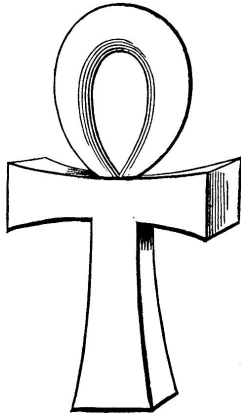


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THE CROSS OF OSIRIS,
OR
THE CROSS OF LIFE.



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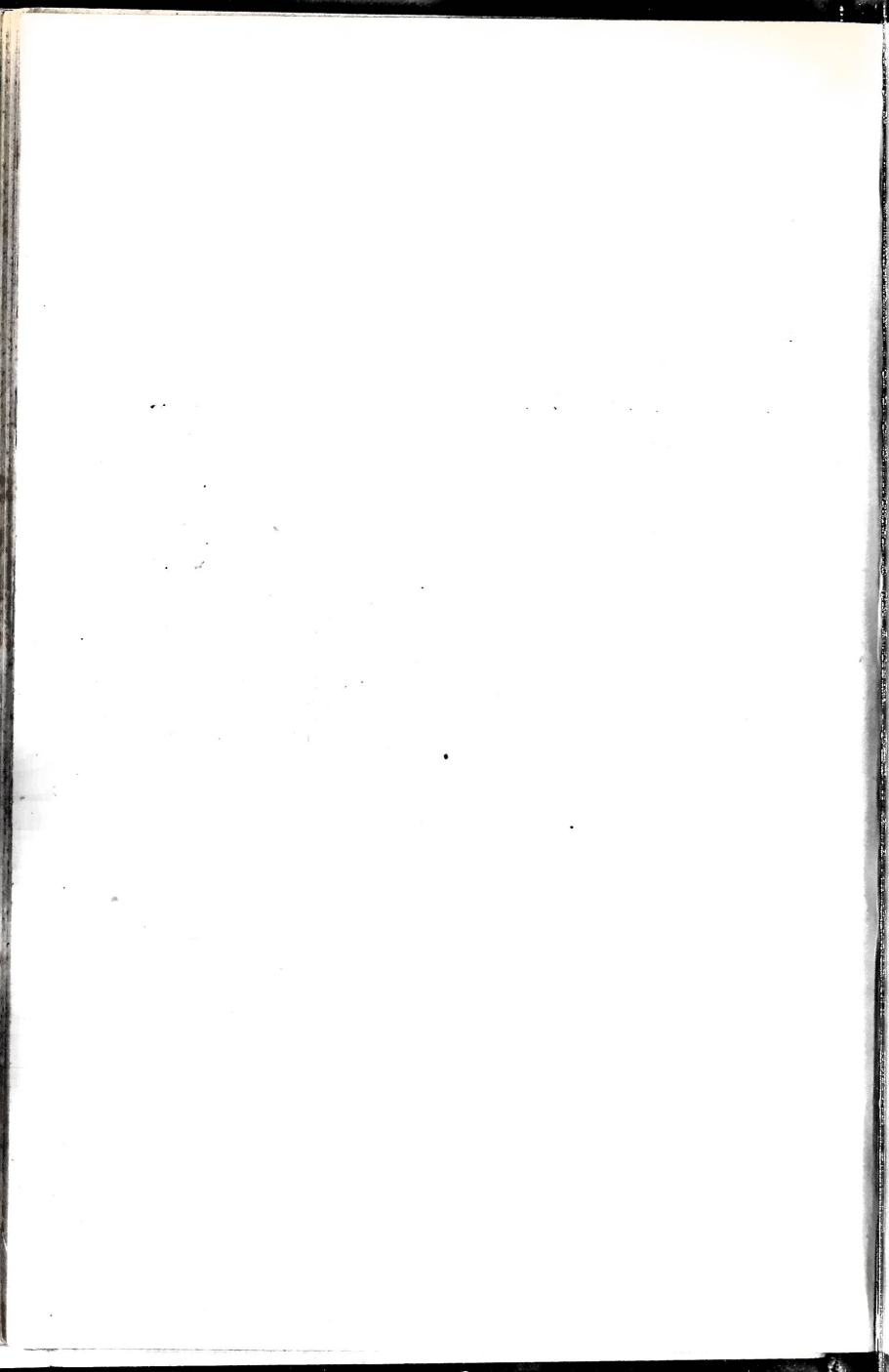
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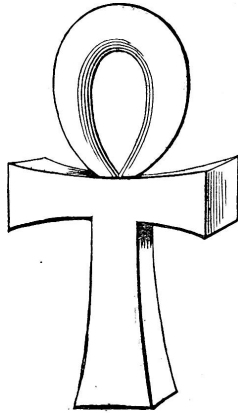
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TO THE READER.

To seek a higher and nobler idea of God, the Supreme Source of Life, than the various religious systems of the world present under the debased form of Personality, is not necessarily attempting to undermine the foundations of Religion, but only attempting to discover and demonstrate them—as the geologist goes down to the old red sandstone for a basis. Religion has nothing to fear from the removal of the mosses and many-coloured lichens with which ages have covered the old rock. The comparative philologist is never suspected of animosity against any particular language because he endeavours to trace all languages to a common root. And it is no irreligious work to strip off the framework and trappings, and bare the base on which all the religious systems of the world find common foundation.





