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HERBERT SPENCER'S DEFINITION OF LIFE.

TO define life, or to state clearly wherein it consists, has always been found an exceedingly difficult task. Science and philosophy have both attempted to solve the problem as to what life really is, and both have found their resources taxed to the uttermost in the attempt. Philosophy, following the speculative pathway, has generally been inclined to posit some kind of an entity with which life must be connected, if not identified. Though there are elements of truth in this view on metaphysical grounds, yet the abuse of the doctrine of occult qualities in scholastic philosophy has brought it into disrepute in modern times. Science, on the other hand, taking the definite line of observation and experiment, and finding thereby nothing more in vital phenomena of all kinds than a certain physical structure and definite chemical forces, has been, perhaps, too ready to conclude that there is nothing more involved in these phenomena than this structure and these forces. Both science and philosophy have doubtless something to say in solving the problem. If we rely on one only we may be led to erroneous or one-sided conclusions. Thus, a purely speculative study may commit us to a