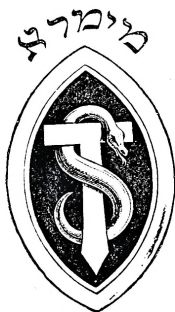


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THE  
SUPREME POWER  
IN THE UNIVERSE.

BY  
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PUBLISHED BY THOMAS SCOTT,  
11 THE TERRACE, FARQUHAR ROAD, UPPER NORWOOD,  
LONDON, S.E.

1877.

*Price Sixpence.*

LONDON :  
PRINTED BY C. W. REYNELL, LITTLE PULTENEY STREET,  
HAYMARKET, W.

## THE SUPREME POWER IN THE UNIVERSE.

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THE subject upon which I venture to embark is one which attracts the attention of every earnest and reflecting mind, while it is apparent that it involves considerations surpassing the powers of the human intellect to apprehend or compass. The finite cannot grasp the conditions of the infinite, and yet the sense of the infinite forces itself upon us as an imperious necessity. For example, we all see that there must be an eternity of time and an infinitude of space, because it is impossible that it should be otherwise. Put time back to any limit, or space to any bounds, and there must have been time and space lying beyond the terms contemplated. And there are other such conditions. Space must be characterized by eternity equally as time, for such a state as the absence of space is not imaginable. But what does space involve? It has been well observed that the conception of "nothingness" is an impossibility. The space, therefore, in all its parts, must have been occupied by something, and that something we must accept as matter, however attenuated in substance. Matter then has been eternal, as time and space. But matter cannot be disassociated from those properties which to our experiences are inherent to it. That is, it must be what is capable of combination, dissolution, and imparted motion. Being susceptible of being acted upon by what is exterior to it, it is fair to assume that what may operate upon it, namely force or energy, is also vested with eternity. Matter, occupying all space, and therefore immeasurable in its possible dimensions, is also capable of being brought to infinitesimal proportions. Reduce an atom

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to any scale, however minute, it cannot be denied that with adequate means the process of reduction may be continued perpetually. Thus time, space, matter, the properties of matter in expansion and divisibility, and force or energy, are all apparently associated with infinitude. These are the circumstances to be recognized in dealing with the important subject before us. The great question to be considered is whether, beyond the elements sensibly working around us, there is a higher power, supremely endowed, operating in the universe and governing all things—a power that has designed and constructed all that we behold, and that directs all for the accomplishment of intelligent ends?

The bulk of mankind, deriving their ideas from primitive and uninstructed times, have decided this question by figuring to themselves an imaginary being to take the place to be filled in the constitution of the universe as its creator and ruler. They have formed this being, as might be expected, upon human models, in realization of human standards of power and excellence, and its special image is transmitted to them in company with the country, language, and national sentiment with which they happen to be personally linked. On the other hand, among the thinking classes there is a considerable and an increasing body who occupy themselves with the finite, practically remitting what is infinite to the precincts of the unreal. What they can establish to the satisfaction of their senses, upon positive experience, in connection with the operations in nature taking place around them, they will acknowledge; what cannot, in the same method and degree, be exactly demonstrated, they are content either to disallow, or to disconnect themselves with as to them unapproachable. They stand thus in the opposite extreme to the emotional image worshipers. But, in their process of negation, these would-be exact thinkers may prove, possibly, to have placed them-



selves at greater disadvantage relatively to the truth than those who have satisfied their desires with well-meant but fanciful representations, transmitted to them through ancestral channels, and accepted by them without questioning.

