

CHAPTER II.

THERE IS NO DEATH.

By death is here meant the extinction of the individual self-consciousness, personal identity and intelligent activity of a man when his physical body ceases its functions and activities.

If life after physical death were not a fact demonstrable and demonstrated there had been neither reason, motive nor excuse for this volume.

This tremendous truth, however, has for ages been in the possession of a few patient, self-denying scholars whose knowledge of the continuity of life has been a matter of daily, rational experience, just as is their knowledge of this physical existence.

Except for the zeal of these few scientists and their eagerness to present their knowledge to the world and their desire to teach others how to personally demonstrate the fact, neither this effort nor certain other historical attempts had been made to reach the public mind and heart.

"If a man die shall he live again?"

Throughout the ages man has put this question to Nature. History, tradition and experience go to show that this question rises with the dawn of individual self-consciousness.

The world's history is made up of the issues of life and death. All of the world's activities are shaped by this expectation of death. The uncertainty as to what lies beyond the grave more or less affects every life. No individual nor community nor nation escapes the shadow. It colors individual acts. It enters into national policies. This certainty of death is the drop of gall in the cup of pleasure. It is love's terror. Childhood fears it. Old

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age dreads it. Even disease, poverty and crime shrink from release by death.

The certainty of physical death conditions all life to restlessness. It shadows all human endeavor with a sense of impermanency. It deflects the soul from purposeful living by bringing into life the continual prospect of reaching the end. Anticipation of death increases the apparent value of time. It creates haste. It engenders a feverish hurry and struggle for immediate satisfaction and happiness.

The controlling passion of man's nature, the passion for conquest, is strengthened by the uncertainty of life. The earth has been and is a slaughter-house. Ambition, lust, greed, and vanity have set the mark of Cain upon the human race. With the hope of a present material gain and an immediate personal satisfaction, but in ignorance of the penalties involved, men have ruthlessly inflicted death upon each other. They kill each other in open battle, in secret encounter and by a barbarous "Sanction of the Law."

Nothing but an actual knowledge of future penalties and fruitions can properly check the suffering and injustice which this passion for conquest entails.

Love of life inspires every living thing. It is, however, man alone who hopes for immortality.

It is safe to say that all men desire to live after physical death. Most of them hope for such a life. Many have faith. There are, however, more whose hope and whose faith alternate with misgiving and doubt. For hope is not faith, nor is faith knowledge, yet both are inspirations to life. Hope is but a fleeting intuition, while faith is the steady expectation of the soul.

Hope for and expectation of life beyond physical death appear to be almost inseparable from human intelligence. In this desire and expectation the savage, the seer, and the child find a common ground.

Except for this natural hope and expectation of a life to come man could not properly work out his destiny upon this physical

plane. Faith is a perpetual inspiration, while skepticism clouds the best efforts. A creed of annihilation saps the springs of human energy. It thwarts the finest possibilities.

Do not these facts testify to the importance of the subject? Do they not justify a vigorous search through Nature for actual knowledge upon this question of life and death? Who can doubt that such knowledge would fix and ennoble life's purposes as no fitful hope nor wavering faith can do?

Literature that has longest survived is that which has been based upon a desire for, or upon an expectation or actual knowledge of a life to come. The sacred writings of the older nations antedate secular history. The greatest of profane writers have speculated upon the immortality of the soul. The works of Plato represent a great intelligence inspired by a hope of immortality, while the Psalms of David represent that same hope strengthened by faith. The Sermon on the Mount, however, represents not merely hope and faith, but instead, the doctrine of the Nazarene testifies to a personal and exact knowledge of the spiritual side of life.

It is as natural to desire life after physical death, to hope for it, to seek knowledge of it, as it is to desire food, light and air. It is an unfortunate man who does not hope for life to come. It is a diseased or abnormal one who does not desire it. A man without hope or desire merely exists. He can scarcely be said to live.

He who gives heed to his own spiritual intuitions is never without hope. He who has hope may acquire faith. He who has both hope and faith may acquire actual knowledge, provided he have the INTELLIGENCE, the COURAGE and the PERSEVERANCE to prove the law.

The expectation of life after physical death comes first as an intuition. That purely spiritual intuition is as strong in the savage as it is in the civilized.

Physical science when called to note this fact dismisses it as "superstition."

This universal expectation of life arises out of conditions that are distinctly not physical. If the human mind had depended upon only physical facts and rational processes of the brain for the development of faith in a life to come it had never developed. No man who had looked upon a dead body could have conceived the idea of a future life.

In spite of the fact that physical life is a veritable house of decay and death, the expectation of, and faith in, a life to come have increased with the higher evolution of man.

It is therefore evident that this faith and expectation are based in the spiritual intuitions of all men. It is also evident that such faith and such expectation are not the mere superstition of savages since they increase with the higher stages of intelligence and moral life of man.

It was this spiritual intuition of the primitive man that laid the foundation of Natural Science.

