

develop among the ruins of the old a new "creature"—a new creature which, while the old is suffering Degeneration from Neglect, is gradually to unfold, to escape away and develop on spiritual lines to spiritual beauty and strength. And as our conception of spiritual being must be taken simply from natural being, our ideas of the lines along which the new religious nature is to run must be borrowed from the known lines of the old.

There is, for example, a Sense of Sight in the religious nature. Neglect this, leave it undeveloped, and you never miss it. You simply see nothing. But develop it and you see God. And the line along which to develop it is known to us. Become pure in heart. The pure in heart shall see God. Here, then, is one opening for soul-culture—the avenue through purity of heart to the spiritual seeing of God.

Then there is a Sense of Sound. Neglect this, leave it undeveloped, and you never miss it. You simply hear nothing. Develop it, and you hear God. And the line along which to develop it is known to us. Obey Christ. Become one of Christ's flock. "The sheep hear His voice, and He calleth them by name." Here, then, is another opportunity for the culture of the soul—a gateway through the Shepherd's fold to hear the Shepherd's voice.

And there is a Sense of Touch to be acquired—such a sense as the woman had who touched the hem of Christ's garment, that wonderful electric touch called faith, which moves the very heart of God.

And there is a sense of Taste—a spiritual hunger after God; a something within which tastes and sees that He is good. And there is the Talent for Inspiration. Neglect that, and all the scenery of the spiritual world is flat and frozen. But cultivate it, and it penetrates the whole soul with sacred fire, and illuminates creation with God. And last of all there is the great capacity for Love, even for the Love of God—the expanding capacity for feeling more and more its height and depth, its length and breadth. Till that is felt no man can really understand that word, "so great salvation," for what is its measure but that other "so" of Christ—God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son? Verily, how shall we escape if we neglect that?¹

¹ For the scientific basis of this spiritual law the following works may be consulted:—

The Origin of Species. By Charles Darwin, F.R.S. London: John Murray. 1872.

Degeneration. By E. Ray Lankester, F.R.S. London: Macmillan. 1880.

Der Ursprung der Wirbelthiere und das Princip des Functions-Wechsels. Dr. A. Dorn. Leipzig: 1875.

Lessons from Nature. By St. George Mivart, F.R.S. London: John Murray. 1876.

The Natural Conditions of Existence as they Affect Animal Life. Karl Semper. London: C. Kegan Paul & Co. 1881.

GROWTH

"Consider the lilies of the field how they grow."—*The Sermon on the Mount.*

"Nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dicit."—JUVENAL.

"Is not the evidence of Ease on the very front of all the greatest works in existence? Do they not say plainly to us, not 'that there has been a great effort here,' but 'there has been a great power here'? It is not the weariness of mortality but the strength of divinity, which we have to recognise in all mighty things; and that is just what we now never recognise, but think that we are to do great things by help of iron bars and perspiration; alas! we shall do nothing that way, but lose some pounds of our own weight."—RUSKIN.

WHAT gives the peculiar point to this object-lesson from the lips of Jesus is, that He not only made the illustration, but made the lilies. It is like an inventor describing his own machine. He made the lilies and He made me—both on the same broad principle. Both together, man and flower. He planted deep in the Providence of God; but as men are dull at studying themselves He points to this

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companion-phenomenon to teach us how to live a free and natural life, a life which God will unfold for us, without our anxiety, as He unfolds the flower. For Christ's words are not a general appeal to consider nature. Men are not to consider the lilies simply to admire their beauty, to dream over the delicate strength and grace of stem and leaf. The point they were to consider was *how they grew*—how without

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anxiety or care the flower woke into loveliness, how without weaving these leaves were woven, how without toiling these complex tissues spun themselves, and how without any effort or friction the whole slowly came ready-made from the loom of God in its more than Solomon-like glory. "So," he says, making the application beyond dispute, "you careworn, anxious men must grow. You, too, need take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink or what ye shall put on. For if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

This nature-lesson was a great novelty in its day; but all men now who have even a "little faith" have learned this Christian secret of a composed life. Apart even from the parable of the lily, the failures of the past have taught most of us the folly of disquieting ourselves in vain, and we have given up the idea that by taking thought we can add a cubic to our stature.

But no sooner has our life settled down to this calm trust in God than a new and graver anxiety begins. This time it is not for the body we are in travail, but for the soul. For the temporal life we have considered the lilies, but how is the spiritual life to grow? How are we to become better men? How are we to grow in grace? By what thought shall we add the cubits to the spiritual stature and reach the fulness of the Perfect Man? And because we know ill how to do this, the old anxiety comes back again and our inner life is once more an agony of conflict and remorse. After all, we have but transferred our anxious thoughts from the body to the soul. Our efforts after Christian growth seem only a succession of failures, and instead of rising into the beauty of holiness our life is a daily heartbreak and humiliation.

Now the reason of this is very plain. We have forgotten the parable of the lily. Violent efforts to grow are right in earnestness, but wholly wrong in principle. There is but one principle of growth both for the natural and spiritual, for animal and plant, for body and soul. For all growth is an organic thing. And the principle of growing in grace is once more this, "Consider the lilies *how they grow*."

In seeking to extend the analogy from

the body to the soul there are two things about the lilies' growth, two characteristics of all growth, on which one must fix attention. These are,—

First, Spontaneousness.

Second, Mysteriousness.

I. Spontaneousness. There are three lines along which one may seek for evidence of the spontaneousness of growth. The first is Science. And the argument here could not be summed up better than in the words of Jesus. The lilies grow, He says, of themselves; they toil not, neither do they spin. They grow, that is, automatically, spontaneously, without trying, without fretting, without thinking. Applied in any direction, to plant, to animal, to the body or to the soul this law holds. A boy grows, for example, without trying. One or two simple conditions are fulfilled, and the growth goes on. He thinks probably as little about the condition as about the result; he fulfils the conditions by habit, the result follows by nature. Both processes go steadily on from year to year apart from himself and all but in spite of himself. One would never think of *telling* a boy to grow. A doctor has no prescription for growth. He can tell me how growth may be stunted or impaired, but the process itself is recognised as beyond control—one of the few, and therefore very significant, things which Nature keeps in her own hands. No physician of souls, in like manner, has any prescription for spiritual growth. It is the question he is most often asked and most often answers wrongly. He may prescribe more earnestness, more prayer, more self-denial, or more Christian work. These are prescriptions for something, but not for growth. Not that they may not encourage growth; but the soul grows as the lily grows, without trying, without fretting, without ever thinking. Manuals of devotion, with complicated rules for getting on in the Christian life, would do well sometimes to return to the simplicity of nature; and earnest souls who are attempting sanctification by struggle instead of sanctification by faith might be spared much humiliation by learning the botany of the Sermon on the Mount. There *can* indeed be no other principle of growth than this. It is a vital act. And to try to *make* a thing grow is as absurd as to help the tide to come in or the sun rise.

Another argument for the spontaneousness of growth is universal experience. A boy not only grows without trying, but he cannot grow if he tries. No man by taking thought has ever added a cubit to his stature; nor has any man by mere working at his soul ever approached nearer to the stature of the Lord Jesus. The stature of the Lord Jesus was not itself reached by work, and he who thinks to approach its mystical height by anxious effort is really receding from it. Christ's life unfolded itself from a divine germ, planted centrally in His nature, which grew as naturally as a flower from a bud. This flower may be imitated; but one can always tell an artificial flower. The human form may be copied in wax, yet somehow one never fails to detect the difference. And this precisely is the difference between a native growth of Christian principle and the moral copy of it. The one is natural, the other mechanical. The one is a growth, the other an accretion. Now this, according to modern biology, is the fundamental distinction between the living and the not living, between an organism and a crystal. The living organism grows, the dead crystal increases. The first grows vitally from within, the last adds new particles from the outside. The whole difference between the Christian and the moralist lies here. The Christian works from the centre, the moralist from the circumference. The one is an organism, in the centre of which is planted by the living God a living germ. The other is a crystal, very beautiful it may be; but only a crystal—it wants the vital principle of growth.

And one sees here also, what is sometimes very difficult to see, why salvation in the first instance is never connected directly with morality. The reason is not that salvation does not demand morality, but that it demands so much of it that the moralist can never reach up to it. The end of Salvation is perfection, the Christlike mind, character and life. Morality is on the way to this perfection; it may go a considerable distance towards it, but it can never reach it. Only Life can do that. It requires something with enormous power of movement, of growth, of overcoming obstacles, to attain the perfect. Therefore the man who has within himself this great formative agent, Life, is nearer the end

than the man who has morality alone. The latter can never reach perfection; the former *must*. For the Life must develop out according to its type; and being a germ of the Christ-life, it must unfold into *a Christ*. Morality, at the utmost, only develops the character in one or two directions. It may perfect a single virtue here and there, but it cannot perfect all. And especially it fails always to give that rounded harmony of parts, that perfect tune to the whole orchestra, which is the marked characteristic of life. Perfect life is not merely the possessing of perfect functions, but of perfect functions perfectly adjusted to each other and all conspiring to a single result, the perfect working of the whole organism. It is not said that the character will develop in all its fulness in this life. That were a time too short for an Evolution so magnificent. In this world only the cornless ear is seen; sometimes only the small yet still prophetic blade. The sneer at the godly man for his imperfections is ill-judged. A blade is a small thing. At first it grows very near the earth. It is often soiled and crushed and downtrodden. But it is a living thing. That great dead stone beside it is more imposing; only it will never be anything else than a stone. But this small blade—*it doth not yet appear what it shall be*.

Seeing now that Growth can only be synonymous with a living automatic process, it is all but superfluous to seek a third line of argument from Scripture. Growth there is always described in the language of physiology. The regenerate soul is a new creature. The Christian is a new man in Christ Jesus. He adds the cubits to his stature just as the old man does. He is rooted and built up in Christ; he abides in the vine, and so abiding, not toiling or spinning, brings forth fruit. The Christian in short, like the poet, is born not made; and the fruits of his character are not manufactured things but living things, things which have grown from the secret germ, the fruits of the living Spirit. They are not the produce of this climate, but exotics from a sunnier land.

II. But, secondly, besides this Spontaneousness there is this other great characteristic of Growth—Mysteriousness. Upon this quality depends the fact, probably, that so few men ever fathom

its real character. We are most unspiritual always in dealing with the simplest spiritual things. A lily grows mysteriously, pushing up its solid weight of stem and leaf in the teeth of gravity. Shaped into beauty by secret and invisible fingers, the flower develops we know not how. But we do not wonder at it. Every day the thing is done; it is Nature, it is God. We are spiritual enough at least to understand that. But when the soul rises slowly above the world, pushing up its delicate virtues in the teeth of sin, shaping itself mysteriously into the image of Christ, we deny that the power is not of man. A strong will, we say, a high ideal, the reward of virtue, Christian influence,—these will account for it. Spiritual character is merely the product of anxious work, self-command, and self-denial. We allow, that is to say, a miracle to the lily, but none to the man. The lily may grow; the man must fret and toil and spin.

Now grant for a moment that by hard work and self-restraint a man may attain to a very high character. It is not denied that this can be done. But what is denied is that this is growth, and that this process is Christianity. The fact that you can account for it proves that it is not growth. For growth is mysterious; the peculiarity of it is that you cannot account for it. Mysteriousness, as Mozley has well observed, is "the test of spiritual birth." And this was Christ's test. "The wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, *so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*" The test of spirituality is that you cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. If you can tell, if you can account for it on philosophical principles, on the doctrine of influence, on strength of will, on a favourable environment, it is not growth. It may be so far a success, it may be a perfectly honest, even remarkable, and praiseworthy imitation, but it is not the real thing. The fruits are wax, the flowers artificial—you can tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth.

The conclusion is, then, that the Christian is a unique phenomenon. You cannot account for him. And if you could he would not be a Christian. Mozley has drawn the two characters for us in graphic words: "Take an ordinary man of the world—what he

thinks and what he does, his whole standard of duty is taken from the society in which he lives. It is a borrowed standard: he is as good as other people are; he does, in the way of duty, what is generally considered proper and becoming among those with whom his lot is thrown. He reflects established opinion on such points. He follows its lead. His aims and objects in life again are taken from the world around him, and from its dictation. What it considers honourable, worth having, advantageous and good, he thinks so too and pursues it. His motives all come from a visible quarter. It would be absurd to say that there is any mystery in such a character as this, because it is formed from a known external influence—the influence of social opinion and the voice of the world. 'Whence such a character cometh' we see; we venture to say that the source and origin of it is open and palpable, and we know it just as we know the physical causes of many common facts."

Then there is the other. "There is a certain character and disposition of mind of which it is true to say that 'thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.' . . . There are those who stand out from among the crowd, which reflects merely the atmosphere of feeling and standard of society around it, with an impress upon them which bespeaks a heavenly birth. . . . Now, when we see one of those characters, it is a question which we ask ourselves, How has the person become possessed of it? Has he caught it from society around him? That cannot be, because it is wholly different from that of the world around him. Has he caught it from the inoculation of crowds and masses, as the mere religious zealot catches his character? That cannot be either, for the type is altogether different from that which masses of men, under enthusiastic impulses, exhibit. There is nothing gregarious in this character; it is the individual's own; it is not borrowed, it is not a reflection of any fashion or tone of the world outside; it rises up from some fount within, and it is a creation of which the text says, We know not whence it cometh."¹

Now we have all met these two characters—the one eminently respectable, upright, virtuous, a trifle cold perhaps, and generally, when critically examined, revealing

¹ *University Sermons*, pp. 234-241.

somehow the mark of the tool; the other with God's breath still upon it, an inspiration; not more virtuous, but differently virtuous; not more humble, but different, wearing the meek and quiet spirit artlessly as to the manner born. The other-worldliness of such a character is the thing that strikes you; you are not prepared for what it will do or say or become next, for it moves from a far-off centre, and in spite of its transparency and sweetness, that presence fills you always with awe. A man never feels the discord of his own life, never hears the jar of the machinery by which he tries to manufacture his own good points, till he has stood in the stillness of such a presence. Then he discerns the difference between growth and work. He has considered the lilies, how they grow.

We have now seen that spiritual growth is a process maintained and secured by a spontaneous and mysterious inward principle. It is a spontaneous principle even in its origin, for it bloweth where it listeth; mysterious in its operation, for we can never tell whence it cometh; obscure in its destination, for we cannot tell whence it goeth. The whole process therefore transcends us; we do not work, we are taken in hand—"it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." We do not plan—we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

There may be an obvious objection to all this. It takes away all conflict from the Christian life? It makes man, does it not, mere clay in the hands of the potter? It crushes the old character to make a new one, and destroys man's responsibility for his own soul?

Now we are not concerned here in once more striking the time-honoured "balance between faith and works." We are considering how lilies grow, and in a specific connection, namely, to discover the attitude of mind which the Christian should preserve regarding his spiritual growth. That attitude, primarily, is to be free from care. We are not lodging a plea for inactivity of the spiritual energies, but for the tranquillity of the spiritual mind. Christ's protest is not against work, but against anxious thought; and rather, therefore, than complement the lesson by showing the other side, we take the risk of still further extending the plea in the original direction.

What is the relation, to recur again to analogy, between growth and work in a boy? Consciously, there is no relation at all. The boy never thinks of connecting his work with his growth. Work in fact is one thing and growth another, and it is so in the spiritual life. If it be asked therefore, Is the Christian wrong in these ceaseless and agonising efforts after growth? the answer is, Yes, he is quite wrong, or at least, he is quite mistaken. When a boy takes a meal or denies himself indigestible things, he does not say, "All this will minister to my growth"; or when he runs a race he does not say, "This will help the next cubit of my stature." It may or it may not be true that these things will help his stature, but, if he thinks of this, his idea of growth is morbid. And this is the point we are dealing with. His anxiety here is altogether irrelevant and superfluous. Nature is far more bountiful than we think. When she gives us energy she asks none of it back to expend on our own growth. She will attend to that. "Give your work," she says, "and your anxiety to others; trust me to add the cubits to your stature." If God is adding to our spiritual stature, unfolding the new nature within us, it is a mistake to keep twitching at the petals with our coarse fingers. We must seek to let the Creative Hand alone. "It is God which giveth the increase." Yet we never know how little we have learned of the fundamental principle of Christianity till we discover how much we are all bent on supplementing God's free grace. If God is spending work upon a Christian, let him be still and know that it is God. And if he wants work, he will find it there—in the being still.

Not that there is no work for him who would grow, to do. There is work, and severe work,—work so great that the worker deserves to have himself relieved of all that is superfluous during his task. If the amount of energy lost in trying to grow were spent in fulfilling rather the conditions of growth, we should have many more cubits to show for our stature. It is with these conditions that the personal work of the Christian is chiefly concerned. Observe for a moment what they are, and their exact relation. For its growth the plant needs heat, light, air, and moisture. A man, therefore, must go in search of these, or their spiritual equivalents, and this is his work? By no means.

The Christian's work is not yet. Does the plant go in search of its conditions? Nay, the conditions come to the plant. It no more manufactures the heat, light, air, and moisture, than it manufactures its own stem. It finds them all around it in Nature. It simply stands still with its leaves spread out in unconscious prayer, and Nature lavishes upon it these and all other bounties, bathing it in sunshine, pouring the nourishing air over and over it, reviving it graciously with its nightly dew. Grace, too, is as free as the air. The Lord God is a Sun. He is as the Dew to Israel. A man has no more to manufacture these than he has to manufacture his own soul. He stands surrounded by them, bathed in them, beset behind and before by them. He lives and moves and has his being in them. How then shall he go in search of them? Do not they rather go in search of him? Does he not feel how they press themselves upon him? Does he not know how unweariedly they appeal to him? Has he not heard how they are sorrowful when he will not have them? His work, therefore, is not yet. The voice still says, "Be still."

The conditions of growth, then, and the inward principle of growth being both supplied by Nature, the thing man has to do, the little junction left for him to complete, is to apply the one to the other. He manufactures nothing; he earns nothing; he need be anxious for nothing; his one duty is *to be in* these conditions, to abide in them, to allow grace to play over him, to be still therein and know that this is God.