THE CROSS OF LIFE.

THIS Cross, the Cross of Osiris, or the Cross of Life, is represented on ancient Egyptian monuments generally in the hands of Deity, or borne by priests; but is always employed as the Divine symbol of Life—of life as the result of perpetual regeneration. As such it occurs frequently in the hieroglyphic writing on all four sides of Cleopatra's Needle. And we know for certain that the symbol is intended as that of Life; for, on the Rosetta stone, it is employed to translate the title *αιωνόβιος*, given to Ptolemy Epiphanius. But this figure of the pole and the ring in combination is peculiar to no country. It is found everywhere, alike among Egyptians, Assyrians, Jews, Greeks, Latins, Gauls, Germans, Hindoos—sometimes in the form of the plain stauros joined with an oval ring, and sometimes in the form of a ring inclosing a cross—but always the same symbol of cross and ring. It is the very oldest

of symbols, and has ever been regarded in every land as the emblem of Everlasting Life, and the principle of its perpetuation. It forms the root symbol of the entire religious philosophy of the old world; and in it Hindoo, Egyptian, and Hebrew alike read the mystery of creation, and the ultimate Secret of Eternal Life. And it is noticeable that this emblem of primeval religion is unwittingly employed to this day in the construction of our Christian churches—the intersections of the cross on the ground-plan being determined by the ovoid lines of the *vesica piscis*. Thus the cruciform structure of every cathedral stands on the oval ring.

On examining the composition of this Cross of Osiris it will be seen to consist of the stauros or pole, and the ring or *ovum*, in combination—the *Linga* and *Yoni*—or, in other words, the symbols of the two male and female conditions necessary for the production of all known vitality. The staff and the ring have always been held respectively as emblems of the womb and its impregnator; and, when combined, as the symbol of reproduction.* The twy-form unity of the Cross of Osiris consequently suggests a two-fold principle of generation whereby Life is perpetually renewed and reproduced; and as such was adopted as the natural emblem of the Divine and Eternal Life-giver, who was consequently regarded as a Twy-form Principle. The modern idea that the divine source is a single *male* regenerator and life-giver is a corruption from primeval belief which does not stand alone.

*“We recognise” (says Rev. Sir George W. Cox, Bart., M.A., in *Aryan Mythology*, Vol. II., p. 115) “the male symbol in the trident of Poseidon or Proteus, and in the fylfot or hammer of Thor, which assumes the form of a cross patée in the various legends which turn on the rings of Freya, Holda, Venus, or Aphrodité. In each of these stories the ring is distinctly connected with the goddess who represents the female power in nature.”

The self-sufficiency of the female principle alone has even been heathenly asserted in ascribing to Venus the cross, as well as the ring, in the astronomical sign ♀, which still stands for the star of that name. But this sign is essentially twy-form—male and female—and has no meaning when taken to stand for either the male or the female principle separately. All ancient belief, however, held true to the analogy of Nature; for it was seen that Nature afforded no solitary example of the production of life from a single parent. So they of old time doubted not but that the Life-giver must be twy-form—male and female—like all his products. And indeed the most exhaustive investigations which science has made up to the present time have failed to demonstrate a single instance of the spontaneous generation of matter, or the possible production of any form of life whatever, except as the result of the impregnation of one distinct principle by another of opposite sex. Matter is certainly lifeless until impregnated by some unfathomable principle of force recognised equally by science and religion, though variously described—by religion as Spirit or God; by science as an unknown quantity x . Whatever be the true nature of this x , whether called force or spirit, whose action we distinguish in such forms as heat and electricity, we know at least *it is not life*—any more than oil is flame. It is *not Life*, any more than matter is Life; but an *inceptive* (male) principle which, by combination with *re-ceptive* (feminine) matter, produces the unending phenomena called Life. For Life is a *compound* phenomenon, neither self-creative nor self-maintenant, but as it were a flame, the product of two mutually expending principles, the result of the constant action of invisible spirit (or force x) on visible matter. Matter we know is *not* life; and the correlative principle, or force x , which impregnates it, must necessarily be, not

Life, but a far higher Principle than any form of mere life, however intelligent, with which we are acquainted. Life is *not* God; but is the unending product of the mutual love of the double first cause, which is God. Life is the Incarnate Divine, and has justly been worshipped as such. But God is not Life, but Love. Hence every system of religion has retained the idea that the Christ, the Krishna, is the *Son*; and that the Son is *Life*, but God is Love; and love by its nature is twy-form. Life is clearly not self-existent, but a manifestation dependent on the continued union of two parent principles widely differing from and vastly superior to it. Life is spirit and matter *in combustion*; the flame from the oil and the wick; the spark indicating the current that passes between the yearning poles of approaching magnets; the effervescence that arises from the mingling of the acid with the alkali. Life is neither matter nor spirit, but the offspring of the pair; it ever consumes, yet is ever renewed, because the loves of the parents are constant; it is eternal because *they* are. Life is thus the vital incarnation of the Twy-form Principle, and as such naturally came to be personified in the elder systems of religion as *the Son*, the visible manifestation of Deity, and the Third Person in the Trinity.

