

THE CUL-DE-SAC OF CIVILISATION.

A REJOINDER TO DR. A. R. WALLACE.

A COMFORTABLE conviction prevails amongst the cultured men and women of to-day that they are superior both to their own ancestors of the Stone Age as also to savage tribes of, say, Swazis or Zulus now existing in tropical continents. Would it be doubted that modern man who, with his electrical inventions, has conquered the inhibitions of space and of gravitation, and now flies indifferently across land or air or water, and who, through the scientific marvels of spectro- and electro-scope, is able to decompose, and weigh the elements of the remotest stars of heaven—would it be doubted that such a man is superior both to the Palæolithic ancestor whose proudest achievement was the rough hewing of a stone-axe, or to the savage Zulu, naked and be-kraaled? If an argument of defence for such an obvious truism were required, the first weapon to fly from the scabbard of mental resource would, in all probability, be the doctrine of evolution. Evolution, it would be urged, in which everybody now believes, provides for continuous progress from inferior to more perfect forms, and of this law the twentieth-century white man is the crowning illustration. But evolution has, alas! shared the fate of all popularised doctrines—Christianity not excepted; its rewards are claimed whilst its conditions are ignored, and thus it has come to pass that human progress is assumed as a *sine quâ non* of an existing system of evolution, although the condition upon which alone the law of continuous advance is operative—the condition, namely, of the existence of some selective agency which shall fix the type—is entirely omitted as a factor in the development of mankind. For in the artificial and complex stage in which the human-social organism is now struggling, selection by *nature* of the fittest to survive, is for all practical purposes eliminated, and no other efficient agency of selection has by man been substituted.

In all stages of development of life *below* that of the human-social, the transformation of organisms is determined, through natural selection, by conditions of environment. The transmutation of the giant forests of the Carboniferous Period into the insignificant types now represented by some of our club mosses, or of the gigantic Dinosaurs of Jurassic Time into the tiny hole-and-corner lizards of our rocks, has been due to climatic conditions

of environment against which the type was helpless. But whereas in biology the environment "transforms"—as Professor Ward phrases it—"the organism, in Sociology Man transforms the environment." Since then the environment of civilised man is almost entirely of his own creation, it is interesting to examine the effect of this transfer of control, as revealed in the human character now in process of evolvment.

Dr. Wallace has, in the January number of this REVIEW, startled the complacency of many by his assertion that so far from having progressed, Man has, on the contrary, since the period when he became historically cognisable, if anything, deteriorated in character. He not only reminds us that inequalities in racial and national characters are, as a rule, not inherent, but incidental to an environment which includes opportunity of accumulated knowledge, &c.; and that therefore the average Zulu or Fijian native may be potentially equal intellectually to the average Englishman; but he tells us that "there has been no general advance of character during the whole period of which we can obtain any definite information." And that "we shall be forced to the conclusion that we are to-day in all probability mentally and morally inferior to our semi-barbaric ancestors."

Now it is not intended here to dissent from this view, which is a logical deduction from reasonable arguments. But when, with the impulsion of much weighty argument behind him, the elastic-souled scientist rebounds from the dark depths of his condemnation of the Past and Present to the roseate prophecy "that there is every reason to believe that it" (the human character) "will be so improved in the not distant future," it is of importance to investigate more closely the composition of this "human character" with a view to testing the justification for such optimism, and of judging for ourselves as to whether the only selective agencies—namely, marriage and education—named by the Professor, are likely to be effectual in uplifting Man to a position which shall eventually be, let us say, as superior to that in which he now finds himself, as this present position is superior to that of his previous anthropoidal stage.

Human character is, says Dr. Wallace, "really the aggregate of the intellectual and moral faculties"; and it is, we are told, precisely in these faculties which Man, as apart from the animal world, distinctively possesses, that there has been no advance but rather retrogression, this retrogression *not* being applicable to those faculties which Man shares in common with the lower animals. For, writes the great scientist, "though there has apparently been no continuous advance in the higher intellectual and moral nature of man . . . this has not been the case with

that portion of his faculties which he possesses in common with the lower animals. . . . How this higher nature originated we may never know, but all the evidence points in the direction of some spiritual influx."