The conflict begins and prevails in all its life-long agony the moment a man forgets this. He struggles to grow himself instead of struggling to get back again into position. He makes the church into a workshop when God meant it to be a beautiful garden. And even in his closet, where only should reign silence—a silence as of the mountains whereon the lilies grow—is heard the roar and tumult of

machinery. True, a man will often have to wrestle with his God—but not for growth. The Christian life is a composed life. The Gospel is Peace. Yet the most anxious people in the world are Christians—Christians who misunderstand the nature of growth. Life is a perpetual self-condemning because they are not growing. And the effect is not only the loss of tranquillity to the individual. The energies which are meant to be spent on the work of Christ are consumed in the soul's own fever. So long as the Church's activities are spent on growing there is nothing to spare for the world. A soldier's time is not spent in earning the money to buy his armour, in finding food and raiment, in seeking shelter. His king provides these things that he may be the more at liberty to fight his battles. So, for the soldier of the Cross all is provided. His Government has planned to leave him free for the Kingdom's work.

The problem of the Christian life finally is simplified to this—man has but to preserve the right attitude. To abide in Christ, to be in position, that is all. Much work is done on board a ship crossing the Atlantic. Yet none of it is spent on making the ship go. The sailor but harnesses his vessel to the wind. He puts his sail and rudder in position, and lo, the miracle is wrought. So everywhere God creates, man utilises. All the work of the world is merely a taking advantage of energies already there.¹ God gives the wind, and the water, and the heat; man but puts himself in the way of the wind, fixes his water-wheel in the way of the river, puts his piston in the way of the steam; and so holding himself in position before God's spirit, all the energies of Omnipotence course within his soul. He is like a tree planted by a river whose leaf is green and whose fruits fail not. Such is the deeper lesson to be learned from considering the lily. It is the voice of Nature echoing the whole evangel of Jesus, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.

¹ See Bushnell's *New Life*.

DEATH

"To be carnally minded is Death."—PAUL.

"I do not wonder at what men suffer, but I wonder often at what they lose."—RUSKIN.

"What could be easier than to form a catena of the most philosophical defenders of Christianity, who have exhausted language in declaring the impotence of the unassisted intellect? Comte has not more explicitly enounced the incapacity of man to deal with the Absolute and the Infinite than the whole series of orthodox writers. Trust your reason, we have been told till we are tired of the phrase, and you will become Atheists or Agnostics. We take you at your word; we become Agnostics."—LESLIE STEPHEN.

"DEATH," wrote Faber, "is an unsurveyed land, an unarranged Science." Poetry draws near Death only to hover over it for a moment and withdraw in terror. History knows it simply as a universal fact. Philosophy finds it among the mysteries of being, the one great mystery of being not. All contributions to this dread theme are marked by an essential vagueness, and every avenue of approach seems darkened by impenetrable shadow.

But modern Biology has found its part of its work to push its way into this silent land, and at last the world is confronted with a scientific treatment of Death. Not that much is added to the old conception, or much taken from it. What it is, this certain Death with its uncertain issues, we know as little as before. But we can define more clearly and attach a narrower meaning to the momentous symbol.

The interest of the investigation here lies in the fact that Death is one of the outstanding things in Nature which has an acknowledged spiritual equivalent. The prominence of the word in the vocabulary of Revelation cannot be exaggerated. Next to Life the most pregnant symbol in religion is its antithesis, Death. And from the time that "If thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" was heard in Paradise, this solemn word has been linked with human interests of eternal moment.

Notwithstanding the unparalleled emphasis upon this term in the Christian system, there is none more feebly expressive to the ordinary mind. That mystery which surrounds the word in the natural world shrouds only too completely its spiritual import. The reluctance which prevents men from investigating the secrets of the King of Terrors is for a certain length entitled to respect. But it has left theology with only the

vaguest materials to construct a doctrine which, intelligently enforced, ought to appeal to all men with convincing power and lend the most effective argument to Christianity. Whatever may have been its influence in the past, its threat is gone for the modern world. The word has grown weak. Ignorance has robbed the Grave of all its terror, and platitude despoilt Death of its sting. Death itself is ethically dead. Which of us, for example, enters fully into the meaning of words like these: "She that liveth in pleasure is *dead* while she liveth"? Who allows adequate weight to the metaphor in the Pauline phrase, "To be carnally minded is *Death*"; or in this, "The wages of sin is *Death*"? Or what Theology has translated into the language of human life the terrific practical import of "Dead in trespasses and sins"? To seek to make these phrases once more real and burning; to clothe time-worn formulæ with living truth; to put the deepest ethical meaning into the gravest symbol of Nature, and fill up with its full consequence the darkest threat of Revelation—these are the objects before us now.

What, then, is Death? Is it possible to define it and embody its essential meaning in an intelligible proposition?

The most recent and the most scientific attempt to investigate Death we owe to the biological studies of Mr. Herbert Spencer. In his search for the meaning of Life the word Death crosses his path, and he turns aside for a moment to define it. Of course what Death is depends upon what Life is. Mr. Herbert Spencer's definition of Life, it is well known, has been subjected to serious criticism. While it has shed much light on many of the phenomena of Life, it cannot be affirmed that it has taken its place in science as the final solution of the fundamental

problem of biology. No definition of Life, indeed, that has yet appeared can be said to be even approximately correct. Its mysterious quality evades us; and we have to be content with outward characteristics and accompaniments, leaving the thing itself an unsolved riddle. At the same time Mr. Herbert Spencer's masterly elucidation of the chief phenomena of Life has placed philosophy and science under many obligations, and in the paragraphs which follow we shall have to incur a further debt on behalf of religion.

The meaning of Death depending, as has been said, on the meaning of Life, we must first set ourselves to grasp the leading characteristics which distinguish living things. To a physiologist the living organism is distinguished from the not-living by the performance of certain functions. These functions are four in number—Assimilation, Waste, Reproduction, and Growth. Nothing could be a more interesting task than to point out the co-relatives of these in the spiritual sphere, to show in what ways the discharge of these functions represent the true manifestations of spiritual life, and how the failure to perform them constitutes spiritual Death. But it will bring us more directly to the specific subject before us if we follow rather the newer biological lines of Mr. Herbert Spencer. According to his definition, Life is "The definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external co-existences and sequences,"¹ or more shortly "The continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations."² An example or two will render these important statements at once intelligible.

The essential characteristic of a living organism, according to these definitions, is that it is in vital connection with its general surroundings. A human being, for instance, is in direct contact with the earth and air, with all surrounding things, with the warmth of the sun, with the music of birds, with the countless influences and activities of nature and of his fellow-men. In biological language he is said thus to be "in correspondence with his environment." He is, that is to say, in active and vital connection with them, influencing them possibly, but especially being influenced by them. Now it is in virtue of this correspondence that he is

¹ *Principles of Biology*, vol. i. p. 74. ² *Ibid.*

entitled to be called alive. So long as he is in correspondence with any given point of his environment, he lives. To keep up this correspondence is to keep up life. If his environment changes he must instantly adjust himself to the change. And he continues living only as long as he succeeds in adjusting himself to the "simultaneous and successive changes in his environment," as these occur. What is meant by a change in his environment may be understood from an example, which will at the same time define more clearly the intimacy of the relation between environment and organism. Let us take the case of a civil servant whose environment is a district in India. It is a region subject to occasional and prolonged droughts resulting in periodical famines. When such a period of scarcity arises, he proceeds immediately to adjust himself to this external change. Having the power of locomotion, he may remove himself to a more fertile district, or, possessing the means of purchase, he may add to his old environment by importation the "external relations" necessary to continued life. But if from any cause he fails to adjust himself to the altered circumstances, his body is thrown out of correspondence with his environment, his "internal relations" are no longer adjusted to his "external relations," and his life must cease.

In ordinary circumstances, and in health, the human organism is in thorough correspondence with its surroundings; but when any part of the organism by disease or accident is thrown out of correspondence, it is in that relation dead.

This Death, this want of correspondence, may be either partial or complete. Part of the organism may be dead to a part of the environment, or the whole to the whole. Thus the victim of famine may have a certain number of his correspondences arrested by the change in his environment, but not all. Luxuries which he once enjoyed no longer enter the country, animals which once furnished his table are driven from it. These still exist, but they are beyond the limit of his correspondence. In relation to these things therefore he is dead. In one sense it might be said that it was the environment which played him false; in another, that it was his own organisation—that he was unable to adjust himself, or did not. But, however caused, he pays the penalty with partial Death.

Suppose next the case of a man who is thrown out of correspondence with a part of his environment by some physical infirmity. Let it be that by disease or accident he has been deprived of the use of his ears. The deaf man, in virtue of this imperfection, is thrown out of *rapport* with a large and well-defined part of the environment, namely, its sounds. With regard to that "external relation," therefore, he is no longer living. Part of him may truly be held to be insensible or "Dead." A man who is also blind is thrown out of correspondence with another large part of his environment. The beauty of sea and sky, the forms of cloud and mountain, the features and gestures of friends, are to him as if they were not. They are there, solid and real, but not to him; he is still further "Dead." Next, let it be conceived, the subtle finger of cerebral disease lays hold of him. His whole brain is affected, and the sensory nerves, the medium of communication with the environment, cease altogether to acquaint him with what is doing in the outside world. The outside world is still there, but not to him; he is still further "Dead." And so the death of parts goes on. He becomes less and less alive. "Were the animal frame not the complicated machine we have seen it to be, death might come as a simple and gradual dissolution, the 'sans everything' being the last stage of the successive loss of fundamental powers."¹ But finally some important part of the mere animal framework that remains breaks down. The correlation with the other parts is very intimate, and the stoppage of correspondence with one means an interference with the work of the rest. Something central has snapped, and all are thrown out of work. The lungs refuse to correspond with the air, the heart with the blood. There is now no correspondence whatever with environment—the thing, for it is now a thing, is Dead.

This then is Death; "part of the framework breaks down," "something has snapped"—these phrases by which we describe the phases of death yield their full meaning. They are different ways of saying that "correspondence" has ceased. And the scientific meaning of Death now becomes clearly intelligible. Dying is that breakdown in an organism which throws it out of correspondence with some

necessary part of the environment. Death is the result produced, the want of correspondence. We do not say that this is all that is involved. But this is the root idea of Death—Failure to adjust internal relations to external relations, failure to repair broken inward connection sufficiently to enable it to correspond again with the old surroundings. These preliminary statements may be fitly closed with the words of Mr. Herbert Spencer: "Death by natural decay occurs because in old age the relations between assimilation, oxidation, and genesis of force going on in the organism gradually fall out of correspondence with the relations between oxygen and food and absorption of heat by the environment. Death from disease arises either when the organism is congenitally defective in its power to balance the ordinary external actions by the ordinary internal actions, or when there has taken place some unusual external action to which there was no answering internal action. Death by accident implies some neighbouring mechanical changes of which the causes are either unnoticed from inattention, or are so intricate that their results cannot be foreseen, and consequently certain relations in the organism are not adjusted to the relations in the environment."¹

With the help of these plain biological terms we may now proceed to examine the parallel phenomenon of Death in the spiritual world. The factors with which we have to deal are two in number as before—Organism and Environment. The relation between them may once more be denominated by "correspondence." And the truth to be emphasised resolves itself into this, that Spiritual Death is a want of correspondence between the organism and the spiritual environment.

What is the spiritual environment? This term obviously demands some further definition. For Death is a relative term. And before we can define Death in the spiritual world we must first apprehend the particular relation with reference to which the expression is to be employed. We shall best reach the nature of this relation by considering for a moment the subject of environment generally. By the natural environment we mean the entire surroundings of the natural man, the entire external world in which he lives and moves and has his being. It is not involved in the idea that either with all or

¹ Foster's *Physiology*, p. 642.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 88, 89.

part of this environment he is in immediate correspondence. Whether he correspond with it or not, it is there. There is in fact a conscious environment and an environment of which he is not conscious; and it must be borne in mind that the conscious environment is not all the environment that is. All that surrounds him, all that environs him, conscious or unconscious, is environment. The moon and stars are part of it, though in the daytime he may not see them. The polar regions are parts of it, though he is seldom aware of their influence. In its widest sense environment simply means all else that is.

Now it will next be manifest that different organisms correspond with this environment in varying degrees of completeness or incompleteness. At the bottom of the biological scale we find organisms which have only the most limited correspondence with their surroundings. A tree, for example, corresponds with the soil about its stem, with the sunlight, and with the air in contact with its leaves. But it is shut off by its comparatively low development from a whole world to which higher forms of life have additional access. The want of locomotion alone circumscribes most seriously its area of correspondence, so that to a large part of surrounding nature it may truly be said to be dead. So far as consciousness is concerned, we should be justified indeed in saying that it was not alive at all. The murmur of the stream which bathes its roots affects it not, The marvellous insect-life beneath its shadow excites in it no wonder. The tender maternity of the bird which has its nest among its leaves stirs no responsive sympathy. It cannot correspond with those things. To stream and insect and bird it is insensible, torpid, dead. For this is Death, this irresponsiveness.

The bird, again, which is higher in the scale of life, corresponds with a wider environment. The stream is real to it, and the insect. It knows what lies behind the hill; it listens to the love-song of its mate. And to much besides beyond the simple world of the tree this higher organism is alive. The bird we should say is more living than the tree; it has a correspondence with a larger area of environment. But this bird-life is not yet the highest life. Even within the immediate bird-environment there is much to which the bird must still be held to

be dead. Introduce a higher organism, place man himself within this same environment, and see how much more living he is. A hundred things which the bird never saw in insect, stream, and tree appeal to him. Each single sense has something to correspond with. Each faculty finds an appropriate exercise. Man is a mass of correspondences, and because of these, because he is alive to countless objects and influences to which lower organisms are dead, he is the most living of all creatures.

The relativity of Death will now have become sufficiently obvious. Man being left out of account, all organisms are seen as it were to be partly living and partly dead. The tree, in correspondence with a narrow area of environment, is to that extent alive; to all beyond, to the all but infinite area beyond, it is dead. A still wider portion of this vast area is the possession of the insect and the bird. Theirs also, nevertheless, is but a little world, and to an immense further area insect and bird are dead. All organisms likewise are living and dead—living to all within the circumference of their correspondences, dead to all beyond. As we rise in the scale of life, however, it will be observed that the sway of Death is gradually weakened. More and more of the environment becomes accessible as we ascend, and the domain of life in this way slowly extends in ever-widening circles. But until man appears there is no organism to correspond with the whole environment. Till then the outermost circles have no correspondents. To the inhabitants of the innermost spheres they are as if they were not.

Now follows a momentous question. Is man in correspondence with the whole environment? When we reach the highest living organism, is the final blow dealt to the kingdom of Death? Has the last acre of the infinite area been taken in by his finite faculty? Is his conscious environment the whole environment? Or is there, among these outermost circles, one which with his multitudinous correspondences he fails to reach? If so, this is Death. The question of Life or Death to him is the question of the amount of remaining environment he is able to compass. If there be one circle or one segment of a circle which he yet fails to reach, to correspond with, to know, to be influenced

by, he is, with regard to that circle or segment, dead.

What then, practically, is the state of the case? Is man in correspondence with the whole environment or is he not? There is but one answer. He is not. Of men generally it cannot be said that they are in living contact with that part of the environment which is called the spiritual world. In introducing this new term spiritual world, observe, we are not interpolating a new factor. This is an essential part of the old idea. We have been following out an ever-widening environment from point to point, and now we reach the outermost zones. The spiritual world is simply the outermost segment, circle, or circles, of the natural world. For purposes of convenience we separate the two just as we separate the animal world from the plant. But the animal world and the plant world are the same world. They are different parts of one environment. And the natural and spiritual are likewise one. The inner circles are called the natural, the outer the spiritual. And we call them spiritual simply because they are beyond us or beyond a part of us. What we have correspondence with, that we call natural; what we have little or no correspondence with, that we call spiritual. But when the appropriate corresponding organism appears, the organism, that is, which can freely communicate with these outer circles, the distinction necessarily disappears. The spiritual to it becomes the outer circle of the natural.

Now of the great mass of living organisms, of the great mass of men, is it not to be affirmed that they are out of correspondence with this outer circle? Suppose, to make the final issue more real, we give this outermost circle of environment a name. Suppose we call it God. Suppose also we substitute a word for "correspondence" to express more intimately the personal relation. Let us call it Communion. We can now determine accurately the spiritual relation of different sections of mankind. Those who are in communion with God live, those who are not are dead.

The extent or depth of this communion, the varying degrees of correspondence in different individuals, and the less or more abundant life which these result in, need not concern us for the present. The task we have set ourselves is to investigate the

essential nature of Spiritual Death. And we have found it to consist in a want of communion with God. The unspiritual man is he who lives in the circumscribed environment of this present world. "She that liveth in pleasure is Dead while she liveth." "To be carnally minded is Death." To be carnally minded, translated into the language of science, is to be limited in one's correspondences to the environment of the natural man. It is no necessary part of the conception that the mind should be either purposely irreligious, or directly vicious. The mind of the flesh, *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*, by its very nature, limited capacity, and time-ward tendency, is *θάνατος*, Death. This earthly mind may be of noble calibre, enriched by culture, high toned, virtuous and pure. But if it know not God? What though its correspondences reach to the stars of heaven or grasp the magnitudes of Time and Space? The stars of heaven are not heaven. Space is not God. This mind, certainly, has life, life up to its level. There is no trace of Death. Possibly too, it carries its deprivation lightly, and, up to its level, lives content. We do not picture the possessor of this carnal mind as in any sense a monster. We have said he may be high-toned, virtuous, and pure. The plant is not a monster because it is dead to the voice of the bird; nor is he a monster who is dead to the voice of God. The contention at present simply is that he is *Dead*.

We do not need to go to Revelation for the proof of this. That has been rendered unnecessary by the testimony of the Dead themselves. Thousands have uttered themselves upon their relation to the Spiritual World, and from their own lips we have the proclamation of their Death. The language of theology in describing the state of the natural man is often regarded as severe. The Pauline anthropology has been challenged as an insult to human nature. Culture has opposed the doctrine that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And even some modern theologies have refused to accept the most plain of the aphorisms of Jesus, that "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." But this stern doctrine of the spiritual

marvellous.

