

Is There A God? by Eugene Fersen

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**Written in 1928, by Baron Eugene Fersen, this work was controversial for it's time.
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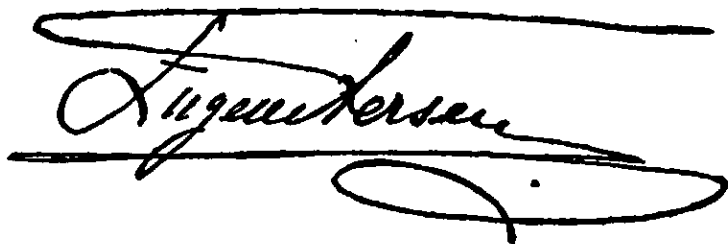
Cara Yowell

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To those noble Men and Women, whose enlightened
Courage and untiring Efforts made possible Progress
on Earth, do I dedicate this book.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Augustus". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a large, horizontal, hand-drawn oval frame.

Author and Teacher of Science of Being
and Founder of THE LIGHTBEARERS, December 14, 1921

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INTRODUCTION


This book, dealing with the Greatest Question of All Times, is the Voice of the Young Generation. In its pages are embodied the doubts, the queries, the secret longings, the silent aspirations, the undying hopes of that New Breed of Human Kind who are daring to think for themselves. Its action rides on the unflinching Determination of Youth to-day to burst the confining walls of Ancient Beliefs, to strike into the Open alone; to win their Life's Battle Here and Now, on Earth, instead of feeding their discontent on unsubstantial Prospects in the Hereafter.

Written for the Enlightenment of Mankind and with the definite Aim to explode Age-old Superstitions which are still blocking Humanity's progress up the Path of its Evolution, the material here presented is built up of facts taken from Life Itself, as well as from the latest investigations and discoveries in the Fields of Science, History and Religion.

THE AUTHOR

CHAPTER I

LOOSE LEAVES FROM LIFE

H, God!—Is there a God?"

The wild cry stabbed like a naked blade through the hospital ward, stilling the faint, sad tumult of a hundred war-torn men. A question—a doubt—a prayer—a revolt—a strong male voice, driven by the unutterable anguish of a tortured Soul, of a helpless being.

"Oh, why have you saved my life! Saved my life—for this! Oh, God! Give me Death—a thousand times Death! To Hell with God—if there is a God who can allow such a thing to be!"

Silence—no answer. A deadening silence! What could be said in the face of so grim and obvious a Truth? Yet, long after the last echoes had fled down the stone-walled corridors, those words rang in the hearts of the group clustered about a cot in the far corner of the ward—nurses, young doctors and a famous surgeon.

A youth lies there—a splendid head, on the body of an athlete. Two nurses, sitting on the edges of the

bed, are supporting him. Fine eyes—but the light has gone out of those eyes; they do not see. The man is blind. Broad and thick is his chest, and square his shoulders—but the sleeves of his shirt dangle empty upon the pillows. The man has no arms. Powerful is his form, where it bulges the top of the covers—but beneath it, the counterpane sweeps blank and undisturbed to the foot of the mattress. The man has no legs.

Blinded, shorn of arms and legs, a human stump, a living log, a victim of the War, buried alive in a lump of useless flesh, condemned to a long, unspeakable agony of life, he exists—a triumph of surgery, an immortal wreck.

And those whose duty it is to save life, wherever a spark of it is still to be found, were wondering, as they looked upon this monument to their skill, if it would not have been infinitely more merciful to let him die. The thousands of others who had perished under their care, men who might have recovered to a happy, useful life—why had Death taken them, yet left this one behind? Could it be that even Death shrank back in horror from so much human misery? How could God, if there is a God of Love, of Kindness, of Compassion, permit such untold sorrow and suffering to come into one mortal life? Is there, after all, a God?

So pondered the nurses and young doctors, with the memory of that last mad protest fresh and aching in

their hearts. Even the great surgeon, deep in the comfortable cushions of his car, became lost in speculation as he rolled through the crowded streets, thinking how unjust God, Fate or whatever you wished to call it, seemed to be in some particular instances. So rapt was his mood that he was scarcely aware of the chauffeur, respectfully opening the door to let him out. But the imposing bulk of the apartment house where he lived, the warmth and coziness of his beautifully appointed home, the attentions of his wife and of their two fine-looking youngsters, his sons, soon dispelled the already waning impressions of the hospital ward.

"By Jove," exclaimed one of the young doctors, touching his own long, strong limbs with an inquiring hand, as if to make sure they were really there. The plump, pleasant little nurse sitting with him on top of the bus appeared not to hear; she was immersed in thoughts of her own. "By Jove," he repeated, more emphatically, "if that's the kind of God there is, who lets His creatures suffer so, I don't think much of Him. The Devil himself couldn't do any worse."

The little nurse made no reply. Though quite orthodox in her religious beliefs, she could not reconcile what she had seen with the concept of Divinity that she had been taught. Her Christian Deity, the loving Father of Man, had nothing in common with that living horror she had left a few moments since.

Arriving at her street, she snatched up her scattered effects and fled, leaving a hasty good-by and a faint odor of perfume behind her. The date which they had both confidently expected to make for that evening was forgotten—an omission, however, which was presently adjusted by phone. For they, too, were alive.

* * *

France—a small village, not far from what had been the Front during the Great War—on the crest of a low hill a wooden cross, formed of the broken blades of a propeller, standing stark and grim against the dainty blue of a warm summer sky. Its shadow falls possessively, with extended arms, on the mound of a grave—an unusually long grave—at its foot. Near by lies the moldering wreckage of a half-burned airplane; beside it, polished and glittering in the sunlight, a car of an expensive American make, a chauffeur, a courier and a couple—a Mother, still erect and beautiful in her sorrow, and a Father, bent by grief if not by years.

“My boy—my beloved—my so tall, so handsome boy! Here you sleep, under the soil of France—forever gone, yet we remain, your Father and I, to mourn over all that is left of you.

“No more to hear your car roar up the silent drive at night—no more to see your tall form bending over me—no more your kiss, your touch, your breath upon

my cheek, the laughter sparkling in your eyes as you look down to me. My darling boy—no more!

“France—you who are called the beautiful one—you are hideous to me. You got my boy, you keep my boy—my tall, my handsome boy.

“Oh, God! Why? Why had that to be? Would it have cost so very much, that costs so much to me? A few days more—oh! Where is God? Is there a God—”

So flashed the frightening thought, unuttered, behind the pale, still face of the Mother, to vanish as quickly as it came. A sudden wrench of the will, a remembrance of what the Church had taught her, and her proud head sank in submission to that which she thought was the Will of God. Sternly she quenched the crying revolt in her heart, that Mother heart which never could forget; and, composed again, though infinitely sad with a sorrow tangled in the very roots of her life, the Mother of the American lad drove away with her husband.

A story sad, yet not uncommon. Son of wealthy parents, heir to millions, intelligent, handsome, full of generous impulses, inspired by high ideals of life and led by the spirit of adventure, embodying in himself all that is finest and best in human nature, he had gladly responded to the call to fight for right. Long before America entered the World War, he had enlisted as a driver in the American Ambulance, later joining the Aviation as a member of the Lafayette Escadrille.

And there he perished. The idol of his parents, the friend of his friends, he in whom all the noblest of life came to a head, rode forth to battle in the clouds. A fight of eagles in the sky, wheeling and dipping amid the unseen streams of Death; a burst of flame, a trail of fire, blazing its way to the ground like a shooting star. At the end, a smoldering heap of rubbish, marking the spot where that bright meteor fell—and a golden star, still burning, burning, upon the black silk of his Mother's dress.

So died a bold American eagle, killed fighting for a country that was not even his own. A young and glorious life, brimming with high hopes and great ambitions, animated by a desire to help his fellow beings, on the verge of a brilliant Future—stamped out like a wind-blown ember under the iron heel of War. He who could have lived life so completely in every way, to whom Fate had given all that the human heart could wish to possess, lies buried under a few feet of ground, the cold gray ground of La Belle France.

* * *

“Nurse—Nurse! I don't want to die. Think what will happen to my baby, if I should die. I'm all he has in this World, you know. I've got to live, I *will* live—for him—the child of my love.”

But the nurse of the maternity ward said nothing.

With tired, pitying eyes she watched the pale young face on the pillow dream audibly on.

"I'll work—oh, I'll work—and bring him up, make him a splendid man. I'm so glad he isn't a girl. Men always have more of a chance in life than women do. I'm sorry I'm a woman myself. Couldn't help it—I was born that way. I didn't ask to be born a girl. I didn't ask to be born at all, for that matter. I wish I never had been. Why was I, do you suppose?"

"My Mother often used to tell me she wished I'd never been born. Well, I wish now my boy had never been born. Yet—I don't know. I'm so happy that he is, too. See—nurse! Did you ever see such a wonderful baby before? Think what I'd have missed—never to feel his sweet little face pressing close to my breast, his tiny body cuddled up to mine. Such a mite of a thing—and so strong already. He'll be just as tall and good looking as his Father, I guess.

"I wonder if Fred would be glad to know that he has a son. He always liked boys more than girls. I wish I could see Fred now—just for a few moments.

"He married another girl, I know. I believe he couldn't help it. She had money, he had none. So they married. I wonder if he's happy with her. As happy as we were, once.

"It's like a dream, those days—so far away, so long ago. Yet it's only a little over a year since I met Fred

for the first time. It was in the subway. I was so tired, after all day on my feet in the store. And the train was jammed. I felt dizzy, a little sick. It showed on my face, I guess, because Fred got up and gave me his seat. Then he offered to see me home. I was glad he did. He looked such a gentleman, strong and kind and pleasant. Like the kind you read about in books. And that night I dreaded to go down my street alone. I always did—so bare and dark and still—and feeling the way I did, it just seemed I'd die on the way. But with him beside me—why, I was sorry it ever ended.

“The next Sunday he called on me. Mother and Dad were in. Mother liked his looks and nice manners, but Dad said he didn't think much of those white-collar guys.

“After that we always used to meet at the subway station and go home together. He lived in Flatbush, too. And sometimes he took me to the movies. Especially if there was a wild-west thriller on the program. Fred liked that kind, and of course I liked anything he liked. A couple of times we went to Coney Island to have some real fun. Oh, that was great.

“Sh-h—see, nurse—how quietly my Fred sleeps. I'm going to call him Fred, after his Father. Don't you think it's a wonderful name? Short—but something in it that catches you. It does me, anyway.

“Yes, we were happy, those days. So happy! It

was like a marvelous, marvelous dream, and I hoped I never would wake up.

“One night—how well I remember it!—we were caught by a thunderstorm on the way home. The rain came down in floods, all at once, and the thunder was awful. We were passing Fred’s place at the time—he rented a ground-floor room from a Jewish family there—and we ducked into the shelter of the doorway. I didn’t want to go in, but he insisted—just until the rain should stop.

“Well—I went in. And I stayed and stayed—long after the rain had stopped. It wasn’t his fault; it wasn’t mine. We just couldn’t help it. Something stronger than both of us swept us away—into a happiness that crowded out the storm, the world, everything. I remember how surprised I was later, to notice the lamp-light flooding in the window, clear and still, just as if nothing had happened. Yet everything was new, different. Fred had told me that he would marry me as soon as he got a raise in salary, and that he’d never stop loving me.

“Hush, baby. Don’t cry. Mother loves you—will love you always.

“We went to Fred’s place again and again after that. We didn’t need the rain then. And each time Fred loved me more than before.

“But one day, I remember, I suddenly felt sick and

fainted in the store. They took me to the infirmary. The doctor there didn't say what was the matter with me—just shook his head when I asked. Next day I was discharged. They couldn't keep a girl in my condition, they said, because of the moral effect.

"I cried all the way home. I was so frightened. I told Mother what had happened and she said it served me right, that I was a fool after all. Dad cussed. When Fred got back that evening I told him, asked him to marry me at once instead of later on, as he said he would.

"Well, he didn't. He married another girl, who had money. Dad threw me out of the house, and the neighbors all laughed at me, so I had to go away. I tried to get work—any job I could pick up—and I've worked hard ever since. But the time came when I couldn't work any more.

"One night I broke down. It was at a Salvation Army meeting on the street. I had nowhere to go——

"Nurse, please give me something to drink. I'm so hot—just like burning up inside.—Thanks.

"They tell me a Salvation Army lass took charge of me and brought me here to the Maternity Hospital. I wonder what my neighbors would think of her. And—well, here I am, and here my baby was born.

"I wonder, nurse, why was I given all that happiness only to have it snatched away? My grandmother used to tell me that God always takes care of His children

except when they're bad. Do you think it was bad of me to have loved Fred?

"Don't say, nurse, that it wasn't right. Neither of us thought anything wrong when we loved each other. We couldn't help it. Fred often used to say, 'I thank God for the day that brought us together on the subway, dear little one,' and I thanked God, too, from the bottom of my heart for having met Fred!

"I was so grateful to God, nurse. Every night I prayed for Fred, asked God to let the happiness He had given us last forever. Just as I'm praying Him now to make me well again. Do you know, nurse, every night before I go to sleep, I ask the good God to give me back my strength, so I can live. Not for myself, you see, but for my baby's sake—for my little Fred. It isn't much to ask, after all that's happened, is it? Do you think God will hear me this time? It seems as if He ought—if only for my baby.

"How dark it's getting! Nurse, is the night here so soon? I think—I'll sleep—to-night—oh! God——"

A stab of pain in the side, a cry, a sigh—and the Girl-Mother slept the night-long sleep for which there would be no morning.

One of the millions, snatched too soon into the delirium of her Moment, cast aside when the fancy is finished, when the man's flare of desire is dead. And she was sixteen years old that day.

Did the Soul of the Girl-Mother, free at last, perhaps look back on that too frail habitation of flesh from which it had departed, and wonder to itself? Why had it been given a body to feel and to suffer? Why had it cherished unknown the fire of a passion destined to destroy it, a human passion placed in the breast of everyone born into this World? Why had it been lifted to the heights, only to be dashed more violently into the depths of anguish and despair? Why must it have bought even the release of Death at the price of a tiny morsel of life doomed at the outset to a career no less uninviting?"

And, as the marveling Spirit winged its way to some unimagined destination, it must have asked itself, "Is there any Justice, any real Happiness? Is there, after all, a God?"

But perhaps the question was never asked, even as it was never answered; for who knows if there was a Soul to vex itself with speculations of that kind?

* * *

Son of a Russian peasant, a bright, energetic youngster, he had early left his home. His parents were poor—serfs, in that old, enslaved Russia. He wanted Freedom; he felt free. So he left that cottage, to him a place of bondage, and set out on his quest.

Rugged and colorful was his life. Many thousands

of miles crept under his wandering feet. City and woodland and plain, they drifted slowly behind him. Winters, he trapped in the forest; summers, he worked in the fields. Wild berries, helped out with a piece of rye bread, were his food, water from spring or brook his drink. At night he slept in the open, his face to the stars.