In such an examination as the present, the argument from design must assert itself, however often it may hitherto have been presented, and, as some think, disposed of. Admitting that there are laws inherent in nature which must prevail to whatever use natural materials may be put, we are to consider how matter may be acted upon and turned to account without invading these laws. Man works in this manner with the substances around him, ever conforming himself to the laws affecting matter, but converting the substances operated upon, and subjecting them to endless combinations, in order to produce in shape, colour, texture, and adaptability, whatever he desires to effect and serve himself of. He is able to act even upon organized forms, altering and improving them within certain limits. Wild grasses are turned by him into edible grain, sour or tasteless fruits are developed into delicious products, flowers are diversified in structure and colour, and domestic animals are varied and brought to high standards of excellence. Attention to natural courses in culture, supplies of nutriment, and conservation of species or breed, brings about these remarkable results. Some particular form is aimed at, and in time the growth is moulded to acquire it. Thus we have grey-hounds, race-horses, toy-terriers, &c. A change of colour in the feathers of pigeons, or an alteration of their bony structures, Mr. Darwin informs us may be obtained premeditatedly by the proper measures. But there is a point beyond which the operations of man cannot extend themselves. In the organic world he can act upon what exists, inducing varieties, but he can create nothing. He cannot project novel forms, or command the sources of life. He

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can improve but not originate. He cannot even conceive a new shape for an animal or a plant, but has ever to draw his ideas from existing shapes. The objects in nature, organized and unorganized, are endlessly diversified, but he is incapable of suggesting, far less of producing and adding to these groups, one purely original structure.

In the natural forms there are obvious evidences of design and adaptation meeting us at every turn, pointing to some unrevealed power that has planned and executed the whole. Each object has its appropriate place, and is surrounded by what is suitable and necessary to it. Plants propagate themselves by methods established for them, and take up nutriment from the soil, the air, and the water supplies, by means of organs provided them, and assimilate this and convert it into their various tissues by instrumentalities specially constructed for such purpose. Great are the diversities in the vegetable kingdom, but each member of the innumerable family keeps its appointed place and grade. The rose never has the sting of the nettle, or the proportions of the lordly denizen of the forest. The fig-tree does not produce the grape, or the grape the thistle. The projected order is preserved as by the edict and hand of a law-giver. Though each form has apparently similar constituent parts, none of these go astray to invade or disarrange existing species. A plant is not engrafted on an animal, nor a bird or fish upon a quadruped. Among the animal tribes the evidences of what is entitled to be called design are still more precise. These are put together with complicated arrangements of articulated bones, ligaments, vessels, fibres, and external coverings, all indispensable to the objects so provided, and not to be interfered with, injured, or removed, without entailing serious sufferings and risks to the being so operated upon. They are capable of locomotion and volition. Some move on earth, some in air, some in the waters, and they are specially framed for their

respective elements. Appropriate food supplies are provided them on which they can feed and sustain their bodily frames. The adaptability of the sexes, their propensity for each other, the care of offspring, the instrumentalities given for attack and defence, and the sagacity and methods of confederated communities such as the bees, ants, and beavers, exhibit the agency of a designing, controlling, and protecting power in operation to fit them in organization and endowment for the ends of their existence.

In the highest of these vitalized forms, namely mankind, there are superadded the manifestations of mind, with the emotions and moral perceptions, to a degree to set this race on a level of their own, and give them the supremacy over all that is around them. The intellect of man examines all things, weighs consequences, draws conclusions, shapes therefrom designed courses calculated to attain desired ends, and stores, imparts, and thus perpetuates its acquisitions, raising ever to higher and higher standards the fabric of human knowledge and excellence. Advancing from what we can judge to have been the condition of one in the stone age, living in caves, clothing himself with the skins of animals, and occupying himself with but little else than the means of satisfying his physical wants in the coarsest manner, we see man in the present day raised to a comparatively high level through the exercise of the faculties with which he stands provided. He has surrounded himself with conveniences and luxuries of habitation, food, and clothing, and stored himself abundantly with resources to minister to his ease, enjoyment, and pleasure; he enlarges his mind with useful and agreeable knowledge; he transports himself from place to place, by land and water, in luxurious vehicles and vessels moved without effort from himself, and sends his messages, to whatever distances, with a speed resembling that of the lightning; he supplies himself with fuel, metals, and other materials, from

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the bowels of the earth, pierces mountains to forge passages through them, spans rivers with roadways, and transforms the surfaces of the earth to suit his convenience and secure his ends; his skill sets at nought physical difficulties, and his power is multiplied thousands of fold by mechanical means adjusted to meet with accuracy every purpose; he examines nature in her grandest and minutest forms by aids enormously surpassing the measure of his natural visual organs; he analyses everything, ascertaining its properties to serve himself of them; thus he puts to use all that he comes in contact with, expanding his knowledge and improving his status; he endeavours to understand himself as well as all with which he is associated; and in this pursuit he is ever conscious of conditions that transcend the powers of his apprehension, speaking to him of a supremacy of knowledge, power, and goodness surpassing the utmost limits of his conceptions.