We are, therefore, to believe that the higher moral and intellectual faculties of Man are differentiated from the faculties which he possesses in common with the lower animals by having no recognisable source. They are not of evolutionary origin, but owe their existence possibly to some "spiritual influx." It is, however, precisely these higher and spiritual faculties which have deteriorated, whilst, on the other hand, in the lower and more material of man's faculties, those which he shares in common with the beasts, improvement is discernible. And yet whilst the *non-evolutionary* character of these higher faculties is insisted on, we are asked to believe that they will in the not distant future, at the instigation of man-selected agencies, develop tendencies of progress in accordance with an evolutionary nature which they do not, it is supposed, possess!

Now it will be the object of this essay to show, firstly, that the moral faculties *are* the intellectual faculties, and that these have been derived, not by some "spiritual influx" through a discontinuous process outside Nature, but through the legitimate continuity of a material evolution. And that it is just because they *are* products of evolution that they have retrogressed owing to the absence of any continuous selective agency, and in obedience to the law of "extinction of specialised types" and "persistence only of the unspecialised," as also in obedience to the generally misunderstood law of "survival of the fittest." For this *really* means survival not of the fittest in some high or abstract sense, but of the "fittest to survive" in the particular environment in which the organism is placed. The assumption that evolution necessarily means progress *upwards* to continuously higher forms is falsified by physiological facts. Evolution implies *evolvment*, but *evolvment* of *any* traits and qualities which will help the organism to *survive*—survival being the main desideratum of material nature.

Many organisms have evolved and survived in full vigour with great benefit to themselves by abandonment of higher structural forms and retrogression to simpler types. The elimination, for instance, of wings in the Kiwi bird of New Zealand which, to the æsthetic observer, would appear as a structural degeneration, has, as Professor Weismann points out, proved of great advantage to the species in the past, enabling it as a ground-bird to adapt itself to conditions under which food was procurable along the lines of least resistance. Owing, however, to this special adapta-

tion to environment, the species—having lost its wings irretrievably—is now likely, as a result of the introduction of fire-arms, to undergo extinction. The Kiwi bird thus illustrates the double truth that evolution is not necessarily from lower to higher forms of life, and that specialisation or a too perfect adaptation to any environment is often at the risk of ultimate extinction of the species.

Similarly, the loss of wings in the worker-ant illustrates the process of “reversed natural selection,” selection that is, which, though operating usefully to the species as concerns the special environment of the moment, is not of a nature to be appropriately termed *upward* growth. Again, the loss of organs of sight in the fish living in the dark waters of the mammoth cave, though from an outside point of view a deterioration of type, is to the fish themselves of undoubted benefit, allowing the more expedient development of other senses. Even parasitism, involving the loss of limbs and every organ except the mouth and stomach, is to the lice which flourish by sucking the blood of fishes an evolvment of nature’s ordering and of undoubted advantage—to the lice.

And so the human animal, *if left to the sole care of evolution*, must face the possibility of evolvment into a social organism in which structural retrogression, parasitism, and degeneration in physical, and, as a direct consequence, in mental qualities, *may* all be contingencies of environment, especially of man-made environment.

But the second argument of this article will try to show that, whereas the moral and intellectual qualities are evolutionary products, liable to the fluctuations and variabilities of *all* evolutionary products, and are therefore truly “characteristically human,” inasmuch as the human animal is by acknowledgment an evolved creation—that the *spiritual* quality, the “spiritual influx,” which is associated by the Professor as part cause and part substance of the faculties of morality and intellectuality, is, on the other hand, a quality distinctively and characteristically *Divine*—and that it is by recognition of the *rôle* which Spirit must play as the main feature of the Super-man that Man’s salvation will lie.