Note

very good

deadness of humanity is no mere dogma of a past theology. The history of thought during the present century proves that the world has come round spontaneously to the position of the first. One of the ablest philosophical schools of the day erects a whole antichristian system on this very doctrine. Seeking by means of it to sap the foundation of spiritual religion, it stands unconsciously as the most significant witness for its truth. What is the creed of the Agnostic, but the confession of the spiritual numbness of humanity? The negative doctrine which it reiterates with such sad persistency, what is it but the echo of the oldest of scientific and religious truths? And what are all these gloomy and rebellious infidelities, these touching, and too sincere confessions of universal nescience, but a protest against this ancient Law of Death?

The Christian apologist never further misses the mark than when he refuses the testimony of the Agnostic to himself. When the Agnostic tells me he is blind and deaf, dumb, torpid and dead to the spiritual world, I must believe him. Jesus tells me that. Paul tells me that. Science tells me that. He knows nothing of this outermost circle; and we are compelled to trust his sincerity as readily when he deploras it as if, being a man without an ear, he professed to know nothing of a musical world, or being without taste, of a world of art. The nescience of the Agnostic philosophy is the proof from experience that to be carnally minded is Death. Let the theological value of the concession be duly recognised. It brings no solace to the unspiritual man to be told he is mistaken. To say he is self-deceived is neither to compliment him nor Christianity. He builds in all sincerity who raises his altar to the *Unknown* God. He does not know God. With all his marvellous and complex correspondences, he is still one correspondence short.

It is a point worthy of special note that the proclamation of this truth has always come from science rather than from religion. Its general acceptance by thinkers is based upon the universal failure of a universal experiment. The statement, therefore, that the natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit, is never to be charged against the intolerance of theology. There is no

point at which theology has been more modest than here. It has left the preaching of a great fundamental truth almost entirely to philosophy and science. And so very moderate has been its tone, so slight has been the emphasis placed upon the paralysis of the natural with regard to the spiritual, that it may seem to some to have been intolerantly tolerant. No harm certainly could come now, no offence could be given to science, if religion asserted more clearly its right to the spiritual world. Science has paved the way for the reception of one of the most revolutionary doctrines of Christianity; and if Christianity refuses to take advantage of the opening it will manifest a culpable want of confidence in itself. There never was a time when its fundamental doctrines could more boldly be proclaimed, or when they could better secure the respect and arrest the interest of Science.

To all this, and apparently with force, it may, however, be objected that to every man who truly studies Nature there is a God. Call him by whatever name—a Creator, a Supreme Being, a Great First Cause, a Power that makes for Righteousness—Science has a God; and he who believes in this, in spite of all protest, possesses a theology. "If we will look at things, and not merely at words, we shall soon see that the scientific man has a theology and a God, a most impressive theology, a most awful and glorious God. I say that man believes in a God, who feels himself in the presence of a Power which is not himself, and is immeasurably above himself, a Power in the contemplation of which he is absorbed, in the knowledge of which he finds safety and happiness. And such now is Nature to the scientific man."¹ Such now, we humbly submit, is Nature to very few. Their own confession is against it. That they are "absorbed" in the contemplation we can well believe. That they might "find safety and happiness" in the knowledge of Him is also possible—if they had it. But this is just what they tell us they have not. What they deny is not a God. It is the correspondence. The very confession of the Unknowable is itself the dull recognition of an Environment beyond themselves, and for which they feel they lack the correspondence. It is this want that makes their God the Unknown

¹ *Natural Religion*, p. 19.

well expressed.

God. And it is this that makes them dead.

We have not said, or implied, that there is not a God of Nature. We have not affirmed that there is no Natural Religion. We are assured there is. We are even assured that without a Religion of Nature Religion is only half complete ; that without a God of Nature the God of Revelation is only half intelligible and only partially known. God is not confined to the outermost circle of environment, He lives and moves and has His being in the whole. Those who only seek Him in the further zone can only find a part. The Christian who knows not God in Nature, who does not, that is to say, correspond with the whole environment, most certainly is partially dead. The author of *Ecce Homo* may be partially right when he says : "I think a bystander would say that though Christianity had in it something far higher and deeper and more ennobling, yet the average scientific man worships just at present a more awful, and, as it were, a greater Deity than the average Christian. In so many Christians the idea of God has been degraded by childish and little-minded teaching ; the Eternal and the Infinite and the All-embracing has been represented as the head of the clerical interest, as a sort of clergyman, as a sort of schoolmaster, as a sort of philanthropist. But the scientific man knows Him to be eternal ; in astronomy, in geology, he becomes familiar with the countless millenniums of His lifetime. The scientific man strains his mind actually to realise God's infinity. As far off as the fixed stars he traces Him, 'distance inexpressible by numbers that have name.' Meanwhile, to the theologian, infinity and eternity are very much of empty words when applied to the Object of his worship. He does not realise them in actual facts and definite computations."¹ Let us accept this rebuke. The principle that want of correspondence is Death applies all round. He who knows not God in Nature only partially lives. The converse of this, however is not true ; and that is the point we are insisting on. He who knows God only in Nature lives not. There is no "correspondence" with an Unknown God, no "continuous adjustment" to a fixed First Cause. There is no "assimilation" of Natural Law ; no growth in

¹ *Natural Religion*, p. 20.

the Image of "the All-embracing." To correspond with the God of Science assuredly is not to live. "This is Life Eternal, to know Thee, *the true God*, and *Jesus Christ* Whom Thou hast sent."

From the service we have tried to make natural science render to our religion, we might be expected possibly to take up the position that the absolute contribution of Science to Revelation was very great. On the contrary, it is very small. The *absolute* contribution, that is, is very small. The contribution on the whole is immense, vaster than we have yet any idea of. But without the aid of the higher Revelation this many-toned and far-reaching voice had been for ever dumb. The light of Nature, say the most for it, is dim—how dim we ourselves, with the glare of other Light upon the modern world, can only realise when we seek among the pagan records of the past for the gropings after truth of those whose only light was this. Powerfully significant and touching as these efforts were in their success, they are far more significant and touching in their failure. For they did fail. It requires no philosophy now to speculate on the adequacy or inadequacy of the Religion of Nature. For us who could never weigh it rightly in the scales of Truth it has been tried in the balance of experience and found wanting. Theism is the easiest of all religions to get, but the most difficult to keep. Individuals have kept it, but nations never. Socrates and Aristotle, Cicero and Epictetus had a theistic religion ; Greece and Rome had none. And even after getting what seems like a firm place in the minds of men, its unstable equilibrium sooner or later betrays itself. On the one hand theism has always fallen into the wildest polytheism, or on the other into the blankest atheism. "It is an indubitable historical fact that, outside of the sphere of special revelation, man has never obtained such a knowledge of God as a responsible and religious being plainly requires. The wisdom of the heathen world, at its very best, was utterly inadequate to the accomplishment of such a task as creating a due abhorrence of sin, controlling the passions, purifying the heart, and ennobling the conduct."¹

What is the inference? That this poor rush-light by itself was never meant to lend the ray by which man should read

¹ Prof. Flint, *Theism*, p. 305.

the riddle of the universe. The mystery is too impenetrable and remote for its uncertain flicker to more than make the darkness deeper. What indeed if this were not a light at all, but only part of a light—the carbon point, the fragment of calcium, the reflector in the great Lantern which contains the Light of the World?

This is one inference. But the most important is that the absence of the true Light means moral Death. The darkness of the natural world to the intellect is not all. What history testifies to is, first the partial, and then the total eclipse of virtue that always follows the abandonment of belief in a personal God. It is not, as has been pointed out a hundred times, that morality in the abstract disappears, but the motive and sanction are gone. There is nothing to raise it from the dead. Man's attitude to it is left to himself. Grant that morals have their own base in human life; grant that Nature has a Religion whose creed is Science; there is yet nothing apart from God to save the world from moral Death. Morality has the power to dictate but none to move. Nature directs but cannot control. As was wisely expressed in one of many pregnant utterances during a recent *Symposium*, "Though the decay of religion may leave the institutes of morality intact, it drains off their inward power. The devout faith of men expresses and measures the intensity of their moral nature, and it cannot be lost without a remission of enthusiasm, and under this low pressure, the successful re-entrance of importunate desires and clamorous passions which had been driven back. To believe in an ever-living and perfect Mind, supreme over the universe, is to invest moral distinctions with immensity and eternity, and lift them from the provincial stage of human society to the imperishable theatre of all being. When planted thus in the very substance of things, they justify and support the ideal estimates of the conscience; they deepen every guilty shame; they guarantee every righteous hope; and they help the will with a Divine casting-vote in every balance of temptation."¹ That morality has a basis in human society, that Nature has a Religion, surely makes the Death of the

soul when left to itself all the more appalling. It means that, between them, Nature and morality provide all for virtue—except the Life to live it.

It is at this point accordingly that our subject comes into intimate contact with Religion. The proposition that "to be carnally minded is Death" even the moralist will assent to. But when it is further announced that "the carnal mind is *enmity against God*" we find ourselves in a different region. And when we find it also stated that "the wages of *sin* is Death," we are in the heart of the profoundest questions of theology. What before was merely "enmity against society" becomes "enmity against God;" and what was "vice" is "sin." The conception of a God gives an altogether new colour to worldliness and vice. Worldliness it changes into heathenism, vice into blasphemy. The carnal mind, the mind which is turned away from God, which will not correspond with God—this is not moral only but spiritual Death. And Sin, that which separates from God, which disobeys God, which *can* not in that state correspond with God—this is hell.

To the estrangement of the soul from God the best of theology traces the ultimate cause of sin. Sin is simply apostasy from God, unbelief in God. "Sin is manifest in its true character when the demand of holiness in the conscience, presenting itself to the man as one of loving submission to God, is put from him with aversion. Here sin appears as it really is, a turning away from God; and while the man's guilt is enhanced, there ensues a benumbing of the heart resulting from the crushing of those higher impulses. This is what is meant by the reprobate state of those who reject Christ and will not believe the Gospel, so often spoken of in the New Testament; this unbelief is just the closing of the heart against the highest love."¹ The other view of sin, probably the more popular at present, that sin consists in selfishness, is merely this from another aspect. Obviously if the mind turns away from one part of the environment it will only do so under some temptation to correspond with another. This temptation, at bottom, can only come from one source—the love of self. The irreligious man's correspond-

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¹ Martineau. *Vide* the whole *Symposium* on "The Influences upon Morality of a Decline in Religious Belief."—*Nineteenth Century*, vol. i. pp. 331, 531.

¹ Muller: *Christian Doctrine of Sin*. 2nd ed. vol. i. p. 131.

ences are concentrated upon himself. He worships himself. Self-gratification rather than self-denial; independence rather than submission—these are the rules of life. And this is at once the poorest and the commonest form of idolatry.

But whichever of these views of sin we emphasise, we find both equally connected with Death. If sin is estrangement from God, this very estrangement is Death. It is a want of correspondence. If sin is selfishness, it is conducted at the expense of life. Its wages are Death—"he that loveth his life," said Christ, "shall lose it."

Yet the paralysis of the moral nature apart from God does not only depend for its evidence upon theology or even upon history. From the analogies of Nature one would expect this result as a necessary consequence. The development of any organism in any direction is dependent on its environment. A living cell cut off from air will die. A seed-germ apart from moisture and an appropriate temperature will make the ground its grave for centuries. Human nature, likewise, is subject to similar conditions. It can only develop in presence of its environment. No matter what its possibilities may be, no matter what seeds of thought or virtue, what germs of genius or of art, lie latent in its breast, until the appropriate environment present itself the correspondence is denied, the development discouraged, the most splendid possibilities of life remain unrealised, and thought and virtue, genius and art, are dead. The true environment of the moral life is God. Here conscience wakes. Here kindles love. Duty here becomes heroic; and that righteousness begins to live which alone is to live for ever. But if this Atmosphere is not, the dwarfed soul must perish for mere want of its native air. And its Death is a strictly natural Death. It is not an exceptional judgment upon Atheism. In the same circumstances, in the same averted relation to their environment, the poet, the musician, the artist, would alike perish to poetry, to music,

and to art. Every environment is a cause. Its effect upon me is exactly proportionate to my correspondence with it. If I correspond with part of it, part of myself is influenced. If I correspond with more, more of myself is influenced; if with all, all is influenced. If I correspond with the world, I become worldly; if with God, I become Divine. As without correspondence of the scientific man with the natural environment there could be no Science and no action founded on the knowledge of Nature, so without communion with the spiritual Environment there can be no Religion. To refuse to cultivate the religious relation is to deny to the soul its highest right—the right to a further evolution.¹

We have already admitted that he who knows not God may not be a monster; we cannot say he will not be a dwarf. This precisely, and on perfectly natural principles, is what he must be. You can dwarf a soul just as you can dwarf a plant, by depriving it of a full environment. Such a soul for a time may have "a name to live." Its character may betray no sign of atrophy. But its very virtue somehow has the pallor of a flower that is grown in darkness, or as the herb which has never seen the sun, no fragrance breathes from its spirit. To morality, possibly, this organism offers the example of an irreproachable life; but to science it is an instance of arrested development; and to religion it presents the spectacle of a corpse—a living Death. With Ruskin, "I do not wonder at what men suffer, but I wonder often at what they lose."

¹ It would not be difficult to show, were this the immediate subject, that it is not only a right but a duty to exercise the spiritual faculties, a duty demanded not by religion merely, but by science. Upon biological principles man owes his full development to himself, to nature, and to his fellow-men. Thus Mr. Herbert Spencer affirms, "The performance of every function is, in a sense, a moral obligation. It is usually thought that morality requires us only to restrain such vital activities as, in our present state, are often pushed to excess, or such as conflict with average welfare, special or general; but it also requires us to carry on these vital activities up to their normal limits. All the animal functions, in common with all the higher functions, have, as thus understood, their imperativeness."—*The Data of Ethics*, 2nd Ed., p. 76.

MORTIFICATION

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth."—PAUL.

"O Star-eyed Science! hast thou wandered there
To waft us home the message of despair?"—CAMPBELL.

"If by tying its main artery, we stop most of the blood going to a limb, then, for as long as the limb performs its function, those parts which are called into play must be wasted faster than they are repaired: whence eventual disablement. The relation between due receipt of nutritive matters through its arteries, and due discharge of its duties by the limb, is a part of the physical order. If instead of cutting off the supply to a particular limb, we bleed the patient largely, so drafting away the materials needed for repairing not one limb but all limbs, and not limbs only but viscera, there results both a muscular debility and an enfeeblement of the vital functions. Here, again, cause and effect are necessarily related. . . . Pass now to those actions more commonly thought of as the occasions for rules of conduct."—HERBERT SPENCER.

THE definition of Death which science has given us is this: *A falling out of correspondence with environment.* When, for example, a man loses the sight of his eyes, his correspondence with the environment is curtailed. His life is limited in an important direction; he is less living than he was before. If, in addition, he lose the senses of touch and hearing, his correspondences are still further limited; he is therefore still further dead. And when all possible correspondences have ceased, when the nerves decline to respond to any stimulus, when the lungs close their gates against the air, when the heart refuses to correspond with the blood by so much as another beat, the insensate corpse is wholly and for ever dead. The soul, in like manner, which has no correspondence with the spiritual environment is spiritually dead. It may be that it never possessed the spiritual eye or the spiritual ear, or a heart which throbbed in response to the love of God. If so, having never lived, it cannot be said to have died. But not to have these correspondences is to be in the state of Death. To the spiritual world, to the Divine Environment, it is dead—as a stone which has never lived is dead to the environment of the organic world.

Having already abundantly illustrated this use of the symbol Death, we may proceed to deal with another class of expressions where the same term is employed in an exactly opposite connection. It is a proof of the radical nature of religion that a word so extreme should have to be used again and again in Christian teaching, to define in different directions the true spiritual relations of

mankind. Hitherto we have concerned ourselves with the condition of the natural man with regard to the spiritual world. We have now to speak of the relations of the spiritual man with regard to the natural world. Carrying with us the same essential principle—want of correspondence—underlying the meaning of Death, we shall find that the relation of the spiritual man to the natural world, or at least to part of it, is to be that of Death.

When the natural man becomes the spiritual man the great change is described by Christ as a passing from Death unto Life. Before the transition occurred, the practical difficulty was this, how to get into correspondence with the new Environment? But no sooner is this correspondence established than the problem is reversed. The question now is, how to get out of correspondence with the old environment? The moment the new life is begun there comes a genuine anxiety to break with the old. For the former environment has now become embarrassing. It refuses its dismissal from consciousness. It competes doggedly with the new Environment for a share of the correspondences. And in a hundred ways the former traditions, the memories and passions of the past, the fixed associations and habits of the earlier life, now complicate the new relation. The complex and bewildered soul, in fact, finds itself in correspondence with two environments, each with urgent but yet incompatible claims. It is a dual soul living in a double world, a world whose inhabitants are deadly enemies, and engaged in perpetual civil war.

The position of things is perplexing.

It is clear that no man can attempt to live both lives. To walk both in the flesh and in the spirit is morally impossible. "No man," as Christ so often emphasised, "can serve two masters." And yet, as matter of fact, here is the new-born being in communication with both environments? With sin and purity, light and darkness, time and Eternity, God and Devil, the confused and undecided soul is now in correspondence. What is to be done in such an emergency? How can the New Life deliver itself from the still-persistent past?

A ready solution of the difficulty would be *to die*. Were one to die organically, to die and "go to heaven," all correspondence with the lower environment would be arrested at a stroke. For Physical Death of course simply means the final stoppage of all natural correspondences with this sinful world. But this alternative, fortunately or unfortunately, is not open. The detention here of body and spirit for a given period is determined for us, and we are morally bound to accept the situation. We must look then for a further alternative.

Actual Death being denied us, we must ask ourselves if there is nothing else resembling it—no artificial relation, no imitation or semblance of Death which would serve our purpose. If we cannot yet die absolutely, surely the next best thing will be to find a temporary substitute. If we cannot die altogether, in short, the most we can do is to die as much as we can. And we now know this is open to us, and how. To die to any environment is to withdraw correspondence with it, to cut ourselves off, so far as possible, from all communication with it. So that the solution of the problem will simply be this, for the spiritual life to reverse continuously the processes of the natural life. The spiritual man having passed from Death unto Life, the natural man must next proceed to pass from Life unto Death. Having opened the new set of correspondences, he must deliberately close up the old. Regeneration in short must be accompanied by Degeneration.

