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A S I S E E L I F E

AS I SEE
L I F E

By
C H A R L E S L A U R E N C E B U R D I C K



W I L L I A M M A C L E L L A N
T W O H U N D R E D A N D F O R T Y H O P E S T R E E T G L A S G O W

DEDICATED TO ALL THOSE
WHO READ THIS MY BOOK

FOREWORD

These my observations on life, or the greater part of them, have been written during my eightieth year; but they are thoughts some of which I have entertained for many years.

My theory of the conservation of all life I have held and thought over ever since I was a young man.

If life is looked at as a whole from the angle of expanding consciousness, I think it will give us a new insight as to its meaning and purpose.

It has been my belief for many years that supernaturalism in religion was a relic of animism and ancestor worship inherited from our forbears.

The theory of the character of gravitation has been in my mind for at least twenty years.

During a busy life I have read books, as I have found time. I am interested in other men's thoughts, but I like best the book of nature.

If in giving expression to my concepts I should antagonise or distress those with orthodox views, I regret the circumstance; but I believe that the world will benefit if thoughtful men everywhere speak the truth as they see it.

If there is lack of literary skill, I would say that I am not trying to produce more literature but rather to put my thoughts on record, trusting they will be of benefit to mankind.

I do not claim any finality for these my observations on life. I trust that they will stimulate thought and that other and better minds will build on them, or, if found defective, will correct them.

CONTENTS

PART ONE

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD	7
1 INTRODUCTION	11-16
2 SCIENCE AND SUPERSTITION	17-20
3 A TRINITY	21-25
4 CONSCIOUSNESS	26-31
5 THE FIELD OF CONSCIOUSNESS (PHYSICAL)	32-39
6 OTHER FIELDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS	40-45
7 THE FUNCTIONING OF CONSCIOUSNESS	46-51
8 RÉSUMÉ	52-54

PART TWO

9 ACQUISITIVENESS	55-58
10 THE ICONOCLAST	59-60
11 GODS	61-65
12 THE WORLD OF SPIRITS	66-69
13 ENERGY, SPACE AND TIME	70-72
14 WATER THE WONDERFUL	73-74
15 SOME ILLUSIONS	75-78
16 MAGIC AND CEREMONIAL	79-83
17 PSEUDO-SCIENCE	84-86
18 RANDOM REMARKS	87-91
19 ETHICS	92-94

PART ONE

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The mantle of life is over all things.

KRISHNAMURTI

Ever since the dawn of reason man has, no doubt, speculated on the meaning and purpose of life. He has recognised that he himself is only a fragment of life, and that its genesis and its ultimate goal are beyond the orbit of his vision.

As there seems to be a plan and an orderly progression throughout nature, man has inferred a creator, a God. Obviously there is a will and an intelligence over it all which sustains and guides its unfoldment.

If one was to find a piece of strange mechanism, and was curious about its origin and purpose, one would study the thing itself and try to discover from its composition whence it came; from its parts the use for which it was intended and, if possible, something of its creator. An intelligent man would not, disregarding the thing in itself, turn to musty manuscripts or the *ipse dixit* of ancient heroes or saints to find a theory to fit in with the thing observed.

Should we not, therefore, look at unfolding life as a whole, and draw what conclusions we may as to the Creator from the thing created, rather than accept the myths and traditions of primitive and ignorant people? Life itself is not visible or tangible, but its activity is manifest everywhere for us to ob-

serve; we may deduce something of its meaning from its activities.

It is my belief, based on observation, that there is a supreme will which upholds the universe in which we live, and a wisdom which guides its unfoldment. I cannot believe that it is all fortuitous. 'The longer I live the more I marvel at the wonderful way in which the physical world is fashioned for the development of consciousness and life. I do not believe that 'a million monkeys operating haphazard a million typewriters for a million years would produce a Shakespeare sonnet' or that the petals and perfume of the rose could have ever been produced by chance. Fortuitous evolution will not explain the genesis of the mamillary gland; intelligent purpose must have preceded the event. Everything indicates a design, which implies a designer.

The scientific man is so keen on the study of the trees that he does not see the forest. Consciousness or life cannot be seen with either a microscope or a telescope. The pious people are so busy weaving fantastic patterns out of the warp and woof of their hopes and fears that they lose much of the sense of reality.

Many people pore over the ancient manuscripts, written in the childhood of the race, and neglect the marvellous book of nature which is open for all to read. The story of the rocks is not only more interesting but much more credible than the story in Genesis. I hope in this book to present an interesting outlook on world activity from the angle of direct observation.

We have something in common with the weed that grows by the wayside, with the insects and the beasts of the fields; we are each and all struggling to express ourselves in a physical world, to shape a garment of earth into an instrument of unfolding

INTRODUCTION

consciousness, impelled by a will which is over and in us all, guided by impulses and instincts beyond our volition, and weaving the fabric with invisible threads.

Scientists have for many years speculated as to the origin of life on the planet. Ancient myths, like the story in Genesis, have held the field with the ignorant and credulous. They believe that the world and all life, at some time in the past, were created by an act of God, comparable to the pronouncement of the negro preacher that 'When God made the first man he made him out of clay and set him up against the fence to dry'.

The biologist has postulated the fortuitous formation of a living cell from protoplasm; given a single activated cell with the power of growth and segmentation, the whole living world including man could be reproduced in time.

My postulate is that the world and conscious life upon it has not been created but is being created; that consciousness, which is a prime factor of life, is constantly developing or unfolding.

Consciousness in its inception or first awakening is only aware of violent impacts of physical energy. As it becomes more developed or refined it becomes aware of more and more subtle vibrations or activity in its environment, and so expands from physical awareness to emotional awareness and to thought awareness, and will, no doubt, go on to the realisation of still more subtle realms.

I believe that the activities which are constantly going on in inorganic matter may awaken a sense of being. I am aware that it would be difficult or impossible to prove this detail of my theory. It is, however, difficult to say where the dividing line can be drawn between the organic and the inorganic. Crystals grow by accretion and organic life by a

similar process of adding one cell to another. Water, a marriage so to speak of oxygen and hydrogen, may have a sense of being.

Arthur Dendy refers to this subject in his book, *Outlines of Evolutionary Biology*, pp. 227-8. "We have strong evidence of the actual existence of living things so small as to be beyond the limits of visibility even with the aid of the most modern optical apparatus. . . . If living matter is first formed in such ultra-microscopic particles and can only be recognised as living matter after it has reached a comparatively high stage of evolution, *it is obvious that we are not entitled to say that it is never formed from not-living matter* (italics mine) at the present day. We cannot see it being formed, and we probably never shall see it being formed, but it is possible that it is still being 'spontaneously generated' all the same. We are not logically obliged, as we said before, to content ourselves with a single starting point for organic evolution, and it would be quite impossible to prove that all the different kinds of bacteria, the simplest organisms visible to us, have descended from a single ancestor. They may equally well have been derived from a number of ancestral protoplasmic units which originated independently from inorganic, not-living matter. If such an event can have taken place it may have taken place many times, and may still be taking place around us, though the imperfect means of observation at our disposal will not allow us to demonstrate the fact."

The world in which we live is not static, every thing is in a state of flux and change. The span of human life is so short that we imagine things are stable. Iron dissolves, granite crumbles, lead is being deposited, the element of which the diamond is composed is taken daily in our food and circulates in our blood; wind and rain and

INTRODUCTION

frost dissolve and the constant activity of conscious life is all the time grasping and throwing off physical matter.

As I said before conscious life is not something visible and tangible, its comings and goings are silent and unobserved; it acts upon or animates physical matter but is not itself physical.

When I was a young man, during one of my many walks in the country the thought came to me, as I was contemplating the life around me, that life must progress from one kingdom of nature to the next higher in evolution and *must therefore be conserved*. I conceived that after functioning, perhaps for many lives, in the vegetable kingdom, it would gain the experience which would enable it to function in the animal kingdom and so on into the human kingdom.

I did not think of reincarnating life from the personal or human point of view. I had not, at that time, heard or read of the theory of human reincarnation which is held as a belief by a majority of the people on this planet.

After more than sixty years I still hold to the view that life—all life—is conserved; that in some mysterious way consciousness has its inception in physical matter and develops progressively throughout nature. That it is the one permanent reality.

It is not my intention to add another to the pantheon of anthropomorphic gods, but I venture to predicate some of the attributes of the Creator, deduced from the world in which we live and the life around us. They have no connection with ancient myths or traditions.

Three elemental factors seem to me to be obvious in nature; one is the will to live, the second is the universal impulse to co-ordinate, and the third is the energy with which life functions.

AS I SEE LIFE

I shall have much to say in this book about the nature of consciousness. There is no life without consciousness and we know of no consciousness without life.

For the rest, there will be some criticisms and some inconsequential essays.

Chapter 2

SCIENCE AND SUPERSTITION

The mind of man is widened by the process of the suns.

TENNYSON

In modern times our knowledge of the world in which we live has grown enormously. Since the beginning of the century there has been a great expansion of our knowledge of the stellar universe; and any intelligent concept of a Creator must differ greatly from that of the Jewish tribal God. The ancient Jews lived in a very restricted world, they knew of only a very small portion of the planet on which they lived and nothing of the stellar universe.

Many people read the childish story in Genesis whose eyes and ears are closed to the marvellous story of the universe which has been disclosed by modern science. Others there are who, with reverted eyes, marvel at the so-called ancient wisdom and do not know that the world advances in knowledge and wisdom; they cannot believe that there is such a thing as wisdom to-day.

Viewed from the new vantage point of modern science, we human beings are infinitesimal creatures crawling about on a tiny speck of cosmic dust which is hurtling through space at a terrific speed;¹ to-morrow we will be one and a half million miles from where we are to-day.

There are countless millions of suns comparable with our own, and it is fair to assume that many are the centre of a solar system in which consciousness is unfolding.²

¹ About one hundred times the speed of a rifle bullet.

² Professor Jeans gives figures based on an estimate by Dr.

Our astronomers know that there are great masses of non-luminous substance in the universe. But consciousness is not necessarily limited to the physical conditions which obtain on this planet. There may be consciousness of a different order even in the sun. Consciousness itself is not necessarily affected by heat or cold.

Space seems limitless; we have been able to probe into distance some ten thousand parsecs and still find no boundaries.¹

At the other end of space science has delved into the minute. The search has been a long one; from molecule to elemental atom and on to electron and proton. In the end science has discovered that there is no such thing as solid matter; only a quantum of energy.²

Physicists are now practically agreed that physical matter consists of energy. It has no reality as substance but exists only in action.

If there is one supreme ruler of this boundless Universe, he is a being of whom we can know no more than the ground worm in the garden knows of human affairs. To him, time and space must have a different significance; he must in some incomprehensible way be outside their limitations. The Western world is proud of its monotheism, but to me it is equally easy to believe that there may be millions of Gods. Perhaps there are solar Gods or rulers of galaxies of suns rather than one

Hubbles (an American astronomer) that the number of suns in the universe may be about 2×10^{24} and that the same number of grains of sand spread over England would make a layer hundreds of yards deep.

¹ A parsec corresponds to a parallax of one second of arc, or about 19,000,000,000 miles.

² I use the word 'quantum' in its generic rather than its specific meaning as applied to Planck's theory.

God. Many kingdoms, so to speak, rather than one kingdom.

I can well believe that there are many great orders of beings superior to man, beings who have no further use for a physical body.

I conceive that a physical body is necessary for the genesis of consciousness, and that man will some day graduate from this school.

In the larger sense, human beings are of no more importance than trees or birds or animals, just as the oldest child in the family is of no more importance than the babe in the cradle. To a being for whom time does not exist, the evolution of consciousness must appear as a unit and no detail will be irrelevant and no detail supremely important.

Is it not conceivable that our world may have had its genesis as the thought or concept of a Creator, be sustained by His will and guided by His wisdom and that it is continuously and progressively unfolding? Some time after this was written my attention was called to Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea* (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*). Schopenhauer's theory that 'The World is my Idea' and 'The World is my Will' is in my opinion a narrow concept. Ratiocination or thought is only one aspect of life or consciousness. It is a fallacy to suppose that the subject of phenomenal experience has no permanence. The objective phenomena of yesterday have no permanence, they are gone for ever, but the subjective result is contained in consciousness as the abstract or essence of life to-day. As I interpret the Indian philosophy the objective world is *maya* or illusion.