Now it is cowardly to beat round about this bush of spirituality. Either Spirit exists as a distinct appurtenance of Man, even though we are unable at present to define it in terms of logic—or it is a chimera. But if it exists, as this argument will assume, and if it means anything at all beyond a mere formal concession to orthodoxy in opinion, Spirit means not a mere cerebral functioning of a purely material nature, not Mind, which is a phenomenon of matter and dies with the disintegration of the

matter in which it was inherent—it signifies something which is Divine. Now that which is Divine is perfect—as oxygen is perfect—and unconditioned. Spirit, therefore, together with its qualities, being Divine, is perfect always, and cannot either become more perfect in the future, or ever have been less perfect in the past. Being Divine, Spirit with its qualities is unconditioned and could never therefore be liable to laws of “relativity to environment,” especially to laws of man-made environment. It is but shirking the responsibility of framing a conception of “Spirit” to define morality and intellectuality as being *separately* characteristic *human* faculties, and then, by an arbitrary euphemism, to name the conglomerate “the spiritual nature of Man.”

To believe that the “spiritual nature of Man” has deteriorated, or is capable of retrogression, whilst the materially-derived qualities shared in common with the lower animals have progressed; and yet at the same time to believe that it is from the spiritual qualities of a non-evolutionary nature that progress in accordance with evolutionary laws of Selection is to be expected in the future—involves belief in a plurality of paradox. The solution of the difficulty can alone be found in recognition of the fact that it is *because* of their evolutionary derivation that the qualities of morality and intellectuality have in any degree retrogressed in the past, and equally can it only be on behalf of their evolutionary origin that progress for these qualities could for the future be predicted.

But how, it will be asked, can the evolutionary origin of morality—the main characteristic of Man—be shown? For this it will be necessary to remove the crinoline of convention which guards the skeleton of morality from impartial scrutiny and study without prejudice the true lines of its anatomy.

What then is Morality? Speaking broadly, morality is a term which presumes in Man the faculty to discriminate good from evil and to sympathise with suffering. But whence was this faculty derived? It is within the scope of this interrogative that has been hitherto contained the *casus belli* between materialism and religion. For materialism has asserted that throughout the whole scheme of life there is no warranty to be found outside Man, for human codes which coddle disease, impose burdensome restrictions on the freedom of sexual and physical activities and which, generally speaking, displace Might and substitute Sympathy and Justice as determining factors in life. Nature, says materialism, is red in tooth and claw; she tramples the feeble under foot and punishes with indifference the virtuous and the wicked. For her Might is the only

criterion of Right, and intentional Justice or Morality, as we understand the term, is unknown. "Of moral purpose," epitomises Huxley, "I see no trace in Nature." Since then, says Materialism, the ethics of humanity are without prototype in the realm of nature, and we cannot acknowledge a *super-nature*, we are forced to declare their origin inscrutable and to reserve judgment as to the value of qualities thus spuriously acquired by Man.

Religion, on the other hand, says: we too admit that morality finds no parallel outside mankind. Our hospitals for disease, our anæsthetics for pain, our social restrictions, our courts of justice, derive no sanction, no justification from the physical universe, which is Nature. But Nature is for us only the penultimate of a *super-nature* which we call God. It is by the miracle of an exclusive revelation from this higher power—some spiritual influx—that Man's morality is inspired; and since the sole source of authorisation for the development of the higher faculties of Man is the *super-human* God, it follows that a belief in this particular form of God is a necessity of human progress. Those, therefore, who reject this God are enemies to the human race.

Thus whilst the point of dispute between materialism and religion is whether any sanction at all is to be found for the distinguishing quality of Man, both materialism and religion are in agreement that the hall-mark of morality is at least not of *Nature's* stamping: that it is not from within the realm of the physical universe that is to be found justification for the new-fangled moral developments of the human animal—that there are, in short, no known laws of Nature to warrant Man's ethical presumptions.

"The morality of nature is," says also Maeterlinck, who, like Dr. Wallace, appears to stand half-way in the world of thought between those who acknowledge only a blind Nature and those who rely on a *super-nature* as the guiding force of life "entirely opposed to that of Man." There exists "the same contradiction between our morality and Nature's mode of action, as exists between our consciousness and the instincts which Nature has planted within us."

