

For thousands of years, men and women have come to the realization that the key to personal and spiritual growth is to be found within themselves when they surrender to the power of silence.

"Entering The Silence" has long been regarded as a fundamental requirement to accessing those deeper spiritual levels within your own consciousness.

If you have ever been interested in practicing silence-based methods like meditation or prayer, or even just want to find out more about them, then this book is for you.

Renowned New-Thought author Horatio Dresser presents these ancient techniques in an easy-to-understand way and also goes on to tackle some of the biggest questions regarding human existence.

Preface

THIS volume is the first of a series of studies of the inner life the main purpose of which is twofold. The point of approach is from the side of practical experience, and the first object is the development of a practical method. But, incidentally, it is hoped that the facts and values of this practical study may be of service to philosophy.

In fact, the production of these volumes was begun with the conviction that philosophy and life may be brought nearer, that practical interests put new demands upon philosophy; while the practical man may be greatly benefited by the study of idealistic first principles.

Hence the point of view is midway between the world of exact thinking and the world of actual living. The interest is not primarily psychological; nor is it ethical or religious. Yet all of these interests play a part.

That is to say, aside from one's particular faith, there seems to be a demand for a new science and a new art: the art and science of the inner life investigated in the freest spirit without regard to specific doctrines. Such a science has become a necessity because of the failure of other inquiries to push through to the heart of reality in the inner world.

The art is needed to solve the problems which remain over when it is a question of the more practical application of the precepts of ethics, religion, and philosophy. For the conventional systems often fail to make clear precisely how a man should begin to live the better life.

It is modern science, with its empirical methods and its minute experimental research, which points the way in this more practical direction.

Scientific methods have already been applied to the psychological study of religion with good results. New interest in religion as a living experience is the outcome.

It remains to carry the investigation a stage farther, that it may cover the entire field of the inner life. The farther the scientific investigation is carried, the more must the individual co-operate. Hence the need of a new art is once more made plain.

For art must precede science, practice must instruct theory. Such an art should come within the reach of all. Every man must be able to grapple more successfully with the issues of actual experience. The devotees of special faiths and scientific interests may then turn the results to theoretical account.

The attempt to investigate the inner life in this practical spirit is no doubt subject to difficulties, and many objections are likely to be raised. For a long time to come such investigations will necessarily be of the nature of pioneer work, in which the art will far surpass the science. But the essential is to propose a method and make a beginning.

The best that can be said of a book on the subject is that by its aid the reader was enabled to pass beyond it. For the more profoundly one catches the idea the more persistently one will investigate—not books, but the living reality itself.

The essential is not the description of experience, nor the theories proposed to account for it; but life as known at first hand, what it means, what one can do with it. It is by recourse to life that one disproves or verifies, as the case may be. To possess life itself is to see that it is primary, while the descriptions of it avail if they send us to the pulsing, surging thing itself.

Some of the volumes in the present series are devoted to the more theoretical bearings of this investigation, others are almost entirely concerned with practical methods. The present volume has brought much evidence that it is of practical value. It is one of the greatest privileges of a lifetime to be able thus to share in the experiences of those who are striving, who are aspiring to live the spiritual life.

Moreover, it is significant that those who have been most helped by the book have paid least attention to its verbal or theoretical defects, but have gone straight to the heart of living experience in the manner advised.

The defects of the original edition were due to the fact that it was a first book, and that it was prepared from lecture notes with comparatively few changes. The subject matter was first used in a brief course of lectures delivered in Boston in 1894.

The second lecture in the course, “The Immanent God,” was then issued in pamphlet form and was incorporated without revision into the volume which was published in May, 1895. The book has been reprinted many times in this country without revision, and a slightly revised edition has been several times reprinted in England.

Since the book was first published a number of important works have appeared by reference to which it is now easier to make the present doctrine clear.

While the general character of the book is the same, the language is so much more explicit, and so many improvements have been made that readers of the earlier work will derive an entirely different impression from the present book, which is more than half new. The changes are too numerous to be mentioned here.

There were but eight chapters in the original edition; the present book contains fourteen. The second chapter has the same general purpose as the earlier discussion, but is now explicitly theistic.

The five following chapters are largely new and are a decided addition to the volume. The theory of suffering has been revised so as to differentiate it more sharply. The chapters on adjustment and poise have been retained with but few changes. The chapter on self-help has been relieved of certain minor teachings.

The following chapter is devoted to a more explicit statement of the method of meditation. The objections which have been raised to this method during the past ten years are also considered. This chapter makes clear the wide distinction between the present theistic philosophy and all mysticisms.

The omission of the Christian aspects of the original discussion has since been made good by the publication of a little volume entitled *The Christ Ideal*, New York and London, 1901.

A simple statement of the general theory of the inner life is contained in a little book entitled, *Living by the Spirit*, 1900, also issued in pointed letters for the blind by W. B. Wait, 412 Ninth Avenue, New York, 1902; German translation (*Das Leben nach dem Geiste*) by L. S.; Leipzig, Lotus Verlag, 1904. That little work is far clearer than the earlier volumes.

Those who prefer to read a simpler statement before taking up the present discussion, will find that book the best introduction. On the other hand, those who are interested to follow the philosophical problems here barely touched upon will find a much more elaborate treatment of these questions in the mature volume, *Man and the Divine Order*, 1903.

H. W. D. CAMBRIDGE, MASS - JUNE, 1904

The Point of View

NOW that the nineteenth century has ended and scholars are making their estimates of its many tendencies, it is becoming more and more clear that it is to be known as the century of the philosophy of evolution.

It has been an eminently practical era, the age of mechanical invention and discovery, and, toward its close, an epoch of sociological inquiry.

But the philosophy of evolution came first, and the unprecedented inquiry into causes, sources, origins, prepared the way for the profound interests which marked the transition to the present century. No department of thought has escaped this reconstructive spirit. It is today a truism to declare that no event or person can be understood apart from environment and from evolutionary history.

Sometimes the inroads of science have seemed to threaten the foundations of man's most sacred faith. But in the end the essentials of faith have been marvelously enriched.

The widespread inquiry into customs, traditions, races, and religions has tended toward the unification of all our thinking about mankind. Hence, many distinctions between creeds and doctrines have faded out in the light of the larger sympathy and sense of brotherhood which the inquiry has inspired.

A new spirit of tolerance has brought a willingness to admit that, despite all differences in creed and dogma, men who are really in earnest are striving for the same great ends, the world over.

The important consideration is to know how far a man has advanced in moral and religious evolution, what manner of life he lives.

This new demand that man shall understand himself in the light of all the causes that have operated to produce him has still more significance when we turn from the outer world to the inner. Thus far, evolutionary science has dealt with man in large part as a physical being. There was a time, in fact, during the middle of the nineteenth century when the entire inquiry seemed to make for materialism.

Closer scrutiny of the results showed, however, that the ultimate problems of life, the questions concerning the real nature of existence, the character of the real man, and the like, were left for idealistic philosophy to solve.

We now know that to maintain the evolutionary point of view is by no means to be materialistic. At any rate, evolutionary materialism is a failure. There are decided limits beyond which mere evolutionism has been unable to go. It is difficult also for natural science to advance into the inner world, for science deals with the universal, and the inner life is in a peculiar sense the home of the individual.

Even experimental psychology fails in the attempt to discover the true character of the inner life.

The most interesting questions are still unanswered when psychology has completed its description of our states of consciousness. In fact psychology as a natural science explicitly disclaims the right to ascertain the values of inner experience or discover the nature of the self. It is necessary, if the search for origins is to be complete, for each man to take up the work where science leaves it, and pursue the investigation by the same fruitful method of systematic research.

There are plenty of sceptics to raise objections to any such procedure. It will be said that the era of morbid self-examination and conscientiousness will again return. Others will insist that the inner life is a mystery past finding out. To all this the reply is that man already lives in and knows much about the inner life.

This is no new venture. It is only a question of substituting more knowledge for less knowledge. It is the half-way positions of imprisoning self-consciousness that distress us.

There is no inherent danger in analytical self-knowledge or rational synthesis. The essential is that such analysis and synthesis shall be thorough. Ordinarily our self-knowledge stops short of the most important consideration.

If we are to be thorough, we must ask, “What is man’s ultimate origin? What is his real environment? Whither is he tending?” These are profound philosophical questions, to be sure. But there are respects in which they are also problems for experimental investigation. No man is more truly a child of this practical age than the one who approaches these issues in the spirit of empirical research.

Individual man now has far more material to draw upon in his effort to investigate the inner life in a free, profitable spirit. Whatever one may think of the conclusions which bear upon the belief in a future life, it is clear that the finer aspects of psychic research have thrown light upon the mysteries of the inner world.

Meanwhile, a new science has been springing up, midway between experimental psychology and the realm of the individual soul, namely, the psychology of religion; and a new literature of the soul has also begun to appear. It remains for the individual to seize upon the results of all this finer, more exact thinking, and verify or correct them in the light of personal problems.

The farther science advances into the inner world the easier it will be to avoid imprisoning subjectivism.

The essential is to approach the study in the right temper. In a sense the inner life is a gift which all men share. Its universal characteristics each man may verify. What makes it real is the fact that each of us just now possesses it. First of all it is owned and observed as experience.

It pulsates, presents new moments even while we observe it. Every man is in possession of clues which will reveal the deeper meanings of this surging stream. For every man has perplexities which have been postponed and postponed, not because they are insoluble but simply because these difficulties have not been met in precisely the situation where they arose.

It seems probable that the interest, the problem of the living present is the most direct clue to the larger truth of life as a whole. Hence it is perspective that we need, not the limited point of view of morbid introspection.

We must regard our own little moment of life in the same comprehensive spirit wherewith the geologist approaches the phenomena of an epoch in the earth’s history. We should view life as a whole, as a tendency amidst a universal environment. In short, we must begin at last to be philosophical.

To begin to be philosophical is to be thorough, moderate, and painstaking; to pursue truth wherever it may lead. The venture seems too bold, at first thought. But again it is profoundly simple, since it is concerned with the commonest experiences of life and in a particular sense with the individual interest of the observer. It is clear that life is a problem which has for each an individual solution.

No one can wholly solve it for us, precisely because it possesses this individual element. Life has had its particular history in each case. In every instance it wears a different aspect. The

temperamental distinction which once seemed baffling therefore proves to be the clue to intelligent thinking.

The utmost that one individual may do for another is to state the facts and laws of life as he apprehends them. That is, another may present the universal element; it is the particular application which makes it true. Hence each man must investigate for himself.

Hence each man must think. And thinking is not so hard a task after all. We make it difficult because we think in borrowed terms, or because we have no method.

The present volume is primarily intended to further the kind of inquiry here outlined. The references to the present age and to current literature suggest the possibility of taking a still more practical step. Where all this literature ends as science, the art of the inner life begins for the individual. In the present teaching no mere acceptance of belief is called for. No dogma is here insisted upon.

No claim is made either for originality or finality. The essential is actual study of life at first hand. Hence, one should be free to depart from prepossessions; not that the creeds of the past are untrue, but that one is just now searching into the realities which give rise to creeds, one is endeavoring to know life itself. For the main trouble with us is, perhaps, that we adopt the opinions of others about life; we read and read and read; we hear and we hear and we listen.

Meanwhile, the great thing is not the words but the spirit, the meaning. The spirit each man of us has with him. No fact of life is more important than this present instant. Nowhere in all the universe is more truth compacted than into this living reality—the passing stream of consciousness which links us to the world, to past and future, heaven and the Father of all.

It is essential, then, that at each point in the discussion the reader pause to make the thought his own through quiet realization of its spirit and its meaning. Let him pause to ask, What does this mean for me? How does it explain, how does it accord or conflict with my experience?