Now it is no surprise to find that this is the process everywhere described and recommended by the founders of the Christian system. Their proposal to the natural man, or rather to the natural part of the spiritual man, with regard to a whole series of inimical relations, is pre-

cisely this. If he cannot really die, he must make an adequate approach to it by "reckoning himself dead." Seeing that, until the cycle of his organic life is complete he cannot die physically, he must meantime die morally, reckoning himself morally dead to that environment which, by competing for his correspondences, has now become an obstacle to his spiritual life.

The variety of ways in which the New Testament writers insist upon this somewhat extraordinary method is sufficiently remarkable. And although the idea involved is essentially the same throughout, it will clearly illustrate the nature of the act if we examine separately three different modes of expression employed in the later Scriptures in this connection. The methods by which the spiritual man is to withdraw himself from the old environment—or from that part of it which will directly hinder the spiritual life—are three in number:—

First, Suicide.

Second, Mortification.

Third, Limitation.

It will be found in practice that these different methods are adapted, respectively, to meet three different forms of temptation; so that we possess a sufficient warrant for giving a brief separate treatment to each.

First, Suicide. Stated in undisguised phraseology, the advice of Paul to the Christian, with regard to a part of his nature, is to commit suicide. If the Christian is to "live unto God," he must "die unto sin." If he does not kill sin, sin will inevitably kill him. Recognising this, he must set himself to reduce the number of his correspondences—retaining and developing those which lead to a fuller life, unconditionally withdrawing those which in any way tend in an opposite direction. This stoppage of correspondences is a voluntary act, a crucifixion of the flesh, a suicide.

Now the least experience of life will make it evident that a large class of sins can only be met, as it were, by Suicide. The peculiar feature of Death by Suicide is, that it is not only self-inflicted but sudden. And there are many sins which must either be dealt with suddenly or not at all. Under this category, for instance, are to be included generally all sins of the appetites and passions. Other sins, from their peculiar nature, can only be treated

by methods less abrupt, but the sudden operation of the knife is the only successful means of dealing with fleshly sins. For example, the correspondence of the drunkard with his wine is a thing which can be broken off by degrees only in the rarest cases. To attempt it gradually may in an isolated case succeed, but even then the slightly prolonged gratification is no compensation for the slow torture of a gradually diminishing indulgence. "If thine appetite offend thee cut it off," may seem at first but a harsh remedy; but when we contemplate on the one hand the lingering pain of the gradual process, on the other its constant peril, we are compelled to admit that the principle is as kind as it is wise. The expression "total abstinence" in such a case is a strictly biological formula. It implies the sudden destruction of a definite portion of environment by the total withdrawal of all the connecting links. Obviously of course total abstinence ought thus to be allowed a much wider application than to cases of "intemperance." It is the only decisive method of dealing with any sin of the flesh. The very nature of the relations makes it absolutely imperative that every victim of unlawful appetite, in whatever direction, shall totally abstain. Hence Christ's apparently extreme and peremptory language defines the only possible, as well as the only charitable, expedient: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee."

The humanity of what is called "sudden conversion" has never been insisted on as it deserves. In discussing "Biogenesis"¹ it has been already pointed out that while growth is a slow and gradual process, the change from Death to Life alike in the natural and spiritual spheres is the work of a moment. Whatever the conscious hour of the second birth may be—in the case of an adult it is probably defined by the first real victory over sin—it is certain that on biological principles the real turning-point is literally a moment. But on moral and humane grounds this misunderstood, perverted, and therefore despised doctrine is equally capable of defence. Were any reformer, with an adequate knowledge of human life, to sit down and plan a scheme for the salvation of sinful men, he would probably come to the conclusion that the best way after all,

perhaps indeed the only way, to turn a sinner from the error of his ways would be to do it suddenly.

Suppose a drunkard were advised to take off one portion from his usual allowance the first week, another the second, and so on! Or suppose at first he only allowed himself to become intoxicated in the evenings, then every second evening, then only on Saturday nights, and finally only every Christmas? How would a thief be reformed if he slowly reduced the number of his burglaries, or a wife-beater by gradually diminishing the number of his blows? The argument ends with an *ad absurdum*. "Let him that stole *steal no more*," is the only feasible, the only moral, and the only humane way. This may not apply to every case, but when any part of man's sinful life can be dealt with by immediate Suicide, to make him reach the end, even were it possible, by a lingering death, would be a monstrous cruelty. And yet it is this very thing in "sudden conversion," that men object to—the sudden change, the decisive stand, the uncompromising rupture with the past, the precipitate flight from sin as of one escaping for his life. Men surely forget that this *is* an escaping for one's life. Let the poor prisoner run—madly and blindly if he likes, for the terror of Death is upon him. God knows, when the pause comes, how the chains will gall him still.

It is a peculiarity of the sinful state, that as a general rule men are linked to evil mainly by a single correspondence. Few men break the whole law. Our natures, fortunately, are not large enough to make us guilty of all, and the restraints of circumstances are usually such as to leave a loophole in the life of each individual for only a single habitual sin. But it is very easy to see how this reduction of our intercourse with evil to a single correspondence binds us to our true position. Our correspondences, as a whole, are not with evil, and in our calculations as to our spiritual condition we emphasise the many negatives rather than the single positive. One little weakness, we are apt to fancy, all men must be allowed, and we even claim a certain indulgence for that apparent necessity of nature which we call our besetting sin. Yet to break with the lower environment at all, to many, is to break at this single point. It is the only important point at which they touch it, circumstances or natural

¹ Page 26.

disposition making habitual contact at other places impossible. The sinful environment, in short, to them means a small but well-defined area. Now if contact at this point be not broken off, they are virtually in contact still with the whole environment. There may be only one avenue between the new life and the old, it may be but a small and *subterranean passage*, but this is sufficient to keep the old life in. So long as that remains the victim is not "dead unto sin," and therefore he cannot "live unto God." Hence the reasonableness of the words, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend at one point, he is guilty of all." In the natural world it only requires a single vital correspondence of the body to be out of order to ensure Death. It is not necessary to have consumption, diabetes, and an aneurism to bring the body to the grave if it have heart disease. He who is fatally diseased in one organ necessarily pays the penalty with his life, though all the others be in perfect health. And such, likewise, are the mysterious unity and correlation of functions in the spiritual organism that the disease of one member may involve the ruin of the whole. The reason, therefore, with which Christ follows up the announcement of His Doctrine of Mutilation, or local Suicide, finds here at once its justification and interpretation: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: *for* it is profitable for thee that *one* of thy members should perish, and not that thy *whole body* should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: *for* it is profitable for thee that *one* of thy members should perish, and not that thy *whole body* should be cast into hell."

Secondly, Mortification. The warrant for the use of this expression is found in the well-known phrases of Paul, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live," and "Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth." The word mortify here is, literally, to make to die. It is used, of course, in no specially technical sense; and to attempt to draw a detailed moral from the pathology of mortification would be equally fantastic and irrelevant. But without in any way straining the meaning it is obvious that we have here a slight addition to our conception of dying to

sin. In contrast with Suicide, Mortification implies a gradual rather than a sudden process. The contexts in which the passages occur will make this meaning so clear, and are otherwise so instructive in the general connection, that we may quote them, from the New Version, at length: "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you. So then, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye mortify the doings (marg.) of the body, ye shall live."¹

And again, "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, the which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience; in the which ye also walked aforetime, when ye lived in these things. But now put ye also away all these; anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him."²

¹ Rom. viii. 5-13.

² Col. iii. 1-10.

From the nature of the case as here stated it is evident that no sudden process could entirely transfer a man from the old into the new relation. To break altogether, and at every point, with the old environment, is a simple impossibility. So long as the regenerate man is kept in this world, he must find the old environment at many points a severe temptation. Power over very many of the commonest temptations is only to be won by degrees, and however anxious one might be to apply the summary method to every case, he soon finds it impossible in practice. The difficulty in these cases arises from a peculiar feature of the temptation. The difference between a sin of drunkenness, and, let us say, a sin of temper, is that in the former case the victim who would reform has mainly to deal with the environment, but in the latter with the correspondence. The drunkard's temptation is a known and definite quantity. His safety lies in avoiding some external and material substance. Of course, at bottom, he is really dealing with the correspondence every time he resists; he is distinctly controlling appetite. Nevertheless it is less the appetite that absorbs his mind than the environment. And so long as he can keep himself clear of the "external relation," to use Mr. Herbert Spencer's phraseology, he has much less difficulty with the "internal relation." The ill-tempered person, on the other hand, can make very little of his environment. However he may attempt to circumscribe it in certain directions, there will always remain a wide and ever-changing area to stimulate his irascibility. His environment, in short, is an inconstant quantity, and his most elaborate calculations and precautions must often and suddenly fail him.

What he has to deal with, then, mainly is the correspondence, the temper itself. And that, he well knows, involves a long and humiliating discipline. The case now is not at all a surgical but a medical one, and the knife is here of no more use than in a fever. A specific irritant has poisoned his veins. And the acrid humours that are breaking out all over the surface of his life are only to be subdued by a gradual sweetening of the inward spirit. It is now known that the human body acts towards certain fever-germs as a sort of soil. The man whose

blood is pure has nothing to fear. So he whose spirit is purified and sweetened becomes proof against these germs of sin. "Anger, wrath, malice and railing" in such a soil can find no root.

The difference between this and the former method of dealing with sin may be illustrated by another analogy. The two processes depend upon two different natural principles. The Mutilation of a member, for instance, finds its analogue in the horticultural operation of *pruning*, where the object is to divert life from a useless into a useful channel. A part of a plant which previously monopolised a large share of the vigour of the total organism, but without yielding any adequate return, is suddenly cut off, so that the vital processes may proceed more actively in some fruitful parts. Christ's use of this figure is well known: "Every branch in Me that beareth fruit He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." The strength of the plant being given in part to the formation of mere wood, a number of useless correspondences have to be abruptly closed while the useful connections are allowed to remain. The Mortification of a member, again, is based on the Law of Degeneration. The useless member here is not cut off, but simply relieved as much as possible of all exercise. This encourages the gradual decay of the parts, and as it is more and more neglected it ceases to be a channel for life at all. So an organism "mortifies" its members.

Thirdly, Limitation. While a large number of correspondences between man and his environment can be stopped in these ways, there are many more which neither can be reduced by a gradual Mortification nor cut short by sudden Death. One reason for this is that to tamper with these correspondences might involve injury to closely related vital parts. Or, again, there are organs which are really essential to the normal life of the organism, and which therefore the organism cannot afford to lose even though at times they act prejudicially. Not a few correspondences, for instance, are not wrong in themselves but only in their extremes. Up to a certain point they are lawful and necessary; beyond that point they may become not only unnecessary but sinful. The appropriate treatment in these and similar cases consists in a process of Limitation. The

performance of this operation, it must be confessed, requires a most delicate hand. It is an art, moreover, which no one can teach another. And yet, if it is not learned by all who are trying to lead the Christian life, it cannot be for want of practice. For, as we shall see, the Christian is called upon to exercise few things more frequently.

An easy illustration of a correspondence which is only wrong when carried to an extreme, is the love of money. The love of money up to a certain point is a necessity; beyond that it may become one of the worst of sins. Christ said: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." The two services, at a definite point, become incompatible, and hence correspondence with one must cease. At what point, however, it must cease each man has to determine for himself. And in this consists at once the difficulty and the dignity of Limitation.

There is another class of cases where the adjustments are still more difficult to determine. Innumerable points exist in our surroundings with which it is perfectly legitimate to enjoy, and even to cultivate, correspondence, but which privilege, at the same time, it were better on the whole that we did not use. Circumstances are occasionally such—the demands of others upon us, for example, may be so clamant—that we have voluntarily to reduce the area of legitimate pleasure. Or, instead of it coming from others, the claim may come from a still higher direction. Man's spiritual life consists in the number and fulness of his correspondences with God. In order to develop these, he may be constrained to insulate them, to enclose them from the other correspondences, to shut himself in with them. In many ways the limitation of the natural life is the necessary condition of the full enjoyment of the spiritual life.

In this principle lies the true philosophy of self-denial. No man is called to a life of self-denial for its own sake. It is in order to a compensation which, though sometimes difficult to see, is always real and always proportionate. No truth, perhaps, in practical religion is more lost sight of. We cherish somehow a lingering rebellion against the doctrine of self-denial—as if our nature, or our circumstances, or our conscience, dealt with us severely in loading us with the daily

cross. But is it not plain after all that the life of self-denial is the more abundant life—more abundant just in proportion to the ampler crucifixion of the narrower life? Is it not a clear case of exchange—an exchange however where the advantage is entirely on our side? We give up a correspondence in which there is a little life to enjoy a correspondence in which there is an abundant life. What though we sacrifice a hundred such correspondences? We make but the more room for the great one that is left. The lesson of self-denial, that is to say of Limitation, is *concentration*. Do not spoil your life, it says, at the outset with unworthy and impoverishing correspondences; and if it is growing truly rich and abundant, be very jealous of ever diluting its high eternal quality with anything of earth. To concentrate upon a few great correspondences, to oppose to the death the perpetual petty larceny of our life by trifles—these are the conditions for the highest and happiest life. It is only Limitation which can secure the Illimitable.

The penalty of evading self-denial also is just that we get the lesser instead of the larger good. The punishment of sin is inseparably bound up with itself. To refuse to deny one's self is just to be left with the self undenied. When the balance of life is struck, the self will be found still there. The discipline of life was meant to destroy this self, but that discipline having been evaded—and we all to some extent have opportunities, and too often exercise them, of taking the narrow path by the shortest cuts—its purpose is balked. But the soul is the loser. In seeking to gain its life it has really lost it. This is what Christ meant when He said: "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Why does Christ say: "Hate Life?" Does He mean that life is a sin? No. Life is not a sin. Still, He says we must hate it. But we must live. Why should we hate what we must do? For this reason: Life is not a sin, but the love of life may be a sin. And the best way not to love life is to hate it. Is it a sin then to love life? Not a sin exactly, but a mistake. It is a sin to love some life, a mistake to love the rest. Because that love is lost. All that is lavished on it is lost. Christ does not say it is wrong

narrow doctrine

to love life. He simply says it is *loss*. Each man has only a certain amount of life, of time, of attention—a definite measurable quantity. If he gives any of it to this life solely it is wasted. Therefore Christ says, Hate life, limit life, lest you steal your love for it from something that deserves it more.

Now this does not apply to all life. It is "life in this world" that is to be hated. For life in this world implies conformity to this world. It may not mean pursuing worldly pleasures, or mixing with worldly sets; but a subtler thing than that—a silent deference to worldly opinion; an almost unconscious lowering of religious tone to the level of the worldly-religious world around; a subdued resistance to the soul's delicate promptings to greater consecration, out of deference to "breadth" or fear of ridicule. These, and such things, are what Christ tells us we must hate. For these things are of the very essence of worldliness. "If any man love the world," even in this sense, "the love of the Father is not in him."

There are two ways of hating life, a true and a false. Some men hate life because it hates them. They have seen through it, and it has turned round upon them. They have drunk it, and come to the dregs; therefore they hate it. This is one of the ways in which the man who loves his life literally loses it. He loves it till he loses it, then he hates it because it has fooled him. The other way is the religious. For religious reasons a man deliberately braces himself to the systematic hating of his life. "No man can serve two masters, for either he must hate the one and love the other, or else he must hold to the one and despise the other." Despising the other—this is hating life, limiting life. It is not misanthropy, but Christianity.

This principle, as has been said, contains the true philosophy of self-denial. It also holds the secret by which self-

denial may be most easily borne. A common conception of self-denial is that there are a multitude of things about life which are to be put down with a high hand the moment they make their appearance. They are temptations which are not to be tolerated, but must be instantly crushed out of being with pang and effort.

So life comes to be a constant and sore cutting off of things which we love as our right hand. But now suppose one tried boldly to hate these things? Suppose we deliberately made up our minds as to what things we were henceforth to allow to become our life? Suppose we selected a given area of our environment and determined once for all that our correspondences should go to that alone, fencing in this area all round with a morally impassable wall? True, to others, we should seem to live a poorer life; they would see that our environment was circumscribed, and call us narrow because it was narrow. But, well-chosen, this limited life would be really the fullest life; it would be rich in the highest and worthiest, and poor in the smallest and basest correspondences. The well-defined spiritual life is not only the highest life, but it is also the most easily lived. The whole cross is more easily carried than the half. It is the man who tries to make the best of both worlds who makes nothing of either. And he who seeks to serve two masters misses the benediction of both. But he who has taken his stand, who has drawn a boundary line, sharp and deep about his religious life, who has marked off all beyond as for ever forbidden ground to him, finds the yoke easy and the burden light. For this forbidden environment comes to be as if it were not. His faculties falling out of correspondence, slowly lose their sensibilities. And the balm of Death numbing his lower nature releases him for the scarce disturbed communion of a higher life. So even here to die is gain.

ETERNAL LIFE

"This is Life Eternal—that they might know Thee, the True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."—JESUS CHRIST.

"Perfect correspondence would be perfect life. Were there no changes in the environment but such as the organism had adapted changes to meet, and were it never to fail in the efficiency with which it met them, there would be eternal existence and eternal knowledge."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"Supposing that man, in some form, is permitted to remain on the earth for a long series of years, we merely lengthen out the period, but we cannot escape the final catastrophe. The earth will gradually lose its energy of rotation, as well as that of revolution round the sun. The sun himself will wax dim and become useless as a source of energy, until at last the favourable conditions of the present solar system will have quite disappeared.

"But what happens to our system will happen likewise to the whole visible universe, which will, if finite, become a lifeless mass, if indeed it be not doomed to utter dissolution. In fine, it will become old and effete, no less truly than the individual. It is a glorious garment, this visible universe, but not an immortal one. We must look elsewhere if we are to be clothed with immortality as with a garment."—*The Unseen Universe*.

ONE of the most startling achievements of recent science is a definition of Eternal Life. To the religious mind this is a contribution of immense moment. For eighteen hundred years only one definition of Life Eternal was before the world. Now there are two.