Now if Consciousness be a necessary antecedent to Morality, it is in the origin and development of this faculty of Consciousness that must be sought the clue to, and the evolutionary justification of, Man's ethical departures. What then, stripped of its metaphysical disguises, is this Consciousness which has had the boldness to define new moralities on the map of human life? Is not Consciousness a synonym for that process in the brain-centres which is intermediary between the reception of a sense-impression through a stimulated sense-organ and the despatch of a resulting

action through a motor nerve? In cases where *no* time intervenes between receipt of the stimulated sense-impression and the resulting action the process is said to be reflex or reactionary, as in the involuntary blinking of the eyes upon an unexpected flash of light, and Consciousness, which must be differentiated from sensation, is non-existent. The mechanism is then controlled, as in the case of animals, whose actions are mainly reflex or who act, as it is called, by instinct, and to whom little or no choice of action is presented, solely by that outside force which silently throughout the gamut of organic life works non-consciously to the individual and is synonymous with the power variously termed God or Nature. The physiological and natural character of this reflex process and its further development by means of differentiated ganglia or nerve-cells for the quicker conductivity of sense-impressions is not doubted, and it can scarcely be doubted that it is under the ægis of the same physiological laws of differentiation and development that in the brain of Man centres which served at first merely as a central works department or telephonic exchange, for the automatic reception and distribution of messages, should gradually, in obedience to an enforced "economy of energy," have developed the power of registering and of retaining impressions thus received. But as a natural sequence to the power of retention, which is a part of memory, would later be superadded the further power of *Discrimination* between these received sensations.

Now it is this power of *Discrimination* which is at once the axis of all Consciousness and the basis of all morality. For it is precisely by means of this developed power of discriminating, of sifting, and sorting, and ultimately retaining, sensations and sentiments likely to be useful to the species that Man has acquired that high power of judgment and capacity for remembering which has placed the seat of these faculties of judgment and of memory—known as the centre of Consciousness—in its present indisputable sovereignty over those *non-consciously* working nerve-centres whose functions are pre-eminently reflex or reactionary. Whilst it is, under the guidance of the all-dominant law, "survival of the fittest," by these very processes of selection and rejection of impressions and sensations, by *Discrimination*, that is, of the socially fit from the socially unfit, the socially expedient from the socially non-expedient, that all codes of morality have evolved.

And what is the special field of work to which the discriminative faculties of the human intellect find themselves of necessity applied? Is it not continuously and always to the *discrimination*, to the selection, of ideas that are *expedient* from those that are

non-expedient, of good from less good, for the preservation and development of the social life? And these discriminations of expedient from non-expedient, good from less good, good from evil, these judgments of the developed Consciousness are the decisions which later codified into terms of right and wrong constitute Morality. Morality is thus no independent entity, no anomalous freak spuriously engrafted on humanity as a rebel force to Nature; it is no inexplicable "spiritual influx"; it is clearly the generic term given by each society for regulations of social expediency which, tested by time, sanctified by custom, and endorsed by the social verdict, have become memorialised as laws essential for the existence of the civilisation which is at stake.

A glance at the codes of morality which form the bases of prominent religions of the world will corroborate this view. Consideration, for instance, of the religious regulations still binding upon Buddhists, Jews, and Christians testifies to the fact that these originated mainly as maxims of *dietary*, *sanitary*, and *social* expediency. Of the ten commandments which constitute the bulwark of the moral faith of two at least of these communities, three only, it will be remembered, deal with theology pure and simple, the remaining seven being concerned with matters of social policy whose enforcement is left to the police. That moral codes or regulations of morality are determined by a common sense of geographical and social expediency and not—through infringement of natural laws—by miraculous and supernatural suggestion, is further illustrated by the fact that there exist in the universe to the present day no general abstract moral laws, no moral laws, that is, which can be recognised as being of universal obligation on all peoples and in all conditions. The cardinal decisions—such as those concerning monogamy, freedom of woman, and abolition of slavery—which the conscious mind of man has since emergence from its condition of irresponsibility been called upon to make, have in every society been guided not by an ecumenical standard of abstract right, but by a common sense of local *expediency* which only an historical criticism later defines in terms of right and wrong or of *Morality*. Of the utmost *moral* importance is the relationship, for instance, between the sexes, yet precisely here do we find a maximum elasticity of regulations in accordance with the varying physical and social conditions of differing climes and races.