Though the universe, in respect of time, space, matter, and force, is constituted with infinitude, the objects coming under our observation, one and all, it is apparent, are of finite order. Whatever may be their endings, it may be concluded that all have had their beginnings. The orbs in space express to us forms obtained by consolidation of matter. We see vast nebulae floating about in shapeless masses, and observe some of them in spiral motion, apparently undergoing conversion into globes such as belong to our own methodized system. The spectroscope reveals to us that other spheres are constituted with materials similar to our own; all seem to be governed by the same laws, and the presumption is that all have had a like origin. The crust of the earth speaks to us of development by superadded matter, ever advancing the capabilities of our globe. At first no life existed on it; then the waters gave forth marine products; then dry land appeared and terrestrial products were generated; and the advance was



ever made from inferior to superior conditions, until at length the stage of excellence in which we stand was arrived at. Within some circumscribed period, during the immeasurable expanse of time, everything we behold, from the vastest orbs in the heavens to the minutest objects upon earth, has had its beginning. How have these forms been devised and projected, with their successions and diversities, and their adaptations each to its place and sphere? If the properties in matter were left to uninfluenced operation, what could have resulted but shapeless combinations and disruptions effected with ever recurring sameness? Could there have been changes of scene and the constant introduction therein of fresh actors of endlessly varied form and diversified characteristics? Could these have sprung into being, each from its origin outlined and suitably and adequately endowed for the position it had to fill? And could all have been arranged from the first in nicely-adjusted correspondence with well-contrived instrumentalities and intelligently directed action? It seems impossible, with any degree of fairness, to attribute to insentient matter such high results. Matter is but ingredient constituted to be put to use by composition. It obeys the control exercised over it by applied power, as instanced in the industrial works of man. In the sphere that lies beyond his ability to influence, has it been its own ruler, with capacity to originate diversities, fitting these with complicated appliances specially constituted to secure definite ends? We see no signs anywhere, in the well-ordered and comprehensive system in which we stand, of fortuitous or eccentric results, of tentative efforts, or failures, and the conclusion should be inevitable that chance operations of insentient matter have nowhere prevailed, but that all has been due to intelligence accomplishing predetermined ends in supremacy of wisdom and of power.

The operations of man within the range of his

means afford indications how, possibly, higher manifestations, lying beyond the limits of his powers, may have been brought about. The materials of which all organized forms are composed exist abundantly in the treasuries of nature. In some manner these are brought together and formulated into living plants and animals, and again the tie that unites the components is severed and they fall into their former separated or atomic condition. Man, making use of the materials around him, applies these, according to their properties and adaptabilities, to develop, alter, and improve living organisms. He acquires by experience a knowledge of what these substances are capable, and, putting them to use, advances gradually to perfect his ends. He thus effects very remarkable changes of form and character in the objects operated upon, so that the original types become scarcely recognizable. The process through which the added matter on these forms is imposed and incorporated, may be that by which their primitive constructions were framed and realized, namely, the designed use, application, and consolidation, of those materials of which, at their dissolution, they are seen to have been composed. If thoughtful supplies and adaptations are necessary to vary and improve the plant and animal, thoughtful adaptations and compositions, it seems fair to conclude, have been necessary for the formation of the original structures.

