



# IN SEARCH OF A SOUL

HORATIO W. DRESSER

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# **In Search of a Soul**

**A Series of Essays in Interpretation of the  
Higher Nature of Man**

**Horatio W. Dresser**

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“ I follow wherever I am led,  
Knowing so well the leader’s hand”

ROBERT BROWNING

## Preface

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THE papers collected in this volume were read before various societies in Boston and other cities, and were not originally intended for publication. They involve much repetition, and restate ideas to which the author has given expression in other volumes. The only excuse offered for their publication is the repeated call to have the papers, notably the chapter on "Soul Growth," in permanent form. But aside from this, the chapters naturally group themselves about one central theme,—the restless search after the soul,—which perhaps gives them a reason for being that can only be justified by appeal to human thought at large. For it is not when we consciously manufacture

a book that the highest revelations come. The living touch which adds color to philosophy may in fact be wanting where one has carefully planned an intellectual scheme. Nature hides her secrets when man is over-curious. One may close the door alike to inspiration and to love by zealously demanding to know how these blessings come. Truth appeals to the mind in fragments and at its own sweet will. It is life viewed as a whole which reveals the divine method of synthesis. And it is better to be true to the wisdom of the moment than mechanically to fit all knowledge together.

This term "mechanical" suggests in a word all that is detrimental to the attainment of the spiritual life. Fixed creeds, artificial methods of study, and the practice of asceticism, self-inflicted injuries and the like, mark the departure from the normal means of growth. The endeavor to formulate the concept of an extra-natural God or to unite in consciousness with some vague Absolute, when the real God

may be beheld in the lives of those about us and worshipped by looking through nature and personality to their common source, indicates a deviation from the central pathway of truth and life. The immediate presence is the only one that is truly alive. So far as this book inculcates a method of development, it emphasizes the natural principle of attainment as exemplified in our daily human social life at its best. By choosing truth for its own sake as my intellectual goal, I shall win many a priceless gift of practical knowledge. By laying personal preference aside and following the highest guidance, I shall receive rewards which I never consciously sought. The pursuit of pleasure shall ever end in disappointment, but unmeasured happiness shall come if I perform the task at hand. To be true to one's promptings to be generous, kind, self-sacrificing, here where charity begins at home, is to achieve far more in spiritual matters than to seclude one's self from society. "The exclusive excludes himself."

He who tells of his spirituality has not yet begun spiritually to live. But he who mingles with the lowliest and the most sinful, he who recognizes the soul in another and speaks to it as to an equal, he who is touched to the heart by true sympathy, shall be led on and on by every deed of kindness done, by every word of encouragement uttered, and by every experience when the temptations of self are mastered.

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Ultimately, then, if this law is true, all interference with the Highest is useless scattering of force; and all really spontaneous promptings of the God within indicate the direction of the straight and narrow way. Whether in speech or thought, in the pursuit of truth or the endeavor to live what I believe, I am to know that I really begin to live when I co-operate with this welling up from within, and that friction is created when I go contrary to it. When I feel a need, I am to know that the desire for it shall in due season bring that which

will meet the need, and that an opportunity is given me to exercise patience. When an experience comes into my life, I should look at it as the bearer of some message to my soul. Thus in time I shall reduce conduct to its simplest terms, and in so doing learn the essence of all arts, win the heart of all virtues, cultivate the powers of thought, of will, and crown all by at least a strong suggestion of spirituality. And, when I arrive here, I shall probably marvel at the beautiful simplicity and naturalness of the spiritual life.

Whatever defects, therefore, this book may have, from the point of view of systematic intellectual methods, may be charged to the earnest desire of the author to put both methods and self aside, with the hope that a bit of the infinite splendor may shine through its pages to the heart of some struggling soul. If the struggle has been long and solitary, It may cheer the fellow-soul to know that another has passed the same way. And, if the search

for the soul along the byways of egoism and introspective psychology shall lead the fellow-soul where the search has led the author, the journey will not have been undertaken in vain. What this larger realm is, those who read deepest will readily see. That it is the only sphere of thought and life where one may find peace and happiness, those will know who have really begun to realize the altruistic ideal.

H. W. D.

19 Blagden Street, Boston, Mass.,  
Sept. 15, 1897.

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# In Search of a Soul

## I. Laws and Problems of the Human Mind.

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**A** NEW epoch in the world of human thought begins with the discovery of the large part played in the great drama which we call life by mind, or consciousness. To a large extent we are concerned with the objects and events in the world around us. The needs of our physical life are such as to demand continuous attention; and it seems remarkable, from one point of view, that man has had even the faintest desire or opportunity to search for the realities of the spirit. Apparently, too, the outer world is so vigorously real, so obtrusively *there*, and so little dependent upon us for existence, that the most natural conclusion is to deem it entirely separate and independently substantial.

But a time comes when this restless play of physical forces called sensation, and this vitascope of social life with its interplay of personality, its shifting fashion and conceits, appeals to the mind in its truer light. Nature's world of resisting substances is just as surely existent out there beyond the pales of personal consciousness. The discovery of the vanities and artifices of society's world adds to rather than takes from the rich objectivity of human life. Yet the X-ray of thought suddenly reveals the whole panorama of creation in a new light. It is made clear to us how largely the entire vision is colored by our mood, belief, temperament, imagery. The mind obtains an instant grasp of itself as the other half of the spectacle. Henceforth the world drama is no longer a play to be observed merely, a play where one is simply one of the actors; but each of the actors as they emerge now has a personal mental relation to us, and we perceive the duality in unity of all human experience.

For not the merest atom could affect us, not the most powerful cataclysm in nature could come to our knowledge, unless our organism should co-operate with nature to make the natural event known. The world of nature exists for us because there are forces at work outside of us, because we have senses which make us aware of the changes of light, heat, sound, etc., in that world, and because we contribute from within the human understanding, the thought and emotion which enable us to know that the world is there. Without these three there would be no world. And, when we at last learn that life differs with each because the mind differs, from that time on the social mind becomes the absorbing object of study, since nature's world, as such, tends to be the same for all, to exemplify the same laws and contain the same events, whereas our own inner life tends to make it unlike for all. The question then is, What is the ground of this unlikeness? What is the real self in each of us? and what is this

wonderful instrument termed the mind, which is the medium of translation from self and man to nature, and from nature to self and society?

At the outset of one's journeyings in the inner world, one is overwhelmed by the marvellous complexity and beauty of the great moving spectacle of human consciousness. Others have travelled there, and there are guides which point out the earlier stages of the way. But at every step the path divides, and unknown regions are opened up on every hand. Analyze the mind, think deeply, study psychic laws as one may, moments will come when one gives up almost in despair, pausing in wonder and admiration at this greatest of all instruments of infinite power. The problems multiply as one proceeds; while the laws seem more and more simple, beneficent, and beautiful.

Evidently, the only way, after one has gained the little knowledge which books can give, is to make the whole question the serious study of a lifetime, content to pass through the

torments of self-consciousness, to grapple with the illusions of the psychic plane, and press forward to the superior realm of clear spiritual vision; for that which colors the whole of life must be studied in life's totality, in order to be known. The practical must go hand in hand with the psychological, since otherwise one may not hope to succeed. Mere observation is of little avail. I must control my mind as well as study it. I must put myself in a normal condition physically, intellectually, and morally before I can trust the visions of the spirit. I must also make my ideas helpful to my fellow-men. And so I may as well decide at the outset to seek for the highest practical and spiritual attainments. For only "love of the best" shall prove sufficiently powerful to guide me through. If I choose this pathway, I may enter the inner world without fear. No influence under heaven can touch the consecrated soul. No one will tarry on the plane of uncanny psychic phenomena who truly desires to attain oneness with the Father.

No spectre shall terrify him who is spiritually poised and peaceful. Therefore, one should desire above all else to win perfect freedom for the inner man, the emancipation of all powers, latent and potentially masterful, yet subservient so long as one lacks self-control.

The entire investigation in fact centres about this problem of self-control. Man awakens to consciousness to find himself played upon by impulses, tendencies, and emotions. His mind is largely swayed by the demands of the body, and he in turn is swayed by his mind. Habit speaks stronger than the soul, and ideas master him until he learns to reason. And he must come to judgment within, and know that he is a slave before he can learn how to become a master. The task requires infinite patience and persistence, until every part of the body, from muscle and tissue to nerve and pineal gland, be brought under control. But the goal shall be won if one be guided throughout by the ideal of rounded-out social development

and the application of natural methods of concentration. My spirituality must fit me to live better and be more useful here or it is a counterfeit. To become normal means that one shall be strong on all the planes of human activity, that one shall be well adjusted to the present life. Artificial methods mechanize the mind, and render it subservient to physical conditions, while that power of concentration which is attained almost unconsciously under any and all conditions frees the soul from bondage to sense. Simply to love truth, to desire perfection of character and spiritual strength, is to concentrate the mind. The spiritual will then grow up almost "unconscious and unbidden" if one leads this truly normal life. And the time shall come when one will need only to open the inner eye and look, in order to see the glories of the spiritual world, if day by day and year by year one has avoided the side-paths of morbidity, ethereality, psychic pride, and egotism.

Yet, when all has been said concerning the marvels and dangers of our mental life, the fact remains that, profound as our ignorance may be, in the last analysis we know only through mind, only so far as the mind translates or imitates the world about us. Each man may test this truth for himself by endeavoring to separate the universe into that which he knows and that which may be said to exist apart from the mind. The attempt is vain, because that which lies beyond consciousness in some form is absolutely inconceivable. Many things may exist beyond the sphere of consciousness, but they must first come within consciousness before we can know them. Even physical sensations are *ours*, not properties of things which we touch. The people we know are known to us only as we view them, not as the people may know themselves. Change the mind in any way, and the appearance of the world will change with it, as we have ample evidence in the phenomena of sickness, sorrow, insanity, hypnotism, sleep.

We perceive only when awake to or conscious of the objects about us. That which man is in some way conscious of in fact constitutes his entire universe, and any supposed existence of a sort other than that of consciousness could come within his experience only so far as he should consciously learn its nature. Strictly speaking, then, the only satisfactory division of human experience is that already suggested: namely, first, that of which we are made conscious; secondly, our thoughts about, our understanding of these presentations or facts of consciousness, and the self which wills, observes, thinks, and feels in relation to these its beings in the great world of mind.

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The real problem, then, is this: Are we really prisoners in the subjective world, or may we know something about the manner of knowing and the ultimate nature of that which is known? If we are really percipient thinkers in a world of consciousness, how are we to understand consciousness without transcending it and

comparing it with something different? For, admitting that these objects around us—chairs, tables, sun, sky, and people—are not of our own creation, but possess qualities and relations of their own, which would exist if we ceased to think, it still remains true that without a mind capable of perceiving and understanding their relations they would have no existence for us. We seem accordingly driven to a consideration of the universe from the *conscious* point of view, yet all the time possessed by the conviction that it is not the finite mind alone which originates this conscious experience which we would fain transcend, nor does it originate in the thought of our fellow-beings which gives us the language whereby we philosophize about it, but that there is a somewhat in us which ever seeks to possess itself, even in this apparently futile endeavor to leap beyond its mental world,—a somewhat which is, in reality, fundamental to consciousness itself.

The interpretation of this struggle to get beyond consciousness is really the great philosophical problem; and it is well to remind ourselves of it here, in order to show the difficulties of a definition of mind. It can only be defined in terms of itself, and this is really no definition at all. But within these limits, seemingly so narrow, there is enough material for a partial definition, as already suggested; that is, *the mind is that point round which impressions gather*, there to be translated so that we may be aware of them, may *think* about them, and may *will* certain changes in our experience. We are unable to locate consciousness, but we feel it to have a focal centre; and the greatest wonder of the universe is the ability of the mind to transform the great mass of events of infinity into the individual terms of the "you" and the "me." That is, if we could put ourselves outside of our own consciousness, and perceive the entire mental and physical state, we would very likely observe some such condition as this:

A vibratory river, now swiftly and now slowly coursing by the shores of thought, each ripple of which represents impressions home in from the outside world; a pyramid of light rising to a point in the centre of that stream, illuminating and thus observing its course, and also actively changing it, just as a stone dropped in a pool causes wave motions to radiate to the shore. The stone represents the conscious thought, the energy which sent it forth the principle of activity, and the wave motion the vibratory result in the physical world. Every slightest activity on the thought side should be conceived as registering its effect in the vibratory stream, the word becoming flesh, the mental picture or motor image translating itself into physical movement, and the physical world in turn translating its vibrations into the phenomena of consciousness.

The real problem of mind-matter relationship thus becomes the problem of motion and the power that directs it. Here we seem to have the

question in its lowest terms, but terms in which mind and matter have become incidents in a larger whole. The field of the mind is literally the field of the universe with all its mysteries. Within this field you and I gather to ourselves as much of all this as a finite mind may grasp, and the act of grasping we call consciousness. The thought of the moment is the emerging and entering point of consciousness. Round this centre cluster the associated sensations or vibrations of light, heat, color, sound, hardness, etc., which constitute the borders of consciousness. Beyond these borders, below the apex of the pyramid of thought, is the great realm of memory; and one of the most marvellous facts of consciousness is that, although the mind, while paying close attention to a speaker, for example, can hold but one definite idea at a time, yet this one idea or train of thought calls up a thousand associated thoughts which confirm or refute it, or serve to maintain the interest in the discussion. So that, as a result, each hearer

contemplates a thousand thoughts of his own to one of the speaker; and every person takes away a different report and impression, colored not so much by what the speaker said as that which his words made the hearer think. The purpose of this particular discussion, then, is not so much to convey ideas as to arouse in the reader a sense of his own possibilities; for a man cannot make another think as he does any more than a university can educate. *Man educates himself by the help of others.* The mind understands that which it is prepared to understand; and, in the endeavor to discover for himself the truth or falsity of this particular account of the mind, the first care should be to seek out one's individual road to the same end,—namely, the control and freedom of the reader's own powers of thought.

The first practical discovery for us, therefore, is this: that the mind, yours and mine, in any and all moods, is here and now acting according to the laws which, when better

understood, will be our salvation from error, sin, and disease. It is not now a question of the kind of mental states which originate the right sort of vibrations, but how any vibrations can originate at all. If we knew our powers at the present moment,—how we are able to concentrate upon this discussion, at the same time gathering impressions from the outside world and unconsciously carrying on the life of the body, and how all this complexity is related to the centre whence the activity originates,—we could ask for nothing more; for we would be masters of the situation. And having thus become conscious of that which is involved in the simplest mental acts, and learned to control them, the nature of those acts, whether they should be good or bad, would then be a problem which we would be fully fitted to solve. In *some way* you and I are just now using or misusing *the greatest power in the universe*. Not by some occult power taken in from without, then, are we to be saved, not by doctoring

effects, but by the intelligent direction of that which has alone made existence possible from infancy. Consider, then, what a wealth of reactions upon the world, or possibilities of conduct, we already possess! I will discuss some of these reactions in detail, pointing out the part they have played in making us what we are.

The lowest plane of reactions is that of impulse. If you are injured, the tendency is to cry out. If some one abuses you, the temptation is to answer back or perhaps to strike. If you are in a dilemma, you hasten to a friend for advice. When sick, the impulse is to fear bad results and to send for the doctor; and in a thousand ways one neglects common sense and self-reliance under the dominance of habit, fear, or of some hurried emotion. And can we not trace a hundred misdeeds to simple thoughtlessness, to the fact that we acted hastily and impulsively,—in other words, to a lack of self-control? Self-control, poise,

inner calmness amidst outward disturbances, is the intervention of one's higher intelligence. This is, perhaps, the most important practical law of the human mind. One need not simply respond to a nerve stimulus like a brute, but there is a self within capable of inhibiting passion or impulse, and turning the lower activities into a better channel. Shall we not say that man has become man only so far as he has thus learned intelligently to direct his forces? Is it not the development of which each stands most in need, to master one impulse after another, and deal with the facts of our incoming consciousness in the calm spirit of reason, pausing before we react that we may picture the wisest course, plant the purest seed, institute the calm vibration, give the right tendency to the great responsive stream of consciousness?

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But before we condemn all impulses, if we look deeper into the human mind, we discover that the noblest emotions of life are

also spontaneous, and that the wise course is never that of self-suppression, but careful use in the light of our best insight, by taking the stirrings of impulse to be the notification that we may become creative on the highest plane. This wise use is learned by observation of one's moods and tendencies.

Have you not sometimes marvelled that you can present such diverse aspects of yourself to different persons or call out so many sides from them? With one you are reserved, from another you win the credit of being extremely sociable. To one you are drawn, by another repelled. You are frank and free with one; and with others you withhold your best self, hardly knowing why. You are cold and distant at times; and, if philosophical, you become absorbed in thought when people would have you more sociable, and you are at times alternately self-conscious and self-oblivious. The sensitive mind finds itself tending to feel and act like its

associates, and literally to present a different aspect to every observer.

The student of human nature is so impressed by these subtle effects, the influence of mind upon mind and the domination of the strong over the weak, that he asks himself again and again, What is influence, and how far does it go? Do we ever think independently? Even when alone in the primitive forest can we detach ourselves from other minds? For, everywhere he turns, the phenomena of mental interchange and influence confront him,—in the orator and his spell-bound audience, in the revivalist and missionary making converts by deplorable methods, in the demagogue using political influence, in the subtle persuasions of alleged friendship, in the temptations of the malicious, in all who are overbearing, obtrusively aristocratic, selfish, greedy,—in a word, one might say all except those who appeal solely to the reason, to truth for its own sake, regardless

of your acceptance or rejection of it, and free from personal bias or prejudice.

Yet, on the other hand, the most beautiful characteristic of human relationships is our dependence on each other when, instead of using influence, our fellow-beings come to us in the spirit of love and helpfulness. Here the power of mind over mind is seen at its best, when the ideals of another inspire and strengthen our own faith and call out the highest that is in us. And is it not an immutable law that no one shall be trusted with the greatest power over other minds until the motive is such that this power shall only be directed to the highest end?

Again, the effect of thought in governing our reactions upon the world is observable in the general beliefs about life, which with the majority are acquired by inheritance and education. One type is that of the orthodox believer, who holds the old Adamistic theory of man's fall, who, therefore, puts the cause

of sin far back in the past, locates heaven far in the future, puts God on a distant throne, believes in vicarious atonement, and thus shirks the whole responsibility of the problem we are here considering. A second type of mind is that in which fear, expectancy of disaster and worriment, are the foremost attitudes of thought, where certain diseases are looked upon as inevitable, old age and the loss of one's faculties are accepted as one's fate, and where the fear of death triumphs over all. A third is the predominantly optimistic type, where belief in continuous soul life supplants the fear of death, where one looks for the good and therefore finds it, where one refrains from attaching a name to one's troubles, but regards all experiences as so many conditions of the soul's emergence into full self-expression. And, without enumerating the intervening types, we might turn at once to the ideal which we are considering in this chapter as the goal of all these varied habits of thought; namely, the

one in which, instead of being controlled by our moods, attitudes, and beliefs, we lay aside all influences, all beliefs, fears, impulses, and discover the real ego, conscious of the level it has reached in moral and spiritual evolution.

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But, when the foregoing tendencies of consciousness are brought into subjection, one has only made a beginning. It is the total self we aim to master, even the phenomena of sleep and dreams, and the hidden self which never sleeps.

That the mind is much larger than the merely conscious self of the waking hours is in fact a truth which has received ample verification in recent literature. Under various names, such as the subjective or subconscious mind, or the subliminal self, this larger part of us, whence so many occult experiences arise, is recognized by all schools of thought, and in one aspect or another forms the subject of many independent lines of investigation. Indeed, the most plausible theory of the human mind is that which regards

it as a subconscious unit, different aspects of which are called into consciousness during our waking hours, in somnambulism, in hypnosis, clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, and spiritual illumination. Whether this subjective self has all the powers of objectification which some have attributed to it may be questioned. But it is rational to suppose that, if we do personify our mental states and call up forms and faces corresponding to our beliefs, this is the faculty in us which projects them. Here, too, is undoubtedly the impression plate on which the emotions, influences, and thoughts of others are registered, the region whence our mental images pass from the thought stage to the vibratory state, and thus outward to other minds and to the activities of the body. Moreover, the subconscious mind seems to possess a sense of the fitness of things, and brings its messages to us at favorable times. It brings warnings of approaching calamity, and is apparently aware of the passage of time. When,

for example, I decide to awaken at a given hour in the morning, and fix the thought definitely in mind before going to bed, it is, of course, my subconscious mind which treasures the thought until morning, and faithfully awakens me at the appointed hour. In dreams and sleep-walking certain aspects of this deeper self are only dimly awake.

Yet experience shows it to be possible to control both sleep and the nature of one's subconscious thinking by putting the mind in the right attitude before yielding to the thought of sleep. The phenomena of suggestion and the facts of mental cure point directly to the subconscious mind as their basis of being. For we do not consciously yield to suggestion nor do we think ourselves into disease. Our fears, beliefs, and haunting mental pictures act rather as incentives to action, like the decision that one will waken at a given hour in the morning; and it is the subconscious mentality which makes them instrumental in causing our

trouble. To cure a person of these nervous conditions, to free the mind of its suppressed grief, of troublesome mental images and fears, the subjective mind must, of course, be given a new and healthier direction, substituting happier and better mental pictures. Is there any limit to this wise use of subconsciousness? Do we not chiefly make and remake ourselves through the untiring energy of this part of the mind, where ideas gather to their like, where fears, joys, sorrows, and hopes grow like seeds in a fertile soil? Is it not evident that this is the feminine half of the mind, the receptive element, that which accepts and assimilates, while the active, or masculine, mind gathers its forces into definite imagery, reasons, and suggests? If so, then everything rests with the active self to make the right, the wise, health-bearing suggestion.

Again, one is aware of this larger self as a deeper and more reflective self than the superficial personality of social and business

life. We call ourselves to account for our superficiality. We are really spectators of our own lives and of our own consciousness. There is always some unknown part of us which is the subject of inquiry on the part of the self that knows. We seem to be carrying on a process of involuntary investigation into the mysteries and truths of life; and, when occasion offers, we are as much surprised as our listeners at the wisdom which we have unconsciously gleaned from experience. The simplest countryman is able to generalize about life, and surprise you with his comments upon it. In fact, the experience of every man is turned over and thought about much as if this wiser self of ours were an elder brother observing all our acts and now and then pointing out wherein one has failed. It is the self which treasures up and reveals only on occasion all the side-lights and hidden gleams of human character, it is the philosopher, moving silently about among his fellows, quiet,

observant, reflective, and speaking only when he may talk to some purpose.

What a fund of unvoiced feelings, of unrealized ambitions which we are dimly conscious of, what a wealth of emotion is latent in the subconscious mind, awaiting an opportunity which may never come to express it! But let our friends depart from us for a time, perhaps forever, and we discover what we have thought about them during the years that have passed. Or let some stirring event occur where our services are demanded, and we display most unexpected ability to meet the new demand. What faith in God, in the world, in the great truths of philosophy and religion, is called to the surface when the beliefs that are nearest the heart are savagely assailed! Ordinarily, we are sceptical, pessimistic, and distrustful. But on occasion we show sublime faith, even in human nature, that selfish and unsatisfactory quantity which we so often doubt. We cling to existence with a joy, with a satisfaction in our beautiful

world, which suggests a deep and intimate connection between this finer self and the Infinite Spirit which so well knows what all this means.

Man does not really know what he is or what he believes until some unusual experience has thus called to the surface this deeper current of thought, that he may understand his mind as a whole. We say we believe this dogma or love that person, we say all sorts of things with our lips only; but the real test alike of belief and of love comes when we are willing to act sincerely with the support and emphasis of this better self, when the social self, the self of habit and of imitation, is laid aside, and the true man assumes the position to which he really belongs. The superficial self should not be allowed to decide important questions; for the mood of the moment may be so narrow, so despondent, and short-sighted that life wears an entirely different aspect for the time being. Sickness, too, transforms the world for us, *because it*

*changes the mind.* To be sure of what we really mean, we must dispel this mood, and judge all weighty problems when the wisest self is uppermost. For the mind, taken as a whole, is like an historical background; and it is just as necessary to grasp this wholeness as it is for the literary critic to judge a book in the light of the age which produced it.

One fact, then, must be evident to all: the larger self is wiser than the self of commonplace experience. It inspires us at critical moments to act better than we have known. It guides us, it tells what to do, it forewarns, it strengthens us when we are weak; and one learns to await its moving as that of a wise counsellor. Who that has difficult problems to settle has not learned from experience that during sleep or rest from thought this larger self may receive help in their solution which the conscious self could not attain? What a wonderful thinking process sometimes results when, after a few data and a subject have been supplied by the conscious

self, the ideas are turned over and over until, almost without conscious thought, an entire essay or lecture comes into the mind, prepared in the subconscious realm! Those who know their own minds well have learned to take full advantage of this hidden process, and to refer to this more thoughtful self the questions on which they wish light, until, in the silence of the trustful and willing receptivity of which the subjective self is capable, some portion of the great All-knowledge shall enter the awaiting mind, infusing it with new life and power.

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Have you not sometimes been at a loss to know why, with so little effort, you have made a change in habit of thought or character? Here, then, is the reason. You saw the ideal clearly, in a moment of clear-cut decision you chose a certain course in preference to many others, and this decision or suggestion turned over to the subconscious mind has gradually wrought the change. There is no simpler and easier method of self-development than this; namely,

to concentrate upon the *ideal*, then await its subconscious realization. For the mind, as we well know from experience, easily falls into certain directions. For example, when a person is downcast, one thought leads to another, until the world seems on the verge of destruction, or when one is over-tired, and a friend comes in with plans for a day's pleasure which make one forget fatigue in the joy of a change of thought. We all know, too, that black may seem white and white black, figuratively speaking, to a mind possessed by illusion. The essential, then, is to see how far our own state of mind at the time colors or discolors our vision, see wherein we have failed, and instantly decide upon the better way.

The law once discovered, that the subconscious process either impedes or aids development according to the nature of conscious choice, ideal, or belief, one possesses a secret of priceless value to all who are seriously engaged in the labor of self-mastery. Just as the

sermon or the book which produces a powerful impression upon the mind is dwelt upon in thought for weeks and months, until one has come to some definite conclusion concerning it, so the absorbing thoughts, the calm, decisive ideas of philosophical reflection stay with us until they have become permanent factors in our moral and intellectual evolution. Any idea which wins *thoughtful attention*, whether it be good or bad, is likely to concern this deeper self. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that any idea which may arouse fear and cause continued misery be firmly dismissed at once, and not be permitted to pass below the threshold of consciousness. Fortunately, the mind's inhibiting power can break off a train of thought before it becomes fixed as a habit or as a factor of our subconscious mind. This is probably the essence of all self-control. An impulse or a fear arises, and tries to draw the whole mind with it. The mind pauses a moment, sees the danger, and creates a counter-activity.

The thought of love may thus drive out hate, and peace may draw all power away from fear. The thought of God, by its very suggestiveness, allays all petty emotion, and lifts one to a purer realm.

Oh, the joy, the quiet, calm, convincing power of those occasional moments when, oblivious of one's surroundings and of the claims of sense, one rises to the plane of intimate union with boundless Being! One seems for the time to be infinite, all-powerful, all-perfect, and all-wise. Then there are no problems. Then all is beauty, goodness, and love. Then symbols give place to the symbolized, and one is caught up to visions which no human lips may describe. Who shall say how these visions might modify all we know of life, would they but abide awhile longer? Who shall say, since life for us is so much like the mood in which we observe it, how many more selves may yet be possibilities for us, and what gleams of new light they might cast upon that which is now but dimly perceived?

But, turning once more to the actual and practical, what shall we say further of this complexity of moods or selves, delivering us from dream to illusion and from illusion to definite intelligence? First of all, it is important to note that this complexity is really an *organized whole*. That is, all these moods belong, in you or me, to a *single ego or personality*, including the subconscious and conscious minds. Now in an organism, as we well know, no part is sufficient unto itself; but each part is good only when contributing to the perfection and activity of the whole. But do we heed this great law? Do we cultivate all sides of our nature, in order that the mind may be well balanced? fear not; and, if you will study your own moods for a time, I think you will discover why.

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Take again the simple case of discouragement. If something occurs which tends to make one downhearted, it is an easy matter to find many reasons for discouragement, until little by little one develops a fit of the blues. Or take the

case of pain. If one gives up to the sensation, thinks about it,—how badly off one is, or the probable outcome of the pain,—it becomes for the time wholly absorbing, and grows in intensity, until some wiser thought makes one aware that one is in a wrong direction of mind. Fear, worryment, and depression seem to grow more rapidly upon us than their opposites. A morbid idea persisted in leads to insanity by the same process. Or, to take cases of an opposite nature, every one knows how the mind is stimulated by anticipation, how the thought dwells upon the plan to visit a dear friend, to go to Europe, or to take a long rest after weary months of toil, and how, thought by thought, one forgets one's present conditions until the mind is lost in visions of the future. It is clear that we become one-sided and in dis-ease or mental unrest by permitting these directions of mind to get beyond our control, by dwelling too long in one line of thought, whereas rest or repeated change of thought, whether it be in

matters of health, religion, or what not, is alone the safeguard and preservative of soundness, balance, happiness, poise.

The law, then, is highly important to note and reiterate that a thought continued in adds to itself, a state of mind grows in proportion as we permit ourselves to dwell upon it, whereas ideas to which we give *no attention* depart from us. Attention, will, therefore, is the keynote. The mind can be absorbed by but one object at a time; and, if we would be free from wrong thoughts, we must turn positively away from them to other thoughts. The way to avoid anger and retaliation is not to think over and enlarge upon the wrong another has done us, but to think of something else, think some good of the other, call up love and charity, and never harbor sentiments of revenge, of anger, nor any idea of a morbid nature.

Let us now briefly sum up our account of the mind, in order to see where we stand. First we have the plane of acute consciousness, of

passing sensations, of thoughts about them, of all sorts of moods, selves, ideas, emotions, fears, hopes, and desires. Then we have the plane of subconscious action, governed by the suggestions given it by the conscious self; and, finally, the higher or reflective self, the self of illumination or superconsciousness, of guidance, insight, reason. That is, we have impulses, moods, tendencies, feelings, growing upon us in proportion as we dwell on them, and a self which, now at the mercy of sensation and now trying to obtain full self-control through spiritual power, creates for itself a world largely dependent on its own consciousness, yet ever trying to realize the divine ideal.

But in all this we have been chiefly concerned with the manifestations or phenomena of mind. We have not yet definitely considered that part of the mind which owns and unifies all these states, this larger self with its inexhaustible treasures of wisdom, and its ability to receive thoughts from a distance, to commune

with Deity, to see, hear, and perhaps to live independently of matter. Is it wholly personal or human?

We are to consider its higher aspects in the following chapters. But we have already had some glimpse of its nature in the foregoing. The passing states come up to us for selection. We are given a wide range of choice; and, when you look back into the past and ask how and why you are what you find yourselves to be to-day, and how you have learned all you know, is it not clear that it came by *desiring* it, by willing it, by voluntarily and persistently putting yourselves in conditions to receive and develop it? Is not every habit—for example, learning to walk—first consciously acquired because we will it, then made a part of us through subconsciousness and reflex action? If this is so,—and every one can verify it,—the most important aspect of the mind is the individual will or desire. And will is not, as some seem to think, a power which we must labor

hard to exert. It is *concentration of attention on that which interests*. It is not our superficial repetitions or attempts to change effects which constitute true prayer. But prayer is love, desire, will, and is effective when it quietly takes its place among the causes of the universe. That which we desire by putting ourselves in line with our highest evolution thus gravitates to us according to natural law. Not every chosen idea is a cause, not everything we desire will follow; for we may desire in the wrong spirit, and we may choose without any real understanding of self. But, if, desiring the right, pure in motive, and willing at heart to follow the highest guidance, we clearly see the *idea* or *object*, then the end or thing will follow. It is not in our halting moods that we pray effectively, but when, not over-confidently, but with firm self-reliance and self-possession, we affirm that a certain good shall be ours.

The choice, will, or suggestion, which is effective in shaping our lives through

subconsciousness, is thus distinguished from the mere phenomenon of attention by the fact that it voices individuality, it is an effort to realize the divine ideal, and has the support of the best that is in us. Whereas the objects that we merely pay attention to; such as the trees, chairs, tables, remain the same regardless of our wills, though we may some time be able to change even these. Will, then, is not attention alone, but, when effective, is the *interest*, the choice, or feeling of effort and self-exertion which directs our forces. It is obviously effective only so far as we understand and have confidence. We thus easily and almost unconsciously issue the fiat of will when we see the wiser course.