Have I ever devoted time and reflection—alone with my deeper self—to realise the full bearing of the profoundest and sublimes truths of life? Have I ever made them my own and actualised them in daily life, or is there still a chasm between theory and practice?

If the reader will keep this practical object constantly in view, unsuspected applications of well-known truths will become apparent before he finishes the volume.

If one is to pass beyond mere self-analysis of the usual sort it is clear, however, that one must be willing to entertain the thought of a fundamental system of realities. To end in a large world one must begin with broad premises. If man's life is environed by a larger Life, he cannot understand himself alone.

In deepest truth there is no "alone." Our own experimental observation proves that, first of all. It seems impossible even to outline one's method of investigation without admitting that the presence of an environing Life is the most striking consideration.

What that Life shall be called is of course another question. But for one's self the frank admission must be made at the outset that it is the presence of the divine Father, without whom the most elementary fact seems unintelligible. If the reader names it otherwise—well and good. It is not now a question of names. As a possible aid to inquiry, the present discussion is confessedly a chapter from life, an appeal to life.

The aim is to convey the living reality itself; so far as possible, instead of merely talking about it. Hence the appeal is to the profoundest experience of the reader—recognized, confessed as what it most genuinely reveals itself to be. The appeal is to reason, too.

But reason must start with facts, with actual life; it does not create its own objects. How else can one hope to unite philosophy and life than by this frank union of experience and thought—one's deepest life made explicit?

It is obviously wiser to be true to all aspects of life as it appears from the angle of one's own temperament and experience than to force all facts into a certain system. The deepest facts are usually slighted, if not excluded, by the latter process. No formula seems large enough to cover all we know and feel. There is an element in experience that usually eludes description. Some experiences can never be told.

They are intimately a part of us. They are sacred, and one hesitates to speak of them. Yet one can suggest them, or at least let it be known that in these rarest moments of existence one seemed most truly to live; Only in this way does the soul, that part of us which is most truly individual, find expression. Only in this way does the unfettered soul show its freedom from prejudice and dogma.

Allegiance to a person or theory limits one to the particular view of life represented by that person or theory. To claim finality for one's system would be equivalent to affirming that progress shall end with the particular discussion in question. Our theories serve us well while we remember that life itself is larger.

Life, then, is large, let us say once for all, and demands a broad way of thinking about it. Ordinarily, we have no sense of what our total self means, we suffer, and we seek relief. We are absorbed in the present, in its needs and woes, unaware that our whole past lives, our inheritance, and our temperament, may affect this bit of suffering nature which for the moment limits our thought.

We live as though time were soon to cease, and prudence would not permit us an hour for quiet reflection.

Yet a new phase, and to some the happiest phase, of life begins when they stop hurried thought, and try quietly to realize what life means as an advancing whole. If life is in some sense one system, can any other interpretation be rational, will the parts ever assume their true relationship in our minds except when viewed in the light of the whole? Possibly our suffering is largely unnecessary.

Possibly it has come about because we have failed to adjust our thought to the wholeness of things. At any rate, to take time, at last, to isolate one's self from the rushing tide of daily life and to raise the great questions here proposed, is to begin in earnest to experiment.

From the first, one stands in need of all sorts of conclusions which seem to belong rather to the end. It is one thing to talk about "the power of silence" and another to be able to pause long enough to enjoy it. One is eager to know what that power is. Yet one must first have a basis to stand upon. The fact that a relatively obscure element besets all our thinking about the inner life is no excuse for vagueness.

To fall back upon feeling or faith alone will no longer suffice. We are in quest of the whole, and reason is surely a part of life's whole. There is both the hurrying flux of our tantalizing consciousness, the part of life which refuses to be still; and there is the persistent conviction that life has a deeper reality which it is the office of calmer thinking to discover. Clearly, we must take life as we find it, and move forward, faithful alike to feeling and to thought.

One fact, however, is clear: experience is best explained at the outset by reference to its environment. If the problem seems too large for us, at first, it would surely prove more difficult if we tried to leap beyond present experience.

It is only a question of attaining closer and closer acquaintance with the near at hand. If our logic at last compels us to look beyond immediate experience in search of its basis, then that basis must be such as actual life demands.

The truth is involved in the very nature of the beings and things by which we are surrounded. It only needs to be evolved or made explicit. All power is immanent, it works through something. Man should not look beyond his own nature, his temperament, inheritance, education, until he is compelled to do so in order to find an adequate explanation of his experience.

He should have a clear conception of the closely related events out of which his life has proceeded, as the river is enlarged and shaped in its course by its tributaries and the country through which it flows, yet never rises higher than its source. In a word, he must know his origin, both immediate and remote. He must start with personal experience, but should not stop until he has traced it to the Source beyond which thought cannot go.

The point of view of this book, then, is explicitly empirical. By the term "empirical" as here used is meant that our existence in the universe is made known through experience, and that by studying experience, testing our theories by further experience, and keeping close to the assured results, we may not only solve our practical problems but gain knowledge of life as a whole.

That is to say, experience brings changes. We reflect upon those changes and experiment. By experiment we learn what theories are sound and practical, what are absurd. The purpose of our theories is to explain experience, and further experience, rationally tested, shows whether or not we have succeeded. Each of us possesses experience and each man may experiment for himself.

Experience means much or little according to the degree of individual experiment. To gain more knowledge of the sort that is really worthwhile a man must put more theories to the test, observe more acutely, think more seriously.

It may well be that experience as individually made known to us is unable fully to account for itself. Something more than mere description is called for. The question, "What is the nature of experience?" Leads directly to idealistic analysis and ultimately to some sort of constructive idealism, that is, a systematic restatement of the data of experience in terms of reason.

But we are not here concerned with the ultimate unification of the data of experience. Nor are we concerned with the more theoretical evidences for idealism. To be sure, we must introduce certain arguments, for example, a plea for the immanence of God. But the chief value of these arguments will be found in their practical empirical bearings.

That is, the argument for the divine immanence, or for the idealistic interpretation of experience, will serve as a central line of thought by the pursuit of which the reader may follow the developments of his own experience. In other words, it is the value or meaning which the reader attributes to the argument that is of consequence.

The first-hand evidence is of more import than the theoretical description. But once in fuller possession of the empirical evidence, one is in a position to follow the philosophical implications much further than the present arguments carry them.

Three important distinctions are involved in this brief outline.

(1) First there is the question of fact. For example, there is experience of a religious type, an emotional uplift or sense of worship.

(2) There is the particular theory brought forward to account for the fact. If you are a pantheist, you will conclude that in the ineffable religious moment you are identical with the "Absolute."

But if you are a theist, you will revere God as the Father and indulge in no mystical theories of identification.

(3) Furthermore there are the practical values which you attach to the facts. If you conclude that God is the Father, your conduct will differ greatly from that of the mystic. In the end, it is undoubtedly the values which we attribute to experience that influence us most. For values are ideals, and we develop by means of ideals.

Ordinarily it is only the technical philosopher who distinguishes thus sharply between facts, theories, and values. But the distinction is plainly of great importance. Very few people know what a fact is. The majority read their opinions into the given matters of experience and mistake what they want to believe for what is so.

But one can make little headway in the endeavor to understand experience without constant discrimination between fact and theory. And there is clearly a great difference between that which is and that which may, or ought to be.

The present inquiry will be chiefly based on these distinctions. The reader is already in possession of facts, that is, of experience. He also possesses abundant theories. Modern science describes for him the physical world in which he lives. History narrates man's life in the past. Moral science sets forth the views of men in regard to what ought to be. Christianity is an inculcation of religious principles. Philosophy is the intelligent co-ordination of all theories.

But there is need of an art of life which shall show man how to live philosophically. This, the most practical of arts, each man may contribute to by giving thought to the problems and laws of his own experience. What he most needs is a working ideal, a principle by which to apply philosophy more successfully. Hence the importance of ideals, the realizationally aspect of religious teaching, the practical worth of philosophical thinking.

Hence, too, the value of silence, of sufficient repose to enable a man to realise the meaning, the spirit of what he believes.

For this inquiry the reader needs no other equipment than he already possesses. Each of us is feeling, acting, living amidst the great stream of events which we call "experience." Yonder are the fields and the hills. Above is the fair, blue sky. Near at hand are the houses of friends and neighbors—theatres of fascinating interests. Within the mind there are passing thoughts and varying emotions.

Implied in all these transient mental states are the habits by which we have developed, and the convictions which underlie our conduct. The essential is to awaken to consciousness of this surging play of circumstance, discover how we are taking it, and consider how we may become more wisely adjusted.

This is to enter more fully into the spirit of the age, to become philosophers of evolution in a yet profounder sense. For it shows not only how experience leads to experience, but even how thought follows thought. Thus we may enter into the fullness of life as it passes, and by this profounder mastery win the greater repose.

And he who can break away from the age sufficiently to meditate upon it in peace is indeed ready to apprehend its finest values, to live in it yet not of it.

It is characteristic of empiricists to make as few assumptions as possible, to plunge into life and begin to philosophise. All that need be said at the outset is that one finds one's self existing in the world, with a deep desire to understand the nature and meaning of life. Where the world came from, one cannot now say.

The important consideration is that it somehow came, and with it this strange being called one's "self." If we do not yet see the rationale of it, we at any rate possess the wonderful gift known as "experience."

Wherever we begin to rationalise, we shall come out at the same point, and ask the same questions, if we persist until we discover ultimate principles. It is usual to begin an inquiry into the nature of experience by analysing the presentations of consciousness.

But as we are in the first place interested to apply the empirical method, it is desirable to begin with a well-known argument and note the changes which practical empiricism brings about in all our thinking. In no respect has the critical empirical method wrought a greater change than in regard to the argument for the existence of God. Hence it is the understanding of the change thus wrought that most readily prepares the way for what is to follow.

It has long been customary, for example, to support the argument for God's existence by an appeal to the sequence of certain causal phenomena. From the fact of causation in general it seems to be an easy step to the proof that God is the "first cause."

For example, it is plain that when a message is flashed over the wires from town to town, or when the electric car transports us through the city streets, an efficient cause has produced the effect which serves us so readily.

The rapidity with which the effect results does not deceive us. We may know little about the force in question; but we know that it acts in unvarying accordance with certain laws, the understanding of which enables us to control it. We learn further that every cause has its antecedent. The electricity is generated by the aid of energy derived primarily from the sun.

The motion of the ship, as it sails before the wind, is likewise traceable from wind to sun, from the sun to the primal source of motion in the universe at large. And we stop here only because we know not the antecedent of this first activity.

The chain of causes and effects is in reality endless. Without a cause nothing can happen, nothing could ever have happened; and with eternally active causes in the world something must always happen. Every cause, every effect, every event in the history of the universe and in our own physical existence, is inseparably connected with this infinite series, extending far back into the irrevocable past, and potentially related to an ever-dawning future.

Yet, if we ask, What does this endless causal series signify? When did cause and effect begin? It is clear that the mere possession of such a series is of slight consequence. For there is no point at which thought can stop and declare, this cause is final; before its appearance there was no activity.

A merely temporal beginning of events is unintelligible. The utmost that one can allege is that there must be one all-embracing series of causes and effects which has existed eternally, a series of which our world is a part and of which all future activity will be an outgrowth. Yet, if the temporal chain of causes and effects must have a ground other than itself, if God could not have been a merely temporal creator, we must look beyond causation altogether to find the true reality of things.

In order to test this reasoning, try for a moment to conceive of the universe as an absolute void, then imagine the creation of something or of some being in this mere emptiness.

Such an event is utterly inconceivable, since something could not be a product of nothing, and every result must have an efficient and substantial basis. If, then, something can neither be made from nothing, nor something become non-existent, the sum total of substance would seem to be ultimately the same. It can be modified, evolved, or dissolved, but must itself have an eternal basis.

