

reach of our tests. Matter, even in its grossest forms, is only detected in its relations,—never in its essence.

Force and life are as subtle as the essence of matter. Spring comes, and countless forces, guided by countless phases of life, awake from the sleep of winter; and structures, numerous as the sands of the seashore, arise from lawn, and garden, prairie, and forest.

The germs of a rose seed, inspired with life, build a bush of numerous branches, and cover it with leaves, and with flowers of ineffable beauty and fragrance. Note the exquisite tinging of each leaf and blossom. The more carefully you examine, the more beautiful it appears—subtle ethereal, divine beauty. Consider its delicious fragrance, distil its oil and study its power of perpetual perfume. What materials compose the beauty and the fragrance? What is that life which reaches forward with unerring fingers, and gathers from light, air, water and earth those materials, and adjusts them so perfectly? Profound mystery wraps all from our sight—except the results.

Let us turn our thoughts from an unconscious vegetable to the building of an intelligent, sensitive, deathless being.

God has evolved out of Himself spiritual forces, inspired them with life, and set them to building structures in His own likeness, out of materials ample as His own nature. In other words, He has created living spirits, endowed with His own attributes in germ life, whose normal activity is eternal growth into His image.

Consciousness, will, affection, memory, reason, power to suffer and enjoy, and immortality, distinguish spirit from vegetable life. A spirit is empowered to study its own activities, but not to know itself. Its essence, ineffable, sovereign, immortal—its substance, its shape, its parts, its *whole* elude its own deepest research.

I am to myself a mystery, as profound, as impenetrable, as the being of Jehovah is to me. I can not bring my own selfhood to the test of any of my senses. I may

listen ever so attentively and continuously but no sound comes up from its mysterious depths. I look steadily, earnestly but no shape, no shadow even, appears. The most discriminating and sensitive touch feels only utter nothingness.

I am conscious of being, I am conscious of wonderful powers and a marvelous life. I am conscious of relations to other beings like myself, and to a physical world. I am conscious of activities and of results from activities, of pleasures and pain. In the language of another,—“The spirit gives perceptions to the senses but it cannot in turn perceive it. It is not sense. At its bidding the valves of the heart permit the blood to pour tumultuously into the flushing cheeks, or to rush back fainting and affrighted from their pallid, collapsing cells; but it is not the blood nor the heart. It sends out living nerves from the lordly brain and the stately column which supports it to the remotest avenues of feeling, but it is not brain nor nerve. It hears with the ear, and sees with the eye; but it is not eye nor ear. It is everywhere within me but not anywhere, inscrutably wrapped up in this muddy vesture of decay, every particle of which it clothes with beauty and life and power.”

Ought I to be surprised that my spirit an emanation from the Infinite spirit,—His off-spring—should hide its essence from my inspection? Why should I expect to analyze it, when the essence of the beauty and fragrance of the rose utterly eludes all search.

Though I cannot comprehend myself, having been fearfully and wonderfully made, I am charged with the awful responsibility of directing the forces of my life in their building process. I have self-determining power. My character is growing under my own fashioning hand. If the life forces of a rose are commissioned to build and adorn with such beauty and sweetness a structure which to-day is, and tomorrow decays; what kind of a structure ought I to rear, when my life