



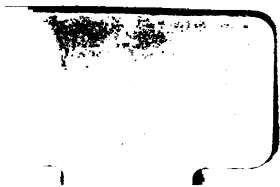
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SPIRITUAL ✕ ✕
CONSCIOUSNESS



FRANK H. SPRAGUE

KE 5204



M. A. Laws.

SPIRITUAL at at CONSCIOUSNESS

BY
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What we see depends on how we see



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PREFACE.

The closing years of the nineteenth century seem in many respects the most significant in human history.

Men have fed on the dry husks of materialism until they are crying out for food which satisfies the craving of their higher nature. The extent to which this hunger is felt is indicated by the widespread interest manifested in the spiritual aspect of life. The doctrines of Spiritualism, Christian Science, Mental Science, Spiritual Healing, the "New Thought" and Theosophy are outgrowths of an earnest desire to possess the inmost kernel of life concealed within its material husk. Nor is this awakening confined to the disciples of these new faiths alone. It is everywhere apparent among longer established bodies of believers, and in the minds of a host of independent truth-seekers.

The tendency of the age is toward *unity* in all departments of life. This little volume is the outcome of an *independent search* for the *spiritual view-point*. It seeks to interpret human experience and the latest revelations of science from that view-point.

False ideals are at the root of all failure, dissatisfaction, misery, despair, degradation and strife; and false ideals are due to a *wrong view-point*. *Choice of view-point*, then, is the fundamental consideration upon which all the issues of life depend. The purpose of the following pages is suggestive rather than instructive. When one discerns the real meaning of the *spiritual view-point*, he may safely trust "the Spirit of Truth" to guide him "into all the truth."

F. H. S.

Wollaston, Mass.,
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SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

I.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

AN inborn craving for knowledge forever impels the mind to reach out in all directions for an unknown something with which to satisfy its desires. Attention is at first attracted by the outer world of objects—appearances that appeal to the *senses*. But after analyzing all that the senses can perceive, and even carrying the process by inductive reasoning and aid of the imagination far beyond the boundaries of actual sense perception, it finds itself no nearer the goal of its search than at the outset. In fact, it finds itself farther than ever from the complete satisfaction of its desire for knowledge; for it begins to realize that there *is no ultimate boundary line for the world of physical manifestation*. The mind goes on and on, in its efforts to conceive the magnitude and extent of something which has no limits either in space or time, until it sinks in utter amazement and bewilderment,

overcome by a sense of the impossibility of ever accomplishing the task it has undertaken. But the result of this very experience has given birth to a new idea — *infinity*. That word, hitherto vague and meaningless, now comes to stand for a *reality*.

Investigation, which heretofore has been directed almost exclusively to the *outside* of life, now turns to the *inside* as well. To be sure, we continue to study phenomena, but with a new thought of their nature and significance. They seem no longer of *primary*, but only of *secondary* importance. Mind is no longer regarded as an adjunct to *matter* or an emanation from it. Its capacity is no longer that of a revealer of supposed *physical* reality; but, *vice versa*, it is seen to be not only superior to the physical which it reveals, but *creator* of it. In the last analysis we are driven from the phenomenal world and compelled to take refuge in mind, which is then *self-revealed*. Material and spiritual, physical and metaphysical, are the opposite poles of mental energy. Intelligence requires both. Man is a microcosm of the universe. The individual is a type of the race; and we have only to study his nature deeply enough to find in him all principles and tendencies existent in larger social organisms.

Ever and anon, in the world's history, the mind of man has been seized with an irresistible passion for investigation and exploration. The tendency to consider first the outer, and afterward the inner side of life, is characteristic of the *race* as well as of the *individual*. When the mind of civilization awoke out of its slumber during the night of medieval darkness, a new light dawned upon it. As one rising in the morning after a sound sleep, with vigor renewed and faculties alert, it began to reach out and extend the horizon of its knowledge on all sides. A wealth of hitherto hidden treasures of intellectual and practical value opened to its view.

Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Guttenberg, Watt and many other immortal names designate this period as the most notable in the world's history in its bearings upon physical discovery and invention. But such marvelous growth in ideas relating to the outer world must needs have had its counterpart in the unfolding of *spiritual thought*. The fulfilment of this necessity was realized in the Idealism whose exponents include Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling and Schopenhauer. Thus we find a balance preserved between physical and metaphysical conceptions.

We may note a repetition, more recently, of

substantially the same conditions. The nineteenth century has been characterized by a degree of scientific research unparalleled in history. Enthusiasm for material investigation, which called forth Darwin, Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, Agassiz and a host of others, is even now having its natural result in an increasing interest in the *spiritual* aspect of life. A predominance of the materialistic tendency in the philosophical conceptions of the former period, has led to a reaction, already manifested in the growing disposition, everywhere apparent, to consider all questions, both theoretically and practically, from a *spiritual standpoint*. Never before would a thoroughly systematic and intelligent study of the inner meaning and relations of life have been feasible.

The inductive method has been applied to every department of knowledge relating to the outer world, until sciences have been established, one after another, upon a basis of *fact*. They are now studied not only individually, but relatively, as interdependent branches—as integral parts of *one complex system*, each of which throws some light upon others and gives a larger significance to all. But physical sciences take account of only one side of life—the *outer*. When they have been pursued to their utmost

capacity, elements of experience still remain unaccounted for, which cannot be brought within their scope. We are then obliged to ascend to other planes, and view the world from the standpoint of its psychical and spiritual sides. While man regarded himself as only a material being — the highest species of the animal kingdom — it is not surprising that this thought should have been projected in the form of an *anthropomorphic* God. While he considered the world a collection of separately created objects, it was inevitable that he should have conceived of a God external to the human soul. But with the growth of spiritual consciousness, he began to look within as well as without.

“I searched for God with heart-throbs of despair,
'Neath ocean's bed, above the vaulted sky ;
At last I searched myself, my inmost I,
And found him there.”

The negative materialism, skepticism and pessimism of the recent past are already giving place for spiritual activity born of *faith* and *positive assurance*. Evidences of a regenerating force are everywhere present in the social organism. The spirit of freedom, which at present characterizes intellectual and moral concep-

tions, is apparent also in the industrial and economic world. There, too, events are steadily tending toward a climax. The purified intellectual atmosphere, which enables us to attain to a more spiritual consciousness, also affords glimpses of a new *social order* dominated by *love* instead of selfishness, which will yet emerge from the current strifes and controversies of the material plane. All indications point toward an approaching adjustment of life on a *spiritual basis*. Earnest efforts along every line are simultaneously converging to this end.

The close of the nineteenth century marks a decided epoch in human progress. All indications point to the speedy advent of an era in which a new, spiritual type of man, and consequently a new society will prevail. Manifold theories and aims, exercised along independent lines, need the unifying power of some *great life* which shall embody them in *practical* shape. Such an incarnation alone can bring them into vital relation to the lives of people of all classes.

Every age which has been distinguished by the development of any vitally important idea has appealed to the world through its leader or *prophet*. Moses, Confucius, Gautama, Jesus and Luther were exponents of mighty tides of human unfoldment. Their insight and spiritual power made them incarnations of the thoughts

and aspirations of thousands of lives. Behind each of these representative characters were racial tendencies and purposes seeking expression in the profound life of a great soul, and calling for utterance in the comprehensive declarations of a great mind. The "word made flesh" is the culmination of every great revelation.

The prophet of the coming era—the exponent of its highest ideals—will be endowed with insight profound enough to comprehend the *practical* as well as the *theoretical* needs of the hour; for it will be his mission to make the *ideal* things of life *practical*, and its *practical* things *ideal*. Thought and action, word and deed, need to be brought into perfect unity and harmony on the plane of the broadest human attainments of the present day. On every hand spontaneous movements, representing some phase of social, moral or spiritual advancement, are preparing the way, and hastening the consummation of this end. The spirit of expectancy which everywhere pervades society must sooner or later find its fulfilment in a leader who shall unite in one brotherhood all those who seek a solution of life's problems upon the *spiritual plane*, and look for the revival and permanent establishment of the kingdom of heaven among men.

II.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

THE skeptic, the bigot and the seer are typical representatives of three distinct attitudes which men entertain toward the Truth. Individuals of each of these classes are equally positive in their convictions, equally certain that their particular views are correct. How, then, is it possible for one to decide whether that which appeals to him with such emphasis as true *is* the Truth, or not? By what test can one distinguish truth from error?

There are two kinds of knowledge:—that which pertains to *facts*, and that which pertains to *principles*. The former is relative, *changeable*, for facts are susceptible of a variety of interpretations, depending on the view-point of the observer. The latter is absolute, *unchangeable*, for principles do not admit of interpretation. Facts are *apparent*; principles are *real*. Knowledge of principles alone is perfectly trustworthy, for it is not subject to revision or adaptation. Principles are *discerned*, appreciated by *intuition*;

they are axiomatic. Facts are *perceived*, understood by the *intellect*. Intuition reveals the Truth immediately, without an intervening process of interpretation. The intellect stands in the capacity of a commentator on the Truth. It doubts, questions, argues, reasons, explains, *believes*; but it can furnish no absolute assurance that its conclusions are *final*. It sees truth in *conceptions*. No conception should be held as a finality, but only as the best view compatible with present discernment of truth, and with the recognition that it must yield to something better when we realize truth more perfectly.

The process of evolution reveals growth through a succession of stages. The inner life develops each form to its utmost capacity, until, transcending its limits, it appears in the guise of a higher one. The insect larva passes through a succession of moults, discarding each outgrown form for a fresh one representing a higher stage of development. Catastrophe, or seeming destruction, is but the ushering in of a new order of existence; and that which appears to be death is only transition to higher conditions of life.

Every dogma contains the seed of its own destruction, for it implies the possibility of a *permanent* conception. Throughout the world's

history, thought has been in almost complete bondage to dogmatism. Now and then, however, certain individuals have realized perfect freedom of thought; but usually, each formulation has been treated by its adherents as final in its own domain. Nevertheless, the entire realm of mind is one; and change of ideas in a single department of thought often involves the readjustment of a whole scheme.

Theologians, scientists and philosophers have contemplated life from independent standpoints. Not only have they antagonized each other, but they have been at variance among themselves. Each one has asserted *his own views* in opposition to all others, until chaos of conflicting claims ensued. Each has insisted upon the supremacy of his own opinions, only to have them superseded in turn by others for which equal authority was claimed. Each purported to hold the unalloyed truth. But men are beginning to see that beliefs *about* truth are not the Truth; that conceptions, to be of value, must be sufficiently elastic to admit of unlimited readjustment and modification.

However exhaustively we study the world from any standpoint, we have only to assume a different one, or to view it from another plane, to find our former conception replaced by a new

one. Theologians, scientists and philosophers are coming to recognize and consider the claims of one another. Not one, without the aid of the others, can see the full significance of even the *smallest fact* of life. Like the radii of a circle when considered as starting from different points on the circumference, they all converge toward a common center.

The Truth can be dealt with only on its own plane. The world is still attempting to solve its problems upon the plane suggested in the query of the woman of Samaria—whether men ought to worship “in this mountain” or in Jerusalem. No true answer could be given upon the plane of such an inquiry, for it revealed a misconception of the very *idea of worship*. When the true nature of worship was understood, the alternative implied in the question was no longer possible.

Conceptions are at best only *suggestive*. They cannot comprehend the Truth, for that is infinite and transcends all possibility of perfect formulation. They can only indicate the direction in which it lies, the atmosphere in which it exists. They are its ever-changing *body*, which the dogmatist mistakes for the *soul*. They are its appearance, not its reality. The forms of our

conceptions must necessarily be deduced from experience.

At the surface of life is manifold expression in infinite variety, apparently without unity of source, or direction of purpose. If we dwell upon the *surface*, we are borne around, knowing neither whence nor whither. Phenomena seem the only realities. But as we turn inward and seek its center, obeying a spiritual attraction, we begin to discern the unreality of phenomena. Only when the *universal* center becomes the *individual's* center, does he find perfect repose. Past and future are lost in an eternal present. Existence seems no longer fragmentary, but *one complete whole*. Confusion, contradiction and inharmony no longer prevail. The most intricate problems reach a simple solution. From this standpoint both center and circumference are perceivable, and the whole is comprehensible; while from the surface neither circumference nor center is recognizable, and the mind knows not even its own relative position.

At the center alone is *absolute knowledge* possible. There the individual comes into harmony with the Universal and shares its consciousness. Thought and feeling are no longer distinct experiences, but are merged in realization. We

know what truth is because we *experience* the Truth. This was the standpoint of Jesus. He spoke with absolute authority: "I and my Father are one;" "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." The Pharisees, who judged according to appearances from the outer instead of the inner standpoint, were astonished at his wisdom: "Whence hath this man knowledge, never having learned?" To the dogmatist of today the idea of wisdom which is independent of learning is just as incomprehensible. He insists that it must bear the stamp of the schools, or be accompanied by some external authority, in order to be *genuine*. The great world still thinks of truth as something to be known outwardly, instead of appreciated inwardly. It sees it only in conceptions; it does not *realize* it.

If we are to be free, in the truest sense, we must be released from bondage to *belief*. We must conquer the *intellect*, and make it our servant, instead of permitting it to be our master. We must assume a standpoint above the plane of understanding, so as to be able to control our thinking, and not allow it to *control us*. The vast majority of people, knowingly or ignorantly, merely reflect the opinions of others in intellectual matters, instead of developing original

tendencies of thinking. Just at present it is comparatively easy for most persons to forsake old beliefs and conceptions for newer ones. These are days of transition, of revision, of reconstruction, in the world of thought. It is now, indeed, more natural for progressive minds to accept new forms of belief than to cling to old ones. So general is this disposition, so widespread has become the tendency to adopt new ways of thinking, that, unless one is extremely careful, he is in danger of yielding to a "fad" in changing his views. History proves that when any reconstructive movement has once gained sufficient headway, new recruits flock eagerly to its support. But, after all, the significance of such movements does not lie *so much* in the superiority of the new *doctrines* they proclaim as in the *spirit* evinced by considerable numbers of people identified with them to become *independent truthseekers*, instead of to adhere tenaciously to any *single phase* or expression of truth. In time, however, a large proportion of the champions of new doctrines allow themselves to come into *bondage* to them, just as have men, in times past, to older ones. History constantly repeats itself. *Principles*, vital truths, give rise to *doctrines*, and in turn doctrines degenerate into *dogmas*. It is the dog-

matic *spirit* rather than allegiance to any particular belief that stamps one a bondservant of thought instead of a free man. Every dogma is a dry, shriveled husk that once contained the seeds of a vital truth. Men recognize the familiar external *form*, and by association confound it with the spiritual *essence* it once embodied. But the living germ has already fallen into the ground where, warmed and nourished by the revitalizing influences of faith and love, it is again growing into manifestation in *fresh forms*. Such is the common history of all beliefs. Doctrines, philosophies and theologies are born, grow, bear fruit and die. "Except a kernel of wheat fall into the ground and die, it cannot bear fruit."

Every belief is destined at some time to be outgrown and cast aside. He who pins his faith to beliefs, ancient or modern, builds on an unstable foundation. The free man is absolved even from the *desire* for a permanent system of thought. Just now we need to be exceedingly careful lest, in our enthusiasm for a newly discovered ideal, we establish a *dogma of healing*. The final word in this matter has not yet been spoken,—in fact it never can be spoken in any matter with which the intellect has to deal. Every man believes what he believes because of

his particular view-point. The free man recognizes the utter dependence of belief upon view-point. Instead of asserting that what *appears* to him in the form of intellectual conceptions *is* the Truth, he treats his views rather as working hypotheses. To attempt to put truth into rigid forms, implies a misconception of its very nature. For convenience we may try to formulate it, but always with the realization that each result is merely tentative and a stepping-stone to a higher one, in endless progression, as our experience enlarges. Creeds are but "milestones on the road to truth." The man whose inner world is based on *definite beliefs* is in much the same quandary as the ancients who fancied that the earth rested on the back of a huge elephant, which in turn stood on a tortoise. But what supported the tortoise? That seems to have rested on the *credulity* of the *believer*. An absolute first cause can never be arrived at by reasoning back from specific effects to their antecedent causes. In order to obtain a truer inward view of the world, we must *relinquish* the view-point we have hitherto held. We shall then see that absolute truth is independent of all *fixed beliefs* and *authority*. Spirit is self-constituted, self-sufficient, self-sustaining, not *mind-created* or sub-

ject to the *dominion* of *thought*. It is necessary repeatedly to tear away formulas and dogmas—deposits of thought filtered through the intellect and crystallized around the spiritual nucleus of life. *Open-mindedness* is the key that unlocks the door of the intellect, and gives one access to the spiritual realm. He who bars this door with dogmas and creeds cannot know the *essence of truth*.

Agnosticism and skepticism have dealt some heroic blows at lingering, decaying forms from which the Spirit had departed, lopping off and pruning away the dead wood of dogmatism to make way for fresh expressions of a *vital* character. Honest skepticism is like fire, consuming the dross, and leaving only the genuine substance of truth unscathed. A positive, vital *faith* is impervious to the thrusts of such negative weapons as doubt and unbelief. They can only prevail where faith is in decadence and the dry rot of conventionality has set in. As beliefs are outgrown and discarded, many timid persons entertain the gravest apprehension lest the disappearance of old forms shall involve the *destruction of faith* and the annihilation of all that men have revered in the past. By confounding *faith* with *belief*, by associating the Truth with

its *instruments* or *agents*, they are led to assume that if certain of the latter are put aside because no longer adequate to meet present needs and conditions, no vital power will survive capable of effecting a reconstruction of life upon a broader basis. They do not recognize an *eternal Principle* beneath all metamorphoses. The casting off of superfluous opinions and conceptions that have already fulfilled their period of usefulness is indicative of a *deeper life* at work making for larger ends. As newly formed leaf-buds expand, they force the past season's dried foliage to loosen its hold and fall to earth, thereby preparing the way for a fuller growth of *fresh leaves*.

Slaves of belief may be separated into *two classes*:—those who judge every idea in the light of their *preconceived opinions*, holding tenaciously to a particular philosophy or creed which serves them as a touchstone by which to estimate all new revelations of truth; and those who, although not hopelessly or permanently committed to the views they now hold, are, nevertheless, slaves of belief because they substitute in their lives one or another *form of belief* for the *Principle of principles*. The former class cannot properly be termed truth-

seekers at all, for they are unwilling to abandon outgrown conceptions for more serviceable ones. The man who never changes his views is, indeed, hopelessly in the dark. He is like a person who should refuse to change his clothing lest he might thereby forfeit his *identity*. The dogmatist does not profit by the experiences of past generations. In the clearer light of the future, *our* most advanced conceptions will seem crude and even in a way absurd, as do those of former periods to us today. The radical of yesterday is the conservative of today; the "crank" of today may prove the sage of tomorrow. Every truly great scientist is imbued with the spirit of *reverence*, not that of *arrogance*. It is a characteristic trait of the dogmatist to regard the knowledge of his own time as the grand consummation of all past thinking. He fancies that, however ignorant and conceited former generations may have been, the full light of truth has *now*, at length, burst upon the world. Yet in the evolution of knowledge it is necessary continually to abandon outgrown theories after they have served their purpose as stepping-stones to a more perfect understanding of truth.

The doctrine of the "new birth" is founded on a universal principle. Beneath the distorted

conception of conversion taught in the "old theology," is a fact of experience that finds new emphasis in each successive epoch of the world's unfoldment. Before any human being can appreciate his right relation to the universe, it is necessary for him to utterly forsake the viewpoint he accepted on entering this sphere of finite thought, the earthly life,—to cease relying on *intellectual impressions* as the basis of *absolute knowledge*. Through the spiritual re-birth, one emerges from the darkness of that realm into the light of an absolute or *axiomatic* consciousness. Thus the Truth makes one free. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God," i. e., *the realm of Spirit*.



III.

REALIZATION OF IDEALS THROUGH
RIGHT-THINKING.*

OUR subject contains three elementary ideas—Ideals, Right-Thinking, and Realization. Let us consider Ideals first. What is an ideal? The word Idea, from which the adjective and the noun Ideal are formed, is derived from the Greek *εἶδω*, to see. An ideal is primarily, then, something that is *seen*.

We may define it as *The Absolute seen through relative conditions*. Those conditions are due to limitations in our *thought*. Ideas are like pictures on a screen. When we look through them at the light of the Absolute Principle, it transforms them into *ideals*. Ideals would be impossible without its illuminating power. Both the absolute and relative elements are necessary to their existence. Thought paints on the screen of time and space an outer world, through which this light shines.

*In part, a paper read before the Metaphysical Club of Boston, February, 1897.

“Forever at the loom of time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by.”

We cannot know the Absolute fully or perfectly from relative planes of consciousness; and so, as we journey through the realm of transient, finite experiences, since our thought is perpetually changing, our ideals change correspondingly; but they go ever before us like the “pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night,” indicating the direction of the absolute realm where thought is consummated by perfect realization.

To illustrate: Our attention is attracted by some character which seems to us a perfect expression of goodness; i. e., the Absolute Principle discerned through that character, appears to us as *goodness*, for that Principle, shining through it, radiates in goodness. The same Absolute Principle, discerned through some external form, appears to us as *beauty*; discerned through some inward thought, it appears to us as *truth*. In a masterpiece of music it is revealed to us as *harmony*. Any medium through which we see the Absolute, becomes idealized for us. But as our thought-attitudes change, our ideals change too; we see the Absolute in new forms instead of the old ones,—in other characters, other works of art, other thoughts, other harmonies. We dis-

cern the Absolute intuitively, and are drawn toward it wherever we discern it, by the soul's law of gravitation—love—because *we* are absolute in our essential nature. It is "the light that lighteth every man coming into the world." Every soul-center in the moral world is as truly a center of attraction as is every physical center in the natural world. Its attracting power is determined by the degree in which it manifests the Absolute. The Absolute is revealed to us with ever-increasing fulness as the veil of our thought becomes finer and more spiritual. On the lower planes of consciousness our vision is so clouded by a grossly materialistic thought-web that we are led to regard it as only a *myth*, the phantom of a dream, instead of the very *source of life*. But as our thought reaches more spiritual altitudes, our vision grows clearer, and doubt dissolves in faith. In proportion, then, as we attain to higher planes of consciousness, our ideal visions approach absolute perfection, for the finite, relative elements become less pronounced.

But what do we mean by Right-thinking? The character of our thinking determines the nature of our ideals. If our thought is engrossed with the things of the lower realms of sense and

understanding, it loses itself in a maze of contradiction, confusion and doubt. We are sure to be betrayed whenever we allow revelations of pure *intuition* to be conditioned by, or subordinated to, evidence furnished by the lower faculties, no matter how cogent their evidence may be *within their respective spheres*. Neither sensation nor understanding can *transcend its own circle*. As reason often refutes evidence furnished by the *senses*, so, in turn, intuition frequently *overrules the decisions of reason*.

Matter is the negative through which truth is revealed in perfect pictures. But men often err by looking for the picture *on* the plate itself. It is not there; we must go a step further and allow the light to shine *through* the negative so as to produce impressions on our highly sensitized spiritual nature. Those impressions prove to be precisely the *reverse* of the image registered on the material plate. As we look backward from the deck of a moving boat, the *shore* seems to move. The image of the real world appears *inverted* on the lens of *sensation*. In olden times men held a theory of the natural universe which was based on the testimony of the senses—a theory which the facts of the case were afterward found to *flatly contradict*. They conceived the earth a flat expanse, around

which revolved the heavenly bodies, held in their places by external forces. But in due time a conception developed, of forces operating from *within*. Men discovered that atoms, planets, suns and solar systems, are held in their places, not by any power essentially external, but by a universal law of *attraction*. This discovery led to a complete reconstruction of ideas relating to physical phenomena. But it proved only a step toward a far more comprehensive reconstruction of ideas concerning the *psychical* and *spiritual* planes. Any definite recognition of universal principles operating on the latter planes is comparatively recent. Although the idea that every soul-center possesses attracting power capable of unlimited increase by cultivation, is not strictly new as a theory, still it has never gained any general *acceptance* heretofore, nor has it been formulated as a proposition capable of intelligent demonstration; in fact, even at the present day, comparatively few have embraced the conception of universal *inner* law. In religion most people still regard external authority as a *fixed center* around which all spiritual ideas must revolve. They shudder at the thought of yielding this apparently stable foundation; of becoming free from bondage to the understanding, and relying on the internal authority of intuition; of

discarding old props, and trusting the soul's law of gravitation.

In philosophy the majority of people still hold ideas of externalism, materialism. Ever since man began to think logically, he has tried to solve the problem of an outer, objective world of phenomena—matter. Considered solely with the understanding, that world seems, in its essential nature, very far removed from the inner, subjective realm of thoughts, ideas and principles. Apparently two worlds exist, inter-related and inseparable, yet distinct in quality and essence. Formerly the natural world of forms, colors and objects, was regarded as the finished work of Deity, who summoned it into being by *fiat* and maintained it by arbitrary laws. Although the author and upholder of creation, He existed outside of it, distinct in substance and essence. Man was supposed to have been *especially created*, endowed with a different nature from the lower orders of life. But, in the progress of thought, laws and processes akin to those in man were discovered in the lower orders. The common origin and nature of the entire cosmos became increasingly apparent, until, in the present century, previous tendencies of thought culminated in the doc-

trines of *evolution* and *unity of forces*. And today the extensive world of matter and the intensive world of mind are regarded by the profoundest thinkers as identical in nature and origin; objective and subjective phases of the same activity; physical and psychical aspects of the same creative energy. It seems probable, indeed, that at no distant day, science will satisfactorily demonstrate the essential unity of the entire realm of manifestation, and that *involution* of thought will be established as the counterpart of *evolution* of experience. Man will then be revealed as more properly *creator* of his environment than a *product* of it.

Every person's objective world is his *thought of the cosmos*, externalized. It consists of just what is included in the quality and scope of *his* thought. If we strike a tuning-fork in the room with a piano, its vibrations awaken a response from a corresponding piano string, for both are so adjusted that they act in harmony. No two people see *exactly* the same outer world, for their thoughts vary, and consequently harmonize with different expressions from without. In fact no one of us sees precisely the same outer world that he did yesterday. The trained eye of the artist beholds colors in nature that I cannot distinguish, unless I, too, train my perceptive pow-

ers to recognize them. The senses are points of contact where internal and external meet.

We invite impressions by rendering ourselves receptive to them. We may attune our thought to respond to the vibrations of low, coarse, material influences, or to those that are high, fine, spiritual. If to the former, a world of materiality, selfishness, sensuality, brutality, suffering and disease will dominate us and stand out as the one evident reality. But all material conditions are of comparatively short duration. The coarser vibrations that give rise to clashing discords and jarring dissensions are soon spent and neutralized; while the finer, spiritual ones continue unaffected by material change and decay. "He that soweth unto his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

When we *become conscious* of love, it begins to come into evidence in our *outer* world. But when we harbor feelings of antagonism, we create for ourselves a world of *chaos*. "Love overcometh all things."