I conceive that it is not so much a consummated creation as a process. Nothing in the world is static, the world in its minutest detail will be different to-morrow from what it is to-day.

If this is so, the search of the scientists for the

origin of life in a single molecule of matter is superfluous, and the 'god of tradition and the god of rhetoric' are puerile.

Because we have accepted a traditional God, the childish concept of an ignorant primitive people, we are bound to the belief in a personal prescriptive God. It is assumed that he is listening to our prayers and songs of praise,—that at the request of Parson Jones, of London, Mrs. Smith, of New York City, or someone in Timbuctoo, he will suspend, or even reverse, the laws of causation, and do just what is required of him; it is only necessary that the supplicant shall have the prescribed faith, get down on his knees and ask him nicely.

Is this not a childish concept of a God, the creator of this boundless universe? We can believe that he is a being to whom no detail of his world is a matter of indifference, but that all must be governed by law. If a man wanted a postage stamp, would he get down on his knees and make a petition to the Postmaster General?

Can one believe that God is to be moved by flattery or that he dispenses favours by request? On the other hand, we can believe that all good deeds, that is, all action in alignment with his laws and the well-being of all his creatures, will meet with its own recompense.

Ethical values cannot be seen in their right perspective if looked at through the mists of tradition or entangled in the vestigial remains of a savage ancestry. Religion in many respects opposes intellectual progress to-day just as it did in Galileo's time. Where faith in a static belief is imposed, intellectual freedom is denied.

But progressive man is neither petty nor pusillanimous, for he can weigh the distant suns and compute their orbits. He has discovered new stellar universes: he should be able to discover moral law and compute ethical values divorced from superstition.

Chapter 3

A TRINITY

*Still, through her moles and masses draw
Electric thrills and ties of law,
Which bind the strength of nature wild
To the conscience of a child.*

EMERSON

Life has many facets, it is infinite in variety, but certain fundamental aspects of life may be postulated as '*the will to live, to be, and to function*'. A man may find life so difficult that he does not want to live, but this is abnormal; so tired that he may want to rest, but his resting is in itself an act of preservation.

Throughout nature there is the universal urge to live. With the vegetable kingdom, for instance, there is no thought about the matter, it is not a desire as we understand desire; but existence is maintained and the functions of life carry on under some universal urge or will to live, to be and to become. It is an impulse to which life everywhere responds.

The perfect human eye may have developed through long centuries from a piece of primitive translucent cuticle with a nerve cell in it, but it only happened because there was a steady pressure behind the entities impelling them to seek a larger field of consciousness, to live, to become more aware of environment in a physical world.

In every crevice in the wall, in the midnight of the deep waters, in every place where even the most meagre opportunity obtains, the will to live finds expression. The healthy child must be doing something; every cell in our bodies obeys an imperative urge to maintain its own existence. It may well be

that this principle works for the cohesion of the molecules in the rock as well as in the most highly developed man.

I think that we may name this element 'will'; it is omnipresent or universal in our world. Of the fundamental nature of will we know nothing; we are only cognisant of its action and give it a name; we do not know its genesis; it may be the source of all energy. I am certain that we can feel its presence acting in or through ourselves. We cling tenaciously to life. Acquisitiveness in all its forms is the urge to secure the means of a fuller life. We seek power in order to control life's activities, commodity in order to conserve life, and knowledge in order to live more completely.

A second universal element is *the spirit of co-ordination*. Co-ordination is the only word that I can find to express my meaning. The word 'love' is worn threadbare—in any event, it does not altogether convey the concept.

It is only by means of co-ordination that life can function and progressively develop. The will to live would be useless and futile without co-ordination. Its presence may be seen in the vegetable kingdom: the tree multiplies its cells and the co-ordinating element directs its activities. One set of cells go to the formation of roots, others to the production of branches, leaves, flowers and fruit. The tree does not think about it. Its action derives from some compelling impulse which, as it seems to me, is universal or immanent in our world.

We can see how specialisation develops out of the pressure of environment, but behind this specialisation is a steady pressure to co-ordinate, to make life fuller and more complete by concerted activity.

This element works not only immediately, or parallel, so to speak, in point of time, but projects it-

A TRINITY

self into the future and links the past and present to activities yet to be. Will is a continuum in time; this second element is equally continuous but synthetic.

Our forefathers did not build for themselves alone. They kept the future of the race always in view just as we, their children, do. We make the foundations of a bridge strong that future generations of men may pass over it: we project ourselves into the future, and all nature does the same.

Sex and reproduction are particular activities of co-ordination. In nature every living thing provides for its propagation in time. What else is it that urges the insect to provide food for progeny it will never see? Parental love is an intense expression of this principle—strong enough to impel sacrifices so great as to imperil life.

Again, this element may be present in the mineral kingdom. It may shape the crystal, or hold in combination the oxygen and hydrogen to form water—which contributes so much to life on the planet.

We know that the principle of co-ordination is very powerful in man: we like to work and plan together. Indeed, no advanced civilisation could be possible without co-ordination. Perhaps we might say that love guided by wisdom is the free flow of this element or influence, when unimpeded by particular desires. We do not know its genesis, but it seems possible that it may be a growing or evolving element. It is certainly a fundamental aspect of life.

In a study of life as it finds expression in the lower kingdoms of nature, I do not think any one can question the will to live, to act, to find self-expression; nor can we question the impulse to specialise, as the biologists call it, or as I would prefer to say, the impulse to co-ordinate activity.

Every cell is influenced by the will to live, but

some other impulse impels the various cells to concerted action. We cannot ascribe such impulses to the effect of blind chance, or to any intelligence in the cells themselves; we must therefore ascribe it to some superior or all-compelling influence. We know that these influences do not originate with man: it is my belief that all natural human activity functions under a pressure from this source.

All human activity can be classified either under the pressure of the will to live or the influence of the universal instinct for co-ordination. These forces are complementary and normally co-operative, but may become fiercely antagonistic. All human tragedy, both in literature and life, is the resultant of these forces contending unnaturally.

The will to acquire power, property, knowledge and a fuller activity or realisation of life are all the resultant of the divine will to live as it expresses itself in humanity. The humanitarian impulses which are universal and inhere in each individual soul, when not corrupted by selfishness, are the result of the immanent influence or Divine impulse for co-operation.

A third element in life is *the field of activity*, or the energy with which life functions. This is somewhat difficult to describe. We must postulate energy which is more or less static; energy which is both positive and negative. Normally in balance, in which the circuit is complete, no change occurs, nothing is done. When, however, it is thrown out of balance it can perform work or result in diversified activity under the influence of elements one and two.

We know that a condition obtains in the physical world when static energy becomes active in the various physical and chemical changes which are constantly going on around us. The physicist has resolved matter into units of energy, and can go on

A TRINITY

farther. There is no ultimate solid substance as conceived by our senses, there is only energy.

The tree lives and grows only because it is able to utilise this energy. It is probable that the sunlight makes the growth of vegetation possible because of the force with which it disturbs the static condition of the atmosphere. The leaves are not composed of sunlight, but the sunlight is necessary for their growth; when the sunlight disturbs the balance of this energy the plant can utilise the energy to build, or it may be that disintegrated sunbeams supply this energy.

Energy is of two kinds, positive and negative, male and female. As the processes of nature go on, sex unfolds and becomes more pronounced. Sex precedes the dawn of intellect and is probably one of the most important factors in the development of life or consciousness.

Man cannot create an ounce of energy, cannot create a grain of sand or a drop of water, but he can direct or transmute this energy and use its tremendous powers. Without the urge to live, without co-ordination of parts, and without the energy field, there could be no grass, no trees, and no life as we know it on this planet.

I have named the trinity from which or in which action and reaction flow and conscious life becomes. I can see no other primal element.

Chapter 4

CONSCIOUSNESS

*I was a gem concealed,
Me my burning ray revealed.*

THE KORAN

CONSCIOUSNESS is essentially awareness. It is limited to that point in time which we call Now. We are not immediately conscious of the last moment, nor can we be conscious of the next. Consciousness is a focal centre, a reaction terminus for all the activities which we call life.

Consciousness *sui generis* is an element which has its inception in a field of energy conditioned by space and time.

The present moment of consciousness, the Now, is the only eternity that we can ever know, in a world such as ours.

Consciousness, in point of time, runs parallel throughout nature: that is, it is the same for cabbages as for kings—the same in this planet as in the others.

Individual consciousness is an integrated point in the field of consciousness which embraces the whole of life. We do not know the boundaries of consciousness, we can only study its action in the world of which we are a part, but we can observe its development or unfolding in nature.

Three things, another trinity, inhere in every act of consciousness; a being or a something which is conscious, an object or a something of which the being is conscious, and a media or means of communication between them. If we see an object we are conscious of it because the effect of light waves

CONSCIOUSNESS

reflected from the object to our organs of vision are received at our centre of consciousness. The simple consciousness of being implies a something external and means of communication. The object or the media may be complex, but the trinity holds true.

The field of consciousness in nature (not the field of action) is a constantly expanding one, developing progressively through the several kingdoms of nature.

In the physical world consciousness finds its inception or beginning in the violent shocks and vibratory movement of a medium which, because of its slow changes, is comparatively stable: it may be no more than a sense of being evolved through long centuries of experience. The next stage will be a very feeble reaction to environment, as in primitive forms of vegetable life. With the first beginning of the sensations of well-being and discomfort a more subtle field of experience is contacted: later the still more subtle field of thought energy is experienced and the humanity stage is reached. What other even more subtle fields of consciousness there may be we do not know.

We need not labour the point as to whether the acid is conscious of the piece of zinc which, when dropped into it, causes such a disturbance, but we can be certain that the growing plant has some sense of being and some vague feeling of comfort or discomfort from changes in its environment—in fact, a dawning consciousness.

When the skin of a growing pear is punctured by an insect, it is felt, and a defence is set up, hard crystallate substance being brought to the place to prevent further damage. The tendrils of a climbing plant are conscious of contact with the support. Many flowers are conscious of the sunlight and turn their faces to it.

Any response on the part of an entity to change of environment implies an awareness on the part of the entity. Without consciousness of an exterior there could be no reaction from within and the simplest form of life could not function.

Every newly created cell constitutes an addition to the field of consciousness; every concerted cell activity represents an advancement in the progressive order of consciousness.

We can hardly question the presence of a growing consciousness in the vegetable kingdom, or its progressive unfoldment in the animal kingdom. A high order of emotional consciousness is obviously attained by animals—fear, anger, jealousy, love, affection—and there is evidence of the first rude glimmerings of thought consciousness.

In man, both emotional and thought consciousness are active and we say that we have arrived at self-consciousness. In young children, and perhaps some primitive folk, self-consciousness has not yet arrived. They have not yet thought of themselves as a separate unit. A great many people are not emotionally self-conscious, and only a few are fully self-conscious mentally. That is, the majority of people do not study or apprehend the workings of their own emotional and thought activity. For instance, strong emotion inhibits thought, but how many are aware of it? Nor do many understand to what extent thought is coloured by emotion. They are fully self-conscious only in a physical body.

At the human stage, consciousness has become very complex. There is a focal centre with, so to speak, marginal gradations. This play of consciousness over physical, emotional and mental might be likened to the tones which make up a chord of music and, like combinations of tones, may be harmonious or otherwise.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is a continuum in time. Many people suppose that they are unconscious when they sleep. This is not so. Even the body on the bed retains consciousness. Every one who dreams must be aware of a consciousness outside the physical body. If one is frightened by a dream vision one is conscious of something which is just as real as houses. It is illogical to suppose that one can be conscious of nothing. Thoughts are things.

When we think of a concrete object we re-create that object by the shaping of thought substance; in other words, we create a thought image of the object exterior to the centre of consciousness. In abstract thought there is still a concept exterior to the centre of consciousness.

All knowledge is in essence expanded consciousness. We become aware of more objects, more activity, more qualities, more relationships, more emotional stress, we become conscious of causation and law, and the exigency of time and space. In the world of omniscience experience lights up one fact or truth after another.

When we study or try directly to apprehend the centre of our being, the inner self, we soon perceive our limitations. We seem to be able to postulate that it is a unit capable of initiating action as well as of reacting to environment; that it has certain attributes, qualities or powers which inhere in its nature. These appear to be the abstract or essence of innumerable experiences. In other words, the multiplicity of contacts with environment seem to have canalised our actions and reactions in more or less definite lines which we call character.