Man is a rational as well as an intuitional being. Man alone is capable of reasoning upon his own intuitions. Man alone has the intelligence to seek a rational explanation of those intuitions. Man alone demands that Nature shall yield the secrets of those mysterious hopes, fears and expectations which alternately inspire or terrify the soul. The spiritual intuition of the savage establishes an expectation of life after physical death. Later on the higher grade man attempts to verify his own intuitions by rational means.

How well he has succeeded the progress of religion and philosophy shows. It was this natural desire for exact knowledge that inspired human intelligence ages ago to begin an investigation of natural laws.

It was man's determination to solve the problem of life and death that evolved the school of the more liberal science.

That earliest effort and first victory are prehistoric events. That is to say, there are no records of the earliest schools accessible to the general public. Those records, however, have not

been destroyed, though oceans may now cover the continent upon which that history was made.

Men, nations and continents pass away, but human effort is never wasted. Knowledge is never entirely lost.

Centuries have rolled into cycles, but that knowledge has been preserved, transmitted and enlarged. That early school of science has never disbanded. For ages, however, its wisdom has passed only "from mouth to ear." And Natural Science today is broadened and ennobled by all that past effort, gain and achievement.

From the beginning human intelligence has occupied itself with speculations, hopes and fears as to a life beyond. The finest intelligences among men have employed their powers to merely elucidate a reasonable *theory* looking to life after physical death.

This desire for life evolved and still maintains the pursuit of Natural Science. The original secrecy of that school arose merely from popular ignorance and prejudice against learning. As a result the facts concerning spiritual life were demonstrated only by the few, and this knowledge was preserved and guarded from the world. In truth, it has been only the few who have possessed the requisite capabilities for demonstrating the fact of life after physical death. For ages these few sought only to gain and preserve this knowledge. They sought only an individual experience and an individual power and control over Nature's finer forces. It was a later consideration and a broader experience that induced them to become teachers among men.

Now, however, they have come to know that their first duty and highest privilege are to impart their science and philosophy to the world as fast as the world will receive them.

These are statements which, in all probability, will be vigorously denied by both theology and modern physical science.

These critics, however, will oppose the position of this work from different points of view. While both will declare that exact knowledge of a life to come is impossible, yet each will give a

different reason for this alleged impossibility. The one regards such an assumption as sacrilege. The other scouts the idea as superstitious folly.

Between the bigotry of faith without science and the bigotry of science without faith truth runs a terrible gauntlet in this world.

The great body of human intelligence proceeds along two lines of investigation. The one system is speculative and spiritualistic. The other is scientific and physical. The one represents intuition unsupported by reason. The other represents reason unaided by intuition. The one stands for only a spiritual perception of ethical principles. The other represents only rational conceptions of physical facts.

Mankind, as a whole, in its expectation of a future life, is sustained by faith and not by any actual scientific knowledge of the life to come.

The creeds of Christendom begin "I believe." Not one begins "I know," when referring to spiritual things and a life to come. By the adoption of such a creed theology takes rank as speculative philosophy. This is true of any religion that does not offer a rational means for demonstrating its dogmas.

Physical science, on the contrary, is based upon facts of physical Nature rationally demonstrated. As a science, therefore, it rejects that which is not susceptible to demonstration. It would not be science unless it adopted exactly this course. Physical science is right when it refuses to accept as science that which is undemonstrable. It errs, however, when it undertakes to dogmatize as to what is and what is not demonstrable to man.

Thus, theology rests upon spiritual intuitions and faith in those intuitions, while physical science is built solely upon physical Nature and the demonstration of physical facts.

The weakness of theology is its ignorance of physical facts. The weakness of scientific skepticism is its contempt for spiritual religion. Both systems, being human, are narrow. Each, how-

ever, is honest, and therefore susceptible to evolutionary processes.

The educated clergy no longer deny the facts of physical science, while the foremost specialists of physical science are studying and utilizing the spiritual and psychic forces in Nature. Theology is hampered by the fear that science will unearth theological errors. Science, on the other hand, is oversensitive as to any criticisms of its deductions and theories.

Intuitions of a spiritual life are not proofs even to the rational mind of any individual. They are, however, truths to his soul and are sources of consolation, of hope and of inspiration.

Intuition is not knowledge. It is, instead, a suggestion of knowledge that may be acquired. Every man and woman knows the potency and inspiration of those spiritual perceptions which are not explainable in reason. Intuition, though not knowledge, is a higher guide to human life than is cold reason when it entirely ignores those convictions of the soul.

German metaphysics demonstrate the development of reason and the suppression of intuition. Here we see to what heights and depths of absurdity human reason may travel. Through and by such "reasonable" processes man is reduced to "an erroneous proposition."

It is little wonder that the theologian rejects those self-evident absurdities of metaphysical abstraction. On the other hand, the reasonable metaphysicians and scientists cannot accept the philosophy of a supernatural reincarnation and resurrection.