His vision, also, perhaps caught its far focus from the stars. Though often tired and worn from the dreary distances he covered, his eyes burned with a bright and eager fire. A Purpose took definite shape in his thoughts—a Purpose backed by a steadfast confidence in himself and his destiny, a clear and simple faith in God. He wanted to reach Siberia, the land of cold—but also the land of Gold.

Gold was his aim. Such gold as he beheld at night, strewn richly through the glowing deeps above him. Gold that held locked in its glistening heart all that he most desired—Freedom, Power, Opportunity to test the strength he felt stirring within him. And with the bright Vision before him, he passed over the lovely green slopes of the Ural Mountains, the Gates of Asia, and entered Siberia, at last the field of his quest.

Years sped by. The awkward boy who had set out from his peasant home became a sturdy young man, straightforward, direct, contemptuous of weakness and fearless of strength. Capable, resourceful, his intelli-

gence sharpened by adversity and made the spear-point of an invincible ambition, he thrust his way among that motley throng of gold seekers who, like himself, had willingly exiled themselves in this dread country of exile, Siberia, for its precious metal's sake.

His hands were his tools. He worked hard, alone, digging and panning the gold-bearing sands. But he used his brains also. What his hands won for him he kept, or used to advantage. His reward was a fortune, wrought from virgin gold.

Yet, to his ambitious mind, this first success was but an earnest of greater things to come, a means to a remoter and far ampler end. He turned his energies to placer mining, washing the gold from its bed in the hills on a scale more suited to his new power.

And the hills opened their treasures lavishly to his knock. His hands no longer sufficed to control the streams of wealth that poured in on him. He built up a stronger instrument for his use, a Company, far-reaching, powerful, of a size and strength to obey the dictates of his restless ambition. Owner and President of this Company, he gained the title of "King of Gold."

Still he was not content. Young, vigorous, at the high noon of his powers, confident of his larger destiny and in the full tide of his unbroken success, he went back to Old Russia. Not to his home village, that wretched scene of his poverty; his eyes were fixed boldly

on nobler fields. The Capital, Imperial Petrograd itself, held the prize to which he now aspired. A wife, of the best, the finest, the fairest and most talented, in all that glittering treasury of feminine charm and loveliness. He would pluck the fruit that sat highest on the tree, sunning itself above the shadows in the light of royal favor.

And, true to his habit of victory, he achieved his aim. The loveliest girl in the Capital, of the bluest of blue blood, became the wife of the son of a serf. More; she brought him what he least expected—Love. The strong, pure love of a broad-minded, truly noble-hearted woman, who looked behind the screen of outer appearances and saw within that which she, as a woman, wanted and dared to claim for her own.

He, who in his days of struggle had learned to despise love as a luxury, even a weakness—he met love with love. With all the strength of his impetuous nature, he loved the woman who was his wife.

As if to bless their union, the riches pouring in upon them swelled to a veritable torrent of gold—a torrent which, once started with so much labor and difficulty, now seemed impossible to stop. The yellow metal acclaimed its Master, its King; like Midas, whatever he touched with the exploring finger of his mind turned to gold.

One day he awoke to find himself the richest man in

Russia. His problem, instead of acquiring wealth, was to discover a use for it.

Under his directing touch, the golden flood broke out through the humbler districts of the City in the form of popular restaurants, where healthful food was almost given away. It took the shape of Hospitals for the poor, lavishly endowed. It erected colleges, where education was put within reach of all. It built churches, financed organizations for the relief of suffering, established libraries, drained into the thirsty channels of countless charities; yet, in spite of all, the King of Gold found a surplus piling up faster than he could spend it.

Vaster and nobler became his projects. Still in his prime, master of untold wealth, doing good in numberless ways, honored, envied, flattered, feared, loved, he was at the apex of human powers. Great social reforms sprang up in his thoughts to be achieved in his beloved Russia.

Suddenly the Great World War burst like a destroying flame over Europe. All his flourishing plans withered in the blast of a more commanding emergency. He transformed his beautiful residence in Petrograd into an Ambulance, where he lived with his wife in two rooms of their own vast palace. She became a nurse and took charge of that Ambulance, which his money supported. And there, in those lofty marble halls which so recently had echoed to the laughter and the

wit of brilliant companies, lay row upon endless row of shattered bodies in clean white cots, débris swept up from the battle front and sent back to be made as nearly whole as might be, against their further need. Groans and nameless agonies prevailed in place of song and dancing, and Death paraded grimly where Life had lately sparkled at its best.

In the train of war came Revolution, and after Revolution the Terror. The corrupt Empire dissolved in a smoking welter of blood. As the dregs boiled to the surface, those who had been on top suddenly found themselves at the bottom, while those who had been at the bottom swam to the top. And he, who had clambered to the topmost peak of power, abruptly found himself tumbled in the dust.

Separated from his beloved wife, fleeing for his life, trapped by those who had shorn him of his wealth, with a price on his head, he sped across Siberia toward the Pacific, with the red crest of the Revolution towering at his heels. After terrific hardships, he succeeded in reaching Japan in disguise.

There, sick and broken-hearted, his energy drained away by what he had gone through, stripped of everything he valued in life, alone, and suddenly very old, he died of starvation in a Tokio slum.

Dying, he longed for peace and quiet. The harsh clangor of the City beat pitilessly in upon him through

the broken entrance, and fat flies droned heavily through the sticky atmosphere, buzzing against foul walls. Watching them, gorged parasites of Poverty, he recalled the popular restaurants he had built for the poor and envied those whom his bounty had once fed.

The Hospitals he had so richly endowed—they sprang to mind. So clean and cool and light, with the white-clad nurses in silent attendance. Yet here he was, dying alone and untended, in a crazy shack, in a foreign land.

The churches he had erected grew in majestic procession through the deepening twilight of his thoughts. Imposing, beautiful, they were worthy temples to the God he had trusted and loved. Would people pray for him to God in those churches? He wondered, dimly. And, remembering, the ghost of a bitter smile tugged at his lips as the night descended upon him, for the thought came: "Suppose they pray; is there a God to hear?"

Thus perished one whose heart was generous, his success proverbial, his wealth beyond counting—one who believed in God.

And far away, the theme of his dying thoughts found an echo in the mind of a weary char-woman, who scrubbed slowly and methodically at the floor of a Popular Restaurant which her husband's money had once built—a very broken and wrinkled woman who,

not long since, had shone resplendent for beauty and wealth amid all the collected beauty and wealth of the richest Capital in the world.

Only two among millions of victims of the War and Revolution, suffering untold agonies, in silence, without relief and without hope, under the very eyes of the God they so devoutly trusted—and wondering, as so many among those wretched millions have wondered ere they died:

“Is there a God?”

* * *

“What a wonderful day—so bright, and pleasant, and cheerful. It scarcely seems possible that the world is convulsed with war, that the enemy is less than twenty-five miles from Paris.”

So ran the thoughts of the young man in khaki, with the emblem of the Red Cross on his cap, who leisurely made his way along one of the crowded streets of Old Paris. It was a very ancient street, overhung with crumbling houses which had perhaps looked down on the changing pageant of many wars, and it led into an old-fashioned square, brimming with sunlight and shadow, where women sat on benches under the trees and kept languid watch over the children who played at their feet. A faint breeze stirred among the blossoms of the locusts, which were in full bloom, and carried

their fragrance everywhere, so that it seemed to shed a luster of life over the old, gray, time-worn houses dozing round about.

Yet under the Sabbath stillness that hung in the air, the young man was aware of a rich and generous tide of life flowing through the great body of the city—a deeply moving tide unknown in that fashionable district of the Bois de Boulogne where he lived. It rippled and glowed against his senses, washing into sharp relief details that would usually have escaped his notice. Trifles took on a fresh interest, a different meaning,—a kitten dabbing at a fly in the window, two women quarreling in a doorway, a child playfully teasing a dog in the middle of the square. It was all in such vivid contrast to the Death muttering ominously just over the horizon to the North.

A church bell pealed suddenly. The Mother of the child rose from her bench, caught her unwilling offspring by the hand and drew him, still protesting, after her toward the open door of the near-by church. Other women followed her example. The square emptied itself quickly—Mothers, wives, sisters, sweethearts, all converging on that dim, cool archway to pray for those they loved, fighting on the battlefield.

He, too, moved toward the church. A sudden desire awoke in him to commune with God, in a place especially dedicated to that purpose. He did not have

much confidence in the power of prayer to turn aside the questing bullet, or parry the bayonet thrust, but at least it could do no harm, either to himself or to his friends at the Front. Young, wealthy, energetic, he had always relied on his own resources to get what he wanted. God and Religion were for those who had favors to ask, things beyond their own strength to take for themselves. Yet he was not an atheist; simply he had never felt the need of prayer to a higher Power, and so was not interested. It would be a novel experience to him, as would a religious service be also.

So thinking, he mounted the steps to the entrance and looked in. A long, deep twilight, with flames of many candles sparkling at the far end and shedding a soft golden luster over a white altar, a gilded cross, a Priest, resplendent in laced gown and glittering vestments, standing with arms extended over the heads of the kneeling throng. Thick bars of sunlight slanted from lofty windows of stained glass and splashed in pools of glowing colors on the stone floor. The rich, melting notes of an organ throbbed like the beating of a great heart through the church, lifting to God the chanted supplications of those who breathed to Him their prayers.

Foot on the threshold, he paused. The atmosphere of that dim, vaulted hall gushed into his face—a breath laden with incense, but stale and chill, such as might

have issued from the mouth of a tomb. Behind him he felt the warm sunlight flooding the street, caught the pure fragrance of the locust trees, saw the green leaves flash and twinkle as they danced in the breeze. Life—fresh, urgent, buoyant, abounding with joy and movement—tugged him almost against his will away from that dark sepulcher, with its odor of decay and sadness. With a sense of relief and thankfulness he resumed his interrupted way toward home.

But his thoughts still turned on the kneeling suppliants in the church. What unvoiced agonies hid behind those moving lips, those downcast eyes? How many of those for whom they prayed would ever come back to them? And those other women, in the land of the enemy, beseeching the mercy of this same God on lovers, husbands, sons. How could the utter faith and trust of both be rewarded? Yet they tried; prayers were rising everywhere for the warring men. He felt suddenly ashamed that a mere puff of cold air should have turned him from his purpose and, struck with a firm resolve, wheeled about to go back.

And now the warmth, the blazing sunlight, the fragrance, the quick life of the street, were all forgotten. From a distance he saw through the still open doors the glimmer of the candles, the altar, and the Priest with his hand raised in benediction. He

hastened his steps; he wanted to share that blessing.

Abruptly the air sang aloud, as if cleft by the stroke of a mighty sword. The sound soared to a shriek and burst in a deafening crash. The church heaved and shuddered; its roof vanished; its walls toppled inward and dissolved in a belching cloud of dust and smoke. On the spot where the stately Temple of God, with its candles, its Priest, its kneeling multitude, had stood an instant before, boiled up now only a thick and sullen vapor, smothering the cries and moans of those who yet lived underneath the ruins and spreading through the sweet air the acrid, bitter smell of burnt explosive.

"My God!—Is it possible?—Women, innocent children—in the House of God—praying to Him!—Where is God, to let such a hideous injustice—such a wanton cruelty—take place in His own House?"

Such were the horrified thoughts rioting in the young man's brain as he rushed to the stricken spot. At their heels reeled another, insidious, compelling, striking like a hate-driven dagger to the very roots of his heart—
"There is—there can be—no such thing as God! Blind Fate alone decides the Destiny of Man!"

He turned away, sick and dazed, from that reeking hell. But he could not run from the utter, empty despair in his own heart. He, who had never cared

for God, preferring to depend upon himself, was suddenly appalled to discover that he had been right.

There was no God.

* * *

He was just an ordinary man—one of millions. Born into a family of many children, he felt lost in the midst of all his brothers and sisters. Impressed with his own unimportance, he was yet quiet, unassuming, always considerate and thoughtful of other people. His tastes were simple; he asked very little of life. Yet even that little he did not seem to get.

The World blandly accepted his own estimate of himself, and met him with a not unkindly tolerance, a smile vacant of either understanding or interest. He said nothing of this, though he felt it keenly. As unassuming as his character was his appearance—neither tall nor short, neither handsome nor ugly—one of those gray, intermediate beings who pass through the streets and through life equally unnoticed, whose faces even vanish from memory as from a glass, so little is any force of character outlined there.

He did not go to college, as did the rest of his brothers. All in all, it would be only a waste of time and money, his father decided. And he, far from rebelling against the injustice of it, considered such a decision quite natural. They were such a fine, lively lot, his brothers.

He went to work in a bank as soon as he could leave the public schools. As he was by nature honest, thorough and industrious, he was promoted more quickly than usual until he attained the position of cashier. Most of his salary he gave to his mother, to be absorbed in turn by his brothers in college. His sisters, also, though they were earning, could not seem to squeeze any surplus out of what they required for dress and living to add to the family quota. His salary alone kept the household running.

One day, at a party, he met a girl. The moment he saw her, he knew that he loved her. She was as ordinary a girl as he was a man, but lively and laughing, and she was kind to him. That touched him deeply, for he was of a very impressionable, loving nature and apt to exaggerate his sensations.

He worked now with a happier purpose, and in time managed to save some money. Not much, but enough to justify the hope that was in him, and still growing.

One evening his youngest brother, the merriest of them all, came home frowning and sulky. That day he had lost his third position inside of a month. To keep up with the fast crowd he ran around with he needed money; he had long ago exhausted all his reserves of both cash and credit.

The older brother was taking his girl to the movies that evening, but he took the worried youngster along also.

The next day he obtained for his brother a position as assistant cashier in the bank where he worked.

For some time the current of life ran smoothly. There was a heavy run of work, and long hours in the bank broke into the time the lovers would have spent together. He was glad that the youngster did not have his own responsibilities and could get away to his fun at night.

Toward the end of the rush he ran into shortages in his accounts which no amount of work could seem to unravel. Puzzled, he made up the missing sums from his own pocket and set himself to discover the cause. The shortages recurred, becoming more frequent and more imposing. Eventually he found the reason. He caught his brother red-handed in the act of pocketing some large bills from the cash drawer.

The shock of finding his own brother a thief was great. He was so thoroughly honest himself that the thought of such a taint in one so close to him in every bond of blood and gratitude was almost intolerable. A common thief—that carefree, jolly youngster so dear to his heart.

All his savings went to cover the loss and hide the shame that had descended on his blood. The carefully built works and plans and dreams of years were swept away in a moment through no fault of his own. Despairing, embittered at the unfair treatment Life had

dealt him, he dragged his aching head and heart to bed.

The task of breaking the news to the girl appalled him. But he was saved that trouble. A messenger came with a note early the next morning. She told him that she had eloped with his younger brother and begged him to forgive her. The brother he had saved from prison and disgrace!

So he saw at last that he had spent his life in vain. The fruit of his honesty and toil went only to give to an idler, a clever cheat, the love for which he would gladly have surrendered his Soul.

He said nothing; his grief was too vast. As usual he went quietly to his cage in the bank and performed his duties with the same painstaking thoroughness. But his spirit was broken.