But what do we mean by Realization? We mean projecting outward, bringing into manifestation, expressing, acting out,—in short, *liv-*

ing. The impulse of expression originates in the very nature of Being. The internal forever seeks externalization. It *must* go outward in activity, manifestation, realization. The abstract must become concrete, the ideal real. Every seed seeks to realize its ideal by expanding into a plant or tree of its own species or conception of life. Each order of mineral is impelled to realize its ideal by developing its own peculiar crystalline forms. Man must realize his ideal by going out in *love* and *unselfish action*. This common impulse of expression underlies the entire cosmos. The eternal process of creation, as manifested in evolution, is a ceaseless realizing of ideals; it is the essential Self seeking amid relative conditions to realize the Absolute.

Everyone recognizes the possibility of realizing ideals, in some measure, on the lower planes where materialism and selfishness prevail; but many are quick to deny the feasibility of realizing spiritual ideals. They say: Oh yes, Idealism is a beautiful dream, but of what use is it? It cannot be brought down into practical life. That very suggestion shows a misapprehension of the nature and source of the world of expression. No one who is inwardly conscious of the existence of an Absolute Power will question either the *possibility* or the *practicability* of real-

izing the highest ideal. The thorough-going idealist is the most eminently practical type of man, for he is conscious not alone of the *existence* of ideals, but also of the power that *effects all realization*.

The ideal of Jesus was to the materialist only a wild flight of the imagination, an impracticable dream. But together with the ideal came the power of realization. If we yield ourselves unreservedly to the power of the Absolute within us, and trust It to direct the course of our lives, the realization of our ideals will be spontaneous. Our failures are due to reliance upon external supports and props. We shrink from casting ourselves loose like the worlds in space, trusting the omnipotent inner law. But if, surrendering antagonism and fear, we allow ourselves to be controlled by the Absolute Power, our ideals will become as magnets, drawing around themselves the conditions necessary for manifestation.

The Infinite in man is free; and because the finite man recognizes this freedom he longs to realize it. He struggles blindly, following the misguiding of personal impulse, relying on "will power" until he finds himself farther than ever from the goal he aspires to reach. His resolute efforts to unravel the mysteries of life, and loose

himself from the entangling web of adverse circumstances, only serve to increase his dilemma and bind him more securely in its meshes; just as the frantic efforts of a fly to escape from a spider's web hinder instead of furthering its release. The first step, then, toward overcoming the world, is to cease *struggling*, striving, battling, with imaginary forces as Don Quixote contended with the "windmill giants." Nature makes no conscious exertion. The potential energy represented by ocean tides is inconceivable; yet the ocean rises and falls without effort because it is receptive to the attraction of the sun and moon. The plant simply *grows*, unfolds according to the *law of its being*. It does not strive to obtain that which is not its natural possession.

Effort is due to *friction*, and friction results from *opposition*. While *perfectly poised*, one is not conscious of friction; it ceases when one comes into harmony with the All-conscious on the spiritual plane. Consciousness of effort, then, indicates *lack of poise*. In exercising "will power" one descends to the plane of force, where friction prevails. By recognizing obstacles on that plane, and meeting them as *real foes*, one creates for himself difficulties that would not otherwise exist. He clothes finite things

with a degree of reality they do not possess. He ascribes real qualities to the *semblance* of things. It is the *finite* in us that feels the necessity of overcoming; the Infinite has nothing to overcome. Specters that seem very real in the dark, vanish in the light. A balloon rises because the specific gravity of the substance with which it is inflated is less than that of the medium in which it floats. Just so must one overcome the world—by cultivating the quality of consciousness which renders him superior to the lower attractions of life. Paul recognized this principle when he said: “Be ye transformed by the *renewing of your minds.*” It is not by putting forth greater exertions, through titanic efforts of the *will*, that the most satisfactory results are achieved, but by *rising superior to lower conditions.* *Consciousness is the basis of all experience.* If one is to realize freedom in the truest sense, he must first *become conscious of freedom.* When the spiritual view-point is comprehended, struggle and perplexity cease. A *clear vision* of the Higher Self enables one to triumph over the lower without opposition. He need not *combat* the lower nature; he has simply to *ignore* its demands. It has no power except that with which his finite thought *endows* it. He may have so long clothed it with the semblance

of power that its fictitious claims seem to him valid; but, as soon as he ceases to recognize them, its ascendancy is at an end. By living on a higher plane, conflict with lower forces ceases. The method of offering *resistance* encourages and stimulates the personal self he is seeking to bring into subjection, and leads to a battle on the finite plane. It is recorded that when the Syrian hosts encamped around the city in which Elisha dwelt, his servant was overcome with fear. But Elisha prayed that the young man's eyes might be opened. "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." He who lives "as seeing the invisible" is conscious of power that is altogether unrecognized by finite vision.

Even the world of mechanical energy yields its supremacy over us when we discover our correct relation to it. Ingenuity overcomes obstacles that seem insurmountable to the uninitiated mind. Inventive genius renders man superior to the exacting demands of brute force. As he perceives more clearly the *nature* of the world with which he has to deal, he is enabled to achieve *greater* results with far *less* expendi-

ture of energy than formerly. As a rule the man who toils the most arduously, who puts forth the most strenuous exertions, *accomplishes least*. Attention, calculation, judgment, count for far more than blind effort and persistency. A ponderous balance wheel, when *finely poised*, may be set in motion by a touch of the finger tip. The resources of nature are gradually being harnessed, and pressed into service to minister to human necessities. Gravitation, chemical affinity, electricity, heat, light and other less subtle modes of energy, are beginning to obey man's dictates and contribute to his satisfaction. Knowledge is power. Intelligence is superior to brute force. As man's consciousness evolves, the world of mechanical energy yields to his mandates.

Effort of expression diminishes as one's ideal becomes clearer in the light of the Absolute. The most eloquent orator is frequently unaware of the words he uses. The thought with which his mind is permeated, clothes itself *spontaneously* in appropriate forms of expression. Even the most ignorant person may be able, under the impulse of some mental stimulus, to express himself in language which under ordinary circumstances would be beyond his control. In

all cases, forms of expression approach perfection to the degree that the mind is *filled with the ideal*. Two students may pursue the same course at school. One wastes his energies in vainly *striving* to master problems, for he has not discovered the secret of success; the other learns naturally, without effort, for the interior channels of his mind are so open that he has free access to the universal storehouse of wisdom. The arbitrary line of separation between his individual mind and the Universal Mind is obliterated so that the inner light is allowed to illumine dry technicalities and cold figures, until they are easy to comprehend.

The principle is operative on *all* planes of life. Many a skilful hunter will raise his gun and fire in a twinkling at a bird on the wing, with no apparent thought of his aim. One person will mount a bicycle for the first time and ride away confidently, like a veteran; another will practise for weeks in fear and trembling before he gains sufficient courage to venture timidly forth on the highway.

A player seats himself at the piano. He instinctively feels the presence of the Absolute. It illumines his thought, transforming it into an ideal of harmony which, standing revealed before his mind, directs his fingers to the proper keys.

His ideal is then realized. In like manner, poet, philosopher, painter, sculptor, architect, business man, and mechanic realize their ideals. Genius is capacity to realize ideals by allowing the Absolute Power to radiate through one's finite life: The character of the forms one employs, is determined by his individual thought-tendencies, mental habits. The greatest artists, composers, thinkers, and creators in every sphere, need only to concentrate their thought, and, looking through it toward the Absolute, to allow it to be expressed spontaneously. Handel declared that while composing *The Messiah*, he "did see the heavens opened and the great God himself sitting upon his throne." We need not wonder that the entire score occupied only twenty-five days in writing. Paracelsus says: "A man comes into possession of creative power by uniting his own mind with the Universal Mind, and he who succeeds in doing so will be in possession of the highest possible wisdom."

The higher consciousness is a never-failing source of expressive power. It is a reservoir from which one may perpetually draw fresh supplies of nervous energy and muscular strength. Spirit, unlike "will power," is inexhaustible. When allowed free course, it permeates, ener-

gizes, and reinvigorates one's whole system. It works like leaven through all the lower channels of expression. In its light one grows oblivious to difficulties. Power is due to *poise*. Doing is the result of *being*. Action depends on *attitude*. Energy proceeds from *concentration*, centering of attention. One cannot give out or distribute more than he possesses. Mind is not the *creator* of energy and vitality, but only a *dispensing medium*. Sensation is a *matter of consciousness*. An ache or pain ceases as soon as one succeeds in establishing a state of consciousness that is *superior to the plane* of sensation. One's thought may dwell on some disagreeable feeling until he is scarcely conscious of anything better in life; but let him be suddenly surprised by the unexpected arrival of a long-absent friend, and the dreaded sensation instantly disappears. It existed in *thought alone*. The athlete is not conscious of effort while indulging in a contest that completely absorbs his attention and interest; but should he expend an equal amount of energy in some distasteful pursuit, he would feel the exertion at once. The power that actuates and moves the finite in man is ever at hand, accessible to all who are *prepared to receive it*. One has only to come into communication with it to be moved by it, as is the electric car when

connected with the feed-wire. The wise man *discounts* anxiety and suffering, not by *evading* or trying to *escape* responsibility, but by *looking down* on events and circumstances from the vantage-ground of a *higher plane*, with that quality of consciousness which disarms them of their power to affect him. The drudge toils on, bewailing his lot and fancying that the difficulty lies in externals over which he has no control. He attributes his hardships to "luck," fate, or the dispensation of Providence, little dreaming that the situations in which he finds himself are due to a lack of knowledge on his own part. Even if the particular circumstances that occasion his suffering were removed, he would still be in a position to encounter others possibly more annoying. One's *consciousness* of weakness gives such externalities the semblance of power they possess. For the strong-minded there are no terrors; the weak-minded encounter them on every hand.

One of the most beautiful allegories in literature, illustrating the realization of ideals through right-thinking, is Hawthorne's sketch, "The Great Stone Face." That remarkable curiosity of nature became the ideal of the peasant boy, Ernest. Gradually the lineaments of his features assumed the aspect of his ideal, until one

day the bystanders, to whom he was declaring its beauty, discovered *in him* its embodiment.

As we gaze up into the heavens on a clear night, an atmosphere of serenity seems to pervade the entire creation. Worlds on worlds, infinite in number, extend out into space, moving silently and harmoniously on their courses, realizing their ideals without friction or effort. Turning from this picture to the world of practical human affairs, evil, unrest, antagonism, discord, sin, and misery seem to rule. Skepticism, atheism, and pessimism are widespread. Men are everywhere saying: "All is evil." "What shall I believe?" "Can I believe anything?" "Is life worth living?" "Does death end all?" "Can we really know anything?" "What is the purpose of life?" "Has it any, indeed?" "Is there a God, or is the world a game of chance?" Whence comes this spirit of inharmony and uncertainty? Shall man alone fail to realize his ideal? Is not the power that moves the worlds harmoniously, also operative in the heart of man? How then shall we reconcile these apparently inconsistent manifestations? Such a state of affairs will prevail just as long as men's thought is centered on the planes of *sense* and *understanding*. We have trusted our lower faculties

to lead us to a knowledge of the Truth, but they have only led us out into the wilderness of materialism.

Contemplating the world of finite things—radiating manifestations of the Eternal Principle—we soon grow bewildered by its inconceivable variety and endless complexity. We follow one clue after another, until it is lost in a confusing labyrinth of ramifications, or until it passes beyond the range of our perceptive powers; on the one hand into boundless immensities of space and time, and on the other within inapproachably minute limits. Then, having lost our clues in both directions, we pause to consider other external features of the world. Baffled in our attempts to fathom its *quantitative* relations, we try to discover its *qualitative* meaning. At first everything seems beautiful; but in scrutinizing any one thing more closely, we see that each exquisite feature is destined sooner or later to be marred by apparent ugliness. We detect laws which, although good and beneficent of themselves, seem to conflict with one another so as to render each other's operation ineffective. We discern purposes and meanings deep and true in intent; yet their ends appear to be frustrated, or their significance perverted, by misdirected exercise and ill-considered adaptation.

Creation, which seems designed to achieve the grandest results, is yet, withal, so capricious and disorderly as continually to accomplish ruin and disaster. Beauty and sublimity seem to be everywhere at the mercy of the blighting, desolating effects of blind force or inadequacy. The arena of life is filled with contending victims, whose agonizing struggles are largely mis-directed, and often destined to end in at least *apparent* defeat.

The farther we pursue our investigation into externals, approaching all the while the outer shell of life, the more firmly convinced are we that this world of strife, suffering, sin, and catastrophe must be *essentially evil*. The most beautiful things pass away, the loveliest blossoms decay before maturity, youth vanishes in old age, and even the worlds are doomed to crumble and disappear. Death seems the one open door through which all living things depart into *eternal oblivion*.

Up to this point our thoughts have journeyed steadily *away from the center* of life, as diverging solar rays proceed outward into space. Our attention and energies have been diffused, dispersed, *dissipated*, into a multitude of random observations and aimless efforts. The idea of *separateness* has constantly assumed greater

prominence and more importance. Meanwhile our vital forces have seemed to wane, and our very being to be in process of disintegration and dissolution. Life has appeared not as *one*, but as *many*; not *united*, but *divided*. We have perceived only its *outgoing* tendencies, for our *thought* has traveled steadily outward.

But let us turn *inward*. We have been looking *away* from the light, so that it could not illumine our thought; consequently we have been beholding *our own shadow*, projected outward by the light, until it extended over our *whole picture* of life.

Yet even in the depths of outer darkness we are subject to a Higher Power which centers all life around Itself; and when our outwardly directed, individual impulse is spent, we begin to be attracted toward the *universal center*. Then, for the first time, we feel, even though feebly and vaguely, the fundamental law of Being operating in us, drawing us into a more intimate relation with the Absolute Principle. The negative element has been overcome by the positive, and we begin to know something of the *essential purpose* of life, *its real meaning*. We have entirely changed our *view-point*. We have been "born anew." Life seems no longer

many, but *one*; not partial, but *complete*; not incongruous, but *orderly*; not dissipating, but *vitalizing*; not eccentric, but *concentric*; not degenerate, but *regenerate*.

Gradually we grow to appreciate the fact that our life is a part of a whole, and that by ignoring wilful, selfish tendencies, we may experience a larger life of unlimited enjoyment and power. In losing our *finite* consciousness we discover the *Infinite*.

In so far as we realize that a common life exists for all, we share the Infinite creative power and wisdom. As we come to obey the universal law habitually, and approach the center of Being, our dissipated energies *concentrate*. Increased *intensiveness* proportionately enlarges the scope of our *extensive* influence. Experience *evolves* what thought *involves*. *Impression* reacts in *expression*.

For thirty years Jesus lived in comparative seclusion and silence, studying the inner laws of life, until his ideals and purposes had matured and definitely formulated themselves. Even after entering upon more active, aggressive work, he frequently retired to the wilderness, into mountain solitudes, to listen to the inner voice. He cultivated intuitive perception and

receptivity to *spiritual* impressions until he lived in constant communication with the source of wisdom and power, the Absolute Principle—"the Father."

True education consists far more in rendering the mind *susceptible* to impressions, than in accumulating *knowledge of facts*. Such knowledge is of comparatively little value as an *end in itself*, but should be sought mainly with reference to the broader purpose of acquiring thought-tendencies that will enable one to rise to higher states of consciousness, and obtain truer, more comprehensive views of life.

The entire universe of facts is at the disposal of anyone who is prepared to accept them intelligently, and to interpret them rightly. We are not to *ignore* the lower faculties. We cannot be *too logical* or *reasonable*. But when our thought wanders into the by-ways of speculation, and loses its bearings, we need to consult our compass—*intuition*. The intuitional faculty should *rule* our lives.



IV.

THE OUTER WORLD.

EVER since Kant revolutionized modern speculative philosophy by his "Critique of pure reason," in which he shows that the physical senses can give us no absolutely correct information concerning the *essential nature* of things, but that the objective world we see, is obliged to *conform in appearance* to certain conditions of perception existing *a priori* in the mind, the chief concern of philosophy has centered around the problem of *consciousness*. Men are not satisfied merely to ascertain what *appears to be*; they want to know what *is*. What can we know of Absolute Reality? What relation do phenomena, appearances, bear to the essential nature of things? Why do they bear such relations? These are questions that have engaged the minds of the profoundest thinkers of modern times. The doctrine, in its various forms, of a Deeper Self is the natural outcome of this introspective study.

Ask a superficial observer of life to state his definition of the term Self, and very likely he

will be surprised to find that its meaning is *open to question*; for it seems to him too obvious to call for a serious attempt at defining. Terms of such universal acceptance as Yourself, Myself and Itself, are commonly supposed to convey exact meanings permanently established beyond a doubt—meanings which are unalterable, the same for all people, and which, therefore, do not admit of question. But terms are intended to indicate *real* things, and every person has his own peculiar conception of the nature of Reality; hence no two people use any given term to designate *precisely the same* entity. The current popular thought determines for nearly all persons, within certain pretty definite limits, the meaning they shall attach to it. But aside from this general agreement, each one must interpret in his *own way* the reality for which it stands. For example, the thorough-going materialist supposes that his *very existence* depends on certain definite combinations of *physical forces*, the proper relations of which are *indispensable to consciousness*; while the idealist sees in the visible form only a manifestation of a transcendental, spiritual *ego*, whose existence is independent of finite conditions. Certainly these two constructions represent a disagreement broad enough to lead one to pause and investigate

the subject more fully, before assuming to accurately and conclusively define, in clumsy figures of speech, a reality that admits of such widely different interpretations.

Whenever we attempt to define the term Self, or even to form an adequate intellectual conception of its meaning, we find it enshrouded in the *deepest mystery*. The reality for which it stands, evades the grasp of our understanding; the more diligently we search for it, the further we seem from finding it. It is impossible to apprehend its nature *objectively*; we know it solely through subjective *self-contemplation*. It vanishes whenever we try to locate it, and we are compelled to seek it elsewhere. We recognize its presence as we do that of a star in the heavens, the *orb* of which is invisible to us; we see only the *effulgence* it sheds forth. Indeed, in attempting to locate the faintest fixed stars visible to the naked eye, it is necessary to look aside from the exact positions they are known to occupy; for when we gaze at them *directly*, they grow imperceptible. Quite as elusive, is the essential nature of things when we try to discover it in an *outer world*. No *real* thing can be *located*. It is not "Lo, here! or Lo, there!" Therefore we say, It must be concealed *within*

the material form. What, then, do we mean by "within?" Take for illustration a rosebud. Nothing could be easier to identify. We readily recognize it by such external features as form, color, odor. But whence come those qualities by which we distinguish it from other objects? What of their ultimate source? At first we see only an outer envelope, the calyx. The visible *form* we associate with the name Rosebud, then, is only that of the *calyx*. And if in turn we seek to know in the same manner what the calyx *itself* is, we are baffled in that also, for we see *its outside* alone. Then we strip off the calyx and find numerous layers of petals; but neither are they, any more than is the calyx, the *essence* of the thing we *call* a rosebud. So we persevere until we come to the stamens and pistils; yet even those are not the rosebud *itself*. But nothing else remains; where, then, is the "inner" life we imagined to exist there?

Throughout our search we have seen simply the *outer aspect* of something; and what *is* the something? No amount of analyzing brings us any nearer the *reality*. Definition fails to acquaint us with it. Is its essential nature, therefore, unknowable? We search in vain for life within the bud—in fact we are foiled in every attempt to *find* an *absolute* inside. Whenever

we dissect any object in search of the inside we conceive it to possess, we discover nothing but *other outsides*. We recognize the *outside* of things by means of physical senses, but they never reveal an *inside*; yet we are just as positive that an inside *does* exist, as if it were visible to the eye of sense. Clearly the idea of internality must be acquired in some other way. Inasmuch as an inside is never discovered by the senses, the knowledge that it certainly exists must be derived from some *other* source. Here is the paradox of matter:—we cannot conceive of an *exterior* without its *interior*; yet the interior of *matter* is *never visible*. Verily we are bound to confess that matter *has no inside* corresponding in appearance to its *external* aspect. It is the *symbol* by which we *recognize life exteriorly*—our *outward interpretation of life*. The symbolical outer world has always been recognized by deep thinkers and appreciative observers as a commentary on the inner life. Poets and seers find the inner mirrored in the outer. Philosophers and scientists are only beginning to appreciate the full significance of this fact. Man becomes acquainted with his own nature by tracing analogous features in the outside world. The outer corresponds to the inner as does the *outside* of a circle to its *inside*. The

inside and the outside are totally unlike; one is concave, the other convex. A superficial observer, on looking at a hollow sphere from the outside, would see nothing about it to suggest the view he obtains from the inside; yet the two distinct impressions are derived from contemplating the *same thing* in its *different aspects*. The world we see without—in space—and the world we see within—in time—are objective and subjective manifestations of *one Reality*. It is inevitable, then, that we should find analogies subsisting between them. By penetrating deep enough, we may discern something of the *inner significance* of every outward manifestation; and likewise we may discover an *outer symbol* for every inward experience. If we thus discerningly study the universe we see without, it will come to hold for us a deeper meaning and interest than attach to it as an *aggregation of objects*. Matter is *mind viewed exteriorly*. Every object, process, or formation we observe in our symbolical outer order has its inner significance. Every outside has its interior aspect, and *vice versa*.

Let us, then, undertake a brief analysis of the outward forms of life—the world in space—preparatory to contemplating the *interior aspect* of life.

Every normal human mind is capable of recognizing *three dimensions* of space; and it is by reason of this three-dimensional conception that one is able to perceive material substances, *bodies*. Scientific investigation reveals the fact that all material bodies are composed of inconceivably minute atoms or *centers of force*; that those atoms, even in the densest substances, such as flint or diamond, are not *contiguous*, but are so widely distributed that the intervening space exceeds by hundreds of times the space occupied by the atoms themselves; so that, were it possible to construct a magnifying glass of sufficient power, the atoms of which the diamond is composed would very likely appear quite as diffused as the tail of a comet. The atoms are not stationary, but *exceedingly active*, and display a variety of motive tendencies. Under certain conditions they collect in groups as atomic families, *molecules*, which are susceptible to the influence of a superior, organizing, formative Intelligence. Lord Kelvin estimates that were a drop of water magnified so that it would appear the size of the earth, each molecule would appear as large as a pea; also, that under ordinary conditions of humidity, the number of molecules contained in a cubic inch of the earth's atmosphere, would be equal to the number ten

raised to the *twenty-third power*. So *intensely active* are the molecules in the atmosphere, that Maxwell calculated that each one must experience *eight hundred billion* collisions in a *single second*.

Again, as we look *upward* in the scale of material forms, we find that worlds are organized into solar systems, and solar systems into still more stupendous groups. And all this magnificent exhibition of exterior forms, great and small, manifests *one supreme law of attraction*. *Nothing is inanimate*; there is no such thing as "dead matter."

Prof. Dolbear says: "The study of molecular science is steadily making us aware that that which we call matter is something very different in its nature from what men have formerly thought. It has generally been assumed that matter is dead, inert, and made of nothing; whereas it turns out to have a basis on something which we call ether, the properties of which are so radically different from those of matter as exhibited in physical phenomena, that no conclusion as to its possibilities can be drawn except as they are manifested in the attributes of matter. The so-called laws of nature represent only a portion of the laws of matter. The latter are called mechanical, and phenomena of

that class are all subservient to what are called mechanical laws.

“The atoms of matter appear to be manufactured articles, and therefore have a substratum; as they possess energy, energy must have been in existence prior to the existence of the first atom. And as the mechanical activities, such as physical science at present has to do with, show to us the utter impossibility of constructing a single one, it leaves us with the persuasion that the energy in existence before matter, was not of the mechanical kind. For that kind is what we have to deal with at present. Choice is exhibited in such disposition of the energy as is displayed in the creation of matter.”

Science has already proven the material world, as it was formerly conceived to exist, to be a *myth*. Forces are no longer regarded as *objective entities*. Light, heat, electricity, magnetism, sound, and even matter itself, are now treated as *modes of manifestation of a universal energy*.

When we attempt to analyze the forms of our outer order, in an ascending scale, we at first recognize the earth as a *complete unit* of itself. But we soon find that this unit represents a *fraction* of a *larger* unit, our solar system. Again, this solar system is a *fraction* of a *still*

greater unit or system. We may gain the very faintest sort of appreciation of the distances involved in these calculations by considering the fact that light, traveling at the approximate rate of 190,000 miles per second, requires over *three years* to reach the earth from the member of this system *nearest our sun*. Even these figures are utterly incomprehensible; yet the most powerful telescopes reveal the existence of at least millions of similar solar units, organized into systems extending out, out, *out*, into infinite space, and finally disappearing beyond the range of any mechanical device yet invented to aid the eye in its search. Supposing it were possible to continue increasing the power of the telescope indefinitely, how much nearer, in all probability, would we be to a *final solution* of the problem of this natural order? It is even more difficult to conceive that an ultimate boundary to it exists in space than it is to simply imagine it to be *infinite* in extent. Any attempt to encompass the material universe with our thought, or even to *estimate* its magnitude, then, gives us at the very outset a hint of the *possible existence* of an *unlimited* number of worlds. And, after all, is it more difficult to account for *such* a universe than it is to account for the existence of *any external universe at all?*

The microscope reveals a world of life in every drop of water. Could we exchange our power of observation for that of the tiniest animalcule thus brought to our notice, the outer universe we *now* perceive, would *totally disappear from view*, and another, altogether beyond the scope of our imagination or powers of description at present, would open to view. We would find no trees, birds, rocks, mountains; that which now appears to us in the guise of *such* bodies, would be resolved into vast unexplored worlds of hitherto unperceived forms.

Let us now turn from these outer demonstrations, in which we observe *concrete* units of matter multiplicable and divisible far beyond the limits of our comprehension, to the science of *pure mathematics*. Starting with the *ideal unit* as a basis, and multiplying it until we have ten, we consider that a *unit* in the *tens column*. Likewise, ten times ten gives us a unit in the *hundreds column*. Evidently we may continue multiplying units and groups of units, until we tire of the process, without reaching a possible limit of notation. And so with *dividing*. In either case the number of available units is only limited by *our thought*; it is *purely ideal*. As long as we hold the *infinite conception* of num-

ber, the demonstration may continue *ad infinitum*. Few people have ever actually counted even *one* million; yet every child is absolutely certain that figures would be forthcoming by which he could express his enumeration of so many units, should he desire to count them. The supposition that this would be possible, rests on a purely rational basis. Long before one reaches a million by actual count of units, he is satisfied that the process *might* be continued as long as he chose—in other words, that the *supply of abstract units could never be exhausted*. But if one finds it wearisome to *count* a million, he can readily *estimate* a much greater number, under favorable circumstances, by resorting to a process of reasoning. Through the rational faculty we become acquainted with the *meaning of infinity* as associated with numbers.

