

THE LIFE.

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PREFACE.

As it is not necessary to the purpose of this book that the authorship should be known, neither the name of the author, nor of any of his associates, shall at any time, or under any circumstances, be made public. It may be proper to add that this book is published at the expense of the author's associates, without thought or hope of any pecuniary return.

THE LIFE.

REMEMBER, we do not know everything. We are but a few stages further on in the eternal progress than you are, and it may help you to appreciate spiritual life if I tell you my belief, that there are beings in the form, who are more spiritual than some disembodied spirits. There are almost as many bars to my knowledge as there are to yours ; my thoughts come baffled back, when, peering forward, I wish to pierce the vail ; there is an undiscovered track to me also. Infinity is not mine any more than it is yours. When I know everything — if I ever do — it will be when I reach — if I ever do — the true center of all. If I knew everything, I think it would follow as a corollary that I could do everything, since part of knowing everything is to know how to do everything. When that degree of knowledge comes to me, I, as a spark of being, shall become one absorbed part of the One Being. This is the faith I hold.

All tests wherein the spiritual is called upon to perform the office of the physical in the amotion of visible matter, seem to me to be but addresses to the grosser

instincts, except so far as they are necessary to intercourse with you. To higher minds, moral force and symmetry of themselves alone produce conviction. If I practice deception, you will, sooner or later, find it out, careful as I may fancy myself to be to conceal it. The little unnoticed surrounding incidents become the witnesses to condemn or approve, and their voices are often very unerring. If self-honesty be my mentor, I need no great caution to watch the consistency of what I say ; if self-honesty be absent, no amount of caution will long continue to protect me from your disbelief.

It is strange that any one who accepts the fact of after individual existence should entertain the thought that all constitutional peculiarities stop suddenly with death. Yet this delusion is very prevalent, notwithstanding every element of reason is oppugnant to it. Would I be the same individual if, somehow, I should appear before you to-day with new thoughts, hopes, and fears all diametrically opposite to those you knew me in possession of before ? Suppose there is not a vestige of my former feelings, hopes, and fears discernible by you ; would you accept my identity upon my assertion ? The fruits are seen, not in an hour, but after long times ; and it seems to me that there is a self-evident error in the assumption that a debased wretch, with degraded tastes and desires, can, by the single and sudden change of death, become a beatified saint, and claim an identical individuality.

Do not trouble about death — the result of the great law which comes, whether with or without apprehension alike, when the conditions are fulfilled. If your faith is



full, so far from apprehending, your whole sense of duty will sometimes be required to prevent you from wishing death, because of the freer life here.

Is it any greater thing, when you consider it, that I should write through you, than that you should write through yourself?

[*Question.* Is culture and knowledge, in this world, of any benefit to the spirit after death?]

Most assuredly. I said before, that some of you are more spiritual now than some of us. Culture is progression. By culture, I mean physical, moral, intellectual, and social culture.

[*Question.* Do you measure time as we do?]

My views of time and yours are very different. I believe, and have it partly from experience, that as we move on towards the center, the estimate undergoes great changes. What an invisible point is your life compared to the line through which your soul will go! You look around you, and see one or two effects, and imagine their importance. How small a matter in the whole purpose of all things! And yet, on the other hand, that one little mite, that unimportant thing, rolls through eternity, and its effects, somehow, are never lost. Whilst I would teach the unimportance of temporary things, as compared with the eternal, I would not be understood to teach the unimportance of anything in itself. I believe your every word creates an undulation, which goes through eternity, for good or for ill. If you will properly appreciate this, its effect will be, not to cause you to watch narrowly every word and act, — for

that would be dwarfing yourselves, — but it will cause you to establish in your soul a principle of conduct, which, once established, you may be careless of details, so long as you know it governs.

Manhood I believe to be this : to build up in your thoughts an ideal ; then to constantly strive to make your life a realization of that ideal.

The moral tendency of an intelligent faith in spiritualism arises from the truth of this, that your thoughts, words, and acts are not for a day ; that temporary ends and purposes are worse than futile if they defer your aptitude for the life beyond. If you could appreciate as it is the absolute nothingness of time, as compared with the vastness of eternity ; if you could really see it before you, and feel it in every act, thought, and aspiration ; if you could embody its appreciation in your lives, — of what avail the winter's blasts, the throbbing pain, the sickness, the mutilation, the death, since far more than compensation surely follows all of these to all who will have them ; and yet you cannot so see it fully now, for, despite your best efforts, the body limits the soul. The pressing necessities of your present call too loudly to be disregarded. These checks, balances, counterchecks, become too complicated. I cannot express to you one tithe of what I would have you know. But this I tell you : you must work as best you can with what you have within you. All I desire is to teach you morals ; and all the advantage I have over any teacher you might meet where you are any day, is, that I am interested in all, and have, perhaps, some better means of appreciating some things than one of the world might have.

The Life. The Life. The Life. Live it. Live the life that is higher than yourself. You can if you will. The acquisition of virtue is everything. Suppose yourselves making proper additions to your eternity by the act of making such additions to the world's truth ; growing gradually in the conditions of body, mind, and soul, which comport with such additions ; making the far-seeing life your nature ; you know not what you shall come to. The very attritions of your every-day life shall be made conducive to the end of cultivation. Can you understand ? Can you act ? The seeming sacrifices will go. The great pæan your soul shall sing for the victory of the change shall remain instead. Can you summon the will to do what others will call a sacrifice — what I know will be none ? This I tell you : you are something else than simply and only for yourself. I am able, in hope and confidence, to tell you, and through you the world, so great a thing. Yet do not mistake. No temporal glory, abnegation, seclusion ; but peace too, and hope, and the freshness of the great future, as the little present fades. Can you endure through discouragements to a great result ? Can you tide over the present love of ease, and come to toil, through me, for a great result ? Not great as astounding the world, nor great in present perceptible fruits ; but very great, and ever gathering greatness, through that eternity to which your ages compared are nothing. Through contemplation of the great goodness of a great result, you must not fail to see the nothingness of the instruments. Remember this always. If you have will enough to begin, and acquiescence enough to let me control, I cannot tell you — through what pain, sometimes disappointment, fear, may be sickness, disease, loneliness, patience,

then hope, quiet, and joy — how overwhelmingly the barriers will be finally overcome, nor with what serenity you can cast your eyes backward, not here, perhaps, but far, very far, beyond where I am now, and see that through you a new light has broken in, by which myriads of others have possessed themselves with a like serenity. I will not be great through you, nor shall you be great through me. We can be despised when once we know what lies beyond. We may then smile at, nay, we will pity, the scorn of the scorner. You must not expect to appreciate everything at once, nor in your whole lifetime, for that matter. The highest goodness is the most unselfish. The highest type of goodness comes to us indirectly, not by trying to benefit ourselves. That being is most benefited who seeks it least, but who seeks the welfare of many at his own seeming pain, and sometimes almost despair. The pure subjective religion is often debasing; the objective always brings subjective fruits. [*Will you explain this?*] Yes; you are the subject. You desire religion exclusively for the good it brings to narrow you, indifferent often to the injury it may do another. The prayer for special intervention is an instance of this. He who prays for rain for his little garden-patch often cares not if it comes to flood a neighboring city. He may be honest, earnest, sincere, and conscientious, but he is narrow and selfish, and meanness is the base of his religion. His subjectivity degrades him. The Great One is the object. Subsidiary the good of all about you, and all to come after you are objects. You labor for the objects, outside of yourself, often against part of yourself; but whilst you refuse to consider yourself, every act comes back to add to your proper being. Thus is it more blessed to give than to receive.

Let me lead you into life. I shall do it, if you will, through natural channels, by leading you into associations. Your time shall be occupied; your name shall not be heralded. You shall accomplish, and affect, and influence, all unseen, if you will. Nothing shall be more supernatural than this, that I write through you. Your shrinking from publicity is one of my hopes in you; so fear not. I will be with you. You will violate no prudence. If you will, you may be known, in the limited circle where you are known, only as a modest person; yet, by force of work that must not be seen, the result shall be great; all the greater because none will be diverted by the clamor concerning the mediate cause. Live the Life, and let it unfold itself. I will direct.

Narrow inspection will reveal apparent inconsistencies; but a broader view of the whole will reveal symmetry. This I regard as one of the best tests of truth. You must not be too careful of consistency in detail. It robs you of the true spirit of things. Have a governing principle, and the great whole will be consistent enough. Oh that we may be friends, not for the sake of the friendship, not for the sake of ourselves, but for all others, — for everything!

[*Question.* What is it that is most to be desired in this life?]

Zest; an interest, lively and continuous, in what you find, on careful thought, to be your duty.

Zest, Zest. Now, the rest is only to continue and work out until the end, not so careful about rewards and punishments as of benefits to others. The results are to

you ; but do not work for them because they are for you. I would draw the distinction clearly, if I could, between the most elevated selfishness and the lowest type of true self-sacrifice. He who labors for rewards in this field shall never get them. He who labors with sacrifices of self, and for others, and is all indifferent to rewards, shall surely get all.

The greatest difficulty in your life on earth is in the continuing in efforts of unrecognized, unrecorded, unknown, nay, slandered, goodness. There is no difficulty which you should so strive to overcome. Secret acts are unseen angels to those who do them, and the very failure of the world to recognize them works the highest health to the soul. A midnight deed of mercy is more yours, so long as it is unknown, than it ever is after it becomes discovered. Discovered virtues bring you the love of others, but your own are growing in your soul forever. It requires a broad soul to appreciate this, but a transcendently superior one to live upon it. Only he who lives the life does it. In your business you note degrees of capacity. The common laborer supplies the wants of each day with each day's labor. He will not provide for the inevitable season of sickness. If a fortune were suddenly given him, he would, ere long, waste it, and return to his vocation. Money has to him only one value — its present use, to satisfy to-day's demands. The further seeing man will forego convenience in health, and deprive himself for the present, to provide as he may against the inevitable next year. The still further seeing man provides for all the possibilities of his own old age, and for his children's beginnings. The more he is far-seeing, the greater and larger sacrifices he will make, if

it seems necessary, in robust health, for the remote future. Now place these stages one hundred degrees further on; what sacrifices would the improved man make of a lifetime to secure the great hereafter? This is the lowest view — merely in the light of prudence — selfish protection. Now take the highest of motives, and give them to the most far-seeing, and what a result you have! I would I could give reasons so strong, so overwhelming, in favor of the great future, that the pitiable plea of present necessity would quail before them! I would teach men to climb the great future on their dead selfishness as stepping-stones, to be led there, not by themselves, but by the hands of those they lead.