The conditions of life and thought claim special attention. Some suppose that they are generated in matter, occurring from its associated properties, while others maintain they must be derived from some superior source lying beyond the range of our observation, and that the material combinations of which we know are merely channels and instruments through which the life and the thought act and are exhibited. The appeal to experience gives us no aid in arriving at the former conclusion, while, as far as

it goes, it supports the latter. We see and are conscious of the operating processes, while of the sources of life and of thought we have no knowledge. The manifested action depends upon the character and condition of the instrumentality, but we have no means of satisfying ourselves that the instrumentality generates the action. Where the organization is feeble, injured, or otherwise defective, the expression of life, motion, and thought will be correspondingly lowered, distorted, or imperfect. A crooked or injured limb will assuredly exhibit lameness, and a mal-organization or lesion of the brain weak or perverted thought; and with degeneration of thought disturbance of the moral senses may ensue. But it would be an obvious error to attribute the source of motion, whatever its character, distorted or otherwise, to the limb itself; and equally may it be viewed as error to ascribe the source of thought, whether acting normally or abnormally, to the tissues of the brain. There comes a moment when the connection between the life and the thought with the physical organization is snapped, the latter being left and the former gone, and then it should become evident that the sentient properties stand with an origin independent of the frame which has been once their habitation but has ceased to hold them.

The prevalence of centralization in the orderings of nature is a circumstance bearing upon the present inquiry. The sun visibly rules the movements of our globe and its associated planets, and, it may be judged, is the source of supply of their most important necessities. In like manner the principal planets rule the movements of their satellites. The sun, revolving on its centre, is apparently under the governance of some superior sphere situated in the expanse beyond it. The solar system, and the countless orbs in space, are thought to be circling round some common centre. The mineral, vegetable,



and animal kingdoms are held within their proper bounds, and every species connected with them has its limits which cannot be transgressed. Each organized object, whether plant or animal, has some inward power caring for its existence, ministering to its wants, and directing it in efforts for its good. Is it to be supposed that the law of centralization is wanting just where it is most required, and that the great universe, with its multifarious and complicated contents and arrangements, all working together in associated regulation and mutuality of support, is left to the influence of laws acting casually and independently in matter without any central governor to watch over and direct the whole? Could the well-appointed system, with all its diversified and orderly details, which we witness, have resulted from natural forces abandoned to fortuitous action? And, were such the process, should we not have seen tame uniformity commonly prevailing, varied with confused intermixtures and calamitous catastrophes?

When it is maintained that there is a power, the author of all the structures we behold, having all in his keeping and under his governance, and standing thus, in a measure, responsible for whatever is and whatever happens, it is constantly objected, in view of surrounding evil, weakness, and misery, that, permitting or necessitating such results, he cannot be possessed of those attributes of perfect wisdom, capability, and goodness, which should belong to such a being, and which are universally ascribed to the Creator by those who recognize his existence.

It is apparent, when we contemplate the circumstances of our globe, that it has attained its existing condition through a process of advancement from low to higher results. It was, seemingly, shapeless nebula, till consolidated into its present form; at first it was without life upon its surfaces, then came marine organizations, and afterwards those that are terrestrial. The primitive was not the perfected con-

dition, but all had to be developed through graduated elaborations. Man himself forcibly illustrates this principle in nature of progress from inferior to superior stages. He has had to better himself as to his food, clothing, habitation, conveniences, knowledge, by exercising intelligent industry, all that he requires having to be wrought out by his own exertions, where nothing was presented to him ready fashioned for his use. And as he has had to provide for his physical wants, so also has he had to minister to those demanded by his intellectual and moral constitution.

In the processes of the physical advancements in nature, it is remarkable how, by an evident law, one object serves itself of others for purposes of self-advantage. The minerals and the gases of the atmosphere feed upon allied substances, disintegrating and absorbing matter standing in affinity to them; the vegetables appropriate what they require from the minerals and the atmosphere, adding their acquisitions to their own systems; and the animals freely consume the vegetables, and also devour one another, none being more destructive of lower life than the intelligent beings standing at the head of the created forms. To accomplish such ends in the vegetable kingdom, leaves and rootlets, acting as absorbents, are supplied, and in the animal, muscles, talons, and fangs; while man is endowed with ingenuity enabling him to fashion weapons, placing all other living beings at his mercy. If we are to object to evil and suffering in the world, the weak falling sacrifices to the strong, consistency would require us to demand that an end should be put to all these operations whereby the superior orders receive their supplies at the expense of the inferior.