The 'I' is not the physical body, the emotions or the mind. Each of these has a consciousness of its own; the 'I' controls within limits all these. When we try to understand this 'I' we can find nothing but

acquired attributes; the conscious or unconscious residue of experience. Like the grub in the cheese, our entire being is the transmutation of environment. If the individual could be stripped of all memories, conscious or unconscious, of pre-existence, what would remain? Yet is this 'I' the permanent reality and all the objective world evanescent phenomena.

It is conceivable that we are only units in a larger consciousness; perhaps a planetary or a solar consciousness; by analogy as the organs of the body, each with a consciousness of its own, are units within the orbit of our own consciousness, and the cells are units of consciousness within the organs.

We presume that we are able to act with freedom; but unless and until we become fully conscious of this bundle of accumulated experiences, fears, desires and sub-conscious memories, we cannot know ourselves. In other words, we are not fully self-conscious beings, and must move within strictly circumscribed limits under the universal will to live. It may be that as man progresses he does acquire the ability to exercise a will of his own, however feeble it may be. The exercise of choice is not an act of will, as I consider it. The lower kingdoms of nature do not exercise will: an animal may be very stubborn but it is only resistance to frustrated desire.

We cannot suppose that the continuous unfolding of a larger or more subtle consciousness progressively in nature is an end in itself, but it is obviously the way of approach to a larger and fuller life; to the acquirement of greater power, greater wisdom, more ordered activity and a serener and happier existence.

Since normally we know nothing about the essential nature of consciousness except through our contact with matter, it is as much in the nature of probability to assume that it is indestructible as that it is

CONSCIOUSNESS

ephemeral; but nature shows clearly by its progressive unfoldment that it is conserved, and that it is capable of growth or expansion. Within the short limits of a life's span we can see unfoldment from acorn to oak, from babe to man,—consciousness conditioned by the physical organism. Conscious entities, in their ceaseless endeavour to live a fuller life, are steadily improving physical bodies; this goes on *pari passu* with expanding consciousness but is distinct from it. The operations of heredity carries forward the physical improvement, but genes and chromosomes have nothing directly to do with the reincarnating entities, whose progress through the kingdoms of nature is determined by cumulative experience. Looked at outside of the time limitation nature presents a field of expanding consciousness progressively utilising bodies suited to its stage of development. The only logical conclusion must be that all consciousness is conserved. Every bit of knowledge or experience gained is a permanent and indestructible asset, an essential part of being. It is the intangible abstract or essence of all experience which survives.

Chapter 5

THE FIELD OF CONSCIOUSNESS ; PHYSICAL

Matter is spirit and spirit is matter.

KRISHNAMURTI

Whatever other milieu consciousness may have, we are certain that it has its inception in physical matter. We can see its development throughout nature from the simplest reactions to environment up to the complex activities of man.

I wish to advance some, to me, novel theories of this our solar and planetary field of evolution. I trust that the reader who is not interested in physics will bear with this digression.

Soon after it was published (1909) I had the pleasure of reading a book by Sir Oliver Lodge, entitled *The Ether of Space*. In this book the author has described some of the qualities or characteristics of the substance which apparently fills all space. One feature which impressed me very much was its extreme density.¹

It occurred to me then that matter must be of the nature of bubbles in space, or, perhaps more correctly stated, points where the pressure of the ether was somewhat relieved. I conceived that the sun and the planets might be the centres of whorls or rotary

¹ From *The Ether of Space* by Sir Oliver Lodge. Page xiv: 'I am able to advocate a view of Ether which makes it not only uniformly present and all-pervading, but also massive and substantial beyond conception. It is turning out to be by far the most substantial thing—perhaps the only substantial thing in the material universe. Compared to ether the densest matter, such as lead or gold, is a filmy gossamer structure; like a comet's tail or a milky way, or like a salt in very dilute solution.'

movements in this dense medium; the planetary whorls being subsidiary whorls within the solar whorl, and the moon the centre of a subsidiary whorl within the earth whorl; the movement of the ether in the solar whorl extending far beyond the outermost planet.

Physicists are familiar with the laws which govern centripetal and centrifugal forces. A cast iron wheel will fly to pieces owing to centrifugal force if rotated beyond a certain speed. Water rotated rapidly in a basin will have a concave surface.

A rotary movement set up in a uniform dense medium, such as the ether, would tend to set up a vacuum in the centre, as the constituent parts would tend to gravitate towards the circumference under the influence of centrifugal force.

Any definite or concise description of such a whorl would be impossible until we know more about the ether and more about whorls. There is no physical substance corresponding to the ether with which we can experiment. We know that when a gas is generated within a dense medium, the gas takes a globular form, but it would not be easy to demonstrate what shape a bubble would take if produced by a rotary movement in a dense non-viscous medium not limited by a rigid contour. I conceive that if a rotational movement was set up in a dense medium, the centre of the rotating mass would be less dense than the surrounding medium.

If a rotary movement was set up in a mobile substance such as the ether, there would be a tendency for a flow of the substance or mass towards the centre at either pole of the axis of rotation; but as there could not be two streams or currents of flow in opposite directions at the centre at the same time, a condition would arise for which we have no solution in physical dynamics. I hazard the opinion that

electrical force is a manifestation of physical energy, and that magnetism is the result of mass movement in the ether of space; the two forces act and react upon each other. We know that the earth is a magnet and that the two poles of the magnet are equalised at or near the equator; may it not be that this phenomena is in some way connected with the movement of the ether tending to be drawn in at the poles of a whorl.

If pressure was uniform on all sides of a vacuum, or partial vacuum, except for a similar vacuum near to it, the two vacua must coalesce, unless there is some force to keep them apart, because the pressure at all points of alignment with each other will be less than elsewhere.

It is obvious that if two vacuum areas (not under the influence of centrifugal force) were in contact they would coalesce owing to outside pressure. If separated by distance this pressure would diminish rapidly with lengthening distance.

I conceive that the planets do not pass through the ether, which immediately surrounds them, but passing with the ether, each in its own whorl, are carried around the sun in the solar whorl. The pressure of the ether from outside would tend to push¹ the earth into the sun and the centrifugal force would keep it in its orbit. What is called 'mass' would be the measure of the resistance by a whorl to etheric pressure.

If this theory is correct it will explain gravitational force. The earth is not attracted by the sun but is pushed towards it. It would also explain the failure

¹ Squeezed into the sun is perhaps a better way to express it.

If the earth were arrested in its orbital movement, it would not fall into the sun but would stream out into the sun; somewhat as juice would stream out from a hole in an orange under pressure.

of the Michelson-Morley and other experiments which have been made to discover a drift in the ether.

If water is boiled in a very shallow basin, the bubbles are small and come almost directly to the surface; there will not be depth of water in which they can coalesce. But if the boiling water is deep, the bubbles largely coalesce and come to the surface as comparatively large bubbles. This will explain gravity as I conceive it; the globules of water vapour are pushed together by the denser substance.

If I were to formulate the law of gravity, as I conceive it, I would say that: *The tendency of two vacuum centres to coalesce will be proportional to the product of their combined resistance to external pressure; and inversely as the square¹ of their distance apart. The respective tendency to displacement in two vacuum centres of different size will be in inverse ratio to the measure of their external pressures.* I do not believe that the ether can be uniform throughout. An energy disturbance in the ether implies local compression and at least a tendency to vacuum. That the ether should be 'stagnant', as has been suggested, seems to me to be inconsistent with our knowledge of nature and the stellar universe.

If there was any instrument sufficiently delicate to measure the speed of two beams of light, on either side of the sun, in the plane of the ecliptic, it would go far to prove my theory if one was found to be slower than the other. One beam would be moving with the flow of the ether and the other against it.

Perhaps the spectroscope may be delicate enough to show the difference in the speed of morning and evening sunlight, not due to the relatively slow

¹ The square of the distance from a point, as affecting radial influence, is a fundamental spatial law.

movement of the earth's surface, which is about 6/10ths of a mile per second at the equator.

It is conceivable that the rotational movement may be due to cosmic influences, originating in the vast reaches of the ether of space; somewhat as tornadoes have their origin in tropical seas, or cyclones in great land areas. I conceive that the axis of the sun or the axis of the earth might oscillate within the whorl, or the whorl itself might oscillate in its movement through space. It may be that the spiral nebulae are caused by immense rotational disturbances in the ether of space, and the flaming nebulae by gravitational stress.

I also conceive that physical matter which consists of infinitesimal units of energy could only, or most probably, find being in a centre like a whorl where the very high pressure of the ether was relieved. I conceive that physical matter itself is of the nature of bubbles in the ether and only possible because of their very minute size. I conceive that the physical unit of energy must be of the nature of a minute whorl or vortex, perhaps not unlike a smoke ring very much compacted; that the outer and inner lines of force run in opposite directions and constitute positive and negative electrical force, the energy being identical, the difference being directional and spatial, the inner lines indicating greater mass. I conceive that magnetism is of the nature of movement in the ether set up by the alignment of electrical force; that the movement may be sustained for long periods of time by momentum in a non-viscous substance such as the ether; and that the energy at the pole of a magnet is of the nature of a rotary or vortex movement in the ether of space.

I conceive that mass inheres in the unit of physical energy, and is equal to the energy exerted against

the pressure of the ether; in other words, equals the energy exerted by the displacement of the ether in so far as it is displaced. These units are very complex and, in some mysterious way, linked up with the ether of space; they have the capacity to reflect, refract or destroy ether waves.

Affinity would be connected with the dual character of these units as positive and negative. The method of the inter-locking of lines of force or energy may account for the characteristics of solid, liquid and more mobile combinations. Variety in the combinations of energy may well be infinite in character, but all governed by law.

I believe that, generally, what science has postulated about physical matter will hold good for physical energy.

I conceive that energy can be infinite in its manifestations; but there are three fundamental qualities—action, vibration and inertia. Energy is convertible into terms of heat, electricity and magnetism.

May we not presume that some being, developed far beyond the human stage and possessed of enormous will power, could by an act of Will set up or control these whorl centres with all their specialised energy?

Expressed in another way, I conceive this world in which we live, and in which consciousness is developing, to be the resultant of the thought of its Creator, sustained by His will and guided by a co-ordinating principal or impulse.

We do not know what Will is, but we do know that within our skins Will can effect movement and change in physical matter; whether this control is electrical, chemical or mechanical is beside the point. It may be that Will is the source or creator of all the phenomena that we call energy.

While science interests itself in all the phenomena connected with matter, and all the activities of life on the planet, it has no definite theory for the origin of matter or the genesis of life, and rightly does not pretend to tell us about the Creator.

The human animal has, all down the centuries, assumed that there must have been a Creator, and this concept of God has always been a reflection of the intelligence of humanity at that stage of its slow evolution. The older the myth or imagining of men, the more of authority it has carried. This is not difficult to understand. The priestly class are always prepared to tell the common man all about God; and for their purpose, the older the myth the better, as it cannot be easily refuted.

My speculations as to the origin and character of the physical world are only suggestions which may be right or wrong; in any event they touch only the fringe of world problems.

However fantastic they may seem to my readers, they may well be more probable than the speculations of a simple primitive people having little or no knowledge of natural phenomena, physics or the cosmic universe.

Some time after this chapter was written a friend called my attention to the vortex theories of Descartes (1596-1650). This great thinker held the theory that the sun was the centre of a vortex, and that the planets were the centres of subsidiary vortices within the solar vortex. This is very much like my own concept. Newton determined, with great skill, the laws which govern the action of gravitation; but neither of these great thinkers connected the cause of gravitation with the reduced pressure of the ether at vortex centres.

Descartes had a peculiar and interesting theory of three kinds of matter. The sun was composed of the first or finer class of matter, the space between the sun and the earth of the second class of matter, and the crusted planets of the third class. He believed that objects on the earth had weight because they were pushed towards the centre of the earth by the

THE FIELD OF CONSCIOUSNESS; PHYSICAL

second class of matter. This again is somewhat in alignment with my own theories. Perhaps Descartes failed to reach the full realisation or implication of his vortex theories because it was held as a period belief that nature abhors a vacuum.

