffering, and failure are as natural and firmly rooted in the ground as order, health, pleasure, and success. This ground, as before stated, is alogical and subconscious. Good and Evil, in themselves as such, are our own creations, arising from our consciousness of difference in relative states of being. But this difference is real, not imaginary. It is the ex-

pression of the strife and resistance of opposing forces, or interests, if you will, in which might alone is victor. Disorder in Nature is only something which differs from our conception of order. Everything in existence, by virtue of such existence, is endowed with the inalienable right to continue to live. Below the state of self-consciousness, there is neither cruelty nor immorality in themselves. Selfishness, on this plane, is merely the struggle to survive. It is the ground immediately below the human attainment; and it is from this realm of being that the great conflict between mind and matter arose which terminated in the victory of mind.

When self-consciousness dawned in the brain of primitive man, a new order of energy was born into the world: henceforward there was a spiritual power of purposive direction towards definite ends.

So the universe, ever in a state of Becoming, is ever more conscious, and its operations more rational.

§ 9. The survival of the human personality beyond the grave now craves our serious attention. To the writer the question: "Is it possible for the individual consciousness of the soul, to continue in a super-physical state of being after death?" can no longer arise. It was answered in the affirmative many years ago; under

circumstances which rendered self-deception, telepathy or fraud upon the part of others utterly impossible. Here we must be personal. This experience came at a time when thoughts and work lay in a wholly different direction: when spirit communion, if it occupied a place in the mind at all, was certainly in the back-most of the back seats of the brain; for the "I" was entirely unconscious of entertaining such ideas. A brief statement of all the necessary facts of the experience will be found in Appendix I "A case of Spirit Identity." It is only necessary here to point out, that coming without prejudice, as it did, with no self-seeking wish to father the issue, there was no self-deception. There was no tricky form of mediumship; no dubious clairvoyance describing symbolic images that might have any meaning and be construed to any end. On the contrary a genuine vision was perceived by a normal person in good health. A clearly defined personality appeared almost as objective as any other of the surroundings. I distinctly heard the voice speaking, (or I imagined I did) giving names, dates, and other important items, not necessary to recount here. And the result? a complete verification of every detail. In view of proposition "7" that Reality is the verification of experience. I accept this and affirm as sincerely as I can affirm any experience in

my life that the communication received was a reality ; that the soul of a departed person did appear—hence survived death. What is possible in one instance is possible in others. Since that time scores of instances of identity have crossed the path of my research, but none that stands out so clearly as this. This is the one unique gem in a vast collection. But it has one tiny flaw. It is not perfect when studied from an orthodox religious point-of-view. For purposes unknown to us, some other order of spiritual intelligence may have impersonated the mother. But the absence of any conceivable reason for deception, and the fact that the message was fraught with momentous consequences and formed the turning-point in a career, compels me to reject any idea of deception. The consequences, at any rate, have been nothing but beneficial to those concerned.

The possibility of the survival of the human peronality beyond the grave, then, is assumed in the chapters which follow ; and this tremendous fact makes all the difference in the world to the philosophical attitude of a thinker's mind.

A philosophy of life which neglects to take account of the super-normal facts of psychical research, together with the facts of religious experience, fails most lamentably to justify its name. Ere the close of the present century it

will become as obsolete as medieval scholasticism.

§ 10. We now come to the final, and so far as the writer is concerned, the central and only vital problem of the quest for truth. "*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*"—*Mark* x. 17. A long familiarity with, and study of various oriental forms of mystical and religious philosophy convinces us quite clearly that each race must work out its own redemption along the special lines of its own psychical evolution. The Vedanta, the Sufi, and the Buddhist philosophies are adapted exclusively to what may be called the Asiatic temperament. We may cull precious gems from each form of thought, but the spiritual fabric for the European mind must be fundamentally Gothic (to use a metaphor) in its psychical structure. Though the end to be attained is the same for each, their racial idiosyncrasies are radically different and demand religious conceptions that are in perfect harmony with that special psychical constitution of mind which has been evolved through long ages of thought, work and environment. In the last part of the book we have attempted to give the essence of a spiritual truth that will reveal the results attained to those who have eyes to see. The language used there is necessarily allegorical. Only in images which require spiritual interpretation can spiritual things be spoken of. The "*King's*

Highway," far from being fiction, is the outcome and record of a spiritual experience.

It is the mystic "way of the cross" entered upon only by those who, in addition to an unbiased mind, have proved through experience, the worthlessness of the purely material rewards which the world of to-day has to offer in exchange for life. It is the "Path of Light" for the soul free from the greatest of all earthly illusions: *the illusion of self*.

To know, and to be able to feel that the human soul is not a separate unit of existence, but one with the soul of the universe, is to obtain a deathless grip upon the universal reality, and realise that there is nothing absolute but LIFE—the Formless. All below this pure spiritual principle is manifest *through form*, and all forms are relative. The human soul is but a living chalice in which coruscations of the spirit rise to the surface of consciousness. *As forms of consciousness, we are one with the formless in so far as the spirit of life manifests through us*; yet separated from, though related to all other forms of being. He who grasps this idea will apprehend the writer's meaning of infinite unity in a world of relativity. Perceiving this, the illusion of "things in themselves" will vanish. The soul is then free. It may enter the "Path of Light" and partake of "The Gospel which is glorious!"

CHAPTER THREE—THE LESSON OF EVOLUTION

“ A fire-mist : a planet :
A crystal, then a cell :
A jelly-fish ; a saurian :
A cave where the cavemen dwell :
Then Art, and Law, and Progress ;
A face turned from the clod.
Some call it Evolution—
Others call it God.”

IN the history of human progress, the nineteenth century, like a beacon-light in the darkness, will stand out luminous and large as the era wherein the child of freedom won the liberty that enabled the mind of man to assert its inalienable right to think for himself and give free utterance to his thoughts. Verily, after centuries of travail, the goddess of Liberty became incarnate on the earth, and the great Victorian age was the historical avatar of her intellectual greatness. In every department of research, the advance made over all past ages was little less than super-natural. It was truly a regime of intellectual giants.

This emancipation of the mind, however, had

other consequences than pure progress ; like a full-blooded youth, it out-ran all restraint. In its sudden rise to unquestioned power, it succumbed to the weakness of the past ; thundered forth its dogmas, and laughed religion to scorn. The re-action against theological dogma became an age of intellectual intoxication and the inevitable consequences slowly set in. The pendulum of thought began to swing in the opposite direction ; and, to-day, we are in the midst of the mightiest spiritual revival that has ever awakened in the human heart. It is mightier than the efforts of the past, because, for the first time in recorded history, it is adopting the methods of science for its propaganda instead of those of the priest. To-day the visions of the seer are not apocalyptic images—but flash-lights of the intuition upon the labours of science ; not symbolical revelations from Heaven—but search-lights of the soul that illuminate the path the biologist must follow if he would penetrate the secrets of life, and plumb the mysteries of being.

During this brilliant era, the greatest achievement of science was the establishment of the doctrine of Evolution upon an unquestionable foundation of facts. These facts, gathered from every conceivable department of Nature, all lead to the same conclusion. To-day the doctrine of Evolution is impregnable.

“Reality is the verification of experience.” The earth contains the story of her past experiences in the geological record of the rocks. From these chapters of our mother’s life we may reconstruct the story of Creation and read the stormy history of her infancy; the passionate love-time of her youthful maternity, when things conceivable and inconceivable were brought forth by myriads: and last, the full vital fruition of her womb when she gave birth to the god-like form of man. But many periods of travail she suffered, many fruitless experiments she made, before success crowned her maternal persistency. Between the earliest forms of the lemur and the ape-man of Java, there are untold cycles of effort; and probably a million years between this ancestral type and to-day. Let us reconstruct in outline the story.

As the infancy of the world grew into the sedateness of maidenhood, we see the love-days begin to dawn, and with the virgin hope, possibilities of motherhood stirred within her. For ages she toyed with the darkness in despair and then, grown bolder, she courted the sunlight frankly, revealing all her nakedness, for pity, to her chosen lover; until, amidst cloud and storm, eroding rock and rain, their union was complete; and protoplasm, the first offspring of the sun and the earth, was born into the world. From this child, aided

by the sun-ray, the alchemist of all future greatness, Chlorophyll, came into being : did not evolve, but Athena-like, sprang into existence ready-armed for the work of creation. From this point, the biological family-tree began to grow and spread its branches, until the face of the earth was clothed in living beauty. From this dateless past to the present, in one unbroken chain of continuity, creative evolution has done its work.

Standing at midnight upon the earth, and gazing far into the stellar depths of space we can read the same story : " A fire-mist : a planet : a crystal, then a cell." Suns are born from slowly-congealing nebula, or from the crash of worlds, give birth to children satellites, and these in turn, under favourable conditions, become the abodes of organic life. From nebula to solar-system, from a single cell of protoplasm to a Shakespeare and a Darwin, the life-process rolls on. The evidence is overwhelming ; we must submit to the inevitable.

Evolution is the fundamental tendency of all existence ; subject to, side by side with a devolution, or reversion to former types and conditions ; an ebb and flow, as it were, of the vital forces. The struggle for existence, and the consequent survival of the fit, is the process, or law of life, and any violation of it carries its own penalty. As we perceive them, there is neither morality nor senti-

ment in the laws of Nature. They are operations along the line of least resistance.

As we have seen, this great process works with the same force in the inorganic as in the organic world of life. The evolution of a sun, or a planet, from the nebulous matter of the universe, is one unceasing war of the electrons and atoms for victory. Those that form stable combinations succeed. Those which, in the whirl of electrical energies, form combinations that prove unstable in the conflict are of temporary duration and break up to reform under more stable conditions. With atoms as with men, the weakest go to the wall.

In the various forms of living organisms now known to science, we, on earth, are dealing with lineages of an, almost, inconceivable antiquity; family-trees whose ancestral roots penetrate down in a gradually converging line into the very vitals of things, and extend backward to that rosy blush of dawn when Mother Earth floating in the illimitable ether of space felt her first throb of organic life. No wonder, in the words of the old Hebrew writer: "The morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy"; for, at that moment, a change of incalculable importance to the rest of the cosmos took place. Trivial though this microscopic speck of living jelly appeared to be, it was fraught with momentous consequences

because it was the beginning upon the earth of a new order of power which was destined to transcend the, hitherto, subconscious movements in the matrix of its being, and open the way for the evolution of organic instruments of expression through which the infinite spirit of life should rise to the self-conscious vision of its own glory.

From the first, faint, sensitive response to external stimulus in live matter to the marvellous sweep of mind by which man is enabled to range the whole visible universe at a glance, there is no break. We are one kin—moving—acting—thinking by the same spirit.

It appears incredible, but it is a glorious truth, that from that first moving speck of protoplasm in the unknown past hierarchies of angelic souls in the unknown future will date the history of their race.

In such a broad cosmic view of evolution, we are able to glimpse the grandeur of the world order in a panoramic vision of unbroken continuity. So continuous does the whole sweep of creation appear in its physical order that we ask, is there a law of continuity that will apply to the soul as well as to the physical body? Let us not be deceived by the wish—the hope! The possible continuity of conscious existence for the individual is the ultimate object of the Quest. We are seeking,

then, in the first place for the law of continuity. If this fails the final result is hopeless.

We have asserted in the introduction that there are no laws in Nature as we understand law ; only tendencies, which we subsume as law ; but this is quite enough for our purpose, for it means that a movement or tendency will continue indefinitely unless it meets the opposition of a stronger movement, and this is equivalent to law.

“ The laws of Nature are the laws of thought. All the laws of Nature may be reduced to one—the law of mathematical possibility, and this is the supreme law of thought.”¹ With this we fully agree, and therefore proceed.

The doctrine of the conservation of energy, although a pure hypothesis, is the central foundation-stone of physical science. According to this law, energy endures eternally through continuous change of form. The process is like an infinite cycle of activity of ebb and flow, where action and reaction so perfectly balance each other that nothing is ultimately lost and the sum-total of energy remains ever the same.

This theory is eminently thinkable, plausible, and possible. Upon the same foundation rests the law of the continuity of life ; that is to say, life, too, moves on for ever without ultimate loss.

In the first place, we must bear in mind that

¹ *The Mystery of Existence*, chapter V.

there is no possible immortality for any special and particular form. The continuity of life can only realize itself in a slowly, emerging succession of forms in one unceasing duration of change ; analogous to the change from seedling to tree, from infancy to manhood, in which memory alone is the connecting ego or self.

If the normal man here on earth possessed the power of perfect assimilation and recuperation, he would, bar accident, or disease, continue to live on indefinitely ; like the first forms of life, the unicellular organisms, that simply go on dividing and, bar accident, live as long as the life conditions of the earth permit. This would mean that human life would have the possibility of being from birth co-terminous with the life of the earth. Accident alone being the Nemesis, man would be in a constant state of change ; but would remain in the full vigour of life because of his perfect adaptation to his environment. It is the imperfect adaptation to all the conditions of environment which brought death into the world. It was the price of progress. As perfect adaptation would bring perfect content life would simply vegetate. Here we are on the verge of an abyss. What does " the survival of the fit " mean ? In the mere sense of fitness to survive under terrestrial conditions, the lowest forms of life are certainly by far the best fitted, seeing that some forms

have continued from the very dawn of life until to-day, and in all probability will be the last to succumb to a dying world. Whatever others may mean, or read into this undisputed fact, we mean that life is ever on the rising wave to newer and higher conditions of being, leaving behind the flotsam and jetsam of previous forms to live or die as chance may hap, with which the advancing wave has no concern. The best suited to survive in the new environment invaded are the fit. So on through every grade of being. The advancing columns in the van of life are in this sense the best as well as the fittest. Every weakling is remorselessly eliminated through natural selection and other contributory causes. In every stage, also, when reaction sets in as the result of spent energy, conservation begins to dominate. Conservative action slowly creates an apparently static condition. Life, seemingly satisfied with the effort, begins to vegetate. But all this is pure appearance. Before long, another wave comes rolling in, over-flooding all previous conditions, and again making a new tidal level. Those who cannot advance, who are too firmly rooted in their environment, are passed by. They cease to be the dominant race. And, again, the best as well as the fittest are the rulers of the roost. As in lower forms of life, so with humanity. The world is filled in many quarters with useless sur-

vivals of past civilisations, or rather, let us say, barbarisms. But on the whole, the best and most fit are the winners in the Olympic games.

In the remote past, it was the best in a purely physical sense that came out victor in the fight, but in Paleolithic man, the laws of progressive life had reached their climax of organic expression. At this point physical evolution came to a comparative standstill. To refine the parts of her superb physical machine, add symmetry to the form, enlarge the brain, ennoble the brow was the utmost that Nature could now do. In short finish off her marvellous handiwork by obliterating the animal and revealing the God.

From henceforth, the struggle for existence was to be fought out on a nobler arena. To live and perpetuate the race ; to fight and eat the foes by which he was surrounded had been the effort of the past. This first great act in the drama of life being satisfactorily achieved, the next was of a different nature. It was the struggle for the supremacy of mind over matter. The divine spirit working within the human soul entered upon the terrible conquest of self, so that to-day the best are those who are morally and intellectually superior. The era of brute force is gone forever. Henceforward the survivors in the race for immortal life will consist of those only who are spiritually fit to survive.