Through all these centuries revealed religion had this doctrine to itself. Ethics had a voice, as well as Christianity, on the question of the *summum bonum*; Philosophy ventured to speculate on the Being of a God. But no source outside Christianity contributed anything to the doctrine of Eternal Life. Apart from Revelation, this great truth was unguaranteed. It was the one thing in the Christian system that most needed verification from without, yet none was forthcoming. And never has any further light been thrown upon the question why in its very nature the Christian Life should be Eternal. Christianity itself even upon this point has been obscure. Its decision upon the bare fact is authoritative and specific. But as to what there is in the Spiritual Life necessarily endowing it with the element of Eternity, the maturest theology is all but silent.

It has been reserved for modern biology at once to defend and illuminate this central truth of the Christian faith. And hence in the interests of religion, practical and evidential, this second and scientific definition of Eternal Life is to be hailed as an announcement of commanding interest. Why it should not yet have received the recognition of religious thinkers—for already it has lain some

years unnoticed—is not difficult to understand. The belief in Science as an aid to faith is not yet ripe enough to warrant men in searching there for witnesses to the highest Christian truths. The inspiration of Nature, it is thought, extends to the humbler doctrines alone. And yet the reverent inquirer who guides his steps in the right direction may find even now in the still dim twilight of the scientific world much that will illuminate and intensify his sublimest faith. Here, at least, comes, and comes unbidden, the opportunity of testing the most vital point of the Christian system. Hitherto the Christian philosopher has remained content with the scientific evidence against Annihilation. Or, with Butler, he has reasoned from the Metamorphoses of Insects to a future life. Or again, with the authors of *The Unseen Universe*, the apologist has constructed elaborate, and certainly impressive, arguments upon the Law of Continuity. But now we may draw nearer. For the first time Science touches Christianity *positively* on the Doctrine of Immortality. It confronts us with an actual definition of an Eternal Life, based on a full and rigidly accurate examination of the necessary conditions. Science does not pretend that it can fulfil these conditions. Its votaries make no claim to possess the Eternal Life. It simply postulates the requisite conditions without concerning itself whether any organism should ever appear, or does now exist, which might fulfil them. The claim of religion, on the other hand, is that there are organisms which possess

or rather, non-organisms

Eternal Life. And the problem for us to solve is this: Do those who profess to possess Eternal Life fulfil the conditions required by Science, or are they different conditions? In a word, Is the Christian conception of Eternal Life scientific?

It may be unnecessary to notice at the outset that the definition of Eternal Life drawn up by Science was framed without reference to religion. It must indeed have been the last thought with the thinker to whom we chiefly owe it, that in unfolding the conception of a Life in its very nature necessarily eternal, he was contributing to Theology.

Mr. Herbert Spencer—for it is to him we owe it—would be the first to admit the impartiality of his definition; and from the connection in which it occurs in his writings, it is obvious that religion was not even present to his mind. He is analysing with minute care the relations between Environment and Life. He unfolds the principle according to which Life is high or low, long or short. He shows why organisms live and why they die. And finally he defines a condition of things in which an organism would never die—in which it would enjoy a perpetual and perfect Life. This to him is, of course, but a speculation. Life Eternal is a biological conceit. The conditions necessary to an Eternal Life do not exist in the natural world. So that the definition is altogether impartial and independent. A Perfect Life, to Science, is simply a thing which is theoretically possible—like a Perfect Vacuum.

Before giving, in so many words, the definition of Mr. Herbert Spencer, it will render it fully intelligible if we gradually lead up to it by a brief rehearsal of the few and simple biological facts on which it is based. In considering the subject of Death, we have formerly seen that there are degrees of Life. By this is meant that some lives have more and fuller correspondence with Environment than others. The amount of correspondence, again, is determined by the greater or less complexity of the organism. Thus a simple organism like the Amoeba is possessed of very few correspondences. It is a mere sac of transparent structureless jelly for which organisation has done almost nothing, and hence it can only communicate with the smallest possible area of Environment. An insect, in virtue of its more complex structure, corresponds

with a wider area. Nature has endowed it with special faculties for reaching out to the Environment on many sides; it has more life than the Amoeba. In other words, it is a higher animal. Man again, whose body is still further differentiated, or broken up into different correspondences, finds himself *en rapport* with his surroundings to a further extent. And therefore he is higher still, more living still. And this law, that the degree of Life varies with the degree of correspondence, holds to the minutest detail throughout the entire range of living things. Life becomes fuller and fuller, richer and richer, more and more sensitive and responsive to an ever-widening Environment as we rise in the chain of being.

Now it will speedily appear that a distinct relation exists, and must exist, between complexity and longevity. Death being brought about by the failure of an organism to adjust itself to some change in the Environment, it follows that those organisms which are able to adjust themselves most readily and successfully will live the longest. They will continue time after time to effect the appropriate adjustment, and their power of doing so will be exactly proportionate to their complexity—that is, to the amount of Environment they can control with their correspondences. There are, for example, in the Environment of every animal certain things which are directly or indirectly dangerous to Life. If its equipment of correspondences is not complete enough to enable it to avoid these dangers in all possible circumstances, it must sooner or later succumb. The organism then with the most perfect set of correspondences, that is, the highest and most complex organism, has an obvious advantage over less complex forms. It can adjust itself more perfectly and frequently. But this is just the biological way of saying that it can live the longest. And hence the relation between complexity and longevity may be expressed thus—the most complex organisms are the longest lived.

To state and illustrate the proposition conversely may make the point still further clear. The less highly organised an animal is, the less will be its chance of remaining in lengthened correspondence with its Environment. At some time or other in its career circumstances are sure to occur to which the comparatively immobile organism finds itself structurally

unable to respond. Thus a *Medusa* tossed ashore by a wave, finds itself so out of correspondence with its new surroundings that its life must pay the forfeit. Had it been able by internal change to adapt itself to external change—to correspond sufficiently with the new environment, as for example to crawl, as an eel would have done, back into that environment with which it had completer correspondence—its life might have been spared. But had this happened it would continue to live henceforth only so long as it could continue in correspondence with all the circumstances in which it might find itself. Even if, however, it became complex enough to resist the ordinary and direct dangers of its environment, it might still be out of correspondence with others. A naturalist for instance, might take advantage of its want of correspondence with particular sights and sounds to capture it for his cabinet, or the sudden dropping of a yacht's anchor or the turn of a screw might cause its untimely death.

Again, in the case of a bird, in virtue of its more complex organisation, there is command over a much larger area of environment. It can take precautions such as the *Medusa* could not; it has increased facilities for securing food; its adjustments all round are more complex; and therefore it ought to be able to maintain its Life for a longer period. There is still a large area, however, over which it has no control. Its power of internal change is not complete enough to afford it perfect correspondence with all external changes, and its tenure of Life is to that extent insecure. Its correspondence, moreover, is limited even with regard to those external conditions with which it has been partially established. Thus a bird in ordinary circumstances has no difficulty in adapting itself to changes of temperature, but if these are varied beyond the point at which its capacity of adjustment begins to fail—for example, during an extreme winter—the organism being unable to meet the condition must perish. The human organism, on the other hand, can respond to this external condition, as well as to countless other vicissitudes under which lower forms would inevitably succumb. Man's adjustments are the largest known area of Environment, and hence he ought to be able furthest to prolong his Life.

It becomes evident, then, that as we ascend in the scale of Life we rise also in the scale of longevity. The lowest organisms are, as a rule, shortlived, and the rate of mortality diminishes more or less regularly as we ascend in the animal scale. So extraordinary indeed is the mortality among lowly-organised forms that in most cases a compensation is actually provided, nature endowing them with a marvellously increased fertility in order to guard against absolute extinction. Almost all lower forms are furnished not only with great reproductive powers, but with different methods of propagation, by which, in various circumstances, and in an incredibly short time, the species can be indefinitely multiplied. Ehrenberg found that by the repeated subdivisions of a single *Paramecium*, no fewer than 268,000,000 similar organisms might be produced in one month. This power steadily decreases as we rise higher in the scale, until forms are reached in which one, two, or at most three, come into being at a birth. It decreases, however, because it is no longer needed. These forms have a much longer lease of Life. And it may be taken as a rule, although it has exceptions, that complexity in animal organisms is always associated with longevity.

It may be objected that these illustrations are taken merely from morbid conditions. But whether the Life be cut short by accident or by disease the principle is the same. All dissolution is brought about practically in the same way. A certain condition in the Environment fails to be met by a corresponding condition in the organism, and this is death. And conversely the more an organism in virtue of its complexity can adapt itself to all the parts of its Environment, the longer it will live. "It is manifest *a priori*," says Mr. Herbert Spencer, "that since changes in the physical state of the environment, as also those mechanical actions and those variations of available food which occur in it, are liable to stop the processes going on in the organism; and since the adaptive changes in the organism have the effects of directly or indirectly counterbalancing these changes in the environment, it follows that the life of the organism will be short or long, low or high, according to the extent to which changes in the environment are met by corresponding

changes in the organism. Allowing a margin for perturbations, the life will continue only while the correspondence continues; the completeness of the life will be proportionate to the completeness of the correspondence; and the life will be perfect only when the correspondence is perfect."¹

We are now all but in sight of our scientific definition of Eternal Life. The desideratum is an organism with a correspondence of a very exceptional kind. It must lie beyond the reach of those "mechanical actions" and those "variations of available food," which are "liable to stop the processes going on in the organism." Before we reach an Eternal Life we must pass beyond that point at which all ordinary correspondences inevitably cease. We must find an organism so high and complex, that at some point in its development it shall have added a correspondence which organic death is powerless to arrest. We must in short pass beyond that finite region where the correspondences depend on evanescent and material media, and enter a further region where the Environment corresponded with is itself Eternal. Such an Environment exists. The Environment of the Spiritual world is outside the influence of these "mechanical actions," which sooner or later interrupt the processes going on in all finite organisms. If then we can find an organism which has established a correspondence with the spiritual world, that correspondence will possess the elements of eternity—provided only one other condition be fulfilled.

That condition is that the Environment be perfect. If it is not perfect, if it is not the highest, if it is endowed with the finite quality of change, there can be no guarantee that the Life of its correspondents will be eternal. Some change might occur in it which the correspondents had no adaptive changes to meet, and Life would cease. But grant a spiritual organism in perfect correspondence with a perfect spiritual Environment, and the conditions necessary to Eternal Life are satisfied.

The exact terms of Mr. Herbert Spencer's definition of Eternal Life may now be given. And it will be seen that they include essentially the conditions here laid down. "Perfect correspond-

¹ *Principles of Biology*, p. 82.

ence would be perfect life. Were there no changes in the environment but such as the organism had adapted changes to meet, and were it never to fail in the efficiency with which it met them, there would be eternal existence and eternal knowledge."¹ Reserving the question as to the possible fulfilment of these conditions, let us turn for a moment to the definition of Eternal Life laid down by Christ. Let us place it alongside the definition of Science, and mark the points of contact. Uninterrupted correspondence with a perfect Environment is Eternal Life according to Science. "This is Life Eternal," said Christ, "that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."² Life Eternal is to know God. To know God is to "correspond" with God. To correspond with God is to correspond with a Perfect Environment. And the organism which attains to this, in the nature of things must live for ever. Here is "eternal existence and eternal knowledge."

The main point of agreement between the scientific and the religious definition is that Life consists in a peculiar and personal relation defined as a "correspondence." This conception, that Life consists in correspondences, has been so abundantly illustrated already that it is now unnecessary to discuss it further. All Life indeed consists essentially in correspondences with various Environments. The artist's life is a correspondence with art; the musician's with music. To cut them off from these Environments is in that relation to cut off their Life. To be cut off from all Environment is death. To find a new Environment again and cultivate relation with it is to find a new Life. To live is to correspond, and to correspond is to live. So much is true in Science. But it is also true in Religion. And it is of great importance to observe that to Religion also the conception of Life is a correspondence. No truth of Christianity has been more ignorantly or wilfully travestied than the doctrine of Immortality. The popular idea, in spite of a hundred protests, is that Eternal Life is to live for ever. A single glance at the *locus classicus*, might have made this error impossible. There we are told that Life Eternal is not to live. This is Life Eternal—to know. And yet—and it is a

¹ *Principles of Biology*, p. 88.

² John xvii.

Stephendown.

quite here.

notorious instance of the fact that men who are opposed to Religion will take their conceptions of its profoundest truths from mere vulgar perversions—this view still represents to many cultivated men the Scriptural doctrine of Eternal Life. From time to time the taunt is thrown at Religion, not unseldom from lips which Science ought to have taught more caution, that the Future Life of Christianity is simply a prolonged existence, an eternal monotony, a blind and indefinite continuance of being. The Bible never could commit itself to any such empty platitude; nor could Christianity ever offer to the world a hope so colourless. Not that Eternal Life has nothing to do with everlastingness. That is part of the conception. And it is this aspect of the question that first arrests us in the field of Science. But even Science has more in its definition than longevity. It has a correspondence and an Environment; and although it cannot fill up these terms for Religion, it can indicate at least the nature of the relation, the kind of thing that is meant by Life. Science speaks to us indeed of much more than numbers of years. It defines degrees of Life. It explains a widening Environment. It unfolds the relation between a widening Environment and increasing complexity in organisms. And if it has no absolute contribution to the content of Religion, its analogies are not limited to a point. It yields to Immortality, and this is the most that Science can do in any case, the broad framework for a doctrine.

The further definition, moreover, of this correspondence as *knowing* is in the highest degree significant. Is not this the precise quality in an Eternal correspondence which the analogies of Science would prepare us to look for? Longevity is associated with complexity. And complexity in organisms is manifested by the successive addition of correspondences, each richer and larger than those which have gone before. The differentiation, therefore, of the spiritual organism ought to be signalled by the addition of the highest possible correspondence. It is not essential to the idea that the correspondence should be altogether novel; it is necessary rather that it should not. An altogether new correspondence appearing suddenly without shadow or prophecy would be a violation of continuity.

What we should expect would be something new, and yet something that we were already prepared for. We should look for a further development in harmony with current developments; the extension of the last and highest correspondence in a new and higher direction. And this is exactly what we have. In the world with which biology deals, Evolution culminates in Knowledge.

At whatever point in the zoological scale this correspondence, or set of correspondences, begins, it is certain there is nothing higher. In its stunted infancy merely, when we meet with its rudest beginnings in animal intelligence, it is a thing so wonderful, as to strike every thoughtful and reverent observer with awe. Even among the invertebrates so marvellously are these or kindred powers displayed, that naturalists do not hesitate now, on the ground of intelligence at least, to classify some of the humblest creatures next to man himself.¹ Nothing in nature, indeed, is so unlike the rest of nature, so prophetic of what is beyond it, so supernatural. And as manifested in Man, who crowns creation with his all-embracing consciousness, there is but one word to describe his knowledge: it is Divine. If then from this point there is to be any further Evolution, this surely must be the correspondence in which it shall take place? This correspondence is great enough to demand development; and yet it is little enough to need it. The magnificence of what it has achieved relatively, is the pledge of the possibility of more; the insignificance of its conquest absolutely involves the probability of still richer triumphs. If anything, in short, in humanity is to go on it must be this. Other correspondences may continue likewise; others, again, we can well afford to leave behind. But this cannot cease. This correspondence—or this set of correspondences, for it is very complex—is it not that to which men with one consent would attach Eternal Life? Is there anything else to which they would attach it? Is anything better conceivable, anything worthier, fuller, nobler, anything which would represent a higher form of Evolution or offer a more perfect ideal for an Eternal Life?

But these are questions of quality; and the moment we pass from quantity to

¹ Vide Sir John Lubbock's *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*, pp. 1, 181.

quality we leave Science behind. In the vocabulary of Science, Eternity is only the fraction of a word. It means mere everlastingness. To Religion, on the other hand, Eternity has little to do with time. To correspond with the God of Science, the Eternal Unknowable, would be everlasting existence; to correspond with "the true God and Jesus Christ," is Eternal Life. The quality of the Eternal Life alone makes the heaven; mere everlastingness might be no boon. Even the brief span of the temporal life is too long for those who spend its years in sorrow. Time itself, let alone Eternity, is all but excruciating to Doubt. And many besides Schopenhauer have secretly regarded consciousness as the hideous mistake and malady of Nature. Therefore we must not only have quantity of years, to speak in the language of the present, but quality of correspondence. When we leave Science behind, this correspondence also receives a higher name. It becomes communion. Other names there are for it, religious and theological. It may be included in a general expression, Faith; or we may call it by a personal and specific term, Love. For the knowing of a Whole so great involves the co-operation of many parts.

Communion with God—can it be demonstrated in terms of Science that this is a correspondence which will never break? We do not appeal to Science for such a testimony. We have asked for its conception of an Eternal Life; and we have received for answer that Eternal Life would consist in a correspondence which should never cease, with an Environment which should never pass away. And yet what would Science demand of a perfect correspondence that is not met by this, *the knowing of God?* There is no other correspondence which could satisfy one at least of the conditions. Not one could be named which would not bear on the face of it the mark and pledge of its mortality. But this, to know God, stands alone. To know God, to be linked with God, to be linked with Eternity—if this is not the "eternal existence" of biology, what can more nearly approach it? And yet we are still a great way off—to establish a communication with the Eternal is not to secure Eternal Life. It must be assumed that the communication could be sustained. And to assume this would be to beg the question. So that we have

still to prove Eternal Life. But let it be again repeated, we are not here seeking proofs. We are seeking light. We are merely reconnoitring from the farthest promontory of Science, if so be that through the haze we may discern the outline of a distant coast and come to some conclusion as to the possibility of landing.

But, it may be replied, it is not open to any one handling the question of Immortality from the side of Science to remain neutral as to the question of fact. It is not enough to announce that he has no addition to make to the positive argument. This may be permitted with reference to other points of contact between Science and Religion, but not with this. We are told this question is settled—that there is no positive side. Science meets the entire conception of Immortality with a direct negative. In the face of a powerful consensus against even the possibility of a Future Life, to content oneself with saying that Science pretended to no argument in favour of it would be at once impertinent and dishonest. We must therefore devote ourselves for a moment to the question of possibility.