Chapter 6

OTHER FIELDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Physicists are generally agreed that the last analysis of physical matter resolves itself into positive and negative electrical energy; and we know little about the essential nature of electricity or magnetism except that it is an expression or aspect of energy closely associated with the ether of space.

I conceive that energy is capable of infinite division and sub-division. When I speak of the subdivision of energy I mean units of energy and not necessarily reduction of power. Energy can no doubt act in an infinite variety of ways. We have different forms of the same energy in solids, liquids and gas. Gas, which is the more subtle, can display enormous power as in explosives, power engines, and the cumulative force of wind on water. I think it highly probable that physicists will some day discover that there are sub-divisions of what is now called gas. Our direct sensual contact with this substance is principally through our olfactory nerves; the variety of odours indicate a very great complexity in its nature. We have to suppose that a blossom can go on for days producing and throwing off a gas, but the perfume of a flower may be something much more subtle than a substance such as air or water vapour.

But I have been led away into a side track. What I wish to postulate is that energy of a more subtle kind may be the field of emotional activity, a still more subtle energy the field for thought, and there may

OTHER FIELDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

be many other and different fields for the expression of life or consciousness.¹

This theory of various fields of energy is not based on speculation; it is based on logical deductions from known facts. It is impossible to have activity of any kind without the play of energy; emotion and thought are as certainly forms of activity as sawing wood. The physical organism reacts to impulses initiated by the more subtle forms of energy.

All the fields of energy interpenetrate (this does not present spatial difficulty) and act and react upon each other, each with its own characteristic form of energy.

Scientists are familiar with the infinite combinations and transmutations of chemical energy or activity, but nutritive muscular and reproductive transmutations of physical energy into life processes can only be explained by the presence of another type of energy more subtle than the physical.

Consciousness has its genesis in contact with physical matter, but is not itself physical. In its first aspect consciousness is probably only a sense of being. Consciousness of being is awakened by activity in physical matter, aroused by the forces of nature which are constantly going on around us.

Consciousness of discomfort or well-being will follow and be the next step in unfolding consciousness. These sensations have their birth in contact with physical matter, but here a new form of energy is manifest which becomes obvious when we study the effect on physical matter of emotional activity. This energy is subtle, fluidic and vibratory in character; it does not take permanent shapes; it is

¹ I know of no word in the English language which connotes circumscribed special activities: I use the word 'field' for want of a better.

associated with, and must interpenetrate the physical as its effect is so intimate.

Consciousness or awareness slowly develops in this more subtle field through good or bad adjustment to its environment, i.e. temperature, nourishment, etc. The entity is conscious of being but has in addition thereto a sensory feeling. I class this as the first step from simple awareness of surroundings to awareness of a more subtle order. Under the pressure of the will to live, life begins to adjust itself to conditions of well-being—in other words, to satisfy a vague feeling of happiness or emotional stress.

In the vegetable kingdom the entity immersed in its natural food transmutes inorganic physical matter into an organised physical body, but not in accordance with any known physical law; there must enter into the process a more subtle form of energy which controls the metabolism. How the act of nutrition is performed is a mystery, but what actually happens is obvious. There can be no thought, or what we call intelligence, on the part of the entity, but there must be an urge to act, a will to function in a physical world, and to build a body of physical matter. Such activity has been going on for millions of years and is without doubt being *initiated* today all around us.

Reproduction and sex are equally simple (or equally mysterious if you prefer) in the initial stages. Segmentation would naturally follow growth. Physical energy is of two kinds, positive and negative, male and female. Differentiation into sex units and ever more complicated sexual forms would evolve. The biologist knows how gradually and with what mutations sex has developed.

Constant repetition of physical impacts under particular or differentiated conditions begins to stabilise or give character to various types of con-

OTHER FIELDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

consciousness. Physical matter forms a *point d'appui* for their coming and going.

Consciousness in the vegetable kingdom becomes more highly developed or specialised under the Will to live and co-ordinate its activities; there is always present an urge to fuller realisation or awareness and *pari passu* with this the organisation of improved physical bodies.

The constant destruction of these bodies is a necessary part of the path of progress. Consciousness gradually develops the more complex and specialised types of bodies which we call species; these in the beginning are determined by environment.

With the experience gained, perhaps through millions of years, in the vegetable kingdom, the more advanced types might pass on into the lower types of the animal kingdom.

The progressive change from the vegetable kingdom to the animal kingdom is so gradual that there is no definite border line, but advanced consciousness in the vegetable kingdom may not have to pass through the lowest stages of the animal kingdom.

An oak tree is a very highly organised entity. When an acorn has lain on the moist ground for some time, a shoot (nourished by the food stored in the acorn) is sent out from the pointed end. This shoot, which is to form the stem or trunk and the roots of the tree, always bends or turns its pointed end straight for the moist soil. To say that this is instinct is to explain nothing; 'instinct' is a word which is used as a cloak for ignorance. There are at least 179 wrong directions that the shoot could take, but it has, at this early stage of its existence, sufficient intelligence to take the right one. I will not weary the reader with a description of the manifold activities of an oak tree, but it must be highly intelligent in

order to instruct the different cells to carry out their various duties, right up to the point when food is stored in the new acorns with which they are to carry on the family traditions.

Vegetable life is highly organised to meet conditions of environment, but its nervous system is such that only the first glimmering of emotional consciousness is developing. This consciousness has its flowering in the field of emotional energy when it has arrived at the animal stage of evolution; there all the common emotions are well developed; the nervous organisation of the physical body permits of a high degree of pleasure and pain and love and hatred with all their variations are well developed.

The animal kingdom sees the first glimmering dawn of thought consciousness; but here life enters upon another field of energy a whole stage higher or more subtle than the emotional energy. Emotion and thought are two different and distinct things, by analogy as different as solid and liquid or liquid and gas, but much more fundamental in character.

Humanity begins with a well-developed emotional consciousness or body functioning in the field of emotional energy and, at the beginning, a very feeble thought or mind consciousness, functioning in the field of thought energy. Through the process of repeated reincarnations, the emotional activities become more refined, and the capacity for thinking become more highly developed.¹

¹ Owing to the perversion of human thought by religious teaching, people who reincarnate once in every twenty-four hours will insist that this fact, which is obvious in nature, is a delusion.

Incarnat—Clothed or invested with flesh: embodied in flesh. Eng. *Inc.* Re-in-carn (flesh).

The soul—spirit or ego, or whatever you choose to call the conscious entity, leaves the body on going to sleep and returns on awaking literally reincarnates.

OTHER FIELDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Emotion and thought are clearly differentiated in nature by the animal and human kingdoms. Anyone who carefully studies their own emotions and thoughts will discover the difference. Emotional activity is of the nature of sensation or feeling; thought is of the nature of creative activity; concrete thought is the making of images out of thought substance or thought energy. One cannot think, let us say, of a white horse without making a thought image, however vague it may be, of a white horse. No doubt these images become more clearly defined as the individual progresses. The artist is able to hold an image long enough to depict it.¹

Abstract thinking is only possible for the more advanced ego. Abstract thinking takes cognisance of something outside of the thinker either as a quality or a grouping of things, and still has the character of imagery of his own creating. Thought takes cognisance of relationships and is very complex in character, but it never has the character of feeling or sensation.

¹ Re Thought-images, it may be argued that these images are produced by an impulse of the organs of vision, a reflection, so to speak, as by a mirror, of previous experiences. This would be to ascribe a creative capacity to physical matter, and is no more likely than that brain cells can pass judgment on correlated facts of nature or experience.

Chapter 7

THE FUNCTIONING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

If nature is looked at from the angle of developing consciousness one cannot help but admire the wonderful arrangement whereby consciousness is brought to unfoldment.

Man does not interfere with the life in the jungle; there nature's own plan of evolution goes on uninterrupted; competition for existence is so keen as to promote intense activity. The leaf or blade of grass that pushes itself up above its companions shuts out some of the sunlight and air from its fellows. Animal life must be alert, intensely aware, in order to maintain physical existence.¹

The development of sex stimulates emotional consciousness: this is probably true of the vegetable kingdom as well as the animal. Without doubt the oak tree gets a thrill when the showers of golden pollen fall on the tiny pink blossoms.

Under the pressure of the Will to live and guided by the co-ordinating principle, this ceaseless activity must progressively develop consciousness. How would the reader design a world better calculated to arouse consciousness?

In the human kingdom, emotion is further stimulated by thought, and the life of the jungle is raised to the *n*th degree. Nature in the raw is only thinly disguised by what we call refinement; the breakfast plate of bacon is not smeared with the blood of the slaughtered pig, and the meat at dinner is not cut up with the same knife that cut the animal's throat.

¹ In nature a balance is always kept. Beasts of prey protect the vegetation from being destroyed by herbivorous animals.

THE FUNCTIONING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

But fear, jealousy, suspicion, hatred, cruelty and war have always gone on among human animals and show little sign of ceasing.

Development in the three energy fields of consciousness is indicated biologically in the human kingdom. The first development of the human embryo, segmentation and multiplicity of cells, partakes of the nature of vegetable life. The first few years of the child's life (with the exception of speech) are little more than animal. The activities are all physical and emotional. It is only later on that the brain organism permits of reasoned thought.

The records of the rocks tell us again the story of expanding consciousness. Fossil remains of algae, trilobite, mastodon and man show that consciousness is not a thing produced or created miraculously in a moment but is the product of slow growth.

Bodies do not improve automatically; improvement is the result of the animating life ever seeking a larger field of awareness.

The emotional body is a necessary link between thought activity and the physical brain. While thought and emotion are two distinct things, thought is inseparable from emotion, as the emotional energy field must form a bridge to the physical brain during waking consciousness. We have an analogy in that a gas such as water vapour must pass through the liquid stage to be solidified. But it is clearly indicated in that great emotional stress inhibits thought.

Many details of our experience point to the fact that the emotional energy field is a bridge between thought and the physical organism, as, for instance, when one is eagerly trying to recall a particular word, which will not come into the mind until the eager desire has subsided. In playing games the mind instructs the body as to what it has to do; but

if the player is too agitated by fear or exceptional eagerness, the result is failure.

Another argument for the emotional organism being a bridge between thought activity and brain consciousness is the fact that emotional stress set up in childhood (as, for instance, by religious teaching) usually prevents rational thought on that particular subject being exercised throughout the life of the individual. Highly intelligent people are often absolutely unable to discuss certain subjects. This is sometimes called 'prejudice'; but the fact is that when the fixed idea is challenged, emotional stress is set up and rational thought is inhibited.

Pleasure and pain are not a function of thought, but may be produced either by thought or by physical impact.

The emotional field also has form which is cast in the matrix of the physical world. It is fluid, protean and kaleidoscopic; here without the physical body consciousness finds itself without anchorage.

In what we call 'waking consciousness' the physical body dominates sensation by reason of its stability, and gives us the more acute sense of reality; by analogy, the solid earth is more stable than the sea or air, but the one element is just as real as the other.

We know little as yet about the qualities of emotional or mental energy. They may have qualities in some measure corresponding with those of physical energy.

Repetition of experience in time secures fixed characteristics in the entity, which we call instinct in the animal or character in the human. Life has to begin all over again with each new body, but owing to the practice in previous lives the earlier stages are gone over rapidly in the more advanced species. All details of previous lives are forgotten, but the

THE FUNCTIONING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

abstract or essence of experience carries on. We need not be surprised at this as we can see the principle at work in a single life. Let us say that a workman has been careless in his work: he suddenly finds that he prospers better by doing good work. Or a business man learns that it pays him to be strictly honest. So life takes on a new orientation which becomes a habit and an element of character.

If we can change our lives in this way in a single lifetime, is it not fair to suppose that some element of character may be carried over to subsequent lives? An individual may devote a lifetime to developing a particular faculty, say music; he will start the next life with only one note, a baby's whine—but will quickly develop what we call a talent for music.

Since we are aware of unfolding consciousness in ever more and more subtle media, may we not suppose that there is a consciousness of a higher order still, life functioning in a world of which we know little or nothing?

Many people believe that there is an intuitional consciousness more subtle and more authoritative than the world of thought; but here one should walk warily. Desire has a very subtle way of colouring thought. Forms of hallucination are many and diverse. Idealism, reinforced by desire and prolonged over a period of time, produces an unbalanced mental state. Many religious beliefs are such, imposed on the child in infancy and strengthened by an organised system of thought with an authority having all the weight of centuries behind it.