Let us again assume our original starting-point; only, instead of ascending the scale, let us descend it; instead of *multiplying* concrete units of matter, let us *divide* them. We know that most molecules, like solar systems, are compound; that *most molecular* units at least, are divisible into lesser, *atomic* units. Chemistry has to deal with an "ultimate atom." But in what sense does this atomic form indicate the

ultimate limit of divisibility in matter? Probably only by representing the limit of *our ability to register* phenomena of disintegration, and to subdivide material forms. The latest scientific investigations point to the conclusion that physical phenomena are due to *various modes* of a *universal energy*, and that matter itself, as an objective phenomenon, represents certain *definite modes of ethereal activity*. At first, matter and energy appear to be essentially different in nature and origin; but scientific experiments indicate that, after all, matter is only a manifestation of energy. The atomic hypothesis of Lord Kelvin, according to which atoms are merely vortex rings in the ether, tends to corroborate the theory that the phenomenon *Matter*, like light, heat, electricity, and magnetism, is an effect produced by ethereal activity. And still further investigations pursued by Prof. Elmer Gates, indicate that *even the ether itself* is composed of inconceivably minute particles. If this be the case, we must suppose that some still more subtle medium fills the interspaces between the particles of which *it* is composed. Where, then, is the process of subdivision to end? Is it not reasonable to infer that it is capable of *indefinite* continuance? We are *obliged* to conceive *space* to be limitless, co-extensive with our

thought of infinity; we know that worlds are organized into *systems*, and those into *systems* of systems on a still more stupendous scale, until it seems well-nigh absurd to attempt to postulate an *ultimate boundary* for the world of matter, beyond which would lie a blank, meaningless void.

Here the transcendental doctrine of Kant relieves us of our dilemma, by showing that space has only a *subjective* value; that it is a *mental condition governing the perception of things outwardly*, and not an *object* of perception. Now if matter "has a basis on the ether," and if the ether is limitless, co-extensive with space, and if space is *subjective* in its character, the conclusion is well-nigh inevitable that there can be no *absolutely definite limit*, either to the *number* or the *extent* of *material bodies*; that the same difficulties attend their *computation*, which are encountered in dealing with *abstract units*; that the *unit of matter* is purely *ideal*, like the unit which furnishes the basis of enumeration in mathematics.

The idea of the relative value of *size* must already have occurred to us, in following this discussion. We have no *absolute standard* of size. Any line may be considered either long

or short, according to the length of our measuring rule. If we measure with an inch rule, a yard-stick seems long; if with a ten-foot pole, it seems short. To one riding in an express train, a mile seems short; to the creeping infant, it seems long. By conceiving space to be infinite, we imply that our standard of measurement is finite. To the animalcule sporting in a drop of water, the ocean would seem boundless, were the animalcular mind capable of such a thought; but to the astronomer, the ocean represents a very small portion of an insignificant planet, itself like a grain of sand on the seashore.

We judge objects to be large or small by comparison with the *human body*. How absurd to claim that a transient, thought-created phenomenon, based on ever-changing conceptions, can have any value as an *absolute standard of measurement!* Yet we have no better one. If we attempt to gauge the magnitude of any object, it must be by this unstable, imaginary unit of measure. But aside from the question of convenience, is there any better warrant for adopting the *human* body as our standard, than there is for selecting the atom, or some one of the heavenly bodies? Is it not within the bounds of reason to infer that beings may exist, to whom the compass of the universe lying

within the limit of human vision, would appear as *the point of a needle* in size? and by analogy, is it not reasonable to assume that to their vision there would appear, in regions altogether unapproachable by human sight, bodies whose forms and peculiar characteristics are quite incomprehensible from *our* point of view?

Now let us turn again from considering the *extent* of the physical universe, to the question of *number* in relation to it. No doubt it sometimes seems to the prosaic, matter-of-fact materialist, that the number of *suns* and *solar systems* *must* be limited, because they are large enough to be readily appreciable by human vision, and, therefore, *might* be counted, *could we only see them all*. But as we have just intimated, an *absolute* standard of size is *unthinkable*. The atom seems small because we compare it with a body of the *human* type. According to the materialistic interpretation of things, every body that lies within the range of our perceptive powers, may be resolved into lesser organic units which, too, possess values of only *relative* importance; and every body, likewise, forms a part of some larger body or aggregation of bodies. Every body of which we have any accurate knowledge occupies a position *in*

the midst of the scale in regard to size, being apparently neither the *largest* nor the *smallest* in existence. We might, under suitable conditions, be able to determine the exact number of units *of a certain sort* in any particular body we choose to designate; or we might at least form some kind of an estimate of their number; at all events we are sure that an exact number *of such* units *does* exist in *that particular body*. But it is only by taking some *distinct type of unit* as the basis of computation that we are able to declare the number of units in any body to be *fixed*. We must assume some definitely recognizable unit as our starting-point, before we can proceed to multiply it in greater forms, or divide it in lesser ones.

The basic unit of Being is the *Self*. Whenever we think of a *finite self* (i. e., a self which is a fragment or a fraction of something), we must look for the complement of its finitude or deficiency *outside of it*. According to the degree one supposes himself to be finite, in proportion to the insignificance of the fraction of Being he feels himself to represent, must its complement seem *infinite* and *incomprehensible*. If he conceives himself a *human body*, the number of atoms of which it is composed far exceeds his power of reckoning; but he then

thinks of them as, in a sense, *parts of himself*. As his idea of self expands and becomes more inclusive—as the thought of human limitation and separateness vanishes, and the narrower thought of self is embraced in the unity of a larger conception, the significance of *number*, in its relation to Being, disappears. In the *absolute sense* there is only *one* self; but it admits of indefinite multiplication or division *in thought, just like the abstract unit of mathematics*. The Supreme Being alone can appreciate the full significance of the *complete unity of life*. To finite view, the world must appear in a manifold aspect (i. e., as composed of separate parts or selves). In the Infinite consciousness there can be no distinction of “I” and “thou,” of *self* and *not self*; all is unity. Only as we descend into the *finite realm* of consciousness does unity begin to be multiplied and divided. Let the processes of multiplication and division of the Self in thought be once entered upon, and they may be extended indefinitely. But such numerical distinctions are not *absolutely real*. Neither number nor distance possesses for us any actual significance *in the abstract*. Only when associated with *concrete things, objects, bodies*, are they meaningful. Whenever we attempt to estimate dimensions *appreciatively*, we must assume at

least *two bodies*, or else two positions supposed to lie within one body. An appreciable estimate of spatial relations, then, is possible because we conceive of matter as *bodies*. But as we have already indicated, both size and number have only *apparent* values in bodily distinctions; so that we have no absolute standard by which to estimate matter, either in regard to its dimensions or the number of units it expresses. Both considerations depend on the *observer's* standpoint. The absolute significance of number is expressed in the *unit*—the basis of enumeration—and *infinity*. Two lines may diverge from a point, but that point may be conceived to exist *anywhere* in an ideal scale that extends indefinitely in both directions. So with the conception Matter. Material units seem to diverge in endless numbers from any appreciable point we choose to designate in a wholly arbitrary scale.

The value of *any given* number is derived from the basis of number, the unit. But with a *variable unit*, it *can have no absolute value*. Therefore we are forced to the conclusion that as there is no *absolutely fixed unit of matter*, there can be *no absolutely fixed number of material bodies*. If space, and the unit of matter, and the number of its units, are all purely ideal, the material universe we perceive outwardly, cannot be *absolutely real*, but is only *apparent*.

Consciousness is *manifested in centers*; it appears in that way outwardly. The efficiency of any center depends on the *degree of concentration* it represents. Every center, as a mentality, reflects *the Self*. Mentalities develop through concentration. The mental factor of Being—the mental phase of consciousness—gives rise to *innumerable images* of the Self of selves, just as mirrors may be made to reflect and re-reflect an object indefinitely, so that it shall appear in every conceivable position and guise. The *position* of each reflecting medium determines the *form* of the image projected by it. The way one's life represents the Self depends on his *view-point*. Every form we observe in our outer world is in some degree an *image of the Self*. Some of those images may be the vaguest conceivable representations of the original—in-distinct, imperfect, distorted; but in the last analysis, all derive their existence from the Self of selves. As mentalities develop, the images of the Self they reflect, or project, change. Some mentalities reflect only remote reflections of the original.

Here, then, we obtain a *hint* as to the correct solution of the problem of the *apparent* existence of an *indefinite number* of material centers. We have already referred to the fact that the abstract

unit of mathematics can be multiplied indefinitely, and also that there is no absolutely fixed concrete unit of matter. Matter is not an *entity*; it is the *outer correspondence*, the *symbolical expression* of mind. Material centers are the outward manifestations of mentalities, mind-centers. But mind-centers are transient, variable, ever-changing; and as they change, the *images they reflect* change also. The basis of the formative principle manifested as Mind, is the Principle of principles—Spirit—the *eternal, changeless, formless, unconditioned Essence* of all that appears. The Spiritual Principle is the basis of all manifested life, just as the mathematical principle is the basis of every demonstration of figures.



V.

THE INNER WORLD.

SPACE pertains to the perception of things *outwardly*, as they are represented in *objective* relations.

Time pertains to their perception *inwardly*, as they are represented in *subjective* relations.

Every person is familiar with the three-dimensional conception of *space*; but comparatively few people are accustomed to think of *time* in that way. Yet a three-dimensional conception of *time* is just as essential to an adequate comprehension of the *subjective* phases of life, as is a three-dimensional conception of *space* to such a comprehension of its *objective* phases. Nearly all phenomena of our outer world would be incomprehensible were it not for our recognition of three dimensions of space—length, breadth and depth. Quite as surely must certain phenomena of our inner world remain enigmatical until we regard them as *dependent on a three-dimensional conception of time*. Distance is the factor most readily appreciable in our conceptions

of both space and time. In space, we locate *objects* by distance; and in time, we chronicle *events* by distance.

The human mind is just as incapable of conceiving of an absolute beginning or end of time, as it is of conceiving of similar limitations of space. A stream of phenomena continues to pass in review before the mind *as long as we view life* in that way, i. e., estimate its *duration*—measure it by points related consecutively in time. But the inner aspect of things is revealed by means of other dimensions than length alone; *breadth* and *depth* are modes of extension that pertain to time as well as to space. When we examine thought, we find that it possesses superficial, *broadly* extensive properties, requiring *two* dimensions of time for their representation; and still further, *substantial* properties, implying *depth* as well, and requiring *three* dimensions of time for their representation. Both dimension and number are elemental ideas which underlie all diversified forms of expression. They are in no way dependent on any particular class of phenomena with which they are associated. As we look observingly into the interior realm, we find that subjective phenomena, thoughts—“mental things”—are related in other ways than the *linear* alone. The kind of thought

necessary to estimate and compare facts, events, opinions, has breadth as well as duration; it extends in *more than one direction* of time. This is the distinctively *intellectual* type of thought. It exhibits different degrees of intensity, as do colors in space, but it suggests only *superficial* qualities. In space we *see* only the *surfaces* of bodies; yet we have evidence of their substantial quality, although *none of the physical senses* reveal it, because, holding the three-dimensional conception of space, we are *obliged* to see objects in that way, i. e., as substantial bodies. And it is precisely so in regard to the interior aspect of life. Thoughts have *substantial* as well as superficial properties. One may be conscious of hardly more than a mere procession of mental phenomena in his thought-world, as he counts the passing moments; or he may recognize the broad phase of thought, while almost utterly oblivious to its *depth*; or again, he may comprehend its *substantial content*, its "solid" quality. Thoughts, doctrines, conceptions of truth, systems of belief, appear to grow and sustain relations to one another in the temporal world, precisely as do bodies in the spatial world. In order to properly estimate spatial relations, we must assume *some point* as a center from which to observe objective phenomena. We conceive

of motion and extension because *our standpoint is fixed*. We see an outer world extending around us *in every direction*. We seem to stand at the center of an indefinitely extensive sphere. Just so, in order to properly estimate temporal relations, we must assume *some point* as a center from which to observe subjective phenomena; we must *concentrate, center* our consciousness. It is only in this way that we become aware of past and future in connection with our lives. From this central view-point we see an inner world extending around us *in every direction* of time. To properly comprehend the content of our inner world, then, we must realize the meaning of the three-dimensional conception of time.

This conception will prove the key to an understanding of *psychic phenomena* that seem weird and mysterious to those who are unaccustomed to associate more than one dimension with time.

An illustration of the narrowest imaginable thought of life is furnished by the individual who considers only the amount of personal gratification the present moment can be made to afford, e. g. the habitual drunkard, the reckless sensualist.

His thought, which embraces but a single

instant of his own career in a personal sense, denotes an essentially *animal* type of life. Even on the lowest distinctly human plane, the individual who considers simply his own interests, usually looks ahead and takes into account, in some measure at least, the probable result of his immediate action in its bearing on his future comfort and happiness. The most intelligent, cultured person may think only of his *own* wants and his *own* advancement, planning and scheming to achieve what seems likely to afford him the greatest amount of personal gratification, either at present or in the future. His thought of life expresses virtually but *one* dimension—*length*. He may be strictly honest, honorable and even charitable, in a narrow sense—often finding his own pleasure enhanced by giving—but always acting, primarily, with a view to increasing his own happiness and perpetuating his narrow, personal interests, either in this or some other world. The conception of salvation embodied in the “old theology” was essentially of this *everlasting* sort. It considered the welfare of the individual *apart from* that of the race. It took into account only the *linear* aspect of life.

This elementary conception is fast being superseded in the race-consciousness by one

which recognizes *breadth* as well as *length* of life, and includes within its scope other individuals—family, friends, the nation, the race. In the latter thought, personal considerations are *subordinated* to the interests and well-being of a larger circle of individuals. Each personal life constitutes a segment of this circle.

We find elements of the heroic and tragic even on the surface of life. Their presence suggests *breadth*, as well as *length* of experience. Great breadth of thought leads to an utter abandonment of the personal attitude. It enables one to reach out beyond the restricted limits of personality, and embrace a broader life, without fear of losing his *identity*; for he is then conscious of possessing a *larger selfhood*.

It is this conception of life which prompts altruism, philanthropy, humanitarianism.

According to an ancient Roman legend, there opened in the Forum a yawning chasm, which the soothsayers declared could be closed only through the sacrifice of Rome's choicest possession. Thereupon the noble Curtius mounted his horse and rode headlong into the abyss, which immediately closed over him. Innumerable heroes have sacrificed their *personal* lives for family and country. Hosts of martyrs have given their bodies to be burned, rather than sur-

render allegiance to principle. Among the lower animals, birds and even insects, instances of self-sacrifice are by no means rare. The mother has been known to deliberately give up her life to save the young offspring. In certain tropical species of ants, the warriors commonly sacrifice their lives to protect the *colony* from harm.

The universal instinct which prompts self-sacrifice, self-immolation, is certainly significant. It does not result from mere blind, mad recklessness, yielding to the impulse of self-destruction, annihilation. It does not indicate an abandonment of common sense or reason; it is an acknowledgment of the supremacy of a higher element in our nature, a more trustworthy guide, which surpasses the instinct of self-gratification. In our most crucial experiences we trust *intuition* implicitly to lead us in the direction of the *highest good*.

But even the *very broadest* conception of life does not satisfy our supreme desire. The *eternal* type of life is not only long and broad; it is also *deep*. It extends in *all* directions of time. A *center* and *three* dimensions, or modes of extension, must be represented in its most perfect symbol; and these requirements are met with in the *sphere* alone. The point, the line, the

surface, are all found in the sphere. It typifies the world, nature's most complete expression.

Truly, the *finite* in man is "as the grass of the field." Human flesh is cheap, indeed. Looking backward over a past of almost inconceivable duration, we are profoundly impressed by the spectacle of countless myriads of lives flashing into view and disappearing again from sight, like an endless shower of meteors. Even on this insignificant planet, armies of human beings are hurried from sight daily, by war, famine, pestilence, accident, or their own folly and recklessness. From such a sweeping survey, human beings might be accounted almost as valueless as the ants we heedlessly crush under foot at every step.

But are these fleeting *phenomena* all there is of life? Are they not, rather, like scintillating sparks thrown off by our *deeper, Universal* life, as it moves majestically on through eternity, altogether unperceived by the *materialistic* vision? Are they not, in the deepest sense, expressions of a Universal Self underlying and manifesting itself in all appearances?

As the perennial plant sends up fresh shoots in the spring, which grow and flourish, and die at the approach of winter, so the unseen, the *real* life, manifests itself in these myriad finite apparitions.

Who, in attempting to sound the depths of consciousness, has ever found a bottom to mark the *limit* of that life he has been accustomed to regard as distinctively *his own*? And who, after such an attempt, has not been profoundly impressed with a sense of the unlimitedness and the unfathomableness of consciousness? Why, then, should we seek to *restrict the scope* of our selfhood? What province in the boundless realm of mind can we, as individuals, properly designate as the exclusive domain of any merely *personal* self? After all, what do we mean by "self"? How varied are the expressions with which we have associated this term, even within the brief period of our remembrance! At one time we may have used it to designate a frail, material body, subject to disease and external forces; at another, a free, spiritual Being, conscious that life transcends the plane of phenomena. For what *reality*, then, does the term stand? Who can comprehend its full meaning?

These fragmentary, finite lives you and I claim as our peculiar possessions, represent incidents or moments in the life of a common, deeper Self. No finite thought of self can more than faintly reflect the Infinite Self. We are frequently conscious of power that invades the domain of our finite thought from some undis-

covered, unexplored region of our Being, and assumes control of the lower faculties. We may, at any time, rise to a plane of consciousness where our commoner experiences are transcended. And by relinquishing our previous standard of selfhood, and accepting a more perfect one, we have satisfactory evidence of a deeper Self within; for the higher type of selfhood to which we aspire, and to which we may attain, is really as much *ours* as the one we have heretofore entertained.

As we awaken by degrees to a larger consciousness, we become aware that not alone the fraction of past experience we have been wont to distinguish as peculiarly *our own*, because we *remember* it as such, is ours, but that *all experience*, under whatever conditions of life, and through however apparently independent external forms it is manifested, is bound together in the life of *one Self*. Verily, in the *deepest sense*, we "live, and move, and have our Being" in that Self.

Every man is conscious of a self in which his separate, personal experiences are so unified that he knows them to spring from a *single source*. Waking and sleeping, he preserves his identity from day to day and from year to year. But if we readily associate expressions separated in

time with one self, it is equally true that we may assume a broader basis by extending our thought so that it shall associate expressions separated in *space* with one self.

Jesus' thought of self embraced all mankind. He said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "Abide in me, and I in you." Paul declared that "we are all members of one body." Jesus' thought was *deep* and *vital*, as well as *broad*; *intensive*, as well as *extensive*. Herein, it surpassed the thought of all other great seers. No thought is perfectly harmonious unless it is poised at the *absolute* center, so that it is in unison with the thought of the Supreme Being. Jesus could say unreservedly: "I and my Father are one," for his thought was in perfect accord with the Divine consciousness. He revealed the eternity, the *fulness*, the wholeness of life. "I came that ye might have life, and that, having it, ye might have it *more abundantly*."

One may be sympathetic, charitable, public-spirited, and even philanthropic, without being conscious of the *deeper* meaning of life. Emotional intensity is superficial, not deep. Joy and sorrow *meet* in the profoundest depths of consciousness. The deepest sorrow does not call forth tears, nor the highest joy, exultation. It is

the *finite* in us that weeps and exults, while the Infinite remains unmoved—not from stoical indifference, but because of that *perfect poise* which enables it to appreciate life in its *complete* significance, without stopping to dwell on each trivial incident. In this way we may stand *outside* our finite lives and view them comprehensively.

The phenomena of life—sparks, as it were, issuing from *real* life—so dazzle us that it is with the utmost difficulty that we become acquainted with our deeper Self, the self of more than personal significance. No general appreciation of the *eternity* of life is possible until educational methods are adopted which are calculated to develop the *expansive* power latent in every individual. The life and teaching of Jesus must remain an enigma to students of human nature and practical economists, until this attribute of life is taken into account.

The eternal life is not a *dream of the future*; it is *without beginning* or *end*, centered in the eternal NOW.

Outer phenomena are symbols of inner experiences. We are acquainted with matter in solid, liquid, and gaseous states. When any *solid* substance is exposed to a definite degree of heat, it

is reduced to a *liquid*. Likewise, when the temperature rises to a definite point still higher, the liquid becomes a volatile *gas*. Through the influence of heat, ice is converted into water, and water into steam. In the solid state it is characterized by *rigidity*—a tendency to hold unyieldingly to its own. This state corresponds to the cold, crystallized, materialistic, selfish, exclusive, personal type of life which refrains from *giving out* or relinquishing its selfish life, for fear of losing something it deems its rightful possession. In the liquid state it is characterized by *mobility*—a tendency to relax, spread out and extend superficially, thereby parting with specific distinctions of form. This state corresponds to the broad, mutual, inclusive, social type of life, which reaches out and sacrifices itself for the common good, never fearing the effacement of individuality or the loss of its own peculiar rights and prerogatives.

In the vaporous state it is characterized by *expansiveness*—a tendency to move out in all directions and to escape from confinement by bursting asunder the bonds that restrain it. This state corresponds to the *spontaneous, eternal* life—the life of spiritual freedom that transcends finite limitations.

VI.

CONSCIOUSNESS.

THE more we study the world of externals,—the objective world we imagine to exist distinctly outside of us,—the more we appropriate, build into our *thought* ideas presented to us objectively, the larger our conception of life grows, and the more we realize of selfhood subjectively; and, conversely, the more we *think*, expand mentally, the larger and richer our outer world grows. We note such an intimate correspondence between the two worlds that it is at once evident that they sustain very close relations to each other, and that some underlying bond joins them. The superficial thinker fancies that the world he sees as external is quite independent of his inner, subjective world; but the moment his thought-forces come into a *vital* relation with the outer order, he is conscious that the two are united. All separating distinctions disappear, and the two are merged in one.

Every man's outer world reflects his thought—images the self he knows inwardly. The self

and its image are one; but one can only see himself *outwardly* in the reflection. In the deeper sense, then, he perceives nothing *entirely apart* from himself; the self is all and in all. When, in some moment of conceit, he fancies that he has attained to a standard that represents the full proportions of his selfhood, forthwith there arises before the mind a vision of a *larger self*, embracing the former ideal. As we continue to study our outer world,—a world that at first seems to consist of innumerable independent selves—its apparent variety and differentiation are found to be unified in the life of *one Self*. As our thought goes out and comes into contact with the world of symbols, their aspect changes. As they come within the scope of our comprehension, their deeper significance is found to be *internal* rather than *external*. We can only recognize (*re-cognize* or know again) what we have already known, even though it be remotely. Evidently this process may be continued indefinitely. So long as anything in our world appears to be severed from vital connection with our thought, we may continue to merge the external in the internal, to include the objective within the subjective, by *enlarging our sphere of self-consciousness*. In the last analysis, then, we come into contact with the *real*

essence of things through *self-consciousness*. The stronger and deeper this consciousness, the more closely we approximate to perfect knowledge of what is real.

On the inferior planes of consciousness, our outer world seems essentially foreign to us, excluded from our self-life, a mighty mechanism, the motive power of which is *blind force*, devoid of intelligence and lacking soulful qualities. Conscious only of impotence inwardly, we are fairly overwhelmed by this show of external forces. But as we slowly awaken from the state of lethargy or inertia that furnishes the basis of such a conception of self, and makes such a construction of life possible,—as we affirm our deeper selfhood and more fully realize its true proportions, the sovereignty of external things at once begins to diminish. As the power of the inner waxes, the supremacy of the outer wanes. While our higher, spiritual faculties are dormant, the world appears dead; but when they awaken, it seems to be quickened into life.

Every man sees such things as he sees because he has reached just the stage of development of consciousness which makes it inevitable that the ultimate Reality or Essence of things shall appear to him in such a fashion,—under

precisely those forms, endowed with exactly those qualities and attributes which he recognizes,—and *not* because the phenomena he perceives have an *absolute*, objective existence, *apart from his thought*.

If one's world is of the material sort, it is because his mind is so imbued with that quality of thought that everything must appear to him in that guise, and not because anything possesses, independent of his thought, the material value he ascribes to it. Every change in consciousness on the part of the observer causes the aspect of things perceived by him externally to change correspondingly. *What* one sees depends on *how* he sees. If, then, one wishes to improve the world, which ordinarily seems firmly established outwardly according to inexorable laws, he holds the *key* to its transformation *within himself*. It is only necessary to cultivate a *different sort of consciousness*; and the degree to which he has acquired the habit of effecting internal changes of this kind determines his mastery over things external. This fact is absolutely true in every relation of life. There are not two distinct kinds of world—material and spiritual; these terms simply signify two distinct *aspects*, modes, or degrees of manifestation, of *one* Reality. The conception

Matter excludes the conception Spirit, and *vice versa*. The absolute Essence of things is unalterable; it only *appears* to change as we regard it in different ways, or in varying lights.

Spirit is not an entity or substance existing apart from matter, concealed from view, waiting to be revealed to mortals at death. On the contrary, it is ever-present Reality, independent of time and space—not *a* reality, or a particular *kind* of reality, but Reality *itself*; the absolute, ideal Principle or Essence of things, about which all conceivable qualities and attributes are predicable; unalterable, formless, undifferentiated, unconditioned; neither describable nor comprehensible, but simply *appreciable*. By many, the spiritual realm is conceived to be a sort of extension of, or adjunct to, the material. They look forward to the time when it shall be disclosed to them as if by magic. But it is only through cultivation of the *spiritual faculty* that Spirit can be made to appear, and that factor of experience does not depend on time or space. It is futile to search for Spirit within the domain of *objective* experience; it must be approached *subjectively*.

Whenever we try to apprehend the Absolute Principle of things, Spirit, with the intellect, we

see it indefinitely extended in time or space, differentiated in endless numbers, relations, forms—just as by refraction and reflection, light, although indefinable and indescribable in its homogeneous aspect, is resolved into an infinite number of diffused rays; and in this heterogeneous aspect it displays a world of endlessly changing hues. Yet the principle which is the source of these varied phenomena remains all the while unaltered, regardless of the way we chance to perceive its effects. It is not light, but our manner of *observing* it, that changes. One person may possess a normally sensitive vision, while another is color-blind or even blind; but it is only the *effects* perceived that vary, and not, in its ultimate essence, that which is perceived. The existence of discrepancies in impressions received must be accounted for by the observer's view-point, or the conditions under which his experiments are made. We see outwardly just what we are inwardly *conditioned* to see by reason of the *status of our own consciousness*; and if we would see otherwise, it must be primarily, through the cultivation of a different quality or degree of consciousness, rather than through the substitution of different external conditions. In the last analysis, the suggestion that leads to a change of view must operate

from *within*; the view-point must be altered. Inasmuch as one's own consciousness is the prime factor in the creation of his outer world, if he would live in one superior to that which he now enjoys, he must set about transforming his *consciousness*; and it matters not how radical the change in his view-point may be, it will effect a corresponding regeneration of his outer world, as surely as the image in the mirror corresponds to the figure of the body that stands before it. His attention, then, should not be directed, primarily, toward changing those specific objects and circumstances he may have imagined to have an absolute existence outside him, but to transforming his inward life or consciousness, thus preparing the way for an outward change.