There are two conditions of human mind in which toleration most lives and flourishes. One is that of indifference, and the other that of doubt. The indifferent stand aloof and listlessly look at a seething mass of contestants, interested in neither, incapable, from want of inquiry, of approving or disproving either, and ready to be generous without stint to either or both; but the attitude of doubt is the attitude of inquiry. When men begin to question the completeness and truth of any long-accepted faith, as their questioning increases, and the truth of the accepted faith begins to waver with them, they naturally look about for something to take its place; for the inner consciousness of all minds, even the unthoughtful, demands something upon which to rest hope. No skeptic ever tore down a religion, but forthwith — perhaps to himself unconsciously — he built upon its ruins some one of his own.

I place all notions of moral action upon this foundation—the inner consciousness. This ruler, dormant in some beings, bright and active in others, increases or diminishes, like all other human qualities, as it is employed or neglected. It transcends all considerations of expediency, when expediency would confront to oppose it. It frequently exhibits in its native and uncultivated being the fine appreciation of distinctions which experience and observation have never taught. It is sometimes called intuition, as distinguished from induction, and the life it produces—whatever the faith—is a life of objective religion, as opposed to the subjective or selfish. This inner consciousness, with its incidental sense of obligation, creates a religion, and to it are referred all the principles of life for the world and thereafter. Whether you believe that each individual life ends when it goes out in death, and that you are revolving, in succession of generations, towards one important and final perfection of the world, or that individual immortality comes with death, and brings final perfection at once,—in either hypothesis the work is accomplished for a result outside of ourselves.

Adherence, earnestness, self-sacrifice, to and for any class of ideas, cannot be properly accepted as conclusive evidence of the absolute truth of that class of ideas. The most common delusion of almost any sect is that which is exhibited when an adherent points to the sacrifices which have been made by its founders and upholders to vindicate it. If you were to name a martyr who has willingly thrown his life on the altar of his faith, an opponent could in turn name to you a martyr who has done precisely the same thing on the altar of a faith

directly opposite in all points. If Latimer and Ridley were willingly burned, Scævola and Curtius sacrificed themselves as willingly. "In the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," is a sophistry. Prejudice and Principle are very conventional terms; neither of them expresses an absolute idea. Two men have a set of ideas, each of which antagonizes with a radical, uncompromising antagonism which defies all reconciliation. Each one has often the most sincere and conscientious conviction that he is absolutely right, and the other is as absolutely wrong. To each one his own little horde of maxims constitutes his divine principles, and those of the other are nothing but degrading prejudices. Each one is pertinacious with his "principles," with a pertinacity that is proportioned to the impossibility of their being established by any reasonable process.

We do not become limited in means by our progress forward, else would we progress inversely, or backward. Life begins, as it were, at the small end of a cone, which ever increases to infinity. You said truly, there is no absolute perfection, even with us. Perfection absolute exists only in One, and we become perfect only when we become of that One; then do not hope for complete immunity from pain and trouble to your immediate hereafter, but yet hope for it when individuality may cease, or, rather, grow into the One. You will learn to appreciate this better when the symmetry of things develops to you.

Death is a very various kind of change, varying very, very much in degree. To some earthly lives it is scarcely any other than a physical change; the continuance and

identity, in all respects, of the spiritual being are clear and certain. To others, the physical change is the least part. Through painful vicissitudes, continuing long, long after the spiritual being is modified — sometimes with a tardiness which makes the change almost imperceptible, sometimes more rapidly. The variation arises partly from conditions self-imposed in life on earth. Here you have another of the many, many incentives to practice the virtues of self-abnegation. Good is first wrested from you by appeals to your own prospects; then — as if by contradiction, but in perfect consistency — by banishment of those very prospects.

Suppose your best conceptions of truth to be your unquestioned suzerain, your lord, your complete, full, perfect, exclusive governor; that you feel and appreciate their certainty and their dignity. To you nothing can be higher, nothing more sacred, nothing more certain. Have you vanity because you seek everything for those conceptions? Shall you stand trembling and craven lest some one, who fails to recognize your position, shall call you self-important? If you are really possessed with what you believe to be the greatest of all things, you may sometimes appear to those who understand you not to be assumptious; but the highest truth of which you are capable is in you; it will not give way to the little prejudices which call names, and tries to show your contents false by calling the vessel weak. It is true you are but the vessel; you must always know and feel this. But what vanity can you have in asserting the height, depth, force, and dignity of all you give? The charge of vanity! Let it be made; you are secure in your humility, and the truth secure in its dignity for-

ever. Do not think there is no modesty. The very spirit and soul of modesty are in that humble disciple who carries within him the truth he is capable of containing. He is not assured ; rather he will suffer all • humiliation, take all disgrace, if need be, and all sneers, but they shall all at the last be as nothing to him. He shall feel, and feel, too, sometimes, with a keenness that would cause his bitterest foe to relent. That very feeling, however, is part of the refining process ; for he shall suffer and be strong ; wax in strength upon and by the very suffering ; and at last, ah, at last ! all shall be his, because he is Truth's. Herein is the difference which common minds, not perceiving ends, fail to comprehend. The man who labors for a narrow personal end, whether in his business or his religion, has self-aggrandizement as his object. The Christian often says in his secret soul, "If I be saved, let the whole world be lost." The business man says, "I shall build my fortune ; we live by the misfortunes of others." But the disciple of Truth says, "My object beyond myself is all ;" and yet, whilst the former, claiming all for themselves, lose all, the latter, utterly regardless of his poor self, extolling his object, gets what he labors not for — everything. In your life, if you but find in all the shining one ray of truth, if you keep it, and give devotion to it, your life shall not be lost, because you shall make the lives of many by it.

One charge against the philosophy I endeavor to inculcate will be, that it is impracticable ; that men are not far-seeing enough, and cannot be made so, to properly weigh their present surroundings ; that it would be inconsistent with any condition of human society to

overlook temporal wants ; that it would result in physical deterioration, which would itself defeat the moral culture aimed at ; that the demands of hunger, the requirements of clothing and shelter, must be met before men can turn to higher considerations ; that apart from this consideration, self can not be ejected from our beings, for self is identity and individuality — life. Were the philosophy claimed to be a perfectly practical present acquisition, these objections would indeed be grave ; but man's relations to the world and himself are too complex for perfect harmony ; that hope must be postponed until many of the disturbing elements are by some means eliminated from his being — a consummation which now very, very faintly comes through the light of the distant future ; meanwhile, he must take things as they are, and mold them as he can. If the full realization of the philosophy of self-abnegation, and other culture, is possible in a future, however remote, then no time is too early to begin teaching it, nor is any standard too high to be taught. Jesus Christ must have known, when he taught forgiveness, how the world would rebel against its practice ; how few — even of those most professing — would practice it in true spirit. He must have known, when he taught toleration, how in his name zealots would burn dissenting zealots at the stake. Yet for this he did not lower his standard. Are forgiveness and toleration presently unattainable in practice ? It is not impossible to strive toward them, and that is enough to begin with. My philosophy shall not be wasted because it is too high for common life, if one being takes one step upward for having learned it.

As by freedom conceptions of truth grow clearer,

they shall work greater than a miracle, all in the most modest, natural way, and no trumpet shall herald the coming. Silently as the nightfall, but powerfully as the light-burst, shall come truth, without adornment, without extraneous proof; self-convincing, its badge of universal recognition — for universal recognition it shall, I believe, finally have — shall be the internal evidence which it bears of its own symmetry and sweetness.

Perfect equality would be a perfection of all qualities, and would therefore be, it seems to me, a division into many equal parts of the Great One. Individuality itself is inequality; and therefore if you say inequality is injustice, you say, in effect, your individual existence, or any individual human existence, is an injustice. Besides, individuality and its correlative inequality are plainly necessary with you, and, so far as I can see, everywhere, because from it arises the necessity for the assistance which the strong must give the weak, by which assistance the weak grow by being helped, and the strong grow by helping. Thus is individuality impressed on everything, that throughout all nature there are no two created things exactly alike, and, to my mind never will be. At last, all inequalities — individualities — will be lost in one absorption, that shall have nothing like to it throughout eternity.

There shall be faith without apprehension, and toleration without indifference. Let but this new era enter the threshold of the world and prevail, and the day of persecution shall have passed forever. Opponents there may, nay, will be, but they shall not be subdued by the world. "Good," "Right," "Truth," are qualities

which shall not be installed by oppression of the opponents of these qualities ; but the virtues themselves, the Good, the Right, the Truth, shall enforce themselves, shall lead and prevail.

Away beyond is the center of the new system. A light, shining by itself from a dark place, shall, I verily believe, diffuse itself into every place, and there shall be seen around and about that light no mechanical appliances worked by human hands, no human being, or *cotérie* of beings, who shall stand in the highest part of that light, to be seen, as if necessary to its creation, to be glorified as to its authors or supporters.

I would not take you from your duty. Zest in your present business is a part, a necessary part, of your life ; what you do in your daily avocation has its influence to conduce to your after life, incidentally. If you do as well as you can in any duty, you do far better for your future life than if you performed carelessly or ill ; but when we consider infinite consequences to not only all the world now living, but to all who are ever to live, try to make comparison ; see how little some things are as compared with others ; and yet do not underrate anything. This is the balance of mind you should seek to get, and keep with evenness. It gives cheerfulness in place of despondency, hope for gloom, courage for fear, Life for Life. The present should be great to you in this, that it throws upon you duties to be earnestly done ; it is great in this, that it demands an interest in its proper demands. It is little, however, when the demand excludes considerations of the beyond. It is difficult always to preserve that elevated equanimity

which enables you to give all necessary interest in the present, yet does not let that present dim your vision, or lessen your greater interest in the future.