The earliest object of organised worship by learned Hindoos and Egyptians was a God in two persons, male and female, such as they found typified throughout all nature—as, for instance, in the fertilising sun fructifying his mate, the earth—a God consisting of two diverse Principles, whose uninterrupted union made Life as eternal as themselves; and so Life, under many different names and forms, became also an object of worship, but always as the *manifestation* of Deity, as the divine Son of the loves of the Twain, not Deity itself. All visible matter has instinctively been regarded as a feminine and receptive principle, and called “Mother” Nature, and “Mother” Earth; while

the invisible Force by which it is ever fertilised and regenerated, has just as instinctively been considered masculine and inceptive, and invariably addressed as our "Father." And, indeed, the old-world thinkers could account in no other way for the perpetually regenerated vitality of the universe than by supposing the existence of an everlasting two-fold principle of generation, bi-sexual as all visible creation. Had we no other reason for concluding the ultimate Source of life to be both male and female, the absolute universality of that arrangement as a condition of life should suffice to prove it. For life, in whatever degree it may be found existing, is invariably the product of two diverse parents. There is no exception whatever to this law.* If we probe the very origin of sensation, by examining the nervous system, as minutely as Sir Charles Bell and Müller have done, we find that the anterior root of each spinal nerve is *motor*, while the posterior is *sensitive*; and that it takes a masculine and a feminine principle acting on each other to produce the simplest form of sensation. Similarly, electricity is produced by the friction of two diverse elements. In fact, all nature asserts the necessity of the union of two opposite elements, the *motor* and the *sensitive*, male and female, as the condition of generating and maintaining life and sensation.

* Instances are, no doubt, to be found of apparent self-reproduction without impregnation, among the *annelids*, the *entozoa*, *hydrozoa*, *molluscoids*, and *aphides*. But in these cases we have propagation without generation, as plants may be propagated by cuttings, but are only generated from twy-sexed impregnated seed. Hence Professor Owen's designation of this property of self-splitting, possessed alike by some animals and some vegetables, as "parthenogenesis" (*parthenos* a virgin, and *genesis* the act of production), is clearly unjustifiable. No "genesis" is involved in the operation, and the whole notion of the possibility of spontaneous generation has been routed from its last strongholds.

Electricity, and all the great physical forces, including nerve-power and all the various characteristics of the phenomena of Life, are but special modifications of one common energy or force, produced by the active and incessant communion of the same two Almighty principles. Eternal union makes the twain One, though they are Two; and their unfailing product, life, introduces a Third principle. Thus, the mystery of the Trinity naturally explains itself as implying the Two, who by love are One, and whose oneness is ever manifested in their eternal offspring, life—the Third person—in the Trinity who are all One. Now it is observable that the doctrine of a male and female Deity is the very fundamental principle of all the sacred books of all the elder religious systems; the common foundation of religion and mythology alike. We have it in Genesis, where we read, “and God said, let US make man in *our own image* So God created man in his own image, in the *image of God* created he him: *male and female* created he them.” Here the “Us” unmistakably asserts the twy-formity of Deity, while the distinct statement that “male and female” are “His Image” defines the sexual nature of that twy-formity. The doctrine of a Trinity of male persons is a modern corruption never dreamed of in the Old Testament, and not even inculcated in the New, which does not speak of the Holy Ghost as a *personalty*, but as an *influence* or *spirit*; just as one may refer to “a *spirit* of good feeling” pervading a certain meeting, or to “a *spirit* of eloquence” having fallen on a certain speaker. The belief in a Trinity composed of a twy-form parent Cause and its product Life, was the instinctive idea simultaneously fastened on by all humanity long before religion became a profession, a system of morals, or an engine employed in national government. And the presumption in favour of the original instinctive idea of a race, as against all subsequent

overlaying with local systems of ethics and national administration, is overwhelming. The old Vedic hymns praised Aditi the Unbounded, as being at once *mother, father, and son*. And the old Hellenic myth tells of Ouranos, the heavens, brooding down on Gaia, the earth, and of Gaia returning the love of Ouranos by the ceaseless production of Life. It was long before such an aberration took place from the original belief as to permit the elimination of the female element from the Deity, or even to suggest the idea of male procession, as the Greeks did in making Pallas spring full-grown from the brain of Zeus. But the aberration has proceeded until even our own creed actually recognises a *reproductive triad* composed of *three males* !

In the genesis of the Trinity given by our creed, the believer asserts in one and the same breath, that Christ was the "Son of the Father," and also that he was "*conceived by the Holy Ghost*." The believer further professes that the Holy Ghost was not only Christ's Father but his *Son*; for the Holy Ghost "*proceeded from the Father and the Son*," wherefore the Holy Ghost was manifestly his own Son's son. All which difficulty arises from regarding the Holy Ghost as "a person" instead of "an influence," and thereby hopelessly endeavouring to complete the Trinity without the logical female element of the old-world belief. The Romanists have eagerly preserved the female idea in connection with Deity, but so illogically that, in their doctrine of the immaculate conception, they are even driven a step further. For, if St. Anna, the mother of Mary, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, *as well as her daughter*, the believer must see that the Holy Ghost was not only the father of his *own* father (Jesus), but the father of his father's mother (Mary), as well as of her Son. Now, all this may be Creed, but cannot be any part of Religion; because it is sheer and impossible nonsense.