To marry half-a-dozen wives in England is thought to be immoral, even for a man who could support them; whereas in Persia the reduction by a Shah of the number of his harem from 1,700 to a paltry sixty produced a few years ago a ferment of rebel-

lion amongst his subjects, who regarded such an innovation as sacrilege to their religious principles.

But it may here be asked, at what psychological moment does the regulation of "expediency" become the sanctified law of "morality"? The etymological derivation of this latter word from the Latin *mos, moris*, testifies suggestively that the slow magic of *Custom* supplies the wand of transformation whose "hey presto" is applied at such time when the general expediency of the regulation having become acknowledged, the law is memorialised through the agency of language, either written or spoken.

This transfiguring process is well illustrated by the familiar rite of marriage. For this rite which is now, in civilised countries, considered essential—whether celebrated civilly or ecclesiastically—to the "morality" of a union between man and woman, possessed originally no vestige of moral significance, it being merely a ceremony instituted by the heads of the two families concerned as an *expedient* means of affording evidence before witnesses of the completion of the "contract of sale" or of exchange, of "delivery" as it has been quaintly put, "on the price being paid and the taking home." Owing, however, to the protection which the publicity of the ceremony afforded against the desertion of the woman, the *expediency* of the custom was seen to possess a value which was permanent, even for the later time when marriage became more properly a contract between the parties immediately concerned. And it is undoubtedly the universality of the sense of the *expediency* of a publicly-attested ceremony—as a means of ensuring monogamy, the social desideratum of temperate climes—which differentiates as a prime moral ordinance the rite of marriage from, for instance, the rite of *baptism* which obtains only as a sectarian formula. That the Church finally "touched with emotion" and thus converted into a religious sentiment, a latent sense of the *moral* significance or confirmed *expediency* of this custom, has been but a valuable additional factor in the conversion of the rite of mere expediency into a moral institution.

A similar metamorphosis of the socially expedient into the socially moral is traceable in the history of the condemnation of murder as a breach of "morals." For when did the murder of an enemy cease to be considered as an honourable obligation and first incur a moral obloquy? It was not the simple inclusion of the sixth commandment on the tables of stone that miraculously transferred this act of violence from the credit to the debit side of the moral account, but rather, as perusal of the picturesque lives of the early kings of Norway shows, a growing sense of

expediency on the part of these astute monarchs, who realised that the relentless obligations of the northern vendetta deprived them of the services and lives of their most virile and valuable fighting men. This it was mainly, together perhaps with a natural desire to add to impoverished exchequers, that first prompted rulers to substitute blood-money for blood in their judiciary circuits through the country. And so in this way a regulation of *expediency* became engrafted as a permanent feature or as a *moral* law in a social code of which the aim is the preservation of the society intact. Thus "expediency" memorialised becomes "Morality," and Morality "touched with emotion" becomes an inviolable principle of human social life.

At the present moment, in the chrysalis stage, between a mundane expediency and a winged morality, may be noted questions as to the attitude of employers to employed; of the State to the employed; of the State to women; to the aged poor; to the starving young—in a word, the question of the responsibility of the State to enforce the principle that the right to life and happiness is not, in justice, the monopoly of the few. Such questions are already forcing themselves, by the reiterated voice of selected thinkers of successive generations, into a permanent place in codes of what many even now do not hesitate to describe as "*moral obligations.*"

Morality has then no ontological significance, but is a generic term for an assortment of human qualities which are the natural and inevitable result of a discriminative consciousness injected into conditions of social complexity. It is no bastard of Nature, outside the sphere of influence of a purposeful evolution, but is as much an evolutionary necessity of Consciousness as this latter is itself a physiological development in the natural history of Man, and has been evolved according to normal physiological laws by a natural process of development and differentiation of nerve-cells, for which not only were the physical materials supplied by Nature, but the sensations or impressions of the senses also, from which thought springs, were similarly inspired by the forces of the non-conscious, synonymous through the whole scale of life, with Nature herself. It is the voice of this newly but legitimately-born power of *Consciousness* which discriminates between good and evil, and thus by the gradual development of a refined power of judgment lays the foundation-stone of human Justice, the starting point of all morality. It is, therefore, no longer necessary to uncouple Man—by reason of his attribute of *morality*—from the continuous chain of organic life, and dissociate him as a thaumaturgical freak from the real business purpose of Nature.