Be patient; the minutes, the hours, the days will pass; misfortunes will bring fruits ripe for the eternal living and unborn. You have been defective, and will, I think, for a time continue to be; but the light is so strong, and your elements are now so mixed, that, as a prism, you will diffuse the rays with a happy and grateful coloring yet. Be in hope; you may wait through some vicissitudes for a while, but it will be all right yet.

Do not look for ornate diction or rhetorical flourish. I am not endeavoring to tickle the ear or gratify the vanities of nice criticism. Though arrayed in rags and weeds, sackcloth and ashes, with all humility, with all homeliness, the Truth is the Truth. If I am strong enough to transmit this, be I ever so weak, do you receive it. Look to the truth for the truth's sake, and through it comes expressed in utter disregard of the refinements of literature, if it be truth, and commend itself to your acceptance as truth, do not persist in calling it falsehood merely from its dress.

In this labor nothing should be a sacrifice. Condition of feeling makes or banishes annoyance, and such condition may be possible to you in the future, that a present seeming sacrifice will change into an opportunity to be eagerly sought and gladly embraced.

Christianity asserts two paramount demands — repentance and faith — as necessary to what is called salva-

tion. Repentance is indeed a necessary requisite for any change in life, from wrong doing to well doing. It is regret for the wrong, and regret for the wrong is necessarily a precursor to a determination to amend and do right. But the demand of Faith. What shall I say of it? What can be said to justify a demand for the blind acceptance of dogmatic assertion in apparent impossibilities, and in supernatural phenomena, in miracles — requirements so obviously repugnant to all reason — to all reason created by the very being who claims the dethronement, or rather subjection, of it? What can be said to justify this demand, never relaxed in the least, but without variation made the absolute essential to a spiritual salvation? And what is salvation? It is a condition of the spiritual being. To my perception it can only be brought about by the cultivation of the spiritual being, not by sudden dethronement of the reason, not by an enforced faith, even were faith always a possible acquirement. I have stated in brief the prominent requirements of Christianity. Now look at the inharmony of all this. The philosophy of truth and abnegation makes no such demand. It claims not to work on nature as fallen, but on nature as it is. The purpose of my teaching is to lead each being for himself — taking his individual peculiarities as they are, whether of great faith or want of faith, of natural goodness or natural viciousness, of constitutional obstinacy or of constitutional acquiescence — to cultivate himself to the extent of his capabilities. My philosophy, in a word, is to work upon people as it finds them; not to require any arbitrary belief as essential to any arbitrary condition. I would teach that the penalties of disobedience to the law within us are separate; each penalty to each

infraction ; not as penalties to satisfy offended power, but necessary results of disobedience to an established thing. Moreover, this is another inharmony : Christianity is necessarily selfish, even in the salvation it teaches. No man can take perdition to procure the salvation of a brother. If he could, it would be inhumanly wrong ; but perhaps the wrong is in having the perdition in the system. Christianity is selfish, too, in its other teachings : each of its votaries is enjoined to do good that he may be saved ; to pursue a certain course of goodness, — not for the good of others, nor for what is higher, because it is goodness, but that he may avoid everlasting torture. How direct the appeal to selfish interests ! How different the philosophy of self-abnegation ! I would teach that goodness be done for others' sake, and for the sake of the goodness itself ; that through all this the hope of personal benefit must be repressed, so when it comes it comes only by indirection, and that only thus can it properly come. That benefit which comes from selfish motives of any kind — no matter how great the good deeds which bring it — comes with the dank and alloy of the selfishness clinging about it. [*Question.* Would you suddenly abolish Christianity ?] No, I would not, nor would I suddenly abolish any religion ; such sudden action, were it possible, would work injury, and the injury could, perhaps, not soon be atoned. But I would, and I trust we shall, gradually as it may be, supplant it and all systems by a better system. Christianity has done good, because it is better to teach a mortal to do even qualified good, and even for his selfishness, than not to teach him to do any good at all. Not everything that is burdened with error must be suddenly abolished. The course is, to let all the good

in it remain, and let as much as may be stand, and eradicate the error from it as we can.

There is an element of Christianity in which it has a seeming advantage over the philosophy of self-abnegation. It made as great zealots as any system can make. To the ignorant it made the strongest possible appeals. "You shall believe; to yourself it is necessary; perdition if you do not; heaven if you do." I see what it calls forth: fear, self-preservation, hope. Then, too, see the sensuous love it called forth. It made its votaries ready to die for it. The philosophy of self-abnegation is cooler; it exercises passion, because it reaches above passion. Men must be cultured and led into it by a calm consideration, not thrown into it in a whirlwind of passion. The progress is slow, but the result permanent, because, when man comes into such an elevation to be in sympathy with it, his mind, his spirit, has a symmetry which nothing shall rob of its compactness, its serenity, its oneness.

If you look through your life you will find the indirect object the morally elevating one. Just as the wish is near or more remote, presently gratified or the gratification deferred, the being engaged is ennobled or debased. If you defer the enjoyment until after life, how much greater the elevation! Banish the hope entirely, how much greater the elevation! The highest growth comes unsought; the good of others only should be your purpose. In striving to separate yourself from yourself you gain everything.

Individuality. This that you desire to retain now.

this on which you rest all your hope of immortality, may it not at some period in the vast future become a burden to you? Suppose it true, as I believe, that all become absorbed in the One; suppose your individuality is the last atom to become united; what joy could you feel at the isolation? Your own individuality should not be the first object of your preservation in the grand scheme of the future. Even for yourself in the lower view, in striving equally for others, you strive for what, in the end, aggregates with yourself.

To my perception the highest reason against a God's not having given direct command to man is, that such a revelation would work this inconsistency in his being; the demand of worship to himself would be selfish. To avoid this in the fitness of things the central force has given no voice of such command; but through the works of nature it leaves mortals to infer the propriety of worship; and by worship I only mean obedience to the laws as understood.

You shall be saved, as it is called, whether you believe or not; but it is important to you what you believe. We take position where our beliefs answer our surroundings—not higher, not lower. Our religion gives all account to constitutional inborn qualities by placing position for each one.

Shadows sometimes, then sunshine. Thus are our lives flecked; thus are all human endeavors marked; for naught less than perfection, I think, can have an immovable evenness. Haply, by compensation, this variation of life, if it affords reason for pain and regret, also

— by the contrast when the brighter hours come — affords reason for gratification. The vicissitudes of fortune are often against us ; but it will be all right. Things, although seeming to stand still, are yet moving in the right direction. Remember this.

The tardiness of reform guarantees its permanency. The slowness with which you arrive at convictions makes you all the more apt to appreciate and cling to those convictions when you get them. Be cheerful and hopeful, and you shall have more than you expect ; nor you alone, but all, all.

It is important to have an elevated faith ; but that is due to constitutional conditions, and therefore is, in some constitutions, impossible ; but it is of the vastest practical importance to every one that he lives up to the faith he has. Every one can do that, and by doing it he elevates that faith. He who has small, weak faith, imperfect perceptions of good and duty, and who lives up to them thoroughly, does far better than the one who, with a bountiful faith, is listless to work upon it in his daily life.

You are forgetful ; you seem to need to see the person making a request in order that you may be impressed to comply with it. Higher views will come only by cultivation. After a while a thought coming from immateriality will challenge quite as much attention as one coming from a visible source now does. Truth is best perceived by its symmetry, and the finest appreciation of spiritual thought is best obtained by a cultivated perception.

Not works against faith, nor faith without works, but works on and up to the faith implanted by nature in you and cultivated by you. Your faith may sometimes be erroneous; nay, it often will be; but you have no better guide to action; so you can but use the best you have; but use it to its full extent, nay, making it your life for others. For others. Be not so solicitous about your rights as about your duties. Who sometimes, or even habitually, forgets rights in the eagerness to perform duties, gets all the larger and more enduring rights therefor. Try to profit by it.

[*Remarks.* Will not a bitter conflict come with the church?]

Yes, yes; and if these doctrines are well appreciated, the warriors shall strike, and you shall not return the blow. The truth shall tolerate error — as to be truth it always must. The truth shall not resent, for then it would lose its symmetry and be error also. The warfare shall be on one side — theirs; the victory shall be on the other side — ours, the vanquished. And we, the vanquished, shall not exult in our victory, but take our enemies — nay, not enemies, our friends — with gentle hands, and lead them forward forever.

“He who loseth his life shall find it.” If Christianity were in harmony with this thought it would be nearer perfect. But there is more prominent than this saying, the awful urgent demand, You must believe, if against the possibilities of your nature. “You must believe on me.” How this demand negatives the simplicity and beauty of laying down a life to find it! For if you do not believe — the system says — you shall not find your

life for laying it down. Wrong. You have faith or you have not ; but this each has — the possibility of doing the best he can. Your warfare must be against the present for the future ; against yourself for others ; then, without seeking, you find the life you have laid down.

You are ready to have one important distinction impressed on you, without which there will appear inconsistencies at times. Thus, when we speak of truth as commending and enforcing itself by its symmetry, we must not be understood to mean, at all times, the absolute, because, as I said, that is only at the center, and the rays, as they shine through me, being remote from the center, receive some deterioration ; then, as they shine through you, they receive some more deterioration, you being yet more remote. But remember this, that whatever commends itself by its symmetry and oneness to your inner consciousness, that you must accept as truth, for to you there can be nothing higher. It may be it is marred with error always, or nearly always ; but until your higher cultivation detects that error, and your inner consciousness affirms the detection, you must take what you have.

In dealing with hidden things, so complex is their simplest phase that often in a small, single sentence an expression of apparent contradiction manifests itself. There are sentences which, to verbal criticism, introduce contradictions that make them insensible and meaningless ; but with the being imbued with the spirit of this philosophy, such sentences will often be found to be fraught with all meaning, and are the very foundation of all.