The problem is, with a material body and a mental organisation inseparably connected with it, to bridge the grave. Emotion, volition, thought itself, are functions of the brain. When the brain is impaired, they are impaired. When the brain is not, they are not. Everything ceases with the dissolution of the material fabric; muscular activity and mental activity perish alike. With the pronounced positive statements on this point from many departments of modern Science we are all familiar. The fatal verdict is recorded by a hundred hands and with scarcely a shadow of qualification. "Unprejudiced philosophy is compelled to reject the idea of an individual immortality and of a personal continuance after death. With the decay and dissolution of its material substratum, through which alone it has acquired a conscious existence and become a person, and upon which it was dependent, the spirit must cease to exist."¹ To the same effect Vogt: "Physiology decides definitely and categorically against individual immortality, as against any special existence of the soul. The soul does not enter the foetus like the evil spirit into persons possessed, but is a

¹ Büchner, *Force and Matter*, 3rd ed. p. 232.

product of the development of the brain, just as muscular activity is a product of muscular development, and secretion a product of glandular development." After a careful review of the position of recent Science with regard to the whole doctrine, Mr. Graham sums up thus: "Such is the argument of Science, seemingly decisive against a future life. As we listen to her array of syllogisms, our hearts die within us. The hopes of men, placed in one scale to be weighed, seem to fly up against the massive weight of her evidence, placed in the other. It seems as if all our arguments were vain and unsubstantial, as if our future expectations were the foolish dreams of children, as if there could not be any other possible verdict arrived at upon the evidence brought forward."¹

Can we go on in the teeth of so real an obstruction? Has not our own weapon turned against us, Science abolishing with authoritative hand the very truth we are asking it to define?

What the philosopher has to throw into the other scale can be easily indicated. Generally speaking, he demurs to the dogmatism of the conclusion. That mind and brain react, that the mental and the physiological processes are related, and very intimately related, is beyond controversy. But how they are related, he submits, is still altogether unknown. The correlation of mind and brain do not involve their identity. And not a few authorities accordingly have consistently hesitated to draw any conclusion at all. Even Büchner's statement turns out, on close examination, to be tentative in the extreme. In pre-facing his chapter on Personal Continuance, after a single sentence on the dependence of the soul and its manifestations upon a material substratum, he remarks, "Though we are unable to form a definite idea as to the *how* of this connection, we are still by these facts justified in asserting, that the mode of this connection renders it *apparently* impossible that they should continue to exist separately."² There is, therefore, a flaw at this point in the argument for materialism. It may not help the spiritualist in the least degree positively. He may be as far as ever from a theory of how consciousness could continue with-

out the material tissue. But his contention secures for him the right of speculation. The path beyond may lie in hopeless gloom; but it is not barred. He may bring forward his theory if he will. And this is something. For a permission to go on is often the most that Science can grant to Religion.

Men have taken advantage of this loophole in various ways. And though it cannot be said that these speculations offer us more than a probability, this is still enough to combine with the deep-seated expectation in the bosom of mankind and give fresh lustre to the hope of a future life. Whether we find relief in the theory of a simple dualism; whether with Ulrici we further define the soul as an invisible enswathement of the body, material yet non-atomic; whether, with the *Unseen Universe*, we are helped by the spectacle of known forms of matter shading off into an ever-growing subtlety, mobility, and immateriality; or whether, with Wundt, we regard the soul as "the ordered unity of many elements," it is certain that shapes can be given to the conception of a correspondence which shall bridge the grave such as to satisfy minds too much accustomed to weigh evidence to put themselves off with fancies.

But whether the possibilities of physiology or the theories of philosophy do or do not substantially assist us in realising Immortality, is to Religion, to Religion at least regarded from the present point of view, of inferior moment. The fact of Immortality rests for us on a different basis. Probably, indeed, after all the Christian philosopher never engaged himself in a more superfluous task than in seeking along physiological lines to find room for a soul. The theory of Christianity has only to be fairly stated to make manifest its thorough independence of all the usual speculations on Immortality. The theory is not that thought, volition, or emotion, as such, are to survive the grave. The difficulty of holding a doctrine in this form, in spite of what has been advanced to the contrary, in spite of the hopes and wishes of mankind, in spite of all the scientific and philosophical attempts to make it tenable, is still profound. No secular theory of personal continuance, as even Butler acknowledged, does not equally demand the eternity of the brute. No secular theory

¹ *The Creed of Science*, p. 169.

² *Force and Matter*, p. 231.

defines the point in the chain of Evolution at which organisms became endowed with Immortality. No secular theory explains the condition of the endowment, nor indicates its goal. And if we have nothing more to fan hope than the unexplored mystery of the whole region, or the unknown remainders among the potencies of Life, then, as those who have "hope only in this world," we are "of all men the most miserable."

When we turn, on the other hand, to the doctrine as it came from the lips of Christ, we find ourselves in an entirely different region. He makes no attempt to project the material into the immaterial. The old elements, however refined and subtle as to their matter, are not in themselves to inherit the Kingdom of God. That which is flesh is flesh. Instead of attaching Immortality to the natural organism, He introduces a new and original factor which none of the secular, and few even of the theological theories, seem to take sufficiently into account. To Christianity, "he that hath the Son of God hath Life, and he that hath not the Son hath not Life." This, as we take it, defines the correspondence which is to bridge the grave. This is the clue to the nature of the Life that lies at the back of the spiritual organism. And this is the true solution of the mystery of Eternal Life.

There lies a something at the back of the correspondences of the spiritual organism—just as there lies a something at the back of the natural correspondences. To say that Life is a correspondence is only to express the partial truth. There is something behind. Life manifests itself in correspondences. But what determines them? The organism exhibits a variety of correspondences. What organises them? As in the natural, so in the spiritual, there is a Principle of Life. We cannot get rid of that term. However clumsy, however provisional, however much a mere cloak for ignorance, Science as yet is unable to dispense with the idea of a Principle of Life. We must work with the word till we get a better. Now that which determines the correspondence of the spiritual organism is a Principle of Spiritual Life. It is a new and Divine Possession. He that hath the Son hath Life; conversely, he that hath Life hath the Son. And this indicates at once the quality and the quantity

of the correspondence which is to bridge the grave. He that hath Life hath *the Son*. He possesses the Spirit of a Son. That spirit is, so to speak, organised within him by the Son. It is the manifestation of the new nature—of which more anon. The fact to note at present is that this is not an organic correspondence, but a spiritual correspondence. It comes not from generation, but from regeneration. The relation between the spiritual man and his Environment is, in theological language, a filial relation. With the new Spirit, the filial correspondence, he knows the Father—and this is Life Eternal. This is not only the real relation, but the only possible relation: "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." And this on purely natural grounds. It takes the Divine to know the Divine—but in no more mysterious sense than it takes the human to understand the human. The analogy, indeed, for the whole field here has been finely expressed already by Paul: "What man," he asks, "knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."¹

It were idle, such being the quality of the new relation, to add that this also contains the guarantee of its eternity. Here at last is a correspondence which will never cease. Its powers in bridging the grave have been tried. The correspondence of the spiritual man possesses the supernatural virtues of the Resurrection and the Life. It is known by former experiment to have survived the "changes in the physical state of the environment," and those "mechanical actions" and "variations of available food;" which Mr. Herbert Spencer tells us are "liable to stop the processes going on in the organism." In short, this is a correspondence which at once satisfies the demands of Science and Religion. In mere quantity it is different from every other correspondence known. Setting aside everything else in Religion, everything adventitious, local, and provisional; dissecting in to the bone and marrow we find this—a correspondence which can

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12.

never break with an Environment which can never change. Here is a relation established with Eternity. The passing years lay no limiting hand on it. Corruption injures it not. It survives Death. It, and it only, will stretch beyond the grave and be found inviolate—

“When the moon is old,
And the stars are cold,
And the books of the Judgment-day unfold.”

The misgiving which will creep sometimes over the brightest faith has already received its expression and its rebuke: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Shall these “changes in the physical state of the environment” which threaten death to the natural man destroy the spiritual? Shall death, or life, or angels, or principalities, or powers, arrest or tamper with his eternal correspondences? “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹

It may seem an objection to some that the “perfect correspondence” should come to man in so extraordinary a way. The earlier stages in the doctrine are promising enough; They are entirely in line with Nature. And if Nature had also furnished the “perfect correspondence” demanded for an Eternal Life the position might be unassailable. But this sudden reference to a something outside the natural Environment destroys the continuity, and discovers a permanent weakness in the whole theory?

To which there is a twofold reply. In the first place, to go outside what we call Nature is not to go outside Environment. Nature, the natural Environment, is only a part of Environment. There is another large part which, though some profess to have no correspondence with it, is not on that account unreal, or even unnatural. The mental and moral world is unknown to the plant. But it is real. It cannot be affirmed either that it is unnatural to the plant; although it might be said that from the point of view of the Vegetable Kingdom it was *supernatural*. Things

¹ Rom. viii. 35-39.

are natural or supernatural simply according to where one stands. Man is supernatural to the mineral; God is supernatural to the man. When a mineral is seized upon by the living plant and elevated to the organic kingdom, no trespass against Nature is committed. It merely enters a larger Environment, which before was supernatural to it, but which now is entirely natural. When the heart of a man, again, is seized upon by the quickening Spirit of God, no further violence is done to natural law. It is another case of the inorganic, so to speak, passing into the organic.

But, in the second place, it is complained as if it were an enormity in itself that the spiritual correspondence should be furnished from the spiritual world. And to this the answer lies in the same direction. Correspondence in any case is the gift of Environment. The natural Environment gives men their natural faculties; the spiritual affords them their spiritual faculties. It is natural for the spiritual Environment to supply the spiritual faculties; it would be quite unnatural for the natural environment to do it. The natural law of Biogenesis forbids it; the moral fact that the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite is against it; the spiritual principle that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God renders it absurd. Not, however, that the spiritual faculties are, as it were, manufactured in the spiritual world and supplied ready-made to the spiritual organism—forced upon it as an external equipment. This certainly is not involved in saying that the spiritual faculties are furnished by the spiritual world. Organisms are not added to by accretion, as in the case of minerals, but by growth. And the spiritual faculties are organised in the spiritual protoplasm of the soul, just as other faculties are organised in the protoplasm of the body. The plant is made of materials which have once been inorganic. An organising principle not belonging to their kingdom lays hold of them and elaborates them until they have correspondences with the kingdom to which the organising principle belonged. Their original organising principle, if it can be called by this name, was Crystallisation; so that we have now a distinctly foreign power organising in totally new and higher directions. In the spiritual world, similarly, we find an organising principle at work among the

extraordinary

good.

materials of the organic kingdom, performing a further miracle, but not a different kind of miracle, producing organisations of a novel kind, but not by a novel method. The second process, in fact, is simply what an enlightened evolutionist would have expected from the first. It marks the natural and legitimate progress of the development. And this in the line of the true Evolution—not the *linear* Evolution, which would look for the development of the natural man through powers already inherent, as if one were to look to Crystallisation to accomplish the development of the mineral into the plant,—but that larger form of Evolution which includes among its factors the double Law of Biogenesis and the immense further truth that this involves.

What is further included in this complex correspondence we shall have opportunity to illustrate afterwards.¹ Meantime let it be noted on what the Christian argument for Immortality really rests. It stands upon the pedestal on which the theologian rests the whole of historical Christianity—the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It ought to be placed in the forefront of all Christian teaching that Christ's mission on earth was to give men Life. "I am come," He said, "that ye might have Life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." And that He meant literal Life, literal spiritual and Eternal Life, is clear from the whole course of His teaching and acting. To impose a metaphorical meaning on the commonest word of the New Testament is to violate every canon of interpretation, and at the same time to charge the greatest of teachers with persistently mystifying His hearers by an unusual use of so exact a vehicle for expressing definite thought as the Greek language, and that on the most momentous subject of which He ever spoke to men. It is a canon of interpretation, according to Alford, that "a figurative sense of words is never admissible except when required by the context." The context, in most cases, is not only directly unfavourable to a figurative meaning, but in innumerable instances in Christ's teaching Life is broadly contrasted with Death. In the teaching of the apostles, again, we find that, without exception, they accepted the term in its simple literal sense. Reuss defines the apostolic belief with his usual impartiality when—and the quota-

¹ Vide "Conformity to Type," page 77.

tation is doubly pertinent here—he discovers in the apostles' conception of Life, first, "the idea of a real existence, an existence such as is proper to God and to the Word; an imperishable existence—that is to say, not subject to the vicissitudes and imperfections of the finite world. This primary idea is repeatedly expressed, at least in a negative form; it leads to a doctrine of immortality, or, to speak more correctly, of life, far surpassing any that had been expressed in the formulas of the current philosophy or theology, and resting upon premises and conceptions altogether different. In fact, it can dispense both with the philosophical thesis of the immateriality or indestructibility of the human soul, and with the theological thesis of a miraculous corporeal reconstruction of our person; theses, the first of which is altogether foreign to the religion of the Bible, and the second absolutely opposed to reason." Second, "the idea of life, as it is conceived in this system, implies the idea of a power, an operation, a communication, since this life no longer remains, so to speak, latent or passive in God and in the Word, but through them reaches the believer. It is not a mental somnolent thing; it is not a plant without fruit; it is a germ which is to find fullest development."¹

If we are asked to define more clearly what is meant by this mysterious endowment of Life, we again hand over the difficulty to Science. When Science can define the Natural Life and the Physical Force we may hope for further clearness on the nature and action of the Spiritual Powers. The effort to detect the living Spirit must be at least as idle as the attempt to subject protoplasm to microscopic examination in the hope of discovering Life. We are warned, also, not to expect too much. "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." This being its quality, when the Spiritual Life is discovered in the laboratory it will possibly be time to give it up altogether. It may say, as Socrates of his soul, "You may bury me—if you can catch me."

Science never corroborates a spiritual truth without illuminating it. The threshold of Eternity is a place where many shadows meet. And the light of Science here, where everything is so dark, is welcome a thousand times. Many men

¹ *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age*, vol. ii. p. 496.

would be religious if they knew where to begin; many would be more religious if they were sure where it would end. It is not indifference that keeps some men from God, but ignorance. "Good Master, what must I do to inherit Eternal Life?" is still the deepest question of the age. What is Religion? What am I to believe? What seek with all my heart and soul and mind?—this is the imperious question sent up to consciousness from the depths of being in all earnest hours; sent down again, alas, with many of us, time after time, unanswered. Into all our thought and work and reading this question pursues us. But the theories are rejected one by one; the great books are returned sadly to their shelves, the years pass, and the problem remains unsolved. The confusion of tongues here is terrible. Every day a new authority announces himself. Poets, philosophers, preachers try their hand on us in turn. New prophets arise, and beseech us for our soul's sake to give ear to them—at last, in an hour of inspiration, they have discovered the final truth. Yet the doctrine of yesterday is challenged by a fresh philosophy to-day; and the creed of to-day will fall in turn before the criticism of to-morrow. Increase of knowledge increaseth sorrow. And at length the conflicting truths, like the beams of light in the laboratory experiment, combine in the mind to make total darkness.

But here are two outstanding authorities agreed—not men, not philosophers, not creeds. Here is the voice of God and the voice of Nature. I cannot be wrong if I listen to them. Sometimes when uncertain of a voice from its very loudness, we catch the missing syllable in the echo. In God and Nature we have Voice and Echo. When I hear both, I am assured. My sense of hearing does not betray me twice. I recognise the Voice in the Echo, the Echo makes me certain of the Voice; I listen and I know. The question of a Future Life is a biological question. Nature may be silent on other problems of Religion; but here she has a right to speak. The whole confusion around the doctrine of Eternal Life has arisen from making it a question of Philosophy. We shall do ill to refuse a hearing to any speculation of Philosophy; the ethical relations here especially are intimate and real. But in the first instance Eternal Life, as a question of *Life*, is a problem

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for Biology. The soul is a living organism. And for any question as to the soul's Life we must appeal to Life-science. And what does the Life-science teach? That if I am to inherit Eternal Life, I must cultivate a correspondence with the Eternal. This is a simple proposition, for Nature is always simple. I take this proposition, and, leaving Nature, proceed to fill it in. I search everywhere for a clue to the Eternal. I ransack literature for a definition of a correspondence between man and God. Obviously that can only come from one source. And the analogies of Science permit us to apply to it. All knowledge lies in Environment. When I want to know about minerals I go to minerals. When I want to know about flowers I go to flowers. And they tell me. In their own way they speak to me, each in its own way, and each for itself—not the mineral for the flower, which is impossible, nor the flower for the mineral, which is also impossible. So if I want to know about Man, I go to his part of the Environment. And he tells me about himself, not as the plant or the mineral, for he is neither, but in his own way. And if I want to know about God, I go to His part of the Environment. And He tells me about Himself, not as a Man, for He is not Man, but in His own way. And just as naturally as the flower and the mineral and the Man, each in their own way, tell me about themselves, He tells me about Himself. He very strangely condescends indeed in making things plain to me, actually assuming for a time the Form of a Man that I at my poor level may better see Him. This is my opportunity to know Him. This incarnation is God making Himself accessible to human thought—God opening to man the possibility of correspondence through Jesus Christ. And this correspondence and this Environment are those I seek. He Himself assures me, "This is Life Eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Do I not now discern the deeper meaning in "*Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent*"? Do I not better understand with what vision and rapture the profoundest of the disciples exclaims, "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we might know Him that is True"?¹

¹ 1 John v. 20.

Having opened correspondence with the Eternal Environment, the subsequent stages are in the line of all other normal development. We have but to continue, to deepen, to extend, and to enrich the correspondence that has been begun. And we shall soon find to our surprise that this is accompanied by another and parallel process. The action is not all upon our side. The Environment also will be found to correspond. The influence of Environment is one of the greatest and most substantial of modern biological doctrines. Of the power of Environment to form or transform organisms, of its ability to develop or suppress function, of its potency in determining growth, and generally of its immense influence in Evolution, there is no need now to speak. But Environment is now acknowledged to be one of the most potent factors in the Evolution of Life. The influence of Environment too seems to increase rather than diminish as we approach the higher forms of being. The highest forms are the most mobile; their capacity of change is the greatest; they are, in short, most easily acted on by Environment. And not only are the highest organisms the most mobile, but the highest parts of the highest organisms are more mobile than the lower. Environment can do little, comparatively, in the direction of inducing variation in the body of a child; but how plastic is its mind! How infinitely sensitive is its soul! How infallibly can it be tuned to music or to dissonance by the moral harmony or discord of its outward lot! How decisively indeed are we not all formed and moulded, made or unmade, by external circumstance! Might we not all confess with Ulysses,—

I am a part of all that I have met?