Try now to imagine a condition of things in which there should be no motion, and conceive the beginning of motion in the illimitable and perfectly inert universe which you have conjured from the fanciful deep. Once more the attempt is futile.

Absolute and universal rest, like a perfect void, is inconceivable. Something moving would be needed wherewith to start motion, as something substantial must have existed before a new product could result. If only one particle moved, then something moving must have caused its motion; and, if it moved once only, all existing particles would undoubtedly be set in motion in the course of time.

Motion could not cease, since only a moving power could stop it, and there would be no power to stop this inhibiting force.

The cessation of motion, then, like its inception, is unthinkable. If it were not continuous, eternal, it apparently could never have become a fact. Moreover, motion implies not only a continuous, all-embracing series of causes and effects, but the existence of the eternally moving substance already postulated. Physical motion also means change from place to place, from one condition to another. Change in turn implies the experience of rhythm or interval in motion.

Change also implies the existence of space, or the extension in three directions of that which is moved.

Thus an eternally existing substance, uncreated and never-ceasing motion, and infinite space, seem to be inseparably connected. There is cause and effect, duration between them, extension of that which is moved or affected, eternal motion, and an ever-moving something whose activity is thus characterised.

That is to say, all that is gained by this kind of reasoning is the mere pursuit of one fact to another, one principle to another. All that we have as a result is a collection of considerations which give promise of ultimate truth but never lead beyond this elusive pursuit. What we need is not a "cause" of all things, not a continuously moving "substance," but an eternal Ground or Reality. This Ground is as readily discoverable here and now, as at any moment, in any age or time.

For, as it is the Ground of all existence, it is itself beyond all causality; it never came to be, nor will it ever cease to exist; it simply is. It is not mere "cause," but the ultimate source alike of the substance and the power exhibited in what we denominate "causality." It is that Being wherewith all thought pauses when, having given up the pursuit of temporal sequences, the mind turns at last from abstract argument to acknowledge the living, present God.

Hence God as the ultimate Ground of the universe is the Being who needs no further explanation. He is self-existent, uncreated, indestructible, at once the basis and the life of all that is known in the universe of change. He is simply the supreme Reality, that for which we need seek no proof, since we are compelled to assume it in the reasoning whereby we hope to prove its existence.

The supreme Reality eternally is its own reason for being. It is the ultimate source of consciousness and thought, the final ground of reason. It is the unseen and permanent Life of the visible and transient series of causes and effects which constitute world-experience. It is the Supreme Spirit, the All-Father. Hence the knowledge of the existence of this eternal Reality is the surest possession of human reason.¹

Were we to conceive of the existence of a vast number of causes in place of the supreme Reality, these causes would be in some sense related, and we should then have need of an eternal ground of this relationship.

If there were other realities, those realities would still belong to an ultimate system. There could be but one strictly ultimate, eternal, omnipresent, independent or self-existent reality. However we approach the subject, we are driven to the same end.

Thought must stop somewhere. All our endeavours to conceive of the ultimate nature of things lead in time to the conclusion that there is a system which includes all particular starting-points, is in some sense superior to time and place, but is no less truly needed everywhere, in all time and by all thought.

To arrive at this conclusion is to cease to be troubled when one tries to find God by tracing back an infinite series of causes. What is really meant by the term "infinite" is the vague, the indefinite, that which gives thought its pause. In vain do we look for the Father by putting Him thus far from us.

It is no wonder that we cannot realise what we mean when we thus describe God negatively. On the other hand, the way to the Father is plain and direct, if we seek Him in the living realities of today.

It is still difficult, to be sure, to define the eternal Reality in an ultimate sense. Yet each definition expresses a truth or attribute. If to define is to limit, nevertheless all definitions that embody the supreme facts and values of life have a common sound in the divine nature. When we state, for example, that "God is love," we truly express a specific characteristic of the most ultimate, eternal, omnipresent Reality.

Again, when we speak of the divine wisdom we name a true attribute of the very Mind which has so often and so unjustly been called "inscrutable."

Could we know the Father in all His fullness of wisdom and love we would no doubt be the Father. Could we adequately state His purpose, we should be in full possession of the wondrous beauty of the universe of manifestation. When we apply particular terms to the divine Life and Beauty, we are not defining the universal effulgence, but rather a certain manifestation as it appeals to finite experience.

When we declare that we know Him, meaning a personal God, we confess the limitations of our thought. But to argue from this that we do not, or cannot know God at all is entirely unwarranted. It is not God in general whom we really seek to know, but the ever-present Father whom the heart calls "love" and the mind calls "wisdom," the God who is not less but more than these human expressions signify.

It might seem more rational to conceive of God and the universe as "in the making." This would appear to be a logical carrying out of the theory of evolution. But here, again, there is need of a permanent principle, something more than the merely temporal flux of events.

Moreover, there is far too much evidence that the universe possesses a definite character, already deeply established, to permit one to accept such a view. It is the need that is felt for a permanent ground of all transient phenomena which leads men to conceive of God as eternal and immutable. To conceive of God as more real than the fluctuations of the time-world is to see that He is more than the world of His manifestation.

All our conceptions prove inadequate if they stop short of the eternal. All our conceptions fail if we regard the Father merely from the point of view of our own sonship. Hence there is need of both the philosophical conception of reality as ultimate Ground, and the more human thought of God as the Father. As Ground, God is not the same as the universe, but is the ultimate centre of the power which the universe manifests.

As Father, God is not identical with His sons, yet is in an intimately personal sense the source of their life.

What is all this reasoning but the confession that the eternal Father is in a sense transcendent, above our knowledge and experience; but is at the same time the intelligible basis of precisely these familiar experiences with which our inquiry began? No attempted logic is more absurd than the endeavour to prove the existence of God, yet no language is so inadequate as that which omits the divine transcendence.

The very limitation of all attempts to prove that God exists is a profound revelation of His presence. We need not prove that which is the Ground of proof. We need only state the existence of the Uncaused. But having found Him, it were folly to erect any barrier to our thinking. If no account describes God adequately, no description leaves Him wholly out. The Ground of all knowing is by very nature knowable.

If God is transcendent, then, He is no less truly immanent. Whatever He may be as the absolute Reality, He is known to us in part as the God of our life, and the Source of our world. While, then, in one sense there can be no time and no space to an omnipresent Reality, in a very real sense there is time and space, since it is through

His world of external manifestation that His wisdom and power are made known. Moreover, it is as necessary to conceive of His existence as immanent in, rather than as identical with His world of manifestation, as it is to distinguish His transcendence from our own knowledge of His love and wisdom. Thus we avoid the pitfalls of pantheism and mysticism, and preserve in strictly theistic terms the thought of God as the Father.

The Immanent God

It is the empirical aspect of pantheistic utterances that is of value, not the doctrine that God and nature, or God and the soul are one. The experience of the presence of God has been a very real fact all through the ages. Hence the rhapsodies and poetic effusions of the mystics are in a sense religiously true, that is, in so far as they are regarded as descriptions of experience.

But pantheism is poor philosophy, and mysticism is not ethics. When it is a question of what is real, what is true and what is right, one must turn from mere description to rational thought. The revelation of God in the realm of reason is far superior to the mere revelation of immediate feeling.

The pantheists meant to utter something noble and true, but it has remained for the Christian theist really to express it. The Father-son relationship is the great fact. It is the upward look, the worship, the reverence that truly finds the Father—not the mystical merging of all that is beautiful into a vague whole. Hence the vast superiority of the revelation which makes God known as love.

It is not, then, the argument for God's existence that avails. It is not the mere theory, for that may be untrue to the supreme facts. It is the life, the love, the experience.

He who can appreciatively suggest the relationship of the soul in the act of worship, in the fullness of love, is the one who most truly lays the foundations of theology, Only by persistently returning to the first-hand experience, and by repeatedly correcting the account of that experience, may one hope to overcome the artificial speculations which have separated men from God.

The profoundest religious tendency of our age is the growing conviction that the empirical revelation is the Supreme revelation. Every advance in this direction means the breaking down of the barriers which once speculatively sundered heaven and earth. As heaven is brought nearer, man's conduct necessarily changes.

For it is no longer possible to masquerade as a Christian by simply believing in a speculative Deity. One must show that one has found the real God by manifesting His love in daily life. Hence experience inspires experience, and the whole religious outlook is changed. The peace "which passeth understanding" is made known through the serenity which then and there exhibits it.

But in theory, too, it is the empirically immediate revelation that is now the chief ground of argument. It is the thought of the divine immanence which above all other modern conceptions transfigures the philosophy of the age. Indeed, some theologians go so far as to say that all previous doctrines were “a mere assertion” of God’s existence; it is evolution that proves His life and wisdom and power.

Previous theories were content with vaguely general statements; it is the thought of God as immanent which makes the conception concrete. Hence the tendency is to look immediately within and behind the minute details of events, even as they pass, to find their Ground and Life. The entire argument of the foregoing pages points to this conclusion.

We have from the first emphasized the immanent empirical factor. The experience of the moment must be understood in the light of its immediate environment, and this environment is part of a larger whole. Event is linked to event, everything is related. The only activity we know is the activity that is just now accomplishing some end, the power that has brought the present out of the past.

There is no reason to conceive of any power, life, or reality, other than the Being which the actualities of existence logically demand. All power is known by what it does, and all reality by what appears.

It would now seem absurd, then, to argue that God impressed His energy upon the primeval nebulous mass, and then retired we know not where; or that He made the world out of nothing in six days, then interfered with it from time to time by miraculous providences. For there is no need of an extra-mundane Deity. Evolution, not creation, is the law of life.

The manifold changes which have brought the world to its present state, the endless working of force against force, of animal against animal, and man against man, the vicissitudes of human history, are probably as important and require the divine presence as much as the impulse which first brought our world into being—if there ever was a beginning.

Either, then—note the alternative—God put forth His own life in the world, and is immanent yet transcendent, is present in it, transforming it in this age as truly as in the irrevocable ages of the past, or there is no God. Let me repeat.

Either God is revealed through the cohesive force which holds matter together, and holds the planets in their positions in space, through the love which draws man to man, and the fortunes and misfortunes which characterize his progress, through the insensible gradations by which our politics are changing and our own conflicts are making us true men and women, or there is no divine Father.

For the true Father is the God of experience, the Supreme Reality which experience reveals, which makes experience possible, He is the God of action, the God of the concrete. It is our own concrete experience that makes God's presence known. God is not the same as our experience. He is not identical with the world. But the world is from moment to moment real by virtue of His immanent presence.

Life, then, ultimately speaking, is a continuous, divine communication. There is no real separation between our souls and the Father in whom, in the most literal sense, "we live and move and have our being." All nature reveals God—the sea, the sky, the mountains, the complex life of great cities, the simple life of the country, the admiration of the poet, the thought and feeling of all men, all nations, all books, all churches, all religions.

All thinkers, all artists and lovers of the beautiful, are "feeling after" Him.

God, then, is revealed in nature, yet He is more than nature can manifest. He is Person, yet in a sense is beyond personality as we ordinarily conceive of it. On the one hand, He is the omnipresent power which all forces exemplify, the source of the substance which all forms contain, the basis of life whereby all beings exist. Yet He is more than this, He is Spirit, Intelligence, apprehended rather by the supreme insight of the soul than through objective experience.

He is Power, yet also Love; the Author of the total universe, yet near enough so that Jesus, most truly of all, named Him "Father" in a particularly personal sense. His complete nature is made known, if at all, in the total universe. Yet He is as genuinely knowable in human life.

Hence God is at once Spirit without form, and the Essence which all forms reveal, the all-loving Father who is unknown and unperceived in this larger and deeper sense, except by those who have thought and suffered deeply, He whom we refuse to recognize when we look afar into the heavens for a god of our own fancy; who is not only immanent, but who is also independent of that in which He dwells; the Friend who is as near to us in the present moment as in the countless aeons of eternity, of which this fleeting moment is a part.