Another objection taken is that the exercise of free-will by man interferes with the idea entertained of an omnipotent Creator. If man, it is observed, is a free agent, he cannot be under the control of a

supreme director; if not a free agent he is not a responsible being. The attribute of free-will, or something analogous thereto, belongs to spheres below that of the human race. Wherever there is independent action, there is an operation resembling, however distantly, the expression of will in man. The attractions and repulsions in organic matter act with invariable certainty, and so far these substances may be said to be left to their own courses. In organic forms these properties take the shape of the affections and antipathies, inducing the correspondent action of love and hatred. The plants have a faculty resembling the will of animals whereby they may be said to govern themselves for their good. They extend their branches in the direction of the light, courting its influences, and their roots in that of their nutriment; trees will incline their stems so as best to resist prevailing winds, and the sensitive plant exhibits aversion to touch such as might characterize one of the animal tribe. Every animal, however low in type, has the means of selecting and appropriating what is calculated to serve for its sustenance, and it is only specimens of the very lowest order which have not liberty to move about as they may please. We see among them, as plainly as in mankind, the exercise of the affections, the display of the antipathies, sexual and parental love, rapaciousness in securing their prey, or ingenuity in avoiding seizure, the whole being manifestations of free-will operating among them within the bounds of their natural capacities. In man the scope of the will has more extended action. Where the creature is low in scale its wants are limited, and its occasions for ruling itself are proportionately few, and therewith its liability to error is reduced. The animals are therefore commonly governed by a faculty of nearly unerring quality, which we term instinct rather than reason. When there is the gift of high intelligence, as in man, the field of the wants and the temptations

is greatly enlarged, and he being left to fulfil his desires through the exercise of his mental endowments, the risk of misdirecting himself is proportionately increased. He is conscious of two powers within him, the one inclining him to what is right, the other to what is wrong; and his judgment is apt to form erroneous conclusions respecting matters on which it is exercised. Thus, while animals, as a rule, are seen shaping their way in a natural and healthy manner, man is liable to misuse his powers and to plunge himself habitually into what is detrimental to him. The question is how far the supreme Creator and director contemplated can be held responsible for the evil with which mankind are associated.

The laws of nature, whereby mankind have to rule themselves, are so unvarying in their constitution, that they cannot be broken without entailing, to a certainty, corresponding unfavourable results. If man, exercising his reason and free-will, misjudges these laws, or disregards them, be it in ignorance or in hardihood, he brings upon himself, inevitably, the consequences attaching to the violation. If he walks heedlessly into a river or over a precipice, his life is endangered or destroyed; if he deliberately puts his finger into the fire he is burnt, or into a snake's mouth poisoned. He feels himself free to do all this or to abstain from so doing. If he habitually gorges himself with unwholesome food his health will suffer; if he constantly inebriates himself his entire system will be overthrown. The moral constitution, equally as the physical, has its laws which cannot be invaded with impunity. The man addicted to lying, stealing, lust, violence, or any vice, debases himself, wounds his conscience, forfeits his own self-esteem, and is despised and avoided by all the respectable portion of his fellow-creatures. He unfits himself for any honest pursuit, is trusted by none, and becomes amenable to the offended laws of his country. Unhappily the degeneration of the parent, whether physically or



morally, may be transmitted to his stock, and much of man's infirmities and obliquities belong to him constitutionally through ancestral influences. Some of his forefathers have disobeyed the laws of nature in their own persons, and the injurious consequences have been transmitted to their offspring. Much depravity is also induced by the force of circumstances and of example, whereby the individual is enslaved in early youth before he has had sense or fortitude to resist surrounding influences or assert his independence. It is then asked, in respect of the asserted author of our beings, whether, if not directly responsible for the evil invading man, he is not so indirectly, from having involved man in conditions to incur the evil, and formed him weak and liable to be prejudicially acted upon, duped, and betrayed into what is hurtful to him?