But, it may be argued, if Morality, or the power of distinguishing the socially good from the socially evil, is an attribute of a developed consciousness, and consciousness is a physiological production inspired by an evolutionary purpose, is it not logical to assume that the continued growth of the faculties of consciousness or of intellectuality are likely to be accompanied, *pari passu*, by a corresponding growth of the so-called moral qualities, and that therefore Dr. Wallace has justification for his optimistic utterance as to development of character in the future, whatever reason may be assigned for the absence of progression in the past?

But the purpose of this Paper will have been in vain if it is not now apparent that evolutionary growth does not necessarily mean *upward* growth, and that the expediencies which lead to the various *growths* of morality prevalent in different countries and at different times are always relative to environments which are likely to become with the ever-increasing pressure of populations upon the free and open spaces of the earth, more and more cramped and artificial, and less and less subject to the purifying influence of a natural selection. For, as Professor Weismann points out, "if adaptation be truly the result of natural selection, then the same process which produced these adaptations will tend to preserve them. And," he adds, "*they will disappear directly natural selection ceases to act.*" Collectivism—the inevitable alternative, after a certain density of population has been reached, to the cruelties of the competitive system—is the last nail to be hammered into the coffin of "*natural selection.*" The *artificial* methods—marriage and education—suggested by Dr. Wallace as selective agencies of progress, are straws proffered to a drowning humanity. For education merely means the enforcement of the particular expediencies elicited by the environment, and marriage, even if it were universally controllable, would find no higher standard for its guidance than that afforded by the prevailing tone of education. Both marriage and education are at the best only expediencies intended to adapt the organism to the cramped and complex environment of social life, and, though of local interest and importance from this point of view, are insignificant compared to the question as to how the elevation of Man to a *loftier plane* is to be achieved. The ostentatious tide of evolution makes no advance upon ancient landmarks of civilisation, its ebb and flow is rhythmical ever within the same strand-limits, and if mankind is destined to reach a further shore, to be elevated to a *higher plane*, some force other than that inherent in capricious waves of evolution must be essayed.

But if there be, as Dr. Wallace believes, a *psychical*

plane, and *Spirit* is the dominant factor of that plane, surely it may be along lines of development of the Spiritual faculty that Man's salvation will be found. Such suggestion may be ridiculed by scientific convention-mongers of the day. But then, would not convention-mongers of our Simian ancestry, puffed with pride at their emergence from the reptile stage, have similarly scoffed at the notion that it would be along lines of development of "*Mind*"—a fantastical, invisible abstract, rather than by improvement, say, in those organs through which their own differentiation from the reptiles had been gained, that the evolvement of Homo from Pithecanthropus would be accomplished?

But it will here impatiently be interpolated, What is the Spiritual plane? What is Spirit? And how, if mankind is seriously to develop along spiritual lines, is the great stumbling block of man's innate sinfulness—of Original Sin—to be overcome? The answer to the former question will be facilitated by dealing with the latter first. For it should not be difficult to show by the light which the explanation of morality here given affords, that neither original nor eventual Sin has ever existed or ever could exist. For Sin means either, as described in the dictionaries, "transgression of divine laws" or transgression of man-made laws. Now transgression of *Divine* laws is obviously a contradiction in terms, for *divine* laws if they are divine, as distinct from human, cannot be set at naught and defied by Man. Whilst transgression of man-made laws implies, in accordance with the definition of Morality which has here been hazarded, mere failure to adapt the organism to the social expediencies of the Age, and though this nonconformity may truly be called non-expedient, or non-*moral*, a different ontological signification is thereby conveyed to that implied in the word "Sin" with its subsumed symptomatic traits of malignant Evil.

