

THE HIGHER LIFE.

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So much of the mystical and magical has been thrown around this subject that the very title may be to some readers the signal to turn the page and pass on. Many good people there are to whom zeal, with or without knowledge, is the principal thing, but the number is steadily increasing of those who want light as well as heat, and knowledge as well as zeal. The modern mind is dominated by the idea of law in the spiritual as in the natural world—it holds that God is not a god of confusion, but that a spiritual cosmos is the "far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." According to an old conception the physical world came to its present order through a series of catastrophes. According to the modern conception, it has grown by the steady evolution of the forces in matter springing from the infinite and eternal Energy from which all things proceed. The same difference obtains as to the conception of spiritual life and growth. Let it not be supposed, however, that all mystery disappears with evolution, or that a knowledge of the law by which a power works explains the origin of the power.

In applying these principles to the higher life, we note that the origin of the life principle or energy is under the new conception as under the old ascribed to God alone, the only Infinite and Eternal. In the physical realm all things were made by the Divine Word; so, in the spiritual realm, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

There is in the physical life itself a higher and a lower, and living things range up from what seems but an animated sack or stomach to the most perfect and beautiful of human forms, with its multiplicity and variety of functions. In the intellectual life also there is a lower and a higher. It may be traced in the seemingly blind instincts and sensations of the lowest animals, up through the cunning of beasts and savage men, to the sublimest reasonings and discoveries of the human mind. And, in like manner, there is a lower and a higher in the moral life. Its first motions may be seen in the simplest law that curbs the selfishness of brutish men, whilst its latest and sweetest fruit may be seen in the love that leads a man to live and die

for his fellow men. Again, of these three stages or planes of life, there is a lower and a higher, or rather a lowest and a highest.

In so far as a man's life is habitually and characteristically on one or another of these planes, it is a high life or a low life. All who live for the physical or animal are on the lowest plane, though their tastes may differ and be called gross or refined. One man may gorge on bacon and beans and wash his meal down with rum, and another may fare daintily on canvas-back and champagne, but they are both living the lowest life—the physical, animal life.

When the man passes from the animal to the intellectual exercises and pleasures, he rises in the scale of life. Animal life he must sustain, and animal enjoyments he may take by the way, but the aim and purpose of his life is higher, and he will submit to plain living for the sake of high thinking. Yet he may be selfish and criminal—a bad man, notwithstanding his knowledge and cleverness.

It is only when the man lives for love and truth and duty that he passes into the highest life. And, by whatever name a man may be named, when he passes into that life, he enters upon the Higher Life. "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."

What, then, is the advantage of the Christian? Two chief advantages are his. In the first place, he has the sublime, the supreme example of the Highest Life in the person of Jesus Christ, who left us an example that we should follow in His steps. In the second place, there has come into the world through His person and work an inspiration—an uplifting power by which the souls of men rise from a sense of guilt and bondage to spiritual peace and to the glorious liberty of the Son of God. The experience of an innumerable company of the purest and loftiest souls is that by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, they have passed as from death unto life, and they have found His Word a true Word: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—Acta Victoriana.