Do we realize what this nearness means, what it is to dwell with God consciously? Let me try to bring Him yet nearer.

Sometimes one seems to look far into the eyes of a friend and to see the soul gazing from unseen depths in return; and, as the face softens into a smile, one draws still nearer to that elusive somewhat

called “the human spirit,” as it lends life and beauty to the features, itself invisible, yet so plainly revealed that one can almost locate its vanishing touch.

There are days in the country in summer—noticeably in June and September—when a divine stillness seems to rest over all the world. We feel an unwonted and indescribable peace which lifts us above our petty selves to the larger Self of eternal restfulness which nature’s calm suggests. We almost worship nature at such a time, so near it brings us to the Spirit which imbues the very vibrations of the atmosphere.

Again, when standing near some grand mountain, or when looking far into the clouds at sunset, we seem to perceive the strength and the vanishing glory of Him who is almost revealed to our longing eyes, yet forever remains beyond our keenest physical vision.

If we push our analysis still farther, we discover that all that is best and dearest in human life, all that is most useful in nature, is like this retreating beauty of a soft landscape: the mechanism is visible, the beauty is of the mind. “I saw my friend,” you say. Yet you saw only his face, not his soul, as you see the world, but not the Life which animates it.

You feel love, you use wisdom, you reap the inner benefits of goodness; but all is intangible. No one ever saw force: we see and make use of its effects. Yet no one doubts its existence. We know it through its manifestations. Some thinkers affirm that there is no dense material, simply varied modes of motion of one force, while other philosophers describe the universe as a system of ideas produced in us by the great Reality behind all phenomena.

Whatever the ultimate nature of matter may be, it is evident that the Reality is made known to us through these phenomena.

The retreating beauty of nature, then, seems typical of our deepest associations with the Father, a union to which Emerson has given expression in his Over-soul. We are conscious of the human part; and, when in times of sorrow we seem comforted from on high, we are dimly aware of the divine.

Yet we cannot fully grasp it: we can only affirm that God resides in and is the supreme source of our being, as the grandeur of nature resides in a landscape whose beauty we can never locate.

Take love, take wisdom, start with any quality in human life which points to a common nature, and, tracing it to its source, one's thought is lost in contemplation of the great Reality which is revealed through all these qualities, since there could be but one central love and wisdom, which all share in greater or lesser degree, as surely as the force with which I move my arm is related to the power which, from all time, has caused the planets to revolve.

Were we not thus intimately related to the Father, there would be some place where He does not exist. Unless our activity is ultimately connected with His life, there is an existence independent of Him. Our life, our consciousness must then in the ultimate sense have its being in His life, however separate from that life in a relative sense it may be. Since our being is thus grounded, we are even more dependent on Him than the plant is upon the sunlight.

Moreover, since God must be conscious in order thus to be the basis of our being in the highest sense, He evidently knows and possesses us as parts of the universe of His manifestation. Thus from many points of view the fact of the divine presence is brought home to us, we recognize that despite our finitude we especially reveal God whenever we love and serve, when we are really wise. Hence it is apparent that while we possess a life of our own, in a sense we have no existence apart from Him.

In such a realization, namely, that we are intimately related in consciousness and in love with the ever-renewing Life, and that we reveal more and more of the divine nature as we ascend in the scale of being, lies a real way of escape from morbid self-interest, introspection, self-consciousness, want of confidence, the sense of one's insignificance.

To know that our highest love, our deepest thought, our truest self, is not wholly our own, but, in so far as it is unselfish, is divine—this it is to have a principle in which we can trust, which shows us what we are, not as weak human beings whom we vainly try to understand by self-analysis, but what we are as individual manifestations of the divine nature.

Thus the painful thought is lost in the consciousness of divine nearness, as though a particle of sunlight should become aware of its relation to all sunlight and to the sun.

What a pleasure it is to view nature and human life with an ever-deepening consciousness of this divine background! Truly, there is no ground for complaint if we dwell in this pure region of thought where we regard all activity as founded upon the divine life, where the landscape suggests the beauty which it so well typifies.

From all this it is clear that there is a vast difference between the worship of God as manifested through nature and the pantheistic identification of God with nature. Nature, thus regarded, is the realm of fact, the given sphere of experience.

The thought of the divine beauty is the value attributed to nature by idealistic consciousness. It is philosophy, not physical observation, which enables us to find God in nature. It is aesthetic intuition, combined with religious aspiration, not mere sense-perception, through which the apprehension of the divine presence occurs.

Likewise in the subjective world, it is necessary to distinguish between religious emotion and the idealization of such emotion. God is not an object of sensuous apprehension but an object of insight. The mere fact of religious fervor at any given moment counts for very little; it is the accumulated values of such experiences which in due time lead to their inferential use.

The moment's experience is no doubt profoundly real, but it requires acute analysis to discover the multiform inferences which we read into it. Again, the illusions are such that one must carefully distinguish the dualities of self and the play of moods, as we shall see more clearly in other chapters.

When all discriminations have been made, it is the thought of the divine love which most sanely guides the soul. In the attitude of love, reverence, worship, the sense of sonship is too strong to permit the mind to make the customary mystical inferences. It is clear that even a perfect Being could hardly exist without an object of love, distinct from himself. If there is such distinctness, there are other Father-son relationships, also.

Hence there is a reason for the existence of human beings, and for the existence of nature, as the theatre of their activity. The mutations of the world of manifestation and interaction thus supply objects of the divine consciousness. Something is being accomplished in the world. The divine life is not a bare monotony. Hence we may say that only through His own progressive life-process is God made perfect. The love of God is made complete through its complete realization.

Through our own love we share in the creative love of the Father.

As abstract as this reasoning may seem, it suggests the great fact that even in God's life there is mental activity akin to ours, that God reveals Himself in detail through the world of finite life, through human aspiration, as well as in human struggle. For a divine need is met in our lives. We fulfil a larger purpose while we realize our own.

This need not imply a purpose in the older theological sense. For there may be no hard-and-fast world-plan, there may never have been a world-beginning in the sense once conceived. But there is at least mutual relationship, and hence neither human nor divine purposes may be understood alone.

In order to suggest this wholeness of relationship of the great world-order, let us once more adopt the imperfect figures of human speech, and conceive of God as a marvelously wise, all-loving Thinker, in whose comprehension the shining worlds of space and the tiniest stems are grouped in one system of self-realization; through whose measured reflection are evolved planets such as our own, unvarying in their law because

He is unchangeable, requiring ages of time because His reflection is measured and sure, definite in shape and known to us as matter because His purpose is rational; and through whose tender care we are led onward to conscious union in thought and deed with His purpose for us. Our earth, then, is a part of the great rational life of God.

It has its definite orbit and a definite history; it follows unchanging laws because it is part of His thoroughly rational life. It is distinct from other spheres of the supreme activity, because its history fulfils a specific purpose. It is finite, because it is a part only of this rational life. Thus, also, you and I are expressions of the omnipresent Life, yet are finite because God means one thing in your life, and something else in mine.

We are imperfect, incomplete, because we join with others to form His meaning; and He has not yet developed our lives to their perfect conclusion.

Such a figure, although it involves many speculative difficulties, seems most nearly to approximate the nearness which human speech can barely suggest.

I am trying to show that God knows us, even though we fail to know Him, that He has a purpose with us which He is even now executing, that He is the completing Self without whom our lives have little meaning; the Knower and the possessor of the known; the Sustainer and the love which sustains; and the Limiter whose will we know as "law," without whom we are as naught, with whom as gods.

In those rarest moments of human life when the soul, in the peaceful isolation of the woods, by the sea, or in the quiet of the library, is lifted above itself and made aware of its kinship with the Father, have

you not been conscious of just such relationship as this? Has not God seemed for the moment to belong to you alone, as though in the unsearchable depth of His love He lived for you?

Yet were you not conscious that the Spirit which then moved you to silence is the same which speaks throughout the countless spheres of the universe? What a divine joy would life be could we always maintain this consciousness of the divine presence! But are we not apt to forget this nearness, to fear, to worry, and to act as though we were quite independent of the great Father, without whom we could not be?

What is life for, in the deeper sense, if it be not for the development of this higher consciousness? Is it not in our moments of earnest thought when we reflect on experience and learn its meaning that we grow? If men were judged on the basis of real worth, would not so much avail as we really are as thinking, helpful souls—that part of us which survives all change?

Man may figuratively be called a point of energy, a center of application of divine Power. His consciousness, his will, if he is aware of his eternal birthright, is a vantage-point whence the infinite Thinker views the world and thereby knows Himself. But God seems to act through the majority of men almost by force, for they seem unaware of His presence.

They are moved in throngs, and spurred along by suffering, because in their short-sightedness they fear and oppose the moving which is for their deepest good. As Emerson puts it, "We are used as brute atoms until we think, then we use all the rest." Yet, if this world-order is the wisest system the love of God must be as clearly manifested in the struggles which carry us onward until we think as in our moments of repose.

It is character that avails, that is the purpose of our contests; and character is the result of determined effort to surmount the obstacles we are compelled to meet. The experiences of evil and suffering seem in a sense to be entirely justified by the good which is brought out of them—although this does not make evil good.

Without contrast and comparison we could not interpret experience. Without darkness and evil we should not know light and good, even if we were perfect at the start, since our perfection, like that of a God without manifestation, would simply be an unrealized ideal. It is the one who has lived and suffered, conquered, thought, and practiced his theories, who moves with the divine law.

He is no longer as one among thousands, but is himself a mover, a sharer of power, co-operating in intelligent companionship with the Father. Then dawns the Christ-consciousness, with its accompanying

life of service; and the faithful soul enjoys a more personal relationship with God, whom he now knows through actual experience to be literally the God of love.

But our realization of the immanence of God must do more for us than simply to furnish a rational basis for belief in omnipresent Reality. Mental freedom and lasting benefits come from systematic thinking about life, as well as inner repose, when we have pushed through to settled conviction.

But the real test of faith comes in times of trouble and periods of discouragement. If we say that we believe in God, and then worry, doubt, fear, and return to our selfish life, we do not yet possess the omnipresent Comforter. To act as though we really believed that God is in His world, in our souls, concerned in our daily experiences, ready to strengthen us in any need whatsoever—this is a genuine test of faith.

To lift our thoughts to Him habitually, not periodically, as if we really expected help, instead of asking for the impossible—this is genuine prayer.

Do we put our faith to such a test? Do we try to trust God fully, understandingly, with a deep conviction that it is His life, His power, which is pressing upon us through our inmost life? Do we wait for guidance when we are perplexed? Do we try to see the divine meaning, the outcome of our experience as part of a great world-experience? Do we let life come as it may from the divine source, without rebellion, without doubt, carrying before us an ever-renewed ideal of ourselves as possessing some meaning in the divine economy? Do we turn from matter to the Reality behind it; from the body to the soul; from the appearances which seem so real to the life which these phenomena reveal?

I am not asking these questions from the point of view of mere theory. There are earnest souls who make this practical realisation of the immanence of God the basis of a system of everyday conduct, the basis of solution of all practical problems.

Nor am I advocating mere faith, or the easy-going optimism which assures men that all will come out well, whatever they do. I am pleading, first, for a rational interpretation of experience; second, for the conception of a supreme Reality competent to give continuous life to this world; and, finally, for wise adjustment to and intelligent co-operation with the tendencies which spring from within.

I advocate that interpretation of life which places the responsibility largely upon ourselves; which teaches us not to lean on systems of thought and on people whom we permit to do our thinking for us, but encourages us to look within to find the ever-present resource.