The answer to this question may perhaps be best given by suggesting the converse of the condition objected to. To be insusceptible of evil, man must be so constituted as not to admit of evil invading him, and the elements must be restrained from in any way presenting evil to him. To fulfil the conditions demanded, man must be established perfect in wisdom, knowledge, and power, or, in a word, placed on a level with his contemplated maker. The world, and all connected therewith, must be altered to suit beings so privileged. There must be no extremes of climate, no storms, floods, or earthquakes; water must not drown, fire must not burn, food must be never otherwise than beneficial, and all poisons must be expelled; the animals must be harmless to man and to each other, sustaining themselves in some wholly innocuous manner, or rather made capable of living without reducing other elements to destruction, vegetal or animal, for the sake of supporting themselves; there must be no catastrophes or accidents of any description, and death itself, with its attendant debility to the dying man, and woe to the

survivors, must be abolished. Thus the arrangements of the creation must be put aside, and an entirely new system introduced, in order that man may be preserved free of the possibility of experiencing evil. And what would be gained by the change? There would be no sense of right and wrong where wrong could have no room; there would be no appreciation of virtue or wisdom where there was no vice and no folly; all being perfect in body and mind, none could require anything of another; there would be no sympathies, no interchange of thought, no stimulus to exertion; all would be on the dead level of unalterable equality.

The tenets of the Christians and the Secularists leave both parties without the means of accounting for existing evil. The Christians consign the greater part of mankind to everlasting torment, whatever they may have suffered on earth, making the very existence of these rejected ones a continuous expression of unrelieved and aimless evil; the Secularists, seeing no future for man, leave all present evil ultimately remediless. The race, they say, may improve in the course of ages to an infinite extent, but for individual suffering in the meanwhile there is no compensation; and bitter are their complaints against the ordering of creation which entails such results. But if it may be believed that there is a future in store for man, and that the entire race have been created for final good, there are considerations, of an obvious character, to clear the question of its difficulties.

Every transgression against the laws of nature, physical and moral, being followed by disadvantageous and frequently painful consequences, it is apparent that the sufferings induced are designed to guide the individual to other courses not entailing such consequences; that is, the evil visits the transgressor for the purposes of correction and instruction, and thus is enforced a system consistent with the presumption that man has been created for good and

not for evil ; and as the desired results are not secured in this life, it also becomes reasonably probable that a future state of existence, when he has ended his days on earth, is awaiting him, wherein the fruits of his discipline will become apparent, and the training needful for him be carried on continuously. Free-will, within certain bounds, is thus necessary to man to allow of the treatment in aid of his moral culture to which he is subjected being maintained. If he could not take action with spontaneity for his own governance, he would be a mere automaton, executing his appointed offices, but learning nothing. But with liberty of action permitted him, and the consequences of acting rightly or wrongly brought home to his experiences, the course of instruction necessary for his advancement is plainly instituted. If his welfare consists in his directing himself due north, every deflection to the east or the west carries him out of his way. Were no bad consequences to ensue from his taking a wrong direction, he would pursue it to the end and never reach his proper destination ; but when evil comes upon him at his first step in a wrong line, he receives a warning which should arrest his course and induce him at once to turn to a better path. The process speaks of a moral governor and director presiding over human conduct and interests. The individual is subjected to constant discipline, here and probably hereafter, in view of elevating his nature and fitting him to be a recipient of boundless blessing. To pause upon the circumstances of this fleeting life and pass thereupon an ultimate judgment, is an obvious mistake, if there is such a future before us ; and without such future it is impossible to understand why the discipline undergone should have been imposed. We may take an illustration from the cultivation of the vine. Its shoots are pruned away, its roots are laid bare to the cold of winter, offensive refuse is presented to it for its sustenance, and its first efforts at production are balked, its clusters