This is quite the reverse of what most men are accustomed to regard the true order of things. The ordinary type of mind grows confused and bewildered in trying to find out what is real, either through the senses or the intellect—faculties which are but mediums of interpretation—and finally jumps at erroneous conclusions, mistaking its own imperfect *thoughts* about truth for the Truth *itself*. Truth may be formulated intellectually, as the spiritual idea of the poet is cast into forms of verse symbolizing or suggesting to appreciative minds the

Reality known to the poet himself, and which must be discerned by the reader as well, in the last analysis, through the *intuitive* faculty. Spirit can no more be perceived through the intellect than can the stars through the microscope. Many pursue the quest for spiritual truth with the intellect, until it leads them to agnosticism or pessimism; others, in whom the discriminative faculty is less keenly developed, are *satisfied* with such aspects of truth as the intellect is able to reveal, and imagine those transient, kaleidoscopic *reflections* of the real to be Reality *itself*. But "spiritual things are spiritually discerned." The intellect can neither perceive what lies above its own plane, nor recognize the *existence* of such a plane.

Therefore learning, of the conventional description—intellectual knowledge, observations concerning truth—may, and frequently does, preclude the discernment of truth itself, by pre-occupying the entire mental horizon so as to obscure the higher vision, causing the attention to be so constantly and persistently centered in the lower channels of perception that, through practical neglect of the higher soul-faculty, its very existence is often either forgotten or denied. Conventional standards of education as

yet make comparatively little account of this highest of human faculties, and the incomparable benefits to be derived from its further development. The material consciousness is cultivated and freely propagates itself, while the spiritual starves for lack of suitable nourishment—ideals upon which to feed. But first of all we must become aware of the *existence* of a spiritual faculty as a *positive certainty*, and not as a mere vague, shadowy possibility.

Intuition is the supreme court of our Being, from the decisions of which no appeal can be made. However, for him who first discerns the Truth, Reality, Spirit, intuitively, the intellect and the senses furnish invaluable sidelights which add immeasurably to its appreciation. Their echoes are like the overtones or harmonics accompanying the fundamental tone heard when any string of a musical instrument is struck or caused to vibrate. No man in whose consciousness the light of truth is entirely diffused, by the refracting power of the intellect, into separate beliefs, definite periods or external events, can appreciate Spirit. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

When one's ear becomes attuned to certain discordant notes in the symphony of life, or his eye over-sensitive to certain distasteful colors,

from constant emphasis of them in their separateness, the *ideal unity* of life known through the spiritual consciousness alone, fades away, so that in time he comes to realize nothing but a narrow, disjointed, material existence. After awhile, by dwelling perpetually on the *phenomenal* aspect of life, he grows to perceive only a monotonous repetition of certain coarser vibrations; his spiritual sight and hearing become continually duller, and the distinguishable vibrations coarser, until he finds himself in the silence of that "outer darkness" which is death.

Only as one's consciousness expands sufficiently to enable him to appreciate Reality itself, does he understand the true meaning of experiences that come to him, seemingly at random, from without; and not until divested of the fictitious values with which time and space have endowed them, are they visible in their true light.

The purely spiritual consciousness is both broad and deep, extending beyond the personal sphere and furnishing the common basis of all separate, superficial experiences that arise in our lives. He who realizes this type of consciousness may, through it, reach another's thought

fundamentally enough to suggest to him ideas that, if accepted and acted upon until they penetrate into the more superficial channels of expression, will transform his whole outward appearance. If, as in the case of Jesus, one's consciousness be profound enough, its regenerating power may be made manifest *instantaneously*, providing a sufficient degree of receptivity exists in the mind of the subject toward whom it is exerted. Such is the *possibility* of consciousness when one becomes fully awakened to the power behind his own and other finite lives; and today many are rapidly approaching that point in their actual experience.

Out of this cosmic, spiritual substratum, this *fundamental* type of consciousness, arises a multitude of individualized experiences, just as myriads of leaves, each endowed with peculiar characteristics of its own, spring from a common source, the life of the tree. The *forms* through which this personal aspect of consciousness is expressed, appear and disappear; but deeply hidden beneath every superficial expression lies the *eternal, spiritual* consciousness, ever the same, the ground of immortality in every human being. To realize immortality is the supreme desire of every man—the end toward which his hopes tend, however mistaken he may be in re-

gard to its real significance and the method of its attainment. In the last analysis, the incentive to live is the desire to escape from the harassing conditions of the lower planes to some *higher* state of consciousness which will afford us peace and satisfaction.

When one realizes this permanent, eternal type of consciousness which enables him to become aware of a deep, *spiritual identity* persisting through all reverses—such as loss of property, or friends, and even the dissolution of the body—he possesses a clear title to immortality; for by steadfastly identifying one's self with that element in consciousness which is able to survive the death of the body, because it transcends all conditions of time and space, viz., spiritual Principle, life and immortality are brought to light. Conditions change, forms perish, beliefs disappear; nothing is stable on the sensuous or the intellectual planes. By allying one's *Self* and one's hope of perpetual existence with *things, events* or *beliefs*—transient factors of experience, uncertain phases of life—by building of “wood, hay or stubble,” one must, sooner or later, suffer the loss of what he has built; and even though he be “saved as by fire,” it will be naked, forlorn and destitute of that spiritual garment which must be woven, stitch by stitch,

through experience in the highest realm of consciousness.

"I who must be saved because I cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God ; ay, what
was, shall be."

Every man who desires to know the Truth, Reality, Spirit, must *assume* the spiritual standpoint *without waiting* to find it through an intellectual *process of reasoning*; it cannot be revealed by any such method, since it lies on an entirely *different plane*. He must once for all *discard* that method and cease trying to discover it in that way. When one cultivates the intuitive faculty, and lives according to its affirmations, its efficiency increases, like the grain of mustard seed which grows into a mighty tree. When one looks steadfastly spiritward, Spirit begins to come into *evidence*, and the spiritual consciousness to displace the material. When the invalid, looking at life for the first time, perhaps, from its true center, declares "I am well," he is only asserting the supremacy of Spirit, allying his life with the *eternal* element in consciousness. It may sound strange at first, but it is none the less the deepest truth to which he has ever given utterance; and the *verbal* expression, if persisted in, will be the antecedent of a

more general and vital expression. By assuming the ideal element in life, appropriating it, building it into our thought, we shall find it, in time, to be the real.

As one must be familiar with the mathematical *principle* in order to be able to solve mathematical problems, so also must one first become clearly conscious of the spiritual Principle before the deeper, more vital problems of active life will solve themselves to the entire satisfaction of his *reason*.

Examples in arithmetic are worked out by means of figures representing numbers, the relative values of which are definitely known; but in algebra another class of problems is encountered, the solution of which, by reason of their more abstruse nature, demands the introduction of *another factor*, viz., certain letters of the alphabet, used to denote unknown quantities.

Likewise in the deeper problems of life arising out of the spiritual nature of man, it is often necessary to introduce an "X," symbolizing a spiritual factor *unknown to the finite mind*. This "X" is the element of Faith, "the assurance of [or the giving substance to] things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." In the practical affairs of life, it stands for a spiritual

Reality which we are unable to define in exact terms, although we are perfectly conscious of its existence. We are apt to overlook the *intent* of the *first* clause of this declaration of Paul's. Faith is not alone "*evidence*," it is "*substance*" as well. In the spiritual consciousness lies the potency of the fulfilment of one's desire, not only subjectively, but also *objectively*; for the subjective and objective factors in the case are blended together. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye *have* received them, and ye shall have them." To be actuated by this Spirit, is to be conscious of the presence in our lives of the *essence of all that is real*, the source from which all realization proceeds, the power by which all objective things are created or brought forth into manifestation. In every instance where we reach the *heart* of life, the spiritual germ, the center from which all expressive power issues, the outward transformation will be marked. The more direct the method, the more speedy and decisive will be the result. This was the position of Jesus, and the secret of his power over men and nature. He recognized

in Spirit the *basic Principle* of all things. He perceived it directly, intuitively, by the inner, soul-sight, not through distorted and inverted *intellectual images*. His consciousness penetrated to the heart of expression, Spirit, causing morbid, spectral thoughts of suffering and disease in the sick and infirm to be undermined and displaced by the revitalizing, spiritual consciousness he was able to awaken.

Genuine Faith, then, is creative, being itself the *substance* out of which all things are made, constructed, brought forth into objective realization; "so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear." This polarizing consciousness is very different from "such stuff as dreams are made of." Jesus referred to it as "the pearl of great price," "the kingdom of heaven," and "the hidden treasure." No man who invites and cultivates it steadfastly, with singleness of purpose, can fail to create for himself a congenial environment. It will manifest itself mentally in inspiring thoughts, pictures of health, feelings of peace, joy and satisfaction. It differs from the dreams of the visionary idealist or theorist, in that it *appropriates* the ideal Principle and *brings it down into the realm of actual, practical affairs*. The visions of ideal-

ists and optimists are too often divorced from the world of actuality; the chasm between the two is too wide. But it must be bridged before one can experience the real in life. Every man who takes firm hold of the spiritual Principle finds things, forces, events, circumstances, friends, and the necessities of life, ranging themselves around him as planets follow the sun, and satellites the planets. He can no more *push them from* him than the man with the negative, material consciousness can *ward off* the things he fears and hates. The magnet will attract the loose particles that are susceptible to its influence.

It is not sufficient to hold in mind and emphasize *specific* thoughts of good, *definite personal* ends, or objects of selfish desire. That is why so many who long to attain to the higher life go faltering, stumbling, and halting along, beset by all kinds of perplexing problems, apprehensive lest they shall fail to reach the goal.

The spiritual consciousness is a *soul atmosphere*—not one of many states of mind to be sought after, but the very *mind substance itself*, out of which grow all subjective states and their correspondences, objective things. This is the plane of the Logos. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made

that hath been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "Before Abraham was, *I am.*" This consciousness may be shared by all men who earnestly and persistently desire it.

Broadly distinguished, there are two methods by which men seek to transform their own lives and conditions, and those of others. Their attention is directed either to certain *objects* of consciousness (a secondary matter), or to consciousness *itself* (the primary factor). The physical scientist deals objectively with physical forces, and their relations in *things*. The efforts of the physician are exerted from the extreme outer circle of life—its circumference—with the intention of affecting the center and inducing the inner Being to awaken and resume its normal activities. By application of material remedies, by concentration of forces at certain definite vantage points on the surface of life, in the material realm, he endeavors to effect changes in the inner, subjective realm. Ordinarily but an insignificant portion of the whole organism is affected by this method, while at best it is possible to reach only a mere fragment of the patient's nature; so that, save on the physical plane, his life remains virtually unchanged.

The physician who diagnoses symptoms of disease, and relies on suggestions which operate subconsciously on the chemical plane, proceeds from effect to cause, and deals primarily with *results*, instead of penetrating to their *ultimate source*. While in this way he is frequently able to gain the *specific end* sought, he is utterly powerless to establish a new, *perpetual* soul-consciousness which, once implanted, remains as "a well of water springing up unto eternal life," being itself the germ of a *spontaneous*, out-growing life, which can no more be quenched than can the *world of nature*.

The world in general still continues to assiduously pursue the clumsy, crude, roundabout, cart-before-the-horse method of realizing ends, in spite of the magnificent example of Jesus and the early Christians, and the *marvelous achievements* that attended their adoption of the *reverse* method. "Narrow is the gate and straightened the way [spiritual consciousness] that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it." Jesus rejected the objective method *in toto*. He healed only such as were *inwardly receptive* to the Truth in a degree sufficient to enable him to reach their lives from the *spiritual center* of Being, at which his thought continually rested. This method (the subjective) assumes the *Prin-*

principle of consciousness to be the *basis of all expression*. It exerts its activity from the absolute center of life, working outward toward all points on the circumference. As each individual's center of consciousness becomes established at the universal center, the whole outward *aspect* of things changes for him. According to this method, instead of supposing the basis of consciousness to be in the *physical* realm, we assume spiritual Principle as the basis of all physical manifestations; and wherever this affirmation is made, not as a theory, but as a *fact of self-consciousness*, its correctness is proven by results achieved.

God is Spirit, absolute, unconditioned Principle. Nothing real is outside him, external to him. There can exist for him nothing *transcending his own consciousness*, no objective thing superior to his own subjectivity; otherwise he would not be the Supreme Being. His will is absolute freedom and spontaneity. As we approach this standpoint, where the supremacy of the subjective is realized, we know it through *actual experience* to be the basis of all expression.

We do not realize heaven by *going to it*, but by assuming that consciousness, *now*. "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven" (this subjective,

spiritual kingdom which is "within you"), and all else "shall be added unto you." "And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, which *is* in heaven."

If, then, one is to satisfactorily determine or control his experiences, he must have access to the *key* to all experience, the basis of all that is thought or perceived—the spiritual consciousness; for all *definite mental states* and thoughts are evolved from it, as are forms of matter from the ether. It is only from this subjective viewpoint that we are able to perceive the unity and true relations of objective phenomena. In proportion to the degree in which we realize this consciousness, are we able to work changes which shall appear objectively in *things*; just as the chemist, by dealing with the elementary basis of a certain substance, is able to transmute it into another; *i. e.*, by so altering the structure of its molecules, through agencies which operate in their atomic substratum, the substance is made to *assume a different form*.

Now, if the spiritual, God-consciousness is assumed as the *basis of all experience*, we have here a factor underlying all individual lives, and therefore common to *all minds*,—a sort of common multiple of all, as it were—an elementary,

ideal substance out of which all specific forms of experience are evolved.

According to the *degree* to which one realizes this fundamental consciousness, is he able to produce the *objective results* he desires. There is no place here for caprice or wantonness. As his consciousness deepens, and he approaches the absolute center of life in God, he knows only *unity of purpose*, singleness of aim, uniformity and consistency in results. As the superficial, ephemeral consciousness produces symptoms of disease (the disintegrating force), so a deeper consciousness gives rise to expressions of *wholeness*. By reaching in one's own life the *common basis*, in consciousness, beneath all individual lives, and, from the position thus gained, touching the springs of expression underlying another's life, it may be made to assume a more normal character. Jesus said to one whom he healed, "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity"; *i. e.*, through singleness of thought and purpose, recognizing only the *ideal* in his *own* consciousness, he was able to reach the deeper Self of the sick person, and thereby to accomplish a transformation of his outward expression.

One finds in his orchard a wild, gnarly apple tree producing sour, unpalatable fruit. He cuts

off the top, and grafts shoots of some choice variety on to the old trunk. The whole appearance of the tree is thereby altered. Henceforth it yields foliage and fruit of a *new order*. The wild variety does not *develop into the cultivated*, neither does the *material* consciousness *grow into the spiritual*; they are quite independent of each other. Not until one *assumes the spiritual view-point*, and begins life anew from its level, will his outward conditions be completely and permanently changed. "That which is born of the flesh [the wild apple tree, "the natural man," according to Paul] is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven."

The higher consciousness in man is *grafted on to* the lower, the material, which has developed gradually by the slow process of evolution; but it is of a *totally different order*, and is not to be confounded with its inferior counterfeit. If one waits to *reason* his way out of intellectual difficulties, he will *never see the spiritual light*. "Let the dead bury their dead." *Assume* the spiritual consciousness, and hold to it *constantly and exclusively*, until it becomes *permanently established*.

No ideal is *in itself* extravagant. In most instances where men fail to realize high ideals, it is not because their *ideals* are preposterous, but because they have entertained them without a sense of consciousness sufficiently profound and unwavering to *effect their realization*. They have failed to rightly interpret New Testament history, because, not having become acquainted in their *own* consciousness with the deeper life of the spiritual plane, the accounts narrated in the gospels have seemed to them either mythological stories, dealing not with actual events, but with purely imaginary experiences outside the realm of fact, or else descriptions of events of a supernatural origin. But science is fast abolishing the supernatural, and bringing all facts within the domain of *universal law*; and it only remains for innumerable well-authenticated accounts of occurrences at the present day, similar to many of those recorded in New Testament history, to be verified by *thoroughly scientific tests*, in order that they may be accorded such unreserved acceptance by the thinking world in general as they have already received at the hands of a considerable number of trustworthy, independent investigators.

VII.

CHRISTIANITY.

As the light of this nineteenth century is reflected back over the historical narrative of the New Testament, the fragmentary incidents there recorded grow luminous with a suggestiveness which enables us now to restore, in its original perfection, the Christian philosophy of life, after it has reposed for centuries beneath the surface-debris of traditional interpretations; just as the paleontologist is able to reproduce the complete likeness of some extinct species, by the aid of a few scattered fossil impressions. It was impossible for men to be conscious of the *real purport* of the life of Jesus, until modern research and insight had first brushed aside the cobwebs of ignorance, materialism and religious bigotry that had long been allowed to envelop the simple story of the four Gospels.

For nearly two thousand years the religious system known as Christianity, has been undergoing a series of metamorphoses, and assuming ever-changing garbs of beliefs, ceremonies and ethical standards.

There are in existence today scores of sects claiming to base their creeds on the authority of the Bible. The term sect means *cut off* or *separated*. Sects stand for particular *phases* of truth, rather than for the Truth *itself*, which is *eternal*, not subject to *interpretations*. Every sect interprets the Biblical record in its own manner, and is convinced that the Bible embodies *its* peculiar doctrinal views. It regards their acceptance as necessary to the welfare of humanity; therefore it seeks to perpetuate its individual existence and to extend its influence. Various interpreters of equal intelligence discover very different meanings in those writings. And so the independent truth-seeker is confronted at the outset with a somewhat anomalous state of affairs, due to the existence of numerous sects, or "isms," representing a wide range of beliefs, and claiming each for itself the *only exclusively correct* interpretation of the Scriptures, resting on the clearest evidence.

Everyone who considers the Biblical record infallible must also assume the *infallibility of his own interpretation*, if the conclusions he derives from it are to have any certain value. Surely this aspect of Christianity is a matter well calculated to give the impartial investigator

grave concern, if he expects to ascertain *just what particular doctrines* are taught in the Bible — providing it does represent a *definite and exact code*. In view of the chaotic state of sectarian interpretations, how can he hope to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion concerning the teaching of Jesus? For, even though he may be perfectly positive of the correctness of the views he has acquired by carefully studying the New Testament, yet his own *individual* opinion is fairly overwhelmed by the weight of testimony of more proficient scholars who have reached conclusions very different from his *own*, as well as from those of *one another*.

Obviously mere scholarship is not a reliable guide in this matter, for the most eminent Biblical students frequently hold *diametrically opposite* views on mooted points of doctrine. Jesus himself even declared that the Truth was hidden “from the wise and understanding,” and revealed “unto babes.” “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.”

In the more exact sense, the term Christianity denotes that *type of life* which Jesus introduced into the world. The first step toward an understanding of that life, lies in ascertaining the *view-*

point of Jesus. After discovering that, we shall be in a position to appreciate the meaning of his *specific utterances*, and the precepts he inculcated, as well as the events of his career. His view-point differed from that of his modern *sectarian interpreters*, in being *purely spiritual*. He recognized the Absolute or Infinite Self in *every man*. He dealt altogether with *principles, realities*, not with opinions, intellectual beliefs, or external expressions of any kind. "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth;" and that is the supreme motive in *every* worthy life. That one purpose was clearly defined throughout his public career; and it was that which constituted him "the way, and the truth, and the life," as well as the judge of the world. He was the Christ because he had the *Christ-consciousness*. He never turned to the right or the left for the sake of avoiding disagreeable consequences, or inviting agreeable experiences. He refused to endorse conventional standards and to conform to wrong customs, but always led the way, even where no one else followed. He never lost his poise or bearings, for the world of spiritual Reality was constantly open to his vision. He gladly sacrificed personal comfort, material gain, friendships,

popularity, and political power, in order to realize the *spiritual ideal*. Even the desire to prolong his earthly career until the precepts he had been inculcating in his disciples had become more firmly established in their lives—as the spirit of *prudence* and *policy*, which too often dictates the course of moral and religious endeavors, would have suggested,—did not induce him to abandon his sublime purpose. Instead of encountering the opposition of the Jews by publicly teaching in Judæa, he could easily have retired to some less frequented locality where, unmolested by his enemies, he might have instructed his disciples more fully in all things relating to “the kingdom of heaven” he sought to establish. By adopting such a course he would have gathered together a large body of sympathizers to perpetuate his work. But, no; his uncompromising attitude in the face, not alone of personal peril, but, apparently, of imminent danger to the new movement, not yet securely established, was the crowning manifestation, in all ages, of the *eternal quality* of the life that bears witness to the Truth. An evasion of this issue would have been a practical denial of his faith in the potency of the spiritual type of life.

Christianity is primarily, then, the life which *bears witness to the Truth, the spiritual Essence*

of things. As that is its single end, it cannot deviate from its path to secure incidental results, or seek for rewards in material things. It *must* achieve success, for the highest success lies in the kind of satisfaction the spiritual consciousness brings. In the midst of outward circumstances of the most discouraging sort, Jesus preserved a calm, even temper, and exhibited such apparent indifference to his surroundings as to amaze even his most intimate disciples, for they had not then grown to appreciate the meaning of his inner life. Even in the face of impending crucifixion he prayed that his "joy might be fulfilled in them."

Spiritual consciousness is not an outgrowth of intellectual beliefs or forms of any kind. One must learn to know the *Spirit of truth* inwardly before he can find it in any *book, creed, or act*. Superstitions, false notions, erroneous beliefs, and dogmatic assumptions, will ultimately fall away and disappear in the light of spiritual consciousness. "The Spirit of truth . . . shall guide you into all the truth."

A *single, deep desire* to know the Truth, is all that need concern the independent truth-seeker. The path ahead will be illumined if he walks by the light he *already sees*. Adequate intellectual

interpretations and knowledge of facts will follow in due time if only one recognizes and appreciates the spiritual Essence of things.

For centuries men have wasted their efforts in sectarian strife, because of the assumption that Jesus intended to inculcate a *theological system* or *scheme of intellectual beliefs* in some way essential to a realization of the spiritual life. Had his intention been such, he would most assuredly have taken care to deliver to the world the doctrines of this scheme in some *definite, unmistakable form*, so that they would have been intelligible to all men alike, beyond the peradventure of a doubt, instead of clothing his ideas, as he did, in the vague, *suggestive forms of parable and hyperbole*, leaving their meaning open to a *variety of intellectual interpretations*. It was not his chief aim to *impart knowledge* to men, but to *establish* in them the *spiritual* view-point; for that is the key to right-thinking, and without it *all knowledge is vain*. Because the multitudes could not appreciate this view-point to any great extent, he chose twelve men, more receptive by nature than the majority, through whom to make it known to the world.

When the Jews asked him by what authority he taught, he replied: "The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very

works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Although the *finite* mind cannot know the Truth *itself*, the spiritual consciousness is accessible to all who are willing to receive it; and through it every man may have abundant witness of the Truth. "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word," (i. e., they did not *appreciate his view-point*). "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Today, as of old, a true classification of men is based on their *attitude* toward *principles*, not beliefs or traditions. There are always those who show a disposition to take refuge in the *letter* in order to *evade the spirit*. The Pharisees said: "We know that God hath spoken unto Moses; but as for this man, we know not whence he is."

Peter, on the other hand, with real spiritual discernment, declared: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "And Jesus answered: . . . Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Even when the twelve disciples questioned Jesus about traditions and doctrinal beliefs, instead of replying plainly, he always took the opportunity to impress upon them *some spiritual truth of universal application*; while to the mul-

titude he spoke, as a rule, *only in parables*, "because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." He rarely dealt, point-blank, in plain terms, with *specific things and events*; but his thought probed deeper into the causative realm of the spiritual Essence of things.

Christianity is a spontaneous expression of the vital, creative Spirit, which cannot be *confined in forms* of any kind. As human consciousness develops, there is a steady progression from purely external, toward purely internal conceptions of truth. The untutored mind associates it largely with the *exterior* aspect of things—facts, events and appearances. The educated mind of the *conventional* type commonly identifies it with opinions, beliefs, thoughts; but even those are only *semblances* of truth, not its absolute Substance.

Manifestations of the Truth are not restricted to the Biblical record, or to ancient times, but may be found in the living experiences of *spiritually discerning* men of *every race and age*, regardless of their mental enlightenment. Every life, every utterance, every written word imbued with the Spirit of truth, is inspired. Moses, Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul, were inspired; but so,

also, in various degrees, were Luther, Carlyle, Emerson, Browning, Walt Whitman, and a host of others. The Spirit which has spoken in many languages throughout the ages, speaks today in *every true life*. Accepting the opinions, beliefs or thoughts of one who is inspired, does not lead us to realize the Truth, any more than mechanically reproducing the forms of an organic body creates life. The Bible, like every other inspired account, can only illumine one's inner life and quicken his latent powers into activity, by its suggestions of living manifestations of the Truth which the past has witnessed. It is not by endorsing traditional beliefs, or imitating the deeds of righteous men of old, that one becomes endowed with *their spirit*. Many people are today living and feeding on the past experiences of others, instead of developing *their own* resources, so that *their* lives, too, shall be inspired. It matters comparatively little to us what Peter or Paul believed, unless we are imbued with *their spirit*; and having that, we shall not be contented merely to reflect *their* beliefs, for new ones will formulate in *our* minds as natural outgrowths of experiences of our own. All vital beliefs must be subject to endless revision, inasmuch as the experiences of men are undergoing perpetual change; but the Truth itself is change-

less, however great the variations that take place in the *mediums* through which it is perceived. The eternal element in human experience may be discovered by everyone who diligently searches the depths of his nature, for it lies at the foundation of every man's life.

In seeking to impose forms of belief or action upon others, we are violating the spirit of Christianity, which insures absolute freedom of choice to every individual. In past ages multitudes were imprisoned or tortured for refusing to accept dogmas which have long since been discarded by all intelligent people; and while today, in civilized communities, such drastic measures are not resorted to as a means of suppressing heresy, there are still evidences of the same spirit at work in milder ways, seeking to restrain or define the scope of men's liberty to think and act for themselves. Every attempt to perpetuate forms and creeds is opposed to the Spirit of truth. Were all formulas of the past annihilated, the creative Spirit would speedily provide new ones adapted to existing needs. The free, unconventional, Christian type of life is like the wind that "bloweth where it listeth." It is radically opposed to conventionality. The hostility of the Pharisees toward Jesus was largely

due to the fact that he set at naught their traditional customs and beliefs, and taught men to do likewise. Yet he did not deliberately and intentionally aim to overthrow them, in an iconoclastic spirit; he "came not to destroy but to fulfil." Yet when the free Spirit which actuated his life demanded new forms of expression, it incidentally and unavoidably accomplished the downfall of old ones that impeded its progress. Time-honored ceremonies and traditions which had been sacredly guarded and cherished for centuries by the Jews, were necessarily swept away by the truth he revealed. As he did not seek to destroy old forms, neither did he attempt to establish new ones. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

The issue was not: old vs. new forms; but Spirit vs. fixed forms of belief of *every* description. The free life of the Spirit cannot be subordinated to rigid forms. Either the one or the other must be paramount; both cannot retain the supremacy. But no sooner were the disciples thrown on their own resources than reverence for doctrines and observances, so characteristic of the Hebrew race, began to be shown in a revival of certain old forms and the substitution of new ones in place of others. Paul was regarded with suspicion by the brethren at

Jerusalem, on account of his liberal views, and we find him at one time engaged in a controversy with them over the matter of observing rituals commanded by the Jewish code, which he held had been *abolished* by Jesus. The metamorphosis of Paul's own doctrinal views, as may be seen from a comparison of his earlier and later epistles, was very marked.*

But the whole life of Jesus demonstrated the absolute freedom of Spirit and the impossibility of making it subject to forms.