The wise attitude of adjustment we shall consider more in detail in other chapters. Here it suffices to point out that if creation is continuous, we may well believe in immanent activities which will guide the man who discovers them. Obviously, the ultimate test of our belief in the immanent God is its effect upon conduct. It makes all the difference, then, what values we associate with the divine presence.

Whether we conclude that there is actual divine prompting, or that the creative instinct indicates the power of our own latent individuality, the result is practically the same; for it is through this individuality that God works. God does not speak to us "out of the air"; He inspires us through what we are doing. That is precisely the lesson of our study. We are no longer to look for the Father in the general, the vague, the mystical; we should find Him in the concrete.

Hence there is need to give specific attention to the kind of mental life that best reveals the divine presence. Hence there is new reason for faith and for practical trust.

The impression prevails that trust plays a small part in the rational life. Yet reflection shows that our conduct is in large part dependent on it. The reputation of a business house may be ruined in an hour, if its standing is seriously questioned and the report is noised about.

With all that science has told us about nature's laws, we are still compelled to take the world on trust. We fall quietly asleep at night, believing that the day will dawn tomorrow, that no calamity will befall our world, that it will be safe to depend on nature's forces. Nature has never deceived us, and we believe she never will. Yet we do not know what may happen.

We run a thousand risks each day, in the streets, in the cars, everywhere, with perfect composure.

May we not carry our trust a bit farther and understand that on which we should rely? Is God less watchful, is He any less present in the realm of thought? If gravitation holds the earth in its position in space, may it not be that its spiritual counterpart, the love of God, sustains our souls in their progress, and provides for us in ways which we have scarcely suspected? Yet how many of those who say, "God is love," stop to realise the world of meaning in that little sentence?

Whatever place the conception of God as transcendent plays in theistic philosophy, the poetic conception of the going forth of the creative spirit, or love, makes the divine immanence concrete for us in a wonderfully practical way.

To regard the creative spirit as immanent and continuous is to acknowledge that all along the way the divine love cares for man. It is no mere figure of speech that describes the world as embosomed in the divine love. It was that love which brought us forth. It is through that love that the purpose of the divine wisdom is realised. Again, it is through the expression of love that man rises to the level of communion with the Father.

Hence it is important to make the fact of love-relationship the basis of the most concrete realisation of the immanence of God.

For example, to conceive of the divine spirit going forth in the form of love is to see that in a sense there is not the least separation between the Father and our individual selves. The thoughts of "power," "substance," "life," still leaves us with a sense of separateness. When we apprehend the divine love we attain at last the realisation of fatherhood. We see that there is literally no barrier between, no substance, no space, to keep us from the Fatherly care.

Hence we feel and know that we exist with the Father in a relationship typified by that of a child in its mother's arms. He is our Father, though transcendent in power and wisdom. Nothing can prevent us from enjoying His love, His help, His peace and inspiring guidance, except our own failure to recognise His presence. Let us, then, be still and know His love and indwelling presence.

Let us test it fully, and learn what it will do for us if we never worry, never fear, never reach out away from this present life. Let us absorb from His love as the plant absorbs from the sunlight; for our spirits, like the plants, need daily nourishment.

Can we estimate the value of such reflection as this, if renewed day by day? Sometimes a text of Scripture, a poem, or a piece of music, will quicken it in us. Sometimes we must seek the solitude of nature where the Spirit comes; for it is the Spirit that is the essential, not any form of words, or suggestions. Silently and unobserved, the Spirit will breathe upon us if we reflect, if we wait for it in stillness day by day.

It will not come if doubt, if we fear, or—note this especially—if our thought is too active; for the Spirit never intrudes. It lets us go our way if we choose: it comes, we hardly know how, if we trust. All it asks is receptive listening. Then all that an unselfish human being would wisely ask is ours.

It steals into our consciousness when we think deeply, to guide, to strengthen, to encourage. The great secret of life is to know how, in our own way, to be receptive to it, how to read the message of its inner whispering. The sure method of growing strong in realisation of its nearness is to believe that it will come if we listen, to trust it in moments of doubt as the lost hunter trusts his horse in the forest.

It will come if we have an ideal outlook, then renew our realisation day by day, ever remembering that, as the Spirit is the Supreme Reality, we live in it, and with it, and there is naught to separate us from its ever watchful care, its ever-loving presence.

[1] There is, of course, a difference between the conception of reality as ultimate Ground, and the religious belief in a personal God.

The World Of Manifestation

ONE truth was clear at every stage in the foregoing discussion. Every atom, every event, every soul in the universe is imbued with the immanent Presence—life is a constant sharing of divine power.

Whatever be the starting-point in our interpretation of experience, whether in some truth of the reason, some cherished insight of the inner life, or a fact in the outer world, there is no stopping-place short of the conclusion that God is the immanent Reality, the sufficient Ground of all existence. We may evade the point or deviate into agnosticism, by giving undue regard to the limitations of finite consciousness.

But our deepest nature is never satisfied until we attain a conception which meets the ultimate needs of thought.

To be sure, we found it necessary to distinguish between a logical argument for the ultimate Ground of things, and the thought of God as the object of religious consciousness. We discarded all formal attempts to prove that God exists, and rejected the popular argument from causation.

But this presented no difficulty, since we are not here so much concerned with the philosophical idea of Ground, with the idea of God as transcendent, as with the immanent relation between God and His world. The modern thought of nature and of human experience demands that relationship at every point, without regard to time or space.

Yet to find God in everything, is not to conclude that one finds only God. The experiences of the inner life are the severest tests. For if we are able to maintain the reverential attitude of sonship we may

enter into the divine love with all joy, yet avoid the pitfalls of mysticism. Finally, we betray our real belief by what we do. To trust, to be profoundly faithful, is indeed to show that the divine immanence is a reality in our lives. By its fruits shall the degree of our love be known.

The adjustment of the inner life to the thought of God is thus the first great step in the present inquiry. The mere argument, the theory of the divine immanence, is secondary. The essential is the attitude we adopt, the effect upon conduct. Unless we make this profoundest of all adaptations, we cannot expect to enter into the fullness of the other two great relationships, the adjustment to nature and to man.

To regard nature, for example, in the light of the divine immanence is to take a vastly different view from that of ordinary thinking.

It is the custom, nowadays, to trace the immanent connections of things, to look back of each event to its immediate physical environment as its cause. This line of inquiry is doubtless in the right direction. But it is apt to stop short of the profoundest interests in human life. The ideal of mechanical science is to describe every event in terms of exactly measurable forces, and it is doubtless a convenient fiction to regard nature as an independent, self-operating mechanism.

Yet it is important to bear in mind the entire inadequacy of this working hypothesis. Above the realm of the mechanical there is the domain of the organic and the realm of the conscious. The mechanical principle is strained to the utmost to make it include the organic, and within certain limits it is no doubt applicable.

This partial success should not, however, blind us to the fact that there is a higher order of existence where all quantitative explanations fail, where thought must turn from the measurable to the qualitative, and from what merely is to what ought to be.

The aim of the present chapter is not to propound a complete theory of nature, but to make certain observations which bear on our interpretation of the inner life. From the point of view of ultimate values, the physical universe is not the total universe, but is the most objective, outer portion of the divine order. The highest type of reality is spiritual. The fundamental character or constitution of things is grounded in the intelligence, the being and love of God.

Only by reference to their fundamental environment may things be understood. Hence the visible world is not comprehensible alone. It is not even a system or unity of law-exemplifying forces, by itself. Nature possesses system through its relation to the total divine order. Hence it is the home of man in other

than a merely physical sense, and it should be regarded in the light of all the ideals to which man's earthly life contributes.

That which gives it its seemingly independent life is the aspiring Spirit which went forth from God into manifesting activity, and is mounting through all the levels of mechanical forces and organic life to the moral and spiritual plane.

The old-time thought of God as the creator of something out of nothing is still so strong that when one proposes to consider the world as a manifestation, the question arises, What is the purpose of this divine self-revelation? That the world reveals God is almost a truism. But the question is, Why does God thus reveal Himself?

The answer may be regarded as the simplest or the most difficult problem that can be asked in regard to the world of nature. It is easy to argue that God created the world according to "design." The facts of nature everywhere suggest such an argument. But modern thought has little need of the notion of a designer. Theological arguments of that kind are quite out of fashion. If the universe has always existed in some form, there never was a beginning, hence no "creation" and hence no "design."

The attempts to assign a purpose for creation have been rather puerile. Wiser men have been contented with the profound suggestion that the world came forth from the "fullness" of the divine nature. It was not due to any imperfection on His part that God created the world. He was not compelled to create it. But in His abounding love he freely sent Himself forth.

We may say, then, that the world reveals the nature of God—in so far as physical forms and evolutions can manifest Him. There seems no reason to allege that there ever was a time when God did not reveal Himself in objective form. The world as a system is of a certain character because God is of a certain nature. The world exists, that is the chief fact. Granted the world, we may if we please say that its purpose is to reveal the being of God in objective form.

The world as a fact is one thing, the world as said to exemplify values is another. What values the divine Father may see in it, only the Father can tell. The values you and I find in it depend upon the state of development we have attained, the theory of life we hold. It would be absurd for any man to insist that his scheme of values exhausts the purposes of life.

The question of purposes, then, is subordinate to the question of character. What is the nature of the world? What are its laws? How is it constituted as a whole? What has been its history? What seem to be its tendencies? Such questions immediately resolve themselves into innumerable inquiries in regard to

different aspects of nature, and it is the province of the special sciences to answer these questions. What most concerns us is the character of human existence in the natural world.

Here again the inquiry divides and subdivides.

It matters greatly where we chanced to be born, what our racial interests are. It is remarkable what a chaos of values, what confused notions exist in regard to man's place in nature. It is obviously of far greater consequence to determine the general nature of the conditions and laws of physical existence, and leave the problem of particular values for later consideration.

It was once customary to contrast the realm of nature with "the realm of grace," to the entire disparagement of man's natural life. Then came the reaction against the supernatural, and nowadays the reaction has gone so far that the tendency is to overlook the values and realities that are more than natural.

A more rational philosophy would doubtless see ends in nature considered as if nature were independent, and lines of development which have a natural beginning but reach far into the invisible.

It is convenient, for example, to speak of the conservation of natural energy while we are not attempting to state what that energy is or what end it sub serves. As a relative end in itself, nature possesses a beauty, a worth which needs no ulterior sanction. Many ideals of a mechanical and organic character doubtless reach perfection in nature. As the home of physical man, as the embodied expression of mental and social life, nature is relatively complete.

The ephemeral, temporal ends attained in animal life are surely of real and almost independent worth.

Quite apart from all the woes and calamities which constitute nature's darker history there is much to be said about these subordinate ends, and nature is far from existing for man's sake alone. The naturalism, the poetry and mythologies which recognize these earthly beauties are permanent possessions of human literature.

Among many other things, nature makes for variety, endurance, strength, and health as physical ends of priceless value. The fact that man has made miserable use of his opportunities should not be emphasized at the expense of the profound thought of what man might have been, of what he may yet

be. It is as unfair to charge nature with human woes as to disparage her because of her subordinate position.

A vast amount of subjectivism must be brushed away before we shall really begin to see nature as she is. From the days of the crudest polytheism and animism to the days of orthodox salvation schemes the tendency has been to read speculative notions into nature. Even now there are those who insist that the physical cosmos is far less orderly than modern science claims.

The first essential, then, is to recognize that as part of the self-revelation of God nature possesses a character quite independent of the thought and conduct of men. To understand that character we should look, not to human speculation and subjectivity, but to nature regarded as it exists for all and as grounded in the being of God. It is to the lasting credit of modern science that it is making the most persistent effort to differentiate between nature and human prejudice.