being nipped off and cast away as rubbish. At this time, any one ignorant that there was a future for the plant, would say an enemy is dealing with it; but when at a later period it is seen spreading itself around, its branches covered with luscious fruit, the mystery is cleared up, and it is found to have ever been in the hands of one caring for it, aiming at its good, and knowing effectually how to attain his end. The sour and uninviting wild grape, through the treatment it has undergone in interference with its natural impulses, has been converted, by seemingly harsh but really beneficial measures, into the first of fruits. In like manner the gold, if it had a voice, might complain of the furnace of the refiner, while the process for its purification is but a passing stage, necessary to have it accepted and put to use as the most precious of the metals. Just so is it with the human race, who have to be advanced through the school of suffering from their original low standard, scarcely lifting them above the brutes around them, to the expression of the highest excellence. To be turned from error they have to be made sensible of the painful results induced by error, and their spirits have to be lowered and rendered ductile, apprehensive, and teachable; and each has to learn his lessons for himself. A father would gladly transfer to his son the advantage of the experience he has earned, but the son would then be a mere copy of the father, whereas, to be stable, he must have a character of his own; and it is only by his individual training that this can be sealed to him and be made to him an enduring benefit.

Is man, in the onward path marked out for him, which he has to pursue under such constant attention to the circumstances in his way, left altogether to his own resources unwatched and uncared for by any superior director? Is it in his case an assiduously maintained culture unfollowed by a harvest? Does he strive, at whatever sacrifice, for spiritual advancement, and end by obtaining no recognition? There are fields of know-

ledge, apparent to him, lying beyond the reach even of his apprehension. The conditions of measureless expanses of time and space, and infinite resources of matter and power, occur to him as necessities, but he is unequal to grasp and comprehend such circumstances. As he examines the roots of things he finds himself incapable of fathoming any of them. He can observe with tolerable accuracy immediate causes, but the ultimate causes are always out of his reach. He knows not how his food is assimilated, how life enters his own or any other system, how any seed or ovum fructifies and is developed into its appropriate form. There are then founts of knowledge, of which he is conscious, but which are unapproachable to him in his present state of constitution. In the moral field his apprehensions and desires are equally high and aspiring, and his capacity for attaining the ends he has in view in like manner limited and insufficient. He can conceive standards of excellence too exalted to be reached by any human effort. Govern himself how he will he is always sensible of shortcomings. He knows he might do better, but his inadequate powers prevent his acting up to his recognized principles. He has aspirations of an indefinable nature, proper to himself, in which others, whatever their experiences or maturity, are ill-qualified to take part. These are the struggles of the inner man for expansion, recognition, satisfaction, which can be directed only to some quarter external to and above himself, where he may claim sympathy and support, and be sure of being met and dealt with free of risk of misapprehension. Is there such a quarter in the unseen world to which he may go for the relief and supply of those his ultimate needs that he fully feels can never be met and satisfied in any other direction?

We are conscious, in our own systems, that mind has command over matter, the direction of our thoughts and studies, every movement of our limbs, every action of which we are capable, being initiated

and regulated by the power of will implanted in us. One of superior will, intellect, or tone of feeling, readily impresses and influences those around him, and there are occasions when the dominion of one mind over other minds is evidently exerted with intention and success. If the physical forms around us have been devised and put together by some unseen constructor qualified to accomplish his designs in whatever he thus undertakes, may we not believe that those higher faculties belonging to man, his intelligence, emotions, and moral sentiments, which are not accidents of his nature, but belong to all in various degrees, under an universal law, proceed from a like source and are subjected to a like governing agency? And as the physical man is sustained by resources of supply outside himself, may we not conclude that the inner man, equally requiring sustenance and growth, receives supports from a direction external to his system, and is in the hands of a superior power, cognizant of his wants, and ever ministering to him for his good?