The old creed of the Trinity, as embodied in the Cross of Osiris, imposes no such demands on the imagination, but plainly records an elementary belief which science every day justifies; a belief which is the forgotten root of every known system of religion, viz., that Vitality, in whatsoever degree of intelligence it may exist, is not a Cause, but an Effect, the product of Two Eternal Causes *whose Loves are Life*. Thus, this Cross of Life declares the Trinity by displaying the Two great eternal Principles whose union *involves* the eternal Third. And so, under the guise of male and female, the Cross of Osiris figures Life's twy-form Cause as *Love*; asserts the world-lesson that life can only come from love; that as human life is produced by human love, so Everlasting Life is produced by Everlasting Love; and, therefore, that *Love is God*; or, as St. John puts it, that "*God is Love.*"

Here, then, we find the oldest creed wide enough to embrace all modern systems of religion, on a basis which science can approve. And it is something to know that there exists a base broad enough for all; and that religion, like language, is thus traceable to a common root. At the same time a return to primitive uniformity in the details of religious creed would be no more possible, perhaps no more desirable, than a return to the primitive uniformity of spoken language.

The peculiar value of this Cross lies in its being a crystallisation of natural teaching—a piece of Nature's own inspiration, first conveyed to mankind by instinct (truer than reason), and which has since proved the root from which all the various systems of faith, theology, and moral philosophy, have grown up; systems which, artificial as they are, nevertheless form a necessary part of the artificiality of civilisation, and will be recognised as indispensable even by the wise who seek to see through them to their common root. There can be no doubt that all the

various systems of faith and worship, founded on the common basis of early belief, have, in course of ages, incorporated many purely natural myths of equal beauty and truth. But the fact of these myths of Nature's own revelation being universally true of Nature, only makes them the more true of human nature; while one may strip religion of its mere framework of an incarnation, mediation, crucifixion, and resurrection, only to find it reveal its grandest beauty in naked form.

The secrets of Life, Death, and Resurrection must be gathered from facts, not assumptions. And we find one unassailable fact about Life, which was fastened on by all the unprejudiced world at the first, and which has been confirmed by all scientific investigation ever since. That fact is, that Life is the product, not of one principle, but of two, a male and a female. No such thing as spontaneous generation is discoverable by the closest examination into Nature's remotest corners. Life must have a mother as well as a father. And Life is invariably the incarnation of the loves of two. This is why a twy-form emblem of Life has ever been regarded as the divine symbol of a Trinity who are One.

Taking the primary idea displayed in the Cross, viz., that of Life as the production of Two Principles ever in active union, it is evident that the Egyptians at least saw very far into the Secret of Life; the secret, not merely of its creation and maintenance, not merely of the extent of its duration, but of *the nature and condition* of that duration. The world's experience has demonstrated the everlastingness of the Two Principles, and the everlasting activity of their union, and consequently that their product Life, being co-existent with that activity, is everlasting likewise. Yet, everlasting though Life be, it is not self-existent. It is a perpetual consumption, a flame that has ever to be nourished by the twy-form parent

Deity—by the BURNING BUSH which burns always, yet nevermore consumes.

The perpetual consumption of life, and its constant renewal every moment, show in what an important way the nature of the Life (theologically the Son), differs from the nature of its two parent principles. In duration, all three principles of the Trinity are equally eternal. But while the nature of the two male and female principles is absolutely *unchanging*, insomuch that, could personality be ascribed to them, they would ever remain the same two *persons*, the nature of the product is *change*. Life *is* change; an eternal momentarily resurrection from eternal momentarily death. Incessant change is the condition of Life, but not of its twy-creative Principle. It is the Burning Flame that changes and consumes, not the Flame-giving BUSH. Hence, while this Cross proclaims the everlasting life of the two constituents of humanity—matter and spirit—it refutes the doctrine of immortal personality. There is *no individual resurrection* of the flame specs, whose life is due to the constant death which consumes them. The eternity of Life renders individual immortality impossible. For Life, in its essence, is consumption; a self-consuming of the Divine Twy-Parent Flame, which conquers death and achieves immortality only by that constant change which momentarily sacrifices individuality in order to reposit its constituent elements in the twy-parent breasts for regeneration into new flame. Thus, the only things in the universe which can possibly be supposed to retain unchangeability, are not Life, but its Two Causes: the inspirers and producers of all that beneficent system of expending energy which we call Life. Here, then, we get the abrupt distinction between Life and the Divine Life-producers. The compound effect is not, and cannot be, of the same nature as either of its two Causes; Life partakes of the eternity of both

its causes, but at a cost of perpetual consumption which excludes immortal individuality. The same analogue pervades all Nature. Steam, for instance, the produce of fire and water, manifests the characteristics of both its parent principles, but the particles of vapour have only momentary individuality before hastening back for absorption by their respective sources—the fire-nature to the fire, and the water-nature to the water—and so providing for continued regeneration. For, be it remembered, we cannot *consume* heat or *consume* water; in using them we only consume the momentary individuality which they present to us; the water and the fire which we use are the same (except in their individuality) which all mankind have used before us. The practice of burning dining-room fires does not diminish the amount of heat in the universe.