In such circumstances we find the mystic, to whom the world of ideation reinforced by desire becomes more real than the objective world around him. Mystics are not confined to the Christian religion. They are found in all of the great religions. There is even the anti-Christian mystic, such as Nietzsche.

If there is another field of consciousness, it is not to be approached in that way. This intuitional field will be more subtle than the mental in which thought functions. In order to attune to it, it will be necessary to still the clamour of the coarser vibrations; for the physical body has insistent demands, the emotional world of pleasure and pain is ever active, thought is dominating and burning with its own concepts and conceits. How, then, can we ever know with certainty of the activities of a still more subtle world, or even know that such a world exists?

As we know that consciousness is aroused in the familiar fields of energy by struggle, defeats and conquests, it may be that this other world is contacted in the same way. It may be developed from grief and sorrow or from a greater appreciation of the harmonious and beautiful: in any event it will only come to the awake and alert and not to the sluggish and indifferent.

Such a world cannot be taken by storm nor by effort or an act of will: nor by following a formula, ethical or otherwise. It is not likely to be arrived at by concentrated thought, by the development of occult or clairvoyant faculties, by religious methods or the ways of the visionary dreamer. We shall know this consciousness by its larger freedom from all these, by its spontaneity, by a more vivid realisation of life. We shall know it as something new and, in itself, vital.

By analogy we may suppose that its presence may be feebly felt at first, and only by persons of great refinement of thought and feeling. It may well be that humanity will have to wait for another race to be evolved with a more refined type of body before this higher consciousness shall have its flowering.

The pioneers of such a race are not likely to have

THE FUNCTIONING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

a happy time. They will be misunderstood. To the mass of mankind they may seem irrational beings; but they will have attained an order of self-consciousness of which we know little now.

Chapter 8

RÉSUMÉ

I will endeavour to put the meaning of the foregoing chapters into a brief *résumé*.

We live on a tiny speck of non-luminous cosmic dust in a universe which is seemingly boundless. We are an infinitesimal part of the whole.

I do not believe that our world is the product of chance, that it just happened. We must therefore postulate a Creator—a God. The world must have had its genesis in his ideation and be sustained by his Will, and moulded or shaped by a universal impulse or law of co-ordination of parts.

That we can have any definite knowledge or understanding of the Creator is, however, obviously far beyond the capacity of humanity at our stage of evolution.

One should try to understand the life of which we are a part rather than accept the crude ideas of primitive people. When we study nature and the life around us, we note that there is a progressive continuity in the stages of development; as progress is the result of experience, we infer that all life is steadily evolving; and that consciousness,—all consciousness—is conserved and comes again and again into physical bodies.

I believe that the conscious entities, seeking a larger field of experience, are continually improving the physical bodies and functioning in ever more subtle fields of energy.

It seems probable, moreover, that there are many orders of beings superior to man who have no further use for a physical body.

RÉSUMÉ

We find ourselves immersed in fields of energy with which we function and carry on all the varied activities of life.

Physical energy has a structural or form characteristic; emotional energy is of the nature of vibratory activity, and thought energy has a conceptual or form characteristic.

We find further that energy is slowed up or stabilised in point of time in the physical world to enable consciousness or awareness to have its inception, and that all consciousness is conserved and carries on from the vegetable kingdom to the animal kingdom and from the animal kingdom to the human kingdom.

Emotional consciousness has its feeble beginning in the vegetable, its fuller expression in the animal, along with the first glimmerings of thought consciousness. Man has developed thought consciousness and functions in three worlds or field of energy. We believe that the next field of energy is more subtle than thought and is of the vibratory or feeling character; that the more advanced individuals of the race are feebly functioning in this thinner atmosphere; that man may have the beginnings of an independent will; that all nature obeys the Divine will to act, man not excepted; that the spirit of co-ordination is immanent in our world and innate in every human being, and in all living things; and that the will to live should work together with the will to let live, the humanitarian impulse being given fullest expression. I believe that the human entity continues to reincarnate until he reaches a stage of perfection when he will have no further use for a physical body.

Fundamentally there is little in what I have been saying that is new; it is rather, as I have said before, another outlook on life. The usual approach to the

subject is, in common parlance, that man has a soul, as if the body was the man and the soul an adjunct, and as if all other life was ephemeral and subservient to the uses of man. I deem the lower kingdoms as essential to the Plan as the human kingdom.

I postulate that the centre of consciousness is the essential man and the various fields of energy the place or condition in which he and all other life evolves. The field is ephemeral and consciousness is progressively permanent.

There is a duality,—consciousness and environment, vaguely called spirit and matter, soul and body; but these I trust have been more carefully defined.

There are, and must remain, narrowly prescribed limits to our knowledge of the universe and our place in it. Any outlook on life, however, which does not recognise the transcendental is a truncated philosophy.

I shall in a later chapter draw some conclusions as to morality deduced from these concepts.

PART TWO

Chapter 9

ACQUISITIVENESS

*One man increases his property and encloses it,
another increases his knowledge and is bound by it.*

KRISHNAMURTI

In the unfoldment of life or consciousness, 'getting' is a prime mover; it is universal and fundamental.

As I write, on this June morning, the grass, the trees and the whole menagerie of life around me is busy getting something.

The tree whose branches wave in the breeze above my head is eagerly drawing in substance from the air; each fluttering leaf is getting food, and the tree is adding cell to cell in bole and branch and bud—growing in stature. The insects which fret its leaves are 'getting'; the birds in its branches are 'getting'; the beasts in the distant fields are busy "getting" all day long.

Is it any wonder, then, that man at the pinnacle of this pyramid of life is also acquisitive? He starts life with a sucking instinct which opens the first chapter of his existence with getting, and the story ends when he is old and grey, clinging tenaciously to his possessions. Perhaps he is pious and is planning to get a good place in heaven when he can no longer get anything more here.

From youth to old age he is continually getting; getting stature, getting pleasure, getting an education, getting knowledge, getting security, getting religion, getting a job, getting friends,

and perhaps, consciously or unconsciously, getting wisdom.

Concomitantly with getting is the anxiety to hold. No one escapes it. There is a story which comes from the East of a wise king. Among the many who came to him for instruction was a Sannyasi. While the king and his pupil were talking in the Royal Park, news was brought to them that the Royal Palace was on fire. The king went on with his teaching, but he noticed that the pupil was restless and not listening, so he enquired as to the cause. The Sannyasi replied that his spare loin cloth was in the Palace laundry.¹

A thing so fundamental as getting must, in itself, be good. In fact, it is difficult to see any other way by which action could be instituted or sustained. Action is also fundamental and necessary to any progressive development of consciousness. Action is inseparable from all the progress which goes on in the world.

We know how in all human affairs the urge to get spurs on to action—the desire for wealth, the ambition for power the craving to acquire knowledge.

In the getting by the individual two purposes are usually served: one, advantage to the community which he must serve in the getting, and the other to himself. The struggle develops individual growth or expansion of consciousness—the something which we call capacity or character, that which we carry over from one life to the next.

‘Laurel crowns cling to deserts and power to him who power exerts.’

We cannot carry over from one life to the next an account at the bank, or a position in society, or acquired knowledge, but no doubt we come back

¹ A Sannyasi is a man who has relinquished all worldly possessions, with the desire to get something else, namely, release from the wheel of birth and death.

ACQUISITIVENESS

with an increased capacity to acquire these things again, and also with an increased appreciation of moral or ethical values.

The boy gets something each day at school, although it may be from the playground rather than from his books. Under the iron hand of necessity we are all compelled to get; we must get food, shelter, clothing and many other things. Prudence and common sense dictate that there should be **some** holding or hoarding.

Shall we then build altars to acquisitiveness? Before we do so we might look at the defects of the system, the reverse of the coin.

When the 'getting' habit gets out of hand and swells to abnormal proportions it becomes a disease. There is the fever of the business man to get excessive profits; others painfully struggle to get into high places, urged on by personal or family pride. The anxiety about the possible loss of property or power is as painful as a cancer. The miser who hoards and gloats over his wealth, stunts his own growth. The pious soul who shapes his whole life to secure a reward in heaven is suffering from a disease.

The victims of these ailments are not usually conscious of the disease. It is accepted as a matter of course along with other human ills, with the difference that the doctor is not called in.

I hear my readers say 'there is giving as well as getting'. In nature this giving is for the propagation of the species, and is no doubt accompanied by the getting of pleasure.

'By this increase your kind: be this the milch cow of your desire' (*Bhagavad Gita*).

The sexual epithalamium is always accompanied by an exquisite realisation of pleasure—no doubt from its inception in the vegetable kingdom; there it often finds expression in beautiful forms, ovule

and stamen and pollen ringed around with petals as in a gay garment. Nor is the sacrifice of parenthood unaccompanied by the getting of joy. Perhaps there is no pleasure partaking so much of the quality of Divine love as that of motherhood. The Supreme Ruler of the Universe must give of his essence in the maintenance of his world, and no doubt finds pleasure therein, or he would not do it.

Social economy is such that, for the most part, people have also to give. The merchant, the baker and the candle-stick maker all give of their services to the community. Besides giving good services all can give cheerfulness, encouragement and love.

There is a difference between conscious and unconscious action—between thoughtful awareness and primitive impulses. No doubt our individual progress can be quickened by conscious effort; but to become conscious means that we must be aware of our inherited propensities and all our reactions to circumstance.

A man is like a swimmer in a strong current; unless he is alert he may be carried on by the flow of the tide and not know where he is; he may be going round and round in a whirlpool life after life and making but little progress.

Can a man know himself, and find in the tangle of emotional threads the one which, for him, is in alignment with God's plan?

There must be intelligent awareness; ethical values cannot be seen in their right perspective if looked at through glasses coloured by old familiar customs and usage. We should try to discover whether or not we are being moved by impulses which are the vestigial remains of our savage ancestry.

Chapter 10

THE ICONOCLAST

I was standing in a street watching workmen demolishing an old and dilapidated building. They were enveloped in a cloud of dust; with each swing of the pick or shovel a mixture of dirt and disintegrated plaster rose up to fill the lungs of the worker. The noise made by their tools was punctuated at intervals by the rattle and thud of falling masonry, when a larger cloud of dust would almost obscure the workmen.

I wondered how many years a man could live and do this kind of labour. I wondered also what dire necessity compelled them to choose such a vocation.

The circumstance passed from my mind until some months later, when, as I was passing through the street again, I saw a beautiful new building standing on the site; clean and resplendent it looked in the sunlight. The thought came to me, how necessary it is to have someone who will destroy the old and outworn in order to permit of the building of the new.

This is the work of the iconoclast. It is necessary at times to get old rubbish out of the minds of men before more beautiful things can take their place. Men in the past who have elected to do this work have lived strenuous lives and sometimes very brief ones. No one can challenge customs and institutions hoary with age without inviting trouble for themselves,—without rising a dust.

Socrates applied thought to life's many problems and propounded his theories of moral law. This was a challenge to the pious people of his day and they had him put to death. Jesus of Nazareth gave to the

people of Palestine a (to them) new and more beautiful system of ethics. The religious people of his day saw in it a danger to their orthodox beliefs and they plotted and procured his death. With the advance, in modern times, of scientific knowledge many of the old religious beliefs and traditions have been proved fallacious, and the religious orders have lost the power to pronounce the death sentence. In times past it was deemed a virtuous act to punish the unbeliever for his unbelief; it was done to please a punitive God and stay his anger. With the better education of the people has come a greater indifference to religious teaching and a more humane outlook on life.¹

People are no longer terrified with the threat of Hell fire or bought with the promises of a future Heaven. Thus it is that modern iconoclasts, such as Thomas Paine, Huxley, Bradlaugh, Ingersoll and others, have not been hounded to death, although they have come in for a lot of virulent abuse.

I have no doubt but that those men who toiled in the dirt to demolish the old building saw something more in their labour than the pay at the end of the week. I believe that all labour finds a supplementary reward in the dignity of honest toil, and in the feeling that it is doing something of service to mankind.

And the iconoclast is content to put up with the jibes and insults of the thoughtless crowd if he has been able to destroy some outworn illusions in order to make room for new aspects of truth.

¹ It is a fact that the humanitarian spirit has grown and expanded inversely with the decline of the power and authority of the Church.