A most helpful method in the application of this principle is to take a mental survey of yourself each day. Discover wherein you have turned in a wrong direction of thought before it has become fixed as a habit. Clear away thoughts of doubt, fear, discouragement, jealousy, envy, and put in their place sentiments

of hope, happiness, trust, charity. Refresh your ideals. Picture a better future. Reaffirm the right and true, and take courage if you have made even the slightest progress; for measured growth is healthiest. Let nothing accumulate except open, honest, sincere, healthful thoughts, which shall draw to them their like, and prove impregnable when troublesome thoughts shall beat against them. Each day shall then be causative and influential in relation to the future; for each renewal of one's ideal is an act of will in the highest sense, and gives fresh impetus to the subconscious mind.

It is clear, then, that the self which thus voluntarily prefers the higher pathway to the lower, which chooses the right, the true, the pure and healthful, is the very essence of human life. Some might indeed argue that it is the lower self that is human,—the tendency to sin, to fall into error and disease,—while the higher Power comes to redeem us from our

depraved state. But would redemption have any meaning unless we *chose* the better way?

Is it not more accurate to say that we do not fully know ourselves until we thus master our own minds and freely choose the superior ideal? And is not this the distinction between desire and will,—namely, that we *desire* all sorts of things, but that the *will* is higher and may select the wise from the unwise, the pleasurable from the painful, the altruistic from the selfish?

It is when the lower desires, the impulses and sensations which hold us in sickness and disease, override our wills that we feel degraded. The man in us is that which rises up, and says, This shall no longer be so; and, if there is anything in us which we cling to with a hope which knows no abating, it is the ability to shake off the dominance of sense forces, and rise superior to all that has caused suffering and misery. Yet I have tried to show throughout this discussion that it is also the will which allows itself to be degraded, that we never sink suddenly into the

depths of despair and of servitude to sense, nor are we forced to descend any more than we are compelled to rise, but that, just as a fit of the blues grows upon us, on the one hand, or just as the anticipation of pleasure leads us to forget fatigue, so there is first absorbed attention, then submission, and gradual increase of the mental state, until we have a burden on our hands or are lifted slowly out of trouble, as the case may be. If, then, we are to control our states of mind instead of being controlled by them, it must be through better understanding of the inceptive stage, the interested attention, the will, or suggestion, since all else follows from this. For it is this part of us which marshals the army of moods and ideas, and concentrates them in the direction of the highest perfection and usefulness. It is the self of the larger hope, the self that is never wholly satisfied with any system of thought nor with any person, but ever seeks something grander and better, because it already possesses its germ within.

It is inspired by ideals which are ever beyond and above us, but only because we are even now ideally perfected, yet can only attain the goal step by step.

How, then, shall one apply this self-knowledge in daily life, that one's world may be transformed from within? I will try to illustrate the process in various ways, that it may be perfectly clear. Yet I must once more warn you that this whole discussion is necessarily tinged with personal experience; for each soul can understand and educate itself only. Still this is very far from saying that every problem can be settled within one's own mind; for man is a social being, and achieves the best results only in co-operation with other minds. And it is dear that man must work with his *hands*, using both mind and body. But the starting-point of all action, however, is still in the mind, since it is the mind that plans, devises, wills, gives the inceptive impulse, and by its persistent self-direction, where the attention is fixed, governs its passing

states, thereby controlling the subconscious mind, and, through that, the body. Knowingly or unknowingly, then, the mind really controls. It is only a question of *how* it shall control. It is therefore absurd to deal with *things* as though they were final, when *mind* is the factor which has moved and arranged things from the outset.

Suppose now you are confronted with a difficult problem, and it is your desire to strike at the real root of the matter. Let it be a question of justice to your neighbor, let it be an insult for which you wish to return love, or one of those decisive questions of business or the heart on which so much depends in after life. We may assume at the outset that there is sufficient wisdom to solve it, if one could become open to it. Usually, then, the difficulty is that we are anxious, impatient, and much too active to note the dictates of the higher self. The essential, therefore, is *calmness*. Turn away from the hurrying world without, turn away from merely personal inclination and feeling, and become

poised, quiet, self-possessed, centred within. Your desire is to do the right, to throw yourself in line with the highest tendency. Guidance is for you. It is there, immanent, resident within you. Ask for it, seek it, await its moving. It may not come immediately and positively. But there is one test of its presence which never fails. That is, if you think of one plan after another, or one solution after another, and attempt to carry these plans into execution, when you are on the wrong track, some part of you will feel in discord with it, you will encounter an obstacle: whereas, when you are moving in the right direction, your whole self will be in harmony with it. The impression or moving will come if it be both expected and awaited. The test of its worth lies in its harmony or discord with one's *whole self*, both rational and intuitive. If one fails to get any light by this method at first, if thoughts of many kinds rush in and drive the attention away from its goal, then one should develop this habit of concentration until it becomes an easy matter,

whenever trouble comes, when in a hurrying crowd, when one is insulted or abused, when morbid, discouraging, and sorrowful thoughts enter the mind, to *seek the inner centre*, to become poised, and there to remain, calm, self-possessed, trustful, until the outer disturbance shall have subsided. For concentration of will or attention, not by holding one's-self *tightly*, but easily, quietly, trustfully, means *concentration of power*. It means that one may be independent of external conditions, and hold the key of the situation.

Suppose now that the trouble is much more serious, and, instead of being an ethical, a financial, or social question, is a matter of health. How shall one make immediate use of this knowledge of self, and the laws which govern the focussing and development of thought? The process is now somewhat the same, but must be more searching. One turns away from the pain as much as possible to the inner centre, opens out within and connects in thought with

the source of all life and power,—the indwelling spirit of infinite Being. One realizes that of itself, that spirit is the perfection of equanimity, calmness, peace, and love. Nothing can disturb that which is by definition Absolute, all-wise, all-powerful, all-complete. One expands with the warmth of love and goodness of such portion of this indwelling life as the mind can receive, and gently, yet persistently, trustfully, and calmly, settles down, down, out of the tension which constitutes the pain, out of fear, out of anxiety, out of opposition to the healing power, peacefully, restfully absorbing from the higher Power, until one becomes filled with it to the exclusion of all else, until the mind has taken on a new direction.

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This naturally suggests the need of a more careful consideration of the influence of the mind on the body. But the question is too large to detain us here except so far as the possible bridging of the chasm is suggested by the foregoing account of our mental picturing

and the subconscious mind. The healing of the body through the realization of the divine ideal probably conforms to the same process as that which characterizes even the most physical of our acts; that is, we first see ourselves, for example walking, talking. We know what movements must be passed through, for we have learned each one consciously; and this motor image sums up, as it were in a flash, all this complexity of motion. We are so accustomed to translate thought into motion that even when we think, but do not speak, there is still a sort of motor impulse, as though we could mentally hear the sound, and as though we moved the lips in speaking. An ideal, a fear, a hope, a suggestion, is, then, simply a mental picture or motor image, which is realized more gradually through the subconscious mind. I conceive or picture myself as I would like to be; and this thought-picture, if persistently held in mind, is treasured up in the subconscious world until it attains realization in the flesh. I dwell constantly

upon some fear until I create for myself what I feared. Is not this the essence of all influence of mind upon body,—first the thought, then the mental picture created by paying continuous attention, then the act of will setting up motion, the subconscious change, and the physical realization of the idea?

Thought, then, by means of motor images or mental pictures, probably blends by insensible gradations with neural action and the nerves, muscles, and tissues of the entire physical system. And, as little as we may know about some of the stages in this process, we at least know something definite about the inception, the basis of all action; and the point we are emphasizing throughout is the fundamental, directive power of mind.

There is no surer basis of trust than this possession of an ideal outlook, this knowledge that something is being achieved through us. Fear is ever the child of ignorance. The safeguard against all subtle influences is to

understand them, to understand one's self. He who thus knows himself, whose motive is right, may go forth into the world unconcernedly; for the conditions we attract depend upon the attitude within. We need not, therefore, in this account of the human mind consider the probability of its control by disembodied personalities; for it is, after all, our own moods which rise up and control us, it is these which we seek to subdue, it is these whose subtle spell we hope to throw off by rising above them. He only who sacrifices individuality could be controlled. There would, then, be something within us which corresponded to the wrong influence; and we should be concerned not with the external personality, but our own condition, which made the wrong state possible. In any case, therefore, we are entirely concerned with our own inner condition, and the fears, the opinions, and beliefs which we put into it, since everything depends at last

upon the personal direction of mind, thought, or will.

There are, it is true, depressing and trying experiences to be encountered by those who thus endeavor to understand and master themselves. But the worst danger of self-scrutiny is morbid self-consciousness, and there is a sure remedy for that. Study the mind as a manifestation of the divine, regard it as the progressive realization of an ideal, and consciousness will never seem mean and burdensome. The one light which guides the soul through the dark places unharmed and hopeful is the perception of the goal lying beyond. We know when we fall that we shall rise again. We know that the day will once more dawn. It is mere waste of thought-energy to be discouraged. The fates will see us through. We are not living for ourselves alone, but a higher Power is at the helm of events.

It is one of the laws of the mind that there is an alternation of pain and pleasure, of doubt

and faith, at least up to that point where one is philosophically poised and balanced. We see the goal and understand the law so clearly that we are confident all will go well. But no sooner do we affirm the good than the opposition of the bad is encountered. Our progress is, therefore, very much like a journey over a mountainous country where there are valleys so deep that one cannot see out, and again heights so sublime that all life, even our subjective struggle, seems a vision of beauty. The essential, then, is to retain the vision of the mountain-top while buried in the dismal depths below, and *never*, under any circumstances, to withdraw one's conscious hold of the ideal, whose realization is not the question of a moment, but one of gradual, measured, persistent yet sure evolution through modification, struggle, and victory.

That one meets with no success at all in one's first efforts to gain self-control and develop poise, to help one's self, or to master

a new branch of learning, is no ground for discouragement; for the mind moves most readily in certain channels, and will not yield to the effort to form new habits until a certain amount of resistance has been met and overcome. It is easy to be rut-bound, creed-bound, and conservative. It requires effort and thought to break with tradition and environment. He who asks to have all the steps explained, that he may be saved the labor of thinking, asks what is impossible. And probably the most helpful discovery which one can make in regard to the mind is this; namely, that it is governed by the same general laws which obtain in the world of nature, or, better still, the discovery that fundamentally it is mind alone which understands the laws of nature, it is mind which gathers our impressions of the external world into a synthetic and intelligible system, that it is mind which has all along really directed the forces at work in our development, and that

the world is as large, and so large only as our own mental development renders possible.

The one great practical problem, then, to which the foregoing discussion reduces itself is this: It matters not so much what we may do in the far future or whether we have lived in the past and come back to earth again. It is of little practical consequence whether our lives are related to the stars, or how many personalities the mind may be split up into. The question is, Where do we stand to-day? Do we so understand our own individuality and the selves or moods which characterize it that they combine *consistently*, so that one self shall not tell one story and another something flatly contradictory, but all alike shall be concentrated toward one goal, shall obey one will, one directive impulse? The motive, the love, or interested attention, the *spirit* with which we do a thing, is the essential. If that be right, all is well; and one need give little thought to the incidents of its realization. If

that be wrong, all is wrong; and the first change should be to set it right. If that be wrong, some part of one's self will confess it. If all is well, if one is on the right track, circumstances will readily give way; and, while one should not place reliance on signs, the signs are indications of, or at least must harmonize with, the state of mind within. And the steps which are essential to this adjustment or wise choice of attitude we have been considering from the outset, namely; to know when one is in a *wrong* direction of mind, and to avoid letting it increase; to give habitual attention only to the healthful, the good, the elevating; to let wrong thoughts die out of consciousness for lack of attention; to make full use of the subconscious mind by making the right suggestions, and by giving it opportunity to do part of our work for us; to hold the right mental pictures of ourselves; to remember that, when we are in a slough, it is temporary only; to have an *ideal*, a leading, a love, or goal; to pursue this ideal,

and to study one's self, not as an isolated, but as an ethically responsible being, whose self-development is of greatest good only through benefit to society; and, finally, to look beyond all that is fleeting, personal, and mysterious to the infinitely intelligent Being without whose power and presence and whose need of us we should not be. For, in the last analysis, as we have seen throughout, everything reduces itself to the centre of consciousness which we find when we look within; the aspiring ego, or soul, whose aspirations are intelligible only on the hypothesis that they spring from a Being of superior wisdom and will. That we strive to know him in the rock, in the flower, in the animal, in the soul,—is not this the meaning of our entire mental life, is it not the essence of the will?

## II. Has Man a Soul?<sup>1</sup>

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**F**ROM one point of view, it seems absurd to ask if man has a soul; for do we not feel its presence within and commune in sympathetic affinity with those who speak its silent language? Surely, no one could impart in words the meaning and beauty of this inmost essence of life. Even to attempt it seems to profane the most sacred part of our being, and he who has penetrated deepest into the soul's unmeasured realms is most likely to be silent concerning its treasures and its joys.

Yet it is equally true that all life is grounded in feeling. It may be that here within us now, and around us, is all the wisdom or power we seek,

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1. A paper read at the Psychological Conference, Greenacre, August, 1897.

and that in the truest sense there is no progress to distant attainment, but only an awakening to the beauty in which all existence forever reposes. But it is just this awakening which concerns us. The perfected universe exists for you and me so far only as we have advanced in discriminative thinking. Life is known to be life by living it, but feeling is not all of life. The pure white ray of light is not apprehended in its full beauty until one has seen the colors of the spectrum. Thought irresistibly demands to know both what feeling is and what it means; and man will never be satisfied until he not only lives and feels, but also comprehends. And the real object of all human thinking is to comprehend the soul: the goal of all endeavor is to manifest the soul in fuller and richer life. It behooves us, then, again and again to readjust ourselves to our own deepest thoughts concerning the soul; for all wisdom, both practical and philosophical, is measured by our knowledge of self.

In one sense, we know more about self than about aught else; for the self is concerned in all that we do, in all that we think and hope for. Yet in this wealth of information concerning the self, in this heart to heart union between all that we are and all that constitutes our social and spiritual experience, lies the very difficulty which besets all attempts to describe the ego; and one could easier tell what God is than define one's finite selfhood. It is far from my thought to claim the solution of even a single aspect of the great enigma. But, as our only hope of solution lies in repeatedly going over familiar ground, with the possibility that a feature of the landscape may appeal to the mind which escaped observation before, I ask your attention to three general considerations; namely, the psychological, ethical, and spiritual aspects of our problem.

As every well-informed person knows, the self, as defined by current psychology, is merely an aggregation of the passing states

of consciousness. The mind is studied as the series of changing processes or psychological events experienced during a lifetime, found in connection with a physical organism or body, and determined by it. My state of consciousness, for instance, is altered, if I close my eyes; and, if I am blind or deaf, I live in a restricted mental world. The time required for my organism to react when you strike a musical note or tell me a piece of bad news will throw some light on the nature of my mental processes. A careful study of the entire nervous mechanism,—of sensation, habit, emotion, volition, etc.,—according to scientific methods of observation, in fact leads to fairly accurate knowledge of the corresponding psychic states. In a word, mind is simply the psychic factor in evolution, a sum of tendencies running parallel with physical events. It is no longer looked upon as an individual monad or atom, a permanent essence or spiritual unit apart from the passing thoughts. But the flowing thought swiftly disappearing

down the stream of consciousness is itself the thinker. One thought thus extends its impetus to another, "remembering and appropriating" what has gone before. And, just as "the mill can never grind with the water that has passed," so we never have the same idea twice; for the environment of consciousness has changed, and we deal twice only with the same *object*. In short, psychology has no present need of the term "soul." It is endeavoring to learn as much as possible about the mind from the objective point of view, and is content to hand over to philosophy questions with which, as a natural science, it is incompetent to deal.

Its task thus defined, we may respect it for what it is worth, and look for rich discoveries in the near future. But, if we try to meet it on its own ground, and present some psychological evidence that a soul exists, this evidence is every time reduced to the well-known phenomena of sensation, or the general mental state termed "affection." For example, you may

argue that the feeling of activity, the sense of effort or will, proves that there is an ultimate essence or spiritual ego. But for psychology this can mean only the muscular sensation, the general state of consciousness at the time, which is, of course, susceptible of analysis, and is describable in terms of the passing mental state. You may contend that there is continuity of conscious experience; but the psychologist will remind you of its lapse during sleep, and the dangers of relying upon memory. It might be argued that a person is always *one* self. Yet the question is, When and how? Shall it be your social self, your concealed self, your character, your ideal, or the aggregate of selves and split-off personalities which hypnotism reveals?

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As a last resort, you may insist upon *some* unity of self-consciousness. But this may be reduced to a disconnected minimum, and as such be resolvable into the simple persistence of thought, as already described. In despair, then, yet with a cordial God-speed to

psychology, we must turn elsewhere if we are to consider the problems of unity, individuality, and continuity of self. Man has no soul, in the common-sense acceptation of that term; but it is feeling itself which feels, thought which thinks, and somehow thinks itself to be a soul.

Yet our excursion into the psychological realm settles some questions conclusively. It seems rational to expect that the psychologist should discover physical aspects for most psychic states; and, the more complete the analysis, the better. Surely no one would argue that the *mind* is permanent. We hold ideas for a great length of time, but every truth-lover hopes to change his mind many times until he shall cognize the entire truth and reveal the fulness of beauty and love. We do not wish the mind to be permanent. It is the self which can consider now this idea and now that, and feel manifold emotions, with which we are really concerned. The passing mental states are no more the soul of which we are in search than

the world of nature is the God whom it reveals. We might say of the soul, as of God, that there is no such essence apart from its manifestations; but that does not imply that there is no reality which manifests. Everything is known by what it does,—for example, the sun; but simply to describe the phenomena of heat and light is to say but little about the sun as their source. We may then take psychology at its word, and describe mental phenomena as not in themselves constituting a soul. But pray let us have all of these experiences, and not those alone which a laboratory examination might reveal.

If you tabulated the physical concomitants of love,—yes, every heart-felt mental state which you might persuade your lips to utter,—would you then have described this “greatest thing in the world” or its lifeless skeleton? Would not this enumeration be very much like a catalogue of all the forces and substances which compose a human body, any possible combination of

which would somehow lack that which we call life, the essential which God alone can give? It is easy to name every element except the one without which all the others are as naught. And so, if we could describe the mind, even in minute detail and exhaustively, we should still have left untouched the real essence, or soul. Most writers assume just that point on which we wish the keenest evidence. Let us, then, at the outset, keep as close as possible to well-known phenomena, and approach by degrees into the misty realm where the soul flees like a phantom before us.

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If you look back over a day's experiences, you will probably discover that the principle which governed conduct throughout the day was that of marked *interest* in a one kind of experience to the neglect of others. You were perhaps collecting facts for an essay, and everything was selected or rejected with reference to that. You may be a student of the human countenance, scarcely noticing dress

and bearing, while intent upon penetrating to the consciousness behind an enticing face.

Or you may be in search of scientific data of a particular sort, and neglectful of all else. Yet the other impressions are there, as you can prove afterward by recalling the sights and sounds which you before observed indifferently. "My experience is what I agree to attend to," says Professor James. It depends upon selective attention. A Roman Catholic may receive a thorough university training, and become deeply thoughtful along certain lines, yet be as good a Catholic as ever, still superstitious, and accepting the priest's word as law, simply because he elects to pass irreflectively by all theological questions, because the mind is never concentrated in that direction. We expand and grow mentally only when we give ear. The conservative thinks the old orthodoxy good enough for him. This choice is decisive, and hinders his growth as long as he so wills. The liberal thinker once consented to investigate

outside of established lines, and thus progress became a habit with him because he willed it. Throughout life, then, we find a leading interest which characterizes the advancing years, just as the plan for an essay gives unity to the activity of a day.

“A man convinced against his will  
Is of the same opinion still,”

because the “will to believe” lies deeper than the susceptibility to argument. We are so constituted as to care rather more for that which attaches to self and its chief interest in life than for any other object of thought.

This interest is the very heart of one’s selfhood, that which one most loves, something which one understands better and better throughout life, something which one cannot suppress. Is there not a profound significance in this self-interest? All egoism set aside and the personality tempered by due regard

for others, is there not a deep, deep moving within the life of each which leads one steadily forward to individual accomplishment, which hedges one about with a certain wise reserve, as much as to say, This is holy ground. Do you not decide all great questions by reference to this inmost authority? Let the authority be named conscience, belief, love, anything you will, it is still the arbiter of your conduct, and your whole life circulates about it.

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There is then a seat of interest whence the attention is governed, the fiat of will issued, and the activity of effort begun,—in other words, a chooser. For the exertion of force and the determination of how it shall act, what it shall do, are quite different, as Croll has conclusively shown in his able work, "The Basis of Evolution." "To account for the production of an act does not in any way explain how it happened as it did, and not otherwise." The choice is different from the act of will, the effort of volition. It is even more absurd to say

that the choice chooses than to say that feeling feels or that it is the thought which thinks. For will is not a being, love is not a being; but these conscious states characterize a being. To say that God is love is only to speak of a certain manifestation through which we learn that God himself is more. "Emotion," as David Irons has pointed out, "is an attitude we adopt. We are pained or pleased *by* something, and have emotion toward something." Will or love may be at the heart of the universe, but without a somewhat which wills and loves intelligently there would be no heart and no universe at all. There is something done and a power at work. No matter how much we may give forth, there is a part of us that is continuously conserved. Choice implies something more than mere thought or feeling, yet may be more fundamental since it runs through life. It points to a meaning or purpose, an ethical motive in all that we do. It implies wisdom as the basis of choice. The question therefore is, What is that

in us which gives the strongest reason, what is the origin of the highest motive, why are you individually different from me?

Here we have left the domain of psychology for the higher realm of ethics, and arrived at somewhat ultimate; namely, not merely the force which is directed by will, nor the mind which represents its projects in thought and issues the fiat of will, but the sufficient ground of life's choice as a whole. In other words, two realms here seem to meet: first, the objective world, that which forms the subject-matter of natural science, that which I am compelled to feel through sensation, and that which I am compelled to think,—namely, law, universality, continuity, the categories of space and time, and the moral law (which would not be an "ought" if I created it); and, secondly, what I choose to interest myself in and do, my voluntary reactions upon the world, myself,—not as character alone, not as a man possessing

certain physical qualities, but as an agent using all these as vehicles of its choice.

Ethical writers agree that, unless there is a free-acting self, or soul, not bound by, but related to the determined or necessary order of nature, then there is no basis for ethics, for what ought to be. For, unless I can obey or disobey, unless I am responsible and can voluntarily alter my conduct, of what meaning is the injunction to do right? And, concerning human life as a whole, why should I try to develop character, to attain self-mastery, to seek happiness, truth, and virtue,—why should I exert myself at all, unless by so doing I am expressing a self which will bring me all these?

When one thus contrasts the self with the order of nature, one finds a character or individuality of one's own, freedom of thought, freedom of will, and the conviction of continued existence; and all this centres about the self as chooser, that in us which is not only aware of a purpose in life, but wills that means

shall be taken to fulfil it. The self in this aspect ever looks forward with unrest and longing.

“The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was made.”

Thus understood, the self is still in large part an ideal, an awakening hero, facing “the plastic circumstance,” and rising through victories won and sorrows surmounted to full realization of his powers and the complete justification of all torture and despair,—an emerging Man, assured at last that all experience is the pathway to a single moral goal.

This leads us to a consideration of the most remarkable ability of the human soul; namely, its power to unify,—a faculty for which psychology affords no adequate explanation. In some way, in each of us the miracle of the universe is repeated. Variety exists amidst unity. The one somehow knows the many, and can also individuate itself, and focalize its powers

to a mere point. This latter ability is illustrated in the extreme by insanity, where one idea may constitute the mind's entire universe. It is illustrated by every act of attention, by concentration, the search in the memory for a lost idea, and the effort systematically to express some doctrine, but, best of all, in the power to think things in one judgment, a vast and incredibly rapid intuition by which one takes a sweeping glance over one's entire intellectual universe in the light of a single concept, or thought.

There must be some reason for this limitation to one mental state, and some principle of unification, somewhat that coordinates. It cannot be chance; for it is fixed and universal, like the law of crystallization or the law whereby certain molecules cohere to form gold. If there were no such form of the stream of consciousness, uniting all psychic events by persistence of purpose or choice, why should our mental processes assemble

again and again each day with the sense of personal identity? Surely, the existence of brain channels is insufficient to account for this. For I can voluntarily return to the *same* train of thought of which I was thinking yesterday, and begin where I then left off; and “this sense of sameness is the very keel and backbone of all our thinking”<sup>2</sup> and choosing. “Remembrance can take place,” says Srī Sankarāchārya, “only if it belongs to the same person who previously made the perception; for we observe that what one man has experienced is not remembered by another man. How, indeed, could there arise the conscious state that I now see what I saw before if the seeing person were not the same in both cases?”<sup>3</sup> No doubts in regard to the illusions of memory affect our belief in this identity. A man may wander off at the beck and call of a split-off portion of his selfhood, and later have no memory of it. But hypnotism

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2. James, *Psychology*, i. 148.

3. *The Brahmavadin*.

can recall it, and splice the selves together. Sometimes one wakes up to one's best self after being under a cloud for months, under a spell, or deadened by loss of interest in life; but what a pleasure to discover that the same soul is there intact! That some people display more soul than others, and put more of it into their music and their speech, is no evidence that other people lack the spiritual sense. In some people the heart element is nearer the surface, while in others it is still dormant; and, until the heart has been touched, the soul is only dimly apparent.

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That the soul is not always fully uppermost in conduct is no proof, therefore, either of its nonexistence or of its weakness. A man sometimes becomes the creature of passion; yet his intellect is still there; and it shall reign supreme again. Introspection alone or at any given time may not safely be relied on to reveal all that we are. It is thought that reveals law, order, meaning, and discovers the synthesis

of our apparently conflicting selves. And the possibility is suggested that we are not yet fully awake in any single aspect of self which even the healthiest mind presents. If this were the full reality of self, it would look too much like the identification of the soul with its states.

Introspection is, in fact, subject to the most painful illusions in its search after the soul. Look down, down into yourself, and you shall at last concentrate upon the merest point, the victim of your own analysis, much as if you should try to imprison an insect under a needle's point, and then discover that the insect was not there. The pursuer himself is the object we are after; and he cannot behold his face in a mirror, and at the same time run around behind it to see what caused the reflection. We know not what life is until we have lived and look back. We may not in this present limited existence look for a single state which shall exhaust the self. As a matter of fact, we never *feel* even the body as a whole, as a unit. We must give attention

now to this portion and now to that; and some regions we are always unconscious of, unless we are made to feel them by the sense of pain. Yet there is abundant evidence that the body is a unit.

It is, then, no evidence against the theory of a unitary soul that in consciousness we do not feel it immediately as a whole. There is too much in the soul to allow itself to be entrapped in one moment of consciousness, although all aspects of it may be represented there in one of those remarkable intuitions which govern our moral choice. Nor can you take, without some allowance, a man's account of himself as observed in successive experiences as final and exhaustive; for there are the dangers of egotism, of too much science, of not enough, and of one-sided development,—for instance, of the brain at the expense of the heart. For an aspect of the soul may be undeveloped as yet; and who shall say how many possibilities

of experience lie dormant within the deeps of us all?

The soul's confession of itself as real, as one and individual, is at least as trustworthy as our belief in the reality of external objects. We cannot feel a "thing," such as a chair or table by itself; but we infer it to be one thing on the ground of the combined impressions received from it. "On the ground of an inferred reality called the brain," says Professor Ladd, "I am asked to dispense with my confidence in the reality of the being which makes the inference,"—an obvious absurdity. The question is not to be evaded, What is it that knows? Do your ideas know or do you know by means of your ideas? Are you love or do you feel love? Are you your own choice or do you contemplate an ideal self for which a higher Power is responsible? Are you simply your own observed mental states or is there a part of you which, after you have described all the passing events of

consciousness, is still the observer, studying all other parts?

This power of self-observation is an aspect of the self to which I wish to call special attention. Carry self-consciousness as far as you may,—that is, exhaust both introspection and thought,—and there is still an observer that introspects. You may observe yourself perceiving an external world, feeling impulses to action, inhibiting or choosing them, you may detect yourself in the act of delighting in beauty or falling in love, of obeying the “ought,” rising to altruistic heights, and intuiting God and the universe; but you can never observe yourself observing all these. “The actual subject is never, in any state of mind, brought before itself as an object....It never feels that it is all out there as an object, that there is nothing more left within.”<sup>4</sup> Put otherwise, thought never fully overtakes feeling. We may detect

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4. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 111.

all sorts of characteristics in our feelings, but the background, or unity of feeling, remains.

My self is not only more than I can observe at any one time, but more than I can grasp at all times through mere finite consciousness. If the soul could thus be completely described, there would then be none. It is its very essence to be appreciable only. The soul is that which I cannot wholly give you, which would cease to exist if you could have and know it all. Yet, if my words lead you to believe that I am a soul, this mere suggestiveness outweighs in value all argument.

Thus we are compelled all along, as we think, to remind ourselves that feeling and thought have grown old together, and that feeling is much the older and richer.

Thought, after all, is simply trying to interpret feeling. Sentience, or feeling, is the reality, or whole; and thought is the appearance, trying to grasp the parts. Says Browning,—

“Consider well,  
Were knowledge all thy faculty, then God  
Must be ignored: love gains him by first leap.”

Another difficulty comes from the fact that the states we would understand are always changing, and we can only regard them as we would watch a bit of wood floating down in the current of a rapid stream.

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Try to make pleasure and pain objects, and they are gone. You can *think about* them, but not as vivid states until they are no longer present as such. Or the difficulty is like that of trying to analyze love while one is expressing it to another: it takes all the life out of it. Nor can you define the sensation of harmony while listening to beautiful music. The scientific interest drives the emotion out. The state has changed. The highest experiences of life are meant to be enjoyed simply, just as some poetry should be read without asking what it means. Let the genius discover the secret of

his power to charm and help people, and the genius has gone. I am not to know why I am most loved as a person. For always, if I carry self-examination too far, I lose spontaneity, and with it the real essence of which I am in search. One never attains the highest inspiration or illumination while submitting all that is sacred to scientific observation. The sacred voice must speak in the holy of holies, or not at all. There is a power in rapture, in momentary absorption into the life of the universe, which surpasses all conscious aspiration and puts to shame all analysis. All that I can say sometimes is that I have lived and loved. By some magic I forgot myself when I was most truly myself, and this cold speech of mine is utterly shrunken when compared with the warm radiance shed by the living soul.

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Psychologically, the utmost that I can say is that I observe interchange between myself as subject and myself as object. I perceive activity coming from myself, and I seem to take up

emotions into myself. But at last there is ever the observer, whose sphere of activity is like an ever-widening circle, just passing beyond the circumference which you are engaged in observing, yet, through the consciousness of identity and the possession of a leading interest, always aware of itself as persisting through its observed states. Even the processes of subconscious cerebration seem to be presided over by a sort of genius which links these states together, and serves them up as cogitations about life for the delectation of the interested observer. And with some of us there is nothing more remarkable and in a sense more pleasurable than this steady observation of life's great play. All that one asks is that the game shall go on forever.

But this duality of subject and object is not necessarily an ultimate difficulty. That we know only through contrast is one of the conditions of consciousness itself. That there is both change and knowledge of it, implying a somewhat that

is unchangeable, is a fact which we cannot get rid of. If infinite Being knows its own universe as a passing show, then the relation is ultimate, and we need not get back of it; for it is eternal. Infinite Being may therefore be an infinite observer or subject, of whose nature we know only so much as the observed universe tells us. We must not be too sceptical in our inquiry into the self, otherwise there will be no sceptic to doubt.

The very conditions which we seek to understand in ourselves are the conditions of the existence of consciousness in the world at large. Even in our reasoning processes we may be thinking in far closer harmony with the ultimate nature of things than we usually suspect. The existence of reason itself, of the demand to know, is one of the evidences that there is a soul. The seer has all truth within him. The prophet sees the ideal long before it is realized; and the spiritually guided soul is sure of the exactness of spiritual law, because such

souls have a living witness within them, because they dwell in conscious proximity to the great heart of life. Is the confidence of friendship ever more sacred than when a noble soul permits one to look deep into the heart of his or her inner life, that one may know what it means to live by divine guidance, to hold ideals as more valuable possessions than things?