But even if the possibility of Sin were, for the sake of argument, for a moment to be conceded, it is apparent that of the Trilogy of which the human entity is comprised, viz., *Body*, *Mind*, and *Spirit*, there is not one of these upon which the liability to Sin can logically be fastened. For Spirit, if it is anything, is Divine, and therefore incapable of Sin, and remains—like the sun which shines irrelevantly to the obscuring clouds of earth through which it is reflected—unaffected by the petty relativities of the transient human forms through which it manifests. Whilst it is not, as has been seen, to the dictates of human *Mind* that transgression of divine laws can be imputed, for Mind deals only with discriminations of expediencies essential to the preservation of the social organism, and these, though doubtless part of a divine plan, have been worked out, so far, on the purely

material plan. Failure to conform with Mind-made moralities of social expediency can no more be denominated *Sin* than could the failure to fit a dress to the fashion of one age be imputed as *Sin* to the dressmaker living in another century.

Whilst the *Body* is of all the three partners the least capable of *Sin*, since *Body* is composed of matter, and matter is inert, and is only brought into motion by a life-force external to itself. For the cells of the body neither live nor die, but are lived in, and then deserted, by the life-force which upon its exit leaves the body as it found it, empty and inert. To say that the *Body* lives and dies and is therefore capable of either *Sin* or of *Morality* is a misapplication of terms, which, like the phrase, "the sun has risen" or "the sun has set," perpetuates an ancient error, since if life and death were inherent in the cells of the body, death would be an extinction of life consecutively throughout the cells, and not, as now, a *simultaneous* abandonment by life of *all* the cells, which instantaneously, upon the exit of the life-force, return to their original condition of inertia—appropriately at the departure of this life-force termed *Death*.

Although then the body is the vehicle through which other forces manifest, it is not upon the *Body quâ Body* and apart from *Mind* or *Spirit* that can be laid responsibility for any action to which it may be urged.

But the elimination of *Sin* from the human tabernacle renders—by the removal of the taint of incompatibility—the partnership of pure and perfect *Spirit* with *Body*, at least a conceivable possibility, though there still looms before us the supreme question, *What is Spirit?*

The conceivability of this *Spirit* may perhaps best be brought within the shadowed light of human perception by the analogy which suggests itself as between the three entities, *Mind*, *Body*, *Spirit*, which compose the human individual, and the trinity of which, according to the "new knowledge," the universe itself is comprised, viz., *Energy*, *Matter*, and *Ether*, the three in one and one in three, which the human mind is ever bungling to express. For though *Energy* with its analogue *Mind*, and *Matter* with its counterpart *Body*, are capable of explanation in terms of science, *Ether*—the third factor in our triad—whose existence is not, in scientific circles, doubted, can only be defined in terms which are as negative as those to which describers of *Spirit* have resort.

For the scientist who would prove to the ignorant the *bona fides* of *Ether*, would have to acknowledge that it can neither be seen, heard, tasted, smelt, weighed, nor measured, and yet he would not only affirm that it exists, but that it is a pre-essential of light,

and possibly even of terrestrial life itself. For though this Ether is not visible to the eye of the body, the eye of the *mind* sees it with a scientific certainty. And is it not possible that though the eye of the body cannot see Spirit, and the eye of the conscious mind can only dimly picture it, the supra-conscious mind which is, on our present material plane, released from fleshly bondage only under certain rare conditions, may see also with scientific certainty when, through the occasional voice of seers and prophets, it announces the existence of Spirit as a factor distinct and separate from Mind or Body, just as Ether is distinct and separate from air?

That the nature of Spirit should be infinite and divine, whilst the body in which it temporarily manifests is, though not sinful, human and finite, is no anomaly in science, for such disparity of qualities is paralleled by the elements of the chemists which have no relationship in their properties to the substances which they comprise.

But, indeed, the latest discoveries of the radio-active properties of Matter are a revelation of the "impossibilities" which Nature, properly understood, accomplishes. The alchemists' fantastic vision of the "transmutation of Matter" has proved to be no dream, but a reality, and the startling anomaly has now to be believed, that *Helium*, a distinct and separate element, with chemical properties of its own, is the disintegration-product, not of some other form of Helium, but of the separate element of *Radium*. In the further instance of *Uranium*, which transforms itself into the totally different body known as *Uranium X*, possessed of its own distinctive chemical characteristics, analogy with the supposed phenomena of spirit-life following as a result of Death, cannot fail to strike receptive minds. For if the fairy tales of Professor Duncan in his enlightening book, *The New Knowledge*, may be believed, it is a fact that, as he tells us, "whereas the plant produces its flowers by *growth*, the Uranium produces its Uranium X by *decomposition*!"

The summation of the argument which has here been attempted in response to Dr. Wallace's pessimistic survey of the past and his optimistic prophecy of the future concerning the character of Man is then, in a few words, as follows:—

The higher faculties of Man are either derived from a material force of evolution, or by means of a "spiritual influx." If they were due to evolution in the Past they will be subject to laws of evolution in the Future, and the reasons which have operated against advance in the Past are likely to be even more effective in checking progress in the time that is to come.

Moreover, since evolution does not necessarily imply *upward*

growth, but *evolvment* of the fittest to *survive*, the *evolvment* of Man, in accordance with laws of adaptation to an environment always becoming more constrained and cramped, is likely, *if left to the sole mercy of evolution*, to be of a retrogressive rather than of a progressive nature.

That the characteristic human faculties of morality and intellectuality *were* derived from an evolutionary power, and not by a miraculous intervention or "spiritual influx," has been shown by the derivation of morality and intellectuality from Consciousness, itself a condition of physiologically-developed brain-cells. The evolutionary origin of these qualities seems also to be an inevitable corollary from the acknowledged variability and imperfections of their nature, for were they derived from Spirit they could not, as partakers of a nature divine and perfect, exhibit either that retrogression in the past which is acknowledged, or the improvement in the future, which is by Dr. Wallace prognosticated.

But the denial of the term spiritual for the qualities of morality and intellectuality does not imply denial of the existence of Spirit, or of the possibility of human progress upon *non-material* lines. It makes, however, requisite a discreet distinction between qualities that are finite and those that are infinite. And if, in agreeing with Dr. Wallace, it is asserted that Spirit in some form *does* exist, and that the development of mankind is—as a deeply-seated instinct warns us—part of the Great Scheme, it seems reasonable to assume that, failing the power of the forces of the *material plane* to accomplish the desired result, it is upon the *psychical plane* that Man's salvation will be wrought. It is by recognition of the great silent power of *Spirit* that Man will be raised to a stage of life which shall be as much higher than that of the human animal, as this is higher than that by which it was preceded. *Life, Feeling, Thought* have been the successive integral forces characterising respectively the *evolvment* of *plant, animal, and human organisms* in the Past, and now, though Spirit may be, in words, as undefinable as Ether, or as, at an earlier stage, was Mind to the genus from which Man was differentiated, yet if a *super-man* is ever to be realised—if *super-man*, that is, is ever to be developed from Man, as Man was developed from *sub-man*—it must be by recognition of that one perfect element of permanent signification which alone is independent of conditions and cramped environments. That element is Spirit. It is as irrelevant to the issues at stake for present-day Man to concentrate his hopes of advance upon such time-serving expedencies as *marriage* and *education*, whilst he suppresses and derides all *evolvments* of a *psychical* nature, as it

would have been fatal to the differentiation of Man from Ape had the latter repressed the promptings of the intellectual instinct of the advanced anthropoidal minority and restricted his evolutionary efforts to regulating the expedient length of the future prehensile tail. Inflated with vanity at having climbed the high Mount of Mind and Consciousness, Man shows symptoms of blindly mistaking Pisgah for the Promised Land itself. But the concluding aim of Consciousness can scarcely be to make man aware merely of his *perishable* qualities. Such refinement of cruelty would be a devil's plan. From the evidence of an historic Past it seems certain then that if the present races of mankind would avoid encountering the Cul-de-sac of Civilisation which has blocked Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Rome, all the great nations of the Past, as in turn they have triumphantly processed down the blind-alley of evolution, they must, at this meeting of the cross-roads, be prepared to follow the beckonings of the Spirit-God through the narrow turnstile leading to "the only way."

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