Chapter II

GODS

Put away all gods, and you shall find Truth.

KRISHNAMURTI

All the gods whom men worship are made in the image of man. This must be so, whether it is the god of a savage or of a saint.

When a Supreme Ruler is pictured by the imagination of an individual, it must take the shape of its creator. The gods so created will have the limitations of their creator, they will have the faults and failings as well as the virtues of their creator. All religious history confirms this.

Individuals, tribes and nations, seeking self-aggrandisement, have cruel and jealous gods—gods which delight in blood sacrifices, or the persecution of heretics, or the suppression of those who do not bow to them. Is it not obvious that any concept which a human being can have of a Supreme Ruler of the universe must be a limited one?

We now know that we live in a universe thousands of millions of light years in extent; that our solar system is only one of countless millions of such systems; that our dwelling-place in this stupendous scheme of things is a tiny speck of cosmic dust hurtling through space at an incredible speed.

There may be one Supreme Ruler of it all, but if there is we can have but the faintest conception of his being or of his attributes. In any event, it is childish to suppose that he interferes in a personal way with the individuals of this planet.

Forty thousand people are killed in an earthquake, most of them appealing to their personal

Gods; earthquakes, pestilence and famine were ascribed to the will of God until men discovered that they were the result of natural causes.

We live in a world of which we do not know the beginning, the end or the purposes thereof; we do not believe that it is fortuitous, therefore we postulate a design and a designer—God. The child or the primitive man, using only concrete thought, will conceive a powerful being at some place in the universe, perhaps sitting on a throne and directing the affairs of the world. A saint will form an abstract concept of God as a being having all the beautiful attributes of which he can conceive, still, a being who can be moved by prayer and is pleased with worship—in short, a God with personal sympathies and human limitations.

Human nature is such that it has a constant tendency to personify any unknown invisible power. When the early Greek navigators had their frail ships dashed to pieces on the rocks by tempests which they could not control, Neptune became a necessity. The fortuitous circumstance called for a God—an unseen power. Could not this God be placated by gifts, offerings or prayers? It soon became a habit to perform supplicational ceremonial before a voyage was undertaken. A certain crafty element in the communal life would seize upon this opportunity for personal aggrandisement, and the professional priest came into power. *He* could perform the ceremony in the right way, *he* understood God, *he* would be the mediator. This suited the unthinking and superstitious mariner, and the priest ultimately became a power only inferior to the tribal chief or king.

In all mythology the forces of evil are personified. The Devil, or Satan, is a god of limited power. Those gods which are the oldest, the most hoary with age, are supposed to be the best or most authoritative.

GODS

If this god of tradition goes back to some illiterate, ignorant, nomadic tribe who lived some thousands of years ago, it must be the right thing; but, as a matter of fact, our gods, like our dwelling places, are constantly undergoing change. This is fortunate. The general belief of Christendom is that we worship the God of the Ancient Hebrews, but this is not so. The God of the Ancient Hebrews loved the emanations from freshly spilt blood and roast meat; he was a jealous and revengeful God whose punitive method was to crush and destroy.¹

I believe that we now have a better God than that. Is it not true that with the growth of the humanitarian spirit the gods improve?

Although our God is not so brutal as Jahwe there are still many people who are afraid of him; like children who are afraid of the bogey man in the dark passage, they fear that God will do them some harm if they speak disrespectfully of him; they believe that God is a quick-tempered being who will punish anyone who blasphemes or says aught against him. This fear has been fostered by the priestly class throughout the ages; witch doctor, priest and preacher have used this bludgeon to keep their followers at heel.

¹ All the Jewish prophets believed in a revengeful God. Because the people had sinned and 'burned incense to other Gods'. Jeremiah put into the mouth of God threats which would have disgraced Hitler. Read Jeremiah Ch. 1 v. 9. 'And the Lord said unto me "behold I have put my words in thy mouth". Ch. 7 v. 20. 'Therefore saith the Lord God "Behold mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon the place, upon man and upon beast, and upon the trees in the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." Ch. 5 v. 33. 'And the carcasses of the people shall be meat for the fowls of the heavens, and for the beasts of the fields.'

Both Amos and Ezekiel attributed punitive and malevolent acts to God.

There is still another form of Deity that we have created. Whenever in the past a great soul has incarnated with a new message of enlightenment and wisdom for suffering humanity (although at the time opposed, and sometimes put to death) after a few centuries he has been made a God and worshipped. And so the teaching is glossed over by the worship of the personality.

The most potent cause of our belief in our particular God is that we are taught it as children and have the belief instilled into us with our mother's milk. We are told that it is wicked to question, that we must accept it on faith and that terrible things will happen to us if we dare to think otherwise.

This process builds in each one an irresistible wall which we call prejudice, a subconscious emotional background, and when the subject of God is present, very powerful feelings are aroused and rational thought on the subject is inhibited.

If any one of the Archbishops of Canterbury or any one of the Popes had been taken as babes and brought up in a pious Muslim or Hindu family, they would have had different gods and they would honestly have believed that the Christian religion was very poor medicine.

Why do we have gods?

We live in a seemingly fortuitous world, a world of chance. We do not know from day to day what misfortune may overtake us. We live in fear. We have brief moments of pleasure, but we know that sickness, sorrow, pain and death are just around the corner waiting for us. Under these circumstances it is comforting to think that we have a good and powerful God who will look after us if we worship him. A personal God is an opiate. We make ourselves believe in him in order to mitigate our sorrow and fears. It is wish fulfilment. We are only too glad

GODS

to accept any old musty tradition about God, and we will pay generously anyone who pretends that he has a speaking acquaintance with God and can tell us just what God wants us to do, so that we may have preferential treatment.

We do not want any rational explanations of our troubles, or lessons from experience, or a better understanding of life; we want a personal God to comfort us. Human nature is such that it is always seeking a cure for its ills; but it is slow in its search for causes, and so we postulate a Supreme Ruler and invest him with causation.

Every human being who contemplates the stellar universe or the fabrication of a blade of grass must be moved with a feeling of awe and wonder. There are moments when, stirred by some uncommon inspiration, we are lifted out of the hum-drum of ordinary events and seem to realise a better, more serene and beautiful existence.

We know that there is a power and wisdom greater than our own that guides if it does not impel: that behind all of the changing phenomena of life there must be a permanent reality which may be called God, or any name you like. But why should this profound sense of awe and mystery be capitalised and exploited as it is in the world today?

Chapter 12

THE WORLD OF SPIRITS

Many years ago I knew a man who said that he had conversations with God. He told me in a confidential way what he had said to God and what God had said to him. As he had not been ordained, it was thought by his relatives and friends to be an irregular and dangerous thing for him to have communion with God: the alienists seemed to agree, and he was placed under restraint.

This unfortunate man was one of a goodly company—the Hebrew prophets, Joan of Arc and thousands of others. Socrates had a daemon or invisible guide. And there is always the voice of conscience speaking to those who will listen.

Normally, those entities with physical bodies and those without are separated into more or less closed compartments. I have no doubt that this is all for the best: one world at a time is usually enough for anyone. There are, however, many individuals who for some occult reason or circumstance have the faculty of clairvoyance or of clairaudience, and can get in touch with disembodied entities. There is reason to believe that this has always been so and that it forms the basis of what is called ancestor worship.

These abnormal faculties do not seem to be confined to any one strata of society; they are as likely to occur with people of low mentality as with any others. Anyone who cares to investigate the phenomena with an open mind will, I feel certain, be convinced that such communications do take place, and that even more startling phenomena occur.

GODS

It is an unfortunate circumstance that many simple and credulous people, when they have communications of this character, jump to the conclusion that it is the voice of God or of the angels, or at least of some great historical personage, which they hear when it is more likely than not to be some one as ignorant and childish as themselves. When people die they do not suddenly become knowing and wise; they are just such folk as they were before, and know just as much or as little as they did then of the mystery of life and death. When, as in certain circumstances, they can get in touch with their friends who are in physical bodies, their communications may be trivial or important, just as they would have been when they were alive.

It is my belief that many disembodied entities greatly enjoy practical jokes and like to impersonate God or whomsoever takes their fancy. Sometimes they are vicious and lead their victims a pretty dance, and there is no means of checking their identity with any certainty. On the other hand, there are great beings who watch over and guide humanity and who help people in difficult circumstances. It will be easily understood that such beings are not normally interested in spiritualistic séances and trivial demonstrations.

I have no doubt that primitive man heard the voices of his ancestors clairaudiently. Ethical considerations did not usually enter into these earlier messages; some ancestors were good and helpful, some were bad and to be feared. Around certain names there grew up in time tradition, myth and miracle which, no doubt, led to the earliest forms of worship. Animism would develop along with it; the primitive mind could not easily grasp or hold abstract ideas; that is why sticks and stones and animals were given magical powers. It was necessary

to have an anchorage for the concept. These earlier aspects of religion survive today in the many forms of supernaturalism.

For any communications from spirits to take place, both the sender and the recipient must be of an order of intelligence capable of understanding each other. A philosopher or a man of science might not be able to make himself understood by a man of little intelligence even when both have physical bodies, and in spirit communications there are other difficulties. Raymond could not speak direct to his father, Sir Oliver Lodge; there were always one or two intermediaries. If thought is to be transferred successfully, the medium for the transfer must be able to comprehend the thoughts which are the subject of the communication. A peasant, for instance, would be a poor medium through which to convey a message from one great intellect to another; he might not understand mathematical equations or hypothetical postulates. There are other difficulties. The language of the spirit world has no consonants or vowels; words are not communicated by sounds such as we perceive with our ears, but by word concepts.

‘The words were hard to understand’.

Symbols and images, more often than not, take the place of words; time and space have a different significance and there is a bewildering mixture of objective and subjective phenomena.

Some years ago I gave considerable time to the investigation of spirit phenomena, but I could not discover that it ‘got you anywhere’. I found that while some information from this source was good, other statements and predictions were proved inaccurate. Communications from spirits should be received with the same measure of credulity that we

GODS

would give to information from any other source. I also learned that there is a very serious danger to some types of individual who dabble in it. Personally I would undergo prolonged and painful suffering of any kind rather than become a controlled medium.

But if communication with disembodied entities is difficult, the world of thought is like an open book to those who can receive its message. The thoughts which Plato and Emerson entertained are not lost to the world of today. It is not necessary to know or speak the Greek language in order to commune with Socrates; the qualification is that one shall have a mind of the same order of intelligence. a receiver tuned to the same wave length. I believe that all the true and beautiful thoughts that have ever found expression are still alive and active today.

Waves in the ether can go round the Earth seven times in a second; it is my belief that thought waves are a thousand times faster. Language, time and distance do not present barriers.

Chapter 13

ENERGY, SPACE AND TIME

There is much nonsense written about time being a fourth dimension. What we know about either space or time is the result of reactions in consciousness to the phenomena, and rational deductions therefrom. Whether we treat these elements subjectively or objectively, the result is a fundamental difference in their character.

A child soon learns spatial relationship and does not try to grasp the moon; a clearer comprehension of the realities of time is acquired later in life.

Space is a static condition of nature, a prerequisite of all activity. It can be measured by any arbitrary standard of length in three dimensions only. Time is not static, it is moving. To the individual, time marches with the sequence of events marked by changes in the states of consciousness. It has extension, which we recognise as the past and from which we infer the future; this cannot properly be called dimension.

We have no yard-stick with which to measure time, except activity, and all activity is the product of energy. Energy is as much an unknown and indeterminate factor as time. Thus we arrive at the mathematician's frequent formula whereby one unknown quantity is said to equal another unknown quantity.

Movement in space may vary from that of the slowest planet or fragment of cosmic matter up to the speed of light, or even faster; these movements have a definite relation in space to objective time, but this does not give time a spatial characteristic.

The two concepts of space and time do not lend themselves to any fourth dimensional hypothesis. To call space and time continuum is without significance. The speed of light is also without significance in this connection.