It is when one thus approaches nearest actual life itself that one finds the soul. I think the majority would testify that the most valued evidence of the existence of a soul is just this indescribably close presence, the eternal now of our common human life. It is not the isolated observer, cold and aristocratic, shutting himself aloft on the mountain-top of intellectual speculation and unfeelingly drawing forth his own egoistic emotions in order to scrutinize their restless play, who shall tell you what the soul is. Nor is it he whose spirituality is of the next world, delighting in the mysteries of the uncanny and the psychic. But it is he who is down

here upon the earth, mingling with humanity, touched by spontaneous sympathy and love, and close to the heart of all mankind. Among the peasant folk of every land, where native politeness has never taken on the cold glamour of artificial society, where genuine frankness and unspoiled hearts are found, one may draw near the real self, or soul, and see there, in all its untaught simplicity, the inmost essence of life. The mother's love, the drawing of heart to heart around the fireside, the devotion which forgets that it is devotion, and the honesty which speaks through the clear eye of youth,—these are the characteristics which endear us to our human existence, and these are the open doors through which the soul is seen. Always in the great soul there is preserved this simplicity of perpetual youth, this nearness to the most truly human side of life.

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The poet and the musician give voice to the soul as no one else can, yet even their inspiration is rendered possible by the persistence of this

almost naïve openness to nature's heart which is so clearly observed in peasant life. The truly great man is he who can ascend to the sublimest heights of feeling and thought, yet remain poised upon the earth, and carry with him the receptivity to that which is best on all the planes of life. The psychologist is only part of a man: the saint is a mere fragment if he shuts himself up in his sainthood. But, wherever you find real life, you find the soul; and to the degree that the artifices of conduct and thought intervene the psyche is obscured. He who produces anything from within brings it forth from the soul, and a man's words shall invariably tell you whether he speak from that essence or from borrowed ideas. The creative impulse indicates the soul's presence and power: reserve force stands behind this impulse to declare its high parentage. Everything that really concerns me calls out the emphasis or assent of the soul, and those who are to play a part in each other's lives may come directly to the heart of their life

together if they give of the soul; for all else is superficial and introductory to this language of the soul.

Is not this the only genuine speech, where no rhetorical skill intervenes to conceal or embellish thought,—this giving of one's real self in spiritual affinity? Soul seems momentarily to mingle with soul in truest love,—such love as puts to shame the emotion usually meant by that word. There is a give and take of the living essence itself, rendering speech unnecessary. A sweet serenity speaks through such experiences as this, transcending the limitations of all other modes of communication, and shedding its soothing influence upon all who are quickened to respond.

Have we not abundant evidence of a somewhat in us which is not bound by the limitations of space and time? We not only meet those who thus appeal immediately to the soul in us, and thereby assure us that they have souls, but in other ways impressions come to us

through other channels than those of the five senses. First impressions of a person's character come in this subtle way. The phenomena of thought transference, of clairvoyance, clairaudience, the perception of odors at a distance, the ability to locate objects and people in space, and the experiences incident to entering *en rapport* with a person whom one has never seen, point to the existence of these finer or soul senses. Some have cultivated these psychic powers, so that they can at will travel in thought to a distant place, describe objects, read the minds of people, and convey healing power. There are evidently soul functions which one can not fully exercise in this life. One does not feel wholly imprisoned in the sense world. Even in illness and in life's severest calamities there seems to be a part of us which is untouched and unspoiled, a genius in embryo, awaiting the time when it shall throw off all allegiance to sense conditions.

These intimations come to people in different ways, apparently as gifts, yet in reality indicating, as many believe, that each of us possesses them potentially, while some who seem especially gifted are simply conscious of that which resides subconsciously in us all. Our deepest insights show us that the inner self never grows old, however the body may grizzle and decay. The real self seems singularly free from the thought of age. Events and the passing of time are matters of indifference to it. What it cares for is not the event, but the law which it illustrates; not the pain, but the truth which is ever unhurt.

Another evidence of the soul's existence is the experience so clearly marked with some as a turning-point in life, and known as the soul's awakening. Many men of mature age seem unconscious as yet of their souls. But to some this awakening comes at sixteen or seventeen, when a new light bursts forth from within. Then one learns why one is here, that it is the

soul which gives unity to life, and that there is a Power behind the soul which sustains and guides it. But this is only a beautiful vision of the ideal as compared with the second awakening when, years later, sorrow and suffering come, when the ideal is made real, when in abject despair and misery the soul cries out in its weakness, apparently utterly alone, yet at the darkest hour succored by a divine presence soothing and sustaining the troubled mind and heart. It is this trial of the soul which shows that one is never alone in the universe. It is the supreme evidence that there is a God, the one unquestionable assurance that God means something in all that we endure and suffer.

Is it not greater evidence of the soul's continuity that our consciousness of its power is sometimes dimmed to the verge of despair, again to rise to supernal heights in these visions of God's nearness and strength, than would be the continuance of such exaltation? If we could choose, we might elect to be ever

ecstatic. But this is not the life which shall make us ethically and spiritually fit to survive. The break in consciousness during sleep is held by some to be evidence of psychical discontinuity. But is there not far more evidence of unbroken subconscious or subliminal activity? Why, then, you ask, are we not more conscious of what we do subconsciously? Because the mind is not wholly fed by impressions from without, but is open within to a superior intelligence, to a wisdom which speaks most to us when we are least conscious of it, when the active self is asleep, and the receptive self is in immediate touch with the infinite.

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“The soul reasons best,” says Plato, “when least harassed by the senses.” This receptivity may come during sleep, or may be attained by self-conscious methods under unusually favorable conditions. In the silent hours after midnight, when the nervous world of our rushing humanity is still, by putting the body in a comfortable position in a room where light

and sound cannot enter, and by laying aside all problems and troublesome memories, one may almost forget that the physical world exists. In such contemplation as this the foregoing difficulties are largely overcome, and that which in ordinary consciousness is concealed now stands out in clearness of outline. That is, motives, thoughts, and tendencies usually hidden in the self as subject now become objects of contemplation, and one is forced to see what one really is; for alone with one's self one must be absolutely honest. The inner light shines forth with such power that one may penetrate minds, problems, and mysteries at other times entirely obscure. One does not need to reason, but simply to ask for wisdom, or merely open the inner eye and perceive by immediate apprehension. The past life moves like a panorama before the mind, and the future opens up with such possibility of accomplishment that all past attainment is put to shame. After a time even this acute self-

consciousness is transcended, and then the real soul vision begins.

But what soul that has been alone with its God can speak of this sacred vision? Time is naught, space is naught. One is conscious of no limits, and sure that that which sustains life does not depend upon the physical world. Yet this is the merely negative statement of it. The positive must speak for itself to those who themselves have this glorious insight. So far as one may suggest it, the clearest fact is that the transcended world of physical sensation and self-consciousness is fleeting and phenomenal, while this timeless realm is continuous, permanent, limitless, one. And here, in this silent universe of the eternal now, one knows by actual experience what it is to be united with the Father, not because of any independent virtue, but because the Father accomplishes something through us.

Should any one assume to say anything final about the soul until he has been quickened on

this highest plane? The ethical plane may long appeal to the mind as the highest. But would it not be a dreary world in which we should simply do what we ought? Is it not by doing more than is required of us that we become truly righteous? "He that loseth his life shall find it." Higher than that which we have made ourselves by conscious effort is that which is *made of us* when we dedicate ourselves in fullest self-renunciation to the Father. He who in very truth has said, and fully meant it, "Not my will, but thine be done," knows that man has a soul. And the soul that man has in this highest sense is God, who uses us as instruments of his power.

If we are all ultimately manifestations of one infinite Life, then in deepest truth there is but one soul; and thought cannot tell where the you and the me cease, and the power which owns us both begins. Yet it would obviously be a false conclusion to say that therefore you and I are identically one. Do not expect any

one to tell you in its fullest sense what this dawning of the Christ consciousness means. But on one point every careful thinker should insist. Your approach to it and mine are not the same. Fidelity to its inspiration means that I shall follow its leading in my own soul, while you follow it in yours. I should crucify the Christ within if I did not listen and obey what it says to me individually. Would the Father be a just God if any one were precluded from immediate help and guidance from him? And can you, as you look back upon your past life, find any better evidence of your existence as an individual soul than this fact of guidance meant for you alone? When you were willing to listen, when you consented to make the sacrifice, then the guidance came. It brought you what you needed for your individual work,—no more, no less. The law is perfect and exact. It does not exclude other souls, but it gives full place to your own. There is room here for both finite and infinite,—for the part which we must

first will to play before that power which is above our wills wells up within us to complete its manifestation.

Here is the nearest approach I can hope to make in this paper to the distinction between finite and infinite. The clew to life's mystery, as Professor Andrew Seth points out,<sup>5</sup> is to be found in the fact that man *acts*, that he is ethically responsible, that some high end is to be accomplished in his life. Say what you will about the fixed order of nature, tell me that there is nothing in man but his passing states of consciousness, or that only the undivided Absolute exists, and that freedom of will is a mere "grateful self-illusion"; each time I must remind you that certain results follow only, and inevitably follow, when something in you or in me has so willed, has so *acted*. And the supreme action of human life is this culmination of all interest, of all will, of all choice, and of all

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5. Man's Place in the Cosmos.

thinking in the dedication of the soul in the absolute faith of spiritual self-renunciation.

No one, then, can hope to do more than suggest this most sacred experience of human life. If your soul has had its awakening, you know what this crude suggestion means. If you have said, "Not my will, but thine, be done," you have had evidence which no lips may speak of. This is your evidence of the soul's "immortal love" and mission. And the supreme fact to remember when scientific scepticism is presented, when your own doubts intrude and the psychic current seems broken, is this inmost character of the soul,—that it is not these physical features, this hand and this brain, but that these are mere instruments of its power.

If, then, you would know that there is a soul, take daily opportunity for quiet repose and contemplation in silence and solitude. Be content to rest for a time in simple enjoyment of life's beauty and spirit, without thinking that you ought to be somewhere else, that you

ought to be doing something or turning your time to practical account. Have a holy temple within, a sanctuary of consciousness never disturbed by the cares of time and space, an ever-present realization of divine Fatherhood, nearness, and love, and prepare yourself year by year to receive the highest inspiration.

Let me repeat: it is the consecrated person who has the greatest evidence that there is a soul. It is he who bends low in thankful humility, with a welling up of love for all humanity, with sympathy for every being that lives. Out of the great silence a voice shall speak: This is my beloved son in whom I am pleased. Make not these things common, but so think, so love and serve, that all may know that you speak, not from yourself alone, but that it is the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Is this vague and unscientific, do you say? and do we seem to have wandered away from psychology into the sphere of religion? Very well, then, let us summarize the steps whereby

we have ascended. If our account is a mixture of thought and feeling, of sorrow and joy, of science and mystery, then at all events it is true to life. And is not this what we seek in all accounts of the soul? Is not the soul what we mean by the heart of life as a whole? and are we not dissatisfied with all logical systems just because they fail to give back this living whole? It is not my words that convince you, but my experience, so far as it appeals to yours, my soul, in so far as I open it that you may read. And the chief value of all discussions of life's reality and the nature of the soul is the impetus it may give each to penetrate yet farther into the mysteries of his own selfhood.

We started, then, with life itself, an intricacy of sensations, emotions, desires, will, thought, selfhood; in a word, a conscious world and an observer of it. We passed on to a consideration of the self as chooser, possessing a leading interest, the same individual throughout manifold experiences, as a free moral agent, through

whose life a high purpose is accomplished, the possessor of heights and depths of feeling, of keen powers of thought, of faculties which enabled it to act independently of space and time, and finally concluded that the heart of human life is the power of individual action. And there we were met by the august silence which guards the Christ world.

We may then call this fundamental experience what we will, call it feeling, consciousness, vibration, force, substance in motion, or vortex motion in the ether, the fact remains that there is a continuous unit or centre in us round which these experiences gather, so that whatever they are, sensations of hardness, sound, or light, logical processes, emotions, mystical insights, or thoughts from other minds, we feel them in successive moments of consciousness, we gather them to a point and react, we are brought in touch with the rock and the saint; and yet we are not these forces, but use them, and they play upon us, and shade off imperceptibly from the

finest to the coarsest, from the coarsest back to the finest, interpenetrating, yet not displacing, so that we cannot tell where one plane or force ceases and another begins.

May I presume to suggest that which seems to me the true reason why we get no nearer an ultimate statement, why we cannot define or describe the individual soul? Because this shading off, this plane concerning which we must be silent, is the point of transition to the divine, because all things are bound together in one whole, and one could understand this meeting-point only by possessing the cognition of the whole. We cannot define the soul apart from its conscious states, and we cannot account for the conscious states without the soul. We do not know the world of nature as it really is because we know it only in relation to our own consciousness. You cannot say what you are as distinct from me or apart from God, because we have no existence apart from him. There is absolutely no evidence of

such isolation, no ground on which the theory of ultimately independent souls has ever been successfully defended. On the contrary, the deepest wisdom of the ages points to the conclusion that there is no soul apart from the Over-soul. Without that the finite soul has absolutely no meaning. You may as well think of a mountain without a base or a river without a source. As surely as a mountain is inwrought into the very history and substance of the earth, apart from which it could not be, so is the soul dependent on the total life of the universe and its ultimate ground. It is a social being, and can attain fulness of expression only through the perfecting of humanity. It is not good alone; but we must view its conscious experience, intellectually and spiritually as well as ethically, in the light of the whole from which it is inseparable.

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Is not this the chief difficulty in our search for an adequate statement of the soul's life,—that it is bound up with every part of the whole? Is

it not because I am at the same time the soul which I would describe to you and also a part of that which owns both you and me,—is not this the reason why I cannot grasp my full essence? If I alone existed by myself, in every sense of the word the maker of my own individuality, I might perhaps tell you all that I am; for I should know it all. But just because this leading interest, this choice, ideal, or centre of vibration or activity which constitutes my individuality, has some meaning which is wrought into our total life, because I am yet to be somewhat that I do not fully know, I can only characterize myself in part, imperfectly. I must then at some point leave the realm of the intellect, and tell you in the language of feeling and of belief that which accurate statement cannot yet convey.

I will suggest this highest element once more in closing by reference to certain experiences with nature. As one stands beneath the pines or listens to the steady lapping of the waves upon a sandy shore, a voice seems to speak to one in

the murmuring rhythm of wind and tide. In the quietude of the forest, in the exhilaration of a mountain summit, or in the stillness of a frosty night, nature makes the same appeal; and you shall know it only by feeling it as a part of your life, never by hearsay. Indeed, Nature will speak deepest to you only when the other activities are quiescent, when she catches you, not upon some carefully planned excursion to steal her heart away, but when, uncourted, she breathes upon you in your most receptive moments.

And so in the inner world, the divinest insights do not come of our own volition alone; but sometimes, when one is most forgetful of its presence, this "feminine element" will soothe the mind to sublimest stillness, and the majesty of God will be declared. The finest experience of the soul in one's self, in others, in the universe, is this pure, unwordable revelation. It is due to momentary superconsciousness, to temporary transfer of one's thought entirely upon the spiritual side of life, so that for the time one is

simply the soul, in immediate grasp of power, life, love, and beauty in one imperishable fatherhood. It is the love of God returned by the love or leading interest of man, the human recognizing afresh its place in the life of the divine. It is universal reality made definite, individual at a point, as the centre of self-conscious finitude, as the you and the me, the observer of the world-drama waiting to play his part; once enveloped in ignorance, but now awakening to knowledge of his real essence as an active participant in life's evolution, as an aspirant for the Christ, as a sharer in the divine joy.

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And I see no reason why, because we conclude that the soul reveals or manifests God, it may some time be effaced, like figures drawn in the sand at low tide. This soul of which we are speaking is itself the draughtsman, not the passing figure. It is part of God who draws the great world-picture through us, his centres of activity. What is known of it as active, or as mind,

as deeds done and emotions felt, or as studied psychologically, is only so much as phenomena may momentarily reveal. But "the philosophy of six thousand years has not searched the chambers and magazines of the soul." Ever onward and upward, there is perpetual becoming, compelling us to revise and enlarge our statements and systems of thought. Resident in the becoming is the remaining: amidst the changeable the unchangeable abides. The two are different; yet the one is completed through the other, and in their association lies the totality, the meaning, of life. Inevitable it is that the two should seem disparate in thought. But that thought is not all, that feeling is somewhat more, that interest or choice and activity lie back of both, and hence point to a permanent Being which knows all finite interests in one absolute cognition, are conclusions to which the mind is led, if it thus takes cognizance of the whole; and just because he can thus transcend the limitations alike of feeling and of thought,

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of time and of space, is the ultimate reason for saying that man has—yes, that man is—a soul.

### III. Absolute Being and the Higher Self.

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**T**HERE are times when it seems the height of audacity to speak for the Highest. On the other hand, it is infinitely unkind to the source of our being to leave it out of account. The poorest fact is inadequately stated, our thought lacks all connection and meaning, if we neglect the one essential without which there would be no facts and no thoughts. At times, too, one is fairly possessed by a vision of the glory and beauty of divine communion; and, let words fail as they may, one must be true to this sublimest experience of the soul. And if the vision is true, if there really is but one life, one power and wisdom inclusive of all existence, of all that we think and do, it is not we alone who speak; but

the great God uses us as instruments to declare himself to each according to the state of receptivity. If the instrument is small and makes little impression by itself, so much the better, if only the consciousness be turned not toward that, but toward the larger harmony which its lowly music suggests. The finite is nothing by itself: the infinite is everything through all that is finite. It is the greatest art of our human life to lay ourselves most fully aside, that wisdom and love and goodness may be manifested through us; and this supreme office will be fulfilled in each of us if we understand the true nature and dignity of the higher self.

The term "higher self" I shall therefore use to denote the revelation of God in the finite soul, the instrument through which he speaks. It is not all of God, it is not merely human, but is that measure of the perfect which the imperfect can apprehend. This discussion of it is not so much intended to show why there must be such relationship of finite and infinite as to make this

occasion a living, present, helpful realization of its existence in each of us here and now. For you already believe what this poor tribute of mine aims to suggest. The words are not, therefore, of as much importance as that which leads me to utter them, the living presence without which even these hesitant witnesses of its power would be impossible.

If, then, you will observe certain conditions during the lecture, the problem of spiritual self-help will be so much the easier. That is, let each one open the mind inwardly to the indwelling spirit, become receptive in soul, that we may realize the divine presence together. Then in the future, when you are in need of help, if you will return in thought to this occasion, and recall your experience at this time, you will have a starting-point, a means of refreshing the thought on the highest plane. Peace, then: let us be inwardly still. Let us realize what it means to be a part of infinite life, to have a higher self,—first through a consideration of our problem

from the intellectual point of view, then from the spiritual plane.

As we look over the world of nature and contemplate the varied complex and wonderful experiences in the realm of mind, or consider the long ages of the past as described by writers of history and science, the most noticeable fact in the long series of events thus recalled is the constant change which everywhere prevails. Massive mountain walls and the sea present the same general appearance for ages, and there is a certain apparent permanence in all large masses of matter in nature. Yet, when we examine the minute structure of things, we find that everywhere there is gradual change, upbuilding and disintegration, growth, modification, and decay. Nothing is really stable, and the great question concerning it all is, Is there some element in it which shall endure all change? This longing for some permanent amidst the fleeting is one of the first demands of human reason; and in early Greece, as

elsewhere, it is one of the first indications of philosophical speculation.

Evidences of system are surely not lacking in the steady flow of this great river of change. At large and in detail, within the mind and without, nature everywhere overwhelms us with signs of intelligence,—in the revolution of the planets, the stages of organic evolution, the adjustment of the organic to the inorganic kingdoms, the alternation of the seasons, the development of physical man, and the wonderful perceptive faculty, or mind, of man, which enables him to observe and appreciate all this. It is almost axiomatic to affirm that this ceaseless change in one great system must have an efficient cause, an indwelling life, and a substantial basis; for we know that the universe could not have sprung from nothing, nor could anything new appear except through a transformation of the old. Yet the mere concept of cause, of continuous time, of pre-existing matter and motion, does not carry us far, and, when closely examined, fails

to satisfy. Even if we turn backward in thought to a far-away past, where all this wonderful universe may once have existed as a mere possibility amidst unformed substance and undirected energy, the process is still in the realm of time, and we have made no headway. Cause, motion, progress, development,—all these are terms of time—they suggest nothing permanent, abiding. One may, therefore, as well look for permanency here and now as in the far-distant past, since the pursuit of causation is simply an endless task. For, if we start with the merest event, such as the ticking of the clock, and seek its cause, we find that every cause is the effect of some antecedent cause, and that of some older cause, and so on forever, until we have upon our hands an entire universe of interacting forces bound together by this great law. And the concept of God as ultimate cause throws little light on the real problem, since it is the basis of causation itself of which we are truly in search, not the

mere creator, but also the sustainer, the life, the changeless and uncaused, without which the infinite causal series could not be. We must then find some more satisfactory concept than that of cause.

This profounder basis of life will be apparent if we look more closely at the phenomena of nature as they exist to-day. So far as we know, objects in nature are not simply made, and then the model laid aside never to be used again; but certain chemical substances always and everywhere assume the crystalline form when they solidify. Trees of a given species everywhere develop the same general appearance; and, despite all change and decay, the idea, or type, remains. Everywhere there is a tendency to reach a type which at once removes the being as a whole out of the realm of mere time and place. In humanity there is evidently a type as instinctive and persistent as that of the crystal,—a type which we are all seeking to realize, physically, intellectually,

morally, and spiritually; and this active ideal may be the source of all our unrest. If this is so, and if we, in common with everything in nature, are simply realizing an ideal intelligently wrought into the system of the universe, then it follows indubitably that that which is evolving must have been involved; and the origin of species or variation, which so perplexes the naturalist, is a question of how and when the latent ideal as a resident ideal found expression through the modifications of external form, through natural selection, heredity, use and disuse, environment, and the other factors of organic evolution. For the whole system clearly works together toward this ideal end. It is an organism wherein no part is independent; but all are contributory and helpful, and in some way included in an abiding form which holds the involving and evolving content together.

The demand for permanency presses upon us as we ascend. For, when we come to man, we find him self-conscious and self-directive. He

takes his own type in hand, and seeks to realize it by conscious choice and aspiration, moulding his career in co-operation with the moving of his own highest nature as it meets and masters the lower. It is this permanent or universal element in daily life, in nature, in books, in ourselves, which is the real basis of interest in existence. It is because among all tribes and nations men have longed for immortality, because in far-off India, in Palestine, in Greece, in America, everywhere that man has dwelt, he has declared his belief in God, because in you and me to-day there is an abiding soul which persists through all that we suffer and enjoy, declaring us to be just ourselves, yet each united by one common nature, that we are at last convinced of the reality of the eternal; that is, because this conviction, like the types in nature, is universal. And just as all this feeling after God, all this search after the changeless amidst the changing, finds its object in one fundamental reality, so in ourselves the little

that we possess of this eternal being alone makes life possible.

Surely, man could not be self-conscious, he could not know, think, and will, without a permanent basis of self-consciousness and reason; for we know only through contrast. The unchanging comprehends the changeable. Mind could not come from anything less highly organized than itself. It finds itself environed by that which, to all appearances, is unconscious, mechanical, automatic, and instinctive. But the soul is the opposite of all this, and can observe it. The changes of thought and feeling which we call self-consciousness are but the last in a long series of mutations, beginning with the very evolution of a planet. The basis of this series must of course include all these changes in one system, and, in order to include them, must itself be indestructible. The Infinite, the Father, must possess the finite, the son, eternal unity must enjoy an endless round of change, in order to bring into expression the beauty

and goodness of all that is eternally resident within it. Love must have something to love, or it is not perfect. Good must be found good in contrast to relative evil. The soul must meet opposition and have experience, else it shall not be developed. There must everywhere be rise and fall, give and take, involution and evolution, receptivity and activity, subjective and objective, part and whole, or no universe at all. And this omnipresent duality leads us at last to the conception of this universal, permanent element which we have been considering as the ground of all difference, the continuous substratum without which the world of change, of nature and finite consciousness, could not be.

Everything that exists, however great, however trivial and illusive, has its place here. That is, for every sensation you and I feel in our passing lives, for every idea we hold and every sentiment we cherish, there is some correspondence in the permanent nature of

Infinite Being. Each event is, then, an avenue out of time and change into eternity and the unchangeable. Each event, too, marks a stage in the attainment of the great creative type; that is, the ideal of the entire universe. Law, limitation to generic type, pain which keeps us within bounds, reason which defines for us the specific goal, and love which guides us on to its attainment are all means to this one high end. Any particular event, life, or law is thus typical of the whole. The infinitely rich basis or ground is that which renders possible every detail in the existence of the tree, the life of the superstructure which rests upon it, the complete ideal seeking complete expression through all the æons of time.

This permanent basis is therefore absolute, complete, infinite, omnipotent, self-conditioned, uncaused; for causation applies only to time and phenomena. Besides life, motion, substance, self-consciousness, personality, all beings and all worlds which it

owns and transcends, it of course possesses and is all wisdom, love, goodness, beauty, any permanent attribute you may name. For thought arrives at last at that which is no longer describable by names, as he, it; but it reaches infinity, not the Absolute, but Absolute Being, or simply Being, Perfect Whole. And, having said this, we said all, we have expressed all possibilities, named all universes, and suggested an endless wealth of divine self-manifestation.

In other words, we formulate the concept of Absolute Life, of which we perceive only enough to know that its experience or cognition is different from our own; for we know things in parts in detail, in time and space, as events, while absolute cognition knows them all as eternal laws, where all parts, all selves, all events, are beheld together or in unity. Is not this transcendent consciousness or life that which the great seers of the past have tried, but failed, to describe—since all language must fail here—by misnaming it the Unknowable, the Thing-

in-itself, the motionless and attributeless? And is it not a necessity of thought to conceive of that fundamental Reality which holds all events in solution, which is the sum of all difference, of all qualities, relations, and individuals, yet is itself continuously the same, without relations and not limited by its own differentiation? It is not then personal, but more than personal, as Herbert Spencer puts it, not simply conscious, but more than the consciousness we know.

Express, personify, individualize, then, as you will, you cannot grasp That; and what you describe as your God whom you love and worship is not the totality of Absolute Being. That touches with beauty all that hands have wrought and all that nature has erected, animates with life all that exists; pulsates, loves in all hearts, thinks in all minds, and holds all beings together in their common task. Yet, when you name it, you lose the transcendent, you do it injustice somewhere; and the truest description of it must also be supplemented

by that which suggests the indescribable. Time and space are details on the fair face of eternity. So are all facts in human life, all the struggles and the victories, the hopes and defeats; but only infinity, entirety, is what you mean, what you would say if you could, and not words and forms shall bring That to me, not the sayings of prophets and the worship of the great religions, but That itself, perfect, infinite, and absolute through all these, its many and varied manifestations.

And, if we learn thus to look immediately back of and within this living present experience, this human life with its restless aspirations, its sorrows and joys, this wonderful world of nature with its unending flow of changing events, why should we conceive of Absolute Being as an unknowable Thing-in-itself, or an infinite ocean, perfect in its frigid isolation? Such concepts as these are aptly termed "philosophical bugaboos" by Professor James. They haunt us, and we try to reconcile

life with them. Here within and without us is the only Absolute we need, that which life itself leads us to postulate. Any concept which fails to give back to me all that I find in human experience as a whole, I am logically bound to reject. And why, if we seek a figure by which to suggest this great concept, should we not illustrate Absolute Being by the whole universe instead of a mere fragment of it,—the bible of a single nation or the philosophical revelation of one hemisphere? May we not take the entire world of human thought as a revelation of the real divine wisdom, each bible, each philosophy, standing for its particular type in the universe of revelation? If so, then only the entire revelation is the truth. We shall not know the reality of things until we have had both the parts and the whole, until we have not only seen the pure white ray, but also the colors of the spectrum, each in detail. And, when this universal philosophy is formulated, it will not be pantheism nor idealism nor any ism. It will not

be purely intellectual, nor will it be dominated by the mystical and the egoistic, but will be a synthesis of universal life itself; and he who formulates it will be more than a philosopher. He will be a Man, and will live what he teaches, in close association with good plain human life.

As an outlook in this larger direction, the present discussion, therefore, claims nothing final, but says that, through all these present partial glimpses of life's reality, Life itself is made known, transcending, using, needing intuition, seership, and reason, all systems of thought and all symbols and emblems of religion; yet is ever more than these, more even than all future revelation shall declare it to be. Too large is the permanent to be imprisoned and labelled, yet each moment it is manifested afresh; and each revelation is renewed evidence of its power, the open door by which the humblest soul may enter into knowledge of life's mystery.

But, thus much said in justice to the unnamable basis of life considered as whole, we may now

turn to particular embodiments of it, and bring them home to the need of the moment; namely, by a more definite consideration of the self which thus discriminates between change and the consciousness of it, between permanent whole and organized parts, the self which contemplates and feels so much of Absolute Being as we commonly associate with the word "God."

### §

In the quiet hours of the soul, when, in stillness and trust, one lays off the thoughts and cares of daily life, and opens the mind to the limitless realms within, a part of one's self becomes active which surpasses all other phases of finite life in reality, depth, and power. The experience of turning away from the outer world to this diviner region is decided and unmistakable, although one simply becomes receptive to that which, unobserved and unobtrusive, dwells with the soul through every moment of its existence. One is in the

actual presence of Being, of love and peace itself. One is never calmer, saner, and more self-possessed than in these ineffable moments. For, in order to attain to this spiritual condition, one must lay aside the nervous atmospheres of our social life, gradually freeing the mind from the thought of persons and things, until after a time one shall rise superior to all limitation and to all sense of separateness with infinity. This finer, more spiritual realm may be, it is true, a part of all that lies beneath it and leads the mind up to it. Yet one is not now simply reasoning about it; one feels the thing itself, one stands in the presence of a life or spirit not elsewhere manifested on so high a plane, a power accompanied by a sense of freedom such that one's soul-life seems to enlarge to the magnitude of the universe. To look back upon the past is to survey the whole course of human evolution at a glance, its high origin, its low beginnings, its long struggles during its period of separateness from knowledge

of its sublime source, its patient aspiration amidst discouragement and defeat, its glorious outcome, and the dawning of conscious and eternal union in motive and deed with the guiding impetus which has sustained it all along. No words of mine can do more than suggest this illumination, this contiguity of infinite and finite. It is the highest office of the observer to report figuratively, if he may, imperfectly, if he must, of this sublime presence and its inspirations. I shall therefore try once more to outline the more important characteristics of this experience as an inseparable part of the unnamable whole already suggested.

In the first place, let the sceptic doubt it as he may, it is clear beyond all question that the mind really does lie open within to a higher and purer realm than that of physical sense; for the experience itself is unmistakable evidence of it, and it points to the existence of a spiritual sense whose function is immediate perception of Absolute Being.

Max Müller describes this spiritual ability thus: "There is a faculty in man which I call simply the faculty of apprehending the Infinite, not only in religion, but in all things; a power independent of sense and reason, a power in a certain sense contradicted by sense and reason, but, yet I suppose, a very real power, if we see how it has held its own from the beginning of the world, how neither sense nor reason has been able to overcome it, while it alone is able to overcome both reason and sense." The insight that comes in these exalted moments is of a somewhat different sort from that of the reasoning process suggested in the foregoing; for there one is making a conscious effort, one is arguing from premise to conclusion, from the fact of time and space, change and phenomena, to the necessary ground of it all in eternity, limitless, unchangeable, and real. The plodding thought of space and time considerations is now transcended; and the soul perceives by direct sight, with little regard to limitations, as

though it comprehended life's wholeness in one comprehensive vision. And the surprise is great sometimes when one learns how long it is ere one of these timeless intuitions is realized in the painstaking world of evolution. One can hardly tell how these insights come. Nor can one always assign reasons for them. Indeed, the attempt of reason to systematize these soul visions is often absurdly inadequate; and the utmost one can do at times is to say, "I know not how nor why, but something was there which knows: the knowledge came to me and I could not doubt it."

The intellect likes to claim for itself all the wisdom of life, and with some people the spiritual sense is so faint that it is futile to argue for the existence of a higher intelligence than that of inductive reasoning or remembered wisdom. Yet, when all has been said on the intellectual side, when the thought becomes lost in a sea of speculative inconsistencies, these spontaneous products of the mind

stand out in distinct superiority, untouched by scepticism, and revealing *the living essence* itself which all along formed the basis of intellectual speculation; for the higher self sees both conclusion and premise, past and present, far and near, *at once*, just as the physical eye comprehends a great extent of landscape from a mountain summit, beholding more in a moment than could be described in a day. The soul lies open to the eternal ideal, the great carefully adjusted purpose or that which knows how all things shall end. At the same time a sense of humility comes that one is thus permitted to look far into the heart of events. This feeling of humility, this upward look of worship, reverence, and thanksgiving to that which is above and beyond, in wisdom and power, is in its turn strong evidence that one really is open to a higher power, and not simply dealing with one's own cogitations. For, if it were merely one's self, one would be self-satisfied and self-centred: whereas during genuine

contemplation of deity one feels how little is the finite self when compared with infinite wisdom; and one is glad beyond all words for even this brief glimpse of life's real essence and beauty, before which one instinctively bows in worshipful recognition of its infinite grandeur and perfection.