For nearly six hundred years controversy has raged as between speculative theology which teaches life after physical death, and speculative philosophy which teaches that death ends all. With a Luther, Calvin, Knox and Wesley on one side and a Voltaire, Schopenhauer, Kant and Renan on the other, it is little wonder that lesser minds become confused as to this question of life after death.

Physical science augments this confusion brought about by speculative theology and speculative philosophy. It enters the

debate with demonstrated facts which dismay theology and disconcert metaphysics. Part of these discovered facts contradict certain theological dogmas. Physical science, therefore, declares that theology has no basis in fact. By this it assumes that there can be no undiscovered facts which might demonstrate a spiritual side to Nature. Instead, physical science assumes that there are in Nature only physical facts and physical forces, and that these facts and forces are demonstrable by methods of physical science alone.

If the Christian world really *knew* what it now only professes to believe, how quickly the whole existing order of theological discourse would change. If physical science were only able to conceive that there *might* be facts of Nature beyond the scope and methods of its own schools, how soon would our general scientific study and experiment include the psychic phenomena of life. As it is, however, both theology and physical science agree in declaring that human intelligence cannot penetrate further into the secrets of Nature.

Who can estimate the benefit that would flow from the exchange of mere faith in a life to come for actual knowledge that such is the fact?

The church, as a whole, professes this faith. The daily life and practice of the individual professor, however, suggest more of doubt than of a fixed faith. If the individual could really know that life after death is a fact, our whole dismal paraphernalia of death would disappear. Indeed, if men entertained even an unwavering faith, their lament for the dead would be modified. The truth is that the professing Christian mourner exhibits but little greater fortitude and faith when death claims a friend than does the average unbeliever. Our Christian brothers mourn their dead with an abandon that demonstrates the instability of their faith.

If one really believes in a spiritual life to come there is neither reason nor excuse for this intemperate grief. If, however, a man could know what he but mournfully hopes rather than believes,

the house of the dead would never be a house of despair. Instead, it would be a house of unselfish rejoicing whenever death released the spirit from old age, disease or sorrow. When a man knows what physical death is he will never retard the passing soul with selfish grief.

Did women possess the faith they claim, they would not swathe themselves in unsanitary crape nor visit cemeteries to commune with the dead who are not there.

To the man who *knows*, the dead body is but the discarded mantle of his friend, one that had served the uses of the soul for the time. As such, the body is entitled to due reverence and is consigned to the earth or the fire without exaggerated grief.

If theology could but rationally demonstrate a basis for its faith, life would be transformed with new and higher impulses and aspirations. If physical science, on the contrary, could but prove its own major premise, viz.: "All is physical matter and mechanical energy," the church would disintegrate in a year. Though science drives theology from one false position to another as to evolutionary history, it does not in the least affect the basis of theology, which is faith in accepted teachers of the law and the individual spiritual intuitions of man.

Theology, however, has never made a rational effort to verify its faith in a life to come.

Physical science, on the contrary, has conducted a vigorous, determined campaign against what it is pleased to term the "superstitions" of mankind.

Physical science has made an honest effort to substantiate its declarations upon this question. The special point of attack has been Modern Spiritualism. A long and critical investigation has been made of those peculiar phenomena which attach to "spiritual mediumship." The purpose has been to show that such phenomena are the result of trickery or brought about by certain peculiar physical and mental powers resident in and natural to the alleged spiritual medium.

As the scientific and reading world knows, that effort has

been a lamentable failure. That failure is demonstrated in several ways, viz.:

1. By the rapid increase of psychic phenomena.
2. By the rapid increase in the number of the believers in such phenomena.
3. By the frank confession of failure made by certain eminent representatives of physical science who set out to "expose" Spiritualism.

The insufficiency of either the charges made or the methods employed by physical science is clearly demonstrated.

Modern Spiritualism, embracing millions of believers, has risen during the past fifty years in the very face of scientific skepticism.

Swedenborg's following increases rather than decreases. Mesmerism, once derided, is now introduced as "hypnotism" and practiced by the "regular" schools of medicine. The almost simultaneous birth, rise, and development of Theosophy, Christian Science and Mental Healing among intelligent people are phenomena which physical science has not explained.

The newspapers, reflecting the average mind and practice, publish daily accounts of faith healers, of mind reading tests, of telepathic incidents and of the varied phenomena attaching to clairvoyant, clairaudiant and impressional mediumship. Persons possessing psychometric powers have been called upon to aid in the detection of crime, while the defense of the criminals on the ground of "hypnotic control" is becoming very frequent in legal procedure. The courts have been compelled to take judicial notice of the existence of hypnotism as a fact.

These facts constitute a very substantial answer to that fundamental dogma of physical science which declares that "All is physical matter and physical force."

The failure of physical science to prove this proposition is confessed by every specialist who has made a personal investigation of Modern Spiritualism. Notably among such are Professor William Crookes, F. R. S., and Alfred Russel Wallace. Both of