Jesus did not estimate men by their *deeds*, but by their *motives* and their *receptivity to spiritual truth*. The poor widow who cast a mite into the treasury, gave more than the rich who contributed liberally. Although the polished counterfeit outsparkles the rough gem, it does not deceive the connoisseur. Jesus saw in the uncouth peasant fishermen, Peter and John, and the detested tax-gatherer, Matthew, the crude material of divine characters. Beneath most unpromising surface indications were natures which responded to truth that the scholarly, religious Nicodemus and the exemplary young ruler declined to accept. Conventional

* See "The Life and Letters of Paul," by Lyman Abbott.

piety and Christianity are by no means identical; for genuine Christianity is utterly opposed to the spirit of conventionality. The following of Jesus was drawn largely from the class known as the *irreligious*, according to conventional standards. He declared to the chief priests and the elders: "Verily the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." "By their fruits ye shall know them." Sooner or later every life is judged by the *spirit* it expresses; but just estimates are often tardy. The world is still prone to stone its *living* prophets while building the tombs of *dead* ones; yet the living and the dead, voice the same Spirit under different forms. It is the Rabbis, priests, and conventional teachers—representatives of the letter in religious matters—who are accorded immediate recognition, while prophets and apostles—representatives of the Spirit—are received, if not with scorn and contempt, at least with meager appreciation. The same general types of character appear and reappear in all ages.

Future generations will read the history of the nineteenth century as *we* read that of the first. Men of this age will be judged according to the spirit of their lives, and not their pro-

fessed allegiance to *creeds* or *observances*, which are destined sooner or later to become obsolete. We individually must take our places either on the side of the Pharisees—exponents of traditionalism, or of the apostles—exponents of the free Spirit. The Pharisaic spirit is exhibited *today* by those who insist on the *perpetuation of creeds and observances*, and demand that men shall recognize particular *times, places and forms of worship*. So long as men order their lives according to external authority supposed to be derived from the Scriptures, instead of the internal authority of the omnipresent Spirit of truth, they find little difficulty in proving, to their own satisfaction, the correctness of their tenets. But such a course is not consistent with the view-point of Jesus, who taught that the *spirit*, instead of the *letter*, is the sole consideration in all human thought and action.

It is far more profitable to cultivate his *spirit of life* than to try to ascertain the exact meaning he intended to convey in certain utterances which seem to us obscure, because of our unfamiliarity with the conditions under which they were spoken. As it was not his aim to establish intellectual beliefs, the terms he chose in which to illustrate spiritual principles, were such as came to hand most naturally. Whenever his

hearers held traditional beliefs that did not involve moral wrong or conduce to hypocrisy, instead of entering into an unprofitable argument over doctrinal issues, he sought to *enforce some spiritual lesson* which those with "eyes to see and ears to hear," could discern at once. Therefore, in the course of his teaching, we often find him incidentally drawing material for illustration from such current beliefs and figures of expression as lent themselves most readily to his purpose and method of treatment. In parable, metaphor, and hyperbole, dealing with incidents and situations familiar to their habits of thought, he presented various phases of truth, in such a manner that the *spiritually discerning* among his hearers could appreciate the point he sought to convey.

But the modern sectarian interpreter who regards the *letter* of these utterances as of the first importance, finding certain doctrines embodied or suggested in the *narrative*, assumes that Jesus intended to *incorporate them into his teaching*; he accepts their introduction as an unqualified endorsement of their *dogmatic* value. Again, we should remember that the writers of the New Testament accounts, however deep and sincere their appreciation of the spirit and aim of their master may have been, never claimed

to be more than *practical exponents* of the truth he proclaimed, and that the few scattered, suggestive remnants of his utterances we now possess, are drawn either from *incomplete personal recollections* gathered long afterward, or from the testimony of witnesses incapable of perfectly understanding their meaning. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." It is, therefore, purely gratuitous to assume that the brief sketches (they cannot properly be termed histories) of the life and teaching of Jesus, which we now have in the four Gospels, fairly represent more than *his general intent and purpose*, with such occasional side-lights as the disciples were disposed to furnish by way of interpretation. Even the most discerning of his hearers, born and educated as they were in the conventional atmosphere of the period, were imperfect mediums through which to communicate to the world the purest and profoundest spiritual truth; so that, naturally, much of the record is colored with their *quasi-materialistic* conceptions, and one must constantly read *between the lines* to discover its purely spiritual significance. .

But although we have no clear or complete account of the *verbal* teaching of Jesus, even

the meager, fragmentary outline of his public career, given in the four Gospels, furnishes unquestionable testimony regarding the *spiritual aspect of his life*; on that point the story leaves little to be desired. If we seek to understand his recorded words in the light of the revelations of his *life*, we shall find it a sufficient commentary on them. He recognized and appealed to the Absolute or Infinite Self of every man, not its mortal semblance. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? . . . Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake."

The man who accepts this standpoint will feel the necessity of forming other associations. Former things will gradually pass away, and all things will become new. New ideals often demand different surroundings for their realization; in time, new ways of thinking are certain to create a *new environment*. The feverish scramble for "things that perish," will give way

to simpler and less artificial methods of living. Such changes may be very radical, and involve a complete transformation of industrial, social, political, and religious relations; yet without a disposition to accept the necessary conditions, one cannot "enter the kingdom of heaven." "Think you that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father, and daughter against her mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." "I come not to send peace, but a sword." "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: . . . and he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me." "Leave the dead to bury their own dead." "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." One may be called upon, like the rich young ruler, to sell all he has and give to the poor; or, like Peter and John, to leave home and previous occupation to enter some new field of activity, or, peradventure, to put into practice his new-born ideal amid the old surroundings—oftentimes a more difficult undertaking than to make a radical departure. But,

however gradual may be the change in *outward* conditions that results from accepting this viewpoint, a new *inner* world comes at once into being, and grows each day more real with the increase of one's spiritual vision.

The whole attitude of Jesus was so remarkable that men have always been disposed to regard his life as apart from the world of actual human influences, an admirable ideal, indeed, but quite beyond the range of human attainments at any time. Yet he instructed his followers to conform *in all particulars* to his standard, and to realize *in the concrete the very things he did*. He taught them to love their enemies, and to exhibit that attitude in all their dealings with men; to "resist not him that is evil," but to "overcome evil with good"; to renounce anger, revenge, and all malevolent thoughts; to devote their lives to the service of others; to heal the sick; these things he did and enjoined on *all* who would become his disciples.

The only recorded incident in his life which seems inconsistent with his professed attitude of non-resistance of evil, viz.: the expulsion of the traders from the temple, is now treated, in accordance with the best of evidence, as an allegorical picture of certain experiences in his inner life, and not as descriptive of any actual

event. In a candid estimate of the life of Jesus, his whole course of action, as well as his recorded utterances on the subject, point overwhelmingly to such a conclusion. "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

When men seek to ascertain the *plain spirit* of Christianity, rather than the *obscure letter* of the terms and forms in which it received its original expression, we may expect to experience a very different state of affairs from that which confronts us in the so-called Christian world of today.

Four or five rival churches will not then struggle to maintain a precarious existence in a single small community, for the purpose of *perpetuating* as many *creeds* or intellectual opinions about the Truth.

Men will not resort to specious arguments and plausible sophistries in order to evade a direct, unreserved acceptance of the spiritual viewpoint. They will not substitute perfunctory *religious observances* for *practical life*, or mystifying creeds, theories and dogmas for truth so

plain that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err" concerning it. Jesus declared: "The hour cometh, and now is, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father;" but "the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers." "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." "The Almighty dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Yet we now have edifices, often stately and magnificent, consecrated exclusively to religious purposes; and furthermore, pews in many of them are sold to the highest bidders.

As Jesus recognized no special *places* of worship, neither did he regard any *one day as sacred* above others. He treated *all days alike, ignoring the Sabbath, and setting at naught its traditional observance*. Therefore the Pharisees sought to kill him, because he did "that which it was not lawful to do on the Sabbath day."

Still today we find men holding virtually the same attitude in setting apart *one day in seven as peculiarly sacred*, and trying to *compel its general observance* in a distinctly religious manner.

The very idea of *violence* is exactly contrary to

the spirit, example, and precepts of Jesus; yet now, often in the pulpit, war is commended as righteous, when undertaken with humanitarian intent, under the plea that "the end justifies the means." But "two wrongs never make a right"; and evil overcome by evil, scatters broadcast seeds that propagate it in men's hearts and cause it to bear fruit in forms more insidious and dangerous, even though not so malignant, as those that have been suppressed.

The spontaneous, earnest words of Jesus and his followers proceeded directly from hearts and lives devoted to the service of their fellows. Every disciple was a *minister*. Peter, James and John, plain fishermen of Galilee, Matthew, receiver of customs, and Paul, tent-maker, went about proclaiming the spiritual life and seeking the welfare of others, not their own pecuniary interests or personal gratification. *Theological training* was not a necessary requisite for *their* work; they did not need to learn *about* truth, for they knew the Truth *itself*. They never tried to *adjust* it to their lives, but always allowed their lives to *conform to it*. What a contrast with much of the religious effort of modern times! How frequently are sermons and homilies judiciously worded and cautiously prepared to please the not over-spiritual tastes and incli-

nations of certain influential members of the congregation, upon whose financial support the very church organization sometimes depends! How often are elaborate rituals, ceremonies and other irrelevant features introduced, for the maintenance of which, large sums of money must be raised—too often by questionable methods!

Is not the simple, undisguised principle of Christianity just as applicable today as when first presented? Why should not scholars, teachers, mechanics, business men and laborers, now manifest the spirit of Jesus and fulfil his command to make known the new life “and heal the sick”? Direct contact with men is necessary to successfully demonstrate the spiritual Principle. No individual can rightfully delegate his *personal* responsibility to *ministers* or *charitable associations*. The early Christians enjoyed practical immunity from disease; for the disciples then possessed the gift of healing. That power may be exercised by anyone who is willing to *conform to the spiritual standard of living*. Jesus said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.” “These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with

new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise harm them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Are these promises fulfilled to any general extent among the professed followers of Jesus at present? Evidently not. The church and the "world" suffer in common from the ravages of disease. Both would arbitrarily limit the efficacy of a universal Principle by restricting the application of the spiritual method of healing to the brief period covered by New Testament history. In many instances both alike are ready, even though unwittingly, to sacrifice the ideal of "a new heaven and a new earth" for temporary material success, either by actively supporting, or tacitly sanctioning, industrial and economic methods based on *selfishness*, as opposed to *love*, thereby upholding institutions directly antagonistic in spirit to the fundamental doctrine taught and practised by Jesus and his more immediate disciples.

May we not well pause, in view of the state of affairs which confronts us, and question whether any traditional ecclesiastical body, as constituted today, stands really and vitally for the idea and

method of Jesus? Whether it is, indeed, a *faithful exponent* of the *simple spiritual truth* for which he lived and died? Can it hope to successfully realize his ideals and do his works if, at the same time, it remains subservient to wealthy or otherwise influential members and patrons, whose means and power have been acquired by employing or countenancing methods and practices diametrically opposed to his? If the "salt of the earth have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."

The most unchristian motives and sentiments freely masquerade under the guise of Christianity and the sanction of professed Christians. Murder, theft, revenge, lust, assume forms quite generally countenanced by civilized people. Their spirit in disguise permeates respectable society, although operating so insidiously that men are often led, almost unawares, into attitudes which they would abhor, were the exact nature of the principle involved more clearly evident. Society is far more seriously threatened by the spirit of anti-christ arrayed, like a "wolf in sheep's clothing," in the garb of conventional piety, virtue or material humanitarianism, than by flagrant abuses and glaring vices

that are easily detected, and therefore more likely to be estimated at their actual values. Murder committed in cold-blooded, brutal fashion, is too repulsive to command respect, even among the most depraved classes; but in the exigencies of so called *civilized warfare*, it is frequently exalted to a high rank among the virtues. A considerable portion of modern society still endorses the anti-christian sentiment embodied in the ancient decree "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." The standard which demands "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," finds favor among men of all degrees of intelligence, not alone in the treatment of criminals, but in ordinary dealings of man with man. Unconscious hypocrisy is encouraged under the name of "righteous indignation." The *spirit* of theft and gambling flourishes under less offensive names, in our exchanges, and even invades churches and societies organized ostensibly to advance the moral interests of humanity.

A majority of the failures of ethical and religious attempts to reform and elevate mankind, have been due to entertaining mixed motives. "Ye cannot serve two masters." Every compromise is a surrender. One drop of ink will

pollute a whole glass of water. Truth loses its efficacy when mingled with error.

The entire human race would have been brought long ago to accept the standard of Jesus but for compromises at critical periods. When confronted with the alternative of *meager results* in the *present* or *complete triumph* in the *future*, men have too often been willing to sacrifice the ultimate success of the cause they sought to further, for more apparent immediate benefits; the "mess of pottage" has proven more enticing than the "possession of a birthright."

Jesus devoted the greater part of his ministry to establishing the spiritual view-point in a dozen lives.

The practical worth of the spiritual life will not be generally apparent until men are willing to accept the teaching of Jesus *at its par value*, and *comply with its spirit*.



VIII.

THE GROWTH OF SOCIETY.*

UNDOUBTEDLY the most important contribution of the nineteenth century to the store of human knowledge is the *doctrine of evolution*. We know now that from time immemorial the hidden things of the spiritual world have been coming forth into manifestation in the visible universe through an orderly process of unfolding. From a finite standpoint, *everything* appears to grow, to evolve, in accordance with absolutely exact, *universal laws*.

The life of the individual is a growth.

The life of the race is a growth.

Our world seems to be a complicated entanglement of forces and interests when we regard it simply as a struggle amongst individuals, in which only the strongest can survive; but it blends into a consistent expression when we lose the finite, personal thought in the Universal consciousness, and view life from its *true*

* Read before the Metaphysical Club of Boston, February, 1898.

center. To do this we must break down the walls of dogmatism, materialism, and selfishness which finite thought has built around us, and which shut out the spiritual vision. In feudal days men sought to protect their lives and fortunes by intrenching themselves in impregnable strongholds and establishing their supremacy as individuals sundered from the *body of society*. But later there came a violent reaction to balance the equation. Man is no more fitted to live in *isolation* than is an atom of matter to remain apart from others of its kind. Both alike are endowed with natures that compel them to seek *alliances* and enter into combinations which tend to produce more highly organic forms. True individualism can only be realized through *co-operation*.

This is a law of Being. The highest specialization in the several members of the human body is effected through their *organic unity* in a perfect whole.

Growth has generally been regarded as a consequence of *getting*, acquiring, and absorbing. But according to the spiritual view, exactly the reverse of this is true — it is due to the impulse to *give out*, to share, to co-operate, to part with the *exclusive* life by losing it in a larger existence. He grows most who realizes most of the spirit

of giving, losing, abandoning, sacrificing the lower things of life for the greater good.

“Whosoever would save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.”

In this simple act of renouncing personal self-interest for a more inclusive life lies the essence of growth and the key to the eternal life. The law of growth, then, is revealed in the tendency to open out, to expand, to abandon the old for the new, to cut loose from all that binds, restricts, hampers, contracts, enslaves, or limits, and to realize the *free life of the Spirit*.

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

“Consider the lilies, how they *grow* ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

The spiritually discerning man, the man who consciously allows his life to *grow* instead of striving to determine its course, indicates a tremendous advance in the scale of evolution. When one appreciates this factor, until recently so little recognized, the doctrine of evolution

takes on a new significance. This type of man marks the *beginning* of a *radically different order of society*, for he will no more fit into the present makeshift than would the Copernican *world* into a *system* of the Ptolemaic sort. The new wine "will burst the old wine-skins."

Generally speaking, social bodies, like material ones, are of two descriptions as to their structure and method of formation. Material bodies of the one class, commonly termed "inanimate," are held together by the *power of cohesion*.

Since they are mere aggregations of particles, they are incapable of spontaneous *growth*—development from within; they can only be molded and shaped by *external* agencies, therefore they tend to disintegrate. But those of the other class are fashioned into individual forms, often marvelously exquisite and suggestive, by a *vital energy*. In the one case, the particles obey an impulse of attraction, apparently of a purely *dynamic* character; each retains the position it is most naturally drawn to occupy in its unaided, individual capacity, without lending itself to any purely *ideal end* of a higher origin—such as beauty or proportion. In the other case, the particles are permeated and actuated from within, by a power that causes them to assume forms conceived by a higher Intelligence instead of

ones of their own selection, as *mere particles*. Snow crystals—each a fairy world in itself,—fantastically sculptured forests on the frosted window-pane, dainty mosses, graceful ferns, exquisite blossoms, stately trees, animal forms wonderfully adapted, not alone to the satisfaction of individual wants, but having reference to larger ends,—these and myriad other creations that constitute the outer garment of the invisible world, portray the irresistible yearning of a deep, hidden life to come forth into manifestation. Every creature builds ideally *better than it knows*. Even its short-sighted deviations from the pattern of the more comprehensive design, are eventually overruled and made to contribute to the perfection of the whole.

To the limited, finite vision, natural selection may appear to be the sole factor in the achievement of this end; but above and beyond this incidental fact of *individual choice*, which the *intellect* is able to detect, the omnipresent Spirit is all the while making for ends quite unperceived by the near-sighted, analytical mind. Nor does this universal order of manifestation cease when the *human* plane is reached. Evolution (*e-volution*, the unfolding process) does not terminate in the conglomerate of disorderly elements at present recognized as “society.”

There is a broader, grander ideal to which humanity must eventually conform. This crude, unperfected, embryotic state, in which each participant is heroically striving to *undo* the work of his neighbor, is not the culmination of human unfolding. Men of the *growing*, divine type are so constituted by nature that, as social particles, they cannot belong to the class of bodies termed "dead"—bodies that are molded from without and held together by the crude elementary force of cohesion; they must necessarily assume social forms patterned after *definite ideals*, not ones adopted as a matter of expediency or mere *convenience*.

A Universal harmonizing, polarizing power operates on every plane of life, tending in the mineral realm to form perfect crystals, in the vegetable realm to produce perfect foliage and flowers, in the animal realm to create perfect sensible organisms, in the human realm to develop perfect rational beings, and in the divine realm to establish a *perfect society*. The kind of body that shall be, depends in each instance on the *quality* of the particles that enter into its composition; yet they do not *consciously* determine the *ideal* they are to represent. The ideal will *grow into manifestation* if they are free and

receptive to the higher directing. It can neither be altered nor destroyed, but its *expression* may be retarded by circumstances. Every seed contains the germ of a *particular species*; and when the formative principle, the Universal vitalizing power, is permitted to act through it, it will unfold along its own peculiar line, and *no other*. Everywhere men are groping with the intellect after an ideal *form* for society. Some conceive it to be anarchistic, others socialistic or communistic. But it will not be perceived by the intellect until the Spirit has first given it birth. Crude and imperfect as human society is at present, it is the outcome of natural forces working inwardly and causing it to expand along general lines *just as definitely predetermined* as those adhered to by any particular species of tree in growing to maturity, flowering and yielding fruit after its own order.

During the past growth and development of society, men nearly always have been quite unaware of the true character or ideal of the body in which they have found themselves placed, often, perforce, as unwilling subjects. The rise and growth of the family and the state were not matters of chance, or even of convenience alone; they were steps in the unfolding of a comprehensive plan, as yet only *partially consummated*. When

men let the divine life of the Oversoul flow freely into and *out of* their lives, by yielding to its *informing, reforming* influence, they will be drawn into higher social relations as atoms of a body designed by Intelligence far superior to human understanding. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will."

If we cultivate receptivity to influences from the unseen realm, always keeping our interior windows open in an expectant attitude, the Infinite creative wisdom and power will perfectly adjust all our relations. When we place our finite lives at the disposal of the creative Spirit, and allow them to conform spontaneously to ideals born in the *highest realm* of consciousness, we can achieve nothing but success, in the truest sense; but if, by entertaining a negative attitude of doubt, selfishness, or unreceptivity, we cut ourselves off from the Universal supply, and cease to be *conductors* of the Spirit, we become social parasites, encumbering the growth of society. We are then like electric fixtures disconnected from the wire that supplies the illuminating power. To realize our true end in life, we must be, on the one hand, perpetually open to receive inspiration from the Highest, and, on the other, in touch with our fellow-

beings, to communicate to them the Spirit as *we receive it*. Thus the circuit is completed, so that the perfect social ideal can grow into manifestation spontaneously. If either end is closed, friction and disorder ensue in our lives, both in their individual and collective capacities.

Forms rise above forms in the scale of nature, from the animalcule, sporting in a drop of water, to world systems moving majestically through illimitable space. The Spirit eternally seeks expression, aiming, through manifold channels and among all orders of life, to unfold ideals. Nor are its manifestations confined to the natural world—that is only its external embodiment, the spiritual idea projected outward in symbols, so that even the dullest vision may catch occasional hints of its meaning. Everywhere we witness *growth*. Within the human sphere we find growth of institutions, arts, philosophies, civilizations, all tending toward some glorious end *not yet realized*. We have only to remove personal obstructions, and become receptive to the Spirit of Truth, to be drawn to the places we are fitted to occupy in the new order—"a new heaven and a new earth."

Jesus declared: "Among them that are born of women [i. e. on the human plane] there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist;

yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven [i. e. in the divine order of free growth] is greater than he." "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which, indeed, is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Paul wrote: "For even as we have many members in one body, . . . so we who are many, *are one body.*"

In the main, schemes of social reform have taken into account, principally or solely, certain *exigencies of the present moment*, seeking, primarily, to stay the tide of injustice and oppression that threatens to engulf society and exterminate our modern civilization in the same manner that, one after another, the civilizations of antiquity perished. They have aimed to ameliorate conditions and render existence more tolerable, in the hope that, with improved opportunities for material advancement, and the betterment of social relations, men would be induced to turn their attention toward the higher and deeper things of a spiritual life. But this method is exactly the reverse of that taught and prac-

tised by Jesus. No reformer ever encountered external conditions more discouraging for the promulgation of a *spiritual doctrine of life*.

The Jews, a proud race of noble ancestry, oppressed by tyranny and impoverished by unjust taxation, levied to support a corrupt and degenerate court at Rome, were looking intently for a long-promised leader, who was expected to free them from bondage and establish a régime in which justice and righteousness would be dealt impartially to all. The time was fully ripe for revolt, or, at all events, *reform*. Jesus came, heralded by John the Baptist as a mighty prophet and reformer. The eyes of the nation were turned to him. But he disappointed the fondest expectations by announcing that his kingdom was "not of this world." To the starving multitudes he offered "the bread of life." To the persecuted and impoverished he said: "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Throughout his career he never offered the slightest encouragement to those who sought to render their *material circumstances* more tolerable through *political or social* methods. Instead of avoiding the Jewish hierarchy and the Roman officials, as he might easily have done, and as

worldly prudence dictated, he openly faced their hostility, and allowed himself to be taken captive and executed; thus, it seemed even to his most devoted followers, unaccountably sacrificing every hope, either of a material or a moral reformation.

But such was not to be the *final issue*. That tragic event, which removed the last vestige of hope and courage from the minds of the disciples, marked the beginning of the most *comprehensive, far-reaching reconstruction of human interests in the world's history*. "Except a kernel of wheat fall into the ground and die, it cannot bring forth fruit." A few years later, the most *significant step ever inaugurated* toward an improved social order, was taken by the disciples at Jerusalem. It was, indeed, a *spontaneous* expression of the new life; and had it not been for the invasion of Judæa by the Roman hosts, and the sudden dispersion of the Jews, this vital movement would undoubtedly have spread and assumed a *more than local* character.

The *regeneration of the individual* must precede any permanently successful *reconstruction of society*. It is comparatively futile to attempt to *suppress* poverty, drunkenness, vice or crime, while their *generic root* (materialism) remains unchanged. The obnoxious Upas tree of social

degradation cannot be exterminated by plucking off its leaves and flowers. The axe must be "laid at the *root* of the tree." Until that is destroyed, it will continue to send up fresh shoots as quickly as previous growths are removed. Penal and charitable institutions can, at best, only partially *counteract* the evils that result from the general acceptance of an essentially *wrong attitude* in life. The respectable, pious materialist shudders at the sensuality and brutality of his less fortunate fellows, little dreaming that *his* life and *theirs* alike represent a *common tendency*. Specific *forms of expression* are largely dependent on the soil or *environment* in which they flourish. Refinement and degradation are only outer garbs that conceal the deeper trend of men's lives from the casual observer.

"Cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also."

Zeal for outward reform frequently leads to indiscriminate efforts to suppress abnormal symptoms in the body politic. The impulsive Peter, carried away by excess of enthusiasm, drew his sword and smote off the high priest's servant's ear, thinking thereby to aid his master's cause. But evil cannot be effectually overcome by evil.

Darkness is not extinguished by opposing it with *more darkness*, but by *letting in the light*.

A worldly-wise materialism makes strenuous exertions to administer formal justice to a few legally-constituted criminals, while at the same time almost utterly ignoring the subtle forces that are at work, on every hand, sowing seeds of crime, disease and misery in thousands of minds. While men are at work repairing one leak in the outer shell of society, the whole structure is being undermined by insidious forces, which are scarcely recognized by the busy throng who live in externalities—in the *semblance* of things. Attempting to check the ravages of vice and crime by legal enactment or forcible intervention is like trying to “sweep back the ocean with a broom.” Evil is hydra-headed; it can only be exterminated by *striking at its heart—materialism*.

If we keep our faces turned steadfastly toward the light, and follow its guidance, we shall be *relieved of all responsibility as to results*. It is not for us to query what the issue of our work shall be. We need only follow the leading of the superior Intelligence which thinks, speaks, and acts *through* us. The finite in man is only the agency through which the Infinite manifests

Itself. This does not imply that the individual is to *lapse into a state of apathy*; but, rather, that he is to awaken to a state of *increased activity and efficiency*, since the wasteful, destructive factor of friction is in a great measure eliminated from his life.

With consciousness of power comes the temptation to use it for selfish ends—a course which must seriously interfere with the expression of the divine ideal. When the organizing impulse is diverted into *personal channels*, and made to subserve individual interests, it produces forms that represent the ideal in a distorted manner. The ideal form, as well as the impulse through which it finds expression, must come forth into manifestation *from within*. Man-made organizations are not instrumentalities through which the free Spirit can act unreservedly. When men learn to trust the management of the world of human affairs to a Higher Power, without feeling constrained to interpose their own personally conceived efforts to avert impending disaster,—when they are satisfied to co-operate with the Universal Will, instead of struggling to neutralize and frustrate the higher end of existence by their ill-directed finite aims—then the growth of the divine type of society will be amazingly rapid, and irresistible as the ocean tide.