In all forms of animated matter, however intelligent, *except Man*, it is not disputed that while *Life* is reproduced everlastingly, the personal individuality of life never is. And experience affords no ground for making an exception to this universal law in the case of humanity—an exception which would involve the only *waste* known in the whole economy of Nature, viz., the dormancy of a large portion of the principles of vitality locked up in a state of eternal sterility, all for the sake of preserving to mankind the doubtful blessing of an individual immortality which no one affects to believe is shared with any other form of animate or inanimate matter. The eternal Life of every atom, both of spirit and matter, as indicated in the Cross of Osiris, is an absolute assertion of universal resurrection—a fundamental doctrine which all Nature daily proclaims in its wasteless renewal of life. Nothing can die but it goes home to God, to be given forth again in Life as a newly revived atom. The Jews still maintain this glorious old article of belief, and at a death-bed they still say the prayer

“Yig-dol,” which they so offer that its last words, “The Éternal is One,” may coincide as nearly as possible with the moment of departure of that portion of His breath which He has lent, to return into His Essence. But the idea of *personal* resurrection is bottomless as the Bottomless Pit which has been founded upon it. It is an idea utterly excluded by the nature of Life itself. All the old theological systems of metempsychosis, so far from teaching personal resurrection, do but symbolise the constant changes of individuality which every atom, after brief manifestation in Life’s flame, undergoes on its way to seek resolution in the vivifying bosom of its Twy-parent. We have the prophecy of these changes even during the momentary individuality of human life. For we know that every particle of a man’s body is renewed once in seven years, and that the very semblance that remains is not the same man as it was seven years before; but that both body and spirit are in a state of incessant flaming consumption and renewal, and only depend for their personality on the time that a certain atom of spirit will maintain its relations with a certain atom of matter without disintegration.

Personal individuality dies even while we live; but Life cannot, even after we die—for the eternal existence of the Two Principles mutually evolving Life makes that of necessity everlasting. But the consumption of the individual is the primary condition of the Eternity of Life. St. Paul saw this when he said: “Thou fool, that which thou sowest *is not quickened except it die.*” Thus the *individual* grain of wheat *dies*. But not the *life of the wheat*—that goes into the *seed*. New grain arises from it, and “God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him” (the old doctrine of reposition as the condition of regeneration), but the new grain, though it has *the same Life*, is not the *same grain*; only “like unto” it, after its kind; as the new rain-drops which the sea evermore gives back to

the sky are "like unto" those that have rained themselves down for regeneration upon its generous breast; they are the same life, but not the same *individuality*. Yet the rain-drops sparkle no less brightly, and the wheat-grains bear themselves no less proudly for having sacrificed individuality to the refreshing joy of Eternal Life. The desire for personal immortality is the mere outcome of the personal ambition of men—the leaping up of a flame that would fain reach the sky, but can only picture itself thereon. Eternal Life is infinitely nobler than an impossible personal immortality, which, could it even be accorded without the abolition of Life itself, would necessarily prove the greatest curse which could be bestowed on mankind. Good men and bad men would alike reject it, could they but realise it. And it is just this root idea that makes the Scriptures of all races counsel the sinking of self in the ideal they present of the Divine Source. The end of all religious teaching is the sacrifice of personal Self, and the entire identification and absorption of the individual Will, the *ego*, with the Divine—all which is merely an enlargement of the preaching of the Cross of Life.

Christ himself, the type of all Divine and human self-sacrifice, repudiated the idea of personal resurrection, when, in answer to the Sadducees, he replied to the question they propounded as to whose wife a certain woman should hereafter be who in life had seven husbands. The Sadducees attacked two beliefs as to Eternal Life: first, as to the fact of any resurrection at all; and, next, as to the doctrine of a personal resurrection. The Saviour's answer was that of the Cross of Osiris. As to the *fact* of resurrection, he answered, "God is not a God of the *dead*, but of the *Living*." That is to say, the eternal existence of a constant *Life-giver* is absolute proof of the eternal indestructibility of the *Life* which he evolves. As to the preservation of personal individuality, the reply

was: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God; for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." That is to say, there is no perpetuity of sex, because each component part of the individual returns to be repositied in its appropriate portion of the Twy-form Deity, which evolved, and still maintains, the Life which had been momentarily exhibited in personal form. Now this statement of the disintegration of sex is undoubtedly an assertion of the disintegration of individuality, because sex is the primary condition of individuality.

Hence we find that Scripture, Reason, and Science agree in supporting the testimony of this forgotten old Cross, and unite in the creed that, while Life is necessarily Everlasting, the needful factor which makes it so is the fleeting character of all personality.

Is this cruel doctrine? Nay; but the gentler gospel of tender Divine benevolence. How much crueller would be the notion of personal immortality? Once accept it as true that our dear dead preserve their individuality after death's disintegration, and we are driven perforce to the conclusion, either that *they are faithless*, or else that *Deity is cruel*.