It appears remarkable, surrounded as we are by death upon every side—change of form—that so many sincere people, from religious or other reasons, should imagine that the laws of Nature will undergo a complete reversal in the world to come. For every plant that succeeds in germinating, a thousand seeds are scattered and die. Under natural conditions, not one in a hundred of these seedlings reaches maturity. This rough proportion is more and more in favour of success the higher the form of life. But out of one thousand children, how many live to maturity? Not anything like one-half. Death here is equivalent to birth in a super-physical state; and we have no reason to suppose that, on the average, there is any greater proportion of survival in the next world than there is in this. In fact, the probability is that the proportion is enormously less. This, because continued life depends entirely upon the spiritual and dynamic stability of the psychical organisation. Myriads of human-beings appear to be almost lacking in these higher functions of mind and soul. What reasons, we ask, have we to suppose that the laws of the super-physical world are not a continuum of the laws operative here? None whatsoever! There is no break in life; no sudden reversal of law. In each and every stage of existence we shall be faced with the survival of the fit. This is the earthly lesson which evolution has for

us. The brave soul will face the facts of life, accept the inevitable, and gird his loins for the fight. In doing so he has forestalled defeat. The gates of death cannot prevail. The keys which unlock the portals of life are safe within his own sanctuary. This is not a faith for the weakling. Not a creed for the sentimentally sick, or the pious hypocrisy of the "miserable sinner." But it is a faith based upon facts. And he who can lift up his brow to Heaven and face God in his own defence will view these statements without alarm.

We are now face to face with the last question of continued existence beyond the grave. The fact of this continuance is assumed here as more than amply proven from the records of psychical research. Remember we are not now concerned with the mere fact of survival of personality for a brief time, but with the possibility of indefinite continuity of conscious existence for the soul of man; which is equivalent to immortality.

We observe death all around us, and we ask: Must continuity of conscious life in a higher world than this also involve death as the price of progress? In a sense we answer yes: emphatically yes! So-called death is only a basis for the rebound of life to reach a higher level. But it will not be the same kind of death as we witness here: only similar in result. There are no graveyards, in our sense of the word, in the realms beyond. This

second death bears some analogy to sleep—as sound sleep bears some analogy to death. If we possess the dynamic will to persist—*that is if we desire continued existence*—we shall arise as from a refreshing sleep during which, for a brief space, we have become unconscious. We shall re-awake to memory and consciousness with renewed vigour for the wider field of work before us.

Let us briefly re-survey the ground we have covered in the lesson of evolution : Throughout the eternity of the past, life has endured : Change of form has continued. A sun is born, gives birth to its family of attendant worlds and reaches maturity ; then change sets in, the life-forces ebb, and a dead system goes on its uninterrupted way until it crashes into another opposing body ; pent-up energy is released, a new star rises in the firmament, and a new cycle of creative life is added to the glory of the heavens. This is no mere metaphor, but a physical reality.

Apart from those starry constellations of the sky, moving onward like marshalled regiments of light, there are other hosts in space. Not all is life and beauty there, death also spreads his pall. Circling in the profound abyss of infinite space is the wreckage of once glorious suns ; funeral processions of the mighty dead, in whose wake trail the flotsam and jetsam of forgotten worlds.

The world order is without beginning and with-

out end. There is no history of the universe as a whole, but only as regards the separate parts which compose it. Birth and death succeed each other. Forms arise, go through their life history and pass away, only to give rise to other forms.

There is continuity ; the movement of creative life being like a spiral whose circle moves onward, but never returns upon itself. Continuity implies unity, and this cosmic unity is the infinite spirit of life. This oneness in all—protozoon, man, and the finite God—stands before us like a luminous truth revealing the fact that the difference of manifestation is the difference of form. And the difference of form is the difference of evolutionary attainment. With this, we come to the form of man.

Man cannot be viewed as in any way a special, or predetermined creation, but only as a vital link in an endless chain. He is an infinitesimal link that has emerged from the ground by virtue of his power to push upward ; and in doing this, he has had to push other species out of existence all along the line of his advance.

At this point, it will be well to emphasize the fact that neither life, nor matter, nor consciousness evolve in the strict meaning of the word. Organisms alone are the product of evolution. For instance, the oak from the acorn : the human body from the ovum. Here we cannot be too precise ; reiteration

is necessary, so we recapitulate : Spirit, as the supreme principle, is eternal, and unchangeable. Life, which is the movement of the spirit in substance, is also eternal, but never at rest—is in a process of eternal change. Matter springs into being spontaneously, as the product of degraded energy ; even as the energy of physical science, under certain conditions, passes into the degraded form of heat. There is no evolution of the electrons—supposing them to be—they exist, or cease to exist under certain conditions. Forms of matter arise from their association and combination through a process of epigenesis. Gold, or diamond, for instance, is not potential in the electron, nor in all the electrons of the universe put together. It appears as the spontaneous result of certain formal arrangements of the electrons ; exactly like, though upon a different plane, melody arises from a musical composition. Not being potential in the separate notes, nor in all the notes of the scale, but the creation of their order, succession, and rhythm—the over-soul, so to say, of the music.

Life, matter, and consciousness, then, are the spontaneous endowments of form. And the soul, as we shall see later, is not any one of these ; but a higher birth still ; a newer creation—the result of life, matter, and memory combined.

CHAPTER FOUR—THE SOUL AND THE SOUL-WORLD

§ 1. FOUNDATION

The soul of man is an evolution like the rest of things and not the sudden creation of a Divine Will. To know what the soul is, we must read the formative story of the physical body upon which the soul depends. Ever is mankind asking: "If a man die shall he live again?" And ever are the prophets and seers of the race answering: "Though a man rose from the dead ye would not believe." For the few who can receive it, this chapter is written.

St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, uses a striking metaphor in reference to the same old question as to the survival beyond the grave. He says: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body," and then, like an afterthought, to correct any idea of miracle, or sudden creation, he added: "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." The spiritual body, here, meaning an invisible organism similar to the natural

body. It is this invisible body that is, mainly, the objective we have now in view. What is it, and how does it arise? To solve this problem we must put the question in another form.

What is man? Whence came he?

To answer these questions, his biological history must be retraced to the roots in the past ages. But this would be an enormous task. It will satisfy our present purpose to begin with man as we find him and go backward, only, to his ante-natal origin—the human embryo.

In order to understand the full and important significance of the embryological period, we must trace it back to its inception; to that instant when it was *born*. This occurred at the moment of the union or coalescence of the nuclei of two simple cells; simple yet unfathomable with divine mystery, and containing the potency of all that we have been in the past and the foundations of all that we shall be in the future.

“But have we reached here, in the union of two cells, the origin of our life history? By no means. We have reached a point, only, where we can say that here begins our separate identity or personality as an individual material organism. But we have not reached the origin, or completed our life history. Back of the embryological stands the cell-life from which we have arisen; and the vital elements of cell-life carry us back in

cycles of evolution through eons of the past, link by link ; until we reach the first speck of living protoplasm when the dawn of Life began upon our Mother Earth. Knowledge, it has been truly said, is a perception of relations, and the revelations of biological research constitute the romance of organic creation. By the law of continuity, we are linked up as by an endless chain with all that breathes the breath of life.

“ For an analogy of our physical history we will return once more to the two cells, by the union of which ensues the embryological stage of our existence. The organic history of these cells, both paternal and maternal, can be traced back through what may be called a succession of births and deaths, or a bringing forth of the life-principle from one form of organisation to another. The ovum, or maternal-cell, has an inception, development and maturity in the graafian vesicle or follicular body. From this body when mature, it has a birth strikingly analogous to the birth of the perfected embryo. The graafian vesicle may, therefore, be termed the external body, or formative world of the ovum, the ovum itself being the internal body, or the seat or centre of the life of the vesicle. The graafian vesicle is, in turn, formed, developed and matured within the ovarian environment. But the life-principle of each individual cell precedes all forms of material organisation

that can be traced. Back of each stage of organisation, or material expression, stands a pre-existing organism that life has woven into existence. In fact, the life of these cells may be traced back into the dim distance of infinite time beyond even the marriage—so to speak—of spirit and matter, the primal father and mother of all existence.”¹

Thus we perceive, that in every stage of the life-history of man which we can trace with certainty, there is ever an inner form, evolving within an outer form. And this truth finds, perhaps, the most remarkable illustration and verification in some of the metamorphoses found in insect-life. So much so, that it will not be an exaggeration to say that the earthly man is the larval form of the heavenly God. Man, and the soul of man as a separate individual organism, begins then with the fertilised ovum ; this ovum bearing, involved within itself, all the hereditary racial experience of both parental lines of descent. At this point, we begin to see an interesting process. The fertilised ovum at once starts to build up around itself an external form—the placenta. This is for its development in the uterine world. The ultimate issue is the birth of a human being similar to, but in many important particulars, entirely different from its parents. It is this

¹ *The Evolution of Immortality*, by C. T. Stockwell.

difference which creates, later, that unique psychical personality which will forever distinguish it from every other creature.

Thus far in our search, we have arrived at man as a living child. His future on earth depends now only on physical growth and mental development. We have seen that behind every form, there is a spiritual principle at work. The invisible life-essence is the vital impulse ; evolution is the hereditary mechanic ; and memory, ever profiting by past experience, is the architect at work devising new forms in response to the insatiable desire for greater freedom. The physical body appears the perfection of material organisation—but where is the soul?—the spiritual body of St. Paul. We must appeal now to the latest researches of physical science—not biology, but physics must aid us. The era of radio-activity, so to speak, has scientifically clinched all our previous evidence and closes the case for the possible physical reality of an invisible organism—invisible we mean to the unaided eye. The spiritual body of St. Paul is in sight.

The wonderful discoveries of Madame Curie and her husband, however, were largely anticipated by Baron von Reichenbach and his sensitives nearly fifty years before. But his experiments and researches were promptly tabooed by the great scientific moguls of his day. Clairvoyance

was deemed super-physical, and anything super-physical was labelled superstition. Things have changed greatly since then. The Crooks-tube, radiant matter and all sorts of "Rays," have periodically astonished a gaping world. And this reminds us, once again, that "reality is the verification of experience."

Baron von Reichenbach and his sensitive clairvoyants have been abundantly vindicated.

Radio-activity offers us a striking and interesting analogy to the soul of things, which is, in a psychological sense, a form of radiation. Every separate cell of the human organism is surrounded and permeated by a soft magnetic light. To the eyes of a seer it is very similar to the soft light of a glow-worm. This light, which is a vital substance, we have called psycho-plasm to distinguish it from the physical form composed of proto-plasm. To the sight of a seer, the radiations from organic and inorganic bodies are hardly distinguishable from each other. The difference is more felt than seen. The radiation from living organisms is not only alive, *but seems to know that it lives*. The consequences of this difference is incalculable. The only conclusion we can possibly arrive at is that this spiritual difference is entirely due to the difference of Form. Organic forms, alone, possess the attributes of consciousness and thought, and by virtue

of these possessions appear to be able to endow their radiations with the sensitiveness of feeling.

§ 2. THE SOUL-FORM, OR PSYCHOPLASMIC ORGANISM

By an effort of the imagination it will not be difficult to bring before the mind's eye an individual form composed of a finer substance than, so-called, earthly material—a substance that is self-luminous. Imagine an individual personality—a friend. Substituting a phosphorescent-like softness of light for his every outline, including dress, etc., yet, nevertheless, retaining all his distinguishing features as clearly as in life, you will have a very true picture of the reality as it appears to the clairvoyant eye under certain conditions. When the clairvoyant sensation establishes a perfect rapport, this luminous figure becomes almost as objective as any ordinary being; and in so doing loses most of its luminosity.

Imagine, again, the same figure merely as outlined in a grey, or misty substance, and you have another lower, but more common form of this super-normal sight.

The whole explanation of this is that the external form builds up within itself an interior, more sublimated, form of psychoplasm. The clothing, being radio-active, like everything else,

has its duplicate in a shapeless radiation around it ; but when worn by an individual, the shape of the garment is outlined by the radiation from the human body.

The super-physical body of man, then, is an evolution of the physical organism, develops parallel with it, and at physical death separates itself from it. When the separation is complete—not before—decomposition of the lifeless body at once sets in. The living electro-vital organism has left its former abode and now, if strong enough to withstand the shock of separation, enters upon another stage of existence. But frequently the shock of physical death so disorganises the dynamic stability of the psychical form that it cannot fully recover itself and slowly passes away into what is truly a second death—extinction.

The vital test for continued life is dynamic strength of will ; or purity of soul. Either of these possessions will bridge the chasm. They are, in fact, the only means of survival ; just as physical vitality, and freedom from serious disease, are the only means of survival when a child is born upon the earth under normal conditions.

Just as the plants absorb nutriment from the air, so the super-physical organism absorbs its nourishment from its surroundings—i.e. the psychical environment.

The writer has devoted many years to arrive at

these facts, and they have been verified by other seekers in all parts of the world. There can be no serious doubt as to their reality in the minds of those who have thoroughly investigated the subject, and who alone are competent to decide.

§ 3. THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

It is unfortunate that the word "soul" has two such widely different meanings as a living super-physical form, and a living action or idea. Though at times they act together these two meanings must not be confounded. In the highest and truest sense the soul of man is a pure spiritual existence. As we have seen, it had a beginning; it has a history; it is the offspring of evolution, and is dependent on form for its conscious expression. Yet, nevertheless, it is formless in itself, and paradoxical as it may seem has no conceivable end except a change of form.¹ Because of its formless qualities it endures in time and is independent of space.

In this pure sense, the soul consists of the aspirations, the ideals, hopes, and deeds of a self-conscious being. As an illustration of this conception of the soul, we see in the crucifixion the birth of a deathless action which will con-

¹ An idea formless in itself may change or evolve into a greater idea.

tinue to live in the minds of men as long as mankind exists ; while " return good for evil " is the type of a living idea as deathless as humanity. It is thus quite true to assert that to-day we see the soul of Jesus reincarnated in the ideals of Christianity, and the soul of Mahomet in the ideals of Islam. Therefore, it is in that sense that we say that the soul is formless and independent of space. You cannot measure a thought, weigh a deed, or delineate the geometrical angles of an aspiration, for they are non-spatial. Truly, the spiritual soul of man is thought, deed, and aspiration. Without these, he would be a mere living machine—soul-less.

Between enduring ideas and continued life there is one remarkable affinity ; the twain are one. *For no great idea ever completely possessed a living form that did not confer the gift of its own enduring nature upon it.* Have we not here one of the mysteries of the Christ idea—the secret of faith, in the " Will to Believe " !

In its general and material conception the soul of man consists of an ethereal, or super-physical organism possessing the attributes of memory and feeling. In this sense, as we have seen, (§ 2), the soul occupies space just as much as any physical body, but being super-physical, it inter-penetrates physical bodies in the same way that the finer forms of energy inter-penetrate matter. Thus

the soul of man can pass through material objects as easily as we pass through the atmosphere—which is only another form of matter. This seeming mystery is in no way miraculous. The super-physical body functions within a super-physical dimension of space; responds to a super-physical order of vibrations. To this extent only, is there anything super-natural about it.

In a general sense, and speaking broadly, we may view the soul as a living, spiritual being, clothed, or embodied in suitable form. A centre of consciousness with memory, feeling, and unique identity. An organism of the higher life. Not an ego in the Hindu sense of the Atman. Not in any sense a "thing in itself"; but a complex in interaction with the rest of existence. In another sense it is in reality a divine ego to us. It is the "I" of myself—of the here and the now. *It is the Infinite Spirit which becomes conscious in me*; and it will remain the centre of my own, unique personality so long as I continue to exist. And this, as we have pointed out, will continue as long as we possess the dynamic will to endure.

As centres of consciousness, we are, as before stated, only clearly conscious of the illuminated centre of our psychic sphere. The further any object or feeling is removed from this immediate

centre of awareness the less defined it becomes, until it recedes into the dim fringe of awareness that constitutes our psychological horizon. We are, therefore, only conscious of a very small fraction of our real selves at any one time. In moments of exaltation our sphere of consciousness expands indefinitely and we seem to embrace an immensity of being. At other times, it contracts into a mere point of concentration upon the most petty detail of life. No man has ever fathomed the whole of himself above or below.

According to this view of soul and consciousness, it will not be difficult to understand the apparent enigma of a person exhibiting a plurality of selves—the higher or supernal self, or, per contra, a lower and degraded self. Only upon the psychological equator of this mysterious personality are we in contact with that complex *via-media* called the normal self. The truth underlying all this is that we are indivisibly linked up with everything above and below in the whole immensity of life and our possibilities of interaction are as boundless as the infinities of space. This brings us to the last section of our subject, which is a re-survey of the sphere of consciousness and the subliminal world.

§ 4. THE SPHERE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE SUBLIMINAL SELF.

It must be pointed out that no mechanical conception will convey a true image of the reality of consciousness as a psychical sphere of Awareness. Any analogy based upon mechanism will fall far short of the truth. The image used, the likeness to the magnetic field surrounding an electric charge, is the nearest illustration we can conceive. To this must be added a shade of colour in the surrounding psychical atmosphere peculiar to each individual: an atmosphere of iridescent light that gives to the seer the impression of being alive. Colour in this case represents quality, or character and not colour per se, but it impresses itself as colour to the clairvoyant. It changes in tint with every different mental attitude, flaming dull-red in anger, while in spiritual exaltation it is an ultra-violet. It flashes in the whirl of changing emotions like the illusive colours in an opal sea under the varying conditions of sun, sky and cloud. The sphere of conscious awareness is within this atmosphere. The dominant self is the focus of its centre. Every object, or thought external to itself, must pass through this psychical atmosphere, as the energy of the sun must pass through the atmosphere of the earth to reach us. And, in both cases, some of the qualities of the atmosphere

through which thought, object or sun-ray passes, are imparted. But the consciousness itself is the flow of the life-wave through this illuminated sphere. It is absolutely a flow which gives the psychical life we call consciousness, and not a crystallised centre or Divine Atom; for there is no consciousness apart from content. We may gather a poor analogy from an ordinary electric-light. The bulb represents the illuminated field of immediate awareness: the radius of light—the psychical atmosphere—growing fainter and fainter with distance until it is lost on the horizon and blends with the sub-conscious: while the current which produces it may represent the flow of life itself. The whole, body and soul—a psycho-physical complex—is the instrument of the Infinite Spirit. Having said this, we have expressed all that study and clear sight can, in the present state of our knowledge. So now, leaving the physiological psychologists to quarrel over the mechanical miracles performed by the *Thalma*, *Cortex*, and *Corpora striata* to their heart's content, we turn our attention to that border-land of fact and fancy called by F. W. Myers "The subliminal self."

First: there is the normal self, with its centre of consciousness—the tiny crest of a wave in the psychical ocean rising above the surface like an islet above the sea.

Then there is the sub-conscious ground in which it has the foundation of its psychical life with the latent memories of its past of immemorial being. In this ground is buried the sub-liminal self ; while the supra-liminal (the supernal) self rises into a higher spiritual strata of existence. We will call them the sub-liminal and the supra-liminal to distinguish them in their qualitative relations.

The sub-liminal is that part of the self which constitutes the basement of the individual being. It is the soil in which humanity has grown, containing the germs of all the past, and wherein the psychical roots of every living thing are as inextricably intermingled as the root systems of a tropical jungle. It is the psychical sub-soil wherein every living form of the past and every experience is preserved in a series of psychological strata ; and which, from time to time, from some unusual stimulus of the mind, wells up into the conscious centre ; even as past features and traits of character of remote ancestors will reappear in children.

Psychology requires the genius of a Gregor Mendel to unravel some of the mysteries of the dominant and recessional factors of the soul. But the great discovery of Mendel (the segregation of the unit characters of physiological development) was child's play compared with the spiritual

insight necessary to read either order, or necessity into the bewildering mysteries which confront us the moment we attempt to penetrate below the surface of ourselves and excavate into the stratas of sub-conscious being.

The supra-liminal is that part of ourselves which may be correctly defined as the higher spiritual religious self which, when awakened to consciousness, ever seeks the ideal beyond; ever aspires for union with higher stratas of being than itself—Supra in the true sense.

The transcendental world of spiritual life which responds to, and comes into rapport with, the supra-liminal realm of the human soul has been portrayed in many images and idealised by seers according to their heart's desire. But, under every form, there is a living reality. It is the life of the spirit—the dream of the saint—the hope of the martyr—the at-one-ment of the Christ. For only brief moments can we be part-takers. To live in it, requires the purity of mind and religious fervour of a Buddha—a Jesus—or a Francis of Assisi.

CHAPTER FIVE—THE SEARCH FOR THE FINITE GOD

“ Ordinary monistic idealism leaves everything intermediary out. It recognises only the extremes, as if, after the first rude face of the phenomenal world in all its particularity, nothing but the supreme in all its perfection could be found. First, you and I, just as we are in this room ; and the moment we get below that surface, the unutterable Absolute itself ! Doesn't this show a singularly indigent imagination ? Isn't this brave universe made on a richer pattern, with room in it for a long hierarchy of beings ? ”—W. JAMES. *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 174-5.

WE have arrived at the final problem of the Quest—the problem of God. It is a study that has ever, we hope, been pursued with a full sense of our limitations ; with a full knowledge of the impossibility of the finite ever, truly, comprehending the Infinite ; or a part embracing the whole. Nevertheless, we cannot, without full justification of their superior authority, admit the dogmatic right of any man, or school of men, to affirm that an Absolute Omnipotent Being exists. We assert that no man in the

past has ever experienced the vision of any but a personal being that in his mind he has, himself, endowed with Infinite Wisdom and Power. Remember this indisputable fact : whenever prophet or seer has received a revelation, it has instantly become visualised in an individual, spiritual atmosphere ; which visualisation has endowed the revelation with the limitations of the seer's personal equation. The moment he attempts to transmit it to others—to give it external form—it ceases to be a revelation and becomes a statement of experience that is either more or less than the truth. Our researches into the so-called sacred writings and revelations but brings these facts to the surface more clearly. We find them purely human documents ; and the inspiring God behind them—if such there be—a very human God ; at the most an ascended human soul in a higher state of development and being.

A careful study of man's religious history will show that the idea of a God goes back into the remotest past. It clearly arose from that first primitive feeling of superstitious awe which came over man in the presence of his dead. This was worked up into actual love of the departed. Undoubtedly, the first altar was the ground upon which was placed food for those sleeping below whom he dreamed were somehow

still alive. The first shrine was the grave. The first temple, a tomb erected for some departed chief.

The idea of God went on through a process of natural development. First : an ancestral spirit. The God of Abraham was of this friendly personal type. Then tribal : Jehovah the God of Israel was a development of Abraham's more intimate God. From stage to stage, the idea grows in the prophetic writings until we see the all-powerful supreme ruler over all other gods crystallised, at last, in one supreme conception for man as " Our Father which art in Heaven " ; and this Father's immanence as the Holy Spirit in all that breathes the breath of life, was stated by St. Paul to be a spiritual essence : " In Thee I live and breathe and have my being." This is the highest Christian conception to-day—a glorified omnipotent, but spiritual personality whose presence, by virtue of his power, pervades the cosmos. From the human ghost to the super-human God is a natural, but necessary, psychological development.

With the advent of true science, and the invention of instruments of precision, the universal aspect of creation changed with lightning-like rapidity. Its immensity outstripped the development of the God-idea. The universe became too big for man's divinity. This great

world—the particular and special care of a comparatively small God—suddenly became as a tiny speck, as a grain in the sands of the sea. The greatness of the world vanished into thin air ; and the man created God, finding no centre in which to stand, became lost in the immensities of being. The throne of God, like the new Jerusalem of St. John, dissolved into the baseless fabric of a dream.

Theologians however, had vested interests at stake. Speculative-philosophy and metaphysics were called in upon the case and a perfect marvel of intellectual creation was enthroned upon the seat of Jehovah.

The God of Isaiah and the Father of Jesus became a nebulous essence of infinite refinement, which, nevertheless, managed somehow, somewhere, and somewhen, to become Will ! Idea ! and Love !

The Lord God of Hosts who gave specific military commands to Joshua : who spoke to the assembled multitude on the banks of the Jordan, and said : “ This is my beloved son in whom I am well-pleased,” finishes his career with twentieth-century refinement as an impersonal, immanent being. Voiceless—except through the voice of man. Brainless—except through the brain of man. But endowed with the attribute of Love, as altruistic as gravitation

in matter. God, as such, has ceased to live and has been transformed into a metaphysical entity. Thus we can see the gradual evolution of the conception of the Absolute.

The whole conception of God means a personal being. A state of formless being is an unconscious state, void of definite ends. It is a desecration of the very name of God to give any thing, or state this title that is less than personal; and *there is nothing conscious that is greater*. For this reason, we refuse to name the supreme principle, or spirit God. Nor can we grant this sacred word to the living movement of the universe. In its great and true meaning, the word God stands for—has always stood for a glorified spiritual personality. We are not seeking to find the Absolute in the solution of this problem. Such a being is not required;—would be of no use whatever to struggling humanity even if found. We are seeking for one who, while almost inconceivably more than man, was once much less than man; who, therefore, can know man's requirements, having himself passed through states *equivalent* to human experience. Man's religious instincts seek refuge in a living God and to satisfy this craving for personal Deity, some human semblance has ever been sought. Osiris, Buddha, Jesus are but types to bring this divine personality down to

the solid earth of our experience. We are in quest of the Finite God, but in this quest, let us be sure of our ground. Let us be as sure as the human mind can be that the Infinite is a human myth.

The case against the existence of an Infinite, Omnipotent God rests upon the self-evident facts of Nature ever present to our consciousness. The skilled workman is judged by the result of his work and not by any invisible, or imaginary merits he may be said to possess. Judged by this, our only standard, we find the work of a supposed perfect, omniscient Being to be a world of disorder, rapine, disease, old age and death. We find the noblest work of this omniscient God, a savage, just emerging from the brute. We find that every recorded attempt of this same omnipotent Deity to save the chief work of his hands from damnation fails most completely. In spite of all efforts, the crime and immorality of men and nations to-day, is probably greater, on the whole, than in any past era of history. The warfare of nations for man's supremacy over man: the warfare of commerce, by which one nation strives, with might and main, to drive another nation out of existence; the warfare of political parties: of sex against sex, has had no equal in the past. No perfect being, with unlimited means at command, would

tolerate this state of existence for a single moment. No moral man, if he possessed the power to alter, would endure this infernal strife for a single day.

This is not owing to the existence of a Devil, or the innate wickedness of man. Leaving the sphere of reason and penetrating lower in the scale, we find all living nature in deadly conflict. Eat, or be eaten, is the law! Everywhere, it is one bloody fight for existence. With this evidence before him, for any sane thinker, there is only one possible conclusion: the Absolute God, the "Eternal Good" does not exist in Nature. His only reality lies in the heads of dreamers.


If God or Gods there be, this or these beings are Finite. Their power over Nature is *limited*. They may be able to *guide* tendencies in evolution, but they can neither alter nor compel the universal process. They themselves, are comparatively powerless as compared with the mighty surge—the inconceivable movement—of the primeval ground of Nature.¹

¹ In *The Individual and Reality* Mr. Fawcett has presented the case against the Absolute with great ability. His arguments are unanswerable. Since this work was written, Sir Francis Younghusband has thrashed out the same conceptions to its bitter end. "Within" was written through suffering. It is like hot lava from a volcano of human pain. It is experience recorded out of the quick of life.

It would be waste of time, and little less than childish futility to see the perfect all, within the maelstrom of imperfection. And as the Transcendent is at the "back o' beyond" we must continue on the trail of the imperfect. St. Paul was the father of good advice: "Come now, let us reason together," said this sagacious apostle. We will do so.

The survival of the spiritually fit beyond the grave is undisputed among those competent to judge the evidence. Indefinite survival means an indefinite advance in knowledge, power and freedom. Continue this development in your mind for a few hundred thousand years and then ask yourselves what kind of being will Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Newton, and Darwin evolve into? What undreamed range of knowledge and power may not be theirs in half a million years hence! We cannot even imagine such a state. It is like thinking of a billion. It is a meaningless word in so far as the mind can grasp its reality. We are purely relative creatures and must have some standard of comparison before we can realise the meaning of a billion. Otherwise it is nothing but an array of Arabic numerals. But let us carry the mind still further. Let us bring other systems of cosmic-life into the scale, systems, compared with which our own island universe (the solar system) is only as a coral

atoll surrounded by the continents of the earth. And every created system that shines is throbbing and heaving to the same wave of Life.

There are many far greater worlds than ours whose central suns flash forth their living energies through unknown realms of space; whose splendours encrust with jewels the midnight sky. On these abodes of life are many and varying forms of self-conscious beings; some almost inconceivably higher than ourselves; some even lower. Such is the spiritual intelligence conveyed from on high to more than one seeker of the Well. And such tidings do not conflict with what in Nature is highly probable. 

Further, we see that everything of which we are conscious, or of which we have any possible evidence *has arisen in time* and by natural processes similar to our own. Accepting this as self-evident in the universe to those who have eyes to see, we approach the conception of God.

Eons before our own sun appeared in the heavens as a light shining amidst the darkness of space other suns had arisen, gone through their cycle of existence and passed away to give rise to other forms. Myriads of beings had arisen into self-conscious existence as a consequence. *Myriads of these beings still live*—are still ascending the endless spiral of spiritual development to greater heights of wisdom,

freedom and power. These glorious hierarchies of the sky constitute spiritual sun-spheres of inconceivable splendour; whose living thought, like an over-soul of divine-love, constitutes the God-head of the World. With Fechner (*Life after Death*) we believe that every living orb in space whereon there is organic life is, in the present state of the world-order, under the guiding care of one of these ascended souls, whose experience is mingled with the life of other worlds.

These guardian-angels are struggling, like ourselves, to remain upon the surface of the ocean of being. They are, and forever will be, imperfect in comparison with the possibility of still greater perfection. And yet it is this very imperfection, this finite, and therefore limited power that we really require to be of any true benefit to us. The absolutely perfect can have no sympathy with the imperfect. To have sympathy is to have had the experience of imperfection. It is for this reason that the human heart has ever found need of a mediator—a God-man, to whom, in prayer for hope and comfort, he could bare his heart and soul as to one who knew its failings. This is the supreme value of Christ—the man of Galilee.

The intuitions of the human soul have not been false—the hope and faith of the human heart have not been groundless, for the Divine

God-head of the spiritual world is the immortal crown that illuminates the cosmos of Being. Within and a part of this supernal realm is the Deity we seek. As surely as man lives here and hopes to survive death and live hereafter, just as surely *God lives* and moves and has his Being in the universe. But equally as sure is the fact that this God is one of many co-equals, "Finite in the midst of Infinity."

We have rent the veil! In inspired words it has been written that the pure in heart shall see God. And though we may see "as through a glass darkly" we can yet discern this radiant, spiritual sun shining upon the darkness of the great abyss wherein surges the primeval ground of that nature of which we are a part.

We feel and know that we are in the Divine Presence! And what is this vision of the soul! Not a refinement on refinement that is lost in shapeless air—nor a vague and formless being of the philosophic night—but a spirit-soul of beauty clothed in radiance and glory: in whose eyes of tender pity shine the light of hope and love—a form of living splendour: on whose God-like brow of purpose rests the majesty of calm.

Part II

CHAPTER ONE—THE MISSIONS OF THE SPIRIT

THE soul, beginning with the first simple form of the Algea, a unicellular-plant that grows and divides, may be likened to a chain of organic life. From the simple cell, life moves in an ever-ascending spiral curve, each round showing an advance in organism, in form, and in function; passing onward and upward along the lines of least resistance: ever and anon branching out into novelty and new paths, bye-paths, so to say, developing many and marvellous forms in adaptation to environment. But the main stem, like the trunk of a tree, going upward, carrying all past experience forward. Unit characters of this experience become dominant, or recessive by turns, according to the pressure or necessity of external conditions; but when blocked by environment, as it were, welling up and branching in every possible direction, developing new forms to suit the new conditions. Nothing is pre-determined, but is evolved along the lines of

least resistance in harmony with the new conditions, and vital requirements.

Countless offshoots of these lines of vital efforts die out, like the dead branches and terminal twigs on a tree that have reached their limit of nutriment from the parent stem. Finally, after countless efforts in countless directions, and in myriad forms, the flowering period of this biological tree is attained, the last material possibility is reached. The living plant of life upon our planet has come to physical maturity, and the flower, the human form, appears. For its psychic fertilisation, this flower depends upon the pollen of the spirit. Not all the blossoms of the oak produce acorns; countless numbers fail to get fertilised and die; many more that are fertilised fail to fight the conditions; frosts, storms, and insects destroy them ere they can mature, and grubs eat the vital heart out of the living germ. As with this symbolic tree, so with human life.

There are favourable seasons when the trees swarm with good fruits, with ripe mast, and others when there is next to none. There are also spiritual periods in the history of human life when the fruit of souls—the harvest of the spirit—is rich, producing some twenty, some forty, and some sixty fold. Thus we see a beautiful analogy in the operations of evolutionary

laws between the variation and mutation of species in plants and animals, and the ebb and flow of the spirit in the psychical development of man.

These spiritual waves of life show forth in so-called reformations, renaissances, etc. And, doubtless, there is some sort of periodic law behind these awakenings of humanity that awaits further investigation. We will note a few broadly outlined periods like the "Naros" of the ancients.

About six hundred years B.C. a regular spring-tide of spiritual activity is witnessed. In China Lao-Tzu and Confucius; in India, Gautama the Buddha; in Greece, Pythagorus; ancient philosophy culminating two hundred years later in Plato and Aristotle.

Six hundred years pass and another great awakening—Jesus, being the glory of that era.

Another six hundred years, and a much lesser light arises; Mahomet of the whirlwind sword appears upon the scene, and preaches death or the Koran.

Another six hundred years, and the wave seems to have reached its lowest or neap-tide state. The grim Crusades, and the menacing beginnings of the Reformation mark this period.

The last six hundred years bring us to our own day, and here again we see the wave increasing. We have a world-wide renewal of "isms": Occultism; Spiritualism; Babism; Psychical-

research ; and the establishment of two entirely opposite forms of Christian faith : Mormonism and Christian Science.

Viewing the foregoing events in the light of a conscious survival of the human soul after the death of the body, it is not difficult to realise the possibility of a Messiah in the form of missions of the higher life to earth. Not in the actual descent and reincarnation of a purified conscious soul, but in the form of a spiritual influx of power from discarnate minds through the media of the incarnated man. When so viewed, the religious importance of such an avatar of the spirit is beyond question.

What was possible in the past history of the race is possible now, and will be possible in the future. There is no such thing as miracle, nor any irrevocable scheme for the redemption of mankind.

But, when the times are ripe—when the human heart is beginning to lose hope and faith—when the spirit of religious light is well-nigh extinguished, and buried deep beneath the fossilised creeds of the letter—when the churches have become conventional, choked up with vested interests, and mammon wears the mitre—when the priesthood becomes a professional living, crowded by those who show none of the signs that should follow those who believe—then,

indeed, is the advent of a spiritual awakening near.

There is no life in the written word ; no spirit of grace in the platitudes of formal prayer ; no power to rouse the soul of man from its lethargy in mere vestments and ritual. In all lines of effort that live, biogenesis is the truth—life from life. You will never reap a harvest unless you plant the living seed.

Each great soul of the race has given his message as it appeared to him. Each had his natural limitations of vision, but each gave the truth that was in him at the time.

These messengers of the spirit were the spiritual kings of the human race in their day, and still retain that regal office. Super men on earth they are super-souls in the world beyond. These prophets and seers of mankind, no matter how much they might appear to differ upon the surface and in non-essentials, all preached one great fundamental truth : that the true redeemer like the Kingdom of Heaven was within : that the secret of life was to realise that there is no death *for those who will to live.*

Stagnation of the soul is death. To drift in the world with the tide of humanity is to drift out and sink into the abyss from which there is no return. Its depths are beyond the reach of living waters.

A summa of the Wisdom of the Ages spells Work in letters of fire ; but this needs repeating, and its teachings reformulating from generation to generation ; otherwise, the life-sapping fungus of orthodox formula, convention, and platitude covers up and destroys the living plant. How supremely the Christ held up the traditions of men to scorn ! And yet, so far as the various creeds and declarations of faith are concerned, the dogma and ritual of the whole Christian fabric rest upon these same legends and traditions. In the Christian religion, but one branch is still green, and that is the personal life of Jesus from Jordan to Calvary. The life of the Master is the living ideal of the race ; the only vital thing that a Christian can take hold of without a quarrel with his Christian brother of a different sect. Literal creed and organisation are the upper and nether millstones that have ground the life out of everything else. Oriental imagery and the legendary stories of primitive man combined, have given birth to the various mythical narratives so beautifully preserved in that book we call the Bible ; and as such a record, we value it as a priceless treasure.

Life and work are one, if they are real. Mere belief without the works is a rotten reed—a death-trap in the truest sense of the word. “ By self alone can self be saved.” The greatest

delusion and snare ever cast upon mankind is the doctrine of vicarious atonement: *this teaching is a living lie*. Jesus Christ can no more save our souls unless we work to save ourselves than we can save the soul of Nero. The Messiah's power to save consists only in, and rests wholly upon his example. "The imitation of Christ" is to answer the call, "Follow me."

The Wisdom of the Ages can be condensed into the doctrine of Work and Love. A humble and contrite heart for all past sin, a clean, upright life for the future, with love and charity to all mankind, is the quintessence to-day of the message of the spiritual messiahs of the race.

We have confined our studies in this work to those two forms of religion which alone of all the religious systems of the world have any vital or saving value for the European mind, and which, if only synthetically united, would constitute a world religion of supreme value: Gautama and Jesus,—The Buddha and the Christ,—both idealists of the highest order—will, we hope, present a united front in the religion of the future.

CHAPTER TWO—THE MISSION OF BUDDHA

THE MAN.

§ 1. ALL the great vital religions of the world, religions which have flourished and spread beyond the race and country in which they originated, have been the personal religions of the spiritual giants of humanity. And in each case the fires of religious fervour have been kept alive by the sweet memories of the life and the undying personality of the founder.

The first of these great personal leaders, of which we have any record, is Gautama Siddhartha. He was born about 557 B.C. at Kapilavastu, 93 miles north-east of Benares. The son of an Indian Rajah, he left his father's palace, his young wife and son, to seek for truth. The enquirer is recommended to read the *Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold, if he would know the beauty of the Buddha legend. Beneath all the symbolism and oriental drapery in this story, we see the quiet, firm soul of Gautama,

the man of infinite sweetness and purity of life, with unbounded compassion for every living thing. It was this, the irresistible personality of Buddha, that won the fight, which, for a time, put an end in India to religious tyranny. Over and over again we are reminded of the graceful presence and spiritual charm that instantly won the love and obedience of those about him. We read, for instance, in the *Gospel of Buddha*, by Dr. Paul Carus, that a few days after he had obtained enlightenment, "Two merchants came travelling on the road near by, and when they saw the Great Shramana, majestic and full of peace, they approached him respectfully, and offered him rice, cakes and honey." After partaking of this he arose to rejoin his five former associates, and on the way met with a young Brahman named Upaka, who amazed at the majesty and sublime joyfulness of his appearance, said "Your countenance, friend, is serene, your eyes are bright and indicate purity and blessedness." The holy Buddha replied, "I have obtained deliverance by the extinction of self. My body is chastened, my mind is free from desire, and the deepest truth has taken abode in my heart. I have obtained Nirvana, and this is the reason that my countenance is serene, and my eyes are bright. I now desire to found the Kingdom of Truth upon earth,

to give light to those who are enshrouded in darkness, and to open the gate of immortality to men."

The following are some of the results of this one man upon earth.

"1. The most formidable priestly tyranny that the world had ever seen crumbled away before his attack, and the followers of Buddha were paramount in India for a thousand years.

"2. The institution of caste was assailed and overturned.

"3. Polygamy was for the first time pronounced immoral, and slavery condemned.

"4. Woman, from being considered a chattel and a beast of burden, was for the first time considered man's equal, and allowed to develop her spiritual life.

"5. All bloodshed, whether with the knife of the priest, or the sword of the conqueror, was rigidly forbidden.

"6. Also, for the first time in the religious history of mankind, the awakening of the spiritual life of the individual was substituted for religion by body corporate. It is also certain that Buddha was the first to proclaim that duty was to be sought in the eternal principles of morality and justice, and not in sacrifices and ceremonies invented by the fancy of priests.

"7. The principle of religious propagandism

was for the first time introduced, with its two great instruments, the missionary and the preacher.

“ 8. By this means, India, China, Mongolia, Thibet, Bactria, Ceylon, Burma and Japan were proselytised; and the Buddhist missionaries over-ran Persia and Egypt.

“ That such results should have been achieved is one of the greatest marvels of history, and when an enquirer consults some of the best-known writers to try to get an explanation of this universal missionary success, the marvel increases. We see Buddhist holy men exhibiting a self-denial worthy of the early Christians to gain an immortality (amritu—non-death) which is said to mean death—literal extinction. We see prayers and sacrifices to a non-God, and gorgeous temples scooped patiently out of rocky mountains in his honour, statues of this non-God are scattered broadcast over half the globe, and the tolerant patience and activity of his missionaries is unique in the history of religions. This is the bewildering Buddhism of popular treatises.”¹

THE MESSAGE.

§ 2. From all that we can learn regarding the real teachings of Buddha, there appears to be,

¹ *The Popular Life of Buddha*, by Arthur Lilly.

according to the standpoint taken, two widely divergent views. This difference hinges upon the personal conception of Nirvana and immortality. The question of what is immortality, is the crux of Buddhistic controversy—what is the eternal Nirvana ?

One school of thought, the least in number, but the most advanced in education, conceives a pure Atheism, and holds the idea of immortality for the race, but not for the individual as such. Ideas and pure forms, alone are eternal. The personal consciousness, according to this school, will cease with the death of the physical body : the psychology of the human mind being with them a physiological problem. The living spirit that inspired and gave birth to great and noble ideas, will pass away at death, and dissolve like dew before the sun : but the soul, as these idealists call it, consists of the thoughts and deeds, noble or vile. These will live and affect the race ; will enter into the lives of others, and so, in this sense, be re-born. This form of re-birth, together with the qualities and characteristics inherited from ancestors, is the only kind of reincarnation admitted by this school of Buddhism. And undoubtedly this is the only possible form of reincarnation on this earth.

• We are what our ancestors have made us. "These," says the Buddha, "are my past in-

carnations." In this sense, and looking only upon the surface, we can see both the apparent truth, and the beauty of Buddha's teaching; especially when studied in the light of Karma, which was the foundation of his thought.

Undoubtedly, whatever mental, moral, or social conditions a man is born to, are the results of the thoughts and actions of others who lived before him, or who are living now. He is born into a psychical and social atmosphere of thought and custom that is almost irresistible in its influence over his life. There is a perfect continuity of life, and a more or less perfect transmission of thoughts, manners, and customs from one generation to another; so that in this sense, it may be truly said that man inherits the Karma of the past; that the past is really a part of him.

In this view, the race is, of course, the all-important consideration. We shall live in our children and children's children. Good intentions, though they may constitute the pavements of Hell, nevertheless, through the law of Karma, will be accounted for righteousness.

But, we may ask, are such semi-scientific, semi-philosophical views in actual accord with Buddha's own teaching touching Karma, and the immortality of the soul? In a certain sense, yes; but in a far wider, in the real sense, no. To understand this, we must ask ourselves,

what was the real mission of the Buddha? What was the central dominating purpose of his mind? And what was the doctrine of Karma upon which he founded his entire conception of life?

We will first consider the doctrine of Cause and Effect as it presented itself to the Hindu mind twenty-five centuries ago, and try to see the real object of Buddha's life.

The law of Karma in his time, and also, today, in the popular Buddhism of Burma and Ceylon, means that your position in this world, mental, moral, and financial (these two latter are the important features) is the absolute, and irrevocable result of your past, physical existence on this earth, in either animal, or human form. The accidents of life that cause you sorrow and suffering are the exact consequences of your own past actions, or Karma in previous lives.

Do thieves rob you? You, yourself, have robbed others: You are now reaping the reward. Has someone set fire to your dwelling and destroyed all that you possess? Be thankful it is not worse, and that you are not roasted alive, for you, yourself, have been an incendiary. Is your wife unfaithful? Has your home and family been ruined through her treachery? You deserve no pity. You have been an adulterer—have broken the hearts and homes of

others in the unknown past. And so on, ad infinitum. Per contra : the rich, smiling, sleek-faced Brahmin is born to his exalted caste by virtue of his past merit. He walks about as the salt of human kind in consequence of his saintly benevolence in past existences. If his wife is a paragon of wifely virtue and devotion, no credit to her. It was her husband's purity of thought, and moral rectitude in the past that is now—through her—returning his Karma in kind. Woman is an inferior being. To be born as a woman, even, is the mark of Cain for the dissolute past. And so on.

Such is the law of Karma ! Viewed in the scientific light of to-day, it is as crude and grotesque as the divine Justice of Dante's *Inferno*, or the avenging devils of the Hindu pantheon. Upon the surface, it is a law that seems to measure out justice in such a way that the judge, the executioner, and the culprit, the doer, and the deed are the same individual—are all one web of cause and effect. It is the way the Hindu mind solved the problem of good and evil. It is, essentially, an Asiatic idea of the eternal fitness of things. But it does not account for the fact that all the good things of this world are very often enjoyed by those who are the most selfish and unscrupulous among mankind. If past merit brings forth the goods of this life, how is

it that the moral merit of the past does not continue along with the worldly benefits? In, at least, seven cases in every ten, worldly power and position are associated with selfish immorality. Karma is, essentially, a moral power, if it is anything. But in this connection, it fails most lamentably to justify its existence.

“Whatsoever measure ye meet unto others, it shall be measured unto you again,” sounds very much like, is, in fact, a distant echo from Buddha to Jesus.

The acceptance and adoption, without question, of this theory of Karma, reveals Buddha's limitations. It shows most clearly that the enlightenment he attained was not the light of natural law. Not an insight into the mysteries of cause and effect upon which he delighted to dwell in his sermons. It was a pure, religious ecstasy; an at-one-ment between his own soul and the soul of the spirit which is concerned not with earthly things. Hence, earthly things were worthless.

This unquestioned belief amongst all classes of Buddha's day that Karma was simply divine Justice destroyed all pity for sorrow and pain; made the human heart callous. Sympathy for misfortune was out of place when the unfortunate was the one who administered his own penance.

Had Buddha's enlightenment included an insight into the laws of heredity, and revealed to him the high stability and transmission of the germ-cells from one generation to another, almost intact; also, that strictly acquired characters of one life are not transmitted to offspring—have no Karmic effect whatever—his whole system might have been different. But the chances are that he would not have spent his life as a mendicant-preacher; and we should have had one star less in the human firmament.

The modern semi-scientific, semi-philosophical interpretation of Karma was not only unknown, in Buddha's day, but it was unknowable. It cannot, therefore, be justly held up as a fair interpretation. Buddha, like Jesus, was the child of his age, and his knowledge of natural law limited to his time.

Having briefly examined the fantastic theory upon which his system was built, let us do him justice and give prominence to his one great and original departure from the conception of his time. For it is this which constitutes his real and particular contribution to human thought. It consisted in the complete rejection and refutation of the "Atman" theory of the soul. This rejection has been misconstrued into a denial of the existence of the soul of man. Buddha's insistence that all human knowledge is

relative, and based upon the metaphysic of experience, is startlingly modern in idea. His irresistible logic, and his constant appeal to the facts of experience in his argument defeated every foe, and shattered the "Atman," or Ego conception into bits. The priestly Brahmins who came to curse remained to pray, and accepted the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

We now come to the question: What was the objective? What was the mission of Buddha, according to his own idea?

If it was anything, it was to save both gods and men from the wheel of the law: birth, sickness, old age and death. It was to destroy the curse of re-birth, a form of transmigration literally believed in by his people.

After meeting with the last of the four presaging tokens, and fully resolved upon the great renunciation, explaining his grief to his wife, Buddha said: "I see everywhere the impression of change: therefore, my heart is heavy. Men grow old, sicken and die. That is enough to take away the zest of life." (*Gospel of Buddha.*)

This world, and all that exists therein, is, according to Buddhism, one of suffering, illusion and death. In this sense it is the most pessimistic religion known to mankind. "Sorrow, change and death" is the weary reiteration.

Buddha's mission was to point out the way of deliverance from this world. The "Dharma" was the path of salvation—Nirvana its goal, wherein there is neither change, birth nor death.

The secret of deliverance is plainly stated. It is the annihilation of self, and every form of selfishness. "Lust of the body, lust of the eye, and lust of the mind" must all be conquered. "Mara's" power must be broken; for as spake Jesus, "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall gain it."

When all forms of self and selfishness are overcome; when the mind has become pure; when the "Thee within Me" is no longer "blind," and appraises the illusions of the world at their true value, then is Nirvana near. When love for everything manifests itself; when there is neither fear nor sorrow; when there is sympathy for all mankind; when desire for separated life either here or hereafter has ceased; then is Nirvana attained. Such is the state of mind of the enlightened. A noble and ideal state most truly.

But what, in reality, if the ideal school be correct, has been attained? Certainly not the most important thing of all—the freedom from re-birth!

If one thing is more certain than another, it

is that good actions, noble thoughts, self-sacrificing deeds, are more certain of re-birth than evil ones. If ideal actions and human sympathy for suffering constitute the soul of man, then Buddha's doctrine of deliverance from the wheel of the law is the most conspicuous failure in history. In this sense, Buddha, in the form of his thoughts and ideas, has been reincarnated millions of times. In fact, the Karma of Buddha, like that of the Christ, is world-wide in its action. Surely, this cannot by any possible stretch of language, be called "freedom from the wheel of the law," and a remedy for birth, sickness, old age and death; seeing that Buddha himself, after the attainment of Nirvana, suffered sickness, old age and death. And his myriad reincarnations, from that day to this, suffer the same things, and are still bound to the wheel of the law. It must never be forgotten that, in the eyes of Buddha, this world was a realm of Maya, or illusion, nothing real; all was mere subjective appearance. It was also the centre of the greatest curse of all curses—ignorance. Everything here was vile and unworthy of serious thought. If there was neither natural beauty, nor art of real worth to his mind, least of all was there such a thing as the joy of conscious life, and aspiration in the possibilities of life for the race. For all was illusion. You

must not look upon youthful beauty without remembering that decay was under the skin, that it was all transitory, and to picture such beauty was to forget disease, old age and death. Under these circumstances, Buddha's ideal was not continued life upon the earth, nor the continuance of the race of mortal men, for this life at best was the curse of fate or Karma. This life (which he was seeking to destroy), at its highest development must only result from the lust of self and ignorance. Consequently the doctrines of Buddha, as expounded by the school of which we are writing, will not harmonise with Buddha's mission, unless we agree that such a mission has not only been a complete failure, but that it was in the very nature of things impossible of success before it began.

As long as there is human life upon this earth, always will there be, in a comparative sense, sorrow, sickness, old age and death. Also in a restricted and qualified sense will there be rebirth in the reincarnation of ideas. So that neither Buddha nor the future Buddha can expect any freedom from the law; while their memories endure, the Buddhas are bound upon the wheel. In the strict sense of this teaching, the Buddhist's doctrine of emancipation from rebirth is as great a delusion as the illusion of Maya they make it their mission to expose.

Looking upon Buddha in the light of his teaching, and especially in the light of the object that teaching had in view, which was freedom from the wheel of the law—freedom from re-birth, and its consequent suffering, old age, and death,—we are logically compelled, if we attach any meaning to his words, to look for the “immortality to men” in a different sense than mere reincarnation of soul ideas that are inextricably blended with race-ideas. As we have seen, such ideas depend upon the continuity of that physical life from which it was Buddha’s chief purpose to free the soul.

We cannot think that this reformer, the king of subtle thinkers, would have made such an error as that of preaching a freedom that could only show itself in bondage: and a state of eternal bliss that was personal extinction.

There is only one kind of immortal life deserving the name, so far as the human soul is concerned, and that is continuity of the consciousness of the soul. Change after change of form there may be, but without the continuation of memory and conscious life, the term immortal, as applied to the soul, is a myth.

To put the question more squarely before you: of what benefit personal or spiritual is the attainment of Nirvana, if all personal memory and consciousness of such attainment is de-

stroyed? How can a state of bliss exist unless there is a consciousness of such bliss? and if, in any way, ideal or otherwise, there is a consciousness of bliss, there must be some form possessing a distinguishing identity from all other forms in which such consciousness becomes centred.

Without consciousness, good and evil, the heaven of Nirvana, or the hell of Mara is non-existent. If this life is the only conscious life he will ever experience, what has the follower of the noble eight-fold path been working for? For what has he given up home, wife, friends, and the personal pleasures of existence? Even if, a century hence, one of his great ideas becomes incarnated in another's brain, of what benefit is it to him? The idea will be unconscious of its originator. It will be but part of the consciousness of another.

To call such a transmission the immortality of the soul, is a gross misuse of language. Certainly it was not for this sort of immortality that the Buddha made the great renunciation: seeing that his only reward was personal suffering, sickness, old age, and death: seeing that there was no other life in which the sufferer would know anything, or reap the harvest of his sowing.

The only gain to be found in such a system was that obtained from the religious peace and

spiritual satisfaction of being undisturbed amidst the illusions of the world. *The joy and the reward must be in this life, or nowhere.*

If this be true, then Buddhism is, indeed, not the religion of pure altruism but the religion of pure selfishness. The monk exchanges the work and strife of the world for the beggar's bowl and spiritual peace. In taking that which his heart desires, he sacrifices nothing for the benefit and uplifting of the race, for according to his own idea, he is only saving himself.

But some of these interpreters argue that as you have benefited by the past so should you sow seed for the future. Thus your present life will not be lost. As a personal unit your soul will become extinct but it will form a part of the over-soul, the mental atmosphere of the race. In this vague, undefined sense it may have a long existence, but it is not immortal. Ideas change rapidly, and a great idea of mine to-day may not fit the next century. It would be a very uncommon idea if it did. I give away my coat, it does not fit the new possessor, and so is re-made; but this re-making destroys all the "my-ness" of my former coat. So we may say of thoughts and ideas. For mark you this, the only vital truths that will endure as long as humanity are those of a spiritual and moral nature. These appear to have been known

by the earliest historical races, but our religious ideas change with the times. Such obvious mandates as "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not commit murder," probably dawned on the mind of the cave-man. But such ideal ethical laws as "Love your enemy," "Return good for evil," were, as we know, reserved for a much later age. Indeed, even to-day, they are conspicuous by their absence. Conceptions relating to science, art and religion are liable to be wrong, are almost certain to need revision and, from time to time, must be reformulated to square with experience. If they are not true they are doomed. Immortal life for them cannot be claimed. How then can any particular man, upon this theory, expect to have an immortal soul? When his name, and his form of consciousness are forgotten, his soul is as much annihilated as is the atom of Radium that disappears in the form of Helium. Everything, every idea that made it what it was has vanished.

If the foregoing be a true interpretation, we may well ask what was the secret of Buddha's success? Evidently there is something amiss. Those who postulate an immortality of the soul as an immortality of thoughts and actions, with complete destruction of man's conscious personality at death, granting only life and consciousness to the race, are surely in error.

This could not have been what Buddha meant when he proclaimed salvation and immortality to man. Had it been so, it would have been easy to state this in his own unsurpassed simplicity of style. In our opinion, Buddha, conceiving the impersonality of the divine spirit of the universe, and conceiving that man was a microcosmic expression of the macrocosm, tried to teach the impersonality of the soul of man as a something that was not a thing in itself, but a changing spiritual form that, ultimately, in the state of Nirvana, while possessing a distinct conscious identity, was at one with the Infinite Spirit and forever removed from any form or semblance of the earth image.

Buddha's idea of God, though he never expressed it, was the same as Lao-Tzu's idea of Tao—the spirit of law and change ; a form of power, but not a form of energy ; the principle of life and mind, but not life and mind in itself.

Buddha plainly perceived the psychical obstacles to the re-birth of a definite ego unit, possessing a mind and consciousness apart from the physical organism. He plainly saw that a divine Ego atom was the outcome of a materialistic instead of a spiritualistic conception of Deity, and, consequently, this immortal spirit atman was a purely metaphysical abstraction

and not a reality. It was an illusion of the mind, based on the egoism of ignorance.

According to this view of Buddha's doctrine, the spiritual ground of the universe was formless, and transcendent to any form of matter, yet in this world as inseparable from matter as an idea is inseparable from consciousness. To Buddha, the physical universe was *maya* in the sense of being limited, conditioned, and in eternal flux; subject to the ebb and flow of change and decay. He did not deny the higher spiritual existence of the soul. On the contrary; as the eternal spirit was unconditioned, and unchangeable, Nirvana (higher than all material form) was the union of the soul of man with this spirit—an ineffable state of bliss. Hence, he must have conceived of the purified mind as existing in a bodiless condition, yet, at the same time, possessing some form, and conscious of its own spiritual identity, both with, and apart from, the rest of the world.

We can never know how, or in what sense such a state of being was conceivable to him. He could not explain it himself, and he always frankly avoided the question. He refused to answer, because the question, he said, was not properly stated. The reason is self-evident. The question could never be rightly formulated because there was no analogy within human

experience that would clearly and truly apply to it without misunderstanding. So he was forced, as Christ later was forced, to speak in parables and stories that they who had the wit and mental penetration might perceive the truth beneath the allegory. As among his own followers in his own day, we see so many disputes upon this vital point, probably not more than a mere handful ever grasped the real arcana, the jewel that lay hid in the heart of the lotus.

§ 3. CONCLUSION—

That Gautama, the Buddha, preached freedom from the wheel of the law, which means escape from the sorrows of re-birth, is a fact. That he preached salvation and immortality to man is a fact. That he was one of the greatest thinkers, and the greatest religious reformer that the world has ever seen is also a fact. Now, whether we apprehend his teachings in the sense he intended or not, we can never know.

As before stated, during Buddha's life his own followers quarrelled and disagreed amongst themselves upon these same vital questions. Like Jesus, Buddha never committed anything to writing. We only get his doctrines through the transmission of oral tradition, hence with the personal equation of the teacher, from one

generation to another. The first inscriptions are those of King Asoka, (about 250 B.C.). From these we may gather, perhaps, some idea of the original Buddhism. If this be so, Buddha did not deny the spiritual personality of a man beyond the grave, nor the existence of transcendent states of life, wherein lived both gods and men. But we cannot be sure that this was not inscribed to meet the heart's desire of the nation, and to endow Buddhism with a religious power that would be vital to the people. But under no circumstances, let the truth be what it will, can we imagine this reformer preaching freedom from re-birth of ideas, when by the laws of heredity this freedom was impossible. If the soul of Buddha consists only of his ideas, he is more incarnated to-day than during his earthly life. In this sense there is no freedom from the wheel.

Unless his preaching meant that there was a higher spiritual life for the human soul, it meant nothing. We cannot imagine this great thinker preaching salvation from the curse of existence—sickness, old age and death—when every man born of woman is now, and probably ever will be, subject to these earthly conditions.

Strictly speaking, Buddhism is not a religion, but an empirical philosophy of life which his disciples transformed into a religion.

The Nirvanum of Buddha, and the Christian's Peace of God which passeth understanding are identical in their meaning.

Buddha spoke to the man. Every form of his teaching was for the benefit and instruction of the individual. Buddhism is pre-eminently an individualistic religion. "By self alone can self be saved," is his constant reiteration. He, himself, attained Nirvana before he began to teach, being still in the possession of his great personality. Consequently, Nirvana must have been to him a personal Nirvana—a soul at one with the soul of the universe. His immortality must have included a conscious survival of death, and life in some exalted spiritual condition. To read into his teaching the idea of immortality for the race, in place of immortality for the individual, is to invert the teachings of the noble Buddha, and make of his religion a mockery of hope and faith.

CHAPTER THREE—THE MISSION OF JESUS

§ 1. THE MYTH :

The literature devoted to the life and apparent mystery of Jesus is enormous in extent. In almost every language, by the various scholars, he has been satisfactorily proven to be a myth, man, and God respectively. This is not surprising, when there are undoubted elements of all three aspects in his nature. We remember that Homer has been denied any corporeal existence by certain critics. And Shakespeare has been deemed to be doctor, lawyer, psychologist, and also a myth by his over-learned students. They have been willing to grant him almost anything but the reality ; which is that of a superlative poetic-genius, who gathered his information as required, by an inspiration of intuition, in sympathetic touch with all the knowledge that was circulating in the mental atmosphere of his time.¹

¹ See Appendix II.

A precisely similar mistake has been made by the great Biblical scholars regarding Jesus of Nazareth. The problem is easy of solution, if we approach the study in a natural way, basing our judgment upon the metaphysic of experience and not burdened with much very useless learning. The study of the life of Jesus is the study of a pure-minded, simple man, possessed with a definite idea and purpose—to this extent a monomaniac.

We will begin as follows :

We are ready to grant Jesus the possession of unusual, if not abnormal, power. There is sufficient evidence to show that he was :

- (a), a powerful mental and magnetic Healer ;
- (b), a clairvoyant seer, and telepathic mind reader ;
- (c), a highly organised sensitive ; receptive to what is properly termed the inspirational and trance state.

The combination of all these psychical features in one individual, is, we admit, extremely rare, but by no means impossible. There are scores of cases of similar combinations on record. Jesus was not unique in the possession of these spiritual gifts : see the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians : *Jesus was a psychical genius.*

Grant to Jesus the possession of these possible powers and all is clear. Everything concerning

him is at once explained if we remember that he lived in an age of miracles, in an oriental land, where a plain, truthful description of any event of an unusual nature is impossible to-day and was much more impossible two thousand years ago. The oriental mind is incapable of transmitting information without embroidering it, either to suit some ulterior purpose, or fit the occasion. We, therefore, reject all miracles of a self-evident legendary character ; as the feeding of the multitude ; raising the dead, etc. (the comatose state was not understood in those days). The immaculate conception was a common belief, as the stories of Greece and Rome bear witness ; so that these need occupy no serious place. It is simply a common legend applied to hundreds of others besides Jesus. If we reject Romulus and Theseus, we reject Jesus on the same grounds. Having cleared the ground of what are self-evidently legendary tales, arising out of oriental exaggeration and superstitious beliefs, we have granted the full limits of the possible. Whether Jesus possessed all of these gifts or not, the fact remains that *he might* have been so unusually gifted. We think he was. He stands before us as the Son of Man—a seer of visions—a fiery religious reformer—a caster out of devils—an enthusiast in every sense of the word. He was at the same time a powerful,

magnetic, and mental healer ; and so sensitive to the mental attitude of others that he could frequently read their thoughts clearly. Such was Jesus, when stripped of the christos myth. A living human soul and a missionary of the Spirit. We will now study his character more intimately.

§ 2. THE MAN :

Jesus, called the Christ, was essentially a man like ourselves, but a man whose psychical organism was doubtless a spiritual mutation in the Jewish race. In virtue of this higher spiritual development, he was fitted to become the instrument of that kingdom of which he bore witness, and with which he was undoubtedly in frequent communion. Through him this higher, super-physical state delivered its special message to his people—the children of Israel ; and later, through his disciple Paul, to the gentiles of the world. Psychically considered, he was of the lineage of the prophets through whom spoke the higher ascended spirits of his people.¹

¹ Lest the reader should misunderstand our meaning, we wish to add that mediumship, as understood in modern spiritualism, is not, by any means, implied in this statement. The writer refers to a much higher form of spiritual rapport—a communion of souls in its highest and purest sense—a state but rarely attainable within embodied conditions here. Jesus was, undoubtedly,

At these times Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the living Christ, speaking the words of the conscious divinity within him. In this sense he was one of the Messiahs of mankind. In a purely religious sense, perhaps the greatest that mankind had ever known.

Apart from these abnormal spiritual states in which he was teacher, prophet, and seer combined, Jesus was a man whose soul was full of love, whose heart bled for the wrongs of his people, and, at times, for the oppressed of the world.

He was the friend of the sinner ; the protector of children, with unbounded sympathy for every form of sorrow or pain. But he was very human and had the limits of humanity.

Like all true psychics, there was a marked duality in the nature of Jesus. Not only was he man, but in the strictest sense of the word, he was also a Jew. By no means was he as broad-minded as Gautama, the Buddha, who sternly forbade all thoughts of race and caste. See Matthew x. 5-6: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of

the psychic flower of his race, and Christianity, the pleroma of the age: The culmination of centuries of religious yearning among men, and of spiritual effort in that brighter world beyond.

the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'” Here in this command we see Jesus, the man, voicing the resentment and narrow exclusiveness of the orthodox member of the synagogue against the hated Samaritan. See also Mark vi. 11, “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment than for that city.” In this threatening prediction we can see the lack of charity for the opinion of others, and all the fanatical attitude of the creed maker: an attitude of mind entirely absent in Buddha. But the true mission of the Christ within, only gradually dawned upon the mind of Jesus. At first he himself seems afraid of the idea and commands those who see and believe: “See that thou tell no man.” The idea, as yet, was too big. Later we find this spiritual bud breaking forth into perfect flower. To the woman taken in adultery, he can now say: “Go and sin no more.” To the man without sin, he gave the right to cast the first stone, and they silently left his awful presence. To his brother Jews of the Synagogue; he could, then, preach the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus, the child of Israel, was, now,

the son of man. He had attained the supreme at-one-ment with the Father.

His knowledge of natural law, of the pathology of health and disease was precisely the same as the common belief of his day. He cast out devils and treated various forms of hysteria and epilepsy as demoniacal possession. Not only so, but gave power to his disciples to do likewise ; that is, he gave them the mental formula of hypnotic suggestion ; the value of which depends largely upon the degree of belief in both operator and subject ; (as do all apparent miracles of this nature). We read : "He performed not many miracles in that place, owing to their unbelief." And again : "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamore-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you." Jesus well knew the power of faith !

It will serve no useful purpose to dwell upon the limitations of this glorious martyr—assuming the crucifixion to be an historical fact. We must never forget that all we know of the events of his few months of public ministry, even his words, are all derived from practically unknown sources—after his death, written from memory by adoring believers, and revised later to suit party purposes. But that the demi-god of the Gospel narratives never existed as such is a

fact. And, that the ideals, hopes and longings of the most advanced races of the world have been, with one accord, embodied in their conception of the noble Nazarine, and thrust upon him, whether he merited the honour or not, is also a fact.

The living Christ became, and has remained the spiritual ideal of the race. On this throne rests his divinity, and not in any sense upon his historical personality. Our love for Jesus is based upon the belief that he was our fellow man who suffered for humanity. In this we feel our kinship.

We realize this manhood with terrific force in that last awful tragedy upon the hill of Calvary, when his broken heart cried out in the agony of despair: "My God, my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" With these words the Spirit fled, but left an immortal glory shining from a crown of thorns!

§ 3. THE MESSAGE:

"God is a Spirit, without body and without parts."

The message of Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, of necessity, was given to the world in a series of parables. The imagery used being that of common experience, but the teaching conveying a revelation of spiritual truth.

Buddha taught the brotherhood of man, but Jesus went further than Buddha. Jesus taught the fatherhood of God and the divinity of man. He taught the immanence of the Spirit of God, and in so doing the oneness of this divine spirit in all living things. "I and the Father are one," declared this great teacher. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me."

Jesus did not differentiate himself from his fellow man spiritually, except in degree of enlightenment, or conscious union. And in this connection, it is of vital importance to remember that the term "Father" with Jesus was a symbol of family likeness to press home the real relationship of man to man. St. Paul grasped this idea in its completeness; the idea that the spiritual or vital principle of the whole universe is one and the same, but that the difference of the consciousness of this Spirit in different forms of life, including man, is almost inconceivable. If Jesus had "A mystery of the kingdom" to reveal to his chosen few, this mystery was a true knowledge of the kind of self-consciousness that gives the crown of immortality to its possessor. This was the secret of Jesus. For want of correct words and true earthly analogies to convey his meaning without error, he could not reveal this mystery except to those of his followers who had gained the inner light. Judas, Thomas, and Nicodemus,

three well-known types, could not attain this inward evidence, as their actions proved.

Buddha, too, stood in the same predicament as Jesus. This vital question "could not be properly formulated," and any direct questions concerning it, therefore, are considered illegitimate. The answer could only be conveyed by parable and allegory. To know this, men must be "born again." Not as Nicodemus thought, born again on earth, but born of the Spirit, and so realise from the light within.

After the beautiful parable of the Sower, illustrating so forcibly the survival of the fit, we read, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear," and the disciples came up and said unto him, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" He answered and said unto them, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven but unto them it is not given" (Matthew xiii. 9-11).

This precious privilege of being able to know was not a free gift from Jesus to his followers, but the spiritual reward of struggle with self—the conquest of self by the growth of inward grace. The path that leads to victory is plainly stated by the master, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." "Enter ye in at the strait gate :

for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. But strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew vii. 12-14). Nothing could be plainer.

In common speech, the message of Jesus to his fellow-man was—

1. That there was life beyond the grave—immortal life for the children of the Kingdom.

2. That no matter how great and continued the provocation, or temptation of the enemy might be, to forgive was the only way to inaugurate the Kingdom of Righteousness: The crown of whose social life is "that ye love one another."

3. That the way to the Kingdom was the way of the Cross, which a pure straight life means in a world of selfishness and sin.

4. That the spiritual secret of attainment is the awakening of the soul to a consciousness of its own divinity, and a full realisation of its heirship to the Kingdom Within.

These are the four noble truths of the Gospel. Jesus asked of none who came to him, "what believe you?" but, reading the central weakness in the model of convention, said: "Sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor." The Master was a man of actions—of fruits of the spirit. Mere creeds were minor matters.

Jesus gave the message from his heart and soul ; gave the truth as it appeared to him, verified by his own spiritual experience.

He never taught eternal punishment, but he did teach "The outer darkness." He clearly saw that continued life beyond the grave was conditional—a question of the survival of the spiritually-fit for the higher life.

Hence his parable of the pearl of great price, and the true value of the world as compared with the soul. His warning to the rich whose hearts were bound to the wheel of this world is of the same order.

He, the spiritual king of men, pointed out the "King's Highway."

"I am the way, the truth and the life." Who is this *I* ? It is the same *I* that declared : "I and the Father are one"—the eternal sustaining power of the universe—the formless spirit of Life, which in the soul of man has risen from the profound abyss of primeval night to the self-consciousness of day.

CHAPTER FOUR—STRAY LEAVES FROM THE DIARY OF THE QUEST

§ 1. THE RELIGION OF JESUS:

In all races, except the lowest, religion seems to be a fundamental instinct, and when this blossoms into the sunlight of spiritual intuitions, we behold the prophet and the seer. Clearly, there is a psychological continuum between the savage and the saint—a measureable distance in states, but how immense!

How misapplied and misunderstood is this word religion. “What is your religion?” inquires the man in the street. He may know what he means, but does he know what he asks? He expects you to answer by naming a church or a creed. If you say that your religion was the religion of Jesus, he will be baffled. Had you named yourself Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, your answer would be luminous. Names, organizations, vestments, dogma and ritual, these—the husks which the swine devour—have replaced religion in the minds of the masses. Even the shape of a church-steeple makes a difference.

But it is worth considering—what was the religion of Jesus? This “son of man” went out into the wilderness to listen to one crying out his soul to the God of Israel to send the long-promised Messiah. Not to save the world, but the chosen people that they might be rulers of the world. Jesus listened to those burning words of John: “Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand”; so Jesus repented and was baptised in the sacred Jordan. He found God in the wilderness, and preached this message of repentance and purification to all. On the seashore, in the wilderness, in the synagogue, as the Buddha before him, he saw the ignorant selfishness of the Self. He knew this to be the central pivot of all sin. And his antidote was the same: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Only in two instances does he reveal his religion: “I and the Father are one.”—“The Kingdom of God is Within you.”

“The consciousness of a spirit which knows itself to be one with the Highest,” this was the religion of Jesus. Knowing this, “religion becomes the trumpet-call of man’s unconquerable soul, and a challenge to the armies of sorrow, doubt and sin.” True religion is indifferent to creeds, and is the deepest principle of unity among men—“That you all may be one.”

§ 2. THE DIVINE ALCHEMY :

We have stated our idea of evolution. We have spoken of the primeval movement of the ground of nature from which arises qualities and features which produce in forms of consciousness the appearances of law. But in the divine alchemy of the spirit, there is a higher evolution—a form of living power transcendent to all lower material forms. This is the life of the spirit—a radiation from angelic personalities that have arisen during millions of eons of the past, creating a spiritual atmosphere of love, with faith in heights of achievement, compared with which those of earth are but as dust and ashes !

To breathe this spiritual ether, to be a partaker of this divine life is to be an heir of the Kingdom of God.

But this fellowship can be attained only through the righteousness of work ; through the conquest of the animal self. Then, pure and chaste as the lotus, the soul of man is free. It enters into its inheritance : a communion of souls in the republic of God.

§ 3. SIN :

There are two distinct forms of sin. The sin of ignorance which is motiveless, and the sin against the Holy Ghost which is a violation of conscience. To sin against the voice of our

inmost self is to degrade one's soul and commit spiritual suicide. We forge for ourselves the chains of Hell, and pass upon ourselves the sentence of final death. A blot upon the scutcheon of life may be obliterated through the penance of tears, but beware of steeping the whole fair emblem of the soul in darkness—this is death.

We may sin in the *sight* of God; but man cannot sin *against* God. "Thus saith the Lord!" should read "Thus saith the Prophet." Man can sin only against himself and against his fellow-man. Man needs only man's forgiveness. In that higher life, when a man can forgive himself, his fellow, whom he has wronged, will already have forgiven him.

No God has ever formulated a code of divine laws for man to obey. Man, in this sense, is a free agent—a sovereign state—hence, he can never disobey God. Yet, nevertheless, free to choose though he be, he must pay the penalty imposed by Nature upon his choice. Disobey her, and you must ultimately pay—and to the uttermost farthing!

§ 4. COSMIC JUSTICE :

There is a doctrine in the world which conceives a cosmic or divine justice pervading the universe which is supposed to be indicated in what has been termed the law of compensation; based

upon the action and re-action in Nature. However true the balance may be in the transformation of energy, it is absurd to carry this principle into vital activity where action and re-action never do balance—are never, in a single instance, equal. The struggle for equilibrium is just the arena where life comes in. Man reads Justice, where he sees punishment for evil or reward for work done. But the punishment or reward may be out of all proportion to the sin or the labour—more or less. Everything depends upon countless aiding or retarding influences, only, perhaps, remotely concerned in the result.

The reality is that everything in this world is governed by Might, though we blindly attempt to think the contrary. And it is because moral power has a greater hold upon life than immoral power that Nature finally decides in favour of that which we call good—or reward.

§ 5. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE:

A beautiful analogy to the community of spiritual life is found in the life of the bee and its relation to the spirit of the hive. From time to time, the bee returns to the hive in order, seemingly, to be re-charged, to be vitalised, as it were, by the atmosphere—the spirit of the hive. So with the soul. It, too, must return to its source of inspiration and power, if it would live

the life of the spirit—must descend into the sacred depths of the “Well,” if it would drink of the inexhaustible waters of life.

In this alchemy of the spirit, man enters upon a process of divine mutation, an evolution that enables him to span the primeval abyss and enter into the sunlight of angelic being. He is no longer, then, a child of earth, but a living conscious power, with principalities in the realm of the Finite God.

§ 6. THE TOUCH OF NATURE :

“One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin.”

Do you wish to know Pan? know the secret of this touch? Desire to enter within the arcana of Reality, and feel the invisible workings in the primeval mystery? To know and to do this, you must possess something of the artist, the poet, and the mystic. Look at yonder pine! Reach out to it—become one with it—feel with it—until your whole being vibrates in sympathetic unison. Then you will know the pine. For one brief moment, intuition will reveal to you the truth—a sylvan secret of life—the reality you seek. You will have become one with Nature—will have placed yourself within the flow—have heard the pipes of Pan.

Have you ever looked at a sunset when the

mind was in such receptive mood that heart and soul ran joyously out to meet the pageant of the sky? When you felt the inexpressible, and saw the unpersonified something? At such a moment, you have entered the mystic river—have bathed in the flowing waters of reality—and in a flash-light of subliminal awareness have grasped the meaning of Life.

§ 7. CUPID AND PSYCHE:

In union there is strength—in power there is duration. The strength, the might, the majesty, and power of life are beyond all finite conception: and this because of the cosmic unity—the *oneness* of life.

Sex implies the necessity of union to be complete. No man born of woman, no woman the child of man, standing alone, was ever, at their best, more than half of the possibility of the life within. In their physical, harmonious union there is strength and increase, in their spiritual union there is the power of eternal duration.

When two kindred souls meet and coalesce, the pollen of the spirit vibrates in the chalice of divine love—a new miracle of life has been wrought—a new power has arisen, and the God-head of the world is enriched with an added potency. Cupid and Psyche—earthly symbols of the heavenly union when they twain shall become *One*.

§ 8. THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE :

To sink into the depths of the profound abyss where being is only conscious of the non-being, is to enter the ineffable calm where only the mysterious voice of the silence can speak. What depths of immensity is here in the soul! Only the unutterable deeps of the silence are felt—a silence so profound that it becomes audible—and we listen to a soundless voice!

This is Nirvana—Union—where there is no self. No special consciousness of the I. But a sense of the all-pervading One. No awareness of the One—no awareness of the Many: but only one sense: a feeling of an undivided Whole.

All else is lost. We rest in an unspeakable calm. A peace that passeth understanding. The base and the mystery of Being.

To awake from this trance like union with the All is to realise the utter worthlessness of every material thing and magnify the treasure which the spirit-life reveals. But in so doing we stand in danger of missing the truth and value which life here and now has to offer. To reap the harvest of two worlds requires the attainment of unusual powers. To unite the fruits of two worlds in one vineyard, to gather their richness into one garner, and mingle the wine of two lives in one chalice, is the supreme attainment. It is the achievement of the Grail.

CHAPTER FIVE—THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM AND THE KING'S HIGHWAY THERETO

I

AN ALLEGORY OF THE WELL

“GIVE me to drink. . . . If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. . . . Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again ; but whosoever drinketh of the water I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life ” (John iv. 14), which saying is an allegory.

The disciples of the Master came to him and asked him why he spoke in parables. “ He answered and said unto them : Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given ” (Matthew xiii.).

True religion of the spirit is one and the same

in its fundamentals for all mankind, but in its outward form of expression it is essentially racial; and the mystical environment of the soul is equally racial. This mental and spiritual atmosphere of the soul is, like the man, an evolution under special conditions. It is as necessary for a free healthy growth and expansion, as are the broad zones of climate for the evolution and well-being of animals and plants. To try to adapt one form of religion for the whole world is to spend our time in chasing a rainbow.

The King's Highway, therefore, has various racial foot-paths along its route which make congenial environments for the varying religious temperaments of the wayfarers.

The majority of the great Hindu races will find the way in the noble eight-fold path of the Buddha; to which, it is hoped, they will return some day.

The Arab, and kindred races of the nearer East, will reach the throne of Allah by the Sufi gate.

The people of China, and Japan will find what they seek in "the Tao of the old philosopher," and the pathway of the Zen. But to the strenuous soul of the West—the practical-minded European—"The Way" is "The Way of the Cross."

But this "Way" is not through the wicket of any church. In fact, the way of the Church

is a turnpike with toll-gates built all along the route. The wickets of the Church have blocked up the true gate and hidden the way of the Master from sight, except to those who have the eye of the spirit to see.

Though it cannot exist without them, true religion, in its spirit, does not consist of morality, or any special code of ethics, or formal belief. It is utterly opposed to tradition as an authority, and it bows its head to no earthly creed.

The Brotherhood of the Well accept and follow out, to its fullest possibility, the advice of St. Paul, " Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

The religion of the Well, and the Mystery of the Kingdom, consists in this one central truth : that Heaven and Hell, with all that lies between, are not external localities in space, but states of mind in the soul of man.

This is the truth and the mystery of the human soul. The Master revealed this secret nearly two thousand years ago, but the Church has so completely forgotten the message that it is for ever preaching of a kingdom at the " Back o' Beyond " ; up above, or down below, to which the faithful are to be admitted after the grand assize.

To organise religion is to drive out the spirit

and stifle the soul. A living religion must be as free and as unfettered as the air.

“There is no God save Allah—True,
Nor any prophet save the human mind,
That stumbles through the dark to find
The paradise, that’s hid in me and you.”

The mystical well of the Spirit, which is ever “springing up into everlasting life,” is the soul of man. We have taken this beautiful allegory of Christ’s to initiate the mystic wayfarer into the mystery of the kingdom of “Mansoul.”

The pathway of the spirit to the well is on the King’s Highway that leadeth unto eternal life in the world beyond. And the reward to him who finds it in this is that “peace of God which passeth understanding.”

Our journey is an allegory and all interpretations thereof are personal. We will, therefore, ere we set out, look over our equipment and question the governor of the citadel—Self.

Can we forgive them that have trespassed against us?—We must—or leave the straight gate for the broad one. Can we have kindly thoughts, wishing well to those who have deeply injured us?—We must—or abandon the narrow path, and take the broad road that leads to Vanity Fair. Can we cheerfully grant the same rights and privileges in thought and action to

others that we claim and desire for ourselves ?— Can we truly in our heart extend charity and sympathy to all that breathe the breath of life ? We must—or our passport will not be honoured by the guards upon the King's Highway. Truth : Honour : Justice : Love : these are the garments of the spirit that clothe the wayfarer who follows the pathway of the well.

In essentials Unity. The essentials are Life, Liberty, and Justice.

In non-essentials Freedom. The non-essentials are Creeds, Race, and Rank. And in all things whatsoever we must have Charity.

This is the minimum equipment that will ensure successful termination of the Quest. If this equipment is sound, we may hopefully enter upon the way. If unsound, we must work night and day to repair the weak parts, or else retire to the "cosy nooks of degeneration" that abound in the world.

II

THE PATH

Let us repeat: there are many foot-paths that lead unto eternal life, many bye-ways that will bring the pilgrim to the same shrine, but amidst them all, there is only one royal road for

you ; only one that can be called, in truth, the King's Highway, in the special environment of which your soul can flower. " Seek and ye shall find," " Knock and it shall be opened unto you." Jesus but re-voiced the ancient Gospel when he prayed " that they all may be as thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." And all this is summed up in the " at-one-ment " of soul and spirit.

But let us glance, as we journey our Western path, on that of the Hindu monk Gautama, the Buddha. Surely, for some distance, we travel parallel lines.

" The noble eight-fold path " is the sign of this royal road. The truth of the fundamental assumption is obvious—" Ignorance is the root of evil." From ignorance arises selfishness ; lustful desire ; the lust of the eye ; the lust of the mind ; the lust of the body.

The lust of the eye is the parent of envy and all forms of vanity, whence arises sorrow and vexation of spirit.

The lust of the mind is the parent of covetousness ; hatred ; and all uncharitableness ; bringing forth a distorted view of the self, and the special importance of the individual I. Under this form of illusion we lose the true perspective of things, and our own proportion to the rest of the universe.

THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM 165

The lust of the body is the parent of all sickness and impurity.

Self alone is the slave-driver of Self. Self alone can save Self ; for the true Self is the lord and king of the various forms of the lower Self.

The birth-right of the spirit is the heirship of the kingdom of the spirit. The hereditary self is the bond-slave of the son of light.

Such are the noble truths of the new life.

Then follows the eight-fold rules of conduct :

First : right belief, right views, opinions that have been duly weighed in the balance of reason, and tested by the light of inward conscience, so that they have become a part of the real self. Creeds are limited by the limitations of the race through which they have evolved. In every case measure a religion by its highest and noblest ideals. If these satisfy the soul the faith is useful for us. In their highest expressions, all great religions closely approach each other, and express their racial ideal.

II. " Right Resolve ; " high aims in life, as far as possible removed from the mean, the sordid and the selfish. Let your aim be to direct your daily life straight towards your own ideal. Then as a bark well-steered, it will reach the harbour of the spirit.

III. " Right speech ; " kindly speech, true

speech, courageous speech : Speech that helps and heals, not speech that hurts and scars.

IV. "Right Behaviour ;" upright conduct, the foundation of character : "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you."

V. "Right Occupation ;" a harmless livelihood. Strive to give to the world honest, productive, useful work ; value given for value received.

VI. "Right Effort ;" perseverance in well-doing. All life spent in a wrong direction is so much life wasted ; a waste which can never be recovered. It is past, and over the past we are powerless ; wrong effort is useful only as experience to teach us what to avoid in the future.

VII. "Right Contemplation ;" intellectual activity, the true cultivation of the mind in its best sense.

VIII. "Right Concentration ;" profound meditation : The daily practice of entering into the silence of your own soul : It is this practice that is at the foundation of all spiritual-power : When all is calm within the silence of the soul, the time is propitious. Knock and the portal shall be opened unto you ! Ask and ye shall receive !

III

THE WELL OF THE SILENCE

We have the proverb that "Truth lies at the bottom of a well"; and we remember that the Scandinavian Odin gave an eye to the wise Jotun Mimer for a glance into its hidden depths.

There is a subtle meaning in every great myth, and the truth here indicated lies at the bottom of the "Well at the world's end." For he who attains this treasure has changed his outlook from the without to the within; has controlled self; has given his outer eye for the inner vision; has escaped from the enchantments of the world; has conquered the desire of the earth-man; and has already entered upon his inheritance in the kingdom of God.

In sooth, we must travel the King's Highway to the world's end. With Pilgrim and Christian we must pass through the "Valley of the Shadow," the "Slough of Despond," the "Castle of Doubting," and the "Vanity Fair" of the world, if we would drink of the sparkling waters that confer the boon of eternal life.

In journeying across the desert of selfishness, inherited from the days of Primitive man, when we see the path strewn with the skeletons of those who have attempted the same grim road; when we look on these wrecks and feel our own

courage quail, we are not far from the fatal "dry tree" of life, whose gaunt form and ghastly leafless arms branch outward and upward to the leaden sky.

At the foot of this tree lies the black stagnant pool of oblivion—"The fatal bourne from which no traveller returns." Look not in! Even a glance is fraught with danger, for ever it reflects the lost possibilities of the soul; with its pessimistic phantoms of evil, blinding to all faith in the future. Drinking of its black waters is ruin, deadening the will, killing the hope, giving birth to despair. "Who enters here leaves hope behind."

From the edge of the desert of the "Dry Tree," at the great forked parting of the ways, the path to the well runs through a fair country—Nature's own garden of delight—"the forest of Arden"—where we find "Sermons in Stones, books in the running streams and good in everything." From every nook and cranny sprout the flower thoughts of great guides of the way. Culling one we read "There is nothing under the canopy of heaven greater than the tip of an Autumn spikelet. . . . The universe and I came into being together, and I and everything are one."

Gathering another it runs: "Before Abraham was I am," and "I and the Father are one."

And here a script of Lao-Tzu: "Like the

river in the valley, the spirit is never dried up. I call it the Mother Deep. The motion of the Mother Deep I regard as the origin of the heaven and earth. For ever it endures and moves without design."

And more from the same mystic: "That from which the universe sprang may be looked upon as its mother"; and again a blossom of Chuang Tzu, travelling the way in the footsteps of his master: "The true sage takes his refuge in God, and learns that there is no distinction between subject and object." This is the very axis of Tao! And once more the same teacher: "Before heaven and earth Tao was. It has existed without change from all time. Spiritual beings draw their spirituality therefrom, while the universe became what we see it now. To Tao the zenith is not high, nor the nadir low; no point of time is long ago, nor by lapse of ages has it grown old." And yet again the mystic writes: "The perfect man employs his mind as a mirror. It grasps nothing, it refuses nothing. It receives but does not keep. And thus he can triumph over matter without injury to himself."

And now a modern thought: "The mind, the psychic part of man, exists in time, but is independent of space—is not spacial."

To understand these sayings try to realise the

true nature of the Infinite Spirit as the living movement or background of all that is.

The principle of life—not an essence of life.

The principle of love—not the energy or sensations of love.

The principle of truth—not the relationships and appearances of truth; and finally: The principle of mental and spiritual perception—of soul consciousness, and not the universe of which we are objectively conscious.

This divine principle is the Tao.¹ Impersonal, immanent—the supreme creative life. To grasp this idea, to weave it into the fibre of our being and realize it as a part of ourselves is to seize the principle of life itself and win the crown of immortality.

Buried in these reflections, a stately and commanding form had approached unseen; a guardian of the Well; on earth named Gautama Siddartha, and thus the Buddha spoke: ²

“The shadows of existence are proportionate to the intensity of the light. In deepest ignorance the soul of man looks up and beholds the shadows and thinks them real: but the enlightened

¹ Tao is also the way, i.e., the law or operation through which things appear and come to be.

² What follows is not taken from any Buddhistic writings, but is an imaginary sermon written in the spirit of Buddha's teaching.

know the truth, know that the shadows are but the phantoms of reality reflected through the organs of sense.

The soul that grasps at the shadow is bound to the wheel of ignorance, but he who apprehends the light—the reality behind the phantom—has entered upon the path.

The possessions of the soul are proportionate to its power of comprehension. Those in the darkness are content with the vanishing sensations of Maya,¹ which after steeping the soul yet deeper in the darkness of the self leave nothing tangible behind.

Therefore, turn your heart to the light—give your ear to the words of the Tathagata, who has pierced the shadows of Maya, and partaken of the undimmed light of the spirit behind the organs of sense.

Would you become small, abject, alone, and in utter destitution, then grasp you the empire of Mara :² Become ruler over the nations—the master and slave-driver of millions : Take the whole world, and the more of Mara's world you seize the less and more pitiable you shall become.

Would you become great ? Would you be a chackravartin,³ of the spirit. Would you be

¹ Maya—the illusions of sense.

² Mara—the Hindu Satan or tempter.

³ Chackravartin—the turner of the zodiac, a king of kings.

arrayed in glory, and march with the angels of splendour? Then give all you possess—most of all give yourself: cut out desire of the world: destroy the self that speaks of mine and thine: surrender your soul to the inexhaustible: possessing nothing, you shall be one with everything.

Oh, all ye who are heavy-laden! listen to the gospel which is glorious—to the Dharma which is light—and enter the Sangha of the spirit which is the refuge in Buddha.

Sever the bonds of Mara: cast away the shades of Yama: enter the path of light—and tread the ways of peace which lead to Nirvana.

Would you make the waters of life turbid? Then struggle in the mud, and rouse up all the foul sediment of past existences through which your elements of being are descended—and verily, the more you fight and surge, the more foul will become the waters which surround you. You shall have your reward. Many ages shall pass before the cesspool you have disturbed shall become clear and allow light to enter. Yama's¹ rule is strong—not thence can you go until you clearly see the way amidst the darkness of the self.

Would you make clear and radiant the waters of life? Then banish the bond-servant: purge away the lust of self. The fires of lust and pos-

¹ Yama—the King of Hades, the ruler of the dead.

session are fed only by the fuel of ignorance. Be calm—consider the swift transitoriness of all earthly things—their worthlessness compared with the eternal possessions of the spirit.

Enter the path of peace, and the sediment of ignorance and lust will sink into the sub-conscious mud in which your being has its roots. The water will become crystal—clear. The peace which passeth understanding will enter your heart. The light of eternity will illumine your eyes, and your refuge from the powers of the world will be undisturbed.

Control your thoughts. Crush the tempter who ever creates images of evil—who plants suspicion—who creates doubt. Hold to the truth which is absolute—Infinite Diversity involved within the spirit of Infinite Unity—the One-ness of the All.

Thus the Buddha speaks—and offers you the gospel which is glorious—a haven of rest for the weary. To which a voice answered: “There are many revelations but only one message, many names, but only one messenger; who comes and comes again; like the voice of one crying in the wilderness, until the harvest is ready for the reaper.”

IV

THE SANCTUARY

The Seven Steps of the Well.

We have reached the goal—Behold the sacred grotto of the Grail!

That Holy of Holies, in whose clear depths lie the mysteries of the human soul—the salvation of the sons of men—the final hope of the world.

Above the stone lintel are mystic characters which read :

Abandon the selfishness of the self all ye who enter here to drink of the waters of life.

The First Step :

Let the mind be calm ; let the mind be sincere ; let the mind be humble. Let the thoughts be pure ; let the thoughts be hopeful ; let the thoughts rest on love. Let the whole united being affirm its oneness with the All !

The Second Step :

Enter into the silence of the well even as you would enter into your closet to pray.

Not the prayer of vain repetition ; not the formulas of a sect, but the prayer of the spirit ; the desire for the one truth of all truths.

Let the mind be calm !

The Third Step :

Enter into the seclusion of the well even as you would enter into a final court of judgment.

Be willing to see, to hear, and to face the truth, and nothing but the truth.

Only the eternal verities of life are worth while. These only are converted into spiritual capital of the soul.

Let your mind be sincere.

The Fourth Step :

Enter into the divine presence of the well even as you enter into the courts of God.

Hold yourself with the true dignity of sonship ; yet with humility in the presence of the Infinite One ; Humanhood, not pride, is the true attitude.

Realize your finiteness as interlocked with the divine Infiniteness.

Seeking the mystic treasure upon the farther shores of life, be not over confident in your discoveries.

Let the mind be humble.

The Fifth Step :

Enter into the darkness of the well with the innocence of childhood ; with the singleness of purpose of the upright man.

Fear not the shadows of the well, nor " the dweller on the threshold." These are not for the earnest ones who have left the old self behind.

Is it not written : " Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Let the thoughts be pure.

The Sixth Step :

Enter into the depths of the well with the hope of the spirit, guarded by the faith and love of the soul. Let your aims be as high as the heavens ; as deep as the abyss. Hope is the light of the world.

Let your thoughts be hopeful.

The Seventh Step :

Kneel upon the margin of the well as you would kneel at the footstool of divine love : Here you are face to face with the great Mother, the Virgin of the world.

Fill the cup without fear, and drink !

Drink of the ever-flowing waters of eternal life !

" Except ye be born of the water and the Spirit ye cannot enter the Kingdom of God,"

Therefore, drink deeply of the draught of divine love !

We—I and you—delusive words—there is but one :

Inconceivable diversity interlocked into one divine unity.

And see ! shining from the depths—burning in letters of fire—now for ever stamped upon the soul !

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN,

APPENDIX I—A CASE OF SPIRIT IDENTITY

Only a brief outline of the main and necessary facts are here given to show that a theory of self-deception, hallucination, telepathy, or fraud upon the part of others will not explain the facts of the case ; each of these being rendered impossible by the peculiar cross-circumstances of the two sides of the case.

One night, after a day's hard study, I was trying to go to sleep, but found sleep impossible, when suddenly, the distinct form of a woman appeared before me. She stood between my bed and the window, and I remember that I could dimly see through the figure. I was not at all afraid.

The apparition spoke in a faint but distinct voice—gave me her name, date of her death ; together with the name and address of an unknown stranger whom she stated to be her son. Here she related a certain circumstance in her life ; then asked me to write to her son and convey this information ; adding, that for reasons, which I would know later, it was important for us to know each other.

Acting on the spur of the moment I got out of bed and made a note of the facts, promising to write to the son. Not until I had completed the memoranda did the figure speak again. Turning half round, it said :

"Thank you, my friend," then the vision disappeared. Now, if I was really asleep before, I was certainly very wide awake when the figure vanished.

To say that I regarded the whole thing as a hallucination is scarcely true. I tried to persuade myself that it was a dream—but there was the writing with the names, etc. I had heard of strange tricks performed by somnambulists, and finally, felt that that must be the explanation. I put the thing out of my mind. The idea of writing what I considered nonsense to a fictitious stranger appeared to be the height of absurdity.

Nearly two years passed by, and the entire circumstance was completely forgotten, when again I had a dream—this time a real one. Upon retiring, I had fallen asleep at once. The same woman again appeared in my dream. This time there was no communication whatever—nothing but a look of profound sorrow. A feeling of remorse came over me. I remembered my former promise; but somehow I felt myself incapable of asking questions. I awoke feeling heartily ashamed of myself. Again, of course, consoling myself with the thought that it was only a dream. Nevertheless, I could not, do what I would, rid myself of the haunting look of that sorrowful face. I determined to write to the address given to me previously. I did, and quite contrary to my expectation received an answer in due course. Now for the first time I was really astounded. A thorough investigation followed. Every detail of the first vision was confirmed. But a still greater wonder was to follow. I found that it was no trivial affair but one of the last importance to me,

which became, and still is, a dominating influence in my life.

Now for the other side of the story which to me, in view of my own experience, appeared the most remarkable :

About the same time that the first vision appeared to me, a gentleman residing nearly two thousand miles from where I was staying, received a communication through the mediumship of a woman-friend of unusual psychic gifts. Only her immediate friends were aware of her abnormal power. This communication, purporting to come from his mother, who had been dead many years, stated that before many days he would receive a letter from a stranger who would ask certain questions and state certain things that would convince him of her identity. It is important here to say that he was very sceptical in spiritual matters. Weeks passed away. No letter was received. So he merely looked upon it as one of the "misses" of mediumship.

About a year and a half afterwards another communication was received through the same source, saying : "Be patient ; wait ; I shall succeed." However, he paid no attention to this. After five or six months' further delay, the unlooked-for letter arrived. I need not add that it was mine.

The promise of two years before was fulfilled. The explanations on both sides being compared left no room for doubt in any sensible mind. Only the most confirmed sceptic, who would refuse any testimony against his prejudice, could remain unconvinced.

APPENDIX II—NOTES UPON MAN'S PSYCHICAL CONSTITUTION

N.B.—The following paragraphs have been culled from many lengthy notes and "communications" received through what has been called "automatic writing." They are here given for what they may be worth as suggestions to other "investigators."

The Aura.

The Aura of a person is a purely psychical form of atmosphere seen or felt only by sensitive temperaments. It surrounds all forms from mineral to man.

Much that we call instinct in animals is nothing but a sensing of the feelings, passing as currents in the mental strata of their race. Many times, wild animals have been observed to become suddenly suspicious, nervous, alarmed, when such warnings as scent, sound, or wind were out of the question. Transmitted by some subtle invisible current, a sense of danger was awakened, their sphere of consciousness received the race alarm which aroused the inherited racial instinct, or memory.

Man, to a greater extent than he is aware of, is influenced by this sensitive atmosphere. To the eye of a seer, it is varied in extent and changeable in colour.

The planet, apart from the atmosphere of gas, has

also a mental envelope, a psychical atmosphere within the gaseous, and this must not be mistaken for the universal ether of space. Finally, the solar system has its own peculiar, psychical aura, so that planetary intercommunication is at least among the possibilities of the future.

Man may be likened unto a musical instrument in his psychical constitution, and the sensitiveness of his auric sphere. He may range, according to race, from the conch, and wooden tom-tom of the savage, to the most exquisite cremona-violin, while the consciousness within the auric sphere rises from the Tasmanian Black to a Buddha, or a Jesus of Nazareth.

There is, therefore, a wonderful difference in kind in the transmission and reception of thought-waves, which like light-waves in the ether, travel in their own medium. These thought-waves, producing sensation in the auric-sphere, have to be transmuted into conscious ideas; and an idea entirely foreign to our consciousness will pass without recognition, or at best, be wholly mistranslated.

One human instrument will only respond to another in harmony, or sympathy with it, and in whatever sense this sympathy, or harmony is, will be the terms in which the idea will be expressed.

To revert to our analogy, every human-being is in accord with some tone, or semi-tone of a musical-scale. Minds corresponding to B flat will receive no message from G sharp; though there are some minds, almost neutral in their sphere of sensitiveness, who respond more or less to anything.

These currents are transmitted in the psychical atmosphere of the planet. The spheres of human

consciousness are but so many wireless-stations for sending or receiving messages. Each station is limited to messages of a certain kind and grade from similar stations.

We are now approaching the mystery of the frequent confusion in thought transference. According to its quality of refinement, and its complex relations with the psychic form of consciousness, and the auric-sphere, the human brain has every degree of receptive quality, from a clear-receiving of the thought to its reception in broken rays. As light is split up by a prism of glass, so such ramifications are lost in the thought of the individual.

As musical-instruments can be attuned to respond perfectly to each other, so by training, two sympathetic persons can become so responsively attuned as to receive and transmit thought clearly, consciously, and without error. To investigate this is the great work for the psychologists of the future.

APPENDIX III—THE GROUND OF NATURE

A critical friend, to whom this work was submitted before going to press, suggested that the writer should further elaborate what he means by the "Ground of Nature," and illustrate that meaning by some familiar analogy. This suggestion appealed to others less critical.

By the Ground of Nature, we mean, of course, the whole invisible psychical basis of spiritual activity and material phenomena—the world-spirit, or ocean of life which, ever in flux and change, ebb and flow, is, at the same time, ever becoming richer in content. Illustrative of this, we find a striking analogy to this cosmic ground in the oceans of the earth we inhabit.

We can go back in the imagination to a period in geological time when the hot seas were first precipitated upon the steaming planet—before the first form of life arose—before the first strata of the aqueous rocks were laid down—and can note that the waters thus formed were fresh waters unimpregnated with their present saline content.

Slowly, as the primitive crust of the earth was eroded and deposited by the waters—strata after strata, the salts of the decomposed rocks impregnated the water with their quality. The oceans, at first, became brackish ; gradually increasing in their salinity

and richness until the present day. Life, likewise, at first, was simple in form, and probably limited in extent. There appears to be a perfect parallel between the increasing salinity and richness of the ocean and the increasing diversity and richness of its organised life.

Generation succeeded to generation through unknown millions of years. Organic life became constantly more complex, divergent, and higher in form, as the ocean became more saline. The content of the planet grew in richness until life ran riot with infinite variety. And man, that final instrument of the Spirit, burst through the barrier and added self-consciousness to intelligence and instinct. Now, we are to note that the first primitive form we can trace, the Eozoon, was impossible before the waters were formed. The giant mosses, ferns, and reptiles of the coal measures, impossible until ages of erosion of the primitive rocks had formed a suitable soil in which to flourish. The earth, in fact, increased in vital riches from age to age, as the waters of the ocean grew more saline by the continuous decomposition of the rocks, and the soil more fertile by the decomposition of its own organic life. We can use this illustration to form an imperfect but intelligible image of the psychical ground—the primeval ocean of Nature.

We are dealing with the ground in our own time after inconceivable eons of preparation ; after the movement of life has become inconceivably rich in possibility.

We would be worse than fools, we would be insane to imagine a beginning as a something evolving from nothing ; but we can profitably go back in imagination

to a conceivable period or process in which the elements of the ground were simple and the possibilities limited to simple forms of expression. System after system of solar energy, and planetary struggle arose to light and beauty, and passed away leaving their primitive achievements "to live and blush unseen" by any self-conscious forms of life. But there was no waste. Each form of life added to the riches of the psychic ground. Every form evolved—though it perished and sank back into the earth again—did not really die. The experience was not lost. The form attained sank back again *as a formless potentiality*, adding to the richness of the ocean of life as the perishing rocks add to the chemical richness of the sea; as the decomposing bodies of organic life add to the richness of the soil.

The ocean of life, like the oceans of earth, is in ceaseless motion—action and reaction—ebb and flow—with this difference—the ocean of life reaches a higher point in matter with every tide. Something new is created, some advance is made, something comes into being which never existed before, because the life-force itself is growing richer in content with every moment of time.

In a chapter devoted to the same subject, Edward Douglas Fawcett, in his valuable work, *The Individual and Reality*, writes:

"We need not ask whether a cosmic plan or design was Immanent in the Ground. We have agreed to discard the conceptions of 'unconscious purpose.' 'Purpose,' 'plan,' 'scheme,' 'design'—these imply a conscious individual, a being who is aware of desires and aversions and can remember, expect, deliberate

and choose. On the other hand, there is no call to suppose that the Ground was ever mere chaos, an abyss of confused differences whence, if chance so decreed, a preposterous Nature and fantastic individuals might arise. System is itself as primeval as the Ground.¹ We have laid stress on the important part played by struggle. But the fecundity of struggle presupposes this system—a germinal system which is to change into a Nature and individuals in most respects differing from itself. This germinal system may have issued from a former one and so on. The universe in the Time-process is always becoming what it was not. Huxley said of 'protoplasm,' that it is continually dying in order that it may live. This is, also, our own lot. The conscious person is always ceasing to be what he has become. This, too, on the great scale, is the lot—the 'contradictory' life of the universe.

"The supposal, even on idealistic lines, of a primeval chaos is gratuitous. The Ground while subconscious, was yet a psychical whole. It was the source of that very strife which sired Nature. . . .

"We do not speak of a primeval 'design' for we must not speak of the Ground as possessing that which presupposes individual life, for individual life belongs to a relatively late stage of becoming. But 'design' even if we allow only for the activities of men and animals, is certainly an important phase of reality now. The Ground, then, is the remote source even of design. Its fecundity was such that I had to pass into this form of activity at last. . . .

"The biologists' natural selection is familiar to all

¹ System here means Tendency.

of us. It may be viewed as continuing that strife which began with time. It has scourged man with scorpions. And even among the higher animals it involves 'a system of terrorism from the beginning to the end,' as a famous explorer tells.¹ It shows no partiality towards what we call the nobler forms of life. It fixed grim instincts, and renders destructive activities, which make for suffering, pleasant. The butcher-bird is encouraged to impole mice, etc., alive on thorns; parasites multiply and torment creatures superior to themselves. Men not yet touched with sympathy, and inheriting ancestral proclivities once of use in the struggle for life, show cruel dispositions which are genuine natural gifts. A passion for cruelty characterises certain communities. This need not surprise any one who accepts the metaphysics offered here. It was no moral power which ordained the process in which individuals arise. The passport to a place in reality, is—just to succeed! . . .

"We return now to the topic of a finite God or gods. There was no design, properly so-called, immanent in the Ground. But world-histories without number may have been their course before the present evolution era, and, more especially, the story of this minor solar system began. And Individuals, motioning into a finite god or gods may have been the fruit of such histories. A being or beings of this sort may have helped to produce our part of reality and may be continuing to modify it now. We must allow, at least, that the hypothesis must be considered."

¹ Sir Samuel Baker.