Thus, in ways of its own and according to a transcendent law, guidance comes, which bears its own evidence with it. It appeals to the mind oftentimes when one is wholly at a loss how to act, when one is weak, discouraged, and apparently cut off for a time from all resources. Clearly, not to be doubted nor mistaken, the outcome, or result, stands out distinctly, like a "beam in darkness." It is literally "a beam in darkness: let it grow," trust it, rely upon it, rest with it, follow it, though it be impossible to see how one shall conquer or survive. For there is a somewhat within us that does know, though we do not. The higher self is that part of us whereby we detect a mere ray of the great

light that is ever guiding us on. Were we wiser, more receptive and more developed, we might perceive more. Probably, as the soul attains fuller self-expression, the vision will be clearer and perhaps more prophetic. Yet there is a fitness in this indistinct and intermittent perception which more than all else proves its divine origin, its source in that which knows how to guide at the right moment, yet still permits us to learn from experience. For, if we could suddenly attain to the beatific vision, there would be no opportunity for mistakes. If we could always realize our ideals when we wished, we should lose the full benefit of failure. The higher power only permits one "to see as in a glass darkly," at first. One sees the beauty and goodness of the holy life, and immediately resolves to live it. Thereupon the vision vanishes, and all shuts in again, like clouds before the sun. One seems to have lost it all. The intellect immediately argues that the vision could not therefore be true, and demands

evidence which it could not comprehend if it were given. The higher and lower natures come into conflict, doubt struggles with belief; and thus sound, lasting development goes on by nature's sure, systematic method. The vision comes again, once more the lower nature is roused into opposition, and the two struggle for supremacy, until one learns at last that the Spirit is never really absent from the soul. It is present in our struggles, inspires us in our hopes, and is all the more clearly revealed in the end because the soul can absorb but little at a time.

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Not all that one sees in these rare moments of illumination is really there. One is misled sometimes, for no one is infallible; and imagination is ever ready to build upon a slight foundation. One must doubt, examine, question, and learn the true from the false, even in the purest visions of this self, in order that one may avoid mistaking the human for the divine. And common-sense, reason, is an

essential and always a safeguard for those who are inclined to become too fully absorbed in the dreams of the soul.

Yet, even when all this has been said, when one has failed and been mistaken again and again, and when the sceptic has once more questioned whether there be a higher self at all, there within, in that sacred sanctuary where the heart of life beats in unceasing rhythm, a presence remains which knows, dispute it as one may, doubt it and come back to it as one may. One simply needs to listen a little more carefully, that is all. For again and again its forecast of events has proved to be strictly correct. It has guided us through experiences where we knew not whither to turn. Help has come unexpectedly, circumstances have given way, people have played their part, and not blindly, but intelligently, an instinct has guided us which used all this as means to end. One learns to live by it, to await its coming, to listen for its leading day by day; by trusting it more

fully each year, by setting personal desires and selfish impulses aside, until out of a mere uncertain mass of impressions, some true and some false, one develops a distinct personality which knows how to co-operate with the upward impulse of spiritual evolution.

The first evidence, then, that there really is a higher self is its contrast with the lower,—the self of doubts, distrusts, temptations, and selfish motives. It appeals to the mind out of pure superiority to these lower impulses. It could not be the lower self in disguise, for its best guidance comes when the lower self subsides or is stilled. Sometimes one seems to be this higher self, or elder brother, looking upon the lower in pity and amusement at its ignorance and conceit. Again, one is the lower self of temptation, weakness, and doubt, looking upward with longing to the higher.

But, in any case, it is like a great instinct or knowledge to which the mind becomes receptive, and is probably akin to the instinct

which, clear and keen in animal life, is the guiding factor in self-preservation and evolution. Yet, unlike mere instinct, which the animal at once follows implicitly, it presents itself as insight or knowledge for our acceptance or rejection. The choice seems to be wholly our own. The guidance never forces itself upon us. And, since man has his own development in charge, he is too far advanced to obey it blindly. It seems to say, "Here is the wisest way, this is the right: follow it, if you choose; but turn aside, if you think you know better." Yet, even when we thus turn aside, when we despise it, crucify and reject it, it never deserts us. It is ever there within in the inmost sanctuary. of the Spirit. It never leaves us, like a friend who is out of patience with us because we will not accept his advice. It simply awaits our recognition, until we are ready in all humility to learn its wisdom; and, then, with genuine receptivity to it, when the self that thinks it knows is laid aside,

such wisdom becomes ours as only supreme intelligence could inspire.

And this leads to a statement of the law which governs the evolution of the higher self; namely, recognition of it, desire for its guidance, with the belief that its wisdom is superior to mere finite insight. Probably every one is open at times to a superior wisdom. But this inner light has been confused with the duller glow of personal opinion and inclination, and we have taken undue credit to ourselves. The essential, the turning-point in our spiritual development, is the discovery that this wisdom has been present with us all along, yet misunderstood and opposed. It is this which causes much of our unrest,—the divine in us seeking recognition. It is this which throws us out of harmony with ourselves and with existing circumstances. It is this which stirs within us and makes us long for the perfect. Misinterpreted, the mind turns from it, utterly ignorant of its true meaning. Understood and

followed, it is that guidance which will lead us out of all conflict into a condition of peace and happiness. If it be recognized even in one point,—that is, that our goodness, our wisdom, and our ideals are not wholly ours, but in part divine; or that the impressions which guard us from danger and the stirrings within us to do good are indications of its presence,—then every one may develop it, every one may learn to be guided, and the germ of divinity within may be made to grow with every thought of trust and every co-operative desire. And one should not be discouraged at repeated failure to obtain true guidance, for victory over obstacles is the price of spiritual success, just as truly as of any other human achievement. It is the mistake which teaches the truth. Only by personal effort, experiment, and discrimination shall one learn at last when the guidance is genuine and disinterested and when it is intermingled with one's own thought and self. It is heartfelt, persistent, earnest desire to know

more, and patient humility while awaiting its coming, which invites the higher guidance. But let the desire be there, and help will come more and more in proportion to one's recognition of it. And gradually, by making this co-operation with the divine tendency our ideal, by renewing the sense of oneness with eternal Spirit day by day and whenever we need help, we shall build up the higher self into a tower of strength, a structure upon which the winds and storms of temptation, contaminating mental influences and doubt, shall blow in vain; for, *wherever the will is habitually concentrated, there the forces which shape experience shall gather*, making a better future out of a steadily evolving present.

It is evident, then, that the higher self, or soul, is active whenever man aspires; and that reason itself, so far as it seeks full knowledge of life's reality, is evidence of a somewhat in us which transcends the finite. The religious, or spiritual, nature is the same higher self described in the language of the Church. When man, in that

far distant day of prehistoric time, in awe and questioning, discovered himself thoughtfully considering the great worlds of nature and of human society, and raised his thought in adoration to the unknown source of it all, it was the stirring of this deep, divine instinct for the perfect which indicates that there is something active within before one worships without. It is this stirring, elevating presence which probably lies at the basis of all religions and the belief in immortality, and has guided man from the crude forms of worship onward to polytheism, to monotheism, and at last to the great spiritual doctrines of the divine immanence, and of God as the Father. For man is naturally conservative. This instinct inspires him with a dissatisfaction which ever points forward, and will never cease its activity with him till he shall have reached the sublimest heights of spiritual glory. If one views it in this progressive light instead of subjecting the spirit to the rule of forms and creeds, it expands the mind in ever-widening

circles, it becomes a personal revelation of the highest, and as such makes one a member of the universal Church. For true worship, the unfoldment of true soul power, demands as its prime essential that one shall be *at home in one's own mind*, that one shall have original views, unhampered by any creed; also that self-possession which knows no allegiance but to God himself, which no circumstance shall upset,—a stronghold of power where the voice of perfect wisdom shall ever have opportunity to whisper better things than have yet found expression in the creeds and doctrines of men.

Again, this law of recognition of the higher self as a progressive quantity is illustrated by conscience, another of its forms of manifestation. As difficult as it may be to rationalize or account for our freedom of will, it is clear that in these moments when conscience speaks there is another voice, making known the will of selfishness, or the lower nature; and one must choose between them, reaping

the results of one's own action or choice. The lower self urges one to follow its dictates, holding out inducements and rewards. The conscience simply presents its "ought" for one's consideration: ours is the choice to turn aside or to obey. If we neglect its keen emphasis of the right, the "ought" quietly retires. If we choose it, it instantly rewards us, so that the truly righteous soul needs no praise, and does not care for it. For the entire process obeys the law of action and reaction; and he who would perfect character must, first of all, make the conscious choice, which yields fruit according to the strength of the desire.

It is well, too, to avoid all morbid self-condemnation and over-conscientiousness. Every moral failure shows, first of all, wherein one may give fuller recognition to the higher self, and should be considered long enough only to learn its lesson, never in the spirit of regret and of self-disparagement. One never mends a fault by dwelling upon it, but by

choosing and willing the better way. The road out of conflict lies through greater receptivity to the higher self, not in introspective thought about our sins.

The essential in all cases, then, is to have a closer understanding of the actual fact, of our real situation in life as sharers in power, love, and wisdom, with a self that transcends the finite, a soul which seeks expression through all our trials and joys. That which is deemed a mere meaningless conflict and burden, that which brings so much suffering and hardship, proves on inspection to be this ever-present elevating impulse, disguised, suppressed, and misdirected.

The impulse curses or blesses, according as we deem it good or bad, high or low, according to our understanding and directing of it. At all events, its real tendency is upward, progressive, elevating; and higher and lower nature alike exist for our best good, for the development of character or soul.

In thus speaking of the higher self in contrast to the lower, I do not therefore mean that the mind is ultimately dual, but that all the selves, all the moods we display and the thoughts we think, belong at last to one aspiring ego, or soul, now revealing itself through matter, now among its fellow selves, and now in solitary communion with its God. The mystery of the universe is bound up and revealed in the remarkable incongruities of finite consciousness; and he who would know how evil and error may exist side by side with goodness and truth need only interrogate his own selfhood to learn that without the two, without the contrast, there would be not only no knowledge, but nothing to overcome. The two exist together as the essential opposites of one perfect system, or whole. One personality may seem to possess many wills, or selves, and may seem to itself for the time being inherently wicked. Yet all these wills prove in time to have the same aim, to be one and all incidental to the instinct

for the perfect. Deeper than all the conflicts, then, deeper than all apparent evil, one finds immanent in every struggle, in every moment of life, a self which, owning both higher and lower, is their common ground. For experience, as it appears from this higher point of view, is without break in continuity: it is clearly of one piece, of one system. No insight more emphatically reveals life's unity than this loftiest vision of the higher self. One feels that even the minutest details of daily experience are parts of one supreme design, wherein all that one is to accomplish in life is involved in a latent ideal. The vision assures us that not for naught have we come into being, but that each trivial event, each mysterious experience, is fraught with a purpose which binds all events together. And in that quiet moment when one thus discovers what one really is, as a soul, as an eternal part of eternal Being itself, a sublimer motive is revealed than mere self-realization; namely, the beauty, the perfection, and welfare of the

whole. Thus the consciousness is lifted out of the narrow vale of mere finite selfhood into the sublime region where the soul shares the consciousness of Deity, where nothing is petty, nothing is superfluous or vile, when viewed in the light of its total history.

Then, as one turns once more to daily life and human society, this knowledge or sense of oneness with the life, the ideal and consciousness of Deity, is the best gift one can carry to one's fellow-men. The sense of separateness may come upon one again, and one may occasionally lose one's hold of the inner power; but gradually it will become as much a habit to re-establish the connection as to talk or write. And after a time one shall so live that every one will feel that one really has a higher self, that one is a developed soul; for conduct, word, deed, the countenance, will show it. The higher self does not become a living reality to us in the deepest sense until one's whole life reveals it. Occasional guidance

may indicate the existence of this self, and I have tried to show that it is through recognition of and trust in this guidance that it may be cultivated. Yet full belief in it means that every detail of conduct shall be a revelation of it. The ideal which the mind thus tries to express is the living Christ, or the character and goodness of God made personal and vital among men. This is the highest phase of the higher self, that part of us which says, "Not my will, but thine, be done,"—the willingness to make any sacrifice, the knowledge that the whole alone is good, the spirit of love perfected and expressed to and for all the world, the knowledge of the eternal presence of the kingdom of heaven within, and the perpetual outflow of its bounties to the needy, the cheerless, and the suffering. Thought can go no higher than this. History itself affords no purer example of righteousness. He who thus chooses to be a follower of the divinest leading has many a trying experience before him. But how much one is spared, what joy and

peace come to the soul which thus settles the future for all time, and how far superior to the selfish life of the world is this never-ending labor for the whole!

But is there simply one self, the eternal God, the fundamental Reality which we considered at the outset as the necessary ground of all existence? When one at last penetrates beneath the illusion of sense to find life all of one piece within, where the soul seems linked indissolubly with all power and love, does one really recognize self as the all of being? Some have thought so, have ignored individuality, and deemed the lower self and the world of nature an illusory dream from which one escapes during these ineffable visions into the realm of everlasting reality. Many believe that never through the intellect, nor through the forms of space and time, can one gain any knowledge of God, but that, when all thinking ceases, in the ecstasy of the higher self, one knows God by becoming God. Surely, there is

a truth here; and one feels that, whatever the conclusions deduced from these visions, there is more reality in them than speech can declare. That which perceives is, for the time being at least, part of infinity; and one almost forgets the existence of the varied, limited, and struggling world of nature. But, when one turns again, it is still there; and the finite soul still exists with its consciousness of imperfection and its far-off ideal of the Christ life.

If the higher self is God, how, then, can there be evolution? Why does my account of these exalted experiences differ from yours? If this self is the eternal God, is it not perfect, unchangeable, and omnipresent,—the fundamental Reality which reason finds to be a necessity of thought, the Power which all forms and all forces reveal? The statement is absurd, for there is no room left for conduct. More truly, then, the higher self is simply the highest in the you and the me. It is a manifestation, an individuation of God,—God and man in soul

communion; and it varies with each one of us to the degree that our souls differ, to the degree that we have been quickened on the spiritual plane. It is not God alone nor man alone. Nor may one hope to distinguish between the two more definitely than to say, It is so much of God as I, the finite soul, can apprehend. And, having apprehended it, it is the highest duty of reason to avoid mysticism as far as possible; for all intelligibility is surrendered when one identifies or confuses God and his manifestations.

On the other hand, if one makes a final attempt to doubt that the higher self is God in any sense, one has to meet all the evidence which we have been steadily accumulating in this paper; namely, the arguments of the higher reason, the consciousness of transition from the lower self to the higher, the sense of humility, the wisdom which still permits one to have experience and to sin, if one chooses, instead of revealing all knowledge at once, the feeling of worship, the strivings of conscience,

the instinct for the perfect, the sentiment of reverence and love, and, above all, the Christ motive, or the highest form of self-renunciation. Doubt it, deny it, reason as one may, one is at last forced to the conclusion that it is not self alone which is perceived in these silent moments of contemplation; for a Somewhat owns and knows us better than we know ourselves, puts us in unwonted self-possession, inspires the soul with high ideals, and reveals the secrets of life.

Then, too, one should remember the law by which the higher self comes uppermost. It is not through one's own seeking alone that the highest visions come. Unless the desire be there, it is true, the higher self will not become active. But, having made the mind receptive, one must give the Spirit full opportunity to come forth in its own way; for it never inspires the mind when one is most active mentally, but in the form of spontaneous revelation in our moments of silence. It is something that

seeks us, that knows better than we when to guide and encourage. And as difficult as it may be to suggest this assurance to another, there is a conviction, a sense of power and wisdom, before which doubt itself stands in awe.

It is not, then, the human part to dictate terms. It is ours to listen and absorb, in faith and readiness, that we may hear the lightest whisper of that sublime voice, happy beyond all words that there is even the faintest bond between us and all-perfect Spirit. Such experiences are like the divinest days of the year, where one is at the mercy of nature's beauty. One wishes that all the year might be like those glorious days. But the mere contrast with other days, and the long weeks when nature sleeps, is once more typical of the lower self and the higher.

He only who asks the impossible could demand more evidence than this: One knows that there is a higher self because one is thrown into discord with the lower. And one knows that there is a lower self, because one would

at all times be like the higher, and cannot; for the lower asserts its sway, and thus, through nature's law-governed method of interaction and contest, sound, lasting evolution results.

The most important lesson, then, of these ineffable experiences, is that they teach one the law of life, the purposeful method of progress,—first the desire for help, guidance, inspiration; then the mental picture, or ideal, the uplifting, the vision, the glimpse of life's beauty and wholeness; next the strong affirmation that we will be true to these insights, that we will be like the Christ; then the darkness and temporary discouragement of conflict with the lower nature, of failure, suffering, and sorrow; and, finally, the emerging once more into the light, better, stronger, wiser, purer, than we were before. These are the stages; and, if we will but keep up our courage and know that we have not degenerated, but that the period of darkness is the time of greatest growth, all will be well. The essential is to know the law, to

remember the alternation of light and darkness, and to keep the mind firmly centred on the divine ideal. One may accomplish wonders in the development of character and soul-power through this patient, moderate, hopeful method, building up the consciousness of oneness with Deity until it shall become a habit, in precisely the same way that one learns to read, to write, to speak a language, or to master any art. The law is simple, unmistakable; and the result or reaction depends solely upon our action, our desire and understanding of the law.

It is well for every one, and especially during trouble, illness, sorrow, and when difficult problems arise, on which one must have light, to go apart from people at least once each day. Little by little, it will become easier to throw off care, to shut out the external world, and to rise to the illimitable plane of Spirit within. One's leading consciousness each time should be the desire, the unworded prayer, for help, strength, wisdom; the recognition of that perfect ideal

which is ever with us, seeking expression. And the soul really knows more about itself than one would think. The chief reason why it has told us so little is because of our too great activity. It will reveal something each time we seek the silence if we give it opportunity to speak. Let us, then, give it more and more opportunity to make itself known. Instead of flying off on a tangent of fear, worryment, and doubt, let us first seek the inner centre, and become spiritually poised, believing that the Power which has brought us thus far will finish its work, despite any and all trouble.

Each time, too, one may bear away help and light to one's fellow-men, one will know better how to cheer and encourage them; and, when the critical experiences of life come, they will be stimulated by the example, by the peace and equanimity, which one can command even amidst grief and misery. Each time also the world should seem more beautiful if one has really attained the true spiritual vision; for there

is no greater mistake than, having concluded that the higher self is all-sufficient, to live the narrow existence of subjectivism. The higher self must take me *out* of self, or I had better not have known it. It must lead me to a larger life, wherein I not only perceive the divine Spirit and universal law better than before, but where I still enjoy nature, where I am still a close observer of my fellow-men, and where altruistic emotions guide me into the ethical life, the life of helpfulness, happiness, and cheer. Absolute Being, the universe, society, the present, the ideal, myself,—these terms must mean something definite, as intellectually separable aspects of universal Reality. So far, then, as this interpretation differs from many other accounts of the higher self, it (1) aims to be more earnest in its appeal to all to believe that they can receive help, to watch for indications of a higher power stirring within, to recognize it, to cultivate receptivity to it, to seek its help in moments of need, throwing one's whole being

in line with its moving, not simply in a passive, but in an active, hopeful way; (2) to suggest one standard of appeal in all troublesome problems,—namely, that which harmonizes with the keenest insight of the higher self; (3) to show the need of discernment, of thought, reason, discrimination, that one may avoid the extreme, on the one hand, of confusing the intuitions of the higher self with mere finite thought, and the mystical conclusion, on the other, that just this finite experience is the great All; (4) the distinct understanding that this that we have considered as the higher self is related to eternity, above all causation, above all time and all limitation, as its necessary ground and basis. Reason may thus be satisfied, the objection to the concept of causation is removed, and all finite thought and evolution are accepted for what they are worth, not in any sense final, but as manifestations of that Being whose nature it is to put itself forth in love, in system, in the great and in the small,

whose living presence is thus the necessary basis of every moment, of every thought, of every aspiration, and of every living soul.

In this way one may develop harmoniously, without reaching afar to that which the here and now alone can reveal. In this way one may be wisely true to the higher dictates of the spiritual sense. In this way at last all life shall become a witness to the joy of mere existence, all thought a confession of divinity, and all the deeds of time reveal the eternal nearness of the living God, made individual and personal through the higher self, complete and perfect through the world of manifestation, and united with all his creatures through the love and life without which they could not be.

## IV. Individuality.

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“Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity known,  
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my  
own.”

—*Robert Browning.*

**A**N acute philosophical observer has said that the problem for the thinker during the next half-century will be the choice between the impersonal tendency, which has reached its climax in Hindu speculation, and the doctrine of individuality so generally held in the West. The renewed interest in Oriental thought, due to the presence among us of many able exponents of Hindu mysticism, has brought very prominently forward the conception of the Absolute as an

infinite ocean of wisdom and bliss, in which persons are, figuratively speaking, only waves or whirlpools. The tendency of modern science is also toward the vast, the great, and impersonal, in which the individual is easily sacrificed, since Nature creates with such a bountiful hand and is careful only of the generic type. Even the new thought doctrine in our Western world advises silence and meditation above all else, —anything and everything that will tend to put the personal self aside, that the real Being may be revealed. And there seems to be nothing left for the finite soul but to maintain a sort of quiet, hopeful attitude through recognition of the Absolute, surrendering to this mighty power the splendid possibilities of personal energy and achievement.

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Yet the desire for permanent individuality is as great as the demand for unity, and this desire must be explained. We have no sooner affirmed all life or power to be one, eternal and limitless, than we must qualify our statement

by defining it to be also many, changing and finite; and, unless we can solve the universal riddle of unity amidst variety, it is intellectually far more commendable to state the dual aspects separately. In the last analysis, only so much of this vastness is knowable by us as can be grasped by the finite mind: no part can speak for the Whole, as such. It is the *personal* revelations of the great seers of the past and present, the phenomena of nature and the affections of the human heart, which have differentiated this great Power, and made it a reality among us. The principle of individuation, reaching its culmination in man, is an essential factor in the entire evolution of the cosmos. To many the term Power, or Spirit, has no meaning apart from these manifestations in persons and things; and just as Creator and created, Love and loved, belong together, so in practical life one must include the two sides,—the times for silence and the periods of activity prove to be not hostile, but supplementary.

That such a unification of practical methods is necessary is evident from the experience of those who have made exclusive application of either one. In our hurrying Western world the method of silence is much needed, and one cannot too strongly emphasize the value of receptive listening and inward repose. Perhaps one may safely go even to the extreme in the inculcation of this method, in order to counteract the nervous tendency of our modern people. Yet some say, This is Quietism once more. How far shall it be carried? To what extent shall one be non-resistant? Shall one go so far as to say,—

“Serene, I fold my hands and wait”?

Again, the need of development which shall counterbalance too great receptivity is illustrated in the instances of sacrifice of individuality with which every one is familiar. There are many cases of hypnotism in real life.

People are, as a rule, either positive or negative to the minds about them; and there are many unsuspected channels of interchange of mental and physical influence. One is both fortunate and to be pitied who has a receptive nature; for turned toward the Highest, it opens the soul to the sublimest inspiration, and, left unguarded, it repeatedly involves the mind in the most subtle influences through one's weakest side. Such people must guard themselves most zealously; for, if this tendency be increased beyond conscious control, the transition to mediumship and intellectual servitude is easily made. Receptivity and relaxation may both be carried to such an extreme that weakness will be the inevitable result; and, if one opens the mind indiscriminately, there is no predicting what influence may come.

Good-natured people are frequently imposed upon; and, in their zeal to be kindly disposed toward all, they sometimes permit themselves to give far too much weight to the

opinions and wishes of others. But the true individual knows how to say, "No," and when to hold fast to conviction, even though the world ridicule him for fidelity to an ideal. There are times when one must look a fear, a temptation, or absorbing influence, squarely in the face, and say, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." In friendships, as in all our personal relations, one must hold the balance of power, as far as individuality is concerned, and be able at any time to shake off mental influences and advice, and decide a problem for one's self. Many are at the mercy of other minds, simply because the Man in them is dormant, because they have not yet learned that the only solution to the problem of life is an individual one. They accordingly depend upon others, and expect from others that which individual thought and experience alone can give.

Many sensitive natures are overburdened through exercise of the wrong kind of sympathy, the kind which enters into trouble

and condoles, expresses regret, says, "It is too bad," and accomplishes nothing: whereas the wiser sympathy cheers, uplifts, preserves individuality, and is helpful both to the one who gives and the one who receives. Some are persuaded to believe a certain doctrine or become followers of a teacher because of some personal charm, because the teacher is a foreigner or one who appeals to the emotions. All this while reason is asleep; and one may never be sure that the teaching is worthy of acceptance until the spell has been shaken off, until the intellect has once more voiced individual belief, and put the entire doctrine through the test of tolerant scepticism. And, if friends urge me to take up a certain line of work or induce me to accept certain ideas, I should not give my assent until I have carefully considered the subject by myself, and come to my own conclusions independently of their influence. For there are problems which one must solve entirely alone, even if this means that,

temporarily at least, one shall part company with one's dearest friends.

Indiscriminate praise is another obstacle to individuality of thought. Those who make it a vocation to attend lecture courses and support "fads" will hear a discourse in which two and two are declared to be four, then listen to another speaker who affirms that they make five, and say, most graciously, that both discourses are "beautiful." Where "all is good" in general, nothing is good in the truest sense. As commendable as it may be to avoid negations and criticism, unless scepticism occasionally rises in its might, no one shall know truth from error. It is not well for a teacher to carry everything before him. No one who loves truth first of all can be a mere disciple or follower of another, and a man has not yet reached the highest plane of thought who is merely an exponent of some well-established system of philosophy.

There is a freshness of thought, an intellectual snap, coming from individual thinking which is never found in the doctrine of a mere exponent. If I go to the fountain-head of wisdom, and each time think out my problem afresh, I perceive in all its purity the vigor of intellectual life. If I live among my fellow-men, and know by actual experience what their pains and struggles are, then my speech shall be filled with a vitality which no second-hand knowledge could give. The work of the individual is, first of all, to carry on the process of continuous creation, to preserve and perfect the type. We receive the best a fellow-man may give us only when we discover the limitations of our teachers, when we know what they primarily stand for, and what we must look elsewhere to find. And always, when one is in the sanest condition, the real man stands out above any task one may be engaged in at the time, so that the man is larger than his teaching, and ever looks beyond to greater truth and power.

Criticism has a most healthy office to perform, and must go hand in hand with belief. If I accept without question the doctrine of another, I lose the highest benefit of his teaching. He who makes me think does me a service, and puts me in command of my own wisdom. I had better think out some theory which is opposed to that of my teacher than follow him implicitly. "Every man I meet is my master in some respect, in that I learn of him," sums up the wisdom of true listening, where preconception is set aside. Yet I also have my thought, and something must ever keep it alive. I must ever have the courage of my convictions, and not only think, but express them.

Obstacles also have a part to play in our lives; and, if we always yield good-naturedly before them, then we must pay the penalty of one-sidedness. It is easy in a mild climate or in a favorable environment to be sweet-tempered and good. But the real test comes when we are thrown amidst hostile circumstances. The sturdy

Anglo-Saxon character has been immensely strengthened, if not created, by the contests for existence in our rigorous northern climate. This, as one far-sighted observer has said, has had a tendency to develop individuality, and to create a belief in individuality which a milder form of life might not suggest. Those who have ascended high on the mountain of achievement have done so through what they have overcome,—by mastery over their own natures, first of all. Personal effort and energy bring what patient waiting never could accomplish, and many times we need to rouse ourselves most vigorously from apathy and despair. We have it in our power to change our life, if we will; and many an obstacle shall lose its power and many a temptation shrink away in terror, when we rise up in the vigor and positiveness of individual strength. And we show the greatest love for our fellow-men, not when we interfere in their behalf, not when we solve their problems for them, and over-

devotedly try to spare them the pains of personal experience with the world, but when we let them have the full benefit of experience, when we push the fledgling from the nest. For "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

That which stimulates a man to action does him a service. It is even necessary, sometimes, to make a man angry before any impression can be made upon him; and chronic invalids have been cured by the same unusual measure. There is ease and luxury, quickly degenerating into selfishness, where life ever runs smoothly. But the occasion makes the man; and, if the occasion be lacking, it must be created from within. Not until I rise above egoism, once for all, and learn to detect the illusions of imagination and expectant attention, may I safely follow methods of contemplation and silence as far as they may apply. If I go too frequently into the silence to contemplate and develop spiritual poise, I stand in danger of over-restraint; and the pent-up energy thus held in check may, in

time, seriously mar my growth. Spontaneity is to be maintained at any cost; and I must not lull myself to sleep with dreamy philosophy, but awaken the man in me to a knowledge of his place in the world of action and of practical helpfulness.

I have risen no higher than my individual thought and effort have carried me. Truth is not truth for me until it is my truth. I must constantly ask for the why and the wherefore; and, when I find myself becoming absorbed, I must call a halt. Advice, at best, is only food for thought. No one can tell me my duty. So long as I depend upon another for advice, I am not faithful to my true vocation in life. But let me once discover that another has had undue influence over me, and the mere revelation of my servitude will partly free me from the subtle spell. I may neglect society by becoming too individual, or I may be false to my own genius by yielding to the impersonal tendencies even of a spiritual society. But I must be developed

on both sides if I am ever to win either true freedom or true power to uplift my fellowmen.

Yet one should ever guard against mere personal self-assertion masquerading in the garb of individuality. It is as easy to affirm the mere egoistic self, and build up that which is in reality an obstacle to the self which God would have us be, as it is to lose sight of the spirit in one's endeavor to be wisely sceptical. The intellect has many temptations with which to lure one from the straight and narrow way. It is individuality of the rounded-out type which we should seek, where no faculty is allowed to trespass on its neighbor's ground. And one will not need to struggle nor to fight when such individuality is attained, for it will maintain itself; and with it all shall come a spirit of repose, which will ever keep one from entering the pathways of the extremist.

Thus in philosophy and in practical life there is a demand for definiteness and fulness of thought, for that which shall recognize both

the whole and the part, neither ignoring distinctions nor facts, but including in theory and in conduct all sides of life as found in the universe at large. Everything is good in its place. The only danger lies in going too far in one direction at the expense of others; for it is balance, poise, that we need. It is just this search for a rounded-out philosophy which constitutes the motive of all our best thinking to-day. The truth-seekers of the past faced the same great problems, but in a more general, vaguer way, like the contemplation of the seer lost in a vision of the infinite, and content to perceive only that. But to-day we are drawing everything nearer to our personal, present experience; and with microscope and crucible, with acute analysis and introspection, we are trying to learn the most minute constitution of the world.

It is easy to say that it is love, or the spirit, that heals; but we wish to know how it heals, the detailed steps of the process. For ages

people were content to say that God created the world. This age asks to know the stages of the world's growth, and the theory of evolution is the answer. For nothing is explained, if we simply affirm that God once acted, and hence our world. This might be accepted if we now believed that species appear suddenly, and that great changes occur through a break in the continuity of nature. But we now know that all modification is by a process so slow that the mind can hardly enumerate the factors, the minute changes, each contributing its tiny share. It is just as wonderful that you and I should think and act to-day as any so-called remarkable event that ever occurred in the past, and each thought of ours plays its part in shaping our career. No detail is lost, no activity passes unnoticed, and without registering its effect, no moment is uncausative; for nature's economy is perfect. These minute changes are just as essential, and must be given equal consideration with the great cataclysms in which

they result. They require the presence of God just as much, and reveal divine power just as fully. Each moment we live all the problems of the universe are involved. Our life problem, in fact, requires us to carry the thought of infinity and the finite, the general and the individual, the great and the minute, along together.

