

Scientific Idealism

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Scientific Idealism

OR

MATTER AND FORCE AND THEIR RELATION
TO LIFE AND CONSCIOUSNESS

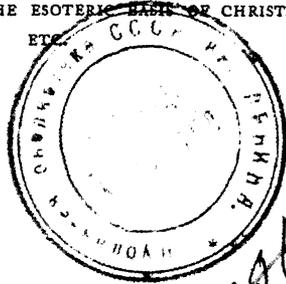
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BY

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ETC.



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FOREWORD

THE great question, What is Life ? is one which may be asked and answered in many different ways ; but each individual must assuredly answer it in some manner or other, for he is confronted with it in a most undeniable and practical form, simply because he *is* alive.

Each one of us possesses life and consciousness, and we cannot avoid the problem : though we may fail to understand its real nature, and may even—with more or less success for a certain length of time—ignore it.

In its lowest and most material aspect the problem is simply one of daily bread—or daily pleasure. Many, indeed, are unconscious of the problem in any other form.

But man cannot live by bread alone : and, sooner or later, in the evolution of every individual there must come a time when the great problem assumes other and higher aspects.

In the history of man's endeavour to solve the problem of his own life, and the great Riddle of the Universe of which he is a part, these higher aspects fall into three categories, known respectively as Science, Philosophy, and Religion.

Each of these may be said to regard the problem from a different point of view, and each is commonly looked upon as more or less independent of the others.

To show that this is not so in reality is one of the main objects of this present work.

What is herein attempted, therefore, is somewhat in the nature of a synthesis of science, philosophy, and religion ; not, however, as either of these is commonly understood in any mere formal or scholastic sense, but rather as representing three phases of human thought and experience which are fundamentally inseparable in the true life and development of every individual, and which can be thus understood without any special training in connection with either.

It is therefore hoped that what is here presented will enable the reader to understand *somewhat more* of the nature of Man—

and his relation to his environment and to the Universe as a Whole—than is commonly found either in science as such, or in any purely formal system of philosophy, metaphysics, or religion.

We say *somewhat more*, because by no possibility can the solution of the problem of life and consciousness be placed before any man or woman in mere words or phrases. These are but algebraic symbols—and, at best, a broken and fragmentary symbology—of what little the mind can grasp of *Realities* which lie beyond the mind—but not beyond experience—even as they lie beyond the forms of time and space in which alone the mind can express itself.

But, though the problem cannot be thus *solved*, it may possibly be helpfully stated—with the unknown factors clearly indicated. To state a problem is often half-way towards a solution. The intuition may possibly fill in what the mind fails to formulate; and this will certainly be done whenever the soul has *experienced*—in its own inner nature, and proper manner—what the outer symbology endeavours to express.

Science, in the modern acceptance of the term, has no dealings with either religion or metaphysics; the former being regarded as altogether outside of its possible investigations, the latter being commonly sneered at as mere intellectual web-spinning.

Yet it is quickly seen that every scientific concept necessarily begins and ends in a metaphysical region; and, indeed, the retort has been made that scientists are, after all, only unconscious metaphysicians. Moreover, it is readily granted that no department of human thought, knowledge, or experience can really be separate from the whole; and that if science, religion, and philosophy or metaphysics may be said to have their own particular sphere of activity, each more or less independent of the other: it must, at least, be granted that nothing which is really *true* in either of these can be antagonistic to what is true in the others.

We need in the first instance, however, a clear conception of the *nature* of truth; and this will occupy our attention in our first chapter.

We are desirous that the reader should understand that no claim is made for any theory or theories advanced in this work other than that they are more or less in the nature of a helpful