The second need is to regard nature in such ways that we shall see its place in human experience, side by side with the inner life. In short, it is as important to give nature its due with respect to our spiritual life as to avoid the mystic identification of nature with God. Whatever its ultimate reality and worth, and however incomplete our natural existence may be, nature is in relation to man a world of matter, of things and forces which exist independently of his mere thinking about them.

Furthermore, the relation of God to matter is in a sense as intimate and direct as His relation to the human soul. We cannot deny the existence of matter. To make such a denial would be to assert the non-existence of a part of the character and purpose of God, as well as of the world of all that we physically experience. Yea, to deny it is blasphemy.

It is true, the world of matter which you and I perceive may have no objective existence precisely as we perceive it. Science tells me that certain ether waves impinge on my retina, and form an image, which in turn is translated into an idea, and interpreted according to my education.

Certain other rays indirectly produce perceptions in your mind, and are interpreted according to your conceptions. The external object may be the same in both cases; but the conceptions which represent it may be quite different. I never see exactly the same object which you contemplate, nor do we as minds actually see the object at all, since we know the object by means of ideas.

We are unable even to dissociate the actual sensation and the perception based on a lifetime of experience and thought by which we interpret it. Nor do we hear the same sound, perceive the same

colors, or smell the same odors. But the existence of something real which causes the sensations no one can seriously question.

Even an uninterrupted sensation makes us partially aware of something not ourselves. We may be scientifically aware that the sensation is in and not outside of our minds, and that we interpret it through ideas; but the object that produces the sensation is not necessarily an idea. When the hand encounters a masonry wall, we are sure of the existence of an external force which meets and effectually withstands all the pressure we are able to exert.

Despite the fact that the ultimate character of nature is not discoverable by physical science, nature proves to be a relatively uniform system everywhere exemplifying the same laws and forces. Nature is not a collection of fragments, of warring atoms, but possesses a certain order, harmony.

The forces which we ordinarily speak of as distinct, such as heat, light, electricity, are transformable into one another. One force in varying modes of motion is the underlying physical principle. That force can neither be physically created nor destroyed, but is constantly conserved.

Some scientific men have been inclined to describe the uniformity of nature as atomic, that is, the order thus far attained by nature is attributed to the systematic arrangement of atoms, an arrangement which came about through fortuitous play and impact.

This view dates back to Leucippus and Democritus, and it was long the prevailing hypothesis of those who fought the notion of "design" in nature and contended for a mechanical, quantitative explanation of things.

The mechanical theory has by no means been abandoned. But it seems more and more improbable that atoms are the ultimate elements of all being. Recent discoveries have pointed to the conclusion that radiant energy in various forms is the primal physical force of all that we denominate "substance," "elements," and the like.

It may be that modes of motion in the ether are the final activities with which physical science has to deal. Such activities may still be describable in quantitative terms. The more simple, relatively independent the description of nature becomes, the more serviceable will be such description alike for the physical scientist and for the philosopher.

The attempt to carry the mechanical hypothesis as far and as high as possible is not to be deplored but to be welcomed. It is the physical scientist who is alone able to develop the great idea of the uniformity of nature, for it is he alone who possesses the essential facts. It is only a question of secondary details. The conception of uniformity is now well-established.

If the secondary details and the discoveries of new elements point to a higher conception than the purely mechanical theory, the physical scientist will be the first to acknowledge it.

As a matter of fact, it is one of the profoundest achievements of nineteenth-century science that it has gradually passed beyond the merely mechanical theory which had such vogue after the great discoveries of Galileo, Kepler, and Newton. Popular thinking has scarcely risen as yet to the modern biological point of view.

We are still inclined to think and speak of matter as "inert" or "dead." Science shows us that it is nowhere inert, not even in the great rock foundations of our earth. Physical death is only a state of transition to another form of life. It is life that is fundamental, not what is popularly called a "thing," or "substance." The word "substance" is ordinarily applied as if each table, house, rock, were a thing by itself, a permanent entity, or unitary mass.

But science points out that there are everywhere mutations of life, even in the apparently most solid body. The term "matter" is simply a general expression for relatively mobile forms of life in various grades from the seemingly lifeless granite through less compact forms, solids, liquids, gases, and the attenuated nerve tissues which approach the nature of mind.

Furthermore, a single substance—for instance, water—passes successively through three states, as a solid, as liquid, and as vapor, the integration and disintegration of matter in various forms being one of the most striking phenomena of material life. Even the earth's atmosphere has been reduced to liquid and solid forms.

The chemical process called combustion is capable of liberating in an incredibly short space of time all the solid materials of a vast building, and transforming them into invisible gases, leaving only a heap of ashes to attest the ruin.

Nothing is stable in material form, nothing can resist the subtle, invisible activities of the one force, interpenetrating the seemingly immutable forms of matter, setting the particles into rapid vibration, or causing them to appear in ever-varying combinations.

Nature is not only the theatre of laws and forces, but is, figuratively speaking, a live organism. That is, the term "organism," as inadequate as it is, suggests an aspect of nature which the word "mechanism" fails to exemplify. Of this great throbbing thing of life physical man is a part, so closely related to it that he seems to be the central figure whose existence was prophesied from the very dawn of being.

To make this relationship clear, think for a moment what this great natural existence means. In an organism no part is complete in itself, but supplements and depends on all the other parts. No part can in itself be perfect, since it would then be a separate organism. The cog-wheel may be a truly wonderful contrivance; yet it is useless unless it exactly fits into some machine which is incomplete without it.

The musical note, however pure, has no meaning for us unless it is sounded in unison with others.

The same is true of man. He cannot live in isolation. He is not good alone. He must have a particular gift or occupation, in order that perfection may be attained by the whole. He is a dependent being, and in turn contributes his little share of benefit. Countless ages elapsed before he could exist at all, and every one of the innumerable hosts that preceded him lived and struggled that he might be born.

From those who labor day by day come the food, the clothing, and the homes which make continued life possible. Numberless thousands of minds have thought out and formulated that which today constitutes our knowledge of art, science, history, literature, and philosophy; and the largest contribution to our knowledge made by a single mind seems wonderfully small, our own original thought infinitesimally smaller.

Each of these incidental forces in the worlds of nature, of society and thought, about which we think so rarely, contributes its share to the shifting series of experiences called life, each plays its part in the great organism.

The most important fact remains. This beautifully organized thing of life, with its wonderful law-governed parts and its co-operation of beings and things, was not made suddenly or out of hand. It has grown out of that which has probably existed eternally.

Slowly, as the seed matures in the ground and prepares the way for the bursting bud and the blooming plant, everything in nature, so far as we know, from the raising of continents to the development of man, has taken place and reached its present condition by insensible degrees.

Today is the product of yesterday, and yesterday of the day before, and so on indefinitely. Each cause is the effect of another cause more remote. The life of the tree comes from the sun millions of miles away, but it comes through something. Its energy is stored in the organic and inorganic materials immediately surrounding the tree, and through the heat and light transformed from the solar rays by the earth's atmosphere.

The immediate environment, ancestry, and experience give rise to all living things; and all life finds its origin in a single environment. Evolution is the only law yet discovered which in any way accounts for the origin of our world in its present form. When one pauses to consider what this law is as a universal principle, it becomes evident that there could be no other.

Yet it is easy to misunderstand this principle. To many, evolution simply means the derivation of man from some lost ancestor, a belief which generally arouses a feeling of repugnance; for it means that the existence of God is not necessary under this theory, and one naturally lays it aside as irreligious.

Yet evolution would be of little significance if it were not a universal law, as well exemplified in the growth of the tree as in the development of new species or of a planet from a mass of nebula. It would have no ultimate meaning unless it proved the presence of God at every step in the great world process.

In the foregoing chapter we have seen that the whole problem is simplified by the knowledge that all life is immanent, that the activity of beings and things is due to the Power resident in that which lives and grows. If God is immanent in one portion of the universe, He must be immanent in all.

If He gives rise to a world and its people, He must be with the world in order for it to endure. This much is clear: it only remains to discover, as far as possible, the series or gradations of power and substance whereby Spirit makes itself known to and revealed as the lowest forms of being, and to note the successive stages through which all beings pass in their upward growth.

This latter task is the work of natural science; and year by year her workers are collecting evidence, classifying facts, inquiring into the causes of variation, the influence of environment, the effect of use and disuse, the transmission of acquired variations, and all other problems connected with development; howbeit there is still great diversity of opinion on all these points.

Every fact makes our knowledge of the immanent God more concrete. Every datum supplies a link in the series of causes and effects. Every factor plays its part. Every step bears some relation to its antecedent and its consequent. And all facts, all forces, all events, are related to the entire universe.

One need only observe the social and political changes going on today, class contending with class and party with party, in order to discover every aspect of this universal principle. We forget this law sometimes, and undertake to force events, we endeavour to convince ourselves that there is a royal road to success; but we soon discover that we can omit no steps.

The seed planted in the ground, like the new idea sown in a wilderness of conflicting opinion, contains an indwelling principle of life, which causes it to develop in a certain way. It grows and absorbs nutriment from the sunlight, it matures slowly, it is dependent solely on what it has within and what closely surrounds it. Its growth may be hastened within certain limits, but only by introducing a new factor.

The plant which it becomes in due time is a type of the results of all physical evolution. It is growth, not by creation out of nothing, but through the transformation of that which already exists into something different. Its growth is due to the interaction of part on part. Its transmutation into another species can only result through modification, the introduction into its life of some new element.

The new element once introduced, whether in the organic or the inorganic worlds, in society, in politics, in religion, a change is sure to result.

But we have the best evidence in our own lives; and the chief problem, laying aside all discussion of particular theories of evolution, is to discover the actual course of events in daily experience, to learn how far we have gone in the up building of character, how to aspire and co-operate with the immanent activities of our being.

We have an excellent example of what evolution means in the growth of ideas. We are born with a set of opinions on matters of politics, religion, and the like. There is a strong tendency toward conservatism; and we are for a time inclined to think like our parents, and even to cherish and defend the dogmas which have come down to us.

But with each experience, each new book, each new acquaintance with the world and with people, which makes an impression on us, a new factor enters into our thought; and the only way to avoid progress is to avoid contact with progressive people.

So well is this understood by certain leaders of thought that they forbid their followers to read outside of established lines; for they know that, if people think, they will change. Ideas have a resident, a stimulating life, especially when they come fresh from the minds of those to whom the world's mental progress is due. They speak to us in books. They compel our assent through reason and through people.

And, once sown in the mind, they work a wonderful transformation, until they burst forth with all the power of firm conviction.

Yet the transition is ever gradual and law-governed, like the growth of the tree. No idea is established without controversy. We turn it over, weigh it, and view it in all its aspects, just as new social and political institutions grow out of controversy and long experience. The power of conviction comes only when the last objection has been met. We are involuntarily as moderate and painstaking as Nature herself.

If perchance we forget the natural method, and jump at conclusions, we discover no way of making them sure but to go back and supply all the steps. If an idea appeals to us at once, it is because thought and experience have already prepared the way for its acceptance. We cannot force a full-grown idea into the mind of another any more than nature can be interfered with from without.

We are compelled to seek a starting-point, to discover some idea already existing in the mind of the other person, and lead on gradually from the known to the unknown. Nor can we create a new philosophy or originate any idea which has no basis in experience. Whether we will or no, we must take cognisance of universal human knowledge, and develop our thought from that. Psychology shows that even the wildest and most absurd fancies of the imagination are in some way products of experience.

Our rational self challenges us to find any method of growth and change except that of patient evolution, the great world-wide process of "continuous progressive change, according to unvarying laws, and by means of resident forces." The process once called "creation" is as long as time itself, as wide as the universe. It is going on today. It will never cease until its great task is completed. It is thorough, painstaking, gradual, and sure.