We all know, of bitter surety, that our dead never answer our tears, our heart-yearnings, our prayers for assurance in any form whatever of their continued existence and sympathy. Yet do we believe them faithless? We know we do not. And it is just because we know they are *not* faithless that charlatanism has ever found willing dupes, led by the most transparent professions, to look for a reproduction of

"A touch of the vanished hand
And the sound of the voice that is still."

Yet those who know what human love is—and who does not?—know surely that there is nothing in this world or the next—no power in heaven or hell—that could keep two truly loving beings from commu-

nicating with one another so long as conscious personality lasted. There have been men and women in the world—there are still—who have braved obstacles to which death is a trifle, in order to convey a mere word of comfort and continued trust to one another. In the case of death we know that the silence does not proceed from indifference on *our* side of the gulf. Our own hearts tell us that it does not proceed from indifference on *theirs*. All Nature, as symbolised by this old Cross, unites in protesting that the very worst form of blasphemy against the Divine Love is to suppose that Deity shuts our dear dead in an unseen other-world cage, against whose eternal bars He leaves them evermore to beat the wings of conscious personal intelligence, crying always to make us hear, but all in vain, because He forbids. We cannot so blaspheme at once our dead friends and our dear God. We know they are only silent because their mortal personality is absorbed in the eternal Extasy of the Divine, and it suffices to be assured of their everlasting Life by seeing the Divine renewal of all Life from day to day. We can also depend that, if our own mere personal love be tender, the Love which produces all Life (of which personal love is but a mortal part) must be infinitely tenderer still—far deeper and nobler than all the personality which it momentarily illuminates.

But the notion of personality continuing after death is practically refuted by us in all the ordinary actions of life. For, whenever a bereaved person takes his own life in the firm belief that he will thereby personally rejoin one whom he has loved and lost, the world's verdict is justly one of temporary insanity. They recognise that the man was suffering from delusion and hallucination. But, were it really believed that he would gain his object, the idea of delusion or hallucination could not be entertained. It is, however, instinctively felt that

the man was deluding himself as to the first condition of continuous Life. The same feeling is exemplified another way. Second marriages would be the cruellest and cowardliest form of bigamy, and would be regarded as such by all the world, were it truly believed that a dead partner remained personally conscious of the circumstances attending the re-marriage of his or her mate. Indeed, all the duties and relations of daily life would be unendurable did we believe we were consciously watched by dumb dead, whose eternal personality was cursed with the doom of eternal inability to communicate with us.

The fact of our possessing personal *consciousness* is insufficient as a ground for belief in our own personal immortality. A man may say, "I know I am a conscious thinker; that is the only thing I really do *know*; everything else is inference; and I am so satisfied of my *conscious thought* as to believe myself an eternal entity, and therefore a *cause* and not an effect." But our knowledge of our own personal consciousness is very limited. The time we have to study it is but short. We can only assert our consciousness from moment to moment, and it is so little under our own control that it is frequently interrupted by sleep and other causes. But all we do know of it distinctly contradicts the idea of its immortality. The assertion, "I think, and therefore I *am*," is but the assertion of momentary personality. But we cannot say, "I think, and therefore I always *was*, and therefore I always *shall be*." For, so far as we know, a hundred years ago, "I," this personal individuality, did *not* think, and therefore *was not*. And, so far as we know, a hundred years hence, "I," this personal individuality, will *not* think, and therefore will *not be*. We know that our "conscious thought" has grown out of *un-consciousness*—for where was our boasted conscious thought at the time of our birth, or say some hundred years before it?

We have no consciousness whatever of this individual personality previous to birth, and have therefore no reason to anticipate it after death. Experience teaches us that conscious thought is a growth as gradual as bodily growth, and subject to similar enfeeblement and decay. Our powers of conscious thinking not only grow and develop with years, but fade with them, and depend for their brightness on the precarious tenure of bodily health. Sickness undermines them, the more so the nearer the sickness is unto death. And if we notice this gradual extinguishment up to the last point, why assert that no sooner is the lamp turned out than it is fully alight? There is no form of animated matter which we see around us in Nature but sacrifices personality to renewed life; and it is unreasonable to seek a solitary exception in the case of mankind. We share conscious thought with many of the inferior animals—possibly in a superior degree—but, possessed in whatever degree, self-consciousness cannot constitute a “cause,” instead of an “effect.” Nothing can be cause and effect too. Man must be one or the other, but cannot be both. God must be one or the other, but cannot be both. All personal consciousness teaches us that we human beings are only effects, and very momentary effects. It further teaches us that there can be only One Cause; that we are consciously *not* that Cause, but yet are conscious that there *is* a Cause. That Cause must needs be so far above personality, and above comprehension by personality, as to be “past finding out;” and we can but dimly worship Him, through pictures and parables, and are as sure to make a God in our own image as it is sure that He made us in His.