Can you wonder that the common mind will be vindictive, malicious, learn to gloat over the misfortunes of others, and the torture of associates, when the master minds of the age have taught the servile, following the guidance of a divinity who threatened vengeance, who took the malcontents and unfortunates of the world and roasted them, and added to that process the idea that that roasting would never produce stupefaction or combustion — would, in a word, never have an end? Can you wonder at the great degree of malice and uncharity in the world of religion, when malice and uncharity are very gods? The Christian religion has done great good, and it must be said great evil also. Let us stifle the latter, and let the former stand. Nay, we will intensify the good by practice.

God's judgments! To my perceptions — in my faith — there is no God who has judgments. Judgments are our interpretations through our vanities of nature's results. How foolish to attribute results of nature to direct judgments of a God! That view makes you a machine. If a God made you commit an act, or made nature commit an act, as a judgment, the act was by his will; but if he makes you act through his will for evil to yourself, why, in the name of justice, did he not make you act differently and better, and thus prevent the necessity of making you injure yourself, or of injuring you.

The virtue of gaining any condition is, to a great extent, measured by the difficulties which we have to encounter and overcome in order to reach the result. Your request for ease, for the absence of all disappointment, for no future solicitude in your life, is — oh, you

know not what. Apathy is of all things the most dangerous. Too much quiet and feeling of content produce apathy. Courage, zest, and the desire to do, through opposing elements and difficulties, constitute the highest health of a higher life. Try to learn the truth. Adhere to it. Practice it. Teach it by practicing it. Encounter all difficulties, mortifications, disappointments, and temporary failures, but adhere to it. When at last it comes out, it will be in triumph, and, if through difficulties, burnished and brightened all the more on account of the attritions through which it passed.

Be not discouraged, nor hasty in conclusions. Results are brought about in very various ways, and the effect of the teaching is not usually sudden, but gradual: as I have said, in the apparent tardiness of the growth lies the best reason for hope in its permanency. Sudden change in any one imports a condition in that one which leads naturally to look for other sudden change, and not evenness and permanency. The man who is easily convicted is also easily averted from his new faith. Be steadfast—earnest. Look around you to see what is your duty; when you see it, what is there left for you but to do it? When you see what your duty is, and fail to do it, then you trample yourself—and all who come within your influence—under your foot. . . . Have you always done your duty when you did know it? Who is there in life who says, “If I only knew the true course,” who has not often clearly known that true course, and yet turned from it deliberately at the call of some one day’s interest pitted against the known eternal right? How few there are who live for next year! how very few who live for the next decade! and how very,

very few who really and actually so frame their lives as to live for the great future ! It would be discouraging to look out at the prospect but for this — that it must come to better ; and what have we to do, after all, but to work and be patient ?

Test what you seek after by casting its reasonable, natural consequence on your progress ; and your proper progress is one with the proper progress of all, and of all things.

Do not think the problem of life is simple ; it is not so in any one nature. Life, its duties, obligations, and rights, raise in their least phase a very complex condition of things for contemplation. All questions are so much more easily asked than answered. Take the question of Zest, for instance. How hard it must be for an average man, in normal condition, to feel that degree of interest in the future which he should without disregarding his present surroundings and feelings with reference to them. How nice an equation it is for any man to work out so to measure out to himself his feelings of interest, as to make himself entertain just enough interest in the present, so as not to trench on the rights of the future, and just so much in the future as not to trench on the rights of the present ! A perfect equilibrium is impossible in the present state of imperfection, but it shall be better for all that. We must take things as they are, and mold them as we can ; and the only way to begin this is by setting forth and enforcing a very few simple principles. From these principles, well understood, there will grow out — we know not how — the symmetry which will make each earthly life consistent

with death, and consistent with the life; just as from the stem grows the flower by natural necessary incident. Principles we must learn; the details will harmonize themselves, although we may not be able to analyze those details, or show how they grow.

I suggest to you recourse to your memory. How much do the fears and despondencies of ten years ago distress you? Perhaps they all together do not employ your thoughts one moment in a week. They are gone. When you had them, they were quite as great and important as any you now have. Now know this is not prophecy; in five years you will not think of present annoyances; or, if you do, it will only be to wonder that you made so much of them, that you magnified them so much. Make many endeavors to tide over that five years in this respect. You will not succeed to perfection, but you can do yourself much good, I doubt not, by it.

I wish to answer (impressively if I can) your question with regard to such manifestations as are called "tests." They may be well enough in themselves, but the truth is not found in addresses to the senses of the ignorant. Spiritual truth can never be established by simple ocular demonstrations. To please the prejudices, to tickle the vanities, these are the common results. There is a higher plane. That truth which has inherent proof of its symmetry is the higher truth; and you will always observe, that manifestations intended especially to convince the skeptical, if you look at them with an analytical or critical eye, contain elements of deception. The higher, the highest spiritual truth has no adjuncts — no ocular

proof. It stands by itself, and commends and enforces itself by its inherency. There is this, too : prejudice considered, everything considered, I do not look for universal, or even general appreciation of the truth which I struggle to begin in this century or the next. Time is nothing. To a biographer, facts may be best known during the life of the subject, but from prejudice they never are then spoken. One hundred years after, when, and although the facts are dimmed by time, the truth is nevertheless, from the death of prejudice, clearer. I have said as much before. Another thing : I am not so anxious to establish Spiritualism as you understand it. What great matter whether you believe in Spiritualism or not, so in this life you progress by doing right and truly to others, and thus to yourselves ? The thing is truth—right. From this flows all that should be desired. What you believe with reference to a definite kind of future state is, after all, not of the highest consequence, since the future is fixed and immovable, whatever your faith may be about it ; but it is a matter of your relation to that future that depends on doing in accordance with your best faith ; but, for all, faith is very important, for faith gives the proper attitude to the soul.

You are above the addresses of the common senses ; then leave them. There is another — a more profound, a broader field for you. That is, your duty to the world and the everlasting. Now you know the new plane of your duty. Do not return, but enter the new field, and from that new field you may presently see other new prospects in new duties, which will unfold themselves as you go along. You have taken a new step. Remember it has new rewards — self-rewards, which are great ; but

it also has new responsibilities which are greater. Do. Do. Do. If it be required of you to sacrifice every apparent advantage and temporal friendship, Do. Do. Do.

The time has arrived to assert the dignity and prominence of inner consciousness, — above and beyond all the philosophy of the wisest, — the unfathomed, unfathomable, — the thing which forces itself upon us, and compels recognition. Although the mental philosopher, the metaphysician, and the psychologist fail to analyze it, fail to find the laws of its governance, there it nevertheless is, — above, behind, beyond all their efforts. There it is, an actual, necessary existence. All we know of it is, that it is, and is capable of being repressed or cultivated; that as it is different, by its manifestations, in different persons, it is so different partly by a difference of use and surroundings. It is this which you are to cultivate; for by this every proper act is performed. This commands to you the truth — the right. This commands of you the performance. Cultivate this, and follow its teachings; make it your self-law and your self-witness, and you can do no better in life, for then you answer all the possibilities and capabilities of your nature. When you come to a right understanding of such of the laws of inner consciousness as can be understood, you will appreciate that it has two distinct qualities. First, that which may be classed as absolute, and second, that which is of a relative nature, i. e., differing in different individuals. To know these qualities as two separate and distinct ones, is of importance. It is the office of the second to inform you of your obedience to the demands. As men are differently constituted and differently educated, — with great differences of early associations, which

do so much to make up the after being, — men, as a necessary consequence, have different honest appreciations of the same moral act. Although truth is absolute, the knowledge of it in your life and mine is not. But having determined by your consciousness any certain proposition to be truth, then to you it is truth. If your neighbor decides in his consciousness the opposite to be the truth, then to him it is truth. There are no other means. Constitutional differences and early associations and education make this difference. But now the absolute commences ; the inner consciousness has made for you a law — that may not be absolutely right, but it is to you the law, and the absolute is this : the phase of inner consciousness which witnesses your adherence and obedience to that law is infallible. Your convictions may change, and the law will then change the thing — the line of conduct. The act which to you yesterday was right, may be to-day wrong ; but the witness, which stands to see that you follow implicitly the convictions of to-day, or the convictions of to-morrow, that is constant ; it cannot change, it can never be other than absolute. The importance of educating others to the appreciation of moral truths is great, but the importance of teaching every one to follow whatever they do believe, that is greater.

Grossly perverted faith in grossly perverted constitutions and degraded lives produces sometimes very harsh results ; but what result will be produced if you ignore this absolute law, and say the witness is not always to be obeyed ? If not always, then when ? In what instance ? If you undertake to determine the instance, do so, but once for yourself. Will you under-

take to say when you shall follow the witness, and when not? Will you say you have a clear conscientious conviction that an act is right in itself, and yet say to yourself it is higher right to disobey that conviction? Isolated monstrosities do not annul a clear law. There are instances in which constitutional peculiarities amount to insanity, but we must not let such instances break down a great law. Conscience is a moral quality; however small when it is repressed, it is still a moral quality. The remorse which the vilest and most abandoned wretch sometimes has, is from conscientious condemnation. The moral judgment of the act in itself may be very weak, and the witness which tells the subject whether he obeys that weak monitor or not may be weak also; but this monitor, this witness, in its utmost weakness is infallible. This witness, when it commends, commends only one course; that is, the acquiescence to the law. It is, in a word, this: it tells you plainly, when it commends, that you have done the best you knew, and the best you truly believed; and that commendation — that inner approbation of the witness — is always that which adds to the soul, gives the proper addition to being, the highest attitude towards divinity. You may commit wrong by following your convictions, but it is not wrong to you, or to your eternity, whatever the act be. The judgment or quality which selects acts as right, as I have said, may be, often is, and will be wrong; but wrong as it is, how much better to your soul than whim, caprice, or violence to your sense of right! What else is there to follow? What? unless it be your sense of wrong.

Do not struggle to get into relations in life where you may be abused and vilified, in order that you may test

yourself in forgiveness. Better spend the time in preparation for everything and anything that comes in the usual course. You need a permanent attitude brought out in you by the cultivation of principles, not an impulsive preparation for one emergency. Let things go in their normal way as they will; do you act, not with reference to a future which your imagination defines, but cultivate yourself with reference to any future that may come, on the principles taught, for the great future. No detailed rule can be laid down. The few simple principles all may understand, and which accepted, understood, and incorporated into life, are quite sufficient for all in any avocation. Let your faith be receptive — quiet. Let your charity be active — energetic.