It is economical, careful, and direct, making use of every incident, every possible factor, every so-called chance, so that in human life joy, sorrow, hardship, success, heredity, disposition, environment, education, society, and thought, are called into use; and all these factors have a bearing on the result. "The ideal is immanent in the real."

The aspiring force speaks through the slightest incident of experience. The omnipresent Spirit aspires through, cooperates with, and seeks co-operation from the individual soul to whom it is ever trying to make itself known. God is immanent in evolution.

In order to make this intimate relationship of God and His world of manifestation clear and vivid, let us try for a moment to conceive the long series of forces and substances, interpenetrating and blending with each other, and descending from the central Love down through the various levels of manifestation to the physical and chemical forces and all the volatile substances to the liquids, solids, and finally to the hard rock.

Or, starting with the nebulous mass out of which our universe is said to have developed, let us pass imaginatively upward through the vast cycles of cosmic time, the thought of which adds depth and meaning to the conception of God. Good visualisers will probably call up some mental picture which suggests these vast stretches of time.

Out of the gradually cooling mass which at length takes shape as our earth they will imaginatively see the dawn of life, and the moderate, patient, purposeful transition from the inorganic to the organic kingdom, the long periods in which one form of animal life succeeded and won supremacy over another, the change from the rank vegetation of the carboniferous period to the graceful forms of today, the raising of continents and mountains, the retreat of the great ice-sheets which once covered large portions of the northern hemisphere, and the dim outlines of that far-distant society, the herding together of men, out of which grew modern civilisation.

Thus we come at last to the dawn of human history. The epochs of the past unfold before us with new meaning. We note how period has grown out of period, event out of event. Thought becomes overpowered by the vastness and complexity of civilised life in its endless phases, its manifold contributions to the arts and sciences.

The great truths of religion and philosophy, the great souls of history, claim our attention at last; and thus the thought turns once more to the Supreme Reality whose ideals are the goals of this long evolution.

One's personal thought is lost in contemplation of the Universal. One is momentarily lifted above the present, above the world of human life, into the life of worlds, of the universe—yes, the very life of God, of which one seems to contemplate but one of its infinite phases.

One feels that the human self is intimately related to this great Life. One communes with the Essence itself, the Spirit, the protecting Love. Matter seems like a mere symbol as compared with the worth of this ideal vision. The Life which manifested itself so long ago in the primeval history of the earth returns to consciousness in man, and recognises through him its own transcendent source. The soul knows the great unity henceforth, whatever phase of it is contemplated.

It habitually turns from the universe to God and from God to His great world of manifestation.

The essential thought for our present purposes is the idea of nature as grounded in the divine order. To adjust ourselves to nature we must first consider what nature is and how it is made known. Popular notions prove to be more materialistic than scientific conceptions, for science corrects the assumption that matter is a substance by itself, inert or dead, amidst a collection of utterly different forces; and develops instead the idea of nature as living, uniform, organic.

The account thus given is carried up to the point of sensation in man, yes, farther than that, for psychology as a natural science inquires into mental life in so far as it is found in close relation with the body. The mechanical explanation of things is carried as far as possible, then gives place to the biological. Biology is still more or less subservient to the mechanical theory.

But a point is reached where the most important problems concerning life and mind are handed over to a higher science. Idealistic philosophy takes up the problems of nature where the special sciences leave them, critically examines all the presuppositions, and turns to the consideration of the far larger system which includes both nature and mind. Thus it is profound knowledge of the inner life that enables man truly to equip himself to adjust his life to nature.

The inquiry which begins at the threshold of sensation reveals a new world.

The Nature Of Existence

In the last chapter we were largely concerned with the world of manifestation as the domain of physical forces and natural evolution. It seemed necessary to emphasise the realities of matter and force in order to avoid the misapprehensions which arise when idealistic arguments are introduced. Moreover, only by specifically considering these realities may one adequately understand the conception of God as immanent.

From one point of view, no interpretation of the divine nature is more convincing than the one which regards every detail of the physical world as immediately grounded in the life and character of God. The

objectivity of God's manifestation clearly conceived, one is free to give unreserved attention to the mental world.

Whatever the ultimate character of the universe, it is clear that the final system has room for nature as well as for mind. If in one sense the dualism of mind and matter is overcome in the ultimate system of relations, their union can only be intelligibly found by complete loyalty from first to last to their contrasted qualities. Hence it is well to bear in mind the magnitude of the problem. Any purely subjective theory must prove as one-sided as are all merely objective doctrines.

The wisest course seems to be to consider now this phase of the world, now that, all the while endeavouring to be faithful to facts, laws, distinctions. With this purpose in mind, let us begin an entirely fresh study of the phenomena of experience.

When we look abroad in the world of life in quest of a clue to the nature of existence, we are at first inclined to describe life in material terms. So large a portion of our time is spent in providing the wherewithal to live, that occupation is naturally synonymous with philosophy.² Most of our customs and modes of speech are based on the assumption that man is a physical being. We speak of a person's face as if we really saw the individual.

We even regard our bodies as ourselves. And it requires searching thought to dissociate the self from its outer garment. Of course, when we pause to think, we know that this body is not the real man. Accident may disfigure the body, but the soul is not disfigured. Endless experiences may come, in varying environments, yet it is always the same individual who perceives them.

We may present many aspects or selves to different individuals, yet the same being resides behind these personalities, or masks.

A man may deceive others, but he cannot be other than himself. He may be "beside himself," as the saying is, or "out of his head" in a fever. But he comes to himself again. Consciousness subsides in sleep, but that is no argument to show that it is gone, or that it is a product of the body. Man becomes insane, but it is in pursuit of an idea. Insanity does not prove a man less but more mental.

And although the body ceases to be an animated whole at death, many of us expect to live in a finer world where a material body will not be needed.

There are many lines of thought, then, which lead from the physical world to the mental. They are lines of thought,—note that. One cannot even raise the question concerning the existence of matter without turning from the body to the mind. The grossest materialist must use mental facts to argue for materialism.

But, you say, he may contend that thought is a function of the brain. So it would seem. This is a common supposition, based on the presupposition that we know more about matter than about mind. This assumption lies at the basis of our habit of regarding ourselves as physical beings. The truth is that, despite our ignorance of many mental functions, we know far more about mind than about matter.

The first fact pointed out by the materialist as evidence of the existence of matter by itself is physical sensation, for example, the sensation of heat or cold. If we touch a hot stove, the hand is burned; whereas a stove without fire gives an entirely different sensation. Surely, the materialist contends, there is nothing mental about this experience. Again, the materialist might argue: I look out of the window and see yonder house, well knowing that it is at a distance from me.

I can descend the stairs and walk to that house, thus proving that there is real external space, apart from the mind.

Moreover, I am compelled to put my body through many successive movements, thus showing that there is time. I can touch the house, note its colour, run against it and thereby meet resistance; I cannot think it away.

Yes, I reply, the existence of temporal and spatial experience is unquestioned. The existence of sensation is equally certain, no one denies that there are differing sensations and that they are in some sense real. But the kind of reality is the point at issue. How do I happen to know that there are hot and cold substances? What makes me aware of motor experiences? How do I know that there is space? It is by comparison of mental experiences.

All things were apparently spread before me as if on an immediately tangible plane surface or wall, until I began as an infant to test their relations. The simplest interpretation of space is the result of much mental experience, and it is impossible to dissociate space from the idea of it.

Yes, the materialist admits, but this is merely the training of the organism, and of course that is essential. Varied spatial experiences awaken varied ideas concerning the relationship of objects. Thus the ideas are produced by physical phenomena.

That is half of the truth, I reply, but do the varied experiences compare themselves? Do they fall into an adjustment such that I always know how to judge the connection of objects in space? What are the sensations by which I judge, and how are they known? What is the ego that feels, knows, and judges? Is that a mere automaton? The materialist is compelled to admit that the nature of the ego is unknown to him.

He must admit that to touch different objects would not suffice to show that they are unequally distant from the actual organism.

This mental discovery is unlike anything the materialist can point to in the physical world. The existence of space is a discovery made by the mind. Likewise with the perception of time. A new moment does not rise up and inform me that time has elapsed since the last. Meditation on the fact of change leads to the discovery of time. So with colours, sounds, tastes, and odours. These gradually differentiate amidst the general mass of impressions which is brought in from the outside world.

The colours might, it is true, have been present in some unknown form before the first wondering glance of the infant, but all that we know about them is in terms of conscious experience. They are non-existent for the infant. The material world means nothing to us without thought. Our real progress is growth in thought; without it we should never be aught more than infants.

The training of the body is insignificant when compared with the training which we give the mind. This is not to say that the body does not exist, but that it is not primary in the sense ordinarily believed. Mind and body have been co-operative from the start.

The materialist talks about sensation as if there could be such a thing apart from the mind that is conscious of it. This term is as much a figure of speech as our reference to the sun as "rising" and "setting." A sensation is an impression made upon the body by a physical object or force.

As hypothetically physical it is an action from outside. But how can an action from outside be felt without something to meet it from within? A sense organ meets it, in the first place, but as soon as consciousness knows it, it ceases to be a sensation, and becomes a perception, that is, a mental product. That is why sensation is in reality hypothetical; it conceivably exists, but we do not know what it is, because we have never felt one.

As felt by the mind, perception is twice removed from matter regarded as external to the body.

The infant is conceivably in the immediate presence of sensation, in its first moments of blurred contact with the world. But the moment the first distinction in consciousness arises the inner or mental contribution begins, and the mind is so much farther removed from matter. What the mind really contemplates is not sensation, but its own states, its consciousness of what we for convenience call "sensation."

The appeal to sensation is therefore futile; for we know sensation only through consciousness.

Do you realize the full significance of this fundamental statement? If so, and if you have hitherto looked at things from the outside, it means that you must now view them from within, that you can never again wholly view them in any other way. For note this, there is one fact from which you can never sunder your life, your experience, namely, you are conscious.

Whatever else you are, whatever else life is, you are ever a conscious being; all your philosophizing should begin with this fact. Whatever you know, is known in terms of consciousness. All that you feel, is consciously felt. All that you see, is perceived by the eye of the mind. For, as already noted, you do not see the retinal image; you mentally contemplate the object after it has been translated into an idea.

All that you hear is a mental somewhat in some way corresponding to aural vibration. The experiences of hardness, softness, color, temperature, light, taste, are mental. What these might be apart from your consciousness you are entirely unable to say. You might as well try to state the day and hour when time began.

There is no reason to doubt that objective activities which give rise to what we denote as sound, "sight" and the other perceptions exist, but it is pure matter of convenience to call these experiences "physical." What we mean to say, when we use words accurately, is that some of our experiences arise objectively, while others have a subjective origin.

The experience which we call consciousness is awareness of relations existing between objective states and subjective states. This statement does not necessarily mean that, because I know things through mind, therefore what my mind translates for me was mind before it was translated.

Nor am I, the perceiver, necessarily my own mental states, and nothing more. For as a soul, or spiritual being, my mode of contact with the world of nature may be but one type of spiritual experience.

Largely apart from the perceptual relationship with nature, I may have consciousness of a purer sort,³ which may tell me more directly what the nature of existence is. It is of no avail, however, for the materialist to insist that because I cannot transcend mind I know nothing about it. I cannot define mind except in terms of consciousness; I can say no more than this: that mental states are states of the soul.

But when it is a question of the contrast between mind and matter, I am able to answer the materialist's last argument by referring to the fundamental fact that, although I know but little about mind by itself, what little I do know is known in terms of consciousness.

Even so far as mind is conditioned by the brain, I am aware of those conditions only through mind. Those conditions may cease to be effective after death, but that does not imply that the mind will cease to exist, for I do not know enough about matter to affirm that it can destroy mind, and I do know enough about mind to declare that it is more fundamental, more intimately a part of me. For there is not the slightest evidence that consciousness is solely a product of the brain.

