

## THE STUDY OF MAN

A FEW men have cherished life-long visions of cheating death, though without that belief in their hopes that would prompt them to search for a continuance of life in a way likely to lead to the desired result. There have been many Ponce de Leons in the world. History is strewn thick with them. Writers have embodied their hopes, half disguised, in many writings. Bulwer-Lytton, Hawthorne and others I can recall. Elixirs have been concocted as life protractors, and have sold readily until found to be failures. There has been more than one Brown Sequard who deceived others by being honestly deceived himself.

But before all these comparatively modern searchers for the fountain of perpetual youth, there existed in the long past many men, who believed with all their minds that the time would come when the race would conquer death. The thought was the goal to all their hopes. They did not seem to expect this conquest to happen in their time, but they believed that the race was gradually growing toward a period when it could be done.

Has the Bible student observed that the Old Testament does not treat of the soul of man? If it does, I have not found it out, either from my own reading or from my talk with other Bible students. From one end of it to the other it seems to consider man in the light of a bodily creature, as if his life were purely external, and related to the external world alone; in other words, as if man had no soul, but looked forward to the time when he would conquer death in the body. If this is true, it seems astonishing, in the light of present knowledge, that these prophets of the old time should have so correctly predicted the course that future events would take. But they were natural men; they were at one with the law of growth—the Principle of Attraction—as it manifested itself in them. They were simply a part of Nature, like the trees and animals; and it was Nature itself that shone through their sayings, and prophesied its own power when men should have ripened to an understanding of them.

This is the true explanation concerning the power of those old seers to predict coming events. They were in the direct line of growth, and the growth principle made utterance through them. They did not talk of their souls; at least, it is my belief that they did not. They seemed to be unconscious of their souls, even if they possessed them. They did not project their thoughts and hopes into another sphere beyond and outside of the present world; the full force of their entire being was centred in the world in which they lived; and what was the result?

Why this—they lived hundreds of years here in strength and health.

I know how the claim to longevity as related of these men in the Old Testament is now scouted and rejected by persons who consider themselves thinkers; but if these thinkers would think farther on the subject, they would see no folly in accepting the statement as recorded.

For my part, I perceive the probability that these accounts are true; and I perceive it—not because the Bible has recorded it, but because the study of evolution shows the possibility of it, and, indeed, confirms the fact that this strange phenomenon was one of the natural periods of growth through which the race would necessarily pass.

It begins to be seen that there are two distinctly marked periods in the history of man. One of these periods I call the period of his unconscious growth, and the other period that of his conscious growth.

Man has ascended from the forms of life that lie below him, and, though he stands at the head of them, he is nevertheless composed of the same material that they are, and partakes of their nature.

The animals and plants all belong to the unconscious plane of life; and man, so long as he remains in his condition of animalhood, belongs to this plane also. It is only recently that man is beginning to emerge from this plane, and step forth into the plane of conscious existence, where his deviation from his previous condition of animalhood is showing forth in an increased intelligence, so marked as to change the entire basis of his life from physical to mental.

The difference between conscious life, and life on the unconscious plane, is in the use of the reasoning powers. On the unconscious plane men do not reason to any great extent. It is this fact that gives us the right to call them unconscious; and the word "unconscious," as I use it, only relates to their power, or lack of power, to examine the operation of their own minds as the law of growth operates in them.

In one sense all life is conscious; but in the sense I speak of there is a growth which proceeds without being observed by the person or persons in whom it is going on. This is what I call growth on the unconscious plane. A man grows; he lives his allotted number of years and dies; he may have been a thinker on many subjects, and may have brought forth great truths, but until he turns his attention to himself—to the study of man, to the law of growth as it proceeds in his own body, he will not have ascended to what I call the conscious plane of life. This conscious plane is that plane where the man no longer lives the vegetable life of his predecessors, but uses his reasoning powers to the extent of their development, and from the animal stage of life on to the thinking, reasoning stage; and this ascent may not only be called an ascent from unconscious to conscious life, but from a condition of ignorance to one of intelligence; from animal to human; from physical to mental.

Life on the unconscious plane, the plane where man is ignorant of himself and his powers, may fitly be called the vegetable plane. It is true that even on this plane a man has advanced a long way above the vegetable, but he is still under what he calls the law of heredity, which holds him in the path his fathers trod, and which he accepts as an inevitable necessity, just as the vegetable does. This feature of growth marks the unconscious plane—the unreasoning or ignorant plane; the plane where men accept things as they find them, without examining themselves to discover whether they have not the power within themselves to project entirely new conditions, which shall forever obliterate the old ones.