Consciousness and thought are but parts of the phenomena of Life in its higher manifestations; and the gradation all down the scale of Creation is so complete that it is difficult to see, if we accept the immortal

individuality of man, how we can reject the immortal individuality of the grain of wheat. The *Life* endures everlastingly; but its momentary individual characteristics perish. Doubtless there are forms of Life far higher and grander than mere consciousness and thought—forms to which the life that now animates us may attain as it passes through the unwasting process of eternal disintegration and renewal. And the prospect of this is surely better than the conceited desire of souls to be *fossilised* in any form of momentary personality. That would mean a clean stoppage of the eternal process of Regeneration, which in Nature stands never still like the fabled sun upon Gibeon, or the moon in the Valley of Ajalon.

Nor have we any right to complain, this being so, that Nature is malignant and merciless, or say that human life is a fraud. It cannot be so if one adequately feels the grandeur of the idea of the Absolute Indestructibility of Life, its glorious renewal, and the certainty that individual life can never lose anything *but* its individuality—which is the last thing that men, taught to thirst for higher life, would ever wish to retain. All the truly refined parts of life needs must last for ever, to be the perpetual germ of higher and higher individualities. And what is there about momentary individuality to make people, *with Eternal Life in them*, so anxious to prolong that individuality beyond its natural term? The assurance of Life Everlasting suffices for the happiness of all Nature, and fills the Universe with unending praise.

If we were never to advance beyond present personality, and had only to look forward to a kind of spiritual mummification, in which individual peculiarities were preserved to all eternity, man would be of all living organisms the most unfortunate. The roses and the daisies would have a better life; they at least, in their ever-renewed bloom, are gifted with for-

getfulness of all, save their Maker's face. Personality is not good enough, and should not be desirable enough, to make one wish for its perpetuity. The best of men that ever lived could not last out an eternal individuality. But eternal life is mercifully incompatible with eternal individuality; for life is growth, and growth is change; and change involves decay and renovation. And further, the eternity of the individual would require *à fortiori* the eternity of species—whereas we know species *not* to be eternal.

But why should we be so conceited? Personality is the very lowest characteristic of created Life. The huge wheeling planets and circling stars, that roam the sky in rampant life, boast no personality; and the best proof of the fundamental truth of all systems of religion lies in the fact that they all alike teach us to despise personality, to sink self, and to absorb the individual will in the Divine aspiration—"They will be done."

We die like the flowers, and have everlasting life on the same terms as they; for the vital principle of flowers never fails, but is wastelessly perpetuated throughout all generations.

Life is only the Twy-form Divine *becoming conscious of itself*. This dual cause of life can have no independent *personality*. Life is manifestly a result, not a cause; the product of two ever combined Life-producing Forces which have not life, but live in their incessant productions. The lightning is the manifestation of two forces, neither of which is lightning or like lightning; an invisible positive force of electricity meets an invisible negative force, and the result of their embrace is that they expend the dazzling fork. So God, as we call the Almighty Twy-force, *manifests* himself in the flesh; and we, and all animated life, are his spirit in combustion. In him we live and move, and have our being. But God himself, the Twy-form, is above and beyond all our conceptions of person-

ality. Wherefore we need not be so eager to retain immortal personality for ourselves, when God himself has none. It should suffice us to know that life cannot die, but is evermore renewed, God giving it a body *as it pleaseth him*. And Nature assures us for certain that this double and impersonal force is the embodiment of love. All observation and experience show that the entire creation and maintenance of life is the product of love—the loves of the twain. Their Love is our Life. And Life is, not God, but the turning into consciousness of the two root principles of Divine Force.

Mythology has always personalised the sun; and religion has as invariably personalised the life-principle. And the universal tendency to personalise things is not objectionable, provided the root principle personalised be not hopelessly obscured. But mythology and religion seldom stray quite away from their objects. The instinctive feeling of the human race keeps all parables approximately true to their origin. But to attribute personality to the Divine Source, in any literal sense, is as mistaken as for individuals to claim an eternal personality for themselves, in spite of the unanimous evidence of Nature to the contrary. It is impossible to have experience of *impersonal* forces of Nature—like the wind, the storm, and the huge restless sea—without feeling their superiority to personality, and the impotence of personality to cope with them. They are tremendously greater Powers than any kind of personality of which we can conceive. Yet we know that these are far inferior to the grand Impersonal Life-powers that wheel the planets in their awful orbits. And even these Powers themselves must be infinitely inferior to the Supreme Producing Force of which they, like us, are only the manifestations. For the Lord is not in the whirlwind, and not in the earthquake, and not in the fire—these are but the off-casts of the great Creative Force. It is certain that we must soar far higher than the notion of a personal

Deity to obtain an adequate idea of the Supreme Producing Forces whose unending Love is the Life which we and all things live for ever in constantly changing personalities. Force, wherever we see it, is a higher and more godlike thing than any morsel of personal life. No person can *produce* Force; all the personality in the world has never yet generated a single particle of Force. We can use the ready-made forces of Nature, but we cannot make any for ourselves. It is clear, then, that personality *cannot* produce Force; and it follows inevitably that the Divine Producer of all Natural Forces cannot be a personality, but must be an Impersonal Force as infinitely higher than all the huge impersonal forces of Nature, as those impersonal forces of Nature are infinitely higher than we and our miserably insignificant "personality."