Jesus did not promulgate a *creed*, establish an *organization*, or institute a *specific reform*; yet within a comparatively brief period, the *expansive quality* of the type of life which he manifested in a supreme degree, yielded the fruits of reform in more abundant measure than any *specific reform* which has *ever been inaugurated*. His life contained the potency, not only of social reform, but of far more than that—of a complete metamorphosis of humanity.

Fixed forms of every description *impede*, even where they do not absolutely *prohibit* free growth. Truth suggested by symbols, or illustrated in parables, is unfettered; but when the *intellect* seeks to dominate the spiritual realm, the law of growth is interfered with, and spontaneity ceases. Creeds, rules, and by-laws—restrictions imposed by the intellect—operate as fetters to any movement which has for its object the advancement of spiritual ends. Water cannot rise above its level; neither can the Spirit manifest itself beyond the limits of fixed forms that men devise in their attempts to confine it.

Jesus spoke with absolute authority, for he acknowledged allegiance to no tradition, dogma, sect, institution, organization, or *sphere of exist-*

ence. His words were the unrestrained voice of the Spirit, whose authority is supreme. His consciousness so far transcended the human plane that he became "one with the Father." He was therefore the Logos, or "Word made flesh." In him, for the first time, the chasm between the finite and the Infinite was spanned, so that the divine ideal of humanity could grow into manifestation with *absolute spontaneity*. He broke through the insulating medium, the material consciousness, and allowed the Spirit to flow freely into human channels.

No satisfactory compromise can be effected between the old and the new standards of life. We must choose unreservedly either the one or the other. All such words as "policy," "expediency" and "diplomacy" should be eliminated from our vocabulary. It is not strange that men have sought to explain away or evade the central point in the teaching of Jesus. It was the boldest, most radical step in human progress; so radical, in fact, that even now the world does not comprehend its full purport. The supposition that he intended to establish, as a general standard for humanity, a type of life so thoroughly subversive of all previous theories and practices, seems utterly absurd to most persons. They think of his life as a *solitary*

instance, an abstract ideal, not as a concrete example of the normal human life.

At present, every human being begins the brief period known as the "earthly life" heavily handicapped by a legacy of materialistic propensities, acquired prenatally; and, in most instances, this subconscious heritage is supplemented and re-enforced by conventional education of a similar description; so that, arriving at the point where independent thinking and acting are possible, men find themselves bound hand and foot, like the fly in the spider's web, by a network of traditional notions and habitual practices from which they must slowly, and often painfully, extricate themselves.

All eyes are turned toward the twentieth century in hope and expectancy. To those who penetrate beneath the surface of life and feel its deep undercurrents, it seems inevitable that the long promised triumph of the true philosophy of human relations is about to be realized. It is only quite recently that the value of *systematic right-thinking* has begun to be appreciated; but its power is practically unlimited. Who would dare to prophesy the results that may be achieved, even within two or three generations, by *healthy, vital, idealistic thinking!* The possi-

bilities of intelligently directed education are boundless. Conscious realization is only limited by *finite thought*; its confines are wholly arbitrary. As the ideal of a divine, cosmic type of man, and a new order of society, appeals with real emphasis to a growing number of people, the movement will gather increasing impetus. Children born and educated to appreciate the larger aspects of life, will find natural tendencies leading them forward to express them. The marvelous achievements of early Christianity were directly due to the spiritual influence radiated by *a single life*. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." What, then, may we not expect when that ideal shall again be manifested in actual life in our midst, as it surely must be at no distant day!



IX.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

ANY scheme of philosophy that recognizes evil as a factor to be reckoned with, in dealing with problems of human existence, seems to some persons to savor of *pessimism*. In whatever light the theme may be presented, in whatever fashion it may be treated, they regard any serious consideration of it as altogether *superfluous*. They are satisfied either entirely to ignore it, or to dismiss it with the briefest negation. If evil is an illusion, they say, why recognize it, even in a doctrinal way? What profit can be derived from an intellectual discussion of a *myth*? Is it not sufficient to reiterate such positive sentiments as "All is good" and "God is all, and in all," and relegate the negative aspects of life to oblivion?

Sufficient as these positive affirmations may be for ordinary *practical* purposes, there is, nevertheless, a sense in which evil *does* exist, and in which it becomes necessary to recognize it as an element of experience, if we are to obtain

the deepest insight into life. Granting that what appears to the finite mind as evil, does not have its origin in the *essential nature* of things, —that it is not recognizable as such in the Absolute consciousness, the fact still remains, that in any profound analytical study of life, this problem figures in a prominent way. To be sure, we may so direct our attention as completely to shut it out from view; but this manner of disposing of the issue suggests the action of the ostrich, which *buries its head* in the sand in order to escape impending danger.

The problem of evil is of the deepest moment in a contemplative survey of life, even though it be recognized that *evil itself* has no valid basis of existence in spiritual Reality.

As the pendulum of thought swings backward from the depressing pessimism of the recent past, an accelerating momentum naturally tends to carry it beyond the point of perfect equilibrium, in the direction of an *unduly exalted* optimism. The present reaction against an excessive, and in many cases almost exclusive, contemplation of the nether side of existence, bids fair to engender, in some instances, an attitude in which only certain beneficent features of life are taken into account. By singling

out such features, and dwelling upon them *apart from the grand whole* of life, we may obtain a view quite as ill-balanced as the characteristically pessimistic one. Between these two danger-points, the Scylla and Charybdis of speculative thought, the impartial, earnest truthseeker must steer his bark. *On one* side lie the seething depths of a despairing pessimism; *on the other*, the deceptive, alluring shoals of an ecstatic optimism. The ship of life can be piloted successfully only in deep water; but it must be in the *calm depths*, where the current flows *firmly and steadily*.

What explanation can be offered of experiences commonly termed "evil"—pain, suffering, conflict, death, and the like? How can their presence in the world be reconciled with the existence of a Supreme Being who "is love"? What are their true values in the picture of life? How shall we properly estimate their worth in the grand total of experience? Distinctions of good and evil originate in the *mind of the thinker*; they are not inherent in *objects*. Objective expressions are pronounced good or bad, according to *our attitude toward them*. "Nothing is either good or bad, but *thinking* makes it so." A thing, event or condition may appear at one time good, and at another, bad,

according to the *way it is viewed*—the light in which it is seen. These distinctions are matters of *consciousness*. An experience which, regarded *by itself*, is suggestive of *evil*, may be deemed *good* when considered in its relation to some *larger end*.

A picture without lights and shades would be anomalous; the execution of a picture is effected by intelligently observing their gradations, and adjusting them in such relative proportions that each will play its part most effectually in producing the *general result*. But it is possible to scrutinize the picture so closely that we shall find in it little else than mere technical details of shading. In one sense, this estimate of it is *literally correct*. Studied solely with reference to color-gradation, it consists primarily of shades. They are its life; they give it *character* and emphasize its bright features; the strength and disposition of its shadows determine its effectiveness. But this estimate is decidedly inadequate from a genuinely critical standpoint. Such observations may be perfectly correct *as far as they extend*; but other considerations are indispensable, if even the faintest appreciation of the deeper significance of the picture as a *work of art* is to be obtained.

Its worth depends on the manner in which it portrays ideas that must be interpreted through *qualitative* as well as quantitative relations.

Darkness, as a phenomenon of the natural world, denotes merely the *absence of light*, in a relative degree. Even there, absolute darkness does not exist; it only *seems* to exist when contrasted with stronger light effects. But the *phenomenon* of darkness is essential to an appreciation of *light* effects. The negative element in perception is necessary in order that the positive factor shall be appreciable. One may be fully aware of the true character of a phenomenon, the value of which is *purely negative*; but that circumstance need not in the least detract from the vividness of the *suggestion* it is instrumental in conveying. Likewise, if one considers a picture solely as an effective combination of shadows, correct as that estimate is, as far as it goes, his impression of the *artist's intent* is of a wholly misleading character. One construes the *instrument* as the *end*. Were it possible to imagine a picture without shadows, it would be utterly lacking in character. Contrasts are due to the recognition of both the *negative* element, darkness, and the *positive* element, light. Neither one, apart from its contrary, can be employed to represent the essential

idea of the picture, but *both together* serve to reveal its beauty.

Light shining through a photographic negative produces a *perfect picture*; yet an examination of the negative *itself* reveals no such picture, but, instead, imperfect, and often grotesque images. The *finite spectacle* of life is the negative through which Absolute Reality shines, to manifest a perfect picture. Cold, bare facts do not constitute the *reality* of life. When we view a cathedral window from the *outside*, it suggests gloom and cheerlessness. We may try to penetrate its dense substance, in the hope of discovering what lies within; but it proves an unyielding barrier to the sense of sight, and refuses to disclose the secret. We might study it from that standpoint forever, without arriving at a satisfactory conclusion regarding its artistic intent; but, if we change our point of view, so as to approach it from the inside of the edifice, we are instantly attracted by a beauty and warmth of coloring *in no way perceptible* from the outside. The very forms that, viewed *exteriorly*, appeared cold, dismal, lifeless, and devoid of expression, when viewed *interiorly*, are transformed into ideals that manifest absolute beauty.

When we *analyze* the world of finite forms,

we perceive evil, suffering, and abnormality. Only when the light of the Absolute Principle radiates through it, is it transformed into a world of beauty, truth, goodness and harmony. The steady, monotonous glare of light, untempered by shade, soon becomes as unendurable as the depressing gloom of darkness, unrelieved by light. Either condition tends to induce blindness. The significance of those factors of experience, commonly *regarded as evil*, depends on the *interpretation* we give them. If we regard them as *intrinsically evil*, instead of attaching to them only such *incidental* importance as they possess by way of revealing a deeper Universal consciousness, they seem to suggest the existence of some malevolent power, actuated by a diabolical purpose.

Heroism that faces difficulties construed as *essentially evil*, often presages despair; but faith that comprehends their true nature, enables one to surmount them, and cause them to be instrumental in yielding a deeper soul-consciousness. So, while evil is not *absolutely real*, it plays, even as a *phenomenon*, an important part in the *drama of life*. Any single object or experience, regarded in the *partial* sense as a fragment, provokes a certain feeling of dissatisfaction. In one's inmost Being one longs for perfection,

completeness, infinity; yet a state of existence into which the conception of partiality (implying a complementary something *unrealized*) did not enter, would be one of such *unrelieved monotony* that spiritual blindness would ensue.

In a great work of art, the unity of completeness is attained through a *combination of individual effects*. The execution of all its details is controlled by the creative Spirit, manifested through a *perfect ideal*. Its success depends on the faithfulness with which each component part contributes its share to some *larger effect*, so that, comprehended as a whole, the work will give perfect satisfaction. Any career consisting of a steady, unbroken flow of pleasurable experiences would, in its *entire aspect*, produce an impression not altogether agreeable. Every satisfying effect, whether derived from a work of art or a life of active effort, is due to the presence of elements that, *observed apart* from the whole, are disappointing, perhaps even *ugly*. Analysis *conceals* harmony and ideal perfection, while synthesis *reveals* them. The way life appears, depends on *our attitude* toward it—whether we try to arrive at a just estimate of it *through its details*, or interpret its *details* in the light of its *completeness as an ideal unit*. Details are in-

dispensable to the realization of a perfectly satisfactory effect. Phenomena that, distinguished separately, seem, in the act of perception, like flaws or blemishes in their relation to the whole, because they suggest imperfection or ugliness, are factors essential to the complete representation. Every detailed expression of a perfect ideal exhibits certain phases that may be construed as imperfect, in a way; and such imperfection must be accounted for, not on the supposition that the *ideal* is deficient, but solely on the ground of the *inadequacy of our method of trying to comprehend its significance*. Parts cannot exist without a *whole*; they must be parts of *something*. The fact that we *recognize* them as *partial* is evidence that we have knowledge of a complete unit to which they are related.

“The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound ;
 What was good, shall be good, with, for evil so much
 good more ;
 On earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven a perfect round.”

Life viewed in detail may seem to exhibit attributes entirely foreign to those revealed by contemplation of it in its *totality*. As we know it in the light of Absolute consciousness, we discern in it *neither good nor evil*, in the *finite sense*. Appreciation transcends discrimi-

nation. The bright and the dark spots of the finite picture *resolve into an infinite ideal.*

The signification of the term "good," when used to designate the *absolute quality* of experience, is quite different from its signification when applied to *relative* distinctions. There is a relative sense in which experience consists of *both good* (the positive element) and *evil* (the negative element). In the absolute sense, "all is good," not because those factors of life which the finite mind accounts evil, have been *eliminated* from experience, but because, in the higher vision, both its good and evil aspects *are transfigured and made to blend together in a satisfying whole.*

The endless array of forms in the world, as we interpret it physically, may be likened to separate threads or strands woven into a tapestry. One may trace the courses of individual threads, and even gain an exhaustive knowledge of their several characteristics, without entertaining the slightest idea of their superior worth and significance as necessary portions of the whole fabric. The chief value of the finished product depends on the faithfulness with which it embodies the *idea of the designer.* However beautiful and perfect the threads may

seem *individually*, they utterly fail to serve their intended purpose, unless they so harmonize and blend as to produce the desired effect. The weaver, from his comprehensive view-point, is able to form a correct estimate of the potential value of each separate thread that is being woven into the fabric in process of construction, and, therefore, to discriminate in the proper disposal of all. The design already exists, perfect and complete, *in his mind*; and it is simply reproduced, in the weaving, under outward conditions. But one not already familiar with the design, is soon confused in attempting to follow the threads separately through their obscure, intricate courses. The whole piece looks, to him, like a mass of hopelessly tangled materials, giving no evidence of design, beauty, or other aesthetic or practical considerations that would be likely to compensate for the trouble and expense entailed by such an elaborate method of workmanship. In like manner, the real meaning and intent of our finite lives can only be known *in the light of a Universal consciousness*. We are both actors and spectators in the drama of life.

Were we to assume the standpoint of an orchestra player, buried in his own part, and de-

voting all his energies to its execution, we should hear only a *din of harshly discordant, irritating sounds*. Each individual instrument would seem at variance with all the others, and they, on the other hand, would seem bent on drowning its tones. Yet each seemingly insignificant part, untuneful and out of place though it might sound to the discriminating but miscalculating ear of one who tried to follow it *alone*, would be considered indispensable when estimating the effect of the *whole performance*. To appreciate the beauty and grandeur of the music in its entirety, we must get outside the din and in-harmony attending the technical rendering of its several parts, and assume the standpoint of the *conductor*, or the *composer*. Then, for the first time, the work would appeal to us as harmonious and inspiring. Every detail of the performance would thus become intelligible, and more deeply significant than it would have been possible for it to appear without the practical observations acquired through experiences that were, in themselves, perhaps vexatious and well-nigh unendurable; for we would then be fitted to understand the importance of each part in its relation to the others, and its ultimate bearing on the whole production. Therefore, we would be able to view the whole situation both critically and

appreciatively, and to realize the fullest meaning of all we had seen and heard. The *facts of din and dissonance* would be just as certain as while we felt the depressing influence of their spell; but they would no longer remain *in evidence*; for the grander idea of the whole composition would so overwhelm them as to *transform ugliness into beauty*.

Suffering and disappointment may be very much in evidence in the *finite* consciousness; but their *import* depends altogether on the *plane* from which one regards them. They play a most important part as agencies in awakening men from the sluggish repose of ignorance and selfishness, on the lower planes of consciousness. Some awaken slowly and reluctantly, only after being repeatedly aroused by most distressing experiences; but then the need of awakening is most imperative. We live in dreams until the burden of suffering becomes unendurable, and impels us to awaken to *consciousness of Reality*. Suffering in dreams may be most intense; but when, on awakening, we realize the *nature* of our misery, it is forgotten in the joy attending the discovery of a *more real state*. Intensity does not indicate reality. Forces that clash most violently, are soonest spent. Evil symp-

toms are transient and suicidal. From the universal point of view, we may know life, not in dreams, but in the *full light of awakened consciousness*. Above all the hardships, pain, discord, and even the horrors that invade the realm of *finite* conceptions, we may delight in the eternal harmony that attends the consciousness of an infinite Reality.

In music, every major scale has its corresponding minor, and every scale its minor intervals. Minor intervals give it depth and richness. Without the minor quality, it would be tame and monotonous. Many of the deepest expressions are tinged with the somber, subdued undertone of the minor. Yet how different is the hopeless melancholy, represented by a doleful, unrelieved minor strain, from the spirit of *joy and triumph* revealed when the minor strain leads up to a full major chord! Should the music end in the midst of the minor passage, we might indeed pronounce it unconsoling and morbidly suggestive. But we wait expectantly for the coming of the *major chord*; for the light it sheds over the otherwise gloomy minor passage, alters its complexion. The weakness of the minor is supplemented by the strength of the major, and the whole effect is glorious.

We live to *overcome*, and rejoice in *triumphing*. We glory in the consciousness of power to *transcend* each finite plane, and make it a stepping-stone to others above. Life is both high and deep. Only by coming up from its *depths* can we appreciate its *heights*. The glory of the view from the mountain-top, is due to the presence of valleys below. In the comprehensive view from above, they appear totally different from the conception we entertain of them while groping our way through the dark, gloomy forests that line their recesses; but the change is in our *view-point*, not in the *valleys themselves*. Neither mountains nor valleys could exist alone. The one kind of formation implies the other. Knowledge of good implies knowledge of evil also. The timid, apprehensive Israelites saw only forebodings of disaster in the Red Sea and the wilderness. But, to the larger vision of Moses, such obstacles vanished in anticipation of possessing the promised land. So, as our thought lingers on the lower planes of consciousness, on its journey to the realm of spiritual Reality, which it seeks to possess, we seem beset on every hand by evil forces. Ideas seen in perspective, as they are projected in a world of time and space, often appear distorted. As time and space have no absolute values, the

angle and extent of the perspective in which things appear, must depend on the *attitude of the observer*. If our world seems essentially base, evil, unsatisfactory, it is an indication that we see life *at too close range*—too narrowly. Were we to adjust our view-point, after the manner of the greatest seers, the real value of our world would be more readily appreciable.

In a microscopic inspection of life, its negative features are magnified into prominence as *evils*. We need to stand off and look down on the finite spectacle from the view-point of eternity.

The transcendental view of life is the only thoroughly satisfactory one. It is to obtain that view-point, that humanity yearns and strives, wittingly or unwittingly. Its scope is *inclusive*, not *exclusive*. If the aspect of things which the finite mind regards as *evil*, were eliminated from experience, life would be characterless. The severest trials are often invaluable. They subserve a larger end, by impelling us to expand in consciousness, so that our thought shall *include, surmount, and transcend* the evil. Thenceforth it *ceases to exist* as evil; *it is absorbed in a larger ideal*.

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow, and dreamy pool;
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle, and foaming wear;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church-bell rings,
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl;
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
Darker and darker the further I go;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child.

Strong and free, strong and free;
The flood-gates are open, away to the sea.
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
To the golden sands, and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar.
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
Undefiled, for the undefiled,
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

—*Charles Kingsley.*



X.

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF HEALTH.

VIEWED from its absolute center, life appears to be a *perfect unit*; while from any eccentric point, its proportions seem more or less distorted, and an infinite number of independent centers are seen. Each eccentric observer, on discovering what he imagines to be an unbalanced whole, tries to rectify matters, as far as possible, by *forcing* an adjustment of the world around his *finite standpoint*. But every effort of this description serves to aggravate the difficulty by conflicting with a Universal purpose. No man can comprehend his relation to the world, or find abiding peace and satisfaction, until he discovers that a common center exists for *all* lives, and then comes into a sympathetic relation with its attracting influence. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot *see* the Kingdom of God." The highest ideal of healing is *self-revelation*—the discovery of one's correct relation to the absolute center of Being. Only by apprehending the significance of life in its

totality, by appreciating not alone its individual phases, but its universal phase as well, can *complete, permanent* harmony be established in one's life. *Effort* is not necessary; but, rather, *renunciation* of effort, and recognition of the fact that all expressive power proceeds from an *absolute center*. True efficiency, and personally directed effort, are contrary to one another; they increase and diminish in an inverse ratio. Great truths are marvelously simple; only error is mystifying. Even the most perplexing mathematical problem becomes easy when the fundamental principle involved is once grasped. Any instrumentality that leads one to be conscious of a *deeper selfhood* serves as a *healing medium*. It may be an objective *event or personality*, or a purely *subjective experience*. It sometimes happens that when individuals imagine themselves face to face with death, and feel that their finite lives are about to suffer dissolution, they for the first time discover the Absolute Principle as the *basis of their lives*; and, through consciousness of spiritual vitality thus gained, *bodily vigor* is renewed. The existence of an eternal Reality is a fact too simple for one to discover while enchanted by the glamour of *illusory phenomena*; but when they fade from sight, it stands clearly forth. There are moments in

the life of every human being, when he realizes *something* of the Absolute. For a time the perplexing problems, doubts and distractions of ordinary life vanish; then the vision fades, and is remembered only as an indistinct dream. But, in truth, *ordinary consciousness is the dream, and those rarer experiences the real life.*

Self-manifestation, or realization of our essential nature through the *evolution of consciousness*, is the supreme end of finite existence. This nature seems to be physical, psychical, or spiritual, according to the *quality of consciousness* through which it is interpreted. When observed on the sensuous plane, it appears as *physical*; on the rational plane as *psychical*; on the intuitional plane as *spiritual*. Certain material phenomena afford illustrations of the metamorphoses of human consciousness. Every mentality passes through nebulous and chaotic stages of vague subconsciousness on a plane substantially *physical* in its aspects until, by more positive tendencies of concentration, it reaches a higher state, in which *psychic* energies, previously latent, are evolved. Those energies develop in degree and quality until, surpassing the boundaries of the psychical plane, they assume the characteristic of *spiritual power*, and radiate in

truth and love—the light and heat of the spiritual realm. The absolute, unchangeable Reality, the Source of all expression, exhibits these three widely different aspects. The interposing *mental medium* is the varying factor. At present, many people are so fascinated by the marvels of recently discovered psychic phenomena that they are inclined to linger on that intermediate plane, instead of *rising to the spiritual plane*, where alone the highest craving of their nature can be satisfied. A sense of freedom from bondage to material notions and associations, and recognition of their capacity to so modify the action of vital bodily processes as to avert symptoms of disease, often leads men to substitute *personally* conceived and directed effort for the deeper spiritual power, which alone can accomplish the *complete emancipation* of the individual in *all* his relations. The true goal of life cannot be reached by merely *playing upon psychic energy* and ordering it in channels of *our own selection*; for, by that method, we seek to determine events, and adjust effects from the eccentric standpoint of our *finite* personality, independent of the Absolute Cause or Eternal Will. Genuine spiritual experiences are born in a realm *above the personal*, and come spontaneously to those alone who have ceased *striving after results of their individual choosing*.

Self-revelation transforms bodily conditions by removing the obstructing element of *blind, personal control*, and allowing the vital energies free exercise in their normal channels. When one *realizes spiritual strength*, health, and freedom, the *bodily correspondences* of those states must inevitably follow. The body is composed of *atoms—centers of force*; force is the lowest *aspect of Will*, and Will is a *phase of consciousness*. In the last analysis, every man's relation to the material world is that of a *superior center of consciousness* to *vastly inferior* ones. The *general* structure of the body is largely determined by considerations beyond the control of human faculties in their *ordinary range of exercise*; for it conforms to long established, persistently cherished *racial conceptions*. Cells and organs exist as *bodies within the body* they constitute. Each is endowed with specialized functions which it exercises, in conformity to the requirements of other members and organs of the body, quite independent of any *conscious volition* on the part of the individual in whose service their activities are enlisted, and upon whose authority their existence depends. But the *ego*—King of this bodily realm—has power to mold it anew, to quicken its activities and revitalize its processes by imparting life-giving

qualities to the whole system. The *ego* may assert its authority, and through the mind *dominate* the whole complex bodily structure, by polarizing the atoms of which it is composed until they entertain affinities conducive to harmonious and sympathetic growth. On the other hand, every *inharmonious* attitude of the mind exerts a blighting, devitalizing influence on the bodily system and, if persisted in, gives rise to expressions of disease and disintegration. Sometimes even the mere *suggestion of uncleanness* while one is eating, is sufficient to *induce nausea*. In such instances effect follows cause with great rapidity, and the relation subsisting between them is quite evident; but in deep-seated organic affections, where the disturbing suggestion operates subconsciously, and therefore more persistently, progress is generally too slow, and the process too intricate, to be readily perceptible; so that it is often exceedingly difficult to trace physical effects back to their causes in the mental realm. *Emotional suggestions* are just as potent to affect organic, cellular, molecular and atomic conditions and relations *within the body*, as they are to change the attitudes of individuals toward one another in the *larger body* of human society. *Antagonism and agitation* demoralize and dissipate the vital ener-

gies, and interfere with healthy functional activities; but *love* and *peace* promote vital and orderly relations by encouraging sympathetic and united action among the lower units of which the body is composed.

Every psychical center is endowed with both active and passive instincts; it is capable of *affecting* other centers, and of *being affected* by them. Each cell, molecule and atom of our bodies, being a psychical center, responds, in some measure, to *influences proceeding from other centers*. Every human being *may regulate and determine*, to a greater or less extent, the relations and operations of these inferior centers of his body, not merely by *consciously* and perpetually *exercising control* over them, but by awakening capacities *latent in them*, and inducing *them* to act in their proper channels. Vital tendencies within the domain of body can be modified either by *our own thought* or by that of *other minds*; and, as such influences operate subconsciously, those changes may be wrought *without our conscious knowledge*. On the other hand, our bodies, being associated groups of psychical centers, are endowed with potency to affect *our consciousness, whenever we are in a mood to accept suggestions* from inferior sources.

They often echo back impressions they have previously received from their indwelling sovereign. Agreeable or disagreeable *sensations* may be occasioned by suggestions from a *bodily source*.

In the endeavor to *realize our freedom*, it is first necessary to conquer the opposing forces that most intimately and obstinately beset us, by establishing dominion over our own bodies. This can only be achieved by encouraging that quality of emotion and thought which tends to transform the bodily realm into a *Kingdom of orderly subjects*, accustomed to obeying their ruler's behests and co-operating with his purposes. Specific thoughts of disease, persistently indulged in, either promote extraneous growths or interfere with a normal exercise of the organic functions; for, in time, *the condition of the organs* conforms to the prevailing character of the thought that *dominates them*. If that is *healthy, positive and vital*, corresponding tendencies will be induced in the bodily centers, and every constituent part of the complex organism will perform its natural functions in sympathy with the *spirit that pervades the entire system*.