On the unconscious or comparatively unthinking plane, man is stationary and helpless as compared with man when he has ascended to the conscious or reasoning plane. On the former plane he accepts his condition as final, or nearly so. It is true that he sees some chance of improvement now and then, and tries to develop this chance. In this way there has been a slow but sure upward movement, from the unconscious or ignorant plane to the conscious or intelligent plane; so that, as the ages have passed, the race has kept slowly becoming more intelligent, until there comes to be among its numbers a few who perceive that the source of all power lies embodied in man himself, and that the great study by which race advancement may be quickened a hundred-fold is the study of man.

The study of man has begun, and as it proceeds the change from unconscious to conscious life proceeds. The condition of the animal man is no longer such a compact and formidable state of ignorance as it once was; it is being broken into by the new thought of the few independent

thinkers, who are investigating themselves and their wonderful powers, and whose freshly acquired knowledge is filtering down among the masses, where it promises to make great changes in the thoughts and beliefs of the unconscious multitude.

The conscious life into which we are entering by the simple unfoldment of our reasoning faculties is called the mental life. And all nature, everything, is on its way upward from the unconscious or animal plane to the conscious or mental plane.

In strict truth, the animal or unconscious plane is mental also, the same as the conscious plane; but it is a more ignorant form of mentality than the high, reasoning, or conscious plane. The word "mental" is as applicable to one plane as the other. All the expressions of life from low to high are mental, as I have constantly endeavoured to prove to the reader; and the difference I am attempting to explain exists only in the quality of the mentality, as manifested by different creatures on different planes of development.

The transposition from what is called the physical forms of life to the mental forms of life is in the different degrees of intelligence that the creatures on the different planes are capable of showing forth. It is on this account that Mental Science makes the statement that "all is mind"; mind in a state of unconsciousness with regard to itself, and mind with sufficient knowledge to be conscious of itself and the faculties it possesses. Therefore, the difference between conscious life and unconscious life is a difference in the degrees of intelligence manifested between different classes of beings.

Man in his early stages of growth makes a closer approach to the conscious state than the animals below him in development. Thus the human being, even in his most savage state, is more conscious of himself and his power than the monkeys or other animals.

All is mind, of which every creature and plant from the lowest form of life up to the most gifted human being is a mental expression, and the form that each creature or plant shows forth marks the degree of its mentality.

Each creature or plant, no matter how small and inferior, has aspirations or desires that reach higher than its present conditions. These aspirations or desires ascend higher than the environment of its life will permit it to realise in the undeveloped state of its intelligence; so the mere fact of the existence of these aspirations or desires calls for a higher grade of creatures in which to become embodied. They form a basis of life, as it were, or serve as a demand upon nature for the next higher type, which shall show forth more intelligence than the former one; and thus the chain of being is preserved, even though the forms of being are always changing. And so evolution proceeds.

I will repeat this idea, which I consider very important, as showing the march of mind as expressed in desire.

Every sane desire of every creature is finally attained. If this attainment fails to show forth in the creature itself, it goes on to development in some other ego. In the scale of evolution it is the ungratified desire of the lower creature that produces another grade of creature higher than itself—so mighty is desire, and so unerring is the fulfilment.

It is the desire for food in the first jelly-like forms of life that prompts their development on a higher plane. These little forms of translucent jelly, having neither hands nor feet nor mouth

nor eyes, are nevertheless attracted to some tiny bit of food floating in the water, about which they put forth parts of themselves until the object is enveloped within their bodies. After the nutriment in the food has been absorbed, the body unfolds and lets the residue pass out. Here is the beginning of hands and feet and eyes and ears and a brain and a digestive system. This development was by desire; desire for food. The desire for food being gratified led to a thousand other desires; the number and greatness of desires kept increasing, and the higher grades of life increased in consequence until man came. The increase of desires in the creature added link after link to the chain of being from the atom to the man.

And what is man but a bundle of desires? His desires are much more numerous and farreaching than those of any of his predecessors. And as he is the culmination of all the desires of all his predecessors, not one single desire of which has failed to be gratified, he has a perfect right to believe that his own desires, great as they are getting to be, will be gratified also.

It is evident that desire is the mainspring of all growth. It is also evident that no desire can exist that cannot be met by the object desired; and thus a new marriage is formed; new desires are begotten, and growth proceeds.