Stay with the work until it is given to the future, and if it fail to all appearance, be not discouraged. If it be met with hostility or contempt, be not afraid; for the future is greater than a man's life, but man shall not know where it comes from, or whither it goes.

Shall we all be objective — strive for something outside of ourselves, and after all find that we seek a subjective God — a God who asks all for himself? No. No. The harmony (as my faith fixes it) is not thus destroyed. The Great One is more objective than are we. The Great One works not for a personality, not for one other, or many others, but for all others, and for all things, past, present, and to come. Not for itself, but for that which is furthest from itself, greatest from a part, all, all. This breaks down revelation through a self-glorified son, breaks down eternal torment, breaks down suffering for triumph, and sets aside the central dogma of the Chris-

tian religion ; for the truth of objectivity beams out behind it, and from its incandescent beams burns it to nothingness.

In your responsibilities hereafter, you may have more than yourself to take care of. If you have wrongly influenced another, may you not have to assist that other from the effect of your past influence, and thus, under compulsion of necessary law, not give, but only get back what you lost by working for another. See what we owe to others. Not only to yourself do you commit wrong acts whenever in every instance you knowingly commit them, but you cannot see the influence of them, it may be, until you are called by necessity to go back and right them.

The northern side of the tree has the strongest bark and fiber, because it has grown by culture from the strong winds, the sleet, snow, and cold ; so the character which has resisted the most buffets has grown robust by opposition, hardy by battles, is the strongest. Who takes the highest stand ? He who reaches furthest from himself to do ; who leaps furthest out from himself to touch with his hand the leper, and endangers himself with the contact. All are kind to friends, the beast included, and friendship will make a snake your friend ; but good to persistent enemies, real good, what shall we say of that ? What will that do, and what especially will it do for you when you do not seek the direct result ?

What is the difference between a worm and you ? Inner consciousness fixes the boundary between continued individual existence and temporary. To my mind that which has individual conscience is individually immortal,

or, more strictly, is not immortal, but continuous, first individually, then after, as I believe, absorbed in the immortal One. As you labor for others through the ages, you grow to cherish less your individuality; you work yourself out of yourself by working for others, and in losing yourself, at last you gain more than yourself—all things. Do you see the harmony of this belief as it is carried along?

There is a province in which conjecture bears no good result. Be not too curious. What should be known will finally be known. All that should be known now is what you can comprehend, and what is essential to your present surroundings and progress. It is worse than idle to peer beyond the inscrutable veil. No answer comes. The time employed in the fruitless search is lost, and the faculties are impaired by the vain forecasting. Seek the knowable, and you shall gain more of it than when your search is after both the knowable and the unknowable.

If I were to tell you some wholesome things, which, in their first telling, would commend themselves as new, true, and right, some simple rules to live by,—living by which you would plainly feel yourself and all within your influence advanced,—they would impress you. Then, after having told them, if I were to tell you some great mystery, which would not commend itself, and if I were to proclaim this mystery a necessary part of the simple, self-commended truth, and your mind would revolt at the reception of the mystery, and utterly refuse its acceptance, do you not see how I should weaken the force of the simple truth by the impossible conditions

with which I environed it? Christianity. If the Sermon on the Mount stood alone, and if the world had forgotten the author, would not the world be better off? Is not this Sermon on the Mount loaded down with the crimes of Moses and Solomon, the vague fancies of John's Apocalypse, — which is like a sick man's dream, full of horrid beasts and impossible dragons, — the sophistries of Paul, and narrow church creeds? All these, and more, must that little sermon bear; and it is too much for it. The tendency of the human mind is great towards creating doctrine. Let us have less doctrine, more simple practice, more faith in simple, unmistakable duties in little acts of kindness, which are always suggesting themselves to us, and almost always brushed away without notice.

Having learned your alphabet in childhood, and progressed to reading, do you naturally go back to re-commit the alphabet? Your faith in the cardinal facts is pure, simple, and as perfect as is often afforded in a life on earth. Why linger around those places where the chief pretense is to instill faith? You may do better than this. Look forward. Do not stand still, or rather do not retrograde, for there is no standing still where motion is life, as it is everywhere. You have faith in the facts; now cultivate faith in the performance of the duties just now budding out of those facts; turn your attention to the cultivation of a system which shall commend itself to the higher minds of spiritual faith, and from them become enforced upon all — a new self-convincing system. By a system I do not mean a methodical book. Truth, I think, often commends itself best in fragments.

There is much that I have written, which, if you will read again, will almost appear new to you; and yet you must not look for novelty, or tire of repeated reading. Some reading of the old files the mind for a better apprehension of that which follows and is to follow. Be true to yourselves, and if the world does not, eternity shall recognize that truth.

What does it signify to be remembered, except the good there is in it to those who do the remembering? If any one is remembered one hundred years hence, he will be occupied then in other ways, so that he will hardly care to return to see how, when, and where he is remembered; but it will be important in the progress of "The Good," not that the being who did what little he could shall be remembered, but that the good wrought be remembered. You know not how personal fame grows small and insignificant as you recede from it in the life. Personal fame is also an element of selfishness. Seek not recognitions and greetings from others. Seek not to be known, but do seek to recognize, to greet, and to know.

Those who talk much of individuality, who are its sternest and most uncompromising claimants, are the very ones, often, who have the least of its present virtue; they unconsciously lose the thing in their persistent claim for it. Among this class we may always look to find adherents to some dogma or formula established by some one else. They go to make parts of a sect, with forms of worship and faith ready-made for them. True individuality best asserts itself in the possession of inward conviction, not taken from any source only because

offered, but built up from within, and ever growing from within outward.

Symmetry. Can you think that we progress in all things, and yet stand still in one? Symmetry means uniformity; and it would indeed be strange if I should go forward in thought, in morals, and in all the other elements of power, and yet stand still in one; that my intellect, improved in every respect, could not evince its improved condition by its unity. If you but reflect, you may yourselves answer many questions of your own asking.

Sometimes, unfortunately for the world, an error of pure absurdity becomes fixed by being accepted by a few leading minds; and for centuries thereafter it is accepted without examination, purely as a dogmatic assertion, revered for its age.

Living convictions come only from living thought, exercised by each individual. Hence, let us encourage each one to think for himself, nor abuse him for his difference. Only in the broadest toleration is the truth most likely to come.

Do not think that, as you have learned something of goodness, therefore you have seized hold of Absolute Goodness. That you may not have until you become of it. All goodness in your sphere and in mine is limited by conditions surrounding us, which we cannot set aside. If we could so get out of ourselves as to get away from all surroundings also, we might, perhaps, gain much more; but we must not abuse what of neces-

sity is. If we could get out of ourselves entirely, we would no longer be ourselves ; we would lose our individuality — a point to be desired, I think, but not yet to be allowed. Necessity, then, exists, and it carries with it some harsh results, which often seem to clash with goodness ; but let us not judge too rashly of this, either. Life, death, after-life, are all too complex to come under one or two simple laws, and a great difficulty in teaching anything is to make profound things easily understood by the multitude. Necessity, by a law of your nature, makes you wish to destroy a venomous reptile when you meet it. May not the question occur, Is this being good to the reptile, created, doubtless, with rights, and a life which should terminate in the process of nature ? But there is something behind this reasoning in the absolute right which justifies to you the demolition. There is something within you, an inner instinct, not due to education, which makes you a natural antagonism to the reptile. This is your inner consciousness. The act does not offend that.

The absolute — the true, central, absolute perception of truth — can not be reached — perhaps never ; but I believe it will when we become part of it in the Great One. Mathematics is the most absolute of sciences ; you call it the absolute science. But follow your stages of reasoning back, the beginning is an axiom ; it stands on some basis which is accepted, not proven. In moral questions, the element of uncertainty is still greater. The number of accepted truths is very much larger. So do not expect the absolute. What, then, have you to rest on ? Only this : Each one for himself must accept that which addresses and commends itself to his moral sense, and he must cultivate that moral sense. This is

the key to responsibility. This measures the degree of responsibility. This understood is the key to everything. There is nothing else. Banish everything but inner consciousness, and you have everything; keep all else, and banish inner consciousness, and you have nothing.

The perfection of unselfishness is not possible in your condition. No perfection is. But for all that, look around you. Are there not degrees of difference? Are there not within your own limited observation vast differences between the selfishness of different men? and can not all rather work toward the better end of the matter than toward the other end? and is the world as good as your practical sense teaches you it can be made? You have not, and will not have, perfection, but you may, nay, must, have progress in one direction or the other. You must move. In which direction shall it be? Do not fold your hands because you can not be perfect, but reach in that direction at any rate; and though you can not reach it, you may have the consolation at least of knowing you will be nearer it.

In the philosophy you read is there one element of sympathy? Plato had cold beauty as his aim. Aristotle had sensual love. One fear, another selfishness, another self-protection, another caution. None sympathy. Not one ever said, Do good for goodness' sake. Sacrifice for others. Weep with others. Die, if need be, for others. Lose yourself that others may be advanced. No; in advocating what they thought the highest, they left out the highest. It is by sympathy that more may be accomplished than by the employment of any other possible

quality. By sympathy you bring yourself in the presence of all that is good and true of the past. By sympathy you bring yourself in unison with the dead. By it you unite yourself to distant periods. It annihilates distance, time, and everything but eternity and good. By it I come to you from thousands of miles distance, and am straightway in your presence. If messages are ever transmitted — and I believe they shall be — with more speed and certainty than by electricity, it will be when a perfect current of sympathy between the two points of transmission is attained. When a death of a distant friend reaches your ear, the chord is touched through the intermediate sense of sound. The chord is there; it is strong; you know that; you feel it. It may be strong enough, in favorable elements, to bear itself, not from mouth to ear, or from paper to the eye, but to bear itself directly; and why is it not? Only because the gross surrounding elements intercept its progress.