Much more, then, shall we look for the influence of Environment on the spiritual nature of him who has opened correspondence with God. Reaching out his eager and quickened faculties to the spiritual world around him, shall he not become spiritual? In vital contact with Holiness, shall he not become holy? Breathing now an atmosphere of ineffable Purity, shall he miss becoming pure? Walking with God from day to day, shall he fail to be taught of God?

Growth in grace is sometimes described as a strange, mystical, and unintelligible

process. It is mystical, but neither strange nor unintelligible. It proceeds according to Natural Law, and the leading factor in sanctification is Influence of Environment. The possibility of it depends upon the mobility of the organism; the result, on the extent and frequency of certain correspondences. These facts insensibly lead on to a further suggestion. Is it not possible that these biological truths may carry with them the clue to a still profounder philosophy—even that of Regeneration?

Evolutionists tell us that by the influence of environment certain aquatic animals have become adapted to a terrestrial mode of life. Breathing normally by gills, as the result and reward of a continued effort carried on from generation to generation to inspire the air of heaven direct, they have slowly acquired the lung-function. In the young organism, true to the ancestral type, the gill still persists—as in the tadpole of the common frog. But as maturity approaches the true lung appears; the gill gradually transfers its task to the higher organ. It then becomes atrophied and disappears, and finally respiration in the adult is conducted by lungs alone.¹ We may be far, in the meantime, from saying that this is proved. It is for those who accept it to deny the justice of the spiritual analogy. Is religion to them unscientific in its doctrine of Regeneration? Will the evolutionist who admits the regeneration of the frog under the modifying influence of a continued correspondence with a new environment, care to question the possibility of the soul acquiring such a faculty as that of Prayer, the marvellous breathing-function of the new creature, when in contact with the atmosphere of a besetting God? Is the change from the earthly to the heavenly more mysterious than the change from the aquatic to the terrestrial mode of life? Is Evolution to stop with the organic? If it be objected that it has taken ages to perfect the function in the batrachian, the reply is, that it will take ages to perfect the function in the Christian. For every thousand years the natural evolution will allow for the development of its organism, the Higher Biology will grant its product millions. We have indeed spoken of the spiritual correspond-

¹ *Vide* also the remarkable experiments of Fräulein v. Chauvin on the Transformation of the Mexican Axolotl into Amblystoma.—Weismann's *Studies in the Theory of Descent*, vol. ii. pt. iii.

ence as already perfect—but it is perfect only as the bud is perfect. "It doth not yet appear what it shall be," any more than it appeared a million years ago what the evolving batrachian would be.

But to return. We have been dealing with the scientific aspects of communion with God. Insensibly, from quantity we have been led to speak of quality. And enough has now been advanced to indicate generally the nature of that correspondence with which is necessarily associated Eternal Life. There remain but one or two details to which we must lastly, and very briefly, address ourselves.

The quality of everlastingness belongs, as we have seen, to a single correspondence, or rather to a single set of correspondences. But it is apparent that before this correspondence can take full and final effect a further process is necessary. By some means it must be separated from all the other correspondences of the organism which do not share its peculiar quality. In this life it is restrained by these other correspondences. They may contribute to it or hinder it; but they are essentially of a different order. They belong not to Eternity but to Time, and to this present world; and, unless some provision is made for dealing with them, they will detain the aspiring organism in this present world till Time is ended. Of course, in a sense, all that belongs to Time belongs also to Eternity; but these lower correspondences are in their nature unfitted for an Eternal Life. Even if they were perfect in their relation to their Environment, they would still not be Eternal. However opposed, apparently, to the scientific definition of Eternal Life, it is yet true that perfect correspondence with Environment is not Eternal Life. A very important word in the complete definition is, in this sentence, omitted. On that word it has not been necessary hitherto, and for obvious reasons, to place any emphasis, but when we come to deal with false pretenders to Immortality we must return to it. Were the definition complete as it stands, it might, with the permission of the psycho-physiologist, guarantee the Immortality of every living thing. In the dog, for instance, the material framework giving way at death might leave the released canine spirit still free to inhabit the old Environment. And so with every creature which had

ever established a conscious relation with surrounding things. Now the difficulty in framing a theory of Eternal Life has been to construct one which will exclude the brute creation, drawing the line rigidly at man, or at least somewhere within the human race. Not that we need object to the Immortality of the dog, or of the whole inferior creation. Nor that we need refuse a place to any intelligible speculation which would people the earth to-day with the invisible forms of all things that have ever lived. Only we still insist that this is not Eternal Life. And why? Because their Environment is not Eternal. Their correspondence, however firmly established, is established with that which shall pass away. An Eternal Life demands an Eternal Environment.

The demand for a perfect Environment as well as for a perfect correspondence is less clear in Mr. Herbert Spencer's definition than it might be. But it is an essential factor. An organism might remain true to its Environment, but what if the Environment played it false? If the organism possessed the power to change, it could adapt itself to successive changes in the Environment. And if this were guaranteed we should also have the conditions for Eternal Life fulfilled. But what if the Environment passed away altogether? What if the earth swept suddenly into the sun? This is a change of Environment against which there could be no precaution and for which there could be as little provision. With a changing Environment even, there must always remain the dread and possibility of a falling out of correspondence. At the best, Life would be uncertain. But with a changeless Environment—such as that possessed by the spiritual organism—the perpetuity of the correspondence, so far as the external relation is concerned, is guaranteed. This quality of permanence in the Environment distinguishes the religious relation from every other. Why should not the musician's life be an Eternal Life? Because, for one thing, the musical world, the Environment with which he corresponds, is not eternal. Even if his correspondence in itself could last eternally, the environing material things with which he corresponds must pass away. His soul might last for ever—but not his violin. So the man of the world might last for ever—but not the

world. His Environment is not eternal; nor are even his correspondences—the world passeth away *and the lust thereof*.

We find then that man, or the spiritual man, is equipped with two sets of correspondences. One set possesses the quality of everlastingness, the other is temporal. But unless these are separated by some means the temporal will continue to impair and hinder the eternal. The final preparation, therefore, for the inheriting of Eternal Life must consist in the abandonment of the non-eternal elements. These must be unloosed and dissociated from the higher elements. And this is effected by a closing catastrophe—Death.

Death ensues because certain relations in the organism are not adjusted to certain relations in the Environment. There will come a time in each history when the imperfect correspondences of the organism will betray themselves by a failure to compass some necessary adjustment. This is why Death is associated with Imperfection. Death is the necessary result of Imperfection, and the necessary end of it. Imperfect correspondence gives imperfect and uncertain Life. "Perfect correspondence," on the other hand, according to Mr. Herbert Spencer, would be "perfect Life." To abolish Death, therefore, all that would be necessary would be to abolish Imperfection. But it is the claim of Christianity

that it can abolish Death. And it is significant to notice that it does so by meeting this very demand of Science—it abolishes Imperfection.

The part of the organism which begins to get out of correspondence with the Organic Environment is the only part which is in vital correspondence with it. Though a fatal disadvantage to the natural man to be thrown out of correspondence with this Environment, it is of inestimable importance to the spiritual man. For so long as it is maintained the way is barred for a further Evolution. And hence the condition necessary for the further Evolution is that the spiritual be released from the natural. That is to say, the condition of the further Evolution is Death. *Mors janua Vitæ*, therefore, becomes a scientific formula. Death, being the final sifting of all the correspondences, is the indispensable factor of the higher Life. In the language of Science, not less than of Scripture, "To die is gain."

The sifting of the correspondences is done by Nature. This is its last and greatest contribution to mankind. Over the mouth of the grave the perfect and the imperfect submit to their final separation. Each goes to its own—earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, Spirit to Spirit. "The dust shall return to the earth as it was; and the Spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

ENVIRONMENT

"Ye are complete in Him."—PAUL.

"Whatever amount of power an organism expends in any shape is the correlate and equivalent of a power that was taken into it from without."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"When I talked with an ardent missionary and pointed out to him that his creed found no support in my experience, he replied: 'It is not so in your experience, but is so in the other world.' I answer: 'Other world! There is no other world. God is one and omnipresent; here or nowhere is the whole fact.'"—EMERSON.

STUDENTS of Biography will observe that in all well-written Lives attention is concentrated for the first few chapters upon two points. We are first introduced to the family to which the subject of memoir belonged. The grandparents, or even the more remote ancestors, are briefly sketched and their chief characteristics brought prominently into view. Then the parents themselves are photographed in detail. Their appearance and physique, their character, their disposition, their mental qualities, are set before us in a

critical analysis. And finally we are asked to observe how much the father and the mother respectively have transmitted of their peculiar nature to their offspring. How faithfully the ancestral lines have met in the latest product, how mysteriously the joint characteristics of body and mind have blended, and how unexpected yet how entirely natural a recombination is the result—these points are elaborated with cumulative effect until we realise at last how little we are dealing with an independent unit, how much with

good.
a survival and reorganisation of what seemed buried in the grave.

In the second place, we are invited to consider more external influences—schools and schoolmasters, neighbours, home, pecuniary circumstances, scenery, and, by and by, the religious and political atmosphere of the time. These also we are assured have played their part in making the individual what he is. We can estimate these early influences in any particular case with but small imagination if we fail to see how powerfully they also have moulded mind and character, and in what subtle ways they have determined the course of the future life.

Note.
This twofold relation of the individual, first, to his parents, and second, to his circumstances, is not peculiar to human beings. These two factors are responsible for making all living organisms what they are. When a naturalist attempts to unfold the life-history of any animal, he proceeds precisely on these same lines. Biography is really a branch of Natural History; and the biographer who discusses his hero as the resultant of these two tendencies, follows the scientific method as rigidly as Mr. Darwin in studying *Animals and Plants under Domestication*.

Mr. Darwin, following Weismann, long ago pointed out that there are two main factors in all Evolution—the nature of the organism and the nature of the conditions. We have chosen our illustration from the highest or human species in order to define the meaning of these factors in the clearest way; but it must be remembered that the development of man under these directive influences is essentially the same as that of any other organism in the hands of Nature. We are dealing therefore with universal Law. It will still further serve to complete the conception of the general principle if we now substitute for the casual phrases by which the factors have been described the more accurate terminology of Science. Thus what Biography describes as parental influences, Biology would speak of as Heredity; and all that is involved in the second factor—the action of external circumstances and surroundings—the naturalist would include under the single term Environment. These two, Heredity and Environment, are the master-influences of the organic world. These have made all of us what we are.

These forces are still ceaselessly playing upon all our lives. And he who truly understands these influences; he who has decided how much to allow to each; he who can regulate new forces as they arise, or adjust them to the old, so directing them as at one moment to make them co-operate, at another to counteract one another, understands the rationale of personal development. To seize continuously the opportunity of more and more perfect adjustment to better and higher conditions, to balance some inward evil with some purer influence acting from without, in a word to make our Environment at the same time that it is making us,—these are the secrets of a well-ordered and successful life.

In the spiritual world, also, the subtle influences which form and transform the soul are Heredity and Environment. And here especially where all is invisible, where much that we feel to be real is yet so ill-defined, it becomes of vital practical moment to clarify the atmosphere as far as possible with conceptions borrowed from the natural life. Few things are less understood than the conditions of the spiritual life. The distressing incompetence of which most of us are conscious in trying to work out our spiritual experience is due perhaps less to the diseased will which we commonly blame for it than to imperfect knowledge of the right conditions. It does not occur to us how natural the spiritual is. We still strive for some strange transcendent thing; we seek to promote life by methods as unnatural as they prove unsuccessful; and only the utter incomprehensibility of the whole region prevents us seeing fully—what we already half-suspect—how completely we are missing the road. Living in the spiritual world, nevertheless, is just as simple as living in the natural world; and it is the same kind of simplicity. It is the same kind of simplicity for it is the same kind of world—there are not two kinds of worlds. The conditions of life in the one are the conditions of life in the other. And till these conditions are sensibly grasped, as the conditions of all life, it is impossible that the personal effort after the highest life should be other than a blind struggle carried on in fruitless sorrow and humiliation.

Of these two universal factors, Heredity and Environment, it is unnecessary to balance the relative importance here.

The main influence, unquestionably, must be assigned to the former. In practice, however, and for an obvious reason, we are chiefly concerned with the latter. What Heredity has to do for us is determined outside ourselves. No man can select his own parents. But every man to some extent can choose his own Environment. His relation to it, however largely determined by Heredity in the first instance, is always open to alteration. And so great is his control over Environment and so radical its influence over him, that he can so direct it as either to undo, modify, perpetuate or intensify the earlier hereditary influences within certain limits. But the aspects of Environment which we have now to consider do not involve us in questions of such complexity. In what high and mystical sense, also, Heredity applies to the spiritual organism we need not just now inquire. In the simpler relations of the more external factor we shall find a large and fruitful field for study.

The Influence of Environment may be investigated in two main aspects. First, one might discuss the modern and very interesting question as to the power of Environment to induce what is known to recent science as Variation. A change in the surroundings of any animal, it is now well known, can so react upon it as to cause it to change. By the attempt, conscious or unconscious, to adjust itself to the new conditions, a true physiological change is gradually wrought within the organism. Hunter, for example, in a classical experiment, so changed the Environment of a sea-gull by keeping it in captivity that it could only secure a grain diet. The effect was to modify the stomach of the bird, normally adapted to a fish diet, until in time it came to resemble in structure the gizzard of an ordinary grain-feeder such as the pigeon. Holmgrén again reversed this experiment by feeding pigeons for a lengthened period on a meat-diet, with the result that the gizzard became transformed into the carnivorous stomach. Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace mentions the case of a Brazilian parrot which changes its colour from green to red or yellow when fed on the fat of certain fishes. Not only changes of food, however, but changes of climate and of temperature, changes in surrounding organisms, in the case of marine animals even changes of pressure, of

ocean currents, of light, and of many other circumstances, are known to exert a powerful modifying influence upon living organisms. These relations are still being worked out in many directions, but the influence of Environment as a prime factor in Variation is now a recognised doctrine of science.¹

Even the popular mind has been struck with the curious adaptation of nearly all animals to their *habitat*, for example in the matter of colour. The sandy hue of the sole and flounder, the white of the polar bear with its suggestion of Arctic snows, the stripes of the Bengal tiger—as if the actual reeds of its native jungle had nature-printed themselves on its hide;—these, and a hundred others which will occur to every one, are marked instances of adaptation to Environment induced, by Natural Selection or otherwise, for the purpose, obviously in these cases at least, of protection.

To continue the investigation of the modifying action of Environment into the moral and spiritual spheres, would be to open a fascinating and suggestive inquiry. One might show how the moral man is acted upon and changed continuously by the influences, secret and open, of his surroundings, by the tone of society, by the company he keeps, by his occupation, by the books he reads, by Nature, by all, in short, that constitutes the habitual atmosphere of his thoughts and the little world of his daily choice. Or one might go deeper still and prove how the spiritual life also is modified from outside sources—its health or disease, its growth or decay, all its changes for better or for worse being determined by the varying and successive circumstances in which the religious habits are cultivated. But we must rather transfer our attention to a second aspect of Environment, not perhaps so fascinating but yet more important.

So much of the modern discussion of Environment revolves round the mere question of Variation that one is apt to overlook a previous question. Environment as a factor in life is not exhausted when we have realised its modifying influence. Its significance is scarcely touched. The great function of Environment is not to modify but to *sustain*. In

¹ Vide Karl Semper's *The Natural Conditions of Existence as they affect Animal Life*; Wallace's *Tropical Nature*; Weismann's *Studies in the Theory of Descent*; Darwin's *Animals and Plants under Domestication*.

main influence, of heredity.

induction of variation by environment; experiment on animal.

habitat & colour of animals.

moral and spiritual

life & m. of environment.

sustaining life, it is true, it modifies. But the latter influence is incidental, the former essential. Our Environment is that in which we live and move and have our being. Without it we should neither live nor move nor have any being. In the organism lies the principle of life; in the Environment are the conditions of life. Without the fulfilment of these conditions, which are wholly supplied by Environment, there can be no life. An organism in itself is but a part; Nature is its complement. Alone, cut off from its surroundings, it is not. Alone, cut off from my surroundings, I am not—physically I am not. I am, only as I am sustained. I continue only as I receive. My Environment may modify me, but it has first to keep me. And all the time its secret transforming power is indirectly moulding body and mind it is directly active in the more open task of ministering to my myriad wants and from hour to hour sustaining life itself.

To understand the sustaining influence of Environment in the animal world, one has only to recall what the biologist terms the extrinsic or subsidiary conditions of vitality. Every living thing normally requires for its development an Environment containing air, light, heat, and water. In addition to these, if vitality is to be prolonged for any length of time, and if it is to be accompanied with growth and the expenditure of energy, there must be a constant supply of food. When we simply remember how indispensable food is to growth and work, and when we further bear in mind that the food-supply is solely contributed by the Environment, we shall realise at once the meaning and the truth of the proposition that without Environment there can be no life. Seventy per cent at least of the human body is made of pure water, the rest of gases and earths. These have all come from Environment. Through the secret pores of the skin two pounds of water are exhaled daily from every healthy adult. The supply is kept up by Environment. The Environment is really an unappropriated part of ourselves. Definite portions are continuously abstracted from it and added to the organism. And so long as the organism continues to grow, act, think, speak, work, or perform any other function demanding a supply of energy, there is a constant, simultaneous, and proportionate drain upon its surroundings.

This is a truth in the physical, and therefore in the spiritual, world of so great importance that we shall not mispend time if we follow it, for further confirmation, into another department of nature. Its significance in Biology is self-evident; let us appeal to Chemistry.

When a piece of coal is thrown on the fire, we say that it will radiate into the room a certain quantity of heat. This heat, in the popular conception, is supposed to reside in the coal and to be set free during the process of combustion. In reality, however, the heat energy is only in part contained in the coal. It is contained just as truly in the oxygen of the air. The atoms of carbon which compose the coal have a powerful affinity for the oxygen of the air. Whenever they are made to approach within a certain distance of one another, by the initial application of heat, they rush together with inconceivable velocity. The heat which appears at this moment, comes neither from the carbon alone, nor from the oxygen alone. These two substances are really inconsumable, and continue to exist, after they meet in a combined form, as carbonic acid gas. The heat is due to the energy developed by the chemical embrace, the precipitate rushing together of the molecules of carbon and the molecules of oxygen. It comes, therefore, partly from the coal and partly from the Environment. Coal alone never could produce heat, neither alone could Environment. The two are mutually dependent. And although in nearly all the arts we credit everything to the substance which we can weigh and handle, it is certain that in most cases the larger debt is due to an invisible Environment.