For finite and infinite are obviously inseparable. If one bears this in mind, remembering the more *human* aspect of the problem, one may avoid the tendency to coldness and non-recognition of personality, which many fall into. The love element, the sense of the beautiful and humane, is quite crushed out of some people through devotion to science and egoistic idealism, so that men and women are looked upon as so many machines to be used for one's own ends,—without a word of gratitude. "The only test of sanity is sociability." One cannot isolate one's self from present-day life without losing its healthiest stimulus; namely, the upward

tendency of omnipresent Divinity, working through society, leading men on through what they are to somewhat better, where natural law, and not a high-spun ideal, governs human conduct. True growth proceeds not by vague diffusion and the ignoring of distinctions, but by concentration, difference, and definiteness. Let a man stand for something in particular, and nature and society will find him of use. But let him become "blind to beauty and deaf to love," and the mere frigidity of his conception of the Absolute will defeat his entire object in the search for truth. And to ignore all revelations of God but that of the inner man, thus becoming subjective by exaltation of the finite ego to the place which infinite selfhood alone can occupy, or, in other words, to mistake the merely human for God, is just as narrow, on the other hand, as this impersonal tendency of abstract speculation.

What, then, is the solution of this great problem? What is the common ground whereon

infinite and finite have due recognition? Must we choose between Occidental and Oriental thought, or are the two systems in deepest truth so many aspects of one inclusive wisdom? Far be it from the purpose of this chapter to insist upon any immediate solution of the question. Let us, then, consider a doctrine which at least aspires to be a reconciliation, by first considering it in the light of the foregoing demands of daily life, then turning once more to suggest the relation of individuality to Absolute Being.

If one retires anew from the outside world to ask in the silence, What am I, who am I, that owns these complex moods, selves, opinions, desires, these delights and sorrows? a most curious paradox is discovered when at length a relatively satisfactory conclusion is reached. One seems to be the friend, the person or being whom people love or blame, the doer of good or of wrong deeds, and the possessor of pains and joys, who passes under the name,

say, of William Brown. Yet, on the other hand, this is not I who just now acted, rejoiced, and suffered. It is not all of me. I am capable of far better conduct than this, and I refuse to identify my total self with that which friends tell me I am or with the self which I despise. When a man calls himself a fool or idiot, and feels discontentment, it is not because he really is a fool, but because his better self is wise,—wise in possibility or ideally speaking. You do not go about in search of wisdom; for, unless you already had it within, you would not find it in books and people. You seek rather *the occasion for its expression*. When you say “I,”

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you mean interchangeably the present self, which displeases you, and the ideal self, which scorns to be described either in present or material terms. You cannot ignore the fact that you have two natures,—one which seems more distinctively yourself, and one for which a higher Power seems responsible, appealing to you as an “ought.” And this is the paradox:

that you are both what you would be and what you are, both the possible and the real.

“So build we up the being that we are,” says Wordsworth. That is, we are engaged in making ourselves objectively that which we really are subjectively; for, unless we are really *more* than we ordinarily mean by the word “I,” then our dissatisfaction has no meaning whatever. It is clear, then, that we must take the word “individuality” in its largest sense, that is, both in respect to what we find ourselves to be today and that which desire shows us we are to become. Individuality enters into all that we do, and at the same time in a special sense points beyond it to the Power without which our moral and spiritual ideals have no meaning. Without infinite Being, finite life could not be. But, granted infinity, we can then very easily find ourselves to be one and individual. Is there any greater wonder in the world than this, the fact that, as a part of limitless Being, of immeasurable Love and perfect Wisdom, you

are still just yourself and no one else, with your private portion of life, love, and wisdom, while millions of others enjoy the same inestimable privilege? And despite the fact that many modern people are so highly developed that they transfer feelings and thoughts to each other, even read each other's thoughts, there is no likelihood that we shall ever intrude upon the sacred precincts of inmost individuality. Nor are we likely to know our most intimate friends so well that there will no longer be thoughts and sentiments wholly one's own; for that which we know about our friends is really trivial as compared with that which eludes our keenest friendships. Each one is somehow just himself or herself. Such is the fact; and it needs no argument to show that, with due ethical consideration, one's individual ideal should be carried to fullest realization. Even Jesus, who spoke of himself as "one with the Father," still (if we are to accept his own words) never *identified* himself with Him.

Yet how fine the distinction which shows one how far to carry self-assertion, how far self-denying service, how far to believe in one's self without sacrificing humility and degenerating into egotism! Put in other phraseology, the problem is that of conventionality *versus* progress. Used as a means to an end, custom may be a handy instrument; but, if custom *masters* you instead of serving you, it would be better to be wholly unconventional, or original. Is it not true that all originality consists partly in a break with custom? Does not conservatism rise up in arms when anything new appears, and has any one ever given the world a new idea which was not at first vigorously combated? Perhaps we may really assume that we have some truth if the critics find objections to our new views. Originality is, in part, a daring to be one's self; and, the more one trusts self and penetrates to its real depth, the more does one tend to develop a style of thought and of language forever one's own. The attempt to imitate is like

the effort to remove effects without touching the cause. It is only temporary. But every man who knows himself understands that each soul that lives has enough to say and enough to do without borrowing from others; and probably the surest road to happiness is to develop this individual tendency, not that it may lead to happiness as an end, but that happiness may accompany the use of individual powers for the benefit of one's fellow-men.

Emerson, the greatest prophet of self-reliance, says: "A man should learn to detect and watch the gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his.... The power which resides in him is new in nature; and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.... Society everywhere is a conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members.... Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities

and creators, but names and customs. Whoso would be a man must be a non-conformist.... The only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it.”<sup>6</sup>

Every time one seeks the guidance of one's own constitution, and asks in the silence, What shall I do? one is helping to shape individuality in outward expression, to form a habit, one is building up the structure in support of this direction of mind, until by and by this tendency toward self-trust and self-help through self-mastery shall become so strong that it will overbalance all else. For, although this effort to be one's self may be at last but the realization of an ideal which we do not ultimately choose, but a higher Power chooses for us, yet we must at least recognize it as our moral goal; and so far as daily life is concerned, it is a cumulative growth, its development comes through wise self-reliance. And those who thus withdraw by themselves to put the soul in the right spirit,

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6. Essays, First Series, "Self-reliance."

to hold only the purest motives, and become re-enforced from within, will never assert the egoistic self. True individuality is not of our own making alone. It is a co-operative product. It will make itself for those who give the soul room to grow into full self-expression. Those who pursue the other course, those who are over-fond of themselves, and who are cold and self-absorbed, become such because they assert the personal self so constantly that the true spirit cannot make itself heard, because they do not each day, as every person should, rise above self to do some act of service for another. Egotism is simply this individual power carried to the extreme where one sets one's self up as a measure of all things: whereas the true form of personality is that which is balanced by recognition of the impersonal, by the knowledge that the greatest individual power or genius is at best only a sharing of universal genius and power. The individual soul is not, then, truly known by itself, but only

as an organ of the infinite. And he who thus truly understands himself will keep all personal desires in subjection to the highest that is in him. "That which a man can do best, none but his Maker can teach him."

Individuality, then, in the ultimate sense, may be defined as that which God meant us to be; while personality is the assemblage of eccentricities, deviations into selfishness and purely egoistic emotions, which are the incidents of our emergence into true manhood and womanhood. If one produces an original work, and receives great praise for it, so that one's head is turned, or if one is impressed with the importance of one's social position, if one has pride of intellect and is overbearing, then the personality may be said to have intruded upon true individuality. But, if all one's achievements be deemed the manifestation of God, accomplishing something through us, so that praise and blame are met with equal calmness, then the personal may become

a means to the wisely impersonal. "Not my will, but Thine be done," "Of myself I can do nothing," are the statements of the man who can accomplish most. Originality is grounded in infinite Being, and only when seen in the light of That is it either correctly interpreted or rightly developed. God and one, this is individuality. One attempting to be self-sufficient, this is personality.

Temperament, then, may both obscure our vision of the divine and also be the measure of our fullest individual attainment. One thinker of the highest order, by nature an optimist, and a genius at precision and method, may find beauty and system in the universe; another, whose mind is disintegrated, may find nature chaotic; while a third may see in the world only evil and misery, because his own temperament is pessimistic. And thus the only sin may be limitation, as Emerson puts it. Yet these temperamental limitations may enable each to stand for a point of view, a phase of

truth; and this may be the highest mission of each. Even the eccentricities of personality may be avenues of divine power, so that personality itself is entirely good in its place. Who would change the personalities of the great men and women of the past, whom the world loves for precisely what they were? The greatest of persons, Jesus, has taught mankind how absolute simplicity, sincerity, and purity of heart may make personality a vehicle to be glorified by God, so that the slightest touch is divine, every word is inspired, and every deed forever sacred. And Jesus was all this because he dared be "true to what is in you and me,"—individuality, aspiring to perfection in the highest spiritual type.

But how can individual souls exist consistently with the existence of Absolute Being? Clearly not through finite independence, since only That is independent. Their individuality must be such as to present no interference with the order of the universe. Their existence must,

then, fulfil a part in connection with Absolute Being. Experience is common both to the individual and society, both to society and God. Individuality is therefore everywhere limited by an "ought," by duty to society and to God. Yet this ethical and social relationship does not mean, even when carried to a high stage of development, the merging of individuality in the whole. Is not the whole better off the more truly each of its members becomes individual? In loving another for the other's sake, I seem to have lost a part of myself. Yet, in reality, the new relation is one which does not restrict me, but *adds* to my life. In the truest friendships the individuality of each is preserved; while to the degree that one is absorbed into the life of another, to the sacrifice of that beautiful equality which is the basis of mutual helpfulness, the ideal friendship is obscured. And in other respects, notably by intellectual development, does not man by becoming cultivated become more and more individual by rising above

undifferentiated mediocrity? Specialization rather tends to differentiate us from one another than to merge us in one whole. The Hindu and the American may be drawing nearer and nearer each other in spirit and in knowledge of truth, yet differ widely in their systems of thought and language, just because their individuality and nationality differ, or just as the revelation made by the Jews differs from that of the Greeks.

True individuality is obviously *the escape into freedom*; and the probability is that, the freer we are, the more individual. Absolute Being itself would seem to be served better by free individual spirits; and freedom in this sense suggests a possible relationship to Absolute Being, which preserves our relative independence, and at the same time justifies our existence as parts of that Being. The centre of Absolute Being, then, may be said to be successively in each and every individual. Each soul is as real as the Over-soul, for there is in

reality no separateness; and from each soul-centre the whole is differently perceived and differently served. Absolute Being is thus absolute because and only because of individuals, without whom life would be an utterly cold and barren monotony,—a gigantic egoism.

Individual longing for permanency and complete self-realization, then, has some meaning. There is an ultimate reason for the cultivation of individuality, within the limits already suggested; and there is *no excuse whatever left for selfishness*. Every detail of modern scientific research is of value, and at the same time there is strong reason to cultivate with this keen intellectual discrimination that sense of humility and love through which the extremes of individual development may alone be avoided. In short, our theory of life may thus be true to all sides of it, and must, at any rate, have place for some such doctrine of individuality as the foregoing, yet without

neglecting the necessary basis of Absolute Being as the eternal ground of all difference, all attributes, forces, forms, persons, of creation in general. That such a unification of scientific and spiritual thought will result from the present contact of philosophical creeds superficially wide as the poles asunder, yet *at heart one*, is apparent from the tendencies among the deepest thinking men and women of our day. We have an illustration of its ultimate unity in the noblest relationships of men and women, where persons of marked individuality of thought and character live in closest spiritual affinity, bound each to each through their common life.

“A friend is not truly known and loved  
Till loved and known in God.”

Many objections must be met before a thoroughly satisfactory doctrine is developed, and the above statements are meant to be merely tentative. But in the mean time there

are abundant reasons for the cultivation of the most original gifts within each of us, yet only that they may be dedicated to the service of the Highest. For he only who loses his life that he may find it is in the truest sense a person, he whose will is one with the Father, yet through this renunciation is made larger, freer, nobler, and more truly individual by the spirit of Absolute Being itself.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions.”

## V. Reincarnation and Receptivity.

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"'Tis not what man does which exalts him,  
But what man would do."

—*Robert Browning.*

**W**HENCE came the characteristics which we are asked to guard so carefully, that individuality may be preserved? Are they the outcome of inheritance and education, or are we simply enjoying and suffering the results of former experiences and existences, added to the karma which we have wrought in this life? The foregoing chapters seem to point logically to the conclusion that, since we create our happiness and misery, we must be reaping the fruit not only of present deeds and misdeeds,

but of our wrong and also our good life in the past. From this point on it is an easy step to the doctrine of reincarnation, and we seem to have accounted for the injustice and evil of the world by a simple process. Let us, then, frankly face the issue, and, without entering into a lengthy discussion of the vexed question of birth and rebirth, briefly consider the bearing of this problem on our present inquiry.

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In all search after truth the safest guide is the principle that the facts of experience are best explained by reference to immediate environment. That is, if we find near at hand forces which account in a relatively satisfactory way for our experience, such an explanation is far simpler and more rational than the one which requires us to look far into the past; for it is irrational to seek a difficult explanation when it is well known that the simplest explanations are nearest true. Adopting this principle as our guide,<sup>7</sup> we have concluded that God is

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7. The Power of Silence, Chap. II.

manifested through the forces which are active close at hand instead of in some far-off heaven. There is no longer need of an Unknowable, a Thing-in-itself, or a Creator sitting upon a distant throne, since the philosophy of evolution has taught us to recognize the resident powers and the minute causes within experience which have made the universe what it is. So far as the past has made the present, it has made its power felt to-day through the life of yesterday. This law holds everywhere in the outer universe, and each may find it exemplified in his own mind. Some habits are so recent that we can trace them back to the conscious efforts with which they began. The formation of any habit corresponds very closely to the acquirement of a language, or learning to walk or to talk; and it is easy to see how the peculiarities of temperament, environment, and the incidents of daily life have modified these slowly acquired habits.

But there is one consideration which should be borne constantly in mind in this endeavor to trace out the natural history of habit. Long before we came into our present state, our ancestors had learned and carried to a high state of development a large percentage of these habits. It is our happy privilege to begin where our ancestors left off, with a whole race as teachers. Each one's handwriting, literary style, bearing, speech, dress, etc., is thus the acquirement of the race plus one's individual manner of learning these arts. If, then, we make a study of a particular person, we find that the general characteristics are to be divided under three heads: (1) Those handed down from the past through one's parents, (2) those acquired by education, and (3) those native to the individual. The characteristics acquired by education we may at present leave out of account; for it is clear that we are almost wholly indebted to society for our knowledge of the languages, arts, and sciences.

Turning to heredity, it is very easy to see whence came our general external characteristics; namely, from our parents and grandparents, through whom we were made heirs to the entire past of natural evolution. Likewise with traits of character and habits of thought, there is a strong tendency to reproduce the combined minds of our parentage,—a tendency which would be all-powerful were it not for the other two factors; namely, education—including our general physical and social environment—and individuality. Even the unrealized ambitions of the parents may be transmitted to, developed, and carried out by the children, showing that the growth which began in one generation was handed down to and continued its life in the next. Suppressed emotions, desires, and concealed traits of character sometimes appear in all their unattractiveness in children who, instead of being secretive like the parent, bring to the surface that which the parent tried to cover up or suppress. A tendency to steal

may thus crop out, and become a veritable mania in the second generation. Tendencies to disease increase or diminish according to the stage reached in the parent, and he is fortunate who, instead of believing himself bound to suffer what his parents suffered, understands how to overcome and eliminate such tendencies. Parents on the ascending scale are apt to have strong children, perhaps of greater stature; while a decrease in height and ability is noticeable where there is decrease of force. Thus, for better or for worse, the child's life, both mental and physical, is shaped by the particular condition of the parents at the time.

Pre-natal influence is a yet more powerful factor in the determination of what the child shall be. Here, especially, one should give full credit to first-hand causes and do justice to the noblest of all functions in human life, that of motherhood. Impulses which make or unmake us may take their rise then, and the mother has the power to implant a vitally strong

tendency toward the good and true. We are just beginning to realize the possibilities in this direction, the power of high ideals, of favorable mental environment, and the effect of thought upon the unborn offspring. Then, too, we are as yet only upon the threshold of discovery in the subconscious realm, and remarkable traits of character may take their rise in the unusual subliminal or subconscious receptivity of the mother: it may be that even genius originates in this way.

Here receptivity may be found at its best, and we must await evidence in order to determine its possibilities and power. Indeed, there is probably no greater opportunity in the universe than this; and we may well think of it, and of all that is involved in motherhood, with holy awe, and with a sense of gratitude for what may have come in this way which years of labor for the good of others will alone enable us to repay. For, through the receptivity of the mother, the best ideals of the past and

the highest attainments of the race may be transmitted, and an occasion be given for a yet greater manifestation of infinite wisdom and love. And is not the mother who knows most about these possibilities the one who, as a rule, sees least evidence in favor of reincarnation? Is there not some deep reason why she feels a repugnance to that doctrine?

If, then, one finds that one need not look farther back than one generation to trace out nearly every tendency,—even those deemed evidences that one is “an old soul,”—in order to find how it started and how it has developed, are we not logically bound to look to this direct cause, not passing beyond it until we find characteristics which heredity apparently did not give? Even then one should seek common-sense explanations, based on accurate knowledge of present-day life, and place little reliance on the illusory experiences which seem to tell us that we have visited a certain place before or known a person

before. Perhaps the conviction which some have that they have never lived an earth-life before is equally worthy of consideration. One may have tendencies, antedating memory,—for instance, unusual ability to philosophize or to compose music. But one may have been not only exceedingly “fortunate in the choice of one’s parents,” but also blessed with remarkably favorable circumstances, tending to develop such ability to its fullest extent. When, therefore, one can trace out nearly every aspect of one’s intellectual attainments to the book, teacher, or experience with which it began in this life, one should be extremely cautious in the acceptance of conclusions relating to some past life. And the strongly receptive or susceptible mind surely has much evidence in itself that such attainments may be the work of a single lifetime, that even genius itself may be at the outset only a large capacity for listening and assimilating.

But, having given these conditions of the soul's development credit for the utmost they may have done for us, what shall we say of the rest? Is it possible that this residuum is just what we call the God-given individuality which *will* have its expression even in childhood, despite the persistent efforts of over-kind parents and teachers to crush it out, the innate capacity to do the particular work in the world for which we stand in the divine economy? If so, what is the origin of this individual soul? Has it built itself up by past effort through all the lower forms? Then it would not be immortal. It would simply be an evolutionary product, having a beginning in time and subject to all the changes of time. For it has been well argued in the past that that which has a beginning must have an ending. Hence the theory that the soul began and evolved as material forms evolve, and the doctrine that the soul was created at birth, are both without hope of immortality.

If the soul did thus begin in the time-world, it would of course require a long process of evolution, since it could no more spring into existence suddenly than could its body. The theory of reincarnation would then fit in admirably. But a time would come when its work would be complete, incarnations would cease, and the life-force return to the Power that gave it. From one point of view, then, the doctrine of reincarnation tends rather toward the belief in absorption or annihilation as the inevitable result of that which evolved in the world of time. Another weak point in the doctrine is its inability to account for karma. That is, it is affirmed that karma, or the work which we do and undo in our struggles for freedom, never had a beginning, and yet will have an end. For here, again, the soul seems left at one end of its world experience without adequate knowledge of that experience, and with no satisfactory theory of individuality, no explanation of the universe.

Moreover, if, as most Hindu philosophers assert, the soul is without birth or death, since it always existed, why should they ask, Where has it been all this time? For, if it is immortal, its existence is not in any sense a question of place or time, but of infinity and eternity. So far as the time and space world is concerned, the soul might therefore be in a state of rest for æons, or might be continuously active for ages, and then enter a state of repose, since it is only the time-world experience that has a beginning; and, even if one could not account for the where and the when of the soul, that would not mean that it was non-existent. If we have once accepted immortality as a fact, we are no longer under a necessity to account for the soul's temporal and spatial whereabouts. It may be that the soul can take on or put off a body at will, when it has attained full consciousness of its power. Or it may have a body of some sort eternally. At any rate, the beginning or cessation of temporal or physical

life is an incident which does not affect the soul as such. It is, therefore, absurd to try to prove by material and temporal terms the immortality of that which never had material existence. There could be no proof of immortality but the soul's own conviction of it. Any alleged proof would be in temporal or material terms, and therefore of no value; and one could only be sure on the empirical side that life is eternal by actually living eternally.

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But, when we thus separate the soul from the world of time, we must clearly define what we are to mean by the term. For, if the soul be a pure and perfect essence and in no sense bound by the conditions of life as we know it, then what is the need of this life, how can the soul be improved or in any way changed by experience?

Again, on the hypothesis that it is an immutably pure essence, but has fallen from its high estate, conduct, even at its best in the holy life, can do no more for us than to get

obstacles and ignorance out of the way that the glory of the soul may shine. In either case the ethical life has little meaning, since nothing can be added to the soul. Individuality has no ultimate value, and we have reduced the soul to an unattractive angel who has never known the blessings of sense-life.

The Buddhistic conception that we are just our passing states of consciousness, that the soul is not yet permanent, but may become so by "killing out the I" and entering Nirvana, is an equally dreary doctrine. For who wishes to enter a condition where all activity shall cease, where there is nothing to do, and no desire to do it? Furthermore, the theory of an ever-changing soul, with the possibility of becoming permanent by choice, is infected with all the difficulties of the foregoing theory of a soul which is merely the outgrowth of evolution. And what assurance have we that such a soul shall remain permanent? If something in us desires immortality, then there must be

something in us that is already immortal. The choice of permanency would then be only an apparent choice, and we should once more be compelled to look beyond this Buddhistic impermanency to an immortal chooser. It would then be absurd to bold that one can create a state which shall exist permanently by willing it, by losing the self that wills, by “killing out desire” when it is the very height of desire to win Nirvana, or perfection, when that ego which is to continue in Nirvana must already be eternal in order to care for Nirvana at all.

“I sent my soul through the invisible,  
Some secret of that after-life to spell;  
And by and by my soul returned to me,  
And answered, I myself am Heaven and Hell.”

If, then, the soul is potentially, at least, all that it desires, and can only become conscious of, never create, heaven and immortality; if, as immortal spark, it is timeless and uncaused,—

this part of us, as an individuation of God, cannot in any sense be a product of time or place, nor of incarnations. Its individuality, its instinct to attain a type, its centre of activity, its life and love, belong to it eternally, and are not acquired by experience. On the other hand, there may be manifold experiences in the world of time connected with it which enable it to attain full individual expression. But it still remains clear that the soul itself is forever an inhabitant of eternity, while the temporal experiences are in themselves no evidence of immortality.

Why, then, could not a soul come to earth now and take on characteristics from parents, beginning its experience with the full benefit of race inheritance as well as at any other stage,—for example, in savage life, in the ape period, or in the age of unicellular organisms? If the capacity to do a certain work in the universe is an eternal possession, why may not the soul attract conditions favorable to its task when

the times are ripe, coming forth to activity from the eternal deeps of infinite being where all possibilities of action forever exist? There would surely be no break in the continuity of evolution if the soul is not a product of that evolution. And, if we are to attribute to the soul the full possibilities of experience, can we conceive of it as anything more at the outset than this individual capacity for experience, the instinct to achieve a type in its own way, the immortal form whose content is added through its association with the sense-world?

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The atoms of which a human being is composed may, it is true, have gone through all the kingdoms of the lower world, and again and again formed parts of the beings who have dwelt here, so that a large part of our life has constantly reincarnated. We may in this sense have both the ape and the tiger in us. We surely possess as much of the animal as we can stagger under. But the superstructure of the human is built as it were upon the ruins of all

that has gone before. The best elements have persisted. The human consciousness has at last become uppermost; and we are concerned almost wholly with the dawning of that, with the awakening soul which caused it to dawn.

Is not the evidence far greater that the beings that have gone have done our work for us, and brought evolution to a point where you and I could best fit in, than that we have done all this? Is there any inherent necessity, any real reason, for believing that we personally have had to possess the consciousness of the amœba and the jelly fish, the ape and the tiger, before we could become human? Is it not in the coming forth of that which constitutes a being human that the real cause of our character is found? If one undertakes to find temporal causes for all that a single human character presents, the task is indeed a hard one. For where can the line be drawn between that which the beings of the past have wrought and our own deeds? Does not the law of cause and effect hold just

as surely on the above hypothesis as though the individual soul had wrought out all this in its struggles from amoeba to man? Is there not rather more evidence in favor of this social karma than in support of the theory that we have personally wrought it all?

In the last analysis, then, the doctrine of reincarnation proves to be strongly egoistic. That is, it is you or I who have personally labored to make ourselves what we are today; and we must work here to free ourselves from past karma, and save our souls for some future state of bliss, where activity shall cease when the soul has wrought out its personal work. On the other hand, the doctrine of this chapter aims to be altruistic, with a suggestion of the great philosophical development which must ensue before a final word can be said on this question. This larger doctrine says it is God and nature and man that have made us what we are; and it is by knowledge of our relationship to these three, as Froebel suggests,

that we are to attain our true freedom. All that we are is a co-operative product. All that we are to become in the highest sense must be evolved in an altruistic life where the soul does not labor for self, but forgets self that it may glorify and uplift the whole. Even our ideals are social products. Our best attainments are made when friend or teacher helps us most. And never may we hope to realize the fullest life until the egoistic existence of introspection, inactive contemplation and dreamy restfulness, has given place to the outgoing life of action, of love and service for humanity.

Here is the crucial point in the whole philosophy of the soul. Is egoism or altruism the true faith? Those who believe it to be egoistic should read deeply in the philosophy of the Neo-Hegelians, notably the works of F. H. Bradley,<sup>8</sup> until the belief in such finite independence is forever undermined. Then they should study with equal depth of thought

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8. Appearance and Reality.

“The New Education” of Froebel, whose theory of human unfoldment is a wonderful revelation of this larger social ideal. Finally, they should turn once more to the life and teaching of the Christ, he who believed in law as firmly as the man of science, yet who emphasized above all else the law of love. For man, every creature that lives, was “loved into being.” Through the faculty of receptivity, through the mother’s love, through the unselfish devotion of the Christ, the creative voice of the Father speaks. It is He who has made us what we are; and, if reason is any guide, he has created us through nature and through the entire race, asking of us in return unselfish life for society, that we may repay to our fellow-men the great debt which we owe to all past humanity.

Is any motive truly worthy of man but this? Is any future life likely to perfect us but this, the life where we take no thought for karma nor for self, but give freely as we have received? And in this incarnation of the Christ within, when

this larger motive is chosen, do we not learn the secret of all incarnation; namely, the gift of God bestowed upon us through our fellowmen according to our receptivity, through the individuality which gives shape to the creative word?

The human soul in the ultimate sense may be described as an instrument (1) for drawing to itself from without—from nature, from man, and from God—all that gives it life and experience, and (2) for giving of itself from within that which individuality enables it to contribute. If it takes only to itself, it is selfish. If it believes itself to have wrought all that it is, it is egoistic. But, if it is outgoing in the spirit of love, with due regard for other individuals, then it estimates itself at its true worth; namely, as an instrument of the Highest, as a note in the divine harmony. The self-centred soul and the God-centred soul, these are the two extremes. The only sound philosophy is a unification of the objective and subjective sides, the only truly

practical life is the wise balance between the incoming and the outgoing, between love and law. And in this inbreathing and outbreathing we have a type once more of the great creative process itself, a just conception of which lifts the thought out of the narrow vale of individual development into the larger life of the universe as a whole.

And, so far as the argument for justice is concerned, this altruistic theory is as plausible as the other. For the justice of what we suffer is to be learned only so far as we understand life as a whole. Injustice may seem to characterize the lives of some of us as we find ourselves placed to-day. But we do not yet see the outcome. And what difference can it make how we have come into our present condition if our circumstances are just now such as to give best expression to the soul that is in us? Whether we have sinned in the past and thus created these circumstances or have come here and attracted them because the soul needed them

in order to do its work, the fact remains that the justification of those conditions is to be found only in the use we make of them in the future in our outgoing life. And in either case those conditions have been wrought by the law of cause and effect, either socially or individually.

There is, then, a far deeper question involved in this problem than the probability that we have lived before or the possibility of recognizing one's friends hereafter. That is, the question whether we shall live to justify all that life now presents to us. No theory which fails to meet the inmost cravings for immortality, for full ethical and social realization, should be taken as in any sense final. The desideratum is a philosophy which shall really explain the soul's history, account for its ignorance, its struggles for freedom, its longings for peace and perfection, and its threefold kinship; namely, with God through eternity, with nature through sensation, and with man through conduct. The mind refuses to be content with the gloomy

doctrine that we are mechanically compelled to work out a certain round of karmic effects, but demands to know when and why karma began; in other words, the ethical import of life. We have seen, too, that the theory that we have emanated from the divine essence into which we must eventually be absorbed is equally hopeless and dreary. For, if we are to lose the individuality which we have labored so hard to preserve, we might as well give up at once, and let the great struggle be over.

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The only alternative, then, seems to be the one we have suggested throughout; namely, that the individual soul is really never separate nor apart from the divine selfhood, that you and I are instruments of receptivity and activity, organs of the divine nature, embodiments of its life, wisdom, and power, and consequently as souls not limited by time, without beginning and without ending, and therefore not subject to birth and dissolution,—that we have always been just ourselves.

But why, then, have we not known ourselves all along, why are we so long in waking up to find what we really are? The obvious answer is that there are two planes of consciousness of self, the eternal and the temporal.

As you study people at large, their lives indicate that at first they lack this double consciousness. For they are, as a rule, thinking of themselves superficially and of their personal relationships. But there is still this unquickened part of us which knows all this in its eternal aspect. It is partially quickened in some minds, and would tell us all that it knows if we could bear it now. So much as it does tell us in the soul's rarest moments is a part of the eternal mind or wisdom of God from which no barrier could ever separate us. We are elements of the divine cognition, absolutely essential to the constitution or perfection of the divine mind. And in our highest transports we know this unity, we recognize ourselves as inseparably one, though not identical with the whole of that

consciousness. This it is to be individual. This it is truly to possess a soul of one's own,—namely, to stand in the divine mind for a particular fact; and this part of us could no more cease than that mind itself which exists as a whole by virtue of its minute, organic perfection.

Thus much assured on the divine or eternal side, it becomes clear, when we turn again to the human world, that somehow that which thus owns and needs us has the ability to quicken us to consciousness at the proper time. Thus our entire time-world experience is a waking up to the discovery of what we really and eternally are. At the outset we are so ignorant—the split-off finite self—that we imagine ourselves to be something by ourselves. Accordingly, we affirm self. We think we know. We push and crowd one another, and apparently do our utmost to possess the earth and all its creatures.

But always there is with us, though unknown and unrecognized, the higher which knows us, knows it all from the beginning. At first we are

simply conscious enough to feel the two forces, the higher and the lower. We affirm the lower, and cling to it as long as possible. Hence the conflict, hence the misery and suffering of the world. And probably the struggle will continue with each one as long as we continue to act as though we had some independent selfhood, until we begin the outgoing life of altruism.

Restated in other words, although the Infinite Father may know himself eternally through each and all of his sons, the immortal, individual souls, yet the souls may conceivably be ignorant of the Father,—yes, must be ignorant of their oneness with him in order to have experience. And each son may be sent forth when the occasion needs him; for, if creation is to be continuous, there must be constant going forth of the creative power. Is it possible, then, that the beginning of what we call experience with each soul is simply the transfer of the divine consciousness from itself as whole to itself as part, so that, whereas the

Father once knew the son as a characteristic of his own being, the son may now know the Father in the light of progressive experience? If so, if each of us is potentially the whole in miniature, then the individual soul is nothing less than the capacity to cognize the entire universe, to understand all phases of life from lowest to highest, from rock to amoeba, from humanity to world-life, and the diversified life of all worlds, perhaps the power to direct a world. But it would not mean that each must exist as all these other forms, since the soul would not then be just this particular son of God. Obviously, however, no soul could really begin this its fullest work; namely, to feel, to know, and to act in the entire universe from a unique point of view, until it should come to consciousness of its oneness with the Father. Here alone could peace be found, and here alone the ability to master the successive steps of consciousness which lead up to this universal plane. The awakening would be literally losing

one's self that one might find it, the entire and final transfer of thought, motive, and desire from the sphere of mere personality to the realm of willing service for the Highest. It would not be heaven, in the orthodox Christian sense. It would not be Nirvana. It would be the Christ ideal made real, harmony of action between the Father's will and the son's will, inseparably one, yet individually distinct in each of us.

Would this mean absorption in the Infinite as a river is lost in the sea? Rather the endless development of distinct consciousness and the power of accomplishment. For it would mean an ever greater and fuller awakening to the beauties, the opportunities and wonders of the universe,—literally, the perception of all that the universe contains, from a particular point of view; and that, too, in a growing universe, where events are ever new. Out from this present limited experience of ours, on one planet and that a small one, we may then conceive human experience as an ever-widening circle, some

time to include other planets and to embrace knowledge of facts now utterly mysterious. The horizon of thought enlarges upon us as we contemplate, until this bit of consciousness of ours seems pitifully small, audacious in its attempts to grasp infinity, and as yet barely on the borderlands of knowledge. Indeed, one is almost inclined to say, I will await evidence a thousand years, and listen to the revelations of the Spirit in all phases of its wonderfully varied universe; and even then I will not speculate, but simply ask that the Spirit itself may answer.