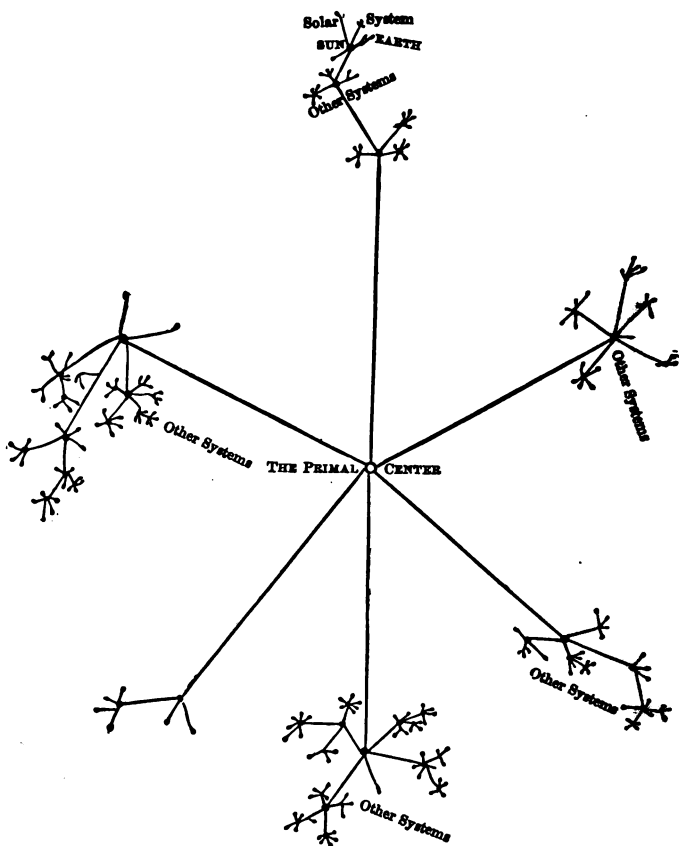
Disseverment. There are disassociations of ideas which come with death that you can not understand fully until you experience them by your own death. A man has himself wrapped up in an interest with you, and often death comes and takes all the elements of interest away, and thus leaves him, alas! with nothing, — with worse than nothing. An iron necessity rests upon him to begin to form new aspirations, suited to his spiritual being, and in direct antagonism with those he has left in life. What a miserable being is he who, having lived for love of money alone, — whose life had intensified in that love as it went along toward the common exit, death, — who suddenly finds himself where money has lost all its substantial value to him! He has nothing left then. He

must begin to create for himself something to fill the dreadful vacuum which his past, lost treasure has made.

Truth has nothing in it that any one should ever be ashamed of. It contains not the least element that any one should fear to utter ; but there is a vast difference in being ashamed to utter and in glorifying one's self by being made the vehicle of utterance. I do not stand here ashamed to bear the responsibility of any one thought I ever expressed ; but I do stand here to issue my perceptions of the truth to the world, so that, if possible, they shall not be clogged with any burden of personal glory to myself, or to those who happen to be the media or vehicles of their diffusion.

You ask me, What is Truth ? If you mean Truth as an abstract essence, I will answer, I can not tell you. The question has very often been asked, never intelligently answered ; but if you mean to ask concerning Truth as related to each individual, I will answer you. I believe it to be to each one the highest sense of faith, and love, and duty, which he is capable of holding and giving.

Let to-morrow take care of itself, and so go to sleep when the time comes, and then await the morrow ; for there never yet was a horror in the future, that was so great, that it did not come and pass. No matter how great, it will come when it will, it will depart when it will, it will leave what influence it will ; and often will something else come, more permanent, and something that, if we cultivate the right view, will be better. At last, at last there shall come the One, and you, and I, and all shall be of that One — shall be that One ; and that is the consummation, as I believe.



In my faith the center is that which, with my limited understanding, we call the beginning. From this primal center bodies of gross matter are first thrown off in divergent lines of space. When these cast-off bodies of gross matter accomplish some distance in the process of their motions, they become spheres. In the process of those motions they in turn throw off other bodies of matter, which in process of their motion also become spheres. The congregation of systems move in straight divergent lines from the primal center to a common circumference, and become etherealized as they proceed. The complete etherealization of each body of each system is accomplished when, in the progress of the system, the circumference is reached by each body of the system. The matter first thrown from the primal center was gross; when it reaches the circumference it will be so etherealized that it will return again to the primal center. The center has no orbital motion. The chief motions of the bodies in each system are those of compound revolution. The chief motions of the congregations of systems are those of recession from, and procession to, the primal center. The effect of propulsion of the systems from the primal center is etherealization. The force of propulsion is potent upon each system and each body until it reaches the circumference. When the circumference is reached the force of sympathy supplants the propelling force, and by the change the etherealized body is drawn to the primal center. Its individuality is lost. It becomes absorbed in the One. Eternal motion for eternal refinement.

[Question. If the first center was and is all perfect, how is it that there were gross and imperfect parts at

the beginning to be thrown off for refinement and return ?] Perhaps the error lies in your estimation of perfection. If nothing imperfect can result from the first perfect essence, how is it that you have an existence ? for you are a result, direct or indirect, of some primal principle. But the analogies of life alone should teach you, that whatever perfection is, it is not a condition of completion. Completion — finishedness — absolute rest — inertia — stagnation — are better synonyms of dissolution and death than of perfection. If life is eternal life, it is eternal development, eternal progress. Concerning absolute perfection, this is all we may know now : that we, being imperfect, can not contain a full estimate of perfection, as the lesser can not contain the greater — the greatest.

Do you ask my reason for the faith thus lamely set forth ? I answer you, I can not see what — for want of better phrase — we call the beginning. I can only faintly see the outer circumference. I can not see what — for want of better phrase — we call the end ; but I think I do see, feel, and appreciate something of the progress and the process. I think I know something of the space from the beginning of my individuality to the present point ; and noting the order and the incidents, I evolve from that order, and from those incidents, the enlargement — the whole. I do not insist upon your acceptance of them. I do not insist upon the acceptance of anything, by any one, against inwrought conviction ; but I earnestly suggest for your acceptance this : that you strive, in whatever surrounding complications you may find yourself, to make your highest sense of right a harmony with your life by living upon and up to it.

You have come to a point in the progress of our sys-

tem, where, if you accept what I teach, you will feel the general effect of surroundings as limitation of action and thought. If you join me in this faith, you will appreciate that you are in a circle in the grand mechanism, not the most ethereal, because not nearest the circumference, or on the line of return from the circumference to the center; and at the same time not the most gross, because not nearest the center in the line of progress toward the circumference. In your circle, you are in such conditions, as distance and progress, proceeding from increasing distance from the center, place you. In other words, you are under a law of development. You are elevated just as you have been pushed forward toward the end; you are depressed—in development—just as you have been restrained toward the center. Within these bounds, however, there is a narrower bound; that is, some of your beings present the highest possibilities of your existence and place in the movement where your earth now is; others present the lowest possibilities of your existence and place in the movement where the earth now is. It is within this last bound that your work lies. That work is to get others and yourself to keep as near the higher and elevated edge of the possibilities, that your world's place in the arrangement affords. The law of moral atmosphere around you is a constant law. Your world will grow ethereal only as your world moves along; it will not grow ethereal in advance of its position. The law does not afford impossible conditions of being. It does not admit of an existence such as Jupiter would admit, or such as Mars would admit, or, on the other hand, such as Mercury would admit. Infer from this that the highest intelligence you can communicate with is only the highest that can exist

in your earth's surroundings in its place in the progress. Yet, notwithstanding the constancy of this great law, the lesser bound admits of large variety and great freedom of action. Within this lesser bound you have capacities which you do not always exercise — appreciable duties, which, recognizing, you do not always perform. Within this lesser bound you have the freedom to choose, and the power to do. Here are your responsibilities. This is the domain of the inner consciousness — of the self-law — the self-witness. Moral responsibility exists just where moral actions may be done within this lesser bound; and it is of vast importance to all, that the highest preparation possible should be attained at the beginning.

For those who fancy individuality, and adhere to it with tenacity, for their consolation I will say that individuality may continue for more of an eternity than they can conceive. Perhaps before that point — if it can be called a point — is reached, they may be ready enough to drop that cherished wish for separate identity. When all selfishness is eliminated out of being, it will hardly be that any one will be found to clamor for self and separate existence. If the progress of life is toward love, it is also toward unity, for love means sympathy. Its barrier is opposing, conflicting, separating personal interest. Break down the barrier, and let the love operate unrestrained, and a union follows. So life, love, eternity, unity, are convertible at last; they are one; and that one is the one, as it was before the beginning, and shall be after the end.

One weakness of humanity is, that it reaches the fur-

theft to know, when it forgets to reach the furthest to do. It often receives no satisfactory answer to its too far reaching questionings. But its furthest reaching acts will always come back laden with eternal fruits. He that goes furthest out of himself to work for the furthest others, is the best — exhibits the best type of true manhood. He who peers furthest for theories in his questionings, is sometimes the most idle, and exhibits the poorest type of manhood, and gets but discontent for it all.

What great matter to you now what Saturn contains? If it is inhabited, you can not help its inhabitants, if they need your help ever so greatly. What matter to you now if Jupiter is inhabited? This you know: your village is inhabited, and with inhabitants, too, who need your gracious, kindly words and acts to assist them, and to relieve them. Do. Do. Do. And thus, when you have done all you can, you may the more speedily come to where you may see other worlds, and do more. Rest assured of this: you shall never fail to have inhabitants somewhere, to whom you may extend your efforts; and when everything that can be done for the people of your world is done, it may be time then to look around you for other worlds to conquer by your kindness. I would not underrate search after knowledge, but there are some searchings that must in your state remain idle. There is a distinction which each one must form for himself, as best he may, between two kinds of knowledge. There is one kind which in your world is almost universally recognized as impossible of acquisition; another which is not. A search after the possible, be it never so difficult, if it is pursued without trenching on your duties to your life, to your fellows, is always wholesome; the search after

the impossible — the unknowable — is weakening in its effects ; for who is so useless to himself, to others, to eternity in the great evolution, as the idle dreamer ? I would not depreciate the earnest labor for knowledge. Individual life affords the opportunity to build a foundation for large information from experience and observation ; and it also, sometimes, affords the higher opportunity of giving expression to the results of an intuition which transcends the line of observation and experience. Isolated men have hitherto strode very far in advance of their ages, and brought to the world thoughts which they could not explain — thoughts which the world long after, in better conditions, came to measure and confirm.