This is one of those great commonplaces which slip out of general reckoning by reason of their very largeness and simplicity. How profound, nevertheless, are the issues which hang on this elementary truth, we shall discover immediately. Nothing in this age is more needed in every department of knowledge than the rejuvenescence of the commonplace. In the spiritual world especially, he will be wise who courts acquaintance with the most ordinary and transparent facts of Nature; and in laying the foundations for a religious life he will make no unworthy beginning who carries with him an impressive sense of so obvious a truth

great function of environment is to sustain life, but has the conditions of life.

logic requires of the environment. Our body made of water, gas, earth, all from environment.

Example from chemistry.

as that without Environment there can be no life.

For what does this amount to in the spiritual world? Is it not merely the scientific re-statement of the reiterated aphorism of Christ, "Without Me ye can do nothing"? There is in the spiritual organism a principle of life; but that is not self-existent. It requires a second factor, a something in which to live and move and have its being, an Environment. Without this I cannot live or move or have any being. Without Environment the soul is as the carbon without the oxygen, as the fish without the water, as the animal frame without the extrinsic conditions of vitality.

And what is the spiritual Environment? It is God. Without this, therefore, there is no life, no thought, no energy, nothing—"Without Me ye can do nothing."

The cardinal error in the religious life is to attempt to live without an Environment. Spiritual experience occupies itself, not too much, but too exclusively, with one factor—the soul. We delight in dissecting this much tortured faculty, from time to time, in search of a certain something which we call our faith—forgetting that faith is but an attitude, an empty hand for grasping an environing Presence. And when we feel the need of a power by which to overcome the world, how often do we not seek to generate it within ourselves by some forced process, some fresh girding of the will, some strained activity which only leaves the soul in further exhaustion? To examine ourselves is good; but useless unless we also examine Environment. To bewail our weakness is right, but not remedial. The cause must be investigated as well as the result. And yet, because we never see the other half of the problem, our failures even fail to instruct us. After each new collapse we begin our life anew, but on the old conditions; and the attempt ends as usual in the repetition—in the circumstances the inevitable repetition—of the old disaster. Not that at times we do not obtain glimpses of the true state of the case. After seasons of much discouragement, with the sore sense upon us of our abject feebleness, we do confer with ourselves, insisting for the thousandth time, "My soul, wait thou only upon God." But, the lesson is soon forgotten. The strength supplied we speedily credit to our own achievement; and even the temporary

success is mistaken for a symptom of improved inward vitality. Once more we become self-existent. Once more we go on living without an Environment. And once more, after days of wasting without repairing, of spending without replenishing, we begin to perish with hunger, only returning to God again, as a last resort, when we have reached starvation point.

Now why do we do this? Why do we seek to breathe without an atmosphere, to drink without a well? Why this unscientific attempt to sustain life for weeks at a time without an Environment? It is because we have never truly seen the necessity for an Environment. We have not been working with a principle. We are told to "wait only upon God," but we do not know why. It has never been as clear to us that without God the soul will die as that without food the body will perish. In short, we have never comprehended the doctrine of the Persistence of Force. Instead of being content to transform energy we have tried to create it.

The Law of Nature here is as clear as Science can make it. In the words of Mr. Herbert Spencer, "It is a corollary from that primordial truth which, as we have seen, underlies all other truths, that whatever amount of power an organism expends in any shape is the correlate and equivalent of a power that was taken into it from without."¹ We are dealing here with a simple question of dynamics. Whatever energy the soul expends must first be "taken into it from without." We are not Creators, but creatures; God is our refuge *and strength*. Communion with God, therefore, is a scientific necessity; and nothing will more help the defeated spirit which is struggling in the wreck of its religious life than a common-sense hold of this plain biological principle that without Environment he can do nothing. What he wants is not an occasional view, but a principle—a basal principle like this, broad as the universe, solid as nature. In the natural world we act upon this law unconsciously. We absorb heat, breathe air, draw on Environment all but automatically for meat and drink, for the nourishment of the senses, for mental stimulus, for all that, penetrating us from without, can prolong, enrich, and elevate life. But in the spiritual world we have all this to learn. We are new creatures, and even the bare living has to be acquired.

¹ *Principles of Biology*, p. 57.

Now the great point in learning to live is to live naturally. As closely as possible we must follow the broad, clear lines of the natural life. And there are three things especially which it is necessary for us to keep continually in view. The first is that the organism contains within itself only one-half of what is essential to life; the second is that the other half is contained in the Environment; the third, that the condition of receptivity is simple union between the organism and the Environment.

Translated into the language of religion these propositions yield, and place on a scientific basis, truths of immense practical interest. To say, first, that the organism contains within itself only one-half of what is essential to life, is to repeat the evangelical confession, so worn and yet so true to universal experience, of the utter helplessness of man. Who has not come to the conclusion that he is but a part, a fraction of some larger whole? Who does not miss at every turn of his life an absent God? That man is but a part, he knows, for there is room in him for more. That God is the other part, he feels, because at times He satisfies his need. Who does not tremble often under that sicklier symptom of his incompleteness, his want of spiritual energy, his helplessness with sin? But now he understands both—the void in his life, the powerlessness of his will. He understands that, like all other energy, spiritual power is contained in Environment. He finds here at last the true root of all human frailty, emptiness, nothingness, sin. This is why "without Me ye can do nothing." Powerlessness is the normal state not only of this but of every organism—of every organism apart from its Environment.

The entire dependence of the soul upon God is not an exceptional mystery, nor is man's helplessness an arbitrary and unprecedented phenomenon. It is the law of all Nature. The spiritual man is not taxed beyond the natural. He is not purposely handicapped by singular limitations or unusual incapacities. God has not designedly made the religious life as hard as possible. The arrangements for the spiritual life are the same as for the natural life. When in their hours of unbelief men challenge their Creator for placing the obstacle of human frailty in the way of their highest development, their protest is against the order of nature. They object to the sun for being the

source of energy and not the engine, to the carbonic acid being in the air and not in the plant. They would equip each organism with a personal atmosphere, each brain with a private store of energy; they would grow corn in the interior of the body, and make bread by a special apparatus in the digestive organs. They must, in short, have the creature transformed into a Creator. The organism must either depend on his environment, or be self-sufficient. But who will not rather approve the arrangement by which man in his creatural life may have unbroken access to an Infinite Power? What soul will seek to remain self-luminous when it knows that "The Lord God is a Sun"? Who will not willingly exchange his shallow vessel for Christ's well of living water? Even if the organism, launched into being like a ship putting out to sea, possessed a full equipment, its little store must soon come to an end. But in contact with a large and bounteous Environment its supply is limitless. In every direction its resources are infinite.

There is a modern school which protests against the doctrine of man's inability as the heartless fiction of a past theology. While some forms of that dogma, to any one who knows man, are incapable of defence, there are others which, to any one who knows Nature, are incapable of denial. Those who oppose it, in their jealousy for humanity, credit the organism with the properties of Environment. All true theology, on the other hand, has remained loyal to at least the root-idea in this truth. The New Testament is nowhere more impressive than where it insists on the fact of man's dependence. In its view the first step in religion is for man to feel his helplessness. Christ's first beatitude is to the poor in spirit. The condition of entrance into the spiritual kingdom is to possess the child-spirit—that state of mind combining at once the profoundest helplessness with the most artless feeling of dependence. Substantially the same idea underlies the countless passages in which Christ affirms that He has not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And in that farewell discourse into which the Great Teacher poured the most burning convictions of His life, He gives to this doctrine an ever-increasing emphasis. No words could be more solemn or arresting than the sentence in the last great

allegory devoted to this theme, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." The word here, it will be observed again, is *cannot*. It is the imperative of natural law. Fruit-bearing without Christ is not an improbability, but an impossibility. As well expect the natural fruit to flourish without air and heat, without soil and sunshine. How thoroughly also Paul grasped this truth is apparent from a hundred pregnant passages in which he echoes his Master's teaching. To him life was hid with Christ in God. And that he embraced this not as a theory but as an experimental truth we gather from his constant confession, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

This leads by a natural transition to the second of the three points we are seeking to illustrate. We have seen that the organism contains within itself only one half of what is essential to life. We have next to observe, as the complement of this, how the second half is contained in the Environment.

One result of the due apprehension of our personal helplessness will be that we shall no longer waste our time over the impossible task of manufacturing energy for ourselves. Our science will bring to an abrupt end the long series of severe experiments in which we have indulged in the hope of finding a perpetual motion. And having decided upon this once for all, our first step in seeking a more satisfactory state of things must be to find a new source of energy. Following Nature, only one course is open to us. We must refer to Environment. The natural life owes all to Environment, so must the spiritual. Now the Environment of the spiritual life is God. As Nature therefore forms the complement of the natural life, God is the complement of the spiritual.

The proof of this? That Nature is not more natural to my body than God is to my soul. Every animal and plant has its own Environment. And the further one inquires into the relations of the one to the other, the more one sees the marvelous intricacy and beauty of the adjustments. These wonderful adaptations of each organism to its surroundings—of the fish to the water, of the eagle to the air, of the insect to the forest-bed; and of each part of every organism—the fish's swim-bladder, the eagle's eye, the insect's breathing tubes—which the old argument

from design brought home to us with such enthusiasm, inspire us still with a sense of the boundless resource and skill of Nature in perfecting her arrangements for each single life. Down to the last detail the world is made for what is in it; and by whatever process things are as they are, all organisms find in surrounding Nature the ample complement of themselves. Man, too, finds in his Environment provision for all capacities, scope for the exercise of every faculty, room for the indulgence of each appetite, a just supply for every want. So the spiritual man at the apex of the pyramid of life finds in the vaster range of his Environment a provision, as much higher, it is true, as he is higher, but as delicately adjusted to his varying needs. And all this is supplied to him just as the lower organisms are ministered to by the lower environment, in the same simple ways, in the same constant sequence, as appropriately and as lavishly. We fail to praise the ceaseless ministry of the great inanimate world around us only because its kindness is unobtrusive. Nature is always noiseless. All her greatest gifts are given in secret. And we forget how truly every good and perfect gift comes from without, and from above, because no pause in her changeless beneficence teaches us the sad lessons of deprivation.

It is not a strange thing, then, for the soul to find its life in God. This is its native air. God as the Environment of the soul has been from the remotest age the doctrine of all the deepest thinkers in religion. How profoundly Hebrew poetry is saturated with this high thought will appear when we try to conceive of it with this left out. True poetry is only science in another form. And long before it was possible for religion to give scientific expression to its greatest truths, men of insight uttered themselves in psalms which could not have been truer to Nature had the most modern light controlled the inspiration. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." What fine sense of the analogy of the natural and the spiritual does not underlie these words. As the hart after its Environment, so man after his: as the water-brooks are fitly designed to meet the natural wants, so fitly does God implement the spiritual need of man. It will be noticed that in the Hebrew poets the longing for God never strikes

one as morbid, or unnatural to the men who uttered it. It is as natural to them to long for God as for the swallow to seek her nest. Throughout all their images no suspicion rises within us that they are exaggerating. We feel how truly they are reading themselves, their deepest selves. No false note occurs in all their aspiration. There is no weariness even in their ceaseless sighing, except the lover's weariness for the absent—if they would fly away, it is only to be at rest. Men who have no soul can only wonder at this. Men who have a soul, but with little faith, can only envy it. How joyous a thing it was to the Hebrews to seek their God! How artlessly they call upon Him to entertain them in His pavilion, to cover them with His feathers, to hide them in His secret place, to hold them in the hollow of His hand, or stretch around them the everlasting arms! These men were true children of Nature. As the humming-bird among its own palm-trees, as the ephemera in the sunshine of a summer evening, so they lived their joyous lives. And even the full share of the sadder experiences of life which came to all of them but drove them the further into the Secret Place, and led them with more consecration to make, as they expressed it, "the Lord their portion." All that has been said since from Marcus Aurelius to Swedenborg, from Augustine to Schleiermacher, of a besetting God as the final complement of humanity is but a repetition of the Hebrew poets' faith. And even the New Testament has nothing higher to offer man than this. The psalmist's "God is our refuge and strength" is only the earlier form, less defined, less practicable, but not less noble, of Christ's "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

There is a brief phrase of Paul's which defines the relation with almost scientific accuracy,—*good.*—"Ye are complete in Him." In this is summed up the whole of the Bible anthropology—the completeness of man in God, his incompleteness apart from God.

If it be asked, In what is man incomplete, or, In what does God complete him? the question is a wide one. But it may serve to show at least the direction in which the Divine Environment forms the complement of human life if we ask ourselves once more what it is in life that needs complementing. And to this question we

receive the significant answer that it is in the higher departments alone, or mainly, that the incompleteness of our life appears. The lower departments of Nature are already complete enough. The world itself is about as good a world as might be. It has been long in the making, its furniture is all in, its laws are in perfect working order; and although wise men at various times have suggested improvements, there is on the whole a tolerably unanimous vote of confidence in things as they exist. The Divine Environment has little more to do for this planet so far as we can see, and so far as the existing generation is concerned. Then the lower organic life of the world is also so far complete. God, through Evolution or otherwise, may still have finishing touches to add here and there, but already it is "all very good." It is difficult to conceive anything better of its kind than a lily or a cedar, an ant or an ant-eater. These organisms, so far as we can judge, lack nothing. It might be said of them, "they are complete in Nature." Of man also, of man the animal, it may be affirmed that his Environment satisfies him. He has food and drink, and good food and good drink. And there is in him no purely animal want which is not really provided for, and that apparently in the happiest possible way.

But the moment we pass beyond the mere animal life we begin to come upon an incompleteness. The symptoms at first are slight, and betray themselves only by an unexplained restlessness or a dull sense of want. Then the feverishness increases, becomes more defined, and passes slowly into abiding pain. To some come darker moments when the unrest deepens into a mental agony of which all the other woes of earth are mockeries—moments when the forsaken soul can only cry in terror for the Living God. Up to a point the natural Environment supplies man's wants, beyond that it only derides him. How much in man lies beyond that point? Very much—almost all, all that makes man man. The first suspicion of the terrible truth—so for the time let us call it—wakens with the dawn of the intellectual life. It is a solemn moment when the slow-moving mind reaches at length the verge of its mental horizon, and, looking over, sees nothing more. Its straining makes the abyss but more profound. Its cry comes back without an echo. Where is the Environment to complete this

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rational soul? Men either find one,—*One*—or spend the rest of their days in trying to shut their eyes. The alternatives of the intellectual life are Christianity or Agnosticism. The Agnostic is right when he trumpets his incompleteness. He who is not complete in Him must be for ever incomplete. Still more grave becomes man's case when he begins further to explore his moral and social nature. The problems of the heart and conscience are infinitely more perplexing than those of the intellect. Has love no future? Has right no triumph? Is the unfinished self to remain unfinished? Again, the alternatives are two, Christianity or Pessimism. But when we ascend the further height of the religious nature, the crisis comes. There, without Environment, the darkness is unutterable. So maddening now becomes the mystery that men are compelled to construct an Environment for themselves. No Environment here is unthinkable. An altar of some sort men must have—God, or Nature, or Law. But the anguish of Atheism is only a negative proof of man's incompleteness. A witness more overwhelming is the prayer of the Christian. What a very strange thing, is it not, for man to pray? It is the symbol at once of his littleness and of his greatness. Here the sense of imperfection, controlled and silenced in the narrower reaches of his being, becomes audible. Now he must utter himself. The sense of need is so real, and the sense of Environment, that he calls out to it, addressing it articulately, and imploring it to satisfy his need. Surely there is nothing more touching in Nature than this? Man could never so expose himself, so break through all constraint, except from a dire necessity. It is the suddenness and unpremeditatedness of Prayer that gives it a unique value as an apologetic.

Man has three questions to put to his Environment, three symbols of his incompleteness. They come from three different centres of his being. The first is the question of the intellect, What is Truth? The natural Environment answers, "Increase of Knowledge increaseth Sorrow," and "much study is a Weariness." Christ replies, "Learn of Me, and ye shall find Rest." Contrast the world's word "Weariness" with Christ's word "Rest." No other teacher since the world began has ever associated "learn" with "Rest."

Learn of me, says the philosopher, and you shall find Restlessness. Learn of Me, says Christ, and ye shall find Rest. Thought, which the godless man has cursed, that eternally starved yet ever-living spectre, finds at last its imperishable glory; Thought is complete in Him. The second question is sent up from the moral nature, Who will show us any good? And again we have a contrast: the world's verdict, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one;" and Christ's, "There is none good but God only." And, finally, there is the lonely cry of the spirit most pathetic and most deep of all, Where is he whom my soul seeketh? And the yearning is met as before, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto Thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living."¹

Are these the directions in which men in these days are seeking to complete their lives? The completion of Life is just now a supreme question. It is important to observe how it is being answered. If we ask Science or Philosophy they will refer us to Evolution. The struggle for Life, they assure us, is steadily eliminating imperfect forms, and as the fittest continue to survive we shall have a gradual perfecting of being. That is to say, that completeness is to be sought for in the organism—we are to be complete in Nature and in ourselves. To Evolution, certainly, all men will look for a further perfecting of Life. But it must be an Evolution which includes all the factors. Civilisation, it may be said, will deal with the second factor. It will improve the Environment step by step as it improves the organism, or the organism as it improves the Environment. This is well, and it will perfect Life up to a point. But beyond that it cannot carry us. As the possibilities of the natural Life become more defined, its impossibilities will become the more appalling. The most perfect civilisation would leave the best part of us still incomplete. Men will have to give up the experiment of attempting to live in half an Environment. Half an Environment will give but half a Life. Half an Environment? He whose correspondences are with this world alone has only a thousandth part, a fraction, the mere rim and shade of an Environment, and

¹ Ps. cxlii. 4, 5.

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The Christian's Quest for the Imperishable