Yet, if we could at last lay aside the futile activities of our worrying sense-life and listen to the revelations of God, would not all arrive at the same conclusion, live the same holy life, and contemplate a similar universe? Is not ultimate blending into one Self inevitable? Not so, if the fundamental hypothesis of this book is correct; namely, that the basis of life is just as rich, just as varied and minutely beautiful, as this our human world of distinct individuals, of nature

and society, of error, evil, and the Christ. For each and all shall develop individually into this larger consciousness. While you are becoming rich in experience, so shall I. Our common human world shall become fuller, and the ever-fresh combination and recombination of its entities will forbid any one of us from either knowing or becoming it all, except from a finite point of view, the surrendering of which would mean a distinct loss to the universe. Each part, each soul, must have its place, or else the life of the whole will degenerate. The pure white ray is eternally both itself and all the prismatic colors. The life of God is ever full of that which makes it absolute,—not absolute because of exclusiveness, but only such because it includes all. Such, at any rate, is the hypothesis on which our argument proceeds; and, while it claims nothing final, it insists throughout that no fact, no longing, shall be ignored, that full justice shall be done to every detail which life presents.

It reminds us, too, how little progress has as yet been made in the development of universal philosophy and religion, that wisdom which assures us that each and all the systems of philosophy contain their message of truth, that every religion is an aspiration toward the highest, but that nothing short of the life of the entire universe is the revelation of truth itself. While any particular sect tries to make converts to its doctrine, while any man urges acceptance of his theory of life as the true one, and while any philosophy of the soul is brought forward to the exclusion of any other, this universal ideal will still be without a hearing. But, when the assembling of many men of varied faiths in one country is taken to mean that each has a phase of truth to give, then out of this sympathy, where Hindu and American unite, and Parsee, Jain, Taoist, Friend, Buddhist, and the rest add their quota of spiritual thought, shall grow this larger doctrine; and men shall then love truth first of all, the prophets through whom

its revelations came secondly, and sectarian doctrines last. And, when this day comes, probably all shall agree that each meant the same truth, but that difference in terminology led each to emphasize a different aspect of it.

But, granted that we are as yet only at the confines of the great realm where knowledge of the soul lies hidden, granting that there must still be much examination of evidence in favor of all theories thus far presented, and admitting all that has been said above concerning the ultimate inseparability of the soul from the Father, may not the soul on its temporal side be associated with a long round of incarnations and struggles, so that the unification of Occidental and Oriental philosophy is already in sight? May it not be possible that each soul must have a touch of life on all sides, that all this past egoistic life is a means to the altruistic future, that we are reincarnated as long as we are egoistic, but that our earth life ends with

the discovery of our true place in relation to nature, man, and God?

It may be so. It may be that the theory of reincarnation is the most plausible hypothesis, so that one could say of it as did the cautious Darwin of his theory of natural selection, "That, all things considered, it is the hypothesis to which there is the least objection." But it is still an hypothesis, and one can only await evidence. If there is still an unknown factor in our experience, which we name as the electricians use the term "ohms," to conceal their ignorance of the real nature of electricity, then let us remind ourselves of our ignorance when we glibly use the words "fate," "heredity," "predestination," "karma," "law," "necessity," "reincarnation." Let us also seek out other hypotheses, and be not as ready to accept as to investigate. "Probability is the guide of life." All conduct as well as all thinking is an experiment. This chapter is purely tentative. Yet, as such, it is the frank avowal of opinion of one who as

yet has found but little evidence in favor of the doctrine of reincarnation, and with whom the balance of the argument seems in favor of social evolution, prenatal-influence, receptivity, and eternal individuality as the sources of all that the past has given us.

But we have agreed throughout that the road to genuine knowledge of the soul lies through the domain of the practical. If it be true that we have lived here many times before, is it not fortunate that we are spared the memory of it? For it is hard enough as it is to face toward the light, the future: it is hard to dwell on the eternal part of us without becoming involved in the consciousness of the process. It is our one concern to stop the friction of to-day, to overcome self, to live for the realization of the ideal. "Man is a stream whose source is hidden." But of the nature of that relationship we already know something; namely, that it is the love of God which sustains us on our way. If we thus here and now learn that the current of love

bears us ever on, if we choose the supreme motive and dedicate ourselves to the Father's work, is there any likelihood that we will come back to earth again—in the flesh?

Evidently not. And what we take with us when we go will probably be just so much of this knowledge of the divine relationship as we have learned here. Whatever we may need besides will then be further development of soul or spiritual experience, and consequently will attract that. If we have been drawn to souls while they were here, no change will separate that which is by very definition changeless, spaceless, and timeless. If it be our desire to carry only the higher self with us, to progress and know the truth, to serve, and to unfold into an altruistic life, until we shall have full power to do the higher will and live absolutely for that, probably that desire will be granted.

It makes little practical difference, therefore, whether or not the individual soul has lived here before. Even if we could decide this

point, it would still be impossible, as we have seen, to separate out the little we may have brought with us from a past existence from the great wealth of inheritance coming through our parentage, through education and race evolution. At best we have played a small part. And that which we bring with us is evidently the God-given power to play a new part in the present world. Otherwise, what excuse is there for our existence? If there is no element of novelty in the universe, how utterly monotonous must be the life of the Absolute! If everything, every detail of our lives, is foreordained by our past karma, how terribly unsatisfactory that realization of the divine plan which sees only mere mechanical precision as the web of fate is unwound! But granted that each of us is ultimately different, endow us with freedom of will within the limits of eternal law, grant us continuous receptivity, and there is a wonderful range left for novelty or possibility. You and I may then enjoy the happy privilege

of developing an entirely fresh experience and of contributing our share of new consciousness to the Father.

To-day may tend to make to-morrow like it. But always there is a possibility for us to rise up in our might, and make it different. If fixed ideas of fate and law intervene to block us in our way, we then surrender our greatest privilege; namely, the opportunity to make things conform to a higher law. There is a gloom surrounding past and present as pictured by theosophy which only the optimism of our young Western thought-world can dispel. Despite all attempts to conceal it and to give the philosophy of the Orient a modern dress, it is still profoundly pessimistic; and here again we may not hope for a final word on reincarnation until the larger hope of the Occident has estimated the Eastern doctrine in its true light.

This larger philosophy, therefore, seeks to penetrate beyond the starting-point of the Oriental doctrine to a condition of existence

which shall be the sufficient ground of all that follows. For, unless we have separate individuality at the outset,—that is, beyond all time,—how are we ever to develop differently,—as unlike as we find ourselves today? If all is on a dead level at the outset, all will be so at the close; and it is a noteworthy fact that believers in reincarnation are those who say the least about individuality and about the system of creation or the laws of nature. They lay stress rather on the caprice of the Absolute, which knows neither distinctions nor parts. We, in the Western world, believe that the universe exists for a purpose. And it is this ethical interpretation of life for which I am pleading throughout; that is, the theory that you and I fulfil some part in an intelligently organized system of divine self-manifestation through nature and society, that the power resident in us is new in the universe, that consequently there is nothing higher than to cultivate and

express the individual soul to the full through the highest social and spiritual life.

If this be approximately true, then let us concentrate upon this ideal, and look for guidance to the highest moving of that self, or soul, which is eternally bound up both in society and with the life of Him whose purpose it reveals. Here in the present moment is the problem: How shall one open one's self more fully and yet again more fully to the boundless love and wisdom of God, that one may become outgoing, may bring freshness of experience to the divine consciousness and to man? How shall one become aware of and realize the highest tendency in human life, the Christ spirit, that which was incarnated in the world from the beginning, but which "the world apprehended not"? Should we not look for that ideal as latent in all humanity, even as appealing to us through the faces and speaking in the hearts of the men and women around us?

It is important, then, to look not at what we have done for which we believe we must suffer through a long incarnation, but at what we can at once make of ourselves if we turn the mind the other way and contemplate our possibilities.

It is important, too, to guard against a harmful form of receptivity. Some have had the idea that they must relax completely, and hence have become weakened or involved in physical sensation, and have sacrificed individuality instead of developing it. But individuality, as we have seen, is a positive, progressive quantity, and increases not by diffusion, but by concentration and self-reliance. It is a reproduction of the outgoing and incoming creative power of God. Consequently, one should realize this power positively, clearly. This wise attitude is suggested by one's state of mind in listening to an interesting speaker. One does not simply become submissive, accepting all that the speaker says: one is

alert, questioning, thoughtful, attentive. And this word "attention" once more suggests the actual mental change. One should not simply become receptive; but one's attention is to be taken off sensation, off self, and lifted above it to the source of all good. Humility, love, the desire for help, is the open door to strength and guidance. It is the affirmation of the higher self, and is very different from that self-conceit, or positive self-assurance, which closes the door to all that lies above the finite personality. Probably all advocates of the silent method of self-help would agree that the experience is never one of inactivity nor vacuity of mind. The truly helpful result is measured by the persistent desire with which one enters the silence. One does not enter the inner realm to surrender, but to conquer. One desires, first of all, to rise superior to physical sensation, to learn as much as possible about one's self, or to commune with the Father. The first discovery may be that one is apathetic, inactive; and,

consequently, the thought should be of a quick, invigorating kind. Definite activity is, therefore, combined with true humility or receptive listening. The period of rest is justifiable only by what comes out of it. "The Lord helps those who help themselves." And whether one needs the peaceful thought, or the stirring thought of enthusiasm and energy, depends entirely upon the particular mood one is in at the time.

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Nor is "the prayer of silence" a conscious petition in the theological sense. It is rather the discovery of that which eternally belongs to us, a calmly reflective endeavor to realize one's real place in the universe, a mental state combining all that is best in our active thinking with the repose of trust and equanimity. It is concentration on one great idea, and concentration is never inactivity. It is calm, self-possessed direction of well-trained mental power. It may be accompanied by consciously definite thoughts or may be like the fixed admiration of the poet, intent upon

the minute yet reverent observation of some beautiful scene in nature, with the view to its reproduction in verse. Yet it should not be the mere contemplation of the vast and general, but always of the concrete and practical, that which brings the one Power home to our human life, that which really accomplishes something.

One thus puts one's self into a spiritual environment, just as the plant is put into the sunlight that it may expand and grow, taking energy from the sun's rays and building it up into new tissue. May it not be possible that this analogy from the physical world is exactly typical of our spiritual growth, that we really do take in new power when the mind lies open? Is not this the cause of all change and variation in the universe; that is, the reception of new life wherever there is openness to it? Is not this the precise reason why creation is continuous, a process of insensible change, every modification being registered in the great fabric of events? It may be that a large part of

our future life is still undetermined. Perhaps it is to be determined through the trend given to our present experience by this welling up of divine Power. At any rate, we must give all facts their due place.

It is clear that our problem is simply one of wise direction of mind. If one's eyes are turned toward the past, it will be the associations, the mistakes and troubles of the past in which one lives. If one looks down into self instead of outward and upward to God, one will become subjective and morbid. If one has a few strange experiences and cultivates them, one is likely to be haunted by faces, by all that is occult and psychic. If one is afraid of losing individuality, then one does not yet know what the individual soul really is. But the wise course consists in the adoption of the simplest method, in the due adjustment of life to its incoming and outgoing aspects. That is, clarify the thought by distinctness of individual insight, reason, discernment, self-reliance, and healthy

activity of thought. Then side by side with this vigorous mental activity cultivate receptivity to the Highest by preserving pure and undefiled the feminine element of the soul. A safeguard for those who are susceptible to influences is intellectual development. The intellect is proud, and looks after its own interests, and is an excellent staying power, when rightly used. Then, too, it is naturally so sceptical that it prevents one from accepting opinions too readily, and its healthiest doubts counteract a too great readiness to be moulded by the minds of other people.

It is impossible to lay down rules which all may follow; for some need intellectual development so badly that you cannot convince them of it, some are already so intellectual that they are unresponsive to anything of a spiritual nature, and others are already so individual that they show an utter disregard for all convention, and you may neither touch their sympathies nor appeal to their reason. It is ever the problem

of the individual and society, of egoism versus altruism. In all wise development one must bear and forbear, and the only safe motto is, "Nothing to excess." He who sets up his individual conscience against the community is reminded by society that he must not pass beyond a certain limit. He who, on the other hand, lives a life of self-sacrifice for humanity must learn that it is easy to be self-neglectful, to make the wrong self-sacrifice. The wise man does not condemn himself for making the most of every faculty he possesses, well knowing that the highest individual attainment best fits a man to serve his fellow-men. The straight and narrow line of development may be followed by all who obey Emerson's rule, "The only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong is what is against it." That is, every time the social demands are too great, and you cannot meet them all, pause in silence to ask yourself once more, What is my place in the universe, is this rational, is this in harmony with the highest

development, does it lead to the Christ ideal? If so, follow it. If not, then know that the duty is for some one else.

For each must, in a way, be a specialist. You must do that which no one else can do as well, that of which you are individually most capable; and the meanest task may be dignified by the thought that it is done for the whole. If, in following advice or in making myself receptive to a teacher, I am untrue to my highest conviction or reason, then I am going astray. Unless I respect myself, no one will respect me; and, if I become so receptive that others make a tool of me, I have only myself to blame.

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Thus must one ever be true to the outgoing and incoming aspects of life, and steer clear of the merely personal, both in individuality and in receptivity. True receptivity is individuality at last, when this balance is attained. But the two are united only in the highest experience of self-renunciation through the quickening of the Christ nature within. In deep humility

at last one says with all one's soul, "Not my will, but thine, be done." In the manger of receptivity within, the Christ nature shall be born; and, when this nature is quickened, one will instinctively bow in worship and rejoicing that one has thus been favored by the Highest.

Whatever the past life may have been, therefore, and whatever the problem on which one needs help, there is ever this resource in the sacred place of the Most High. It is no easy attainment to make the mind as free from care as that of the little child. But, when such receptivity as this is attained, one may each time solve the very mystery of creation afresh. For one literally begins life anew, one is born again, not reincarnated in the flesh; but the Spirit regenerates, formulates itself in one's life, as the chosen vehicle of its power.

First comes the undifferentiated spirit, moving upon the waters,—to use the old figure. Then the separation of the waters that the dry land may appear, the defining of the type, the

establishing of the law, the emphasis in a given direction which causes the spirit to become the word, the ideal, and then become flesh. And then follows the evolution in the objective world of all that has been thus involved in the unseen realm within, the law of the outer world corresponding to reason within.

And so, when the soul is refreshed from within, it goes through these stages in the creative process. First the spirit breathes upon the mind, then the image of the Christ appears, the picture of the ideal one seeks to attain, the involution of that which is to transform one's life. Then the pure white ray of insight, of the ideal, is put through the prism of doubt, that one may behold its rationalization or analysis in the colors of the spectrum. In other words, one's faith is immediately put to the test. The idealist is forced to make his ideals practical; and, if one cannot apply his insight to the minor problems of daily life, then he must once more put his ideal through the creative

stages that he may approach nearer the type. Thus again and again one turns to the fountain-head of life's stream, to become re-created and strengthened. And each time a period of darkness, of regeneration, ensues, similar to the changes experienced by the seed in the ground. One comes down to earth. One expects to realize the ideal at once. But the time element is found to be a factor, just as in outer nature time is required to master obstacles and objectify the type. The trying experiences and temptations which one encounters correspond to the conflict of elements in the visible world. The ideal is proved to be true only when it has become the real. Intuition declares its purity by harmonizing with reason. The individual life is rounded out only when it realizes its highest aspiration in fellowship with society. Thus step by step, through the balance of opposites, the ever-fresh return to the holy of holies whence all creative power proceeds, the soul holds itself up to the type of types, and by attaining

that brings all men to the same level. The way is indeed narrow. And it is not the first time one tries, nor the hundredth, that self is put entirely aside. But just as a picture is completed touch by touch, just as nature patiently takes advantage of every slightest change in the cosmos as an aid to evolution, so every thought sent out toward one's star, every instant of genuine receptivity, draws one nearer the goal. The incarnation of the Spirit in the forms of worlds, rocks, plants, men,—this is the miracle of the universe. Nature never mingles her types nor forgets unchanging law. Nor is she ever egoistic or retrospective. "The eyes of evolution are in its forehead." The wonder of creation is repeated every moment we think. And he who would accomplish most in human life must learn to be a close follower of the systematic stages of the creative law, the law of love, which brings all mankind, all the universe, into being.

## VI. The Unity of Life.

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"We must be in earnest with the unity of the world; but we must not forget that, if regarded merely as a system of forces, the world possesses no such unity. It acquires it only when regarded in the light of an End, of absolute worth or value, which is realized or attained in it."

—*Andrew Seth.*

**I**N those rarest moments of human life, when the soul forgets its kinship with space and time, and becomes absorbed in contemplation of infinity, a vision comes, which transcends in importance all other phases of feeling or thought. All facts, all experiences and insights, are somehow put together; and the mind sees as one whole that which heretofore appeared disjointed and

fragmentary. Not merely because the intellect reduces all facts to exemplifications of one law, nor because all forces and substances are perceived to be ultimately one, but because facts and laws, powers and elements, mind and matter, even good and evil, and the paradoxes of the moral life, take their places as parts of one vast purposeful system, animated by a Life intimately near in every hour of existence, in every sensation, in every thought, and in every aspiration. The motion of the minutest atom, the most trivial event here and now, is thus found to be in relation to the mightiest of cosmic changes and the most distant event of the past. Consequently, no thought, no deed, is wholly one's own, not even the goodness on which we pride ourselves, nor the suffering which seems to isolate us from Deity. But the one Life moves with us in all that we do, reflects with us when we philosophize, inspires us when we love, and means something in every tendency of our being, physical, intellectual,

moral, and spiritual. And that which is thus essential alike to the least and the greatest is perceived at last to be itself that which reveals and that which is revealed, literally and eternally One, inseparable, whole, infinite, uniting within itself all possibilities of beauty, life, and power, granting to each its individual place, yet somehow dissolving all distinctions and all differences in one transcendent Being.

Such is the nature of the mind's sublimest intuition. No reasoning can approach it in value; for it is the summation of all thought, and is an immediate sense of life's reality. The mind gradually rises to its level, and then as if by a mystic flash all facts are amalgamated into one. Yet as some have doubted even its first premise,—namely, that there is an all-inclusive Reality, either material or spiritual,—let us consider some of the steps which lead up to this universal conclusion, that we may meet the sceptic on his own ground.

Let us start with that which every one will admit; namely, physical sensations of light, heat, sound, electricity, and the rest. These feelings in general tell us that there is a material world. No one denies that there is at least a primal force or energy which gives rise to these sensations; for every one, even the atheist and agnostic, admits that there is movement, or life, of some sort. It is also generally admitted that this primal force is eternal, since the life and motion of which we are now conscious could not have come from nothing, and must therefore have a permanent basis or continuous cause. The critic would also admit with modern science that all motion, all force, is somehow related. In other words, it is *one*: there is only one ultimate force, of which heat, light, electricity, etc., are manifestations. No one disputes this nowadays. This being granted, it follows that all events—that is, any particular movement, such, for example, as lightning or the hum of an insect—is related to and therefore partakes of that one force. All

events, as well as all particular manifestations of the one force, therefore belong together. Not the slightest movement could lay beyond the pales of this one force. There are, in fact, no pales or confines. It therefore follows that all that exists belongs in, and nothing is outside of, the one force. Logically, then, we are bound to include in our accounts of it all facts, every feeling, every thought, even every fancy or whim, all evil and error. The one force, therefore, includes all that we denote by the terms "matter," "mind," "self," and all that is called spiritual, however you name it. The critic must therefore admit that the one force is comprehensive enough to be the sufficient ground of all the wonders of system, law, order, intelligence, which we find in the world at large and in human life.

For we may search the universe in vain to find anything which can be separated from life or motion of some sort. Even our mental states are reducible to modes of motion of finer

grades; and, without the feeling of effort or activity of some sort, we are never conscious. Our impulses, tendencies, thoughts, volitions, are all known as forces acting or being exerted. Man finds himself fundamentally a *centre* of force or vibration; and it is futile to argue that the mental life is disjoined from the physical, and, therefore, not a part of the primal energy which science shows to be one, for we know mind and matter only in *relation*. Force meets force: we try to control matter, and are thrown back defeated, or matter yields where mind knows how to direct force against it. We are not even able to say what matter is apart from force, for we know it only as modes of motion. When I put my hand against a wall, it is force opposing force; and the feeling of resistance is more fundamental than that of substance. Unless you were *active* or acted upon, you would not know that the world exists. We find ourselves members of an endless series of events,—of changing lights and shades, music and discord,

summer's warmth and winter's cold, pleasure and pain, and possessing consciousness of all this. Atom is related to atom, event to event, and mind to mind with such intimacy that the thought is utterly bewildered by the minute intertwining and blending.

Types of this intricate wholeness, this intimate association of things, actions, and persons, are visible on every hand. A chair or table has sharp outlines, and seems to be distinct by itself. Yet the atmosphere surrounds it, gravity presses upon it, there is a cohesive power holding its molecules together. A force must press both from within and from without, in order for it to retain its shape. These forces in turn are manifestations within the ether which interpenetrates all its atoms, forces of disintegration are at work upon it, finer substances are passing through it, and so on through an indefinite range of relations and interrelations, endlessly and inextricably involving its existence and connecting it

necessarily with everything else that exists. And, even now, we have considered only its physical aspect, and said nothing about its past, when it was a part of the vegetable kingdom. There we have every reason to believe that each cell was psychic. Probably, even in its present inert state as a chair or table, each atom is alive, perhaps psychic, or conscious.

In our own organisms, all this is far more apparent; for we consciously direct and use these forces. It is highly probable that not only is each atom alive or psychic, that it is really one force which holds mind and the physical system together, but that the body itself, and as a whole, gradually shades off into the mind, so that no strict line of demarcation can be drawn between them, so that even at death there is no abrupt disconnection, but a change of state in that fine intermediary substance which might with equal truth be termed matter or mind. Everywhere, then, there is probably interblending, interpenetration, so that one

may state the most physical fact without fear that one will be called a materialist if only one is true to all aspects of it, both the mental and physical, the two sides of the shield about which men have so long disputed.

It is a scientific fact that not only do forces interpenetrate in this way; but different substances may occupy the same space at the same time, "each acting as if it were the sole occupant of the space."<sup>9</sup> You may, for example, completely fill a globe with water, heat the globe until the water becomes steam, then you may add a finer liquid, alcohol, and produce an equal amount of alcohol vapor, and then add ether, and have as much ether vapor as though the other two were absent. Thus we may have a universe within a universe without end.

This may serve as a figure to illustrate the way in which the finest force, even the spirit, is here within us, is, in fact, omnipresent, yet in no way interfering with our individualities. Physical

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9. Cooke, "The New Chemistry," p. 10.

man seems to be the only creature who is open to all these interpenetrating forces. That is, in this one space occupied by your body or mine, we may at the same time be open to all the physical forces resident in the ether, to the finest vibratory nerve forces, to the subtle essence which conveys thought from mind to mind, and spiritually open to the soul-life which more intimately connects us with the mind and heart of God.

Is not this the real unity of life,—not bare sameness or monotony, but infinite variety crowded into each moment and every part, so that each one of us as a centre of force or consciousness is the great whole in miniature? Yet, just because we are thus microcosms, we are one with all other minds. It is a commonplace fact to state that human nature is the same the world over, that men display the same passions, manifest the same instincts, that they all worship some God and believe in immortality. But this simply means that there really is one

mind common to us all, all of whose attributes each may manifest without robbing any other. One only needs to be told that all truth is one, all goodness is one, in order to see at once that it is true. And here is a tangible way in which to realize life's unity, by conceiving yourself as a mind centre from which radiates all the forces of the universe, yet in no way displaces any other mind.

But now our critic is ready to ask the question, If all events, whether conscious or physical, are fundamentally reducible to changes of force, centering about these finite points of energy, why is it not simply a *blind* force, why may there not be endless combination and recombination amongst the two-fold atoms governed by chance, why may not human life, even your boasted visions of the soul and your self-scrutinizing attempts to get outside and free from yourself, be just such a fleeting aggregation of molecules, some time to dissipate and form new bodies and mystical

transports? This doctrine has been very frequently held, and was stated in some such fashion by the famous Greek, Democritus, who, first among western thinkers, propounded the atomistic theory. Yet, here once more, we have considered only one face of the shield, and hence have an impossible, therefore a chaotic, universe on our hands.

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Even Democritus was compelled to admit a definite tendency among the atoms. In other words, they combined not by chance, but according to law. As we rise from one plane to another in the scale of life, the evidences of law, order, system, and intelligence become simply overwhelming, until one is literally forced to admit that life is not blind, that the end is foreseen, that the creeping of the vine, the development of organs in the animal kingdom, every growth that we can name, is toward some end, the same tendency; for example, crystallization or the development of the seed

in the ground is precisely similar the world over under similar conditions.

When we turn to man, the evidence increases. Not every action of ours is rational by any means. We have turned over a large part of our conduct to the care of habits; and we still act, to a large extent, from impulse or instinct. But all these habits were consciously acquired by action intelligently directed to some end, either by us, by our ancestors, or in the animal and vegetable worlds. When we awake to consciousness, it is to find ourselves in possession of an organism which it has taken ages, perhaps millions of years, to perfect; and is it not our one object above all else to exercise proper self-control, that we may wisely direct each and every one of our forces toward an intelligible end, so that we shall become in the truest sense *persons*, and turn everything to good account? And is it not clear that the persistent ego which you find always there when you awaken each morning is the one

permanent factor of your life, the guiding force which holds all else together in one personality, never letting you become anybody else, never wholly yielding its individuality, and ever affirming that its goal *shall* be attained, that no chance, no circumstance, shall intervene to prevent complete self-realization through the perfecting, not of yourself alone, but of all humanity? Do you not will this, and do you know of any power that can shake your determination?

Yet you are not conscious of originating this instinct for the perfect. You *find* it in your experience as the central fact of your life and the highest manifestation of purpose in the universe. That which we find as fact in present-day life we are logically bound to attribute to the one force whence comes all activity. It could not, therefore, be mere *blind* force, since a cause or ground cannot be less intelligent than the combined effects flowing from or reposing

upon it. Consequently, it is all that we denote by the terms "universe," "man," "life," "God."

This much conceded, it only rests to decide with our critic how we are to name this force; for we have built up from premises, which even he must admit if he is logical, all that is needed to demonstrate the vital presence of the power which we call God. We have found first, force; then varied manifestations of it, such as sound, light, heat, matter, life, mind; secondly, interrelationship which binds star to star, atom to atom, and mind to mind; thirdly, centres of force or consciousness; and, finally, law, tendency, or purpose, which unifies all events, all centres, all lives, as parts of a single system or organism so wonderfully wrought that its cause or ground must at least be as wise, as good and intelligent, as the being we call God

When you look over the universe at large, can you conceive of any possible way whereby all these forces and events, all these minds, finite centres, and wills, could exist together except

in one system, fulfilling a common end? If, then, there is one system, and hence one moral end, must not the directive intelligence be at least as wise as its chosen goal? must it not, in fact, be wiser, in order to choose just that goal which brings *order* instead of chaos into the universe, in order to exclude all other possibilities?

But granted that the universe is one mass of interrelated events or combinations and recombinations of force moving toward one end, what assurance have we, so the critic asks, that this end shall be realized? Evil surely exists in the world,—for example, the Armenian atrocities and the degradation of our modern civilization, the pains and miseries which so largely overbalance the good and pleasurable. Then, too, the physical universe is cooling; and a time may come when the sun's energy will be so dissipated that the planets will not only be uninhabitable, but be rent asunder. What have you to say to this? the critic asks.

It is, indeed, possible that such a dissipation of force may take place, and that the universe may begin its differentiated physical life afresh in the form of new stars and planets; for the dissipated energy would go somewhere, it could not get outside of the whole. Nor would its amount be diminished. But a mere mechanical dissipation like this would mean that force is blind, that physical force is all that exists; and this, we have found, is contrary to two of the most suggestive facts in our inquiry,—namely, that purpose, or law-governed tendency, exists, and that consciousness is a more fundamental form of energy than physical force. We have good reason to believe, then, that the physical universe is the crudest form in which the one Life manifests itself, and that all force is either ultimately mental or is directed by mind. The mental side of life, then, our critic simply cannot deny; and, unless mind is to cease to exist, surely chaos cannot come into the universe.

And, if he argues that evil and good are fundamentally opposed, and that evil may some time overcome the good, we may still reply that two opposing forces presuppose the existence of an ultimately harmonious whole, to which they both belong. Thus we return each time to the thought of a fundamental reality, which is at least sufficiently harmonious within itself that the universe may continuously exist. Without fundamental harmony, no universe. And, if there is fundamental harmony, then evil, however great its power, is incapable of wrecking the universe. Moreover, since intelligence is everywhere so apparent, there is strong reason to believe that pain and evil, since they exist, also fulfil a purpose as parts of the one system. In fact, the mere existence of things in a system indicates their goodness; for is not that thing good which is capable of adjustment in relation to something else? Is not fire, for example, good in its place, and harmful only when allowed to pass beyond certain

limits? It is not, then, absolutely bad, but bad only under certain conditions.

One may be unable to see good in a particularly vile evil, like the case of Armenia. But we do not yet see all the facts involved. At any rate, there is no positive evidence that this or any other evil is sufficient to prevent the triumph of the good. After all, is not human life as a whole full of just such apparent incongruities as this? And is not this the wonder of it all, that such a strange mixture of elements should exist,—such oddities and freaks, sinners, saints, and devils, all personally unlike, yet in a way surprisingly similar as parts of one great social whole? We find it difficult at times to put up with and account for each other. But the great God surely needs us all. The unity of life is a fact; and we must fit our reasoning to that, for all that philosophy may hope to do is to rationalize the universe of facts.

But what in all this assembling of incongruities, this interpenetration and finite concentration

of force and mind, is God? Surely, not the force alone, nor the intelligence and substance, nor the mere aggregation of all finite minds. We have found reason to believe that the directive intelligence must be wiser than the wisdom we know, in order to exclude all other possible or self-destructive world-orders. Moreover, we do not in the objective world know this primal force or mind: we know only *forces*, minds, substances, whereas the ground of it all must be *one* reality, alike the basis of all force and of all intelligence and will, of all finite selves and all worlds. Therefore, we must still reserve for the Father of it all the term "transcendent," the intellectually unknown. Subjectively, the mind in its sublimest transports perceives this essence intuitively; and, as I said at the outset, this chapter is simply an attempt to give in detail the elements of the vision which tells us at a glance that life is one.

We experience the same difficulty in our own minds as we have noted in the preceding

chapters. What we are subjectively, or as observers, as ultimate or individual centres of thought, we do not fully know. We know ourselves only so far as we have become objective; that is, so far as we have had experience, so far as we have thought and willed. Between the subject and object, the inner and outer, there is constant give and take. We observe, reflect, pay attention, and will; and then, as we issue the fiat or command, the word goes forth, takes form as an act, and brings about changes in the outer world. On the other hand, the forces acting in the objective, or outer, world play upon our organisms, produce sensations; ideas, and finally make an impression upon, and add to the consciousness of, the subject or observer.

Is not this typical of the relationship between God and his world? May we not, with all due reverence, and without assuming to know, apply the analogy to the divine life? In the beginning was the word, or logos; and the word was with

God. And the word went forth, and became flesh. That is, we know two phases of this trinity in unity. We know the infinite as it goes forth to manifestation and as it becomes finite; and we know that there must be the third,—namely, the subject which owns the mind or universe of manifestation, that which feels the love, that which is alive, whose life we call a unit. Can you conceive any other possible (rational) basis for existence but this,—a Being of whose life we know a little through the forces, the purposes, the finite selves, the wisdom and love which reveal him? And may we not rightfully think of infinite life on its transcendent side as one vast soul, in the same sense in which man must be ultimately mental or spiritual in order to possess consciousness of change? For that which we know as matter comes and goes, and ever alters form; while its basis must be permanent, or eternal. That is, there must be both the permanent and the impermanent, the law or purpose which abides and its changing

exemplifications; the same amount of force and substance, yet with ever-fresh combination and recombination; the same being that loves, and ever new opportunities to display that love.