The usual fourth dimensional theories leave energy out of the equation; but energy may be as much a continuum as time or space. While the mind refuses to grasp the concept of a limit to space or time, that is, an extension to which there is no beyond, we are able to conceive of energy as being exhaustible, but we have no proof that it is so. Astronomers believe that the energy of the sun is being dissipated, but it may very well be that somewhere in the universe that energy is being conserved. Some of the energy that was used in the deposit of carbon in the coal measures millions of years ago can be recovered today. The physicist's theories of entropy ignore the organising functions of life or consciousness. A clock cannot run down unless it has first been wound up. It may very well be that the dis-organisation of a beam of sunlight, when it is intercepted by physical matter, makes possible the utilisation of this energy by conscious life to build physical bodies, entropy, in this case, resulting in a higher type of organisation.

Energy is a fundamental factor equally with space and time. Without energy there could be no action, and without action there would be no perception of either space or time; they would cease to be subjective phenomena for any one.¹

The orthodox physicist likes, as he believes, to keep his feet on the ground. If he can make a mathe-

¹ This theory does not dispose of space and time in consciousness—the fruit of experience in a phenomenal world. The concepts of space and time would persist in another world along with the realisation of beauty, virtue and love.

AS I SEE LIFE

mathematical formula with the aid of the square root of minus one, which is workable, he prefers it to a plunge into the transcendental, or the recognition of consciousness as a thing more substantial than physical matter.

Chapter 14

WATER THE WONDERFUL

The more I learn about the physical world in which we live, the more I marvel. It seems to me as if its molecular structure has been specially designed for the functioning of life.

We know that there is adaptation on the part of life; but I cannot evade the thought that the field for life has been especially designed by an omniscient Designer.

I marvel at the wonderful properties of water. I marvel that such an extraordinary medium should have been devised for a bridge between solid earth and the air. I marvel at the capillary action of water which, overcoming the force of gravity, mounts to the top of the tallest trees.

I marvel at the clouds which keep their appointed places in the skies and do not trail in damp disordered ranks along the landscape.

I marvel at the arrangement whereby the invisible water vapour is raised from the seas and transported over the land to provide the conditions for life thereon.

I marvel at the mysterious law of latent heat whereby tropical seas are cooled and the land areas are warmed, and whereby the temperature of our bodies is prevented from soaring far beyond fever heat.

I marvel that the law of contraction by cold is reversed when ice crystals are formed, so that our lakes are frozen at the top instead of at the bottom.

I marvel at the ubiquitous element that functions

AS I SEE LIFE

in every blade of grass, every fluttering leaf and every throb of the heart.

I marvel at the ethereal beauty of the clouds, the symmetry of the snowflake, at the mirrored loveliness of the lakes and rivers, and the majesty of the ocean.

Chapter 15

SOME ILLUSIONS

We look out of our eyes at a world upside down. The lens of the eye inverts every image, the brain transposes it. You can prove this by pressing with your fingers on the top of the eyeball when in the dark. You will see a luminous glow caused by the pressure, but the brain from force of habit will transpose it and the glow will appear on the lower side of the eyeball.

We see two distinct and different images with our two eyes; they are blended into one by the brain. Hold your finger sideways a few inches from your face, and you will be able to see with one eye a finger having a fingernail and with the other a finger without.¹

¹ The advantage of having two eyes is that we can judge the distances of various objects. It gives us what is called stereoscopic vision. Although we are only conscious of seeing one object or picture at the time, the brain takes cognisance of the difference in the two images and thereby judges the distances of various objects.

On noticing the continual backward and forward movement of pigeons' heads, I came to the conclusion that this movement is made by the bird for the purpose of obtaining stereoscopic vision. The pigeon method would cause objects in the foreground to have a rotary to and fro movement in relation to the distant background. They could in this way tell if a cat was near enough to be dangerous.

The pigeon method must require a lot of energy, but the result is probably a great deal better than by the human method. The pigeon can see things on two sides of its head, while we can only see on one side of our heads, and also because the apparent movement of objects in the foreground would be active, as against our own passive system of judging by outlines only.

The sun shines as hot in the winter as it does in the summer.

We are conscious of only one perpendicular, but our perpendicular is constantly changing. When you get out of bed, say at 7 a.m., you stand erect, but before you are dressed, both you and the house you live in will be standing at an acute angle with the previous perpendicular. At lunch time (1 o'clock) you will be standing at right angles, and at 7 p.m. you and your house will be upside down.

You may have left your house at 9 a.m., made a journey of a few miles during the day. You may not have been conscious of going far, but when you return again at, say, 9 p.m. your house will be at least three quarters of a million miles from where you left it in the morning.¹

The Ancients supposed that the sun and the stars moved over their heads. We still say that 'the sun goes down in the West and comes up in the East'. But it does nothing of the kind. We go down in the East and come up in the West. It is the moving horizon which produces the sunset.

At sunrise we are rushing towards the sun at a speed of a thousand miles per hour, and at sunset we are rushing away from it at the same speed.

Most people suppose that we live on the surface of the planet, but the surface is far above our heads. We live at the bottom of a sea of air which is pressing upon our bodies with a terrific force—something like

¹ Sitting comfortably in our chairs we are totally unconscious that we are moving at a terrific speed through space—about one hundred times the speed of a rifle bullet. If our bodies were passing through the air at that speed they would be burned to a cinder. The ether of space is extremely mobile, but if we were displacing the ether at such a speed I think there would be trouble for us. It is my opinion that we travel with the ether.

SOME ILLUSIONS

twenty thousand pounds for the entire surface of the body.

Nearly everyone supposes that the sunshine warms the air. Well, it may warm it a little but it is very little. The air is warmed by the convection of heat from various surfaces, only indirectly by the sunshine.

People will tell you that they see the steam coming from an engine or a kettle of boiling water, but no one has seen a particle of steam since the world began. It is suspended water that you see.

It is not the hammer which drives the nail into the wood; it is done by the invisible momentum which is put into the hammer. The virtue of the hammer is in its hard face and its capacity to communicate a lot of momentum to the nail.

The 'weather wise' say that it turns warm and rains. What happens is that it rains somewhere and turns warm. When water vapour is precipitated into rain, an enormous quantity of latent heat is released. Heat travels faster than storms.¹

The humidity of the air affects your comfort as much as, if not more than the temperature. Without the evaporation from the body, your blood would go far beyond fever heat.

A man standing on a pier or in a boat sees the waves go rushing on past him, and naturally thinks that the water is moving along at a great speed. But as a matter of fact the water moves very little except up and down. The thing that is moving at high speed is what we call momentum and not the water.

When we touch or handle physical matter, we believe it to be something entirely different from what it is,—a quantum of energy moving in closed

¹ The precipitation of water vapour over the British Isles in a year supplies more heat than a thousand million furnaces would do, burning continuously.

circles. It is possible that this energy, like the momentum in the waves, is what goes round the sun, and not the earth on which we momentarily stand.

There is reason to believe that physical matter is a partial vacuum in a denser medium. If the earth and the sun are bubbles in space, it would explain the cause gravitation.

We think of the physical world around us, including our own bodies, as objective. It is quite possible that it is all subjective and only appears objective from the viewpoint of time.

We may well suspect that there are a great many more physical or sense illusions, but they are trivial as compared with our emotional and mental illusions.

Chapter 16

MAGIC AND CEREMONIAL

Scientists, in modern times, have learned much about the laws which govern physical phenomena. Psychologists are trying to understand some of the laws which govern thought and emotion. But that problem is a very large one and has come to the fore at a much later period in time. Thought and emotion are two distinctly different things; by analogy as different as earth and water. Water, or moisture, is usually found in combination with earth, but the physicist deals with them separately and does not talk about earth-water; the psychologist, however, talks about thought-emotion; he will learn in time to distinguish the difference.

The psychologist has also to deal with physical matter, because thought and emotion produce reactions in physical matter. Changes are brought about in physical matter by emotional and mental conditions and by combinations of the two. We all know how thought and emotion can change the features of a person; we know how prolonged worry and depression will break down the physical organism and produce ill health, and how cheerfulness improves the health. We are not so familiar with the results of collective thought and emotion; or how a single individual with a determined will and a one-pointed purpose can move a group of people.

Mesmerism, by which one person is controlled by the will of another, is a near relative of magic.

The psychologist cannot use the microscope or the delicate weighing machines to determine particular results, but his methods should be none the less

scientific. There is no doubt but that emotional and mental energy can be so directed as to produce definite physical results. We have an analogy when air and water in the form of wind and wave tears down a rocky shore or builds up an island of sand.

Magic may be black, white or grey. Witchcraft, a form of black magic, has a factual reality.

We have been told by ethnologists that among certain primitive people the witch doctor or tribal priest can pronounce the death sentence on one of the tribe; when this is done the man dies. The explanation lies in the fact that the witch doctor believes in his magic, the man believes that he will die, and the whole tribe believe the same. The collective thought of the people, reinforced by strong emotional stress, brings about the result. When, however, the magic is tried on a white man who does not believe in the magic, the process is disturbed or counteracted by other thought and the magic does not work. What might be called the mechanism of magic is the same when a group of mind healers get together and produce cures among their members, or when an eloquent preacher stirs his audience to emotional fervour, and faith in his curative powers actually produces healing results.

It is not generally understood how thought and emotion can be reinforced by numbers. We know that two men working together can lift a greater load than either one can lift alone. Thought and emotion can be also intensified by collective effort. This is what happens when mob action takes place. When a crowd is moved by fear or some other strong emotion, they may kill or destroy or do things of which individually they would disapprove.

When a talk or lecture is given by a thoughtful person to a group of people the collective thinking reaches a point which could not be repeated by the

MAGIC AND CEREMONIAL

individuals afterwards. Congregational worship is an example of emotional and mental unison which produces definite results.

Ceremonial is the handmaid of magic. It is a form of regimentation whereby concerted action is obtained and collective minds and emotions are kept in unison. Ceremonial when performed by a large number of people gathered together profoundly effects the whole group. This accounts for the feeling, sometimes called 'spiritual', which is produced by the mass and other religious ceremonial.

The mass is a survival (the vestigial remains) of the ancient blood sacrifice. All the paraphernalia is the same: the high altar, the lighted candles, the incense, the decorated robes of the priests (the ephod), the anointing oil, etc. The bishop's mitre is a truncated copy of the headdress of the Egyptian God Osiris. In the ancient blood sacrifice the priests sprinkled the altar, the other priests and the congregation with blood mixed with water and hyssop (see St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews ix v. 19-21).

The blood is no longer used but the ceremonial of mixing the blood and water and the motions of the sprinkling survive in the mass. In some of the ceremonials the word 'hyssop' is brought in. 'Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be clean'. Another detail is equally enlightening: the ancient priest carried out some of the functions of a butcher. He had, in certain ceremonials, to kill the beast, cut it up and strip the fat from the entrails.¹

Naturally his clothing would get soiled, so Moses commanded that he should change his garment in a

¹ 'And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar.' Exodus xxix v. 13.

certain part of the ceremonial.¹ And this changing of garments survives in the mass today for no other reason than that it was once useful. The high priest still stands at the altar for a long time engaged in manipulative activities.

The people who in olden times gathered to watch the animal killed and consumed by fire were told by the priests that their sins would be overlooked, and that a revengeful God would have mercy on them; this they believed, and it would produce a happy feeling, a sense of relief, which would be heightened by the collective emotional forces of the group. The same feeling is produced by the ceremonial today. The worshippers are impressed by the air of mystery, and their emotions and thoughts are kept in unison by music, canticles and the watching in silence of the ceremonial movements.

This ceremonial has no doubt gained much momentum from the long centuries during which it has been practised. It is probable that hosts of unseen entities—disembodied souls—take part in the mass; they would find pleasure in being in the atmosphere of well-being and righteousness, the feeling which so much impressed Cardinal Newman and which he called ‘sanctity’, without in the least understanding its significance. Well, it may be that people *are* better for thinking themselves better. Who knows? But those who take the primrose path of comforting illusions will miss the road to reality and truth.

Ceremonial has nothing to do with ethics or morality. There is no evidence that Jesus of Nazareth ever participated in the blood sacrifice or any truncated copy of it. How can anyone suppose that the ceremony is in any way pleasing to the Ruler of the Universe?

¹ ‘And he shall put off his garment, and put on another garment.’ Leviticus vi v. 11.

MAGIC AND CEREMONIAL

The laws which govern the phenomena of magic are as yet very little understood. The laws themselves are neither good nor bad, black nor white; it is all a matter of how and for what purpose they are used. There is no doubt, however, that they have been used for centuries by men who have discovered the practical results which flow from skilful manipulation of them.