The conscience is a faculty influencing our moral condition, the existence of which all must recognize. Fairly and honestly used its dictates will ever be in the right direction, nor are its indications given in uncertainty or weakened by compromise. As if by the finger of a supreme director, to the true and earnest seeker the proper path will be pointed out and commended for adoption. And if the indications given are disobeyed, ordinarily the thoughts of the disobedient will be troubled till they yield and pursue the course they are made to feel is the right one. If, however, the teachings of the inward monitor are set at nought, its action becomes weakened, the moral perceptions are obscured or perverted, and the individual sinks into indifference or degradation; but the witness is merely quelled and silenced, not absolutely extinguished, the conscience of the most hardened being always susceptible of awakenment by some

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visitation lowering and searching out his spirit, or by some monition and appeal addressed to him reaching his inmost apprehension. Is not this remarkable property, which is common to man, just such a medium as a superior power may make use of to come into contact with us in order to stimulate our thoughts and direct our actions for our ultimate good?

It must in the end be conceded that whatever has been offered in these pages as reasonable possibilities, can only be accepted properly by those who are able to believe and act upon the conditions spoken of. If the Creator is to work sensibly upon the creature, it is a first necessity that the existence of such a being as the Creator should be recognized. There are multitudes who avow that there is such a being, but who approach the subject no further. Theirs is an acknowledgment based upon no personal persuasion, but such as is merely due to the prevalence of common consent. The Securalist may be forgiven for challenging a creed not supported by better foundations, especially when it is seen to take its shape from the crude anthropomorphic models of the ancients. To feel that there is such a power as I presume to point to, the sense of his being must be expressed by habitual dependence upon his rule. He does not show his hand to those who are not prepared to take home to themselves the fact of his interpositions. Nor can any trace his dealings in discipline of their spirits who have not submitted their interests to his direction and keeping.

The whole race, laden with infirmities and surrounded by temptations, are in a position to require the ruling hand of this supreme and infallible director, and access to him must therefore be free to all. There can be no gate to be closed or opened, the mere circumstances of existence giving all a title to approach their Creator, and receive at his hands the satisfaction of their wants. Addressing themselves



to the same being, the experiences of all resorting to him, should be, and are, necessarily alike. And alike also are their ultimate hopes. Setting aside all artificial distinctions, and fancied stepping-stones, deliverance from evil, and establishment in final blessing, are the aims, in all their several forms of worship of the devout, whatever their denominations, whether Catholic, Protestant, Theist, Jew, Mahomedan, or Pagan. A common creed, based upon natural and universal testimonies, awaits the acceptance of mankind when they may bring themselves to be satisfied with it—a creed full and comprehensive; sufficing for every need and every desire; giving no room, when once apprehended, on which doubt, distrust, or division can find a standing place; round which the whole race may range themselves in assured union; resting on foundations wide enough for all, adaptable to all, and which can be disturbed only when the universe itself, with all its associated conditions, is overthrown. It is a belief that the Almighty Being standing as the author and the ruler of all is our ever-present and unalterable friend. Such a confidence should reconcile us to every form of temporal evil, and bind us together in the recognition of a brotherhood rooted in him—often professed, but hitherto never realized. Every other creed yet resorted to has introduced some intermediate agency, a circumstance necessarily occasioning isolation, and promoting discord. This creed alone is stamped with simplicity, grandeur, universality, and every element of demonstrable truth; suitable to the merest child; sufficient for the most matured and enlightened intellect; and holding out considerations and prospects to tranquillize and satisfy every mind. It provides the one who is governed by it with grounds to reconcile him to the present life and its manifold ills, and hopes to cheer and support him in view of a life that has to come. The Secularist is without either source of consolation; evils unredressed

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embitter the thoughts he has of existing conditions, and a future is not before him. The artificial creeds, it is now apparent, cannot stand the knowledge of the day, and are being manifestly subverted. It becomes us to supply their place with sufficiently broad and solid foundations. We must not be content to recognize and obey the intellect and disown the emotional part of our systems, any more than we should think of feeding the emotions at the expense of the intellect. The whole man must be met in all his requirements, and the sense that we are in the hands of a beneficent creator, under training for future blessing, is that which alone can compass us in our varied conditions, remove all difficulties in our paths, and fulfil our every need. If this be the true faith, to this faith we may rest assured we all shall come. Then the world at large will be introduced to confidences and hopes it has never had, and its advancement in all that should characterize it as the work of him who has made it, will, it may be safely concluded, be fairly initiated and prosper onwards and for evermore.