All this follows inevitably from the mere admission that force exists, since, argue as we may, whatever life presents belongs to *one* universe, and since every truth-lover is bound to include all facts, even the visions of the mystic. The mystic may be mistaken in much that he sees; but the fact cannot be denied that he sees it, and that there is a spiritual plane. The materialist may even deny the mind whereby he knows, but he is using the mind even while he denies it; and, if you pin a man down to the one fact from which there is absolutely no escape, he must admit that he consciously exists. The materialist knows that he, the thinker, is a different being from the objects he thinks about; and, if he will but admit that, there is no ground left for his materialism. Science herself is coming to the conclusion that matter,

as we have believed in it, does not exist. It is *force* that exists, and our sensations are due to differing manifestations of the one force. Our spiritual experiences are probably just so many finer manifestations of this same energy. Perhaps all grades of manifestation are equally spiritual. Perhaps they are all material. The term chosen matters little. The essential is to be true to the facts and their logical implications,—the relationships of the changing and the unchangeable, the objective and subjective, the universe of manifestation, and its necessary basis or ground.

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From the whole range of facts there is simply no logical escape. We are parts of that series of facts; and, as parts of this whole, we demand that there shall be a place for love and personality, for all that endears us to man, to nature, and to God. Only he, then, who has a spiritual nature, but will not admit it, or he who argues just for the sake of argument, is a persistent atheist; for

each of us possesses the elements of a rational demonstration of life's ultimate spiritual unity.

But how are we to justify the existence of a purpose which gives unity to life? It is obviously impossible to attribute that which we call a motive to Absolute Being, for a motive implies imperfection and ignorance. Yet expression is one of the laws of the universe, and is everywhere a clew to the ultimate meaning of conditioned existence. The idea is insufficient by itself. It must take form. Love or depth of feeling retained within is of no worth, and serves only to make its possessor miserable. It must have an object, in order to exist at all. The same reason for proceeding forth may conceivably be attributed to Absolute Being, yet, without doing it injustice, if only it be remembered that the universe of manifestation exists not for one purpose, but for the glory and beauty, the benefit and completion of the whole. That is, we have not fully stated the life of God, the unity of life, until we have described both the

outbreathing and the inbreathing. The outbreathing is just this universe of self-expression. Perfect wisdom could *learn* nothing from self-manifestation, nor could infinite love be made stronger by continual out-going. The justification of the manifested world is to be found only in the nature of the Perfect Whole. Happiness, virtue, activity, knowledge, beauty, love, self-realization, and altruism are all objects or ends of life; but they are not good alone. All that we find in experience must belong to the whole, whose life may therefore be accurately conceived as standing in need of its existence. For oblivion could not encompass universal Being, nor could it fall into utter negation or temporary unconsciousness. Life, not death, must then eternally belong to it. Something must be continuously active, in order to maintain that life, or consciousness; and each soul, each part, however great or small, may therefore be said to develop and return its share of consciousness to the total Life to

whose perfect existence and whose unity it is thus absolutely essential.

All that we denote by the term "consciousness," all that we find in the worlds of feeling, thought, and will, may accordingly be taken to suggest this eternal cognition or life of the whole, to which each part contributes its share. The continuous production of consciousness as essential to infinite existence is thus a life of endless change and variety amidst eternal permanency and unity; for infinite life could not be mere self-duplication or sameness of consciousness. That to which nothing could be added or taken away would still include the power of endlessly varying the expression of the same attributes or qualities. Each manifestation, ever afresh, yet in a sense in no wise new, thus serves to maintain the absolute whole. And it is the supremest joy of existence to discover that one may in this way be even of the least service to that which without it would be incomplete.

It is clear, then, that there is need of just as many units of consciousness as are essential to this high office, that these souls or individual units, those who are able to rise to a comprehension of the whole, are the only permanent units, and that each must represent a different aspect of divinity. Awakened to a sense of its place and duty in the universe, the soul, therefore, finds that it does not live to itself alone, but for the glory of all being. Nothing else is worthy of it, nothing less is really worthy of each of us, even as we are placed to-day. The soul is that permanent part of us which uses at their best all the faculties possessed by a human being. We are not, then, to add our quota of consciousness through so-called spirituality alone, but on all the planes of experience, through both the crudest and the finest that is in us, through reason and through intuition, physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, through beauty and utility, art and science, feeling and thought, poetry and

philosophy, being and doing. By depriving any part of our being of adequate self-expression or by crowding any creature that lives out of its due place, we thereby interfere with this harmony of the whole. On the other hand, the lowest tendency in man may aid in the fulfilment of our life purpose.

People of a finely organized disposition are usually at a loss to know why the animal in them is so strong. It is because so much is required of them on the spiritual plane. The lowest is a type of and indicates the presence of the highest. The lower is needed to balance the higher; and the stronger it is, the better, if it be rightly understood and directed, since it is our attitude toward it which makes it good or bad. When the lower impulse comes uppermost, it may be turned to the best account if we understand that it indicates the quickening of life on the highest plane. That which causes untold misery while we misuse it may thus be

the means of the greatest diffusion of goodness, when used for the glory of the whole.

The continuous outgoing or expression of the whole through the full development of all its parts thus being accepted as the purpose of life, one plane of existence may illustrate it as well as another; while the universal ideal is accepted as the goal toward which each of us is striving. In order that this ideal may be realized in all the fulness of detail, the universe of time and space exists. The individual contribution of any and all souls is the continuous social product of indefinite time, each thought and each deed adding its gift to the whole, succeeding the deeds and thoughts that have gone before which others have contributed, and leading the way to indefinite usefulness in the future.

Just here we must make special note of the habit of thought which leads us to forget this ultimate unity of life; that is, the tendency to separate the material and spiritual, to scorn

the one and cleave to the other. Hence we find people caring a great deal either for the one or for the other, and therefore getting into discord with one, while holding only to the other. Is not this the great fault in all our thinking and conduct,—this unnatural separation between things which belong necessarily together? We have thought that God belonged only to the spiritual. Consequently, we have worshipped only on certain occasions and in certain places. We have separated him from his world, and even now it is supposed by some that a God is necessary only to give the inceptive impulse to evolution.

Yet a little reflection convinces one that the one Life may be—yes, *must* be—found in the lowest fact,—that in the slums, in the depths, in matter, in sensation, as well as on the heights and in the company of saints, the one essence resides, vivifies, and uplifts, the difference being that there are grades or planes of manifestation, and on one plane Life is more clearly revealed

as force or power, while on another it is more truly describable as love, as the Father. If any fact is low, if any manifestation seems to shut out the one Life from us, it is because we make it so, because we fail to realize its divinity, and because we draw lines of distinction which are not found in nature. The one essential is to perceive and consciously to unite with the spirit on all the planes,—in everything, everywhere, and at all times.

The hardest and most unnatural task in the world of thought is to draw lines of sharp distinction. If life, force, substance, is ultimately one, there is no separation. We cannot too often remind ourselves that the distinctions of finite speech, of philosophy, of religion and science, are largely matters of convenience. They are simply affairs of thought, even when we use the terms "higher" and "lower." We state the facts thus because of our limitation, but they are not found so in nature. We consider things by piecemeal, because the mind can grasp

only one vivid idea at a time. But life itself is all one whole; and he who would understand it aright, as it really is, must turn away from finite interpretations of it to actual, living vision of the great, unbroken whole itself.

Does this seem to make divinity common, to take down the distinctions which we have set up between God and man, and make him the mere life of material phenomena? It will not seem so if we remember that there are varying planes of manifestation, and that each contributes its share of living consciousness in its due place. Starting with the coarser grades of manifestation,—the rocks, the vegetable world, and the lower forms of animal life,—we find them less highly organized, and consequently revealing less of what we term the higher nature, or soul of the universe. But could even the least of these exist without the omnipresent life, the intelligence, the type, which presides over crystallization and growth? The higher we ascend, the more closely we approach

the very heart and beauty of life, because, the more highly developed the organism, the more numerous its planes of divine revelation, consequently the less separateness from the Power which all these forms reveal. That is, less *real* separateness; yet men, as a rule, are unconscious of their deep-lying unity with perfect Love and Wisdom. They have tried to be so much by themselves that they have shut out the sense of oneness.

The worst form of separateness is the locating of our Maker afar from us in time and space. God once acted, we say, but now leaves us to work out our own destruction; or heaven is to come, and we must await it. Even those who have adopted the conception of God as omnipresent make the mistake of reaching out and up in order to get help. But, so far as one introduces ideas of time and space, one shuts one's self off from the highest manifestation of this Power: whereas in reality here and now, as we have seen above, all these planes of

manifestation exist; and even in the beating of the heart the universal life pulsates, the divinity is there, and one may consciously unite with it.

Here also is the reason why this conception of the unity of life is not mere pantheism. Pantheism would have it that this universe is simply God. It is one because God is one. But we are distinguishing throughout between the eternal, all-wise, and intelligent Being and the changing forms and forces whose wisdom they reveal. It is not the physical universe alone that is a unit, nor the realm of the inner life, nor the domain of spirits, nor God apart from his world, but all these together, the infinite made perfect through the finite. It does not take from the individuality of the table that it is surrounded by the atmosphere, and played upon within and without by opposing forces. It is just these which constitute individuality, and apart from the physical forces there would be no table.

Likewise with us. Each of us is a person; that is, we have the power of self-consciousness,

of self-adjustment, of self-direction, and of self-realization. Each reproduces in little, as we have seen, the unit of the universe. As you look within, you find that all that you have ever thought and felt belongs to *one* experience. And there could be no better illustration of the unity of life than this. Yet it takes nothing from you to learn that your life and goodness is a sharing of the one eternal goodness and life. You are still yourself, with full opportunity for individual thought and action,—yes, for sin, if you wish. And all other persons enjoy the same great privilege without loss of individual freedom and thought, yet without marring the unity of life as a whole.

Thus much clear, our finite task is to find out our special place in this great world-system. Evidently, this place must be the one which we are just now filling, but do not know it, since we are ignorant of its beauty and meaning. Accordingly, instead of finding out the wisdom of life's order just as it is from this largest point

of view, we think how we would like to have life arranged. Did you ever picture the confusion that would come into the world if one of these ideals, reared in the home of discontent, should be imposed upon the fabric of nature and society?

Yet this is not saying that whatever is, is right *now*, but that the present is instinct with what *ought to be*, with what *shall be*, and that each man may consciously help the ideal to become the actual. Do you realize what a change would come over life if you tried thus to learn the wisdom of the present circumstances in which you find yourselves placed, by settling down quietly into the realization of what you are as a centre of force or consciousness, related to all force, all thought, all life, all beings?

But where, the critic asks, as a last appeal,—where is this vague eternity in which you would have us live? I answer that it is *here* in any and every moment that we live; that it is the detailed instant, the trifle, the finite, which brings the

vast, the great, and inconceivable down to our comprehension; that finite and infinite are both essential; that the numerical whole is made up of all the individual figures, one, two, three, and all their combinations up to a million, a billion, and so on. The minds of two hemispheres are laboring to develop these two sides of the one great fact,—the great universe. The Hindu mind contemplates wholes. The Occidental mind is engaged in the minute analysis of the parts, and emphasizes the relative, the personal. For a perfect balance we must have the two, not only philosophically, but in our daily life, the mental and the physical, the thought and its expression, the intellect and love, activity and receptivity, God and man, whole and part, inseparable, yet distinguishable. Start where you will, then, reason as you may, there is surely no logical escape from this conclusion. We are parts of one whole; and never can we hope to do justice to the whole or its parts, to man or God, to reason or intuition, to self or to society,

while we ignore one fact, one right, even of the humblest of life's creatures, while we hasten or crowd, while we deny to anything that exists its due place and its share of life and consciousness.

The chief point, then, is to remember for what purpose the whole exists. Shall we dwell in the consciousness of self as a part of the whole, or shall we centre our consciousness upon the whole, which exists "for the benefit of all being," for the development, the beauty, goodness, and pleasure of all its parts, not as parts, but for each other, and for the whole?

That this conception of life's unity or wholeness demands the reconstruction of our ethics, of our social customs, of society, science, and thought at large, is at once evident beyond all question. There is not space here even to suggest this change; but, if each reader will take this central thought home, reflect upon it, absorb it, question it, doubt it, and verify it, the rest will follow as a logical consequence, and each thought about it shall be a step toward

its fulfilment. For the comprehension of this great motive, the glory of the whole, means the one central desire which we have emphasized throughout; namely, the longing to realize the divine oneness as a *habit of life*, and to remove all obstacles to its perfect expression. When one enters the silent, inner realm, and becomes conscious of life's wholeness, this obstacle, in self, in the mind, or in the body, is the one point around which the forces which work upon us are gathered. If we are ignorant of the process, suffering is the result, the crucifixion of the Christ within. If we understand it, we can let go our fears, take off the tension, remove the resistance, and co-operate where we once stood squarely in the way. Here is the whole matter in a few words. Everything depends at last upon which way we look, for the mind cannot look two ways at once with equal power. In one direction one impedes, in the other one co-operates with the natural action. In one direction, be it mental or physical, one shuts in,

suppresses, contracts: in the other one mentally and physically opens out, expands, expresses. The warmth of love heals by throwing apart the physico-psychical particles of body and mind. The outgoing thought for another takes one out of the discordant self. The spirit of communion with the divine opens the budding soul into full and natural growth as rapidly as it becomes receptive.

Take any fact, then, as a starting-point,—your own breathing, the sensation of light, or the feeling of resistance offered by the walls of a room,—and lift the thought from this manifestation of force on a low plane to its infinite relations with all other facts, all other forces and existences. Then, turning from sensation, see how largely the perception of the world of nature depends on your own mind, on the degree of intelligence, the education, and conscious experience. Having conceived consciousness as fundamental to sensation, think of yourself, the subject, chooser, or

observer, watching the stream of thoughts and feelings. Assured that you are more real than your states of mind, pass from yourself as a unit of consciousness upward and outward to the Over-self, trying to think of that Self as the mind of the Whole. Place yourself on the side of the Whole, and try to view life as it must seem to that vision which comprehends all sides at once. Cease to think of yourself by yourself alone, but apply one test to all questions: Is this living for the whole? Is it neglectful of any part? Am I fulfilling the supreme purpose of my existence; namely, to reveal and develop divine power, that the infinite life may be made richer by my experience? If not, I have no concern with it. If so, no power can stop me. In any case fear, worry, haste, impatience, and all the emotions which characterize human life for itself alone have no place here where such a glorious vision of life's unity obtains. Is there any true life but this, one in consciousness with the Father, yet

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true alike to society and to the individual ideal,  
while living for the unity of these three?

## VII. The Religious Aspect of the New Thought.<sup>10</sup>

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“A man’s fate lies in his character, and not in his conditions.”

—*Hamilton W. Mallie.*

WHERE, in the wide universe, is the home of man? Where is that centre whence radiates all that shapes life and conduct, so that every house has its peculiar atmosphere and every personality a power forever its own? The new thought assures us that it is within,—in the realm of ideas, consciousness, and will, thus accepting the conclusion which in all ages has characterized idealism.

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10. Address at the Home Conference of the Boston Food Fair (Greenacre Days), November, 1896.

By the "new thought" I therefore understand, not a new philosophy, but a new *application* of a doctrine which is older than our Western civilization. In fact, it is but a phase of the great philosophical movement of our time, which seeks to unify the richest wisdom of all ages, and to bring into close contact the spiritual insight of the Orient and the exact science of the Occident. It is not the product of any one time nor of any one people, but it is rather an adaptation to the needs of to-day of the one central doctrine which lies at the basis alike of Christianity and of all great spiritual systems.

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When engaged in its special field, it is true the new thought is known as the mental cure, mental or spiritual science and metaphysical healing. It is represented by widely differing schools, and employs many and varied methods. To some it is simply a means of obtaining relief from physical disease; while others pursue it for psychological purposes without regard to its spiritual import. I shall not weary you with

the facts upon which the claims of the mental cure are based, nor undertake to defend any particular theory of health or disease, but turn directly to the conclusion to which the practice of the new thought steadily points, and to a consideration of the nobler and better life which it demands from its disciples.

In those silent moments of companionship, when one withdraws from the excitement and complexity of the outside world to the home of the mind, the kingdom of the inmost self, one becomes conscious of a power which the wisest have named spiritual. One seeks the silence of this inner realm in order to become mentally refreshed and strong or to extend this healing power as a gentle, soothing influence to a suffering soul in need of help. One feels a deep desire to quiet the troubled spirit of the afflicted one. The sufferer desires to be healed or comforted. Thus love, or spiritual desire, is the meeting-point, the common prayer, drawing the two souls together in sympathy;

and this love or aspiration is the open door to this silent realm of the Spirit. And this inner realm is not a mere fanciful abstraction. It is a living, present, elevating consciousness. The experience is distinctly that of rising above self to a higher plane, to a finer reality than the presentations of physical sense. And there, where the merely human self partly loses itself in the divine, one is conscious of the power, of the love, of the peace and restfulness, which have led men in all ages to worship God. For the conviction is ineradicable that there is actually present a higher Power of which one is, for the time, the vehicle and agent, which brings life and strength to the sufferer, and to which one's personal thought is emphatically secondary and subservient.

At every step the practice of the new thought at its best emphasizes this nearness as an actual, living, loving, helping reality of the immanent God. The truth that "in Him we live and move and have our being" is the watchword of the

new thought, its basic fact and starting-point. All its doctrines lead ultimately to this. All its helpfulness as a practical system of daily conduct is embodied in this great statement. The new thought is, in one word, the attempt to realize in every moment of experience this truth of our spiritual existence; and the new application consists in just this unusually persistent effort to let no detail, no act, no trouble, pass without considering its intimate relation to the omnipresent Spirit, disease, poverty, sin, wretchedness, and misery of every description being deemed within the pale of this system of thought in its vigorous effort to be practical. And, in order to accomplish these ends, it makes full use of our recently enriched knowledge of the human mind, its susceptibility to suggestion, the power and right use of thought, the effect of mental environment and mental atmosphere, and the wonderful operations concealed in the great realm of the subconscious.

The new thought, while aiming to be scientific and practical, is thus on its higher side intensely spiritual or religious, in the universal sense. It is Christianity, or any special religion you please, simplified and applied not only to conduct, but to health. It calls for a devoted, unselfish life of self-sacrifice and good works. It is in the highest degree ethical, honest, conscientious,—a thought and life wherein one does not simply profess belief in a certain creed and attend church occasionally, but a life in which practice is a sincere revelation of precept, and where the worker must himself become pure, peaceful, and poised, in order to bring purity, peace, and rest to others. Its workers turn first of all to the source of all light and love, then carry that life and love into the dark places of the afflicted. They discover the ideal state toward which the struggling soul is evolving, and then help it to evolve. They do not try to *control* other minds and compel their assent to certain doctrines, nor do they endeavor to

force their own personalities to the fore. It is rather their endeavor to step aside personally and become helpful instruments of the All-Good. They affirm what seems to them the right, the true, and the helpful, placing an ideal before the mind for acceptance or rejection; and whether the method be one of suggestion, of silently sitting by a patient, or teaching by the power of example without regard to health or disease, the one effort is to point the way out of trouble, out of misery and disease, not by discussing symptoms, but by redirecting and freeing the mind.

It is, therefore, a fundamental principle of the new doctrine to look for the good, to encourage, to give hope and cheer. Its followers believe that ultimately only the good exists, all seeming wrong being a means to an end higher than itself. And, in approaching other doctrines, and people who think differently, they seek rather the common ground of spiritual unity than points of disagreement. They hold that

in deepest truth we are all trying to voice one wisdom, and that seeming differences but illustrate the endless variety and beauty of the universal truth. The great minds of all ages and among all nations have expressed this truth as it appealed to them, and its expression is rather the incident of time and place than anything which separates it from the visions of other seers. The same great truth seeks manifestation through the spiritually quickened minds of today, and the advocates of the new thought see no greater opportunity than to co-operate with this spiritual evolution.

The new thought, therefore, inculcates the broadest charity and the utmost sympathy. Instead of cherishing thoughts of hatred, of jealousy and anger, it shows me that I must not judge, that I ought not to descend to the level of one who abuses me, and that I shall not suffer from passion unless I meet it half-way. In fact, it insists that our trouble is largely of our own making, and that, to overcome

it, we should not be content with the mere doctoring of effects and supposed external causes, but strike immediately at the root of the matter in our own nature. It is true, we may not be aware that we cause our own misery; and we may have seemed justified in attributing it to other people. But that is precisely the point. We should become aware of it: we should understand ourselves, and learn how, by conduct and thought, we create conditions similar to our state of development within. For action and reaction are equal in the mental world as well as in the realm of nature. As is our thought, our will, or desire, so will be the fruits of our activity; and, while we, in our ignorance, may suffer, unconscious of the power of thought, it is nevertheless true that thought and our habitual mental attitude have played their part all along.

We are called upon, first of all, therefore, to *think*, to understand ourselves, that we may use the power of thought to the best advantage.

Life is freed of a large part of its care and torment for those who thus develop the larger sympathy and fellowship, turning aside from the uncharitable thoughts, the injured feelings, and the worriment which once deprived us of our peace, to take up the healthier activity of the new thought.

One's spiritual creed, too, is immensely simplified by cutting off the doctrinary discussions, the ritual and ceremony which so often encumber religion, and by giving all one's thought and energy to the simple religion of action. The new thought welcomes, believes in, any creed; and, so far as it affiliates with the Church, it is with the Church universal. Its creed is professed only in connection with its works; and through these works it seeks to give of itself, to let every thought and every deed be a message of power, a revelation of such wisdom and goodness as have been made one's own in the inmost sanctuary of the Spirit.

Always at last and fundamentally, then, there is this sense of spiritual power, to which all else is secondary. And of this august presence one speaks with the more hesitation in this hurried age, since so many neglect it utterly. They know not what you mean; and it is the law of all spiritual wisdom that it is not to be shouted abroad promiscuously, but imparted to those kindred souls who draw it out. Yet, so far as one may define that which needs more than definition to describe and communicate it, it is apparent that God is overlooked and neglected because of invidious distinctions, because we have separated off this as spiritual and that as material, *this* as the divine being, afar from his world, and *that* as his world, where evolution somehow does his work: whereas all this, all distinctions, all species, all changes, and all complexities are so many varied manifestations of his power. God, then, is either revealed through all that is now present with us or not at all; and the only consistent view, is not to hold

that this is from God and that from man, this is good and that is vile, but that all alike make God known in order and degree. Define life, then, as you will, call it mental or physical, known to us in terms of time, or changeless and the same in quantity through all eternity, the essential is not to exclude the one Power or Being, without which the universe could not exist, from even the slightest of its manifestations.

Such goodness as I possess is, therefore, part of the one eternal goodness of the universe. I am to treat all men, I am to deal with every circumstance, every detail, and every trial with the remembrance of its divinity. I shall view all events, and even all evil and sin, in the light of its probable purpose or meaning. I shall neglect neither the human part nor the divine if I am consistent, but carry with me as a part of my daily life the realization of the place and beauty, the utility and outcome, of all that exists in the life of the boundless All. I may have but a glimpse of that ultimate unity, but let me be

faithful to that glimpse. Let me carry into the trivialities of life the inspiring consciousness of the divine. Let me meet all men as though I really believed them to be children of the same Father, enjoying equal privileges with me, and worthy of the best I can give them. Let me give all things and all people an opportunity to realize the ideal of evolution, through co-operation, through mutual adjustment and help.

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As thus conceived, the new thought may regenerate character, and has already transformed many a home. It says, "Seek first the home or haven of rest within, be at home in your own soul, then manifest this peace and power in the outer world." My conduct, whether in the secret domains of the Spirit, whether in word or deed, by precept and by example, should therefore be a full and free confession of the philosophy on which the new thought rests. I may confess my faith in my own way; but, first of all, let my life be

such as to suggest this deeper background, this efficient director of events which uses me as its instrument. And I am to remember, above all else, that no task, no work, no thought at home or abroad, really worthy of man, is unworthy to be a living, stimulating declaration of our life with God. The new thought shall then become typical of the continuous yet ever-changing revelation of the highest.

“Ever fresh the broad creation,  
A divine improvisation,  
From the heart of God proceeds,  
A single will, a million deeds.”

## VIII. Spiritual Poise.<sup>11</sup>

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“Be thou but self-possessed,  
Thou hast the art of living.”

—Goethe.

UNQUESTIONABLY, the most striking fact in human life is the sense of uneasiness, the feeling of dissatisfaction or pain, which lies at the basis of the chief activities of daily existence, of all our efforts at self-improvement. It is manifested in the murderer who feels an impulse to kill. It is active in all physical instincts. It sends us here and there in search of changed conditions. It draws man and man together, and is that which stirs the soul on the highest

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11. A paper read before the Metaphysical Club of Boston April, 1897.

plane. Everywhere there is discontent, and unwillingness to take life just as we find it. Yet this universal restlessness possesses us despite our wills. For man is naturally easy-going, if not indolent. When he finds himself placed in comfortable surroundings, he would gladly remain there forever. But the sensation of hunger or thirst, or the need to provide shelter and self-protection, draws him ever onward. When his physical requirements are met, he is disturbed by a craving for knowledge; and, the more he knows, the more intense is his desire to learn, so that there is practically no rest for the intellect. Then the stirrings of conscience add their sense of unrest to all that disturbs our repose. Society is always making some demand upon us. When pleasure comes, it brings pain with it; and the mind is ever casting about for a sort of world or heaven where *something* shall give us perfect peace. Then there is the demand for exercise, the artistic sense, the desire to travel, the longing for wealth,—in a word, *the*

*instinct for the perfect*, or the effort to realize an ideal. In one way or another, on one plane or another, each of us is aware of an impulse, a stirring, a state of tension or confined power, an ambition which permits us no rest, and will probably never relax its hold upon us until the travail of creation be ended.

What is the meaning of this restlessness? Why are we possessed by this old discontent, loaded down with passion, yet haunted by dreams of sweet rest and harmony? Are we always to be played upon by opposing forces, or shall we some time learn the meaning of it all? The answer is contained in the restless experience itself. As we look abroad over the world of beings and things, we find that pain or disturbance of some sort is everywhere one of the signs of growth. The bud knows not why it is pushed from within; but there is an effort to expand, and attain perfection as the finished flower. That which spurs man on in the progress of invention and discovery is a need,

a want which he tries to meet. We build houses as a protection from heat and cold. We seek knowledge, that we may avoid a repetition of suffering and misery. Everywhere the creative impulse is aroused by a feeling of necessity or is accompanied by a sense of pain, and nothing new is given to the world without a conflict with the easy-going conservative element which would stem the tide of progress if it could. Even when suffering is caused by accident or disease, the conditions are the same. There is a tendency to restore harmony, and the suffering is proportionate to the amount of resistance met by this instinct for the perfect. Whenever there is tension, uneasiness, pain, want, or desire, we may therefore know that it means one of two things. It is either (1) evolutionary, a sign that we are incomplete on that side, and that the universe seeks our perfection, or (2) it is some hurt which nature is trying to heal, some temporary loss of equilibrium.

The tension or impulse is a sign to us that we are to *understand its meaning*, and, instead of opposing it, throw ourselves in line with the creative or restorative power. Obviously, if we misunderstand and resist the impulse or deem it evil, we become creators of our own misery through ignorance. The problem of existence, then, is, How are we to take life so as to avoid the friction or pain? Obviously, no mere thought process will avail here; nor can we overcome pain by a mere negation. We must get down deeper into the heart of life, and ask persistently, What part has suffering played in the life of the race and in evolution? and then not hope to master it by the affirmation of a theory, but *by taking an attitude of soul*. For experience is not simply an affair of thought. We do not exist merely to learn. But conduct is three-fourths of life, and a man shows what he really is and what he believes by what he does.

This attitude of soul is expressed by the one word "poise." "Be poised and wise and your

own to-day," Emerson says. That is, experience is invested with fixed conditions, which we must accept and not hope to alter. Ours is not the choice of the world-plan. We did not create the realm of the ideal. Nor is it our pleasure that creation should be announced by a cry of pain. We simply awake to find ourselves already so far advanced that all the beings around us seem to have realized their type except man. And the reason why experience with him is dragged out to such a surprising length is evidently because so much is to be required of him when he shall at last gain poise.

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Rightly understood, then, is not this restlessness, physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, indicative of a power with us which seeks harmonious development on all these planes? For, if we are not responsible for this instinct for the perfect, some greater Power is; and this greater power is evidently perfectly competent to complete the drama of creation. Do you know what part is assigned to you? If

not, then learn that, and gradually rise through all the planes of being to the highest individual development. The athlete possesses poise physically, the scholar attains it intellectually: the grand opera singer may have it as an artist, yet lack it morally. No one shall gain it spiritually in the fullest sense until it be attained on the lower planes. And it is one of the first conditions of spiritual poise that one shall so understand the individual self as to know why one exists in this well-ordered universe.

Individuality of thought and conduct, then, is one of the essentials of spiritual poise. Is it not because each of us is of particular worth to the universe that we are thus haunted by an ideal, and given no peace until we attain full self-expression? May we not rightly assume that all our struggles cluster around this central purposive fact, that there is an individual *soul* striving to come forth, the condition of whose growth is just this round of pains and pleasures, of defeats and successes? If so, then,

the desideratum is to focus the attention, not on the conditions, but on the *end* or outcome; namely, the completion of the soul through the strivings of this instinct for the perfect.

Again, one must respect the individual ideal because poise is not an attitude of weakness or resignation, but a condition of *power* or strength. It is character, centrality, consistency. To the degree that one is cast about by circumstances, fearing to think for one's self or stand up for self, one still lacks poise; and this lack is due to self-ignorance. Weakness is therefore one more sign that the creative energy is at work upon us; and we should not condemn ourselves because of our faults, but learn to grow strong and self-reliant in the true self. Spiritual poise *is ever a gathering, never a surrendering of forces*. It is the command by the soul of all that lies below it; and the surest way to attain it is to pick up your forces one by one, until you are master of the art of self-control.

If, for example, it is your habit to move rapidly, start some morning by putting yourself consciously and *slowly* through your work until you master the habit or impulse. Overcome all impatience in the same way. If you are nervous, make yourself sit perfectly still for a time. If your powers of thought control you, learn to control them by holding yourself for a given length of time to one line of thought.

I remember that, once while watching a play, I tried the experiment of absenting myself from the theatre at the most exciting time in the play, when all eyes were fixed on the stage. I turned in thought to Mount Kearsarge in New Hampshire, and began to visualize in imagination the familiar outlines of Mount Washington, and the hills, lakes, towns, and villages which may be seen from there; and I found to my surprise that I could shut the play out completely. Let this serve, then, as an illustration for all cases of self-help, and the method employed in the development of poise. *Shift the attention*

*elsewhere*, and you draw the power with it; and, if you seek freedom from pain, nature will then have opportunity to heal. Interest yourself as you would interest the child who has cut his finger, and wants to nurse the hurt. It may require considerable self-command. Then cultivate this by daily exercise until you can shift the attention at will.

Suppose, for example, that you are in a noisy, hurrying crowd, and are inclined to hurry with it, or are tormented by fear, anxiety, worryment. Try to command yourself by the thought of "Peace, be still." Realize what you are as a soul, an inhabitant of eternity, where there is no sense of time, no need to hasten, and no restlessness. The stirrings of the creative impulse need not give us pain if we adjust ourselves to them by this thought of eternity now. It is our own ignorance and impatience which so intensifies the pain. It is because we dwell so much on effects, sensations, troubles, calamities, fears, and doubts. But he who is poised may learn

the lessons of soul development as well in one place as another, if only he learn this superiority to circumstances, if he have this ability to command inward serenity amidst turmoil. By spiritual consciousness, then, I do not mean an occasional illumination or ecstatic vision, but the *habitual* realization of the divine presence. In order to make this realization a habit, one should go apart from people for a while each day, and shut out the world of time and space. Do not look within and ask yourself what you are by self-examination and analysis. But *lift* the mind to the highest plane by the thought of oneness with Deity. Try to gain a sense of life's wholeness by reflecting that there could be but one fundamental reality, or life, that, consequently, it is this one manifested life which is present in all this uneasiness and dissatisfaction. "God's hand is still engaged upon his world," says Browning. Creation is continuous. There is a welling up of divine power, an "uplift of heart and will" within

each human soul. And the essence of poised spiritual consciousness is to unite in thought with this immanent aspiring power, realizing its full ability to complete the purpose for which it is striving.

God is here. God is within. Be at peace with all that life brings. Be at rest in your soul. When you look within, do not identify yourself with the restless impulse nor with physical sensation. The real man, or soul, is rather the observer of all this by-play in the great game of life. And you may become a *poised* observer if you will, without surrendering spontaneity and without becoming a stoic. For stoicism is indifferent selfishness. Egotism is the poise of mere finite personality. But the spiritual repose of which I am speaking is dependent upon three things, which at once remove it to a purer region. First, the recognition within us of a higher self, which is responsible for the instinct for the perfect. Secondly, trust in the ability of this self to complete the creative task; that is, adjustment

to it such that we shall not oppose it, but cooperate with it. And, thirdly, the preservation of humility, or the ability to lay aside our own plans, beliefs, and selfishness, that the will of the highest may be made known.

