

NECESSARY BELIEFS INHERENT IN THE PLAN OF THE SOUL.

When we hear the noise of the falling water or the hiss of the steam which drives a loom, we do not confuse these agents with that of the weaver. The unintelligent forces of the waterfall or the steam are contrasted with the weaver, much as the blind chemical and physical forces at work in living organisms are contrasted with life. You know that the steam and the water cause the movements of the loom, and yet that the weaver co-ordinates these movements. The rude, sightless force of the waterfall and of the steam may be essential; but they do make the loom, and there can be no weaving until there is a loom. Even after the appropriate mechanism has been brought into existence, you must have the weaver to co-ordinate its activities. He does not put forth all the force there is in the loom; but he co-ordinates it all. Surely there is a distinction between co-ordinating and causing the movements of germinal matter. Sometimes the weaver makes the loom and moves it too. In this life chemical and physical forces play through the organism; but when we drop the natural and acquire a spiritual body perhaps the change is analogous to that which occurs when a weaver, whose loom has been moved by a waterfall or steam, dispenses with their aid and sets the loom in motion by his own force.

In the defense of the authority of the necessary beliefs or axiomatic truths of intellect and conscience against the pretenses of materialism, what are some of the uses which can be made of a correct definition of life?

1. Correctly defined, life in physical organisms is the power which co-ordinates the movements of germinal matter.

2. This definition is not intended to apply to disembodied life, nor to the Divine Existence.

Of course, we do not suppose that there is any germinal matter in the organisation of the Angel Gabriel. Ours is a definition not of life merely, but of life in physical organisms.

3. It is identical with Aristotle's definition of life as the cause of form in organisms.

4. Co-ordination the greatest marvel in the structure of living tissues, is by this definition put in the foreground.