The worthiest things of thought come not to you, or any one, by the first simple direct effort. The finer and more finished the product of thought, the more prolonged and complex the thought which is necessary to produce it. As in physical formation, so in mental, and just as in mental, so in spiritual. That part of your physical which is the most indirectly operated upon, expresses the highest phase of your culture. The ear, the eye, the nose, the character of the mouth, and, withal, the shape and size of the head and the fiber of the brain, are not results of a day's effort, or of a direct effort toward their cultivation. It takes generations of effort, in the continued cultivation of life, to change a low forehead, small eyes, short nose, and heavy mouth, into domed head, large and expressive eyes, and lengthened nose, and well chiseled lips. Thus, too, in morals and spiritual progress — but more. Those things which are highest in the scale of true value, come to fruition the slowest ; but their tardiness — as I have said in relation to progress —

assures their permanency. You are being led slowly — you may think too slowly — upward ; but be consoled with the apparent tardiness by the hope of permanency. All disciples of a philosophy must begin at a simple point, a point at which they can view but a few small things close to them, in order that they may eventually stand at a moral eminence, from which they can view many and great things at increased distances. A great moral system does not come in a day. If it did, it might depart on the next day. The length of life of all things is in a measure correspondent to the time it requires from inception to maturity. You may sometimes in the future look back to your present stage of progress, as you do now look back to the beginning of our intercourse.

[*Remark.* Then no difference what we do ; the end will be the same.] No difference ! You confront and deny your most common every-day observations in making such a conclusion. That there should be no difference at the end ! What have you to do with the ultimate end now, in this view ? You are at the beginning, and the way is too long to contemplate, for weariness. No difference what you are, or how you progress, or what surroundings you make for yourself in the mean time ? If no difference, exchange places with some poor wanderer about you. If no difference — you are above the lowest certainly — go down and begin with their aspirations and feelings. Take to yourself their low aspirations. No. Banish from your thoughts the inactive, fatalistic theory. You are where you are. Some laws limit your action and your desires, but there are also laws by which you are made capable of doing, whereby others shall advance,

and take you along with them in that advancement, accomplished through your efforts.

Now look — in view of creation and progress — at the manifest error of those who say, “ God measured out, by one rule, rewards and punishments to all, for obedience and infraction of an arbitrary law, which makes no account of conditions, stages of progress, or locality, which He himself, and He alone, has placed you in.” In other words, that you, being in a line of gross surroundings in one of the inner and heavy circles, must do and think those ethereal and more perfect things, which only become possible at a point in the increased circumference, which a more ethereal body has reached.

You are mistaken ; you have seen more than one side. As I think, the necessary principles of your moral life, of the moral life of the world, are few and simple. Incidents are innumerable, it is true, and progress in that course in which new thoughts are revealed by others, and suggested as outgrowths of the principles, is without limit ; but these all flow from the few easily said general rules of life and conduct. You may construct your faith, you may draw conclusions without end, you may, by these few principles, enter into a new field of life and thought, by which you may, and doubtless will, see almost all things in new lights ; but a high and important point is attained, when, upon a full recognition of these few principles, you enter upon the new field. This you have already done.

Life comprehends universal infinity ; infinity of the past, as well as of the future — speaking from this point, the present. It is an infinity of the past, which is not

marred by present separate individual consciousness. Life was a universal entity and unity in a past and grosser period. It then became diffused into a number of individualities, by the refining process of outward motion. In the further progress of that refining process, it will return into a universal entity and unity again. Imagine this line without beginning: without end —

Line of Grosser Entity and Unity.

Line of Individuality.

Line of Ethereal Entity and Unity.

When a fuller appreciation of the philosophy of truth is reached, the disciple will come to learn that some things which before were regarded as mysteries are but the pretenses of those who profess the performance of them. The faculty of prophecy does not exist in this imperfect condition. It is an incident and possibility only of perfection. To foretell with accuracy, the prophet must have a complete and perfect knowledge of all the minutest details which go to make up the future. Only he who knows all the past, who discerns all motives, all effects of time, and circumstance, and condition, visible and invisible, can announce the product. Prevision means a knowledge of all that goes to make up the future event, as absolute and certain as a knowledge of figures that go to make up a mathematical product. Who about you, whether spirit or pretended spirit, or in the form, has those necessary attributes? Who is there that can compass sea and land, and find the wind that blows its unseen malaria to poison the fiber, to weaken the physical frame, to work by slow process in undermining the mental organism, to produce, at last, the disease — which previous hereditary conditions invited — which unseats the reason of the individual, and

results in a suicide or a murder? I do not say that all attempt to foretell is pretense, but I do think that when it is not pretense it is self-delusion. There are some things which we cannot ask of imperfection, and this assuredly is one of them, and always has been.

What does the world most need? Something suited to its present condition; and I would discourage every effort to reach for the unattainable when there is so much about and around you practically attainable; so much that in the employment of your whole endeavors within that province you will find your whole time employed. The platform on which all can meet in harmony is the place first to meet upon. If those having opposing faiths in incomprehensible things can be told plainly some rules to govern their every-day relations, — rules about which there can be no disagreement, — why may not all work for the accomplishment of them?

Each system will have this difficulty to contend with: that no matter how simple, how fully it commends itself to general acceptance, the moment it gets a standing by recognition there spring up disciples — well meaning often — who will clog it with doctrines and with mysteries, until, with such shadows, they hide the central life itself. Therefore I wish to inculcate the high necessity of keeping alive individual conviction, and at the same time of giving the fullest recognition to differences of condition and freedom of thought.

I believe that the days of dictatorial dogma are ended, or near their expiring end. What the world shall have instead shall be suggestive of things which, when sug-

gested, shall inherently recommend and convince themselves — live truths which shall stand out and enforce themselves, and on the first intimation make acquaintance and firm familiar friendships. Then shall we see suggestion supreme, dictation dead. If by some these suggestions are refused, utter destruction shall not follow the refusal. Damnation for disobedience is in one system ; suggestion and example to the disobedient by those who are the obedient is the other system. You may infer the difference in the effect yourselves.

All that can ever truly gratify, of the past, is a sense of the accomplishment of that which was placed in your way for accomplishment. To look back over a stage of performance up to your capacity, in which you did with zest what you found to do, — that is all to be wished.

I say this to the ages to come : Whenever a system, a faith, or doctrine, gets around it a sanctity which forbids inquiry into it, or comparison of it with other systems, faiths, or doctrines, that vail of sanctity hides, narrows, and weakens the moral and intellectual force of its adherents. When it demands of its votaries blind, unquestioning submission, it necessarily encourages blindness and ignorance. If a sense of veneration once seems to require of you that you close your eyes and ask no questions, you may take warning from that moment that that sense of veneration is trespassing upon the true domain of your inner consciousness, which is, or should be, more sacred than any dogma, for by its cultivation and rightful power alone can your soul grow. . . . No, not only that, but Christ's system is not the only one. I speak not only to Christian nations of

Christian creeds, but to all nations of all creeds now existent and hereafter to be formed.

What can be more incongruous than this which exhibits itself to your attention every day: those who inculcate and insist upon your accepting a creed handed down as divine, who insist on your making that creed your conviction, not because it agrees with your reason and natural conditions, but because it comes from the ages, and these ages are ages of less progress and worse conditions than the present? What do they? What do these who insist there is nothing without future continuous individuality? They insist upon your ignoring your individuality now, by giving it up to the dictation of traditional dogma, in order that you may attain individuality hereafter. In other words, you must annihilate, as far as you can here, a necessary condition, that it may exist hereafter. The true rule works just inversely to this. You have individuality here — being in the lower scale. You must use it by following your convictions and cultivating them. Having received the individuality as a garment for a lower and colder atmosphere, you can wear it until you reach a higher and warmer moral atmosphere; then you may throw it off, and enter unity at last forever.

Isolation is the evil which follows from too great an exercise of individuality. Injury to the freedom of individual thought and action is the evil which follows from too great organization. The true point of cultivation — the balance — is attained by according individual freedom of thought, and cultivating by suggestive teaching the liveliest sympathy — humanity — which creates

in each one the best sense of self-imposed restraint. The danger that follows organization lies in this : as the organization grows permanent, its tendency is to hamper and restrict individuality ; and if its power grows too great, it stifles freedom, until at length the lives of the members cease to be lives of conviction, and become lives of formula. Guard against the insidious tyranny of organization. Some organization is necessary for any large enterprise ; but when organization is effected to accomplish moral purposes, beware that the organization does not come to be regarded with too much reverence, else the governed will have a mighty machine which will make them helpless recipients of routine ready-made machine morals. Too intense a disposition for organization causes us to ignore the rights of our opponents, and thus trample upon our duties, ay, and overturn our rights also ; to make us partisans, to lead us to combine only to succeed with temporary success, that we may exult in victory over our humiliated, vanquished adversaries ; to assert a creed of superiority in goodness, that we may be very devils at last. And in this thus comes the penalty, or one of the penalties : if the organization succeeds, it becomes our tyrant in turn ; having worked in us the injustice of spirit whereby we trod down, it will tread us down, debase, warp, and leave us, at last, with few virtues and many narrowing prejudices — emasculated pygmies. The organization will then be supreme, and apparently necessary, because the individuality will be so lessened that the individual can not stand alone, and must need the support of his exacting master.