For poise must be *progressive*, or it is mere egotism masquerading in its guise. We are not to make an attainment, and rest there. We are not to develop a theory of life, and then repeat the same ideas all our days. The creative impulse is never to be stilled, but, when allowed full liberty, should carry us on and on, and up and up forever. Consequently, he who has learned the rhythm of life and put himself in harmony with it is ever on the alert to gain new truth, to change his views when new experiences come. He is an experimenter, fixed only in one particular, and this is the very essence of spiritual poise; namely, the knowledge that there is an eternal God, and the conviction that one is an immortal soul. Everything else is subject to change. That consciousness shall

endure. Transfer your thought there, and it will not make much difference where you live or what comes to you. A man may learn life's lesson anywhere if he will simply face it, and not run away from his task. The disgruntled complainer, the pessimist, or the creature of impulse, is the one who tries to escape. But the restless impulse proves to be an angel in disguise when its meaning is sought.

No fear ever seemed half so terrible when we calmly faced it. No power in society is so great as the calm, persuasive character of the man who gently meets all persecution in forgiving silence. Half our woes vanish when we sit down to think about them philosophically. We may spare ourselves a large part of the friction of life by applying this method in every detail of daily existence. Pause before you act. Say to yourself, "Peace, be still." Command the inner man, become self-possessed, and conduct will be gradually freed from nervousness, haste, impulsiveness, mistakes, misunderstandings,

and fear. Ask yourself each time: Is this worthy of an exalted soul? Am I true to the soul as my real self, or am I a slave to sense? It is better to stand still twenty-four hours, as Socrates did once, until you get some light than to surrender the soul to mere impulse.

Finally, spiritual poise involves the understanding that occasionally one must apparently lose it. Even Jesus cried out on the cross as though forsaken. There are experiences which unnerve us and throw us off our balance. Again we seem utterly weak and disheartened. The supreme test of our trust in the infinite comes during these times of apparent relapse. It is a far greater attainment to remain firm when trouble comes than to be poised when the day is bright and shining. He who is really poised remembers that he has been through all this before; and, knowing every step of the way, he can patiently await the dawning of a better day. Patience, patience, and trust. Remember the eternal laws, and do not be weighed down

by circumstances. *Remember the soul.* And, if you faint by the wayside, rise again, and press forward. Your poise is not really gone. The universe has not been harmed. "For it is only the finite that has wrought and suffered. The infinite lies stretched in smiling repose."

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## IX. Soul-Growth.<sup>12</sup>

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“The promise of life, intelligently understood, is never broken to those who are willing to meet the conditions of its fulfilment: it is broken only by those who misread it or who fail to stand the tests which it imposes.”

—*Hamilton W. Mabie.*

**P**EACE, be still! Let us enter the realm of the soul for a season. Let us lay aside the cares and troubles of the busy, hurrying world about us. Let us even neglect physical sensation so far as possible, as well as the sense of time and the thought of space, that we may commune with one another in the abode of the eternal. For there is a region where time is of no account,

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12. A paper read before the Psychomath Society of Waltham, March, 1897.

where the moments are years and the years moments. It is ever present with us, ever here where one may enter it, if only the rush of thought and sensation be stilled, and the attention be turned from the passing moment to the eternal whole without which the moment could not be.

I do not mean a vague, airy realm existing only in the mind of some visionary enthusiast. Nor shall I attempt in this paper logically to prove that the soul exists; for proof is an affair of thought; and is infected with all the limitations of time and sense speculation. But I speak of that inmost essence which abides with us throughout the vicissitudes of experience, of which no man can have evidence except by looking within to find himself a living soul. And it is not my purpose here to consider the question of immortality, since that is largely a matter of personal conviction. I shall assume that each of us finds a self which is somehow unlike its world of sense experience, yet rises through

that experience into full self-expression. In other words, that, empirically, the soul has an evolution, yet is essentially dependent for its growth upon that eternal Being without whose existence evolution itself would be impossible. The method of soul development advocated is not, then, that of intellectual cultivation so much as daily—yes, constant—effort to open the mind afresh to the living, loving, sustaining Power in which our being is centred, and from which each may draw spiritual help and strength at will. I will try, then, to indicate some of the evidences that such a self exists, as an heir to this boundless region of love and power, and at the same time point out some of the applications of this spiritual knowledge to the problems of daily life.

For it is the existence of the soul, awakening to consciousness and attaining fuller and nobler self-expression, which alone gives unity to and justifies the existence of human life. Many answers have been given to the

question, Why are we here? and the problem is difficult because one answer alone will not suffice, because so many ends are fulfilled in humanity,—namely, beauty and utility, truth, love, and happiness, all the vocations and arts, physical strength and skill, the intellectual attainments, social life and moral perfection,—the expansion of all that is noblest in heart and mind. But all this is incomplete without the spiritual, and all these ends are insufficient to account for the suffering we endure and the hopes we cherish of continued existence. Unless there is a soul there behind it all and prefigured in it all, then we may not hope to account either for our most trying or for our most exalted experiences. And, obviously, if it is the soul which moves through all that has seemed mysterious, there is no surer method of adjustment to life than to understand ourselves from the spiritual point of view, and no better means of self-help than to turn directly within, accepting the ideal of soul-growth as the

supreme goal of life, instead of meddling with remote effects and externalities.

In order to gain some insight into the progressive experience of the soul, it is incumbent upon us, then, not only to still the outer self and listen for the inner voice, but to regard life as a purposeful whole. For, if the soul is to mean anything for us at all, we must regard it as that persistent moral and spiritual element of our experience which is the necessary condition of all finite existence. If it is also immortal, it is an ultimate individuation of the eternal Spirit, or God, therefore eternally different in each one of us, enjoying a sacred relation with the Father, and through him made capable of fulfilling a special mission.

In our daily life we are largely absorbed in the pains and pleasures of the moment, with almost no thought of their relationship as one whole. We evade opportunities as though some demon were trying to impose as many meaningless burdens upon us as possible;

and, when fate at last succeeds in bringing some profitable experience into our life, we pass it irreflectively by, obstinately refusing to penetrate to its meaning. Yet, turn from trouble as thoughtlessly as we may, we are forced to admit that hardship has done us good. Despite our precautions, all that we have passed through has left its mark upon us. We are, externally at least, what the past has made us; and each day we let occasions pass which might shape a better future for us if we would but give them the proper turn. There are indications, too, of a somewhat with us which is mysteriously working through and above our wills to create the larger man of the future. We are not always slaves to sense. We are not always sordid nor despondent. There are moments when we feel capable of living in other spheres than this, when we wonder at ourselves for so long remaining subservient to the claims and conditions of physical existence.

There is more in us than our lips confess, more even than the superficial self has ever realized.

Occasionally, one meets a person who seems to live wholly from within,—from the soul. There are moments and hours in life when one cannot mingle with people, even the best among one's friends. For something sacred is present. One cannot descend to talk and listen. One is oblivious of the physical world. A divine stillness rests upon all the surroundings and an unutterable joy fills the soul. Words cannot suggest it. People come and interrupt, but one is constrained to say, I must be about my Father's business. No duty can exceed in importance the receptivity to this highest moving. For it is only seldom that there is so slight a sense of separateness, and one feels that enough must be absorbed to touch the lowest that is in one's life.

It is in these occasional moments that we most truly live, when for a time the soul really declares itself, and life is seen as an ethical

whole, revealing a steady march of events from ignorance to knowledge and from weakness to strength, where everything points forward to the perfection of the soul. Every one has such moments; that is, every one is inspired according to the phase of development, and every one can learn to piece them together until conduct shall be transfigured by remembrance of their spirit and meaning. The first essential is to *observe* them, to *trust*, to follow intuition, and to learn through this spiritual self-reliance more and more to depend on the inner man. When one has at last learned to live from the soul, there is no need of argument to show that the soul exists. It is its own evidence. Nor can one argue successfully with one who lives only in the thought of time, that all experience means the development of character. But those who have wrought and suffered, failed, and been tried in the balance and found wanting, until at last they obtained peace from within, know whereof they speak when they declare that

the *growth or expression of the soul* is the one highest purpose in all that life brings, and that all else is incidental to this. Now I am far from saying that sorrow and suffering must pursue us all our days; but it is nevertheless well known that they know the most about life who have most deeply suffered and thought. Life is a superficial play until suffering makes it a reality. Theorists will tell you that you may escape it all, and that, if you will only hold the right ideals and rightly focus your thought-forces, you may glide smoothly into the channels of success. One may, it is true, escape much trouble in this way, since everything in life depends at last upon our mental attitude. And by suffering I do not mean mere physical pain. But it is those who have passed through the great experiences of life—the struggle for daily bread, the transition to manhood, love, marriage, separation from friends by death,—and have been developed by these experiences, whose souls are strongest and who know what life is, because they have

*lived it*. It is *character* that gives expression to the soul. Age signifies nothing. If we accept the opportunity when it comes, if, when we clearly see the better way, we *begin to act*, then our spiritual growth is rapid. But, if we do not rise to the occasion, we may postpone our lesson indefinitely. One may be a boy at fifty, making the same mistakes and passing through life as thoughtlessly as at twenty-five. Or one may be a man while in one's teens, if only one have learned to think and take prompt action, if one knows that life is not a farce, surely not a tragedy, but an experience where pain and pleasure come together, where one may rejoice even in the midst of hardship through the knowledge that every moment of life is an opportunity for the soul to come forth and show its power.

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One may thus live more in a month than many would live in a year. And it is *real life* that tells, not mere thought about it. Just as feeling is more real than thinking, which aims to interpret it, so the expansion of the soul is more

vital than the transient conditions of its growth. Each time trouble comes to us we are given a chance to show what stuff we are made of, and each time we may let the opportunity pass if we will. The discovery that contest and pain are a part of life, therefore discourages and overwhelms us or cheers and uplifts according to our view of it. Let it be once understood that disturbance, change, conflict of some sort, accompanies all creative effort, and we shall not look upon the throes of evolution as pain, but think constantly of the outcome. We shall then become superior to any and all conditions, and welcome *everything* that comes as a means to this one high end. We shall be deeply grateful that our life has been just what it has been, since it has given the soul opportunity to develop. And we shall live more and more in this spiritual consciousness, realizing that, so far as we yield to circumstances, the soul is held in subjection; for we live either for the one or the other,—either in the soul or in the conditions which

it uses. If I subordinate myself to the minds of others, I suppress and narrow my soul. If I accept other men's opinions instead of thinking resolutely for myself, if I am a mere machine for money-getting, a selfish capitalist or a fashionable pleasure-seeker, I am untrue to the best that is in me. Every day that each of us lives we meet the poor or suffering, the cheerless or afflicted, and may comfort them. Every day we have impulses to do good, to give, to express sympathy, to utter a word of encouragement, to *love*. If we suppress the impulse, we put another bond upon the soul. If we do the deed of kindness and brotherhood, our spiritual life is made the richer. He who lives on the plane of soul consciousness may thus develop where the complaining inhabitant of the sense realm sees neither growth nor happiness. And, if rightly understood, the opportunities for soul development may be made the basis of the greatest happiness in the world. He who meets life as though it meant something worth finding

out, and who expresses his best self, is the one who has a permanent basis of happiness. There may be times when the burden seems too hard to bear. But even then comes the dawn of relief. The strength of the soul is in proportion to the obstacles it must meet and master. Life is really never too hard. We are never cut off from the source of strength. But steadily, as the day follows night, pleasure pursues pain, and power accompanies the occasion for its manifestation.

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And this is no mere selfish life,—this conduct where one seeks to express the soul on every occasion. One expresses it, that other people may be helped. One is not seeking to save one's own soul. It is at once the supremest joy and the fulfilment of the highest purpose in life to open one's self spiritually to the source of all goodness, wisdom, and love, that one may distribute the spirit wherever one goes, letting it show in the meanest details of life,—in the countenance, in the spoken word, in

the deed of kindness, quickening in others the consciousness which has so beneficently lifted one out of sorrow and despair. There is no greater work than to quicken to consciousness the soul of a fellow-being, to touch him where he is undeveloped, to help mind and heart to grow, and to inspire in him a trust in the sacred integrity of his own individuality. One may thus become such a centre for the distribution of power that all shall feel it and respond, and the personal presence shall be an inspiration. The all-important point is *never to forget* one's high calling, never to lose one's hold of the Spirit within, and never to do anything which shall give offence to the soul in its desire to come out into activity and wholeness. And, if one does temporarily forget, then the first effort should be to quicken afresh the dormant sense of oneness with Deity. For the source of help is always the same, however great or small the difficulty. Each experience has its meaning in the purposeful whole, whose end is soul

development; and every moment is a fresh means of entry into the eternal realm where the great Over-soul abides.

How, then, shall one obtain spiritual help, when there are difficult problems to face and when sorrow and sickness come? The wisest of souls said, Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you. He also said, The kingdom of heaven is within; and he advised his disciples to enter there, and, having closed the door, pray in secret to the Father, who already knows what we have need of before we ask him. That is, heaven is the measure of spiritual poise each has attained. The essential on the human side is peace, *readiness*, recognition, receptivity. In the inmost realm, where the Father dwells, all things have been provided, just because there is a purposeful soul. There is a way out of all trouble and a solution for all difficult questions. There is peace and poise, wisdom, strength,

and health for us; but we must observe the condition of the coming of this kingdom.

The first thought, therefore, should always be one of peace, trust, and expectant receptivity. One should seek out some quiet, retired place, and, without urging the mind in any way, gradually drop all thought of the external world,—drop its problems, lay aside its cares and perplexities, and slowly lay off the atmospheres and influences of other minds until one is conscious of the soul. *There is no solution for trouble while we dwell upon it.* The pessimist makes no progress. The human mind learns only through contrast; and to know where we stand, wherein we have failed, and how to better our condition, it is absolutely essential that we view ourselves from a distance. And this can be done as well in one place as another, and even in the midst of trouble, if only one learns to abstract one's self from the environment for a time,—to throw off mental contaminations, clear away every thought which obscures

the real self, and turn the attention toward the higher Wisdom, which knows the way of escape. The mind cannot attend equally well to two objects any more than one can serve two masters. Break the connection between yourself and your trouble, and relief will come; and every moment that you keep the thought off self you will be growing stronger.

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This applies to disease as well as to moral and spiritual problems. For the mind either leads or is led: it is imprisoned by sensation or it redirects the feelings by vigorously turning away from that which is burdensome and painful. Idea, suggestion, or will,—whatever you may call it,—is the ultimate director of events in the mental world. Give the mind the right turn, lift the consciousness to the highest plane, and hold yourself still at the inmost centre, and you are then in a position to isolate the disturbed region or to command it as one having authority. Since the mind must be interested, let it then be absorbed with what *ought to be*.

See yourself, in thought, well, strong, happy, helpful, progressively realizing the divine ideal. Carry your consciousness over to the soul side of life, the purposeful, and open the mind, that you may learn the inner meaning of these struggles and diseases, throwing the will in line with the evolutionary tendency; for deep within each of us there is an instinct, a leading, which, usually obscured by opinions, conceits, selfishness, sensation, and the rest, is as surely present and as ready to guide us as the instinct of the animal, the aggressive life of nature in the budding plant, or the awakening energy of the spring. Like the life of the plant, the latent tendency is potentially all that we are ever to be. It is the dormant ideal of the soul, and that ideal comprehends even the minutest details of our complicated existence. It is literally and eternally true that, if one seeks this moving, if one can really persuade one's self to listen, if one finds the kingdom of the Spirit and desires only what the Father wills, that all else will

follow, that everything shall be provided for, that succor will come, opportunities will come, health will come, strength and wisdom will come. The law is absolute: the system of realization of the soul's ideal is complete. All that is asked of us is willingness to set aside our own ideas, that we may observe the one absolute condition of the higher guidance; namely, humility. *Become as a little child, and you shall have the wisdom and strength of a man.* One never really trusts the Father until one thus fully lays aside all that stands between, until one is ready to dismiss all plans and all fears, and quietly await the highest moving.

Yet this attitude of receptivity does not mean the sacrifice of individuality. It is not a weak attitude in any sense. The thought of peace and the realization of one's own dependence are necessary approaches to the inner realm. But, once there, one awakens to a new sense of sonship through recognition of the particular virtue for which one stands in the universe.

The solution to one's problem may not be clear at once. It may require many attempts really to rise to the level of the true self, and one may accomplish nothing more at first than to take off the nervous tension and lay aside the mental atmospheres of others. But even this is a great gain. Simply to know how to regain poise every time one loses it, to maintain inner peace amidst the hurrying crowd, is priceless wisdom; and, if you can learn to carry the spirit of solitude into the hurrying world of society, it is a greater attainment than to win this peace by leading the life of a recluse or ascetic. This condition of inner stillness once established as a habit, one has a basis on which to rest whenever there are momentous experiences to face; and in time one may learn to command it even under the most adverse conditions.

Let the trouble, then, be what it may, one has nothing to do with *effects*, since to dwell upon them means to magnify and aggravate them. The one universal method is to turn

always and habitually to the inner world,—to seek poise, centrality, self-possession, and there hold firm and confident. It may require time for the outer to correspond. At first, one will apparently fail, and simply stir up the lower self. But patience, patience, and again patience: the soul will conquer in the end, and bring all things in subjection to that. The mere realization that one is of individual worth in the universe is a help, for it gives one confidence and the courage of one's convictions. The thought that all experience means something for the soul always aids one to be patient and to take the universe on trust. The way may not be clear at first, and the meaning of a given experience may be extremely obscure. But there is always one way of adjustment to the situation which never fails. We can be faithful to the task at hand, living in the present and awaiting developments. It is far better to do this than ever to worry or be impatient. Oftentimes it is better to rest on our oars than try to stem

the tide. In fact, the one great lesson for all who are possessed by a high ideal is to put an end to all striving, to all effort to grow, so far as this effort involves a reaching forth from the living present, and then let the soul grow of itself. Spiritual unfoldment is a natural and easy consequence when the obstacles have been removed. It is the merely finite will, the agitation, the impatience, the fear and distrust, which bar the way. Stop these, and the soul will assume its rightful position. There is no fact of greater consequence than this. When we are in pain, whether physical or mental, when we are disturbed, in trouble, diseased, we are to know that the pain is not evil, but is an indication that nature is at work to restore harmony.

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Poise and patience are demanded of us,—not the nervous tension whereby we try to endure, but co-operation with nature's effort to regain her balance. There is no ground for fear when one understands, and the way to understanding lies through calmness. Nature's

resources, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, are placed in the hands of the one who observes this law. On whatever plane help may be needed, the principle is the same; namely, to seek first the inner kingdom, to gain spiritual self-possession and poise. And, if one obeys this law habitually, one may learn to avoid the extremes of ecstasy, depression, and the unhealthful reactions which follow close upon a too eager desire to grow.

Those who learn thus to enter within to become aware of themselves as souls may aid others to attain help by the same process. That is, first place yourself in conscious union with the universal Spirit, then turn in thought to the one whom you wish to help, realize the same truth for him, quietly, yet positively, and try to quicken his soul. I do not mean by thought transference, nor is the person helped simply because the mind is amenable to suggestion. The process is more truly that of induction through spiritual affinity. The other soul feels

and knows your power because you live from the soul, because you have touched life's reality, and possess the living essence. There is no need of words for those who can thus *feel*. There is no effort to control another's mind. The process is more like that which results when one meets a person of rare spiritual repose and strength of character or one who is unusually pure and sincere. One is instantly transported to a better world by such an atmosphere. And this is what each may do for the suffering and sorrowful. I am not therefore pleading for anything new, but for an extension of the sphere of spiritual helpfulness, so that by the intelligently directed inner consciousness one may send words of peace to those at a distance, or sit by the bedside and lift the afflicted mind to the spiritual plane.

The essential throughout, whether in helping one's self or another, is to hold the mind on the soul side of life, and avoid working upon sensation.

Another essential in one's spiritual development is the avoidance of all sadness and morbidity. It is easy for the sympathetic heart to be bound down by the woes of others; and there is enough misery to make us perpetual pessimists if we regard only one side of life.

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But one should very early learn to nip in the bud this tendency to take life over-seriously. The burden of the universe is not ours to bear alone,—no, nor that of the nation, not even that of the family; in a word, not even one's own trouble. "We never stated our griefs as lightly as we might," says Emerson. There is always underneath a sense of the humor of the situation, as though we could laugh at it all if we only would. We like to be coddled and told how badly we look. But it is all wrong, and disloyal to the soul.

The discovery that we are souls should be the source of boundless joy, for it opens up limitless realms of possible good works and

happiness. If the knowledge makes us sad, if religion, if any doctrine, makes us sad, then there is something wrong in our attitude; and we do not see life as it really is.

The notion still lingers that one should show only grief when calamity visits people or when our friends depart. Is it not selfish, does it not indicate that we are thinking of our personal loss? Would not our friends prefer to see us happy? And should not our love for them cause us to do that which would please them? It is on the plane of soul life that we have most deeply communed with our friends, and this tie is still unbroken. The rest is but superficial effect, and to grieve just because society says we must is once more to subordinate the soul to circumstance.

Moreover, grief, and particularly long-continued or suppressed grief, is an obstacle in nature's way. Depression contracts, happiness expands. Happiness must always be present in some form when we are in a normal condition;

and, if all is serious and gloomy, then let us first remedy that. There is nothing, no fact in life so gloomy that it is without its happy side; and it is a wise saying among philosophers that, if this aspect be omitted, one is not true to life. One should *create* happiness if it is absent. Find something cheerful to think about, and enlarge upon it. Always and ever, when one needs help, the thought should be of a light, buoyant, expansive kind, tending to take one out of self. Morbid self-consciousness and analysis should be avoided as one would keep clear of a demon. One can avoid these dangers of introspection by coupling some happy thought with the desire for help. Do not look down into yourself expecting to expand mentally, but open out in thought, just as you would mount the stairs of a country residence until you reach the observatory, where the eye commands a wide sweep of landscape. Rejoice with the stars and the birds. Count your blessings. Rehabilitate the memory of the good and the joyful; and,

if life seems too hard for the time being, take it on trust with the simplicity of a child. No philosophizing is worth the loss of spontaneity and youthfulness. It is a broader, more hopeful outlook that we need, a look outward and upward. Live in a large thought world, and your whole life shall expand as rapidly as the mind unfolds within. Hold fast to the soul, remain firm and poised, and you may be absolutely superior to outward effects, and be able to attract conditions like your inner mood. But do not expect your circumstances to change until you have changed within. It is when one has really *found* the kingdom that all else is to be added. Nor is it well to expect a rapid response while one is still subjectively imprisoned. One feels inclined to hurry Nature, and to force the body to respond. But the energy is misspent, and one may as well be content at the outset to let Nature have her way.

Frequently, then, one should cease all external effort, lay aside all opinions and

beliefs, and get a fresh start in the wonderful inner realm of the soul. He only is the growing man who gives himself repeated opportunity to change even his most sacred convictions. The only sacred thing is the bond between the finite soul and the Over-soul. All else is subject to change; and, in order to lift conduct to this high level, one must go to the fountain source, and readjust one's self to the inward flow of soul life. No matter what changes while that endures. One may lose friends occasionally because to continue in their company would mean to be untrue to the Spirit. One's tastes will alter, and life will assume new aspects. But every new experience will correspond to some development within, and everything will mean the growth of the soul into maturity and beauty of outward expression. View life this way, and it shall become ever happier and nobler. Dwell ever in the soul's realm, and you shall even pass through calamity, and be benefited by it. One's faith may, it is true, be tested more

severely each year, but only because one is the more capable of meeting the trial. There may be times when one seems utterly isolated from spiritual power. But the soul is always there, though momentarily quiescent; and one shall regain self-possession in due season.

In addition to the danger of becoming over-serious and morbid, one should also avoid becoming too subjective. There is a tendency among those who have learned that life is largely what we make it to place undue emphasis on this inner, or subjective, side to the neglect of the outer, or objective. The physical life is almost ignored by some. They take no exercise, and make little effort to apply their doctrines to practical life. But is this Nature's arrangement? In real life, wherever it is harmonious, do we not find both the subjective and the objective, both the brain and the hand? and is not that form of spirituality highest which makes wisest use of all that is found in human life? The universe has need of men and women, or they would

not be here. It is through the human touched by the divine that the highest revelations of life's reality are made. God himself apparently needs a universe in order to express or objectify himself. The divine life would be cold and dead without it, a mere interior dream, utterly passionless and solitary. It is the proceeding forth in forms of love and power through beings and things which makes infinite being real and vital. It is the development and expression of soul, of love, life, and power in us which completes us, and makes us vehicles of divinity. The inner realm should be visited only for temporary refreshment and the recovery of equilibrium. Then, when the mind is readjusted and strengthened, we should turn once more to the warm, pulsating life of humanity, and try to carry into the minutest details of commonplace existence this spirit of Deity, imbuing and uplifting it all. They lose half the beauty and joy of life who become subjective ascetics. The *expression* of the interior or divine vision is a far

greater attainment than the mere *perception* of it. Many have soul visions and beautiful theories of whom you may expect nothing in practical life. But the real test is the *life*, the conduct which shows that the existence of the soul and of God is no mere theory, that one does not dwell in a high-spun realm of idealism, but that this spiritual knowledge has sunk deep into the heart and mind, become a quickening factor, *a vital reality*. Until one thus makes one's doctrine a part of daily life, it is little more than a belief which some acute experience is likely to overthrow. It is when this truth has meant something in one's relations with society, when one has passed through great sorrow or calamity, and grown strong under it, that one really believes it. The ideals of practical life are the only true guides, not those of abstract speculation. *Actual* life is the highest life we yet know, and he who would lift society to a higher plane must himself be an active member of it. It may be very well for some to try Utopian

experiments, and isolate themselves for a season from our complex modern life. But little is to be hoped from them until they once more become truly *human*. You shall find as much soul in the life of the simple countryman as in the mind of the profoundest philosopher; for it is not *thought* alone that makes character, nor life under particular conditions. It is the expression of the *best* that is in us through superiority to any and all conditions.

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I cannot, however, close this account of the soul's share in our daily life without at least a suggestion of its impersonal side. He who seeks to enter the kingdom of heaven must in a sense disregard personality, so far, at least, as it is egoistic. It is only by impersonally longing for the highest that one is made most truly a person. Seek help and guidance as if you were nothing of yourself, as if only God were good, and you shall be exalted to the highest individual rank. There are seasons when one almost forgets who it is that contemplates; and all limitations

alike of personality and of our conditioned existence cease, to give place to a far-searching vision of the eternal. Let the visions come freely and fully as they will. Be true to the highest message God whispers to the inner man, and do not be afraid that individuality will be lost. It is when the soul cries out in humility, "What wilt thou have me to do?" that one is truly receptive, that one finds the real self.

To read the message of the soul, one must therefore be well versed in the language of feeling, that indefinable speech which communicates from heart to heart and from mind to mind life's choicest blessings and emotions. Oh, the peace, the quietness, and restfulness of those silent hours of the soul, when all is hushed without, when the mind is still and the soul is active, independently of sense stimulation. It is as though the centre of consciousness could be moved at will through boundless realms of heaven, peace, happiness, love, and beauty. It is like the rest which follows

years of toil, months of struggle and defeat,—the reward of persistency, and the resting-place prior to taking up life's task once more. Oh, holy relationship, when the soul is lifted up in thanksgiving to the faithful Father who has guided it through its long period of darkness when it even denied him! What wondrous happiness to be once more received into glad companionship with God!

A new epoch begins with such communion as this. The past seems utterly gone. The mind is washed clean, the spirit healed, and with a purer heart one dedicates the soul afresh to the service of the Highest. This it is literally to know that one has found the kingdom where all else will follow. One need not have a care, one need not plan nor worry; for this would mean the disregarding of the divine guidance. He only gives himself to the Father who gives himself absolutely. If the God in us commands the soul, then the soul shall control mind and body. In many people the body—

that is, impulse—still commands. Others are controlled by the mind; that is, by dogma, fear, pride, selfishness, opinion. But one who lives from the soul masters even the intellect, and in turn offers this as an instrument of divinity. This I understand to be the goal of all soul-growth, the mastery of all planes by which we climb to it, and then the renunciation of self that the Christ spirit may prevail.

It may be, as I have suggested throughout, that the soul does not really grow, but is in embryo all that we are ever to be. But, empirically, we have every reason to believe that the soul is more accurately a possibility, that it rises by its deeds, and is gradually freed from bondage, and that each may will to make it a reproduction of the Christ. There is every reason, then, in our search after the soul, to do justice to all aspects of its life,—to the conscious states associated with it, to the ethical meaning of life, to its due place in relation to nature and to man, to its individual gifts and the office of receptivity,

its relationship to the unity of the cosmos, its inmost heart as the home of personal choice and the centre of spiritual poise, and its mission in the world as a brother of the Christ.

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Our search has therefore everywhere brought us face to face with the same problem in different forms. If we regarded the human self from the point of view of the mind, or the passing states of consciousness, we were every time sent forward to look for the real ego which owns all these states, which feels, wills, thinks, loves, expresses itself in conduct and in moral choice, and observes its own qualities of mind. If we regarded the self as impulse, temptation, instinct, we each time found a higher self, which ever urges us on to attain the spiritual type. Looked at from the point of view of individuality and receptivity, our problem was to preserve undefiled the pure essence which distinguishes one soul from another. From the point of view of our social relationships, the problem was the full development of all sides of

our being, yet only that we might be the better fitted for an altruistic life. Thus we were led on from phase to phase of the inner life until the only solution of our problem proved to be this. He alone shall find the soul and know its nature and place in life who himself lives the fullest life, who loses his egoistic self that he may find the highest self in the realization of the Christ ideal. Every plane of life, then, is to have its due place. Our spirituality must fit us to live better here on the earth and with our fellow-men. Every experience that comes into our life is to be looked upon as a means to an end, and every incident in that experience as an opportunity for the solution of the one central question of our inquiry; namely, How shall we escape from self? For at every turn he who would know himself, he who would master himself, would live an ethical life, or attain the power and consciousness of the Christ, is confronted by self, personal desire, selfishness. And at every turn he must meet this self, and face the other

way if he would grow. He must say constantly, "Not my will, but thine, be done." He must not withdraw into self, but send himself out in love, peace, and fellowship, speaking from the soul to the soul of those whom it is his privilege to help.

Every opportunity met in this way shall deepen the hold upon the Highest, every act of kindness done in this spirit shall let in the sun of love and wisdom upon the dark places of our suffering human world. One may mount rapidly or slowly to this great kingdom of knowledge and power where the soul's mission lies. The choice is ours to say whether we shall free our souls from self or neglect the occasion. It is our part to await occasions, not to plan our life; to enter the silence and become receptive, that we may learn how to speak and be wisely active; to be faithful to all sides of life,—to head and heart, intuition and reason, self and society; and then, having understood

the law to obey it, to begin at once to realize this practical, rounded-out ideal.

This means that one shall have perfect trust that everything needed shall be given at the proper time. It means that everything shall at times seem dark until the moment before one is to act. It means that one is willing to give up all plans, all possessions, associates, and friends, if need be, that all these may hold a subordinate rank. But such faith as this is the supreme test of one's fitness to enter the highest kingdom of service. Only the utmost diligence, the repeated comparison of self and the Christ ideal, suffices to rid the mind of all its fears and selfish plans. But the kingdom is worth its price, and can be purchased for nothing less.

In the stillness of the inner realm a divine voice whispers, "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." "Peace, be still," we may say with assurance to everything in our being which offers resistance to the Spirit; and, when we thus speak, the lower self will know

intuitively that we speak with authority. The soul is capable of becoming absolute master of all else that is in us; and its supremacy shall become a living fact if only we cease to fight and to struggle, if we give up forever the attempt to crush the old man in us, and resolutely affirm the power and purity of the new. Ideals may help. Thought is a stimulus and an inspiration, and sympathetic friends may do a service for us of which we are individually incapable. But in the last analysis everything depends on the stand taken by the soul itself in true humility and willingness to follow where it is led. Our knowledge of the soul is scanty and imperfect. It is only glimpses that we have as yet of its deep reality and its glory. But all that is asked of us is fidelity to these rarest moments when we most fully live, when the great ideal is most clearly outlined before us. For these moments will become more frequent in proportion to their recognition, and the time will come when

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every moment shall be an inspired confession  
that we dwell eternally in the presence of God.

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