Without a brain, it is true, I probably should not have such experiences as we call "sound", "taste", "light", "heat," and the rest. But physical perception is only the lowest grade of conscious experience. Even that experience must have a percipient background.

Whatever is brought forward from the physical side, it is met by a stronger fact on the mental side, in the shape of that which interprets it. There are no purely "physical" experiences without mental correspondences; whereas there are many mental states which have no exact physical counterpart, such, for example, as our logical and mathematical processes of thought.

The sense of resistance is sometimes pointed out as purely physical, as the most fundamental evidence that the physical world exists. But all that we know about this experience is that force meets force. The materialist is unable to tell us what that force is.

Moreover, resistance is not physical alone. Whose mental world is so poor that the soul has never encountered the resistance offered by fears, doubts, states of despondency and the like? What is more stubborn than one's own lower self? Again, the fact of motion is said to be primarily physical. But motion is not confined to the physical world; no moment of consciousness stands still. Consciousness is like a river where there is always a perceptible current.

You may doubt the existence of nature, but you cannot logically doubt the existence of mind. Our natural life may be a dream, but if it be "of such stuff as dreams are made of," it is all the more emphatically mental. If we shall sometime awaken to know things as they more truly are, it will probably be an awakening into a more distinct form of consciousness, where the soul is made more directly aware of what it now knows mediately.

The flesh may be and doubtless is a constant source of illusion, but that is an argument for the idealist, not for the materialist. For if the mind would be freer without the body, it is all the more real; the conditions which are supposed to produce consciousness really hamper it.

Another effective argument is found in the fact that, whereas the body tends to condition the mind and man would be largely an animal if he succumbed, it is possible to triumph over the animal characteristics of the flesh and be less and less hindered by them. As powerful as are our fleshly conditions, the soul has a power whereby it can progressively transcend and transmute many of them.

No analysis of physical life is capable of accounting for these progressive triumphs, this superior power. The mind tends to be unlike the flesh. It is more than the flesh. As an effect cannot be greater than its cause, we must look elsewhere than to the physical world to find the sufficient ground of all that the mind displays.

That the mind awakens and displays its powers only when changing conditions furnish opportunity, is no argument in favor of matter as a cause. Matter may indeed furnish the occasion, at the outset, but there is evidence that later the soul compels the occasion.

If, now, we have really found our way into the subjective world, let us look about and take our bearings. Our argument thus far has emphasized the fact that primarily life is an affair of consciousness. We found it possible to listen to the last word of the materialist, then reply that as ponderable and real as his world is it is nevertheless known only through mind. Wherever we go, whatever our argument, from consciousness we cannot escape.

This is the primary condition of life, and life is always as large for us and no larger than our consciousness. Yet to argue that consciousness is primary and, so far as we know, universal, is far from contending that it is just our consciousness and no other. The helpless babe lives in a conscious world, yet that world is brought in upon its little self through no effort of will or self-consciousness.

In the early years, especially, consciousness is produced in us; it is not we who produce consciousness.

Later, the soul awakens to awareness of self, discovers desires, and the power of action. These factors, as we have already said, are instrumental in bringing about changes in the flesh. Yet it is well to remember that, all through life, the changes in our consciousness are largely changes produced in us by a reality objective to our wills. We are compelled to be conscious; consciousness is given; it is not created from within. There is no mere unrelated consciousness.

We build upon and modify consciousness, but it is the “stream of thought” which supplies the wherewithal. Much of the time we are little more than reflective observers.

To be conscious, then, is to live in a world. What that world might be apart from our consciousness we do not know, for we have not had the experience. Our consciousness is the translating medium through which the world is put before us in the form of ideas. It is the prime condition of existence—that is the most we can say.

Wisdom obviously consists in learning as much as we can about the condition, that we may more fully reap the benefits of an existence that is given to, not chosen by, us.

I emphasize the fact that life is given, because the tendency of many who in some measure understand the power of thought is to speak as if its conditions were of our own making. If existence were merely an affair of personal thought, if thought were “omnipotent,” the mind could of course create or destroy at will.

There would then be in reality only this particular self; there would be no world, only this one person’s subjective states; for there could not be two omnipotent powers.

To transfer the center of power from the physical world to the mental is not by any means to try to prove it to be any less real or less the gift of the Spirit. We must continually guard against confusion between the term “thought,” used in a finite, personal sense; and the term “consciousness,” employed to designate the condition of life in general.

Consciousness is our total experience from infancy onwards, the connection between the self, the world, and the Supreme Spirit. It is at once the world as made known and the reactions of the soul on the world, including perception, emotion, will, the rational process, desire, and the like. It is the general whole, known in childhood as a confused mass, in which various related parts are gradually noted, considered, and classified.

Thought, regarded as meditation upon this general whole, which is progressively discovered, is of course dependent, limited. It represents, symbolizes, imitates, understands by contrast, comparison, and seizes upon certain phases of consciousness which it chooses to be concerned with for a time, while all else is permitted to fall into the background.

It thus abstracts, it is indirect, mediate. To some of its abstractions, worshipped as truth, we owe our ages of departure from the reality of life. The concrete consciousness, on the other hand, from which these small sections of life were abstracted, was direct, immediate, and would have been a far safer guide to knowledge of reality.

Thought is in a sense thrice removed from the world of reality, since it deals with remembered perceptions, or feelings, which were originally translated sense-experiences. There is every reason, then, for holding to the concrete, the first-hand experiences; and avoiding the artificial constructions of thought whereby we theoretically sunder ourselves from the world.

Moreover, as the self or soul which abides in us is more real than the thought which passes, if we were really concerned to develop a theory which should center about the individual, we ought to put our doctrine in terms of the self, not in terms of its thoughts. The self is at once the thinker, the perceiver, and the center of will, or attention.

Although we know the soul only through what it does, through observation of ourselves as self-conscious, yet thought must take the soul into account as the prime factor.

The soul and the reality whence springs the world— these are the two fundamental facts, and all our philosophising is an attempt to understand their relationships. We may then dismiss as inadequate the doctrine which undertakes to describe life in terms of thought. It is in its way as inadequate as materialism.

Even consciousness, as we know it, may not be a large enough term; for both the world and the soul may be more substantial than any analysis of present consciousness reveals; and thought, at best, is only a part of consciousness.

But in dismissing the theory that thought is all-complete, we do not so readily escape from our subjectivity. One may still contend that this consciousness which I contemplate is just my consciousness,

and no other. For what do I know about an alleged world existing beyond me except in terms of my own states?

What do I know about you other than that which my consciousness of your relationships with me reveals? To me, the world is what I am conscious of concerning it. To me, you are what I know or think you to be. What you may be in and for yourself I do not and cannot know, for I cannot transcend my consciousness of you to acquire your consciousness of you.

Thus one might continue to accumulate arguments until, in the end, one would feel hopelessly subjective. But we may as well pause here, for if the escape from subjectivity be once made there is no going back. First let us admit, however, that there is a deep truth in these considerations. What we think and know is indeed thought and known as we apprehend it.

But the fact that I know the world only as I know it does not signify that there is no world objective to myself; and the fact that I know you only as I am impressed by you does not signify that there is no self to make the impression, no "you" to know yourself intimately. I might even throw light upon your life for you, know you in part better than you know yourself, despite the fact that what I know would be known as I perceive it.

The fact that I know only in an individual way is of far less consequence than that I am compelled to be conscious.

The truth, then, is that I do not need to make my escape from the subjective world. I never existed in such a world, alone. I have always been outside, that is, my most intimately self-conscious states are never purely my own. They are due to relations between myself and the world, between the soul and the Ground of all souls.

Consciousness is from the start a co-operative product. The world comes to me and I slowly begin to recognise it. My soul is the centre of my world, to be sure, but I do not even discover my soul until I have discovered the world. Self-consciousness is a relatively late psychological development. I learn that I exist as a self by contrast with objects and selves external to me.

The act of discovery is thus itself an objective thought, as it were. The subjective world is first known as a sort of development or projection of the objective realm. The discovery is made only as rapidly as it is possible to contrast the relatively objective with the relatively subjective.

This fine discrimination becomes clearer when stated in terms of activity. It is conceivable that the first sensation, if it could have been known by itself, would have been a sense of activity. The growing life of the physical organism reaches the point where it makes itself known.

Thus consciousness begins, the soul begins to awaken. On the physiological side, the first experience is activity, movement, life. On the mental side, it is the sensation which corresponds to activity, movement, life. The sensation itself is movement, life. A dead thing, if such there be, is not and could not be conscious.

There may possibly be movement without consciousness, but there cannot be consciousness as we now know it without movement. Consciousness is awareness of change, and change implies movement. Consciousness is also a relating faculty, but new relations are perceived through the stream of consciousness. Consciousness flows, changes are produced in our consciousness by changes in our environment. To be sure, change may originate within; but I am speaking now of its earlier external origination.

What the infant possesses at the outset is not lost; self-consciousness adds to, it does not take away from. Motion or life is common to the mind and to the external world, whence come changing activities. There is no chasm to bridge between the soul and nature. From the first moment of the conceivable dawn of consciousness there was activity all along the line. There is and has been no separation.

That which we know as the changing play of consciousness is on the physical side the motion or life of what we call "matter." The distinctions between the natural and conscious worlds are not sufficiently marked to warrant the isolation of the mind in a realm all its own, sundered from nature.

In reality, we know motion or life only in terms of mind. We agree to classify certain activities as "mental," others as "physical," but that does not mean that they have no interchangeable activities. Take away all motion, and you remove all basis of belief in a natural world; but you as surely rob mind.

In closing the present discussion, we must emphasize the dual aspect of consciousness as thus far considered, (1) consciousness as brought in upon us; and (2) consciousness as emanating from within.

The discovery of a world of activity, that is, the discovery through the fact of activity that there is a world, implies a corresponding or co-operative activity springing from the soul. In later chapters we shall make more use of this fact. Here we simply note its bearing on the preceding discussion, and chronicle the relationship of activity and consciousness as equally fundamental, although activity may antedate our consciousness of it.

The soul, then, is an active as well as a conscious being. Activity is a phase of consciousness, and consciousness is a phase of activity. There is of course a difference between mere thought and thought in action, although all our thoughts, all our ideals tend to express themselves in action. But activity is always present in some form.

The final statement about life must include both the forces of nature and the highest activities of the soul, the sentiments of love and beauty, the joys of our spiritual existence.

Our analysis of the nature of existence, therefore, has revealed two ineradicable factors, though we have not established the argument for activity on as firm a basis as that for consciousness.⁴ (1) Existence is fundamentally conscious, and (2) existence is fundamentally active. A third characteristic has only been briefly referred to, namely, existence is also social.

So far are we from being isolated or subjective beings, that life would be impossible were it not for our dependence on one another. The discovery of the self is a social discovery. We become aware that other beings are here before we know that we exist. The self is discovered by contrast with another self ministering unto us. From the first moment, we live in a social world and we can never get outside of it.

There is every reason, therefore, for the development of a social rather than an individualistic system out of the fundamental facts of consciousness.

All parts of life are inextricably bound together. The study of existence from the point of view of consciousness does not in any way impoverish our conception of life; it greatly enlarges it. Thus we return to the point of view of the universe of manifestation. In the profoundest sense we must understand the divine order, and the relationship of souls in that order, before we can truly evaluate either the phenomena of nature or the activities of mind.

[2] That is, we do not discriminate between the appearances of things and the reality which analytical thinking would reveal. To judge by our behaviour, would no doubt be to conclude that we are materialists.

[3] For example, the intellectual and volitional states, the processes of rational insight.

[4] The question of activity will be considered in other chapters.