You go along, you go along, and as you go along you enter into different atmospheres ; as your physical world

in its progress sometimes traverses the region of meteors, so in the same progress your moral world sometimes traverses the region in space of moral murkiness and perturbation, in which murder, suicide, and evil tendencies of all kinds seem to be, and are, stronger; but things come as they do; you can not help that circumstances hang around you, seen and unseen, which are not of your own making, to influence you. So you must take things as they are, — for they are as they are, — and you must mold them as you can. Do the best — as you understand it; then what is left is better to the world than what is left when you do the worst. . . . Ah, let me not teach fatalism for all that, but let us keep carefully in mind this: that there is a region within the province of the inner consciousness of each individual in which that consciousness measures and declares the responsibility of his will, which enables him to give scope and direction to his actions; a region wherein he sits as judge over himself, and pronounces with certainty upon his obedience or disobedience to his convictions. He may violate his judgment, but if he does, he does it not as a fatalist.

It may be said against the practical working of the philosophy at first, "If, say, several were to take this as a strict set of rules to govern them, would not designing and mean men take unnatural advantage of the spirit of self-sacrifice and oppress the disciples? or, were a community formed on the basis, could that community, adhering to the rules, protect itself from annihilation?" If there were enough in the world to begin the highest illustration of the system, I would say to them, Suppose your temporary destruction does follow, will it matter

against the system? Will not that sacrificing example work an untold number of new disciples? and shall a repetition of such examples cause wanton murder to continue? It may be that if it did, the system would, in the end, work an age of barbarism; but is this the tendency of truth? But the system has no such a possibility in it. It cultivates a sense of protection, not for the self of its adherents, but for the prevalence of the truth; and self-preservation is sustained just as it is — better than in any system — for the sake of the system, for the sake of Truth.

[*Remark.* If there will be no compactly kept organization, the opponents of this system will have each individual to contend with.]

Besides that, suppose the highest practice of the system were given by any one, and it were a failure; you need not consider this if you take things as they are and mold them as you can. Who is there that can not sacrifice more than he does without even temporal hurt to him? Let the doubtful and timid self-preserving disciple begin by minor sacrifices. There are myriads of kindly acts he may do, myriads of gentle considerations for others which he can exercise, myriads of self-denials which he may make without infringing in the least degree on his self-preservation, or on the commonly received notions of his dignity. No one will be a perfect practitioner of the system at once here; and the system will not have its complete force until the world is advanced to where it can receive, hold, and live it; meanwhile, be not afraid of beginning. If you are convinced there is right in it, practice so much of it as you can, and you will then find by your experience in well-doing how you may practice more.

Hitherto faiths have been built upon the traditions of the past ; hereafter let them be drawn from the wealth of the future. Let them change progressively, just as the human mind in its progressive enlargement shall become capable of receiving the advanced phases. Heretofore faiths have stood as barriers in the way of human thought and development — because as they were dogmas, inconsonant with reason, built upon past traditions, human development tended to contest their supremacy, therefore the dogmatics dictated the bound of progress — henceforth let faiths join thought and development, and lead them on. There is nothing so dead as the past, there is nothing so replete with life as the future. The domain of memory and habit has tended to dignify error. The domain of hope and effort shall abate it.

The absolute is the perfect. Perfection is not an incident or an accomplishment of a transient condition. Perfection is the last, the one — the eternal. Perfection is not susceptible of conception by the imperfect, as the lesser can not contain the larger or largest. The most we can do is to reach forward to the limit of our condition to express lamely our longing for the inconceivable condition beyond that point. As in physical nature friction limits perfect motion, so in moral nature the attritions of our surroundings, the flesh, the atmosphere, the uncompleted distance that has been achieved for us, must limit present attainment of perfect attitude. The law which limits the perfection of motion by friction is not more certain, or more exacting, or more inexorable, or more necessary, than that which limits your attitude by your surroundings. Indeed, it is all the same law, only its operation is upon different objects. These seem, at the

very statement, to be truisms and axioms; and so they are, but the corollaries proceeding from them, whilst they are as certain as the law, are often utterly disregarded and ignored.

Some of the world, while they assert from their observation, and, as I think, truly, that light, motion, heat, electricity, and life, are one and the same thing under different conditions, they refuse one of the corollaries of this, which is the tendency of all things to one. If this is so, what is individuality worth, except as a transient condition conducing to the end—a by-play of Nature as she proceeds from the center, in her course, to circumference—thence to the center again? . . . Yes, yes: as, in journeying across a sea, the first days of the passage are fullest of memories of the land you have left, the last days of hopes and anticipations of the lands you are to reach, so, when, once in the progress from center to circumference, more than half the passage is accomplished, the new atmosphere will enable you to draw from the prospect, instead of the retrospect, more and more.

Man's ideas of particular attributes of divinity are either reflexes of himself, or reflexes of the age which produced them—accepted by him. The highest aspiration of each man is each man's God. Hitherto men have insisted most uncompromisingly on those things which were least capable of reduction to certainty. The rule has been, that that must be most implicitly believed which can be least known. The claim is, as you proceed in degree from certainty—arising from experience and observation—you proceed in degree to certainty of conviction. Henceforth things must be taken as they are.

Some persons with refined physical organizations may shrink from the thought of merging their delicate individualities — of combining in one their tastes, feelings, aspirations — with the vulgar artisan beneath them. But I would say to them, ere they properly appreciate the import and tendencies of things beyond, they will learn that they will have themselves to advance far above their tastes, feelings, and aspirations, before such merges can be accomplished. Before that union takes place, they will find a vastly greater difference between their then selves and their present selves, than now exists between their present selves and the lowest of the low beneath them; and consider this, that long, very long, ere the union comes to be, there will be an equality of which they know, in the dust of the earth. Who, two hundred years hence, shall select the refined clay of their delicate persons from the coarse clay of the artisan? I would not suggest an attempt at a present sudden union that would thwart ends, for nature has its adaptations, and it takes but small observation to see and know that a beggar without heritage and accompaniment of filth, rags, and hunger will be as ill at ease if suddenly raised to the receipt of homage, and wealth, and luxury, as would be the king with his heritage of refinement if suddenly lowered to the beggar's surroundings; but through ages you know not what sympathy shall work; and whilst you are not called upon to exchange places with any one, you are called upon to help every one within your reach to a higher and better life, and only by so doing can your own life rise above itself.

Right is a word that will have very varying interpretations to different persons. Some will take a very low

estimate indeed of the rights of others ; but let us remember, we must take things as they are, and mold them as we can ; and if the person with but a low estimate of others' rights always strives to consider them, he will, from his low view, become enlarged to a better consideration of those rights by and by ; and then, too, if he does not this, what is there for him to do better ?

THE TRIALOGUE.

1. You shall accept the faith that your soul and judgment each day give to you.

2. You shall live upon and up to that faith as nearly as you can. This shall be your worship.

3. You shall do to all others as all others have the right to ask of you, and more ; for by raising others shall you be elevated.

So shall your life grow. If I were to give commandments, these only would I give — and what others are there ?

Let us look each morning out into the day, and if we see, in our relations with our daily task and with our fellows, two paths, one wherein, by giving up some cherished selfishness, we give some one his rights, and the other, wherein, by asserting and insisting upon ourselves, we keep from some one his rights, as we see, let us choose. And which shall we choose ? When the principles are incorporated in our natures, we will not need to ask daily questions of ourselves, for that incorporation in our natures will work a solution of our whole lives.

We can go on and dip deeper into things ; we could attempt to teach you what you can only partially conceive

of, — stages through which you will eventually go, — to show you some imperfect visions ; but your life, where you are, will, at the end, leave you far more capable of coming into sympathy with the future, when you enter it, if you do the things nearest you now.

If the known history of the past is taken in survey, you may note, among other things, this: those differences in the region of religion which caused the bloodshed — the ecclesiastical and pontifical tyranny — the oppression of the strong over the weak — the gloating vengeance. Those differences which caused all this were differences of dogma, differences concerning the things which in their nature were incapable of ascertainment and clear solution ; and indeed, the rule, as I have said I repeat, the rule has been, that just in a ratio as the dogma was remote from possible solution, and furthest from ascertainment by reason, in that ratio were the intolerance and rigor the greatest. Amidst all this, the plain, practical, recognized virtues, such as gentleness and charity, bringing assistance and kind aid to starvation, and leading from debauchery, ignorance, and positive vice, were trampled under foot. Now let the world give one century of fair trial to a practice of these things which we know. Let us permit, for a season, the dogmatic differences — which we can never reconcile by argument or establish by illustration — let us permit these for a season to slumber. They have had the throne for centuries. Let us slip in one little era of works of kindness, without demands of faith in dogmatic assertion — one little era ; and if that little era does not put to shame the exactions of the priests who have warred to the knife to insist that miracles must be believed, — that apparent inconsistencies

must be accepted by the reluctant brain of man, — if it does not, then we may return to those idols again.

The absolute is the positive, the undeniably demonstrated certainty. A moral truth is not susceptible of such demonstration as a mathematical proposition. I mean to teach by this, that you must not quarrel with another who maintains different moral grounds, since both or either of you may be wrong, inasmuch as neither of you can, from the uncertain nature of the thing, be absolute and certain. Now, what have the foregoing disjointed fragments taught you? This is what they aim to teach : —

1. That the absolute does not apply to the quality of moral acts ; that the best means of testing truth is, that each one for himself measure it by its symmetry to himself ; its application to his daily practical life ; its application to his further future life.

2. That belief in dogma is in many cases an impossibility ; made so by the constitution and surroundings of the individual conditions over which he often has no control.

3. That the demands of life are best met and answered by each one when he does the best he believes, — whatever that belief may be, — and endeavors to cultivate his life and belief, and to make a harmony of them.

4. That it is better for you, for the world, and for eternity, that you strive to work for an object outside of yourself.

That there are strong elements of truth in what I have endeavored to teach, the result of living thereby will convince. Although order is not regarded, harmony pre-

vails in the teaching. If any one can not give assent, with his faith, to any portion, he must withhold it. The system can only operate for good so far as it convinces. Let the man who sees anything that answers his convictions, or that gives him new convictions, be careful to live by the things so discerned. Then learn hereby toleration, self-culture through other culture, self-abnegation ; and the necessary result will be growth and progress upon an ascending scale.

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AN EXPONENT OF THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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