We may hope that, as time goes on, the scientific study of psychology will lead to a much better understanding of magic and ceremonial.

Chapter 17

PSEUDO SCIENCE

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

POPE

The amoeba is a wonderful animal. It is not so big as an elephant. A full-grown amoeba, when it spreads itself out, covers about the $\cdot 2 \times \cdot 10^{-12}$ part of an acre of ground. (If these dimensions are not quite right I trust that some mathematician will correct me.)

The biologists, who are fond of classifications, call the amoeba a unicellular animal. (We will let that pass as I do not like quarrels.) The amoeba knows a lot—I was about to say that it has a head on its shoulders, but that would not be correct. Its head is in the centre of its body where it cannot get bumped by other objects. The biologists do not call it a head but a nucleus (but we will let that pass). Whatever it may be, the amoeba knows the difference between organic and inorganic substances, and I am of the opinion that neither Darwin nor Huxley knew this for certain. (Ice crystals are organised, but Darwin and Huxley would have called them inorganic.) The amoeba's knowledge is practical, that of D. and H. theoretical.

The amoeba has tactile and prehensile faculties. We can put out our hands and grasp things. (I have heard of a man who could pick up a pin with his toes.) The amoeba can go one better and pick up things with any part of its body. Perhaps, dear reader, you would like at some time to pick up an apple with the back of your neck or between your shoulder blades, so I will tell you how the amoeba would do

PSEUDO SCIENCE

it. 'The presence of articles which are good for food causes the protrusion of pseudopodia (you will find it in the dictionary) in a definite and purposive manner, and the food is secured.'

I am sure you would like to know more about this pseudopodia, so I will tell you. 'In the process of formation of a new pseudopodium we see first a thickening and protrusion of the clear ectoplasm, accompanied by a streaming in of the endoplasm, and the latter seems to bulge out the ectoplasm as it flows forward. The pseudopodium is withdrawn again by a reversal of the process, the endoplasm streaming out from it into the central mass of cytoplasm and the ectoplasm contracting after the re-treating endoplasm.¹ Now you know!

The amoeba knows a lot of other tricks, such as locomotion, gestation, assimilation, respiration, etc. It seems probable that it inherited this knowledge or these faculties from its ancestors. The family tree probably extends back over several millions of years. (Quite a respectable time.) If one could go over the records carefully one would perhaps find such a family name as 'microbe' or 'infusoria' and, as I believe, respectable relatives in the vegetable kingdom. (We simply don't know.)

Here is another very interesting fact. If we could look up our own pedigree (or family tree) we might find some record of the amoeba (or some similar unicellular animal) in it. Somewhere in the tree (perhaps 2×10^{24} thousand years ago) two of these ancient ancestors went into partnership, so to speak. Instead of separating by segmentation, as all respectable amoeba should do, they clung together. (Two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one.) They may have found it an advantage in hunting or holding their food. We don't know. We

¹ A quotation from scientific literature.

do know that this was a great event in the world's history. (The discovery of America, the world's great battles, or modern inventions, are matters of minor importance.) There were later branches of the family tree when larger groups of our ancestors got together and worked as a unit. (Those were great times.)

But I must tell you that they did not all of them adopt this reform. Some of them were conservative and did not like new-fangled ways—independent, they were. (You see, segmentation gave them a kind of immortality.) And so one branch of our house consists of unicellular animals today. We are not very proud of these relations—we call them backward in evolution.

We look with some pride on our own branch of the family tree in which each body contains some millions of collected cells.

But just here I have to pause and think. (Resting my forehead on my hand, I meditate). Perhaps these fragments of consciousness which animate unicellular bodies today are not a backward lot, but new entities pushing forward into physical bodies. (Not ancestors, but new relations.) New souls, so to speak, yearning for sensation; trying (as we all do in our foolish ways) to get a 'kick' out of life—to find a more or less stable dwelling place for a day.

Chapter 18

RANDOM REMARKS

Any intellectual view of life that is worthy of the name will recognise that sympathy and love are as important in the world today as mechanical, scientific or political efficiency.

Pure reason is only a part of Truth, the other part must be lived. Logic may be worshipped as one more anthropomorphic God.

To do good in order to get a comfortable place in heaven has nothing to do with true morals or ethics: it is a business transaction.

Some hard-headed scientific men believe in the conservation of energy but question the life after death; as if the Designer of the universe would conserve the husk and throw away the kernel.

It is probably not because of indifference to the sufferings of humanity that greater beings do not give more help. It is necessary that humanity should learn the law of cause and effect; the Gods themselves cannot separate the one from the other.

Emerson might conceivably have been the re-incarnation of Plato: both had exceptional literary ability and the philosophy of both touched the transcendental—the ultimate goal of all philosophy.

Words can be used to cover up little understood facts, as well as to convey knowledge. In a neigh-

bourhood where I once lived, strange phenomena occurred in a certain house. Pieces of coal were thrown about, things fell off the mantelpiece without being touched, etc. Everyone was mystified. Then someone said that it was Poltergeist phenomena. The word was passed from mouth to mouth and everyone was relieved and happy. Our philosophers similarly invent words like 'libido', 'élan vital' and the like, which serve as cloaks for things obvious but little understood.

Positive and negative energy functioning throughout nature as male and female provides the warp and weft of the garment of life; the pattern and the colouring are infinite.

The Hebrew bible is a wonderful collection—history, ethical values and superstitions. It contains the most poetical phrase of any that I know: 'When the morning stars sang together.'

Gratitude is a sensation, a feeling. If God is not aware of the feeling directly, do you think his attention will be called to it by noises made with the mouth?

He who can endure intense pain or prolonged physical suffering without whining, groaning or cursing, has acquired some virtue.

I am persuaded that there are lessons to be learned from suffering; pain expands the consciousness in some mysterious way.

The dirtiest and most filthy tramp and the foolish bedraggled harlot are both precious. They are the product of many millions of lives; the result of

RANDOM REMARKS

patient progressive evolution from the dim and distant past.

Death is not painful: it is life which is painful.

An intelligent well-bred dog will be interested in a bit of dung or a piece of carrion, but will turn his head away if presented with a rose beautiful in colour, form and perfume.

Life is made up of 99.9% trivialities. I once heard an eloquent man lecture; all that I now remember is that he wore immaculately pressed trousers. If he spoke words of wisdom, they have all been lost to me.

There are certain people who believe that they, self-conscious entities today, will reincarnate. They will not. In the tangle of subjective and objective worlds identity will be lost. Even the potentialities which we possess today may be circumscribed by the fate of the new-born babe.

A great man should be measured by the *best* he has done, and not by the abundance of straw and chaff which comes away in the threshing.

An individual must be self-reliant and, in a sense, self-sufficient, else he is as a leaf in the wind, blown hither and thither. If he accepts one authority today, another may cancel it out tomorrow. Only that is our own which we acquire through our own mental effort and struggle.

There is a story of a colonial settler who took a gramophone back with him to his home in the jungle. He was surprised that his native servant expressed no astonishment at the performance of the

machine. When questioned the native said that the talking box did not puzzle him, but what he would like to know was how meat got inside of a tin. Civilised man is like that; he is greatly intrigued to learn that a voice some hundreds of miles away can be reproduced in his loud speaker, but does not marvel at a daisy which grows and blooms in his garden.

Scientists, owing to their self-imposed limitations, question the continuity of life or consciousness, whereas the processes of nature point as certainly to the fact as any of the deductions drawn from spectroscopic phenomena. Evidence for the conservation of consciousness is as good as the evidence for the conservation of matter.

Einstein has done no more than elaborate relativity. The early astronomers knew that all the movements of the heavenly bodies were relative. The ancient philosophers knew that all human relationships, all human activity and conditioning, were relative. Physicists have recognised for centuries that energy, heat, light, electricity, magnetism, chemical reactions, etc., were related or relative.

Sex is the great imperative. We have not only different bodies, male, and female, but we also have male and female minds and emotions. If the latter two have sufficient opportunity to function the first will remain a long time in abeyance.

The man who habitually asks God for his blessing does not differ essentially from the man who stands at the street corner and asks for pennies; they are both trying to get something for the asking.

RANDOM REMARKS

I knew a man who lived fifty years ago; he was then about thirty years of age; his name was Charles Laurence Burdick. He was a man with many strange illusions, and he made many mistakes. If either he or the man that I know today as Charles Laurence Burdick were given immortal life it would be a terrible tragedy. My only hope is in progressive change: I trust that tomorrow I shall be a different and a better man.

I do not say any prayers for fear that they may be answered. I firmly believe that the Creator will manage his world for the best, without any of my suggestions.

I do not ask any forgiveness for my sins or misdeeds; I trust that I shall be punished for them, so that the account may be settled and I may learn wisdom.

A life-time is like a day at school. We can fritter away the time, or play the fool; or we can take ourselves in hand and make some progress. But whether the days be many or few, the long arm of necessity will reach us in time and teach us our lessons.

Let no one erect a monument to me: if my work is of any permanent value it will mark my having been.

Chapter 19

ETHICS

Only a rash man would undertake to formulate an ethical code or define in words the functioning of moral law. Who is able to follow the tangled threads of cause and effect, and say 'Thou shalt' or 'Thou shalt not'? Action and reaction may be immediate or it may be delayed for centuries.

Millions of years ago sunlight stimulated vegetable life to spread its fronds in the humid atmosphere and fabricate the carbon tissues which form our coal measures: today we may convert the carbon into a kind of artificial sunlight.

Each span of human life represents a day at school, and human relationships are, or may be, infinite; delayed reactions would inevitably occur. Who can determine obligations or deserts, punishments or rewards? Wasted opportunity and useless lives may meet with restricted opportunity and humiliation in a subsequent life. Other individuals born in favourable circumstances, as the inheritors of wealth or social position, may have earned the right to favourable treatment owing to the fact that former lives had been given to the service of mankind. There is no doubt but that honest endeavour and kindly deeds build character which is unalienable from the individual. Thus reincarnation would explain some of life's inequalities and their automatic adjustment. This has a bearing on ethics, the human relationships and obligations of the members of a community or social order to each other.

If my theory of the Divine impulses or forces which impel and guide the evolution of consciousness

ETHICS

is correct, two obligations on the part of the individual follow. First, to make the most of life, that is, to live it fully; and the second, equally important, to promote the welfare of all life. We should give what help and guidance we can to the lower kingdoms of nature and the maximum of reciprocity to our fellow men. If in adjusting the balance between these two motives, the Will to live and Co-ordination, mistakes are made, I have no doubt but that Nature will bring its own corrective in some form of punishment, just as pain instructs us when we misuse our physical bodies.

The moral life demands that there shall be right relations with the family, our friends, our country, the whole human race and the other kingdoms of nature. To determine what the right relations are one must search the heart. By that I mean one must discover just what one's own motives are. If action is determined by fear, suspicion, pride, jealousy, greed, hatred, cruelty or lust, they must be wrong and will injure the individual himself and the community.

Humanity is made up of individuals and action has its inception in the individual. Ethics is not a matter of codes, creeds or collective standards, but of the reaction of each one to his environment. I may look at my neighbour's garden, may admire or disapprove, but it is not my business to direct him as to what he shall do; it is my first concern that my own garden shall be free from weeds and well-ordered.

We have to let the ape and tiger die out, but we can only do this if we recognise in our motives those primitive instincts which, perhaps, for many lives have shaped our individuality or character.

Much may be said for discipline, for self-control, the living up to a code of ethics and the like; but the

unconscious motive may be acquisitiveness, to get personal good or gain, to get to heaven, etc.—the individual being impelled by two different types of desire and never touching the conscious realisation of essential virtue.

I believe that good impulses are inherent in each one of us, but overlaid by more urgent desires. If a child is in danger, how quickly everyone jumps to the rescue, under the natural impulse to save life. The thief who takes your purse respects virtue but his wants clamour for satisfaction. The soul of each is scarred all over with the bruises of circumstance. From our ape ancestors, we retain the impulse to reach out the hand and take; but when we become more awake, more aware, more conscious of the mainspring of action, we shall come automatically to do the right thing. As the compass needle feels the flow of the ether and responds, so the heart will respond to the Divine Spirit of love.

Didactics are of little avail; we are bored by platitudes: Life teaches. In any form of community life there must be laws of restraint, but morality is a private affair. Search the soul.