If this conclusion as to the grand Impersonality of Deity be as inevitable as it appears, it effectually disposes of the paltry argument which says a personal resurrection is necessary in order to repair individual rights and wrongs by a future distribution of rewards and punishments. For, if it be accepted that Deity is a Twy-force, not a person, it is obvious that the force is exerted, like the subordinate forces—*e.g.*, the wind and the sea—beneficently for the greatest good of the greatest number, but necessarily without consideration for the individual. It occurs to none to complain of the individual injustice of the wind or sea, or indeed, of the inevitable *individual* injustice of all our own-made wisest and kindest laws. Besides, any system of rewards and punishments is a monstrously imperfect expedient for the adjustment of good and evil deeds. Neither punishment nor reward can *undo* a single wrong. The golden rewards of Heaven and the fiery pains of Hell would be alike powerless to obliterate any one *committed* deed, or its unending influence on life as a whole. Yet the root of the

Heaven and Hell parable is sound. And herein. It is certain that life may *degenerate* as well as *regenerate*. We see this in species, as well as in the individual. And no man can wantonly disobey Natural Law without suffering for it, not only in his momentary personality, but in the injury done to the Eternal Life through which every particle of his indestructible matter and spirit has to pass. The individual life of all species must either improve or degrade; but though individuals may so injure themselves that the eternal Life particle by which they are inspired may even have to go back as far as its organic form for regeneration, yet the world's old belief that Good will ultimately prevail over Evil is justified by the gradual improvement of life and intelligence. To suppose that the Twy-form Life-giver—the Infinite Mother and Father, Aditi, to use the child-language of the Vedic hymns—punishes, or is vindictive, or permits unmerited suffering, in order to be worshipped for soothing the remembrance of injustice with the golden largess of Heaven, is blasphemy against all Nature, if the doctrine of Heaven and Hell is literally understood instead of tracing it to its root. The placid Twy-form Principle which inspires life and generation is absolutely Impassionate Law and Force, and is so manifested in universal Life. The stone falls not to crush us; but they that fall upon the stone must be broken. We human creatures adjust things in a rough kind of way by a system of punishments; and by disregarding these artificial laws, imposed by civilisation for mutual protection, a man suffers in his personality. But if he disregards the impassionate laws of Nature, he is self-punished in the deterioration of his immortal life, and the necessity for its assuming a lower form. This is the germ from which all the personalised schemes of eternal punishment and immortal reward have developed themselves.

The remarkable tendency of all known species to sport and aberrate from the parent stock, and in due time to form new species, is a natural law, and appears to be a condition, of the Regeneration of Life. It is so recognised in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. But, in the case of man, the tendency to err from the normal standard is artificially described as "sin" or crime. This is socially provided against by the penal laws of communities. But the Divine system of adjusting what we ignorantly term Evil—which is probably no more evil than the friction attending all motion—is not penal, but regenerative. Evil is at least used, like the decayed dough in the flour, to leaven the mass. Indeed no kind of life which we may superficially regard as spoiled or degraded, is ever wasted. It is invariably regenerated and utilised to its utmost capabilities by the divine Life-generators, who ordain the survival of the fittest, while decreeing the necessity of emulation and suffering as the condition of improved life.

It is common to arrogate to man an exclusive monopoly in the possession of what is called Free Will; and therefrom to argue that man has an exclusive monopoly in future punishments and rewards. Of course man's "Free Will" is not absolutely free, its exercise being restricted by the laws and social restraints imposed by communities for self-protection, and also by the restraints of the ordained Law of Life, which cannot be disobeyed with impunity. But man has no monopoly in free will. He shares its possession with the animals, and with all other kinds of animated life. Every living thing has the power to sport and aberrate, and to take its choice, subject to the inevitable consequences of disregarding the Law of Life—which law encourages the best forms of individual life, but discourages deteriorating forms. A dog has the same free will as a man. If a dog is whistled to by his owner and called to come to him, that dog

has the same power as a man to choose one of two courses, and decide yes or no, whether he will come to his master with a wag of his tail and lick his hand, or whether he will bolt off with his tail between his legs. The dog's decision is so far free that he has a choice ; but it is a choice restricted by the knowledge of consequences ; he knows he must either obey or suffer. Man's free will is held and exercised on the same terms as the dog's ; and is just as much restricted by law, human and divine. There are fortunately many artificial laws for the protection of social life, which if a man offends he suffers in his personality. But there is the Divine law of life, which none can offend without injury to the immortal life in him, the life which outlasts his personality. All law is of course impersonal ; and nobody believes otherwise, although we personalise human law into a blind goddess, bearing a pair of scales. The Divine law and cause of life must be equally impersonal ; and it is only because Divine law has been parabolised, to meet the vulgar comprehension, into an all-powerful Personal God, who permits evil in order to punish it vindictively, and rewards virtue with the bribe of a golden heaven, that the grand old root of an Impersonal Law and Cause of Life has become obscured. All things living know that disobedience to the Divine Law and Cause of Life means maiming and degeneration. But the degeneration is not vindictive—it is vindicative. It is the vindication of the squanderously beneficent Law of Life, which decrees the survival of the fittest, and the decay of failures into forms more elementary for the purpose of future regeneration.