Our bodies, then, are reservoirs of expressive energy. They may be made either *invaluable*

allies or *obstinate opponents*. We may surround ourselves with "body-guards" of willing friends or determined foes. If we cherish sentiments of ill-will, resentment, intolerance, ugliness, "righteous indignation," restlessness, discontent, fault-finding, self-condemnation or "the blues," the psychical centers become so charged with the resultant of those emotions, that they will surely *react* upon us, sooner or later. One may be suddenly seized and overpowered by a malady lurking in ambush in this bodily storehouse of psychic forces, where he has long nurtured seeds of disease unawares. But if he lives habitually in the *positive atmosphere* of the higher realms of consciousness, the psychical centers of his body become so permeated with vital and beneficent energy, that their *reflex influence* constantly tends to *strengthen and confirm* his very attitude. "To him that hath shall be given."

Whatever we sow in *emotion or thought*, lives in both the lives of others and the psychical treasury of our *own bodies*; and in due season we shall *reap its reaction*. Every hateful thought returns like a boomerang to the sender; but friendly thoughts make for us congenial allies, *within* as well as *outside* of our bodies. The resultant of each thought is treasured with-

in our bodily Kingdom, waiting to add its mite toward rendering our future happy or miserable.

When we relinquish our hold on the body, its individual particles having no longer a centralizing, attracting power to unite them and administer their affairs, disperse and *seek other affinities*. The different members and particles of which the body is composed are not *parts of one's self*; nor is the individual man *a part of the Universal Life*; but all members and all individuals are diversified *expressions of the one life, reflections of the Principle of principles*. The body presents a picture of health just so long as its particles are *permeated with*, and *polarized by*, the healthy, beneficent thought of its indwelling spiritual sovereign. When he loosens his hold on it, it degenerates into an ill-governed Kingdom, in which internal dissensions and rebellions are rife; and, unless checked, they will eventually overthrow and expel their ruler. We need periodically to relax our grasp of the body, by resting and sleeping; otherwise habits of tension are acquired, which cause friction by undue restraint, and disturb the normal functional activities.

Symptoms of disease are due to *derangement of the natural functions* of the bodily parts.

Nearly every person is so sensitive to suggestions from subconscious sources, that any appreciable change in the attitude or relations of the constituent parts of his body, produces, under ordinary circumstances, a *corresponding change* in his own states of consciousness.

Such sensations as pain or sickness are ordinarily due to *suggestions* we receive from a *bodily source*. A condition of the body may be the *occasion* of a mental state, as in the case of a wound, which is accompanied by the *feeling of pain*; but it is not, in the stricter sense, the *cause* of the sensation—that lies in our *acceptance of the suggestion offered*. This is clearly demonstrated in instances where attention is *completely diverted from the object* or incident that suggests the sensation. *A sudden shock* has been known to restore deranged organic functions to their normal operation. In the hypnotized subject's consciousness, the suggestion of the hypnotizer is paramount to that received from *his own body*; so that he may be prevented from *accepting the suggestion* of pain in case of bodily injury.

Medicine acts directly upon the bodily atoms, on the *chemical* plane of subconsciousness, and induces them to assume such altered relations that they will have a tendency to exert psychi-

cal influences which *suggest* to the patient *normal mental states*, and thus promote in him the consciousness of health.

Mental methods are incomparably superior to material ones, because they appeal directly to the *ego*, the rightful ruler of the whole bodily domain, and encourage it to *govern*, instead of to *be governed*. In this way they open the door to the *development of selfhood*.

Every human being is in some measure influenced by suggestions that come to him from the relatively lower subconscious, or the relatively higher superconscious realm. He may sink to the plane of sensation, where bodily forces will determine the direction of his thought and produce experiences of sickness, pain and depression; or he may rise above the level of material consciousness, so that higher forces will control and mold his life. By exercising intuition, we come into relation with higher influences, and realize the satisfaction of a *free, spontaneous existence*; for we are no longer drawn *down* toward the *material* pole of life, but approach the *spiritual* pole, and become atoms of a higher body, in which perfect harmony prevails, because all its members are polarized by the spiritual consciousness.

Every state of consciousness serves as a lens to focus the diffused rays of love and truth upon mentalities that lie within its range. When colored by prejudice and opinion, or marred by flaws of caprice and selfishness, its capacity as a concentrating medium is impaired, for it projects unfaithful and distorted images; but if pure, transparent, and free from the obstructing element of personal bias, the picture it projects is one of ideal perfection.

Whenever we live in an atmosphere of *spiritual* consciousness, we inevitably radiate love and truth through all the affairs of the lower planes of life, so that they assume a natural, orderly arrangement, and subserve a spiritual end. But when we dwell habitually on the *physical* or *psychical* planes, even if successful in avoiding immediate discord and disaster, we fail to realize the *supreme end* of life. Jesus, recognizing a direct relation between bodily symptoms and a deeper, spiritual attitude, said, when healing the sick: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." "Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee."

The complete unity of life is disclosed to the spiritual, or super-psychical, consciousness alone. The necessity of *watching and regulating bodily symptoms* disappears when we rise to that plane. In healing disease by mental methods, one

establishes communication with the mind of the patient, and awakens in him the consciousness of health, which causes the lower centers that constitute his body to *assume more normal relations*; for the higher consciousness, if repeatedly and persistently affirmed, will ultimately dominate the lower.

Self-revelation, in the deepest sense, awakens a desire to *reveal others to themselves*. How far is it right or expedient to intrude our thought upon others? Ought we to try to influence men to see truth *against their inclinations*? In a general way, thoughts originating on the *personal* plane are liable to interfere with another's freedom, and so to occasion undesirable results; but good alone can come from permitting the higher consciousness to be so directed toward another that elevating spiritual ideals shall be projected within the reach of his vision. In fact, every moment of our lives, whether we *intend it or not, we are sending out thoughts* that appeal to *some one*.

Every thought that is born of the higher consciousness, is instrumental in advancing the true end of existence, by drawing men into closer relations with the Absolute Principle of life; therefore it aids in the eternal process of self-manifestation.

XI.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE
SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE.

IN all ages there have lived seers, prophets and men of genius, who have professed to find in life a deep, esoteric meaning, unappreciated and unrecognized by the restless throng of human beings, who crave only amusement or entertainment. Individuals of these rarer types are often accounted eccentric, by their less aspiring fellows, because they are uninfluenced by motives and considerations that appeal to the average man.

How one can be serene in the midst of tumult and strife; contented when surrounded by poverty and deprivation; and even, perchance, feel an increased sense of satisfaction as his material resources and creature comforts diminish, — these things are fairly incomprehensible to the ordinary mortal. Such superiority to conditions seems to him sufficiently erratic to warrant the conclusion that his unfortunate brother has gone daft, and is a menace to society, or, at least, a proper subject for charitable consideration.

Evidently this *deeply contented* state of mind is not derived from outward conditions; its presence must be attributed to an inner consciousness of which the superficial man has little knowledge. Some men, indeed, in their heart of hearts, long for this "peace that passeth understanding," and yet they are so deceived by *appearances* of things which appeal to them on the lower planes of consciousness, that they fail to reach this goal, the supreme end of existence.

All manifested forms of life exhibit the characteristics of *variety and unity*. Everything we perceive may be considered either as a *unit in itself*, or as constituting *a part of some other unit*. Whether we attach greater importance to variety or unity in the things we recognize, whether we are more forcibly impressed by the one or the other consideration, depends on the *attitude* we assume toward that which we contemplate. The uncultured mind, which relies chiefly on the *physical senses* for information, is generally so bewildered by the complex phenomena of the spectacle it witnesses, that it does not succeed in comprehending its *unity*—the *spiritual idea* it represents,—a characteristic which is at once evident to the more highly organic type of mind.

Every man's first acquaintance with the world is made through *separate impressions*, which of themselves afford *no suggestion of relationship*. Only as he begins to be conscious of his own *individuality* or *organic unity* does he discover unity in the world around him. Perception leads from the many to the one, from variety to unity; expression leads from the one to the many, from unity to variety.

To gain the spiritual consciousness, to live "as seeing the invisible," one must, first of all, be filled with a *single, deep desire to know the Truth*; without such an incentive, every attempt will prove vain. He must also be ready to completely renounce *opinion*, prejudice, wilful propensities, narrowness and *all merely personal* considerations, whether of thought or impulse, that can in any way interfere with the attainment of a higher state of consciousness. The mental soil, being thus purged, in a negative way, of those forces which impede, choke and dwarf the realization of spiritual ends, and being rendered receptive to truth, is ready for a *fresh growth* of emotions and thoughts. As seeds of various kinds are constantly scattering abroad over every available tract of the earth's soil, springing up, and growing into plants, each

according to its own species, so in the inner life, the same irresistible impulse of growth and propagation is encountered. Seed-thoughts of every description are distributed broadcast throughout the realm of mind, and find lodgment in every unoccupied nook and cranny; but wherever the field is preoccupied by a vigorous growth, so that they are unable to take root, they perish. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." As the outer world of nature "abhors a vacuum," so does the inner world of thought. Wherever a mental vacuum exists, thoughts of all descriptions rush in promiscuously to fill it. A horde of nondescript, ill-defined sentiments and impulses—mental weeds—is always ready to enter in and take possession of the undisciplined mind, run riot, and scatter ruin and desolation. Thoughts are seeds of emotions; and emotions dominate the world of psychic beings.

Having, then, resolved to pursue the spiritual life, it only remains for us to discover the best means for its advancement. How can its growth be encouraged and accelerated most effectually? In a general way, by surrounding ourselves, as far as possible, with an *atmosphere* calculated to nourish the germs of spirituality; by bringing

ourselves within the reach of influences that conduce to their unfoldment. Every means that tends to draw our thoughts in that direction, should be eagerly welcomed.

He who avails himself of the advantages offered by every accessible medium of spiritual perception, is certain to find the richest and fullest appreciation of life. Every vision of beauty, every thought of truth, every impulse of good, every aspiration for a larger, *more real* life, is evidence of the presence of a deeper Self, the infinite, God-self within.

One may grow to recognize its presence more clearly by cultivating greater intimacy with nature, a more ardent desire for the real and substantial, a more positive love of right, and a more sincere devotion to the service of humanity. Every man's capacity for realization enlarges with the using. Faithful employment of faculties already developed, not only tends to increase their scope and efficiency, but it also opens up the way for the appearance of others previously latent.

One may increase his power of discernment by occasionally retiring into the inner recesses of his Being for self-communion; by seeking the solitude of nature; by becoming familiar with the best available art and literature; by coming

into touch with the great, active world of human interests. Above all else, he needs to cultivate *originality*,— to learn to think for himself, so that he may know what is real *at first hand*, by coming into *direct contact with the soul* of things. His mind must be permeated with the *atmosphere of reality*. He need not rely on others to search the hidden depths of consciousness for truth that *he* may discern as well. In these and many other ways, he will come by degrees to realize his deeper selfhood.

In the present stage of human development, nearly every man's life is passed, to a great extent, amid outward associations so unfavorable to the promotion of spiritual consciousness that he needs, at frequent intervals, to come into the immediate presence of the Infinite, in order to obtain renewed strength and *ideal energy* to dispense in the *practical* affairs of life. By persistently dwelling on the spiritual aspect of life, one may, in time, accumulate sufficient reserve power to render him equal to any emergency. Every man who desires to realize a deeper selfhood, finds it necessary, in the beginning at least, to repeatedly and persistently emphasize the fact that such a Self *does in reality exist in him*, even though buried beneath a tangled web of disorderly thoughts which obscures, and

threatens, if not swept away, to obliterate the image of the Ideal. It may be that he will succeed only after repeated trials, in permanently establishing and maintaining his standpoint in a realm of consciousness deeper than the finite, so that changes in the transient world of events, circumstances and opinions, will not disturb his peace of mind.

From time immemorial, seers have recognized an inner Presence with which they could hold communion, and have found in it the source of wisdom, knowledge, power, joy and peace,—in fact, of all that is *real and enduring* in life. In moments of purest spiritual consciousness, when our vision penetrates beyond the barriers of finite thought, and human consciousness blends with the Divine, its existence becomes an *axiomatic certainty*.

The entire outer world, a structure infinitely complex and varied, from a finite point of view, is resolved, in the mind of the thinker and seer, into a consistent expression of the *one Self*, in whose life *all live*, in whose thought *all think*, in whose activity *all act*, in whose freedom *all are free*.

The possibility of one's knowing anything outwardly, depends on the vital connection of

the outer expression he perceives, with the *life within him*. He *recognizes* an outer world, *because of this union*.

The ultimate source of all expression, the original impulse of all outgoing life, is derived from the deeper Self—the Self which, in every man, is concealed behind the surface indications of a *personal mask*.

The further we drop the plumb-line of intuition into the depths of consciousness, the more fully is our *essential nature revealed*, and the more clearly evident become design and purpose in the cosmos.

Two classes of people are to be met with everywhere:—those who seek to manifest the *real things* of the deeper Self, and those who live in the *semblance* of things, in sensations, opinions, sentiments, independent of any conscious relation to a deeper Self. All lives are *rooted in eternity*. As they draw sustenance from the spiritual realm, they develop and come forth into manifestation in the finite realm of *phenomena*. The expanding germ within a seed, overcomes the most formidable obstacles in its struggle to reach the sunlight. The position in which the seed is planted may cause it to *grow downward* at first; but the inexorable law of its

Being leads it ultimately to seek the air and sunlight that its life demands. Within every human expression is a *germ of Divinity*, which will come to light whenever encouraged by enviroing circumstances. The flower is concealed within the bud, until conditions are favorable to its expansion. Each experience leaves an impression on the mind. Every person is building, even though unconsciously, *an inner life*, around which the *outer show* is the temporary staging; and when it is torn away, that which he has built inwardly will stand revealed. By consciously co-operating with the Divine in our nature, thinking and acting along the lines it indicates, the development of our lives will be spontaneous and harmonious. As all living things are *from* the Infinite, their normal growth is *toward* the Infinite; as the Infinite is the source of life, it is also its destination.

The life of the deeper Self is manifested in beauty, truth, goodness and harmony. Through their influence the real Being, which lies beneath every finite, human mask, may be appealed to, until it responds in some degree, at least. The man who has supposed himself to be a mortal creature, obeying the quickening impulse from within, aspires to realize his essential nature,

the Divine and Eternal. This is the tale of evolution; as the Divine reaches down to the human in revelation, so the human reaches up to the Divine in realization.

The deeper Self speaks many languages; but every attentive, appreciative listener finds the *same story* in all, however much they differ in forms of expression.

Ranged around the absolute center of life are numerous spheres of expression, each with a circumference or surface of its own, and differing from all others in its *mode of expression*, the *character of its phenomena*, the *guise* in which ideas present themselves. During the process of human evolution, four such independent world-orders have come to light, gradually, one after another. They may be designated the world of *Nature and Art*; the world of *Religion*; the world of *Philosophy*; and the world of *Music*.

Within one or another of these worlds, every one may cultivate the acquaintance of his deeper Self—the Universal Self, so as to come immediately into the presence of the Infinite, which, to the uninitiated inquirer, seems enshrouded in *unfathomable mystery*. Thrice happy is he who has obtained access to the soul-realm by *all*

these entrances, and is able through all alike to commune with the Infinite.

Two of these worlds, Nature and Music, are perceived by the faculties of sight and hearing, respectively; the other two, Religion and Philosophy, are discerned intuitively, without the intervention of external sense-mediums peculiarly adapted to reveal them. Both the inner and the outer sight and hearing are *susceptible of cultivation*, and need equally *careful training*.

As the deeper Self is manifested outwardly in Nature, so it is manifested inwardly, to the "*mind's eye*," as it were, in Philosophy. As it speaks outwardly in Music, so it speaks inwardly, through the voice of conscience and the moral sensibilities, in Religion.

Poets have always sung the praises of Nature. The natural world sustains a close relation to the world of Philosophy—of pure thought,—as an *embodiment* of ideal visions. In "Music and Morals" Mr. Haweis has described the peculiarly intimate associations existing between the world of Religion—the moral sphere,—and the world of Music, which *embodies* emotions.

In dealing with deep soul-experiences all terms are hopelessly inadequate to convey one's meaning intelligibly. Words can only *suggest* to another person such experiences as he is *already acquainted with*.

The world of Nature and Art (except Music, which is entitled to rank as a world of itself) is one of *beauty*; through it Absolute Reality is manifested as *the Beautiful*.

The world of Philosophy is essentially one of *truth*; through it Absolute Reality is manifested as *the True*.

The world of Religion is essentially one of *goodness*; through it Absolute Reality is manifested as *the Good*.

This trinity of spiritual qualities has stood from time immemorial as the foundation of *all ideal expression*.

To these three worlds there must also be added the world of Music, which is considered in the following chapter as the world of *harmony*; through it Absolute Reality is manifested as *the Harmonious*. The latter world reveals the Eternal Nature through no *essentially new* attribute, but, in a measure, through all the foregoing so finely blended that they appear inseparable, so far as the general effect produced, is concerned.

The normal human mind is capable of recognizing three dimensions of space. The natural world consists of ideas presented outwardly in conformity to this conception of spatial relations.

In the order of evolution it is this world into which every man is first born; i. e., it is in it that he attains to self-consciousness as a human being. He gradually awakens to a knowledge of himself, discovers what manner of man he is, by finding his own nature revealed in this outer order. The natural world conforms to certain models or types which are pre-existent in the mind; therefore it is symbolical of the inner life. It is an embodiment, a projection as it were, of ideas latent in the mind, waiting for some suggestion to call them forth and give them shape in actual expression.

Plato conceived this world to be the "diversified appearance of Ideas," which the soul, having known in a pre-existent state, previous to its birth into this relative sphere, is able to recognize, in some measure, in all things, but, in most instances, in a *confused* and *obscured* manner; so that the earthly life is a process of *recollection* or *re-discovery* of the essential nature of things.

The man who aspires to a higher life, who earnestly desires to become acquainted with his deeper Self and more fully conscious of the spiritual Essence of things, the perduring basis of all manifested life, will seek every opportunity to commune with the Infinite as it is reflected in the starry heavens, the ocean, the woods, the

mountains, flowers, birds, insects and countless myriads of exquisitely formed creatures too minute to be visible to the naked eye. The genuine lover of Nature *breathes in* and *absorbs* her spirit whenever he comes into her presence. He sees with a vision deeper than the physical. Seers and poets almost invariably have been enthusiastic devotees of Nature. Even Jesus was frequently constrained to retire from the discordant suggestions of public life, and go apart by himself into the mountain solitudes, where he found the Infinite revealed outwardly in *perfect beauty*. Every man enlarges his appreciation of the real, by living in the presence of Nature and becoming familiar with her language.

In the course of human evolution, man received in the world of Nature his earliest inspiration and incentive to bring into active expression the deeper things of life. The charm of natural landscape impresses, in some degree, even the rudest type of mind. It arouses not alone ecstasy, but *awe, reverence and devotion*, as well. The savage is conscious of the presence of a Great Spirit, however crudely his ethical and religious standards reflect the divine ideal. Evolution in the religious, as in the natural

world, has been so gradual as to be scarcely perceptible from generation to generation. The religious instinct in man first assumed the guise of superstitious fear, and led him to worship the heavenly bodies, natural forces, wild animals, and images designed to personify invisible powers, which his fancy clothed with attributes utterly abhorrent to the more refined instinct of a later period. Each individual mind, and each race, from primitive man to the highest type of the present day, has entertained some *characteristic* conception of the Supreme Being. Ethical standards vary according to the measure of goodness men are capable of appreciating. As the world of Nature appears to each observer an embodiment of *beauty* to the extent that he has "eyes to see," so the world of Religion reveals to every individual just as much *divinity* as his power of discernment enables him to feel. Every man's God and every man's religion reflect *his ideal of life*.

The world of Religion comprehends those phases of life which concern the attitude of the *individual man* toward *other beings*. Its mode of expression, like the natural world, represents the Absolute Essence of things, differentiated in variously related centers. The Supreme

Being, fellow men, and hosts of inferior creatures, appeal to the individual, prompting emotions of reverence, love, sympathy, compassion. When man first begins to *realize* something of the higher consciousness, to know that he is *more than* a superior animal, and that the human creature is nothing less than a crude, embryotic expression of *divinity*, the idea of Deity begins to dawn upon him, as his conception of the supreme excellence. He *idealizes* the noblest traits and attributes he is acquainted with *in humanity*, and pictures them to himself in an imaginary form which he enthrones, after the fashion of earthly potentates, as the *sovereign ruler of the universe*. The character of this image alters with the *thought that projects it*. Every man's conception of the Supreme Being seems to *him exactly to correspond* to the Eternal Reality. The *materialistic mind* finds only a *materialistic God*, and the vindictive mind, a God of vengeance; while the spiritual seer discerns a *purely spiritual God, transcending the most exalted ideal* which the finite mind is capable of conceiving—a "God of the living"—beyond its power to image, and discoverable only as an immanent Presence by those who *seek to manifest* the divine life. A spiritual type of religion discards *perfunctory* worship and refrains from judging by the artificial standard of *conduct*.

It encourages men to reach out and up spontaneously toward the *ideal fountain* of goodness, as plants grow toward the sunlight. It offers, as an incentive for living, the *enjoyment of freedom*, not the *affordance* of restraint. Work that seemed irksome when performed reluctantly, under the forced demand of *duty*, proceeds without friction, and is esteemed a *privilege* when undertaken in the *spirit of freedom*. Nature manifests in superabundance the freedom of the creative Spirit. So also, to him "that hath ears to hear," Religion speaks, in broadest accents, a *language of freedom*. Not everyone is privileged to enjoy a life of freedom in the world of *Nature*, under the most satisfying conditions; but *everyone* may retire at frequent intervals, be it only for a moment, to the inner realm of the soul, where, at the heart of the universe, the finite meets the Infinite, in simple, undisguised spiritual intercourse, untrammelled by the conventional dictates of dogmatic theology.

The *prophet* rather than the *priest* is the exponent of that which is *most real* in Religion, for he proclaims the supremacy of the Spirit over the letter.

Closely allied to the world of Religion is the world of Philosophy or pure thought, in which

life is viewed *introspectively*. All that we know of the internal characteristics of things is revealed in this way; for by outward observation, we become acquainted with *externals alone*. Through an inward sight (sometimes designated the sixth sense) we perceive life interiorly, just as, by the outward vision, we perceive it exteriorly. Looking outward from any position, we see only those things that *meet our gaze*; and so it is with the things we see *inwardly*. *What we see there is determined by our view-point*—the attitude we assume toward the inner world. We decide, by our *choice of attitude, what things shall lie within our range of vision*. In the natural world one may invade dismal swamps and penetrate gloomy thickets, or he may visit more attractive localities, where the scenery is enchanting and inspiring. So in the thought-world, each one may *select his own ground*, and on his *choice* the quality of his experience will depend. He holds the key to his inner, as to his outer world, in his *ability to choose his view-point*, and to change it at will.

The seer, rather than the scholar, is the exponent of that which is most real in Philosophy, for he exalts the spirit above the letter, and esteems *wisdom* more than *learning*.

The evolution of consciousness may be traced upward through each of these four worlds until the point of spontaneity, or soul-freedom, is reached. It is only on the *lower planes* of consciousness that the absolute Essence of things appears to be resolved into endlessly differentiated phenomena.

The *ideal unity* of these worlds becomes clearer as we follow the various paths that converge toward a common, cosmic center. The beautiful, the good, the true, and the harmonious, all lead us to be conscious of a Principle which *transcends all spheres of manifestation*. Enthusiastic devotees of Nature, the Fine Arts, Religion, Philosophy, and Music, find revealed, each in their respective spheres, the *same* Absolute Reality. The different forms simply represent *particular modes* in which it is manifested. The ideal human life calls for such all-around development as is afforded by intercourse with the Infinite through every possible avenue of spiritual discernment. One is in danger of growing ill-balanced by *exclusively following any special bent*. The *pursuit of a "hobby"* tends to warp and deform one's life, until its poise and symmetry are destroyed. The hermit, the religious fanatic, the morbid mystic, the musical monomaniac, are illustrations of this tendency. The

ideal life reaches out in *all directions*, and is open to influences from *all sources*. Its various talents are unified, as the colored rays of the spectrum *blend in the white light*. Many scholars and business men who regard an occasional sojourn among the mountains or at the seashore as quite indispensable, almost entirely ignore the benefits they might also derive from contemplating the universal aspect of life through *other* channels. Speaking comparatively, how *few* people enjoy the invigorating, stimulating atmosphere of the thought-world! How few cultivate the *spiritual vision* by which the ideal world is *inwardly perceptible*! How few, too, seek recreation and strength in the revitalizing world of Music!

As we probe beneath the plane of phenomena, we enter a realm of *pure ideas*, discernible by the *spiritual faculty*, but *not by the senses or the intellect*. In dream visions we are sometimes aware of the presence of ideas which are intangible and indescribable because they are not clothed *in forms recognizable* by the lower faculties. In waking moments, also, we are sometimes conscious of ideas *too elusive to be embodied in words*. The ideal substance of things is capable of formulation in *all modes of expression*. The same essential ideas appear in dif-

ferent guises. Certain descriptive adjectives apply equally well to phenomena of all worlds of expression.

We characterize natural objects, emotions, thoughts and tones *alike*, as broad, deep or substantial, brilliant or subdued, sharp, rough or dull.

We are conscious of *harmony* in *Nature*, and of *beauty* in *Music*.

These four worlds by no means comprise the *possible scope of spiritual revelation*; on the contrary they suggest an inexhaustible variety of modes by which the Infinite may radiate in finite expression. Thus far in human history, but little even of the *surface of life* has been explored by man. He must continue to discover *new* modes of manifestation, as the domain of knowledge includes wider areas. Already, in this age of discovery and inventive application, unexplored worlds are beginning to loom up, just beyond the range of his perceptive powers, only awaiting the development of *new faculties* through which to reveal *inconceivable splendors*. For acquiring knowledge outwardly, we are now dependent on a *few scattered series of vibrations*, each series being of very limited extent. We can perceive *light*—ethereal vibrations from

460 to 725 trillion per second; *heat*—similar vibrations within another comparatively limited compass; and *sound*—atmospheric vibrations within a very narrow range. Above, below, and between these series which stand out like scarcely recognizable oases in a vast desert, all seems void. Yet what wealth of hidden resources *these gaps imply* for creatures who may have developed responsive faculties *capable of perceiving* vibrations at intervening rates! Even more restricted are our means of acquiring knowledge *inwardly*. Recent discoveries in telepathy and other fields within the vast domain of the occult, suggest well-nigh *inconceivable* advantages that may be enjoyed by beings whose *faculties for perceiving* the correspondent vibrations of finer sentiments and emotions have been sufficiently developed. Even now, we sojourn on the *borderland* of an infinite realm that is waiting to be possessed by man.

“We know in part and we see in part;” but how *insignificant* are these occasional fragmentary gleams compared with the *transcendent glory* that may be experienced by beings who are capable of appreciating something of the *perfect unity of life as an unbroken whole!*



XII.

MUSIC.