By closing time a gray, sleety rain had turned the snow to an ankle-deep slush on the city streets. It was unbelievably cold, with a wet chill that crept through the very marrow of his bones and burned like a hot coal in his chest. Yet there was so much pain already there, what did one ache more or less matter?

The next day an ambulance carried him away to the hospital, tossing and moaning in a delirium of fever. A bad case of flu, said the doctors, and held out no hope for his recovery. No chance, was the verdict—no chance to live, even as always there had been no chance for him to live.

Calling in his distraction for his girl, for his brother, alone and in utter despair, he cried out to God to give him a chance—at least one chance—to live. And then, consistent to the end, he died.

A strange chance, if there is a God to listen to a mortal's prayers, thought one who watched the sheet drawn quietly, like a final curtain, over the tragedy that had played itself out.

* * *

A policeman was trying to disperse the crowd of curious women who clustered about the doorway in which he stood. His efforts were unregarded; the fascination of something within that gloomy interior was stronger than the prestige of the law. Recognizing this, the officer turned his back, content that the crowd should merely keep its distance, and stood blocking the entrance with his burly form as he too eyed the scene inside.

A woman was sitting quietly there, as if resting. Her face, pillowed against the back of the chair, still bore traces of a past loveliness which care and trouble had not been able wholly to blot out. Beside her, on the table, lay an unfinished letter.

She was dead—a suicide. The letter, mute witness of her crime against herself, was just the last cry of a breaking heart.

“When I look back”—so read the letter—“to the days of my youth, those happy, carefree days which are gone forever, they seem like yesterday to me. I can hardly believe that twenty-five years have passed since I was married to the man I loved, the man who gave me during our short (alas! so short) life together all the happiness I could ever wish!

“He was a young civil engineer. He worked in a great chemical plant, a position with prospects for one so strong, so big-hearted, so clever as my engineer. We had our home near by, and there my boy was born,—a beautiful baby, strong and sturdy like his father. We were so happy together, we three, that often I had to wonder if such happiness could last.

“One day—how well I remember it! Such a beautiful, balmy spring day! All Nature was beaming with life, and life seemed to sing in our hearts. I was just about to take my baby out into it, when suddenly the doorbell rang.

“When I opened the door a man came in, and others followed. Before he spoke, I knew. My husband had been killed by the explosion of a boiler, they said, and they had come to tell me of his death.

“Of that day and the days that followed—how could you ever understand? They were kind to me in their clumsy way; I see that now, though it did not seem so at the time. One official of the Company came to me;

he brought a check. For a long time it lay on the table where he left it. Blood money—in trade for my husband's life. I could not bring myself to touch it. Could money replace my loss? I wanted to tear that hideous slip of paper to pieces and throw it in the fire.

“But I thought of the little one crying at my knees, and I took the check. It kept us for the months and months that I could not think, could not feel. I was a living automaton. Had it not been for my boy I would have died—gladly.

“He used to look at me with his big, questioning eyes, and in them I saw the same kind, loving look of his father. And it seemed to me that my beloved husband lived again in my boy—his boy. Our child became the living link between him gone and me whom he had left behind.

“That gave me courage, and in the end it gave me back my life. And often I vowed, as I looked into the bright eyes of my son, that I would make of him as fine a man as his father. But not an engineer; my husband's death was too fresh in my mind for that. I would make our boy a Doctor.

“Education costs, though. All that was left me was the house now. So I took boarders, and invested my little profits carefully, and worked and schemed and prayed for my boy.

“Knowing nothing of business matters myself, I

naturally had to ask advice from others. A friend of ours suggested that I invest my money in a certain deal that a friend of his was promoting. It was bound to be a success, with such a capable man handling it, and the dividends it would pay would be very big. A wonderful opportunity, he said, for a woman in my position to draw heavy interest and at the same time increase my capital.

"My head believed him, but my heart doubted, so I invested only half of what I had. For several months things went so well that I regretted my caution. The dividends that came in were larger than I could ever have hoped. So when the chance came to put more in the same scheme, I invested all I had.

"Next thing I knew my money was gone, together with the man who had swindled me and thousands of other poor widows. It was a hard blow, but it didn't make me lose my courage. I couldn't afford to lose my courage. I had my boy to consider.

"I started again from the beginning. I still had my house and my boarders and I found work to take home. I sewed far into the night, and when the stitches would reel from the weariness that was in me, I could always clear my vision and steady my hand with a glance toward my sleeping boy.

"The years slipped by like that, and my boy became a big, fine looking fellow, so like what his father had

been in appearance, but oh! how different in character. He hated work; all he wanted was to have a good time. I tried my best to get him to see things rightly, but it was no use. He drifted into bad company, began to drink and frequent gambling dens, and one day, when he came home drunk and demanded money which I would not give him, he beat me. He—my boy—for whom I had given all my youth, all my energy, all my love,—he beat me until I was black and blue, and then he left me.

“For weeks and weeks I did not see him again, and when at length I did see him I could have wished him decently dead instead; for he was behind prison bars, sentenced to die on the gallows for a murder he had committed in a hold-up.

“To-day he was hanged. I am alone, and this has been my life. I do not care to go on with it. I shall make an end to such a life.

“I would ask God to forgive me for what I am about to do, if I still believed there was a God. A God who could give happiness only to sharpen the bitter edge of grief, who could heap sorrow on sorrow, shame on shame, disaster on all, in answer to prayers and works and trust and faith. First the husband of my heart, snatched from me in the ripening glory of his glorious manhood. Then our son, the fruit of our truest love, harried along the path of crime to a felon's death.

"No! There can be no God, no Being so omniscient as to number the hairs on every beggar's head, yet allow such things to be. Chance—blind Chance—is all that rules our destinies in this World. And knowing this, I am content, for I find peace at last."

So read the lieutenant of police, who had looked on Death too many times and in too many guises to be impressed by it any longer. Yet the leathery, lined check beneath the visor of his cap (which he had not troubled to remove when he came in) gleamed wet in the light from the open doorway as he put the letter in his pocket. For here he had looked on Life.

And she who had borne to the bitter end her sad lot in the game of Life, looked up to him with a soft, sad smile on her pale face—the pale, trusting face of the dead woman in the chair.

* * *

Silence—a tense, breathless silence. A mighty Nation, a waiting world, quiver on the verge of a tremendous event, their attention locked on one slender, frightened girl.

She kneels on the broad steps of an altar in an old—a very old—cathedral. Above her stands a man in a diamond crown and an imperial mantle, whose deep voice and moving hands weave over her the spell of

the greatest Power within the gift of humankind. Her pale face is a delicate fountain of loveliness above her coronation robe of rarest metaled cloth, lined with ermine, which cascades like a golden, foam-flecked river down the steps behind her. To the brilliant multitude thronging the spacious aisles below, it is a precious shell enclosing that on which all the threads of their lives, their hopes, their loyalties converge, their future Ruler, their Queen. To her, on whose drooping head will descend the title of Tsaritza, it is the crushing burden of an Authority, a Trust, too great for the shoulders of the shy, timid girl from a foreign country to bear. They see its majestic splendor; she feels its relentless weight.

For her heart is appalled before the immensity of her task. Too much—too much of everything; she did not ask or want so much. She did not even dream it. Her tastes were simple, her aims quite modest—love, husband, children, happiness, a home and Peace. But now—Oh, God! Will that ordeal never end?

A sudden heaviness falls on her brow—so cold, so like an ache, that her hand half rises as if to brush the pain aside. But glimpsing her own pallid features in the polished surface of the step, she stops; for on her head; a blazing glory, sparkles and burns a Crown, the Diamond Crown—the Imperial Crown of Russia. With its splendor, its power, its oppressive load of responsi-

bilities, it presses her down, down, closer to that reflected visage whose wide eyes peer up at her from the mirror of stone beneath,—the only understanding companion in all that glittering assemblage of earthly pomp and prestige.

Firm hands lift her gently to her feet. No longer a forlorn and shrinking girl, but an Empress, she rises beside her Emperor, erect before the altar, the Nation and her God.

A crash, like that of breakers toppling on the shore, bursts from the ancient cathedral as the wild thunder of acclaim rolls out over the Capital, gathering volume from cannon and trumpet blast and the roar of shouting men. To the farthest corners of the vast Empire echo the joyous tidings, while from every remote hamlet and city, from cottage and palace, by wire, by messenger and by word of mouth, surges back the glad, welcoming cheer—"Our Tsar and Tsaritzza are crowned! God bless them both, and give them a long and happy reign!"

Pale and motionless, she stands there in all that vaulted magnificence, silent amid the storm of prayers and good wishes that beat in upon her from two hundred millions of willing subject souls. She feels upon her the solemn gaze of countless saints, painted on the bright walls and huge, soaring pillars; she is conscious of the countenance of God Himself, gigantic amid His angels, looking down upon her from the great gilt dome

overhead. And as her glance drops again to the people, banked in shimmering drifts at her feet, she forms a vow in her heart to be true to the Trust reposed in her, to make them happy—happy at any price.

Buoyed up by this resolve, she descends the steps of the altar on the arm of her Emperor. A lane opens through the solid, living ranks below. Like a moving flame she seems to float, rather than walk, toward the ponderous doors which swing open at her approach. And like a pale golden flame, bright and clear, she breaks suddenly on the vision of those massed tens of thousands who wait outside to greet their new Ruler, a glorious Star framed in the vast stone arch of the Cathedral doorway.

“Hail to our Tsaritzza! Hail to our Tsar! Hail!” The passionate cry rolls up in a renewed thunder of adoration. Men are swept to their knees like grass before a wind, joyously weeping women make the sign of the Cross, all touched to tears by the sheer beauty and majesty of Her to whom their hearts go out as one. And the tribute of the Capital, the love of the people, blows like an incense into her lifted face,—a finer, better incense than that in the old Cathedral, because a living one.

It is overwhelming, unbearable—an impossible dream. Can so much of everything be crowded into one human life? Earth’s greatest powers are gathered into her

delicate hands. Hers the love of a great Nation and a devoted husband. Hers Youth, hers Beauty, hers Intelligence and a tender heart. Hers the World's most famous Palaces; hers priceless gems and treasures beyond counting; hers the satisfaction of every desire, of every silent wish. And what is not yet hers—will be hers some day.

She reels on that dizzy peak of Power to which she has been lifted—that Power of which God has given her too much. But the young spring day is so lovely, the air so balmy, the sun so bright, that new strength floods in upon her. A soft breeze glows like a caress against her upraised face, wafting away the sadness that has lingered in her heart, and leaves her for the first time on that fateful day happy and grateful to God.

Years flash by.

Again a Silence, heavy, ominous, trembles to the verge of its unborn Moment. It breaks in a ragged volley of shots, and through the rift boils up a tumult of voices—cries of children, moans of women, hoarse shouts of drunken men.

Night, choked with storm, crowds thickly in upon a small city lost amid snow-covered mountains. It all but blots out a house on the outskirts behind whose shuttered windows unspeakable things are taking place.

There stands an imprisoned Empress, alone. Her

face, as she watches the closed door of her chamber, is pale and very calm, her glance steady. But it is as if the flesh slept above a frenzied dream of horror. Within it she lives, over and over again, the agonies of this past hour. Her husband, once the Tsar, snatched from her to an unguessed but long expected doom. Her daughters—torn from her arms by lust-inflamed, drink-maddened fiends, abused, raped, stabbed with bayonets—their screams will ring forever in her shuddering Soul. And her son——

The door bursts open, belching a flood of savage, exultant faces in upon her. She scarcely feels the brutal hands that thrust her down the hallway; her body has long since lost its power to suffer further. She goes with closed eyes; she no longer wishes to see. So much of horror have those eyes beheld of late.

Stumbling on a threshold, she is jerked to a halt. A blast of icy wind scorches through the mists of her stupor. The clamor suddenly stops; a stillness thickens like a pestilence around her. But in that strange, remote refuge to which her spirit has withdrawn, she knows only that she is very weary—very for the end. God! God! Will it never come?

Fingers, twining in her hair, wrench her sunken head erect. A rough voice commands "Look!" Obediently, incurious and indifferent, her tired lids drift up.

Once more she is standing in a doorway, so mean, so

low, that it seems almost to crush her. Before her, torches flare redly on the snow and scoop a vast cavern of light out of the black night, illumining an open space from whose borders flushed and evil faces leer up at her. In the center of this space rises a great mound of wood, spouting dark jets of smoke which curl up around a still dreadfully stirring heap of human bodies on the top. Her husband, her daughters, all that was dear to her in life, all that she loved, all that she had thought mercifully dead, still living to suffer, to be burned alive. And yet—not all. She does not see there the body of her boy.

A sudden, savage thrill of hope leaps in her breast. For him, perhaps, the incredible, the impossible, has come to pass. Escape—some secret helping hand stretched boldly forth from the midst of this bloody mob—

She reels aside from a violent blow on the shoulder. A drunken figure lurches past her, down the steps and out across the snow toward the smoking pyre. Cuddled softly in his clumsy arms, as if asleep, rests her beautiful boy, his upturned face streaked with blood that still oozes, in a sluggish crimson stream, from a dark hole in his forehead.

The monster swings the corpse outward by one heel and heaves it sprawling into the flames, which are beginning to spurt up in a bright, hungry torrent over

the crest of the pile. Then, rocking on widespread legs, he roars his exultation, while he wipes the blood from his hairy hands on a corner of his coat.

And the Mother, looking up to the sullen, wintry sky, starless and threatening above her, thinks, in those last lucid moments of her earthly life, of the God who has sent this answer to her prayers. She thinks of her Coronation Day, that Day of boundless hopes and joys, of power, splendor, love and happiness, of faith and trust and measureless gratitude to God for all He seemed to have given her. She thinks of the many hours she has spent since then in daily communion with Him, of her sacred vows and supplications for His help—she, whose simple faith in God was always so bright, so living, so supreme.

Gone—all lost in life—husband, children, empire, hope and even faith in God. God? She knows now that there is no God.

And with that last crushing thought, the Empress turns from the despair in her Soul to the more welcome blaze. Firmly, courageously, even a little gladly, she walks down the stairs, across the trampled snow, past the grim form of the murderer and, without a pause, mounts the burning pyre. For an instant the soaring flames surround her with a halo of unearthly glory; then the smoke, boiling upward, veils her forever from human eyes.

She, too, has gone—perhaps to find her God.

And from the Four Corners of the Earth, from countless faltering hearts, from tired lips, ascend toward the Sky, the glorious blue Sky, the prayers of suffering Humanity.

Will Divinity hear the despairing cries of Its suffering Children, will It ever answer the bitter Need from which they spring? For countless Ages those supplications have risen upwards to the distant Stars—an endless, sorrowful murmur pulsing out into the Mysterious Void—yet no answering Voice has come to quell the surging Tide of Evil, Blood and Woe. Cold and distant remained the Heavens—cold as the bright Stars which glittered unmoved upon the Earth, swept time and again by Wars and Pestilences, Flood, Fire and Famine, an endless procession ravaging the ranks of Mankind from Beginning until Now, with never a forbidding word from Above to check their mad course.

