

For the Torch of Reason.

Easy Lessons in Philosophy.

BY CHARLES CLARK MILLARD.

II.

All that we know, or can know, of the universe is included in two classes; namely, things, and the properties of things. For instance, rocks belong to the first class; while weight, density, hardness, etc., belong in the second class. So man is in the first class; and emotions, desires, reason and judgment are in the second. It is self-evident that density and hardness depend on the existence of some thing which is dense and hard; so, joy, hope, reason and judgment depend upon some being having these properties. A thing is more than any or all of its properties, and does not depend upon them for its existence.

Things are divided into three classes called the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, but the lines of separation cannot be definitely drawn. All things are passing through these three kingdoms in a ceaseless and endless circle of transformation; rocks crumble and become soil; the soil becomes grass, fruits, grains or vegetables; and these in turn become animal tissues; then the animal dies, decomposes and returns to the mineral kingdom, and this process is repeated ad infinitum.

But flesh is not grass, neither is grass soil; but each new combination is new creation, having properties peculiar to itself. The "thing in itself" is the thing we see, feel and know; and the "real world" is the world which impresses us through our sense organs; and, if we use a little reason and judgment with our sense, things ARE what they seem—Longfellow to the contrary notwithstanding.

Chemistry teaches that each new thing in the vegetable and animal kingdoms is formed by a union of pre-existing elements; and the elements combine so as, for the time, to lose their specific character and create new substance, differing from any or all the elements used in its formation. Oxygen and hydrogen unite and form water; but water is not a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen.

Until the present era of science, it was believed "always everywhere and by all" that there was a time when no thing existed, and then there came a time when all things were created out of "the nothing". All scientists now agree that there never was such a time; and consequently no such event occurred. There is no better evidence to prove that there was a time when life was not, than there is to prove that matter was not; it is an assumption without proof, and does not deserve serious consideration. On account

of the "nebular theory", scientists do not admit this; but that theory is losing ground, and the "origin of life" is likely to share the fate of "the creation of matter."

Evolution rationally accounts for all vegetable and animal life that has ever existed on the Earth except the first living cell and this one microscopic cell is all that remains of the great mystery of life. But if life is but one of the inherent properties of matter, (as many scientists already believe) which is developed under certain conditions; then there is no why? nor whence? nor whither? to this so-called "problem of life." And if we admit the claim of the religious evolutionist, that God created the first cell, it is at least just as probable that he made life a property of matter, as it is that he gave it an independent creation.

Every living germ, whether vegetable or animal, possesses the property of changing other substances into its own substance; and each one has what we call the power of choice, and exercises it in the selection of its food. Each germ selects certain substances for food, takes them in to its own structure, changes them into its own substance and thereby grows; and this is only a partial view of the general principle of law, that all things tend to move, to act, to become what they are not. The law of germ growth produces similarity while the general law produces dissimilarity.

Suppose a sour-apple tree has a sweet-apple graft on one of its branches; the same sap goes to all the branches, and all but one bear sour apples; but one changes the sap into its own substance, and what it cannot use, it does not take. A similar process is found in animal life. The blood freighted with food of a general nature passes to each part of the body, and each part chooses what it can change into the substance of that part. How this is done will be explained in another lesson.

The line of demarkation between the mineral kingdom and the vegetable kingdom is somewhat wavering and shadowy; but between the vegetable and animal kingdom there is no line at all. In the domain of the microscopic protozoa, the scientist has drawn his line in vain; for after each attempt the little creatures have crossed and recrossed the line with ease, regardless of the feelings of the scientist. In the next lesson I will treat of cell life and the psychology of the cell, thus leading up to our own mental life.

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