Music constitutes a world of itself, co-ordinate with the worlds of Nature, Religion and Philosophy. It is not, like the other arts, an extension of the *natural* order, for it is characterized by an entirely different *mode of revelation*. The world of Music is pre-eminently the world of *harmony*. The idea of harmony—*unity in variety*—is exhibited not alone in the blending of tones, but in the complexions of *each individual tone*. Sound is sensation occasioned by atmospheric vibrations acting on the auditory nerves. Vibrations recurring at regular intervals, and at certain specific rates, produce *musical* (harmonic) tones. *Pitch* is determined by rapidity of vibration. *Quality* depends on the prominence of certain overtones or harmonics (secondary vibrations induced by the fundamental vibration, and which blend with it and modify its effect). In music every note sustains to every other note a definite harmonic relation, according to the ratio of their respective vibrations.

Combinations of tones are agreeable or disagreeable, concordant or discordant, in proportion to the degree in which their vibrations *blend*.

When the fundamental vibrations conflict, the effect of *dissonance* is produced.

Sounds suggest all conceivable moods, all phases of emotion. No longing is too deep, no aspiration too high, no purpose too broad, to be paralleled in music. Every creature finds its most spontaneous and significant means of emotional expression in *sound*. The cries of wild animals, the songs of birds, and the more suggestive utterances of human speech, attest this fact. One's first impulse on experiencing intense joy or grief is to *cry out*. In that act emotion obtains its most direct and natural satisfaction.

With the dawn of this modern era the heart of civilization began to throb with renewed life which demanded just such expression as music alone affords.

In the Renaissance, arts which had prevailed in ancient times revived, and did their utmost to manifest this fresh inspiration; but not until the inner mysteries of life were revealed in *tone harmonies*, was the expression adequate. Then,

for the first time in human history, Music took its rank with the fine arts. Indeed it then became virtually a *new art*; for, although its elementary forms were handed down from a remote period, it first appeared within this modern era as an important factor in human development.

On first thought, it may seem strange that the greatest and most marvelous of the arts should scarcely have appeared at all in those ancient civilizations among which other branches attained to such perfection. Even among the Greeks it did not reach a sufficient development to render it a worthy companion to its sister arts, for it never surpassed the forms of *simple melody*. Harmony, as the term is now understood, was not employed by them. Pythagoras discovered the relations of the different intervals, and demonstrated, from a scientific standpoint, the physical basis of a series of tones which practically coincides with our diatonic scale. Within this limited field the Greeks constructed simple melodies. But such a scale was ill-adapted to the development of harmony, and altogether insufficient as the basis of an art in any way comparable to our modern Music. The elaborate art-form we now possess owes its existence to the employment of a more com-

plete system of mathematically arranged scales. Its consummation could only have been reached after centuries of slow progress ; for, in technical demands and practical requirements, it rests on a purely mechanical basis, requiring time for elaboration, and involving physical discoveries as well as psychical development. Then, again, fulness and warmth of emotional feeling—qualities in which nearly all ancient races were on the whole deficient—prevail to a far greater extent in our latter-day civilization.

The effect upon music, of the modern awakening was apparent in its advance from simple, crude melodies to harmony (the combination of melodies or chords).

The awakened genius for discovery and invention soon placed the new-born art upon a practical foundation, by devising instruments suited to its more advanced requirements. Simultaneously with the growth of the ideal philosophy of Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant and Hegel, the religious awakening of the Lutheran reformation, and the marvelous achievements of the Italian Renaissance, the new art of Music found expression in the works of Palestrina, Bach, Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven.

So mightily was the modern world stirred by the desire to become better acquainted with the

essential nature of things, that the impetus was felt in all those worlds of expression.

Sculpture achieved its greatest triumphs in ancient Greece, Painting in Italy, and Music in Germany.

It was in the fourteenth century that Music began to make a radical advance beyond the simple forms in which it had been preserved, during the dark ages, mainly through the agency of the church. It then began to assume new importance, as a direct result of attempts to place it upon a substantial scientific foundation.

From that period its growth was rapid and sure. As an art, it rests on a valid basis, both from a psychological and a physiological point of view. Psychologically, it appeals to the higher human faculties, by reason of its power to embody ideas and convey them to the hearer through emotional channels. Physiologically, it reaches the brain through the auditory nerves, causing sympathetic vibrations in the bodily organism. These operations conform to unvarying natural laws; and the discovery, in modern times, of those laws has established the art on a secure and permanent foundation.

The phenomena of sound previously associated with the world of Nature afford no expression in any way comparable to musical art. A sensitive ear is capable of detecting harmonics in some waterfalls;* but such suggestions were too faint and indefinite to call forth a response from human ingenuity; in fact, they first became definitely distinguishable by the aid of modern physics. In the light of present knowledge, the songs of birds are seen to have been prophetic of the development of vocal music; but even that expression was lacking in the higher animals. Vocal music was probably evolved by slow degrees from forms of speech, being, primitively, scarcely more than inflections or modulations of the *talking voice*. To it was added, in time, accompaniments upon such rudely constructed instruments as were then in use. The development of instrumental music within the last few centuries has surpassed, in originality, all previous achievements in any field of art.

Hearing is the most recently evolved of the five specific senses known to exist in the animal kingdom. It surpasses the others in its qualifi-

* See "The Music of Niagara," by Eugene Thayer, *Scribner's Monthly*, Feb. 1881.

cations as a vehicle of pure ideas. Sight and hearing are far superior as avenues through which to discern the spiritual aspect of things; and it is with these two that we have to deal in considering the fine arts. The loftiest function of hearing is exhibited in musical perception. Sound brings one nearer to the realm of pure ideas than does sight. The attractions of those outward phenomena with which one is instinctively associated in active life are less prominent in sound. The daily occupations of nearly all persons lead them to deal much more closely and carefully with distinctions in quality of *color* and *figure* than of tones; therefore the mind, being engrossed by the former, is more inclined to dwell upon them whenever they are present.

The most meaningful phenomena tend to grow commonplace when observed steadily, and lose their suggestive potency through constant familiarity. On beholding a painting or natural landscape, the average mind is inclined to linger on the *plane of phenomena*, instead of penetrating deeper, and discerning through them the *pure ideas* it is their function to disclose. But let us imagine ourselves occupied with daily pursuits requiring a more constant and intimate association with distinctions in quality of *tone* than of

color and figure, so that musical sounds in various combinations would be present to the mind as continually as *objects of vision* now are, and enter as thoroughly into the practical economy of living; let us also imagine ourselves paying as little attention to relations of color and figure as we now do to *tonal* relations; it is clear that our minds would then be more engrossed with the *phenomena of sound*, and more familiar with *tone effects*, than with those of color and figure. The natural inference is that *sight* would *then* be the more direct avenue to the ideal realm, because our attention would be less likely to become occupied with those phenomena which, owing to the familiar relation they sustain to our every-day life, tend to interfere with the discernment of a Spiritual Reality beyond. It is possible, indeed, to become surfeited with the visions of beauty and grandeur everywhere apparent in the natural world, so common and persistent are they in every waking moment; but how infrequently is this true of musical harmony! Our ears are seldom greeted by agreeable *combinations of sounds*, while our eyes are continually met by attractive *scenes*; and, even then, how quickly our power of appreciation loses its keenness!

According to Schopenhauer,* whose treatise on Music was the first satisfactory exposition of that art, from a philosophical standpoint, "The (Platonic) Ideas are the adequate objectivation of the Will. It is the end of all the arts, except music, to facilitate the cognition of the Ideas by means of the representation of single things. . . . Music, as it ignores the Ideas, does not in the least depend on the perceptible [*i. e.*, natural] world; it ignores it unconditionally; and it could still exist, in a certain measure, even if the world were not here at all; which cannot be said of the other arts. For music is as immediate an objectivation and image of the universal Will as the world itself is, even as the Ideas also are, the diversified appearance of which constitutes the world. Thus music is by no means an image of the Ideas, as the other arts are, but an *image of the Will itself*, . . . and therefore the effect of music is so much more powerful and penetrating than that of other arts; for these speak of shadows only, whilst it speaks of essentials. As, however, the same identical Will shows itself in the Ideas as well as in music, only in each of the two in a totally different way, there must consequently be a parallelism, an analogy, though by no

* Translated by A. R. Parsons.

means an immediate likeness, between music and between the Ideas, whose appearances in diversity and in completeness constitute the visible world."

Again, he says, music "never expresses phenomena, but solely the inner being, the essence of phenomena, the Will itself, . . . the inner soul of things without their body. . . . It represents, accordingly, the metaphysics of all that is physical in the world, the thing *per se*, which lies behind all appearances. . . . It gives the inmost kernel of things that precedes all formation, the very heart of things."

Each *characteristic form* of music should be esteemed for the *idea* it expresses. The essential feature of "dance music" is *rhythm*. A *schottische* may possess as great a degree of merit, *of its own order*, as a symphony; but its possibilities, as a vehicle of expression, must always remain far inferior to those of the higher classical forms, for its dominant suggestion is of a *lower type*. Purely rhythmic ideas may be clothed, incidentally, in melodies or harmonies of real excellence. Music of this class acts as a healthy stimulant and tonic to the mind, inducing nervous exhilaration or muscular relaxation that is often highly beneficial; but such

music should not be substituted for that which represents more substantial qualities. Each has its province and its end to fulfil; and each should be accorded recognition on the basis of its *true worth*. Music possesses a sentimental value quite apart from the purely spiritual ideas it may be instrumental in conveying. Composers of the cheaper grades of so-called "popular" music commonly cater to the lower human instincts, by appealing to *impulse* and merely *animal emotions*. The baneful effect of such music is incalculable. It is a far greater menace to society than are some more generally recognized sources of evil, because it operates insidiously, and reaches the *seat of character* through subconscious channels. Seeds of impure, demoralizing sentiments and emotions are sown broadcast under the guise of seductive sounds. Strains calculated to produce such deleterious effects are by no means monopolized by the street organ-grinder and the dance-hall orchestra; they pervade respectable homes, churches, Sunday schools, concerts, and stage performances which often masquerade under the title of "high grade."

Melodies that are *merely empty*—analogous to the "Mother Goose" rhymes in literature—are far less objectionable than those which make

some pretensions to seriousness, while in reality suggesting sentiments and emotions of a low order.

Considerate parents are careful that their children shall be placed under the influence of wholesome books, good companions, and healthful amusements; for the impressions—largely subconscious—acquired from those sources help to formulate character and determine the course of subsequent life. Children seldom appreciate the full significance of all that comes within their observation. Long before they are able to detect the real meaning of pictures, or comprehend the situations they represent, they are capable of absorbing something of their *atmosphere*. Before they think of analyzing the aims and motives of their older associates, they form attachments and discriminate in traits of character. Yet music is the most *subtle* and *powerful* of all agencies in shaping character.

It is capable of doing not only *immense good*, but *enormous mischief* as well. The craving for it is inborn in nearly all human beings. Not only has it "charms to soothe the savage breast," but it affects, in some degree, even the lower orders of creation. Certain concordant or discordant combinations are known to delight or distress animals.

Music appeals to people of all classes and conditions—savage and civilized, ignorant and educated, vicious and respectable. It flourishes alike in the slums and in the most cultured circles. It is of the utmost concern, then, whether the lower, or the higher instincts are catered to, in seeking to satisfy this hunger.

It is frequently contended that music of the best quality is too abstruse and intricate to be appreciated by the average listener; that it is ill-adapted to the needs of the *general public*, whose tastes are better satisfied with a less substantial sort of entertainment. A twofold misconception of the nature of music lies at the root of this argument; for it assumes that *quality* is in some way related to *difficulty*, complexity, elaborateness; and, also, that music must be *understood* to be enjoyed or appreciated. But it is a fact that many of the *simplest* airs have become *immortal*. Simplicity characterizes much that is grand in both Art and Nature. One need not seek long to find good music suited, in point of technical difficulty, to the capabilities of the most unpretentious player. Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, and a host of other composers of high rank have furnished an inexhaustible supply of such material.

Equally erroneous is the impression that prevails to a considerable extent among all classes of people, viz., that music must be *understood* (comprehended intellectually) in order to be appreciated; that it is its chief function to portray or represent definite ideas by means of *symbols*—forms requiring *interpretation*. If such were the case, unless one possessed a technical knowledge of the art, and had acquired the ability to interpret its symbols, it would, indeed, be useless to expect him to derive any great measure either of pleasure or benefit from listening to performances of the highest grade. To many minds the term “classical,” as applied to music, is fraught with suggestions of *abstruseness* or *dullness*. Listeners are often bored by music, simply because they regard it in a *false attitude*, or look for the wrong elements in it. It appeals, primarily, to the *emotional*, not the *rational* faculty. It is not necessary to *interpret* its forms. To *enjoy* and *appreciate Nature*, one need not be familiar with different species of plants and trees, like the botanist; or understand the structure of minerals and rock-formations, like the geologist; or even comprehend the various processes through which the Beautiful is revealed, like the physicist. No more need one be a musician,

or a student of harmony, to *appreciate* the *spirit* of music.

Subconscious impressions require no explanation. In some measure, the *atmosphere* which pervades every work may be *felt*, even by those who are entirely ignorant of the formal value of its subject matter. To be sure, knowledge of harmony is essential to the clearest comprehension of the *forms* in which the Spirit is embodied; and so, in some respects, it materially enhances one's appreciation of the art; but it is not the *chief* consideration.

Music constitutes a complete *world of itself*, with a *distinct mode of manifestation*. Its forms are wholly different from those of the natural and the thought worlds; but it is often easy to trace parallel expressions of the same idea under their different forms. Music of a merely *descriptive* character, which undertakes to suggest definite scenes from the natural world, so that they may be distinctly traced by the imagination, does not reach the highest level. The imitative function in man is properly subordinate to the creative. Francis Hueffer writes of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony: "He brings the songs of birds, the thunder, and the murmuring brook before the

ear, not as a portrait of nature, but as at once a suggestion and embodiment of the feelings which would be called up by them." One should not *try*, in that sense, to understand music. The profoundest harmonies cannot be translated into definite *forms of thought* or *natural images*. One need only surrender to it, become passive, and let it speak as Nature speaks. People do not shun *Nature* under the pretext that her language is *too complex and abstruse*. Even uncultured people receive inspiration from the beautiful and sublime.

The phrases "popular music" and "music for the masses" are frequently used to distinguish music which satisfies an inferior order of taste from that which appeals to the more *refined* taste. But such a method of discriminating is artificial. It is considered expedient to elevate public taste in other art matters by exhibiting to the general public, works of the highest grade. No one advocates filling museums and galleries with inferior productions on the ground that the current standard of popular taste will not enable the masses to *appreciate* works of greater intrinsic merit. In discussing music of genuine worth, one is first impressed with the prevailing fondness for *melody* (tunes,

airs). This form reveals life in its *linear* aspect, as a series of consecutively related experiences. But, in its higher phases, life includes far more than that; it possesses *breadth* and *depth*, as well as length.

The profoundest harmonies afford a comprehensive view of its fulness and richness. They reveal it as *many, yet one*; as a struggle of contending forces, yet governed by an *all-inclusive purpose*; as often discordant and imperfect when viewed in detail, but *harmonious* and *satisfactory as a whole*.

The ecstasy of the higher vision transfigures the tones, so that we obtain through them an insight into life, which enables us to appreciate its external and internal relations, its variety and unity, its individuality and universality, its finitude and infinity. One who hears with the *physical* ear recognizes nothing but *sounds*; but one who hears with the *spiritual* ear appreciates *ideas*.

Music possesses both suggestive and stimulative potencies. Its constant flow of suggestiveness arouses the imaginative faculty from a state of passivity, so that one's thought soars aloft in regions of the highest ideals. It lends

wings to thought, which enable it to rise to higher planes, where, beyond the border line of definite suggestion, it is released in the realm of spiritual freedom, and left to its own originality, independent of the guidance of *distinct forms*. It sometimes fulfils this function best when heard at a distance, beyond the range of *perfect audibility*. The individual consciousness, overflowing its finite limits, rises to the plane of the Oversoul, where one beholds his deeper Self as in a mirror. As his thought transcends the phenomenal plane, he knows the essence of all things to be an eternal Spiritual Reality. From this plane of consciousness, the real world is seen to be not *less*, but *more*, than phenomenal. The phenomena of life are transfigured until only the *spiritual substance* of things is recognizable.

As the phenomenal aspect of life disappears, one finds himself beyond the pale of phantoms and sense illusions, standing face to face with all that is real in his Being—the *spiritual*. In the realm of the Absolute the conditioning factors of time and space do not prevail. Were we always to experience the spiritual consciousness, there would be no occasion for denying the reality of phenomenal Being. We would be just as observing of surrounding incidents; nothing would escape our attention. The outer

panorama would become so transparent that the eternal Reality, concealed from the material vision by the mask of sense illusions, would always be clearly in view; the material veil would be too thin to obstruct it. While one's thought is completely absorbed in the transient, while he sees nothing more in a life, while his attention is engrossed with sense perception, the material mirage appears to be the reality of realities. But let him ascend to higher ground, from which he can obtain a comprehensive view of life, and look down on the finite scene from above, and the whole *aspect of things* changes. Conditions that seemed all-important fade into insignificance, and assume merely incidental values.

Most of the fine arts represent life, not in its *total* aspect, but in its *fragmentary phases*—never finished, but always *becoming*, evolving, growing, reaching out, striving to attain. Architecture and Music alone are capable of revealing its total aspect in rounded-out, complete works. In Music the innermost secrets of the heart are disclosed in the truest proportions of harmony, or relation to the whole Being.

In the music-drama, Wagner has essayed to present ideas simultaneously in poetry, scenic

art, and music, so that they shall command the undivided attention of all the perceptive faculties. Ideally, the music-drama represents the highest achievement of Art, because it attempts to express the *profoundest human experiences* in the most *comprehensive manner*. It is an advance beyond the spoken drama, in so far as music has power to awaken deeper, more subtle feelings than words. A similar universal art-form was sought in the Greek tragedy; but the crude, undeveloped condition of instrumental music at that period prevented its employment as a substitute for the chorus, which served as a background for the action, and furnished a sort of commentary on the play by intoning the deeper sentiments of the actors.

Schopenhauer says,*—“The delicate relation in which music stands to the true nature of all things will explain the fact that if suitable music be heard to any scene, action, event, environment, it will seem to reveal the secret sense of these, and act as the most correct and clearest comment upon them.”

Yet, important as are its achievements, the music-drama falls far short of a perfect standard in *actual performance*; for even though fulfilling its intended purpose, so far as its *musical*

*Translated by A. R. Parsons.

features are concerned, it is evident that in stage art much must be left to the *imagination*, even after the exercise of due care and ingenuity in regard to the various devices employed. But this fact only emphasizes the importance of presenting to the senses an illusion as complete as possible, that the imagination may not be continually challenged by them.

An invaluable, and at the same time almost universally neglected, opportunity for becoming acquainted with the deeper life of the soul may be found in *improvisation*. Here the deeper Self enjoys perfect freedom of expression, so that the heart's choicest treasures are poured out in the most lavish fashion. No method of self-development exceeds in importance this simple indulgence in intuitive expression. It opens the door to a world entirely foreign to most lives, calling into activity at once the perceptive and creative faculties, and adding immeasurably to one's appreciation of what is *real in experience*.

The value of music as a *therapeutic agent* has long been a subject of more or less speculation and practical experiment. In "Music and Morals," Mr. Haweis has hinted at certain possi-

bilities in this direction. Music has frequently been employed, with highly satisfactory results, to alleviate suffering and dispel the morbid atmosphere which envelops sick-rooms, hospitals, and sanitariums.

Suitable music is a sure antidote for "the blues," if one is sufficiently *receptive to its influence*. Its importance as a remedial agent cannot be properly estimated until the general public shall have been educated to a better appreciation of its merits. The healing potency of Nature is universally recognized, while that of Music is known only to the few. Physicians have testified that "under the influence of certain kinds of music the nerve cells, if depleted or too relaxed, may be stimulated to more vigorous action. Music of an opposite character will diminish too great nervous activity, and tend to produce a condition of peace and restfulness."

Evidently, Musical Therapeutics offers a wide and little cultivated field for usefulness. The claims of music as a healing medium are becoming more clearly understood in the light of "the new philosophy of health."

Spiritual poise is the basis of health. Health is wholeness, *harmony*. The root of disease (dis-ease) is discord, *inharmony*. The world of

Music is pre-eminently the world of harmony. Finite thought, when absorbed in selfish desires, merely personal interests, becomes out of tune with the Universal, and ceases to blend with the other tones in the symphony of life.

Then we need to assume a standpoint *outside the realm of finite things*, and see each part in its *true relation to the whole*. This we do when our attention is completely absorbed in the greatest music. The proper adjustment of finite relations ensues, and our lives assume their normal proportions.



XIII.

ART AND NATURE.

As man beholds the process of creation going on around him in the outer world, he at first supposes himself to be a *product* of natural forces—or a mere cog in the machinery of the world, as it were. Recognizing only the *finite* in himself, not yet being aware of the existence of a deeper Self within, it is impossible for him consciously to identify that Self with the creative Spirit he sees manifested outwardly in beauty, goodness, truth, and harmony. But as he gradually becomes conscious of a creative impulse proceeding from within, and follows its leading, he finds himself co-operating in the progressive work of creation.

The scope of the natural world is enlarged through his efforts. In place of rude stone caves he constructs abodes of original design, conforming to such geometrical figures and mathematical principles as his mental development enables him to comprehend and apply. He engrafts on to certain rudimentary forms of the

natural world, others of superior excellence. In directions where Nature seems deficient or tardy, he supplies her lack, and supplements her previous achievements, by fulfilling her intentions, completing her efforts, or accelerating her progress.

Nothing could be more perfect, æsthetically, than the snowflake, the oak tree, the mountain peak, the ocean, or the primitive forest. Still, with the infinite possibilities of design, there is always room for *fresh* expression. Even in directions where Nature's work is incomplete, she aids man in his endeavors by supplying the rough material for further undertakings. He steadily enlarges her scope by bringing to light hitherto unperceived treasures, manifesting ideals previously unrecognized, elaborating simple forms, and producing new effects. Architecture, landscape improvement, horticulture, adaptation of natural forces to the requirements of a progressive civilization—these are among the achievements that attest man's ability to amplify and extend the works of Nature. In the fine arts he gives further expression—through many mediums, and according to a variety of tastes—to the Spirit he finds already abundantly manifested in Nature.

Thus we see that Nature and Art constitute

one world. They blend so imperceptibly that, in many cases, the line of demarcation between superhuman and distinctively human expressions is obliterated. Their *mode* of revelation is the same, and their *forms* are of the same description. Both are perceptible through the same outward medium—sight. They are partial expressions that a deeper consciousness enables us to recognize as the work of one Creator.

Genius is *spiritual insight*. It penetrates the outer envelopes of life and makes it possible for one to assume a central view-point from which all things appear in their true relations. Every man has the power to lay down at will his personal consciousness, to exchange the finite stand-point for the infinite, to merge his separate existence in the Universal, and to allow his thought to become poised at the center of Being. In that state he shares the creative spirit, and is inspired with a deep longing to manifest the ideal world. The *finite* man creates nothing; he simply serves as an instrument of the Infinite—a medium through which the universal Life finds expression; just as the wire in an incandescent lamp is a means of radiating light when the current is passed through it.

Material forms are symbolical. They *suggest*

spiritual ideas. Ideas are projected into external form by the intervention of thought—mental images susceptible of unlimited modification. These images remain latent in the mind until the search-light of consciousness illumines and reproduces them in memory. On attempting to formulate his ideal visions, the creative artist appropriates the mental images most accessible and best suited for embodiment, and weaves them into original designs—models of outward representation. He may not be able consciously to trace the process by which this result is achieved. The finite consciousness must be passive in order that the Infinite may fully possess Its instrument. For this reason the standpoint from which the artist creates and that from which he contemplates his work, are sometimes widely separated. He may even fail to recognize his own productions when he approaches them in the capacity of the *critical observer*, instead of that of the *creative instrument*.

The deeper Self often accomplishes results that fairly bewilder the finite agent through whom they are achieved. It always builds better than the finite man conceives. One need not be consciously aware, as he writes, paints, or composes, of the deeper meaning of his work.

Some men of genius underestimate their creations, while others overestimate theirs. In Art, as in Nature, the deeper Self creates with lavish hand, and frequently scatters abroad the choicest material with prodigal recklessness.

Every man is a genius, did he but know it; for he has latent capacities waiting to come into exercise whenever he allows himself to forget his *finitude* in contemplating and obeying the Infinite, which incessantly calls to him from within. If he listens to the voice it grows louder; if he obeys, it becomes more authoritative—until, in time, he forgets the impotence of the lower self and identifies his life habitually with the higher.

Nearly every man needs, most of all, to learn to adapt or apply what he *already knows*. He has latent resources that need developing, and dormant powers that need quickening. "Common sense" is genius *in embryo*. The dullest mind is stored with *information* enough to produce the works of a Homer or a Shakespeare; but the fire of genius must be kindled slowly, by experience, before it will awaken memories, call forth slumbering thoughts, and reconstruct ideals from the scattered elements of past life.

It is not the province of Art to *copy forms*. Genuine Art expresses *ideas*, as Nature herself

does, and with the same kind of creative impulse—therefore in essentially the *same guise*. Both are inspired by the self-same Source, so that their aims are necessarily in perfect accord. The ideals of the true artist are identical with those of Nature. He feels the creative impulse as it is revealed in its vigor and purity in Nature. When he reproduces the likeness of existing forms, it is not for the sake of *imitating* or *mimicking* them, but because his finer perceptive instinct enables him to discern in forms ready at hand in Nature, certain *pure ideas*; and an indwelling Presence, of which he is conscious and with which his own life has become identified, clothes those ideas according to the peculiar artistic predilections or specially cultivated tastes of the individual mind through whose instrumentality they find outward shape. The Author and Creator of all expression within the provinces of both Nature and Art, when permitted to act spontaneously, produces similar results. Poet, seer, prophet, and artist realize something of the Universal in their several spheres. It is not Henry Smith who writes verses, paints, or composes immortal works, but the infinite Spirit acting *through* the personal agent.

A painting in imitation of some old masterpiece, even though so cleverly executed that

only a *connoisseur* can distinguish it from the original, possesses little intrinsic worth because it is simply a *copy*. Although its forms and colors may exactly correspond with those of the genuine work of the master, yet the counterfeit lacks the *spirit* with which he endowed his work: just as a mechanically modeled figure of the human body lacks the *breath of life*. Genius infuses into a work the spirit that causes it to hold the same vital relation to the universal ideal as do living organisms to the soul of Nature. It is the Spirit that creates and quickens, in both Nature and Art. All works are vehicles of the Spirit, and possess intrinsic values according to the measure of the Spirit with which they are endowed. The great painter instils the quality of his inspiration into the *very colors and canvas* he uses. It is indelibly *stamped* on the physical and psychical forces with which he has to deal, and that is what gives value to his productions. It is its spirit, rather than *details of expression*, that satisfies the appreciative observer. Many immortal paintings are open to severe criticism, from a technical point of view, for faulty perspective or imperfect coloring. Even Nature produces blemishes and monstrosities; but though the *vehicle* be deformed, it still serves, in a measure, to reveal the immanent Spirit.

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