As moans rise from under the lash, so rose the prayers of Humanity from under the scourge of Evil; but Divinity remained deaf and dumb. Still Faith has lived, and Hope has prevailed even against hope. Still the hearts and tongues of Humanity send out their prayers to this unresponsive God; still Temples rise to testify to His Glory and Power; still His servants seek to justify His strange neglect.

And still the Heavens remain as silent, as remote and

indifferent as before, leaving Mankind in utter despair what to do, what to believe, which way to turn. Afraid to lose their last hope in God, despairing ever to receive any answer, they still plead and pray and call on Him.

But in their hearts, the dark shadow of their hopeless hopes, dwells the question "Is there a God to call upon." That Great Question of To-day, the greatest question of All Time, is rising now, shaking the very Powers of Heaven and threatening the Foundations of Life Itself.

CHAPTER II

SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT



PRIMITIVE Man, when he roamed this planet millions of years ago, was little more than a naked, hairy brute. There was nothing in his composition to distinguish him in any radical way from the animals in whose midst he lived—if he could. He had not yet developed the faculty of conscious thought; the Rational Mind was totally absent from his simple assortment of qualities. Like other beasts, he depended mainly on Instincts, which he developed to an extraordinary degree, to guide him amid the snares and pitfalls of a savage and hostile World.

Unlike other animals, however, Man, though strong and powerful of Body, was of all Nature's creatures the most miserably ill-equipped to survive the merciless conditions of the life of those times. In a World where fierce beasts of prey, huge reptiles and colossal birds were masters, he had neither fang nor claw nor protective armor to preserve him in the midst of the hungry destruction which teemed on every side. Hunted and

defenseless, of all things the most unfit to contend with his environment, he faced the seemingly impossible problem of continuing to exist in a place and at a period where the Law of Survival of the Fittest was at its most ruthless expression.

Under these circumstances, Man was compelled to seek within himself something to take the place of the physical weapons which had been denied him. His body utterly failed to meet the needs of the times; with it he could neither outfight nor outrun his enemies. His Instincts were no sharper nor quicker than their own. But he found that he could out-think them. Thus, by the very poverty of his existing means to fulfill the harsh demands of Life, Man was forced into that career of conscious mental development whereby he was destined to lift himself from his humble position in the scale of animate being to an undisputed mastery over all living things.

This was not a rapid progress. Many tedious Ages were to wheel slowly past before that clumsy, fearful, inquisitive, mischievous creature called Primitive Man perceptibly widened the margin of conscious thought which was beginning to separate him from the unconscious thought of animals. Reason took form vaguely amid the unordered chaos of his Mind. But from the depths of his newly discovered being there breathed up certain qualities of Optimism, Curiosity and a crude

Sense of Humor which, taking fire from the undying spark of Life, of Universal Life Itself, that burned unquenchably within him, broke forth in the smoldering Inner Urge, Onward! Onward!

In obedience to that Urge, Man battled his slow way onward and upward throughout the countless centuries of his Evolution. The Law of Evolution Itself, working through him as through everything else in Nature, helped him in that unfoldment. The challenge of circumstances, of dire needs, called forth in him the hidden qualities necessary to meet those needs. And at every step, the Fire of Conquest in his heart burned more brightly, fanned to a hotter blaze by each adverse wind of discouragement and failure, lifting him from the darkness of his primitive state, over obstacles and difficulties, defeats and terrific perils, to his present enlightened eminence, even as it will continue to urge him onward and upward throughout Eternity Itself.

It was in the earliest stages of his development, when the Fire of Progress was still only a faint glimmer in the boundless night of his Ignorance, that Man first began to notice those things which were later to rule his Imagination, and through it his Destiny, with a passionate and dreadful power. Living then in individual families, of which the man was the natural head, the provider and protector, while the woman was the helper, the keeper of the lair and guardian of the children, he

found little time for idle speculation during the daylight hours. But in the evening, with his family fed and secure from the dangers which had infested the day, he could meditate at leisure on the wonders of Nature which had caught the attention of his searching, questioning Mind.

Foremost among the mysteries which struck him with peculiar and fascinating force were those centering directly upon himself. He noticed his shadow skimming over the ground at his heels when he raced across the open, or waiting patiently beside him when he stopped. He saw an unfamiliar face slide out to mock him from the cool depths of some quiet forest pool when he bent down to drink, and vanish silently as he drew back in fright. Frequently at night, when he lay down to sleep, he found himself roaming unknown jungles or fighting weird battles of which no trace remained in the gray light of morning. From all this he concluded that he must have another, or several other selves, which could come and go as they pleased, regardless of the physical body they inhabited at odd intervals, and which were as indestructible as the shadow he could not hurt, or the reflected image he could not grasp. So emerged the first dim concept of a separate life apart from the life of the body, the inchoate idea of a Soul.

Through these strange shadow beings, Man was led to a new perception of the Universe about him. He

observed a certain correlation between them and other things in Nature. For instance, if the Sun or Moon went behind a cloud, his shadow self obediently faded out also and left him alone. On the other hand, no matter how hard the wind blew or the frost bit, they could not stir that queer spirit companion one hair-breadth from its appointed place at his side. If he fell from a terrific height, a cliff or the top limbs of a gigantic tree, during his dream wanderings, he was astonished, when he woke up trembling and sweating with fear, to find himself still as alive and whole as when he went to sleep.

Clearly, therefore, this singular world had much more to it than could be seen with the naked eye. Man began to be aware of a direct and intimate connection between himself and the Forces of Nature, and to look with a new respect, a new interest, on the old familiar phenomena which before he had been accustomed to take for granted. His Mind was no longer content to stop at the bare fact of their existence; he began to ask himself, Why? What? How? and to fill the unfathomable vacancy outlined by these queries with speculations of his own.

So must he have pondered often at close of day when, perched high in the limbs of a tree in the forest or squatting before the mouth of his cave, surrounded by his family, he watched the fiery ball of the Sun roll

grandly down the slopes of heaven and plunge out of sight beneath the distant rim of the Earth. And as he saw the Stars glimmer forth one by one over the darkening Firmament, he must have wondered what invisible hands lit those twinkling fires in the Sky, who had made the Sky itself, what caused the Sun to rise and gave the Moon its silver glow.

These mazy mental excursions into the Unknown had no organized plan, no definite meaning. They signified merely a state of mind, a preparatory stage in which the soil was fertilizing itself for some future growth. Though Man himself was probably not conscious of the fact, he was nevertheless deeply impressed by the mystery, beauty and grandeur of Nature. He sensed instinctively the presence of unseen and tremendous Powers—Powers which pulsed through the rising and falling of the Tides, beat down upon him in the changing Seasons of the year, throbbed in stately measures through the waxing and waning of the Moon—and he felt somehow akin to them. All his solitary inner nature, all his unformed secret longings, went out to them as to something stable, something permanent and dependable, ruling serenely above the uncertainties and abruptly shifting chances of his own precarious existence.

Thus was borne for the first time upon the Consciousness of Man a dim perception of some Supreme Ruling

Power, a vague and undefined idea which stirred uneasily, deep at the roots of his Mind. As yet he did not try to explain those Powers, to clothe them in a distinct concept which would give them form and outline in his thoughts. He simply felt that they were there, a potent Something which he could not understand, though he could see them flashing into evidence all about him and was aware of a very close, if subtle, relation between them and himself.

Clumsily, also, he began to work out an estimate of those Powers which should determine the attitude he might safely observe toward them. In marked contrast to the creatures and things about him, he noticed that they never deceived or betrayed him. Though there was nothing in his own surroundings that he dared to trust—tree branches, which might be rotten and break under his weight, bushes or bowlders which only too frequently hid a lurking foe, fellow men who would not scruple to waylay and kill him if they happened to covet his wife, his cave, his berry patch—he found he could trust them implicitly. When he saw the Sun go down at night, he knew that it would climb to its usual station overhead in the morning. Experience proved to him that as often as the Tide ebbed away from the shore it would return, that the Moon which dwindled nightly as it rode across the Sky would swell once more to its full luster, that Day would follow Night, Spring

conquer Winter and Summer tread in the footsteps of Spring. They could be depended upon to act in the Future as they had acted in the Past.

Therefore Man put all his trust, all his confidence, and with it a great love and gratitude, into those Powers which he knew to be his only unfailing Friends. Thus Faith was born.

But those Powers seemed to be very far away, beyond Man's reach. He yearned to get into more intimate contact with them. And, while he recognized their handiwork in the massive sculpture of the mountains, or detected their secret presence under the shaggy bark of gigantic trees, he could not take mountain or tree home with him to his tiny cavern dwelling. So he did the next best thing—he took a fragment of the mountain, a branch of the tree, a stick or a pebble. It was his first attempt to embody the Abstract in the Concrete, to translate immaterial Forces into material terms which would bring them within the range of his intelligence.

Like most first attempts, these were not wholly satisfactory. There was nothing unique about such articles, nothing to distinguish them from the sticks and stones Man trod underfoot every day, nothing suggestive of the marvelous Powers they represented. So Man undertook to impart to them some measure of originality of line, some hint of the inexpressible Something, he knew not what, that went to make up

his consciousness of those Powers. Gradually crude images began to emerge, curious trinkets which would later borrow form from creatures of Nature's fashioning, when Man's none-too-robust invention was exhausted—the beginning of Art. These trinkets he kept in his cave or carried with him on his quests for food, "luck pieces" about which clustered the kindly qualities of the Powers he adored.

However, there were other Aspects of Nature which, far from being kindly disposed toward Man, seemed to war with him even worse than did the animals. Black clouds, trampling over the mountain crests, belched storm and tempest and freezing winds upon him from their gloomy ramparts, or at times beat him to earth with rattling volleys of hail. Lightning lashed forth to destroy him, thunder crashed and rolled over his head, floods drove him to seek refuge in the trees and at times even the solid Earth rocked and opened beneath his feet. A dread and awe such as no jungle menace could hold for him assailed Man when he saw these angry Forces gathering to hurl their wrath on him.

In the stress of those moments Man, great child of Nature that he was, turned instinctively for succor to the Powers he had learned to love and trust. They stood to him for Security, Protection, the only champions he knew who could cope on equal terms with enemies against whom he himself was powerless to

contend. His cry went up to them under the darkening Sky like the cry of a frightened child to its Mother, beseeching, imploring, a wail of blended fear and supplication which throbbed from cave and tree into the angry Heavens until drowned in the rush and fury of the storm.

Would those distant Powers answer? Would they ward off the lightning stroke, prop up the shaking walls? With the plea rose also the doubt, the question. So the first Prayer was uttered on this Earth.

Meanwhile, terror drove Man together into groups. He observed that he could meet the attacks of huge reptiles and beasts of prey much more successfully in the company of other men than he could alone. The simple rule that in Unity is Strength forcibly impressed itself on him. Not only was his own power to overcome dangers multiplied many times, but the danger itself diminished in proportion as it was shared by others. The sheer pressure of circumstances, therefore, forced him to combine in a group which lived together for mutual protection. This was the first Community to appear on Earth.

This group always came to a head in one who, decidedly stronger or more resourceful than the rest, commanded their interest and respect. In time of danger, he became the rallying point; to him all members of the group looked to get them out of trouble. He was

the natural leader, the one who stood foremost by reason of his superior strength or cunning, and his decision was accepted by the others as final merely because of his prestige among them. This habit of obedience, at first indulged only at the threat of some common peril, soon crystallized in the form of a few simple rules, established by the leader, to which each member of the group was expected to conform for the good of the Community as a whole. Failure to do so was punished by death or expulsion.

Thus the first rude symptoms of Organization and Government began to appear.

One effect of this gradual change in Man's mode of living was that it gave him more leisure to think. He noticed that his calls upon the Higher Powers for help did not always bring forth the anticipated results. To be sure, if he managed to escape a danger that beset him, he was only too ready to give all the credit for his good fortune to the prayer he had sent up, while, if he fell a victim, he seldom lived to speculate on the lack of response to his entreaty. But enough cases were left to make it very clear to him that his prayers often remained unanswered, and he wondered why.

One of the many instances which struck his primitive Mind with special force was that, once the breath of Life was gone, no amount of praying by those who still lived could avail to bring it back again. Death, partic-

ularly a violent death, was nothing new to him. On the contrary, it was one of the most ordinary incidents of his existence and as such it was accepted by him without reflection. Only when he started to think about it did its mystery begin to fascinate him.

When those he loved died, he tried to awaken them. They paid no attention to his shouts, did not stir when he nudged or shook them, were cold to his touch. After his utmost efforts were exhausted, he prayed. It was his last recourse. But the body remained as motionless and indifferent to him as before.

Presently, also, it began to change, to decay. As he did not wish to part entirely with one he still loved, he took the body and buried it in the ground, heaping over it great mounds of stone to protect it from the wild beasts. This was the first Funeral and the first Grave on Earth.

There were other occasions when those Powers failed him. The Elements still exacted their toll in earthquake, storm and flood. Prayers did not seem to be a wholly adequate defense against them. Yet Man, the born optimist, preferred to believe that the trouble was not so much with the Powers as with his method of getting at them. Probably it was not they who had failed him, but he who had failed to make his need plain to them.

Therefore, he set about finding a more satisfactory

way to gain their closer attention. His only direct point of contact with them was through the images and symbols he had fashioned to represent them, or through imposing rocks and trees which seemed to bear the stamp of their presence. To these, then, as to the Ear of the Infinite, Man addressed his supplications, hoping through them to reach more directly the Powers for which they stood.

Moreover, to avoid confusion and to state his needs more clearly, Man permitted the head of the family to assume the rôle of spokesman for all the others. Just as the first crude signs of organized community life had begun to emerge in the group, so the first evidences of organized prayer began to loom through the fog of superstition, awe and wonder with which Man regarded the great Forces of Nature. The supplications of an entire family were gathered in the mouth of one, to be presented in a coherent and orderly manner to those images through which the Powers whose help it was desired to enlist could be more nearly approached.

Up to this point, Man's attitude and progress toward a conscious unity with the Ruling Powers of Nature had developed normally and constructively along natural lines. But the moment he delegated to one among his number the right to act for him in his contacts with them, he took a fatal step from which thousands of centuries of painful and futile endeavor have not been

able to redeem him. The first man to step forth as an intermediary between his fellow beings and the Powers they adored, opened the way for them into a slavery that was soon to be riveted with merciless thoroughness upon their minds by a certain type of individuals who were to be found, then as now, in every community.

These men, the jealous discontented, hungry for power, ambitious to dominate, to govern, yet lacking the strength or courage to assert openly their leadership, sought to win by stealth what they dared not claim as their right. Cunning, selfish and unscrupulous, they saw in Man's vain attempts to discover some way of access to those inscrutable Powers of Nature an easy chance to realize their own wildest dreams of power.

It was obvious that people had granted their leader authority over them because of his unique ability to provide them with something which they could not supply out of their own resources. He stood as a buffer between them and the World, transacting their contacts with it through his own superior energy and intelligence much better than they would be able to do. He knew more about the World than they did—the habits of wild creatures, the location of good hunting grounds, how to trap game—and could give them the more abundant food supply they desired, if they would follow him.

But in their contacts with that invisible World

inhabited by the Powers of Nature, people were at a loss for some one to guide them. One knew no more about it than another. The recognized prayer-maker merely uttered the family pleas; once launched, they were out of his ken forever. The situation was ripe for any ingenious pioneer, by merely claiming to have the information Mankind wanted, to take his fill of power from them. None had that previous information; but when a few, prompted by human vanity, pretended a closer acquaintance than others with those Powers, they could not help noticing what a marvellous boost it gave their prestige.

Such men, therefore, stood forth and said in effect to the rest of Mankind: "I have a secret influence with the Powers to which you pray. They hearken to me; I talk to them in my dreams; they answer me in the rustling of the leaves, the cry of the birds, the sound of the waters. You speak to them in an alien tongue; that is why your prayers are not answered. But I will interpret your prayers, deliver them in acceptable form to the Great Powers whose messenger I am, and also make their desires known to you."

And gullible Mankind, overjoyed to find at last some definite channel through which they could penetrate to the Powers they loved, subjected themselves completely to the will of the Intercessor. To them, it was not a human being who spoke when they went to him for

aid or counsel; it was the Forces of Nature, the Powers to which they had given all their devotion, all their trust, addressing them through his inspired mouth. He was the connecting link, the Interpreter of the Will of those Powers, the Mediator between them and Man.

So it was that the Body of Priests came into existence, turning the Blind Faith and Ignorance of Mankind to their own personal advantage, directing upon themselves the whole magnificent flood of passionate adoration, of eager submission, which Humanity yearned to pour forth to the Powers whose representatives these impostors claimed to be. They were the first Great Wall to shut Man off from his direct communion with Nature, the first imprisoning barrier to encircle his Mind, the first unsurmountable obstacle to block the straight Path of his Evolution.

Yet the way of the Priesthood was not destined to be so easy as it seemed. Hitherto, the Powers of Nature had been simply Powers of Nature to Man, something undefinable, beyond the range of his investigation. Now rose some among his number who, claiming to know those Powers intimately, ought to be able to give a more definite and concrete idea of them. Clamorous, importunate, the demand beat in from every side for more complete information concerning them.

To meet this emergency, the Priests were compelled

to draw on their imaginations for some Being or Beings who could reasonably be supposed to wield such Powers. Just as in the beginning the demands of a ravenous World had forced Man, in self-defense, to develop his conscious intellect, so the Priests, confronted by the no less famished curiosity of their followers, were squeezed into a new and fantastic field of activity. In order to keep their hold on the superstitions of the people, they began to create those fictional Divinities who were to strut their perishable glories across the stage of Man's fancy for many Ages to come. Those Divinities they called Gods.

For the first time on Earth, then, Man's lips consciously framed the name of "God."

Priests had to describe the character of this God, the imagined embodiment of the Powers of Nature. In their utter ignorance and conceit, they usually made of him just a highly magnified human being, gigantic in stature, but endowed with all human traits, good and bad alike. They assigned to their newly created Deity a place of abode, perhaps some inaccessible mountain peak or starlit cavern in the Sky, from which he ruled Mankind with all the caprice of an absolute master, of a king or, strangely enough, of the Priests themselves.

There were many Powers of Nature; consequently there came to be many Gods. Even the Priesthood

could not at first grasp the idea of cramming them all into one Divine Skin. Sun and Moon and Stars and Trees were the visible emblems of individual ruling Deities, whose respective Provinces were outlined by the Forces thus expressed. But each of these numerous Gods had one thing in common with all the rest: like his human counterparts, he was exceedingly susceptible to Temptation. He could be flattered, humored, placated, bribed with gifts, influenced one way or another, all by means of an intercourse carried on through the medium of his priestly agents on Earth. Gradually the practice of soliciting the favor of the God by these various means settled into a generally accepted, conventional method. A form of Worship grew up.

Thus Religion appeared, the second Great Wall to close relentlessly around the bewildered Mind of Man—a Wall within a Wall, separating him still more completely from the very Powers of Nature he tried to reach through them, blocking more hopelessly the Path of his Evolution.

Partly to draw the attention of people from the fact that their prayers were answered no oftener than before, partly to enhance the awe and mystery so essential for the maintenance of their authority, the Priests organized these casual forms of worship into a distinct and impressive function. From a habit, they were cast in the mold of official sanction and made a requirement..

Certain places were set aside, consecrated to the performance of that function alone, usually a hilltop, a glade deep in the forest or a dark cavern in the cliffs.

In these surroundings, which lent an added air of dignity or terror to the ceremonies, Priests established those Rites by which they wished to bind forever under their sway the superstitious, ignorant, fearful mass of Mankind. And in those spots, where the wondering people gathered and subjected themselves mutely to this new, strangely fascinating ordeal of Worship, were held for the first time Religious Services, or Rites—the third and most oppressive of the three Walls to close about Man's Mind.

With this final addition, the structure was complete. Between the Powers of Nature and Man stood a triple Wall—Priest, Religions and Rites. As long as those Walls endured, shutting Man off from any free contact with such Powers, preventing him from obtaining any genuine Knowledge of them, the authority of the Priesthood was safe.

From that time dates the stupendous Struggle which still goes on between the Mind of Man, battling for Enlightenment, and the Priesthood, striving to pen it within the prison walls of Rites and Religions. The Realm of the Gods was the realm of Mankind's Ignorance, where Blind Faith must take the place of clear Understanding; its borders stopped where actual Knowl-

edge began. Priests, the Voices of the Gods, were interested above all in keeping people behind their existing mental boundaries, in blocking all efforts to expand their field of Knowledge, lest they penetrate beyond the border line of the Unknown and discover there the total absence of any such Deities as had been pictured to them.

During succeeding Epochs, Man was fated to invade that mysterious Realm more than once, flushing covey after covey of ancient Divinities from their secret retreats among weird superstitions and finding them to be nothing more substantial than bad dreams. Yet as often as old Walls crumbled, new ones rose in their stead. However far Man extended the boundaries of his Knowledge, at bitter cost to himself, the appalling vastitudes of the Unknown still stretched interminably on every side, and as often as faith in an old God perished on closer acquaintance, Priests were never at a loss to limn forth, on the reconstructed walls that shut man in, the features, majestic and terrible, of another.

Once the Priests, posing as God's Representatives on Earth, had finally established their ascendancy over the minds of their fellow beings, they began to consider how they might best use the situation for their profit. They had told Man that he did not know how to approach Divinity properly with his supplications;

now they explained to him one of his important omissions. God demanded sacrifices in exchange for His favors. He desired a portion of the crops which He caused to grow, a share of the game which He led into the hands of the hunter.

This seemed supremely reasonable, quite in keeping with the character of a Deity constructed on the general human plan. So the altars were daily heaped with the tributes of the people to their God—meats, cereals, fruits, game and all the simple treasures of those days. Part of these were burned, for the satisfaction of God and the people; the rest were kept to support and enrich the Priests. It was an admirable solution of a difficult problem, maintaining the Voices of the Gods in a style befitting their lofty pretensions, while it relieved them also from the necessity of ordinary toil, which suited neither their dignity nor their desires.

Frequently, however, disappointed supplicants were unwise enough to grumble and complain that their sacrifices were wasted, that God accepted their offerings but neglected to keep His side of the implied bargain. The only consolation their protests gained them was the suave assurance that they had failed to offer enough, or of their best. One could not afford to be stingy with God, who had a most disturbing insight into private motives. He did not sell His favors cheaply. But, to determine what would be enough for all the ordinary

requirements of life, the Priests named a certain percentage of a man's goods which should be given as a regular contribution to God.

In this way the Tithe came into existence, skimming the cream of all human activities and diverting it into the insatiable maw of Religions.

The worldly power of the Priests swelled in proportion as the torrent of wealth pouring over their altars increased. So also did their needs and ambitions. In the course of time, magnificent temples began to rise, each rivaling the other in costliness and grandeur. Built by the labor of the people, who gladly contributed efforts and materials, they were the glorious expressions of human adoration for their Divine Ruler, as well as adequate domiciles for His ministers on Earth. But with each stone straight and truly laid, with each muscle strained in unrequited toil, the yoke of bondage to the Priests was riveted more securely on necks bent in blind and reverent submission to God.

Within the carefully restricted confines of unchanging basic principles, the long and tragic play of Religions unfolded itself down the Ages, carried on toward a climax still to be revealed through the shifting characters of many generations of Men and Priests and Gods. Though the influence of the Priests penetrated to the very core of private life and regulated the thoughts no less than the actions of the people, some sparks of

opposition always continued to smolder deep inside, breaking out now and then in rare individuals. The majority, their intelligence wholly obscured by Ignorance and Superstition, accustomed to seek the intercession of the Priests with God on every occasion, impoverished by the sacrifices exacted from them, had reached a state of absolute separation from Nature. They belonged to the Priests in Body, Mind and Soul. Yet they were tinder for the burning. To keep them in a condition of willing servitude, it was necessary to stamp out any unruly intellectual glimmers which threatened to light up their appalling Ignorance.

This, also, was not a difficult problem for the Priests to solve. Their God was a hungry God; he lusted for the smell of burnt flesh—preferably the flesh of an enemy. He was a vengeful God; in payment for a slight, or simply to express his moody displeasure, he was accustomed to vent his wrath upon the whole of Mankind. In order to placate his savage temper and appetite, greater sacrifices were needed.

Where were these sacrifices to be found? Animals no longer sufficed; they were good enough for a steady diet, but they lacked the refinement most pleasing to the Divine taste. A great public sacrifice, where the interest of God was implored in behalf of an entire community, demanded offerings more rare, more precious, more convincing. It demanded human lives.

And a people who had been taught to give of their best to God were permitted no lapse from their high standard at this latest and most terrible stage of the game. Captives and criminals would not do; their lives cost nothing, left behind no sense of loss to measure the extent of Divinity's gain. Only the finest and noblest, youths and maidens, distinguished for their strength, beauty, wealth and intelligence, those who stood highest in the esteem of their admiring fellows, were acceptable to God.

Curiously enough, among the ones selected for this fatal honor were invariably to be found those who, by their qualities of intellect and leadership, constituted a possible threat to the power of the Priesthood.

So the bloody history unrolled itself down centuries. Prosperity was evidence that the Powers of Heaven were pleased; elaborate sacrifices were needed to testify to the appreciation and gratitude of the people. Disaster was a sign of their displeasure; more elaborate sacrifices were necessary to placate them and avert their anger. And from reeking altars, drenched with the gore of all that was best among the deluded masses of Mankind, the red fog of Slaughter steamed up under the smiling Sky, spreading harmlessly abroad over the the Heavens, the abode of the watching Gods, whatever might have proved troublesome to their representatives on Earth.

Yet, in spite of oppression, in spite of their dread, in spite of a not wholly irrational reluctance to tempt the awful vengeance of God by disobeying the mandates of His Priests, the people tugged stubbornly and insistently at the fetters of Superstition which bound them. In their persistent, groping fashion they nudged out the discrepancies between Divinity as painted by His ministers and Divinity as represented by His supposed acts. As the bonds of their allegiance loosened, allowing doubt to creep in, Priests perceived that something more impressive than their own unsupported word was required to fortify the waning confidence in God.

Miracles, therefore, were summoned into play. Images of the Gods, so long mute and impassive before the worshiping multitudes, suddenly bowed their heads and spoke in sonorous accents to those prostrated in an agony of terror at their feet. Great bronze bulls bellowed, spouting torrents of smoke from their ears and nostrils. What wavering Faith could withstand such compelling portents as these and many others?

Certainly not that of the guilty and awe-stricken throngs whose frightened eyes beheld them. To their simple minds it was all too ominously real, too living, too close, for any remotest suspicion of deception to survive. Only from the distant perspective of this enlightened Era, when excavators, digging on the sites of ancient temples, have brought to light the

artful machinery of pipes and levers by which such stage effects were managed, do the bare bones of extinct Religions convey some idea of the structure of the species. Yet, do modern people profit from the lesson?


Even to-day such manufactured miracles are found, made to entice gullible worshipers to certain shrines. The recent Revolution in Russia unearthed many sacred fakes of this nature, functioning now as did those others thousands of years ago to exploit the blind, unquestioning Faith of ignorant and superstitious people.

Ignorance was not a monopoly of the Past. With a slight change of names and trappings, the same conditions which prevailed in barbarous ancient times prevail still. To the generation of that distant day the times were not barbarous, any more than they are to the modern generation now. The difference is in degree, not kind.

And still the comparison holds good. Mankind is even to-day in the grip of Ignorance and Superstition, looking half in dread and half in awe for the supernatural and the miraculous, cowering under the threat of the Divine anger, seeking to curry Divine favor, cursed by God through the mouths of Priests, sacrificing to God through the hands of Priests, receiving no recognition from God in spite of the promises of Priests, in hundreds of existing Religions all over the World, now as in days gone by. And they do not think it strange.

CHAPTER III

PAGEANT OF THE GODS

N the deep hush of an ancient forest an old man, with flowing hair and beard, robed in white, crowned with a garland of green leaves and holding a golden sickle in his hand, stands erect under the massive branches of a huge tree. Before him rises a crude altar, a funeral pyre, dwarfed by the mammoth trunk and limbs which sweep in a vast arch above, but rendered only the more impressive to those waiting worshipers who throng the adjoining glades. For on this altar one of their number is about to die, a sacrifice to the angered Gods whose favor is thus being entreated for them by that dread Intercessor now dominating the scene, the Priest, the Druid.

Solemn chants drift like a sighing wind through the dim forest aisles. Louder, clearer, they come. And like leaves before the streaming gust, the crowd swirls back to make place for the young man, fair haired, blue eyed, towering head and shoulders above them, who is led slowly toward the altar.

A glorious offering, this. A splendid warrior, so bold, so brave, so handsome; none to rival him among the people, none so strong, none so generous, none so loved. A gift to touch the hearts even of offended Gods, to disarm their vengeance and stay the Pestilence which rages like an unseen enemy over the land, striking down rich and poor alike, invading hearth and temple, taking grim toll of the noblest and fairest, the old and the young, and drawing Famine in its wake.

So, at least, had declared that dark, fierce maiden whose eyes burned with passionate fires of unearthly wisdom, the Prophetess, ordained by the Gods to sift their messages from the rustlings and whisperings of the Sacred Tree. Stung by their sudden command, she had sprung forth in the moonlight to race like a flying shadow of Death amid the clustered habitations of the people, and pausing at the door of the sleeping warrior had marked him for the sacrifice.

And now, head gallantly poised above the broad, straight shoulders, the young man steadily mounts the funeral pyre which is to be his final resting place on Earth. The last rays of the setting sun, darting like a shower of blazing arrows through the branches, seem to burst against him in a fiery golden spray, kindling in his hair and glowing upon his skin until he flames like a living jewel before those who look on him now in farewell—he, whose warm, throbbing flesh and solid

bones will be but feathery ash in the first breeze of to-morrow's dawn. Yet the people who love him rejoice, for to them this seems a token that their Gods at last are pleased.

A sudden scream, wild, exultant, thrills through the tense silence. A maiden's form, molded in savage relief under the sacred white robes which are tossed fluttering behind her by the violence of her movements, leaps up beside the now recumbent figure of the doomed warrior. For an instant the polished stone blade of the knife in her hand flames redly in the sunlight, plunging down to bury itself to the hilt in the sunburned chest below, driven with all the frenzied strength of religious ecstasy, of thwarted desire, of vengeful fury, into the steadfast heart which but a few days since had dared to scorn her proffered love.

Glazing, the blue eyes yet mock the dark ones bending triumphantly above them—dark eyes that fiercely seek in the anguish of his own some solace for the hunger they can never hope to fill. And like the lids which slide down softly behind the spirit which has fled, the white garments of the Prophetess settle in tired folds about her trembling limbs. Forlorn, alone she stands, drooping under the burden of her guilty secret, a woman still beneath the sacred vestments which have served so well to mask her dreadful crime.

As the sun, a bloody ball, sinks in the raw wound

of the western sky, the first flames from the pyre stab into the dusk that deepens throughout the sacred grove. The people stand with bended heads and anxious hearts, motionless amid the gigantic shadows which crouch and lunge and shudder in a grotesque, silent dance over and around them, while they await the answer to the question in their thoughts.

Are the Gods appeased? Has that young, glorious life, pouring out its boundless capacities for achievement, its soaring ambitions, its genius for victory in arms, whether of men or women, its laughter, its kindness, its passions, its merry faults, in one precious libation on the crimsoned altar, won for its fellow men the mercy of those Divine Beings, briefly quenching their thirst for human blood?

The Priest, in benediction on the reverent throng, assures them gravely, and in terms of resounding wisdom, that it has. But deep in the secret places of his wise old mind, beyond the reach of fatal utterance, he dares to wonder.

So throughout the Earth men sought Gods in the Trees, whose moving leaves and nodding boughs whispered in the ears of Druids, Priests and Prophetesses, the Will of the unseen Deities behind them. Priests were the human Voices of the Gods, the Tongues who translated into understandable words the Divine Edicts. And woe to the rash mortal who failed to hearken

when they spoke. Death or shameful exile was mild punishment for such offenses.

Powerful they were, those Gods of the green woods, and powerfully ruled their Priests, whose Voices were as their own upon the Earth. For they were the First of their kind, the True, the Only Gods, to be worshiped in fear, obeyed in trembling haste, by awed and adoring Humanity.

* * *

As rolling waves sweep over the open sea, so Tree Worship swept from its misty homeland in the North over the entire World. And like waves also, which, when they leap with all their gathered force upon the rocks, are flung back shattered and broken into the ocean from which they came, so Tree Worship, swollen with the collected might of all the Druids, broke and dissolved against the ramparts of a new Religion, a new Worship, a Power springing up also in the depths of a forest, but this time a tropical one, on the island of Ceylon in the South.

Sinister, terrifying, the new God rears his evil countenance out of the poisonous jungle mists. The Serpent God, cold Avatar of Mind, weaving his devious course amid tree trunks so thickly crowded together, so tangled in creeping vines and interwoven roots and branches as to form an almost impenetrable mass. The giant Snake,

whose mottled coils blend cunningly with the scheme of violent contrasts in which he lives—with the pattern of vivid colors splashed against the dark green of the foliage by the flowers, whose stifling fragrance burdens the hot, moist air. The Creeping Death, who slips like a melting shadow through the headlong avalanche of abundant tropic Life, most dreaded of all the varied forms of destruction in that region, languorous and alluring, where Beauty is but the mask that Treachery puts on and voluptuous blossoms cup their venom in petals of enchanting loveliness.

In the heart of the forest, a gloomy cavern, its portals carved in the semblance of weird monsters who keep watch over the vast entrance below. No life or movement is visible in the mysterious darkness of the interior; yet a rank, festering odor, an appalling stench, like the breath of some imagined horror clothed in flesh and living form, steams up through the gaping mouth, killing even the heavy fragrance of the flowers which have been piled everywhere in profusion.

Flowers, flowers! Heaped in windrows upon the ground, dripping like bright rain from the surrounding trees, foaming over the dark face of the cliff and breaking in a sea of lambent fire up the low slope of the hill as the people, wreathed and garlanded, swarm forward to honor their dreadful God. The whole Earth seems to have burst into passionate, cold flame, save where, in

its midst, the black mouth of the cavern temple pants with some hideous inner life of its own.

Distant music begins to hum through the jungle glades. Throbbing of wooden drums, roar of many voices chanting sacred hymns, clear, singing notes of hundreds of venas writhing and flickering through the rolling volume of sound like the vivid play of lightning over a tumbled mass of storm clouds. And, swept forward out of the gloom of the forest on the flood tide of this resounding tumult, a procession, spilling slowly over the flower-strewn sward toward the cavern.

Priests—and in their midst a group of youths and maidens, haggard faces uplifted as if to seek some breath of life above the heavy burden of flowers with which their forms are laden. Thick ropes of blossoms, twining tenderly about slender waists and bronzed young bodies, glowing like wind-kissed embers against the pale flesh of naked breasts and wearily drooping limbs, sway in many graceful curves from one to another and bind them in festive chains. Soft chains, as delicate as the skins their petals press; merciless chains, as terrible as the purpose they adorn and serve, making escape impossible.

As the procession nears the cave, the music beats to a quicker, fiercer measure. Despairing countenances, convulsed with dread and horror, surge back from the foul breath that gushes from the mouth of the den.

Back—back they shrink, until the forward moving ranks of Priests, rushing together, overwhelm them. There is a short, violent struggle; some garlands are tossed aloft like bright spray, fall again and are seen no more. The sacrifice has been cast before the Gods.

In a crashing thunder of exultation, the music peals out to drown the shrieks, the moans, the wordless cries of terror and anguish which, mingled with the hissing of snakes, now pour in an indescribably horrible tumult from the grim cavern mouth. Quicker and quicker throb the drums, shriller and shriller ring the cords of the venas, louder and louder swell the voices of the singers, until the echoes, reverberating through the depths of the jungle, startle even the wild beasts in their lairs. The hymn mounts to its climax of religious frenzy; suddenly it stops. Silence settles over the glades—an intense, a dreadful silence, unbroken by any sound from the dark mouth of the temple cave.

And the Priests, standing forth, bless the awe-stricken multitudes prostrated at their feet. "Peace be with you," is the burden of their words of dismissal. "Our sacrifice has been accepted; our God, the Great Serpent God to whom we bow down, is pleased. Great and terrible is our God, the Great Serpent, and greatly to be feared. Harken to us, His ministers. Go in peace, and proclaim His glory throughout the World."

And the crowd, picturing to themselves the hideous

spectacle now being enacted in that soundless, vile smelling cavern—huge snakes, trundling their fat, greasy coils through a litter of torn flesh, broken bones and unspeakable rubbish fouled by their own excrements, as they leisurely dispose their gorged forms for the monthly sleep—go soberly away. Great, indeed, is such a God, and greatly to be feared.

Thus Humanity again bent its head in humble worship before a True, an Only God. Marvelous Temples sprang up over the Earth in honor of the Great Serpent, Divine Symbol of Wisdom. As the Feathered Serpent in South America, the Dragon in China, the Typhon in Egypt, the Python in Greece, and as the Seraphim and the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness among the ancient Jews, this Deity commanded the dread, the homage, the submission of Mankind. So complete, so universal did His rule become among the teeming millions of His followers, that they transferred His name to the heavens themselves, where it still stands written among the stars in permanent testimony of what once was—Scorpio, the Great Snake, one of the Signs of the Zodiac.

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“Great is Iswar, the Only True God! He, the Creator, is the Ruler of the Universe, King of Gods and Men. Hail to Him, the Creative Source from whom all Life springs! Hail to our God—Hail!”

So sing the men and women who, linked in a slowly moving circle, weave and sway in a rhythmic dance around the huge black stone, curiously shaped and brightly polished, which sprouts like a giant finger pointing to Heaven from the ground in their midst. The Sacred Phallus, representing the creative organs of Man, the Lingham, Emblem and Symbol of the Great Iswar Himself, Creator of the Universe and Father of the swarming hordes on Earth no less than of the Heavenly Beings above, erects its tantalizing mystery before eyes of Mankind.

Wilder and wilder whirls the dance, as the mounting beat of the music whips glowing emotions to a frenzy of ungoverned desire. Scant clothes are torn off and flung aside. Naked they dance together, men and women, a mad welter of flashing limbs and white bodies that gleam wet in the blazing sunlight as they spin dizzily around the glistening black rock. Some, as exhaustion claims them, drop panting in groups and couples to the grass, and there, without shame, for the glory of Iswar, give free rein to those raging passions which their furious exercise has lashed to a ferment, and which Iswar Himself has graciously planted in their human breasts to the end that they may thus fittingly honor Him.

So, in a great spasm of passionate abandon, rises to mighty Iswar the adoration and praise of exuberant

Youth, on fire with the burning Torrent of His Life in their veins.

"Glorious—glorious is Life. Glorious is Iswar, our God, whose reign shall endure forever," shout the Priests when they see the energy of the worshipers begin to flag.

"Iswar," echoes the sigh from throats thick with hot desire. "Iswar—" from quivering lips, from throbbing hearts. "Iswar—" from bodies locked in a renewed embrace. "Great is our God, and wonderful His rule. Drink deep of the Cup of His Life. Drink deep of Love, of Passion, the sweet Nectar of Heaven."

The worship of the Great Iswar, of His Lingham, of His never-ending, generous life, flooded over the Earth. As vapor is sucked upward to the sun, so the love-sick hearts of Human Kind were drawn to Him for satisfaction of their lustful, thirsty longings. And of all the ancient Gods, none was to cling more persistently to his throne of power than Iswar, whose authority was rooted in a passion that still reigns supreme in human breasts—the passion of desire between men and women.

The name of Iswar has long since vanished under the successive tides of Religions, but the God Himself has never perished from the roll of the Immortals. Discredited in his original character, he reappears under a new name, Siva, in India. As Osiris, he crops out in the temples of Egypt. As Alpha and Omega he invades

the Christian Religion itself. Perhaps more nearly than any other Divinity in the whole register of the Gods, Iswar has justified the claim of His subjects that His rule will endure forever, though it is doubtful if He will receive the credit for it.

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“Down with Iswar! Down with the worship of the Lingham! Down with Lasciviousness, Sensuality and the Depravity of Mankind!”—rises the cry from the lofty temple towers of Chaldea. “Let the Sacred Fire of the Pure Agni, the Only True God, burn to ashes this corrupter of Humanity! Come, worship our God! Bow down in fear and trembling, in love and adoration, before this flaming symbol of his Power. Let the Sacred Fire cleanse your heart of the dross of sin and evil, leaving it pure and fine as gold without alloy. Sacrifice to the Fiery God, keep His Flame bright on the altars in your homes, and He will reward you greatly.”

Priests spoke, and a new Religion flared forth in honor of another True and Only God—Agni, the God of the Cleansing Fire. Temples sprang up afresh, while the Teachings of the Fire Worshipers spread like its own element among the Races and Nations.

The reign of Agni marked a comparatively mild and harmless interlude in the bloody empire of the Gods, for He was a less malignant Deity than the possibilities

inherent in His name might imply. But the fire of His worship, while it burned with a gentler luster, was presently to light the fiercer fires of another Faith, warming to life that Divinity, magnificent, devastating, before whose blazing splendor even the bright glory of Pure Agni would fade like a star in the glare of noon.

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“Hail to Baal! Hail to the Sun of Righteousness, the Only True God!” proclaim the Priests of Baal. “He, the Sun, the Ruler of Light, is the Life-Giving Principle of this World. Without His warm Rays nothing could live on Earth. He is the Destroyer of all Evil, of Typhon, the Great Snake of Darkness. He burns up the clouds of storm and ruin, which try in vain to swallow that glorious Sphere of Light. He is the True, the Only God.

“Hail to Baal, the Great God, Lord of the far-spreading World! And Hail to His Consort, Astarte, Mother of Gods and illustrious Queen of Heaven!

“Fall down in humble adoration before our Celestial King! Pray—sacrifice to Him, beseeching His favor upon you. Fear Him! Worship Him! For He is the Only True God—Baal-zebul.”

The Sun of Righteousness dawns in overpowering splendor upon Humanity, putting to flight the waning stars of lesser Deities. Baal, Father of Gods and Men,

shares with his mild Consort, Astarte, serene Queen of Heaven, the dread and worship of Mankind.

Temples break out of the rock to do honor to Baal—great piles of stone, reared in the likeness of the God's own visage. Huge head lowered between outstretched paws, chin sunk deep in the pavement of the courtyard, the monster seems to gulp down in one endless draught the vast level floor of polished stone that pours into his open mouth, catching from his gullet a sullen crimson glow. For the Sun of Righteousness is a fierce God—fierce as His face upon the blazing desert sands—and requires somewhat more than an ordinary sacrifice to slake the unquenchable fires of his desolating thirst.

Hence the spectacle, at not infrequent intervals, of hundreds of victims at a time, slaves, captives of war, once free men of conquered nations, or on occasion some of the best and noblest culled from wealthy families subject to His sway, fastened to a long chain drawn by teams of bulls and dragged across the gleaming floor into the gaping mouth, into the flaming throat, of Baal Himself. Time and again the smoking chain returns for more, while the shrieks of those who perish in the raging heart of the blaze, as well as the cries of fresh offerings whose bare feet quail on the scorching stones, are drowned in a rich flood of ecstatic music from harps, played by beautiful maidens, and in the blare of trumpets sounded by soldiers on the temple walls.

Thick columns of greasy black smoke, boiling from the vacant eye sockets of the God, crumble at the touch of a fitful breeze and wreath the monstrous head in gloomy mists. And neither the ringing music that peals out under the open sky, nor the delicate blue clouds of incense spurting from golden censers, can quench the rank and bitter smell of Death which creeps with that somber vapor throughout the perfumed atmosphere.

Great and terrible indeed was Baal. His Priests were more feared, more honored, than any king. And though in time the savage luster of His name diminished, He too has survived the assault of many Religions and has been perpetuated by them under different names. As Ra in Egypt, as Mitra in Syria, as Brahma in India, as Apollo in Greece and finally as Jehovah, the Sun of All Righteousness, among the Jews, he has reigned in dreadful splendor over the peoples of the Earth. For He, also, was once the True, the Only God.

* * *

“Brahma, the Many Headed, Many Armed, the All Powerful, the God of Gods, the King of Kings, is the Para-Brahma, the Soul of the Universe. With His outgoing breath Worlds come into existence, ready born in a state of complete activity—the Manavantara, or Creation of the Universe. With His intaken breath, all

things are withdrawn from existence, sucked into His Own Ineffable and Sacred Self. This is Pralaya, the destruction and the end of everything."

"Awful, blazing, His splendor burns up the Worlds, which lie helpless and terror-stricken at His feet. With countless arms, with many gaping, fiery mouths, tremendous toothed and terrible to see, is Brahma. Human beings, drawn to Him by an irresistible force, are rushing into His open, hungry mouths to be destroyed. Some, caught in the gaps between His teeth, have their heads crushed to powder. Impetuously they hurl themselves into those flaming mouths to perish. On every side, all swallowing, fiery tongued, He licks up Mankind, devouring all."

"Out of His Head has He created Us," proudly declare the Brahmins, the Priests. "We are to be the dominating caste, the guiding and directing Power on this Earth. After Us, out of His arms did Brahma fashion the Kshatriyas, the warrior caste, the Kings, Princes, governors, captains, fighters, to protect His people. From His belly and His loins did He form the Vaisyas, the merchants and the farmers. But out of His feet did He make the Sudras, the servants, the slaves."

Wretched creatures are the Sudras—the dregs and sweepings of Humanity, to be despised, and ignored, and deprived of all human rights. Their very existence is a contamination. They are not to be permitted even

to look at the members of other castes, nor to defend themselves against abuse, nor to have the attention of a physician when sick. Hopeless and changeless shall be their lot, a life of degradation and abject servitude from which only Death can deliver them. So, at least, decrees Brahma, the Ineffable, the Pure One, dwelling in Eternal Bliss, forever contemplating His Own Glory, according to the word of His Priests.

Magnificent and rich beyond description were the Temples erected all over India, then the Center of Civilization, to Brahma, the Celestial Father, and to His two Sons—Siva, Creator and Destroyer of Life, and Vishnu, the Preserver of it. Marble walls, elaborately carved, surmounted by roofs and domes of solid gold, arose like glittering miracles of frost upon the soft green of spacious lawns, or multiplied their deep-piled loveliness in the pools which dreamed quietly at their feet. So delicate, so glorious, so ethereally beautiful were these enraptured visions of the builder's art, that it seemed as if no thought of Cruelty, or Pain, or Suffering or Death could ever creep in to mar their perfect symmetry.

Yet their spotless stones were glued together with the blood, the sweat, the tears of uncounted multitudes of laborers of the Sudra caste, despised outcasts, slaves, whose single privilege it was to remain meek and submissive to the will of their earthly masters, spending

their wretched lives with extravagant profusion in the service of a God who had condemned them to this fate. But of what account, either to Gods or men, were the lives of these miserable creatures? Death to them was but the final cure for the disease of living. Meantime—Temples must rise to the glory of Brahma, the Father of the Universe, the Only True God.

* * *

“Renounce this World,” cry the Priests of Buddha. “All is evil here on Earth. Live by the begging bowl, on alms, and look forward only to one end—to die. The sooner you can escape all mortal ties and enter into Nirvana, where dwells the Great Lord Buddha, the better it will be for you. Final absorption there, and complete loss of your Identity, your Individuality, that which is the YOU, as the storm-driven raindrop is absorbed in the restful ocean deeps, will be your enviable reward.”

Thus the doctrine of Renunciation, of abandoning the fight against adverse circumstances, the very denial of the natural Law of Evolution and Progress, and next to Death itself the greatest obstacle ever to stand in the way of human Achievement, took form and shape in the mouths of Buddhist Priests.

“Withdraw from the World, as the World is Evil. Renounce, sacrifice, all that is dear to you on Earth.

Give up friends, family, honors, love, ambitions, comforts, pleasures, all. Live in solitude, praying constantly to God. Resign yourself patiently to your miseries here, knowing that you will find refuge from them in eternal oblivion hereafter."

A gentle, though negative Religion among the fierce Religions of the day, Buddhism, with its promise of utter extinction and loss of any individual existence in the life to come, sighed like a cooling wind on the harassed spirits of millions of the humbler classes, whose bitter experience in this World made them unwilling to risk a repetition of it in the next. It spread rapidly throughout the South and East, a numbing anæsthetic which brought to the swarming multitudes of poor people a sense of relief, a prospect of rest, the more grateful in proportion as it was foreign to them.

Again great Temples and Shrines freckled the broad face of Asia, while three hundred millions of idols of Buddha testified to the power of that brooding God. Whole countries, like Thibet, were converted into vast monasteries where people prayed day and night to Divinity. And in order that prayers might never cease, wheels were fashioned, moved by the wind, which ground out in an endless, futile round the sad supplications of superstitious Humanity.

All progress was stopped by that new Religion. Like a huge sponge it soaked up energies, initiative, thoughts

and desires, leaving people to live under the rule of Buddhist Priests in an unbelievable filth and squalor of Body, ignorance and darkness of Mind. Content with their dismal lot, they dreamed away in poverty and indifference the earthly existence which was all that most of them possessed, proof against any incentive to better their condition as long as they might be blotted into that unearthly and distant Future, whose drowsy promise beat in peaceful measures through the assurances of the Priests.

Still blindly seeking, vainly hoping, Humanity plodded along the new trail to the True, the Only God. Yet how often before had they listened to things which the next Religion claimed to be false!

* * *

“Osiris, Ra, Bel, Astarte, all gods of other nations, are evil gods; their Idols can neither see nor hear. Baal-zebub is the Devil himself, as is also Mammon, the Golden Calf. There is but one True God, and we are His chosen people—He, the God of Gods, Who slew the first-born of Egypt, Who drowned the Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea, Who delivered us from bondage and, like a Pillar of Fire before our eyes, leads us across the Wilderness to the Promised Land. The Sun of All Righteousness is Jehovah,” declared the inspired prophets among the Jews.

"Worship Jehovah, the Lord our God, Creator of Heaven and Earth and all the hosts therein. Bow down before Him, Whose power and Glory knows no end. Forget false gods; they are less than the dust under the feet of the One Living God. Fall in awe and trembling before Jehovah, Whose mercy is great to those who fear Him, but Whose anger is terrible to those who disregard His might.

"For from Heaven itself He cast into the fires of Hell those Seraphim, Spirits of Light, who dared to assert their individual freedom. He drove Man, whom He had created, from the Garden of Eden, condemning him and his descendants forever to a life of untold sorrow and suffering, for having broken His commandment and eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. In a moment of anger He swept the entire World with a Flood, drowning millions upon millions of human beings, men, women, and children, blotting out all life, that of animals included, excepting only those few who, in His infinite mercy, He permitted to ride out the storm of His vengeance in the ark.

"Great and terrible is our God, the only True Living God to worship and adore."

And to the kneeling multitudes, crouched at the foot of the roaring and shaking mountain of Sinai, where lightning and thunder and raging storm trampled the black crags and manifested the awful Presence of

Jehovah Himself, there seemed to be no room for doubt. Terror-stricken, they prostrated themselves in the dust of the ground, while overhead the God of the Jews, black browed and flashing eyed, quick to anger and invincible in battle, established His Throne in the Heavens.

Always seeking, always hoping, always led astray by the Priests whom they followed in their Ignorance, eagerly welcoming each new God, each new Religion, as the one and only true way to Salvation and deliverance from their human woes, Humanity plunged on in its great quest for God.

* * *

“Kill, kill the Infidel dogs! Allah is the Only God! Smite, for the glory of Allah!”

And in a smoking tide of blood and fire, Mohammedanism broke across the World. “Accept the faith of our Prophet, or die,” was the mandate they carried with the edge of their conquering swords. And nations fell before the might of Islam, while millions of people embraced the Faith of Allah.

The burning of the Library in Alexandria, Egypt, and the total destruction of its collection of priceless documents, the accumulated Knowledge of many Ages, by the famous Mahometan leader, Omar, marked the beginning of Islam’s devastating march over the World.

Cities in flames, fields laid waste, impaled bodies sprawling against the Sky, pyramids of human heads, the fragments of shattered empires and ruined civilizations, littered the path trodden by the followers of Allah, the Only True God.

Murder and rapine were the religious duties of those who honored Allah. Their zeal in these devotional exercises brought them the earthly reward of whatever spoils they might take from the unbelievers. Gold, women, jewels, slaves, all they could comb from the wreckage of their holy aggressions, were theirs by right of conquest. And afterwards, when some happily fatal chance flung open to them the doors of Paradise, it was to admit them to similar pleasures, only on a more heavenly scale. Shady trees, fragrant gardens, soft pillows and the ardent ministrations of enchanting Houris, beautiful maidens who brought them luscious fruits and sparkling wines in golden cups and stood ever ready to anticipate their least desire, made a Heaven of the Senses that few Asiatics could look coldly upon. Death in battle for this God was a privilege to be eagerly sought, when it yielded such returns. Eternal Youth, and eternal enjoyment of the pleasures of Youth—could any hot-blooded and passionate race of men desire more?

Not, indeed, the followers of Mahomet. Great was Allah, Dweller in the Seventh Heaven, who knew so

astutely how to reward His faithful ones for destroying the miscreants, the infidels, the Christian dogs, and establishing in their place the power of His own Priests.

* * *

Yet serene and calm above the dark desolation, like a bright Morning Star of Hope, had risen the Teaching of Jesus, holding out to a suffering and bewildered Humanity the Promise of a New Day, a Day of Peace and Happiness and Love.

"Peace on Earth, Good-will toward men," was the message it sounded high above all the tumult and discord and reeking turmoil of war. "Love your enemies, bless them that hate you," was its astonishing advice to a people over whom hung the naked and still dripping sword of the oppressor. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven," it said to weary seekers whose eyes had vainly scanned the distant skies for that elusive realm; and then, gently and compassionately, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." Not afar off, not in the words of Priests, not beyond the stars, on the other side of a celestial toll-gate called an Altar, but within reach of all, poor and rich alike, in their own hearts. Discover first that treasury of latent powers, that eternal heritage of every living being, said this simple and practical Teaching, and then all other things will be added unto you. And also, sublimely tolerant and understanding,

sublimely modest, sublimely true, it swept aside the blinding mists of human pride in its own self-assumed infallibility with the assurance, "None is good, none is holy, but God."

One Commandment, and one only, did this new Teaching bring to Humanity, but that one so heroic in its proportions, so clear and perfect in its outline, that the World has yet to discover an improvement on it. "Love God with all thy heart, and love thy neighbor as thyself," it said, summing up in a single sentence all the commandments of great lawgivers of the Past, all the teachings of the prophets, all the massed wisdom of Ages gone and Ages yet to come.

And Mankind, turning to Him who bore to the World this Light, this radiant Central Sun whose single glory far outshone all the other luminaries which had once dazzled the sight of men, thought they had found God.

So Priests sprang up, and a new Religion swept over the lands. Dungeons, gloomy and terrible, ate like cankers into the solid rock under gray buildings which reared aloft the Holy Cross. Chambers of torture, their dank walls reddened with the glare of fires in open grates, rang with the anguished shrieks of victims stretched on the rack or tangled in the cords of hideous engines of torment. Robed Priests, austere and grim, composedly fingered their crucifixes while they watched

men and women—yes, even children—wrenched out of all human semblance, torn flesh from bone, plucked apart with red-hot pincers, blinded, mutilated, in the name of the God of Love. Thus the Holy Inquisition looked into the religious persuasions of any whose devotion to the Church they had occasion to doubt.

In the market place, also—a huge stake. Smoke-blackened and grim, it rears its gaunt height above a gorgeous platform which shimmers in the hot sunlight before it. Here, on occasion, may be seen the Bishop, Prince of the Church, a jeweled cross flashing on the royal purple of his gown, reclining at ease in the midst of his assembled court, about to preside in state over a religious ceremony which will add luster to the fame of God and authority to the word of His earthly lieutenants.

The notes of a bell, sharp and clear, toll their solemn warning through the hushed atmosphere. From afar off comes the sound of voices and faint tumult, rolling nearer down one of the narrow, crooked streets. Abruptly it swells to full volume as the head of a procession spills into the open square.

Priests, with lighted candles, singing hymns. After them, surrounded by guards, a wretched group of men, women and children, pale with despair and terror, clad in sackcloth and bearing on their heads the sign "Heretic." Then Priests again, more Priests, an endless

river of skirted, tonsured figures, flowing darkly over the sun-drenched pavement toward the stake. Finally, an explosion of bright colors, the crowd in their holiday finery, foaming and billowing over the dusty stones in a joyous rush for points of vantage. For it is a great religious Feast Day, an Auto-da-Fé, signalized by the burning alive of a bunch of heretics.

Amid the jeers of the yelling, spitting throng, the victims are quickly chained together about the stake. At a sign from the Bishop, torches are plunged into the great heap of fagots piled high around the fatal spot. Almost instantly a thin haze dances up, flames climb rapidly through the sticks to lick savagely at bare feet, and scream after scream, rings out so shrill, so piercing, driven by such a wild energy of anguish and despair, that even the derisive spectators are silenced. There is a glimpse of struggling figures which lurch and surge against their bonds, of smoldering garments which burst into a blaze here and there, all blotted out presently under a roaring, toppling wall of fire.

For a brief time the hideous cries continue, falter, cease. The flames shudder apart to reveal a cluster of blackened and smoking forms, sagging limply on the chains in the heart of the blaze. Then they leap together again, and the Bishop, rising, devoutly thanks God for having permitted His Holy Church to snatch these imperiled creatures back from the very brink of

Hell Fire, burning their sinful bodies in order to save their eternal Souls.

Suddenly the sky darkens, the wind howls, and a hissing torrent of rain descends to spoil the grim show. The square boils into a mad turmoil. Bishop, executioners, soldiers, priests, sedate nuns, painted women of the streets, stately matrons and clinging maids, small boys, dignified citizens, girls pressed by their lovers—draggled hair streaming behind them, dresses blown above their heads—snatch frilled skirts and priestly robes high over fat calves or dainty, twinkling legs, and dash in one cursing, laughing, weeping scramble for shelter.

In a moment the market place is deserted. The rain stops. A few hungry and dripping dogs, slinking across the wet stones, prowl disconsolately about the edge of the extinguished fire, wistfully eyeing the charred corpses which hang in the chains above the still hot and steaming embers.

And all over the Christian World thousands upon thousands of human beings, heretics, witches, tools of the Devil, whose sole iniquity often lay in nothing more than a flea bite, or a new way to cure a cold, perished by flame and torture, with the warm approval of their nearest neighbors and friends, for the greater glory of God—the God of Love—the God, if we may believe it, of the Priests of the Christian Religion.

Christianity, earnestly seeking improvement, split into many creeds. Thereupon wars multiplied, hatred and intolerance increased, ruin and desolation spread over the land. Millions of people were slaughtered, burned, beggared, visited with unspeakable cruelties, in the name of the God of Love. Popes, infallible Heads of the Christian Church, hurled curses at each other or at those who opposed them, and thundered wholesale anathemas, interdictions and excommunications on the heads of bewildered Humanity.

Adore our God! Adore His Son, another God, and the Virgin Mother of God, a Goddess, Queen of Heaven, and the Apostles, and the Saints, and the Universal Church, and the Holy Sacraments, and the Pope, Vice Regent of God on Earth, and the whole staggering calendar of the Blessed. Obey the Church, the Priests. Otherwise you will be damned and your Soul cast into Hell Fire, there to be tortured forever and ever.

So said the Vice Regent of God, the Holy and Infallible one, in whose hands had been placed the Keys of Heaven and Hell. His the power to loose and to bind, to open wide the Gates of Paradise or the red portals of Hell, to dispense eternal joy or eternal and unimaginable pain. His authority is greater than that of any earthly monarch; Kings and Princes kneel before his throne; lips on which tremble the destinies of nations sink to kiss the slipper on his foot. His word is superior

to all human laws; at a breath he can free peoples from allegiance to their governments, sweep an empire from under the feet of its ruler. He can remit sins, providing the inducement is big enough. He can slay, burn, destroy without blame, in the interest of Holy Church; he can proclaim his victims saints, if it seems politic. For He is the Interpreter of the Divine Law, the Keeper, the Ruler, of human Souls.

And if the borrowed Power of God's Vice Regent on Earth is so great, how much greater must be the Power of God Himself, the only True, Living God! He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End of everything, the Great Loving Father Whose blessings are bounteous to those who abide in the teachings of His Church, who pray, who fast, who revere the Priests, who embrace the Faith and are lucky enough to have absolution at hand when they die. Eternal rejoicing in Heaven will be their reward—white garments, golden harps and haloes, wings to waft them hither and yon over the shining fields, and the privilege of singing endless Hallelujas to God, seated on the Great White Throne above them, while they bask in the light of His glorious countenance forevermore.

But those who dwell outside the pale of His Church, who have not been baptized with His Holy Baptism—woe to them, unfortunate and benighted creatures. All the teeming multitudes of the heathen, all the billions

of people who lived before the Church came into existence, all who die unshriven or unbaptized—innocent babes, children, women, men, streaming endlessly into the fiery mouth of Hell, to writhe and shriek in deathless agony among the flames for no other crime than that they never heard of the True God, or else failed to enroll under His banner before Death deprived them of the chance.

“Vengeance is Mine,” saith the Lord our God—and assuredly His vengeance is terrible. Once an offender got into Hell, there was no getting out. He could not die; he was immortal. He could not purchase absolution; there were no Priests where he was. He could not clamber back to the Church, the only Gateway to Paradise; that was up on Earth, far beyond his reach, and in any event would be defended to the last drop of Holy Water against such as he. All he could do was suffer, without pause, without respite, without hope, plunged into the raging lake of fire, scourged by the avenging flames, not for a day or a year or a century, but forever and ever. Other religions had always put an end, however remote, to a damned Soul’s term of punishment; to the Christian Religion, with its doctrine of Love, of Mercy, of Forgiveness multiplied seventy times seven, belongs the unique distinction of having taken that end away.

Great is God! Adore Him; it is the only safe course.

In sin you were begotten; in sin you shall die, unless you are redeemed through Faith in Him and in His Son, the other God. Your lives are in the hollow of His hand. Whom He wishes to save, He will save; who dares to go against Him, He will condemn to the lot His Divine Justice has prepared for the wicked, the unbelievers, the heretics and the heathen.

So be on your guard, for your Soul's sake. Pray! Sacrifice! Give up the joy of moving your body in the rhythm of the dance; it is wicked. Turn aside from the clean air of forest and hill and shore, that you may creep nearer to God through the dim aisles of the cloister. Surrender your wealth to the keeping of the Church; a rich man cannot enter Heaven. Despise your body; it is the Devil's catch-basin of appetites to lure you into sin. Men, beware of women, and, women hide your charms lest you become a temptation to men. Do not inquire too deeply into the mysteries of Nature, do not peer into the heavens with your telescopes, do not probe into the causes of disease and discover effectual remedies; you may be thwarting the Will of God, Who would have revealed all these things to His servants if He had desired the patient to recover. Proceed with caution, or stand still; otherwise you may upset established tenets of the Church and render yourself liable to Hell Fire.

Pattern your life after the Divine Will, as recorded

in the Holy Scriptures. Since God clothed Man in the skins of beasts, in the Garden of Eden, He doubtless finds the human form He created a shame and an offense in His sight. Conceal it, bury it under heaps of garments. Abhor Art, if Art reveals it. For it is the home of Sin. Since God forbade Man to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, learning is not safe. Be wisely ignorant. Avoid all books, all Science, all Sources of Knowledge which conflict with our Testament. Let us select for you that which it is good for you to know. Sacrifice your hunger for Beauty, sacrifice Love, sacrifice Enjoyment, sacrifice Progress; the more it hurts, the better our God is pleased.

For God delights in sacrifice. He let His Own Son, a God, die to appease His wrath at the wickedness of Mankind, to stay His thirst for vengeance because of the transgression of the first Man in the Garden of Eden. God the Son, nailed to the Cross for sins He had not committed, dying a felon's death, washed away the guilt of the World with His innocent blood and purchased a reprieve for Humanity from God the Father. And His great sacrifice still stands good. The worst criminal on Earth, professing faith in Him, can dodge the just penalty of his crimes and step neatly into Paradise. But the gentlest infidel, the kindest unbeliever, regardless of the wealth of virtues that may adorn his life, is doomed to eternal Hell.

Behold, seven angels stand before the Great White Throne of God awaiting His Command to pour upon Humanity the seven vials of His wrath. Woe to them, on the Day of Judgment, who do not believe in Him, our God of Love and Mercy and Right. For when the Day of Judgment shall come, only those whose names are written in the Book of Life will be saved, and their number is 144,000. All the rest, the thousands of millions of people, shall perish and be cast into the fiery pit amid the Devil and his angels, to suffer the pangs of eternal Hell.

But the few Elect, those who believe, will soar straight into Heaven, where they will dwell in eternal bliss, undisturbed by the sight of their former comrades, parents, sisters and brothers on earth squirming in the torments of Hell. They will sing Praises to God, as well they may, for His great discernment and Justice, and they will be His People and He will be their God.

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"Orthodox Christianity has failed! Priests, Ministers, have perverted the Teachings of the Bible! The material structure of the Universe is all evil; it is the Adam Dream of Matter. 'There is no Life, Truth, Intelligence nor Substance in Matter.' It is all an Error, an Inverted Image, a Colossal Mistake. Yet I have discovered the Truth," proudly proclaimed, from a

small town in Massachusetts, an aging woman, burning with a youthful ardor to re-make the World.

Taking advantage of the growing dissatisfaction with the existing orthodox teachings, trying to turn the stream of Humanity's longing and seeking for a God into the gold-plated vessel of her own new creed, repeating on a small scale what Religions have done so many times in the Past on a large scale, Mary Baker Eddy set out to save the World.

Onward—onward, Christian Soldiers! Fight the Evil of this World—fight Matter, even though you have to use it. Deny Matter, even though you must work and slave for it. Deny everything material—material Laws, material phenomena, material facts, even your own material body—but build me material Churches and pay me material fees.

The physical forces of Nature are Evil. They are Animal Magnetism, the very trap to catch those who are unaware of its danger. Evil also is all material knowledge, which is utterly false, utterly non-existent in reality, and should therefore be ignored. Scientific discoveries are simply that many obstacles to spiritual unfoldment, therefore more dangerous than helpful. Physicists are wasting their time; medical doctors, to say the least, are useless and their efforts to cure Mankind ridiculous; hospitals are unnecessary, a menace to the Health of the Race and too dreadful for any right

mind person even to approach. All other Doctrines are wrong. Only my teachings are without blemish.

So has been pounded into the faltering human Mind of late, by readers, lecturers, teachers and various publications, the worship of Eddyism, commonly called Christian Science, though not Christian in spirit nor scientific as teachings. The most recent offshoot from below the prunings of the Christian Faith on the Age-old Tree of Religions, it borrows from human prejudice, intolerance and credulity an independent life of its own and tries to squeeze itself into the Throne of Power on which are dozing the Orthodox Religions of To-day.

* * *

An endless column of soldiers in khaki, rippling and flowing down the crowded street, winding like a great serpent into the open. Flags fluttering, bands playing. Shouts, cheers, triumphant songs.

So they set out to conquer, to win the World's War, for their people, for their homes. Millions upon millions of youths, the best and bravest, the strongest, finest, noblest, laughing faces, smiling eyes, exuberant with life, ready to lay down their lives for their country's sake.

"Soon we'll be back. Soon the war will be over," shout the departing boys, swinging confidently onward to the glory they see awaiting them with their Mind's eye.

Years pass—unbelievably slow, dragging years. Still the war rages—a flaming Hell, worse than any conceived by the imagination of Man. Kill, destroy, annihilate—by the thousands, by the millions. In the air, on land, on water, underground, beneath the sea. By airplanes and submarines, big guns, tanks, rifles, bombs and shells. Death raining down in fire and steel. Death ripping asunder the bellies of great liners. Death creeping down the wind, lurking in the poisoned waters. In the trenches, in the open, in no man's land, in crowded, anxious cities—everywhere the fangs of Death, running red.

Kill, soldiers, kill. With gas and bullet and naked blade—kill your enemies. Slay civilians, women, little children. Destroy! Destroy towns, fortifications, churches, hospitals. Blow up the trains carrying fresh troops to the Front; blow up the trains carrying wounded men to the rear. Wreck palace and cottage, headquarters and dressing stations. Sink transports, sink ships laden with food and ammunition for our foes, sink warships if you can, sink steamers crowded with non-combatants, women and children. Kill! Kill! Kill!

Still not enough—kill more! and yet more! Behind the lines, sacrifice, give to kill, to destroy. North and South and East and West, on the mountains and in the valleys, let loose the smoking tide of Death. Sow

desolation, ruin, hatred, hell. The more you kill, the greater heroes you will become. Lives lost—honors gained. Limbs gone—medals won. Glory, power, prestige. Promotions—promotions coming thick and fast. From workshop to commissions, from school bench to captain's bars, from gridiron to colonel. Who thinks or feels or dreads or cares! Kill—Kill for fame and glory and honor among men!

From field and forest, city and plain, they come, the pick of Humanity, streaming by millions into the ravenous gullet of the War. Like Brahma with his thousand flaming mouths, like Baal with the belly of raging fire, the monster sucks in all that the Nations have to offer, women and men, and calls hungrily for more—ever for more.

Meanwhile, all peoples turn to God. Religious processions weave through the streets, churches hum with supplications, confessions, pleas, communions, Priests chant their solemn services above the heads of the kneeling throngs, while from every land, in tents and temples, in darkened cities and open fields, in teeming camps and flame-rimmed trenches, prayers for Victory rise like a bloody smoke to the silent Heavens, to the common God of mortal foes.

So Christian nation fought Christian nation, and prayed to the Christian God. A Christian war, this World War. Nearly two thousand years of Christian


Religion, nearly twenty centuries of the domination and Spiritual Leadership of the Priests, culminated in the greatest disaster that ever befell the Human Race, in the sacrifice of no less than forty millions of human beings, the best and finest, to God. And did the Loving Father of the Christian peoples accept that sacrifice?

In the wake of war came famine, pestilence, revolution, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, as the seven angels obediently emptied the vials of His wrath upon terror-stricken, helpless, suffering Humanity. Yet the Heavens smiled as brightly and inscrutably as before, still as silent, still as aloof, still as indifferent in the face of this latest and most terrible earthly catastrophe as they had always been in the Past. No sign, no help, no answer, no relief.

Mankind discovered that under the leadership of the Priests they had plunged headlong into a blind alley, to be dashed back in confusion from the hard stones of a Religion which left them, as religions had so often done before, without a God.

CHAPTER IV

DEITIES UNMASKED

OOKING back through the mists of Time at the endless procession of ancient Gods, modern Humanity perceives that these divine monstrosities were not Gods at all, but merely man-made figures wrought by Priests to help them prey on the fears of ignorant and credulous people. While their real character remained undiscovered, they served to subject Man's originally free and independent nature to a slavery of Creeds and Superstitions; but as soon as advancing Knowledge cleared away the Superstitions in which their sole strength lay, they crumbled to decay amid the ruins of that Religion which had fostered them and which left them as unmistakable proofs of its own falsity.

Thus the Sacred Trees of the Tree Worshipers have long since been found to be nothing more than ordinary, though beautiful, giants of the forest, much below even the humble earthworm in the scale of Evolution and quite undeserving of the worship of an enlightened

people. They are considered what they actually are, just trees, lofty pillars in the great Temple of Nature, commanding admiration by their size, loveliness and extraordinary age but no longer receiving the homage of awe-stricken and adoring multitudes.

Similarly, the worship of the Serpent, of Fire, of the Sun, of Creative Powers, have all subsided before the advance of scientific Knowledge. No more do people crouch in adoration and terror under that flaming orb which wheels overhead day after day. Though great stress is laid on the life-giving qualities of the Sun and it is frankly recognized as one of the most important physical factors in the scheme of human existence, it is also established in its proper relation to other things—a mere brilliant spark amid countless other stellar bodies in an Infinite and Eternal Universe. As it had once a beginning, somewhere in the immeasurable vastness of Time and Space, so it will one day have an end. But it is not Divinity, not God.

So modern Science reduces to normal proportions the distorted images of the Past, and leaves printed against the distant horizon a clear outline of the struggle waged between Men and Priests. Gods were the instruments Priests used to bar from expression some of Mankind's most fundamental and precious traits and rights—Discrimination, Individual Liberty or Self-Determination, and Self-Reliance. By their presentations of God, they

blunted Discrimination; by their Rites and Forms they destroyed Individual Liberty; by their pose as Intercessors between God and Man they blotted out Self-Reliance. And as often as the veil of mystery was stripped from before the face of one God, Priests peopled the unexplored twilight beyond with other spectral Divinities, each more majestic and imposing than the last.

Considering the terrific tax on the Priestly imagination in their fight thus to keep ahead of advancing human Knowledge, it is not surprising to find that a discredited God of old frequently crops up again in the person of a later God. Physiology, Pathology, Eugenics long ago put to flight old Iswar, Creator of Heaven and Earth, with his Lingham and its phallic worship, explaining the generative powers of human beings so clearly that even a child would not make a god of them now. Nevertheless, Iswar, monumental proof of the misleading doctrines of the Priests, is resurrected to reign again under his present name of the Heavenly Father, whose overshadowing of a Jewish virgin caused her to give birth to a Divine Child, the Christian God.

No scruples or even the crudest principles of Ethics were observed by Priests in setting up their successive Gods. The history of Religions is a record of the most unblushing plagiarisms—the stealing and appropriating

to their own use of other people's ideas or concepts, without giving them due credit. Not only that, but by resorting to a very clever and successful trick, Priests both disguised their thievery and made it serve them to the greatest advantage. While embodying in their new God all that the old one had represented, and instructing their followers to worship it as the Good Ruling Power, they loudly condemned as Evil the Deity from which they had stolen its successor's chief treasury of virtues. The Supreme God of one Religion became the Devil of the next, to which it was also the Father.

As a result of such practices, the most appalling confusion prevails among the various Gods which Humanity has been led to worship. Baal-zebub, the Sun of Righteousness, is called by the Jewish Faith Beelzebub, a Spirit of Darkness, the Devil, yet at the same time is worshiped by the same Jewish Faith as Jehovah, the Sun of All Righteousness. Iswar, slyly ruling the Hindu Religion in the guise of Brahma, Creator of the Universe, suddenly flares up also as the Son of himself in the form of Siva, the Destroyer of it. Reborn again later under a new name, he appears as the Alpha and Omega of the Christian Faith.

More astonishing still, the Serpent of Wisdom adored by the ancients, whose living expression, the great Serpent Kaliya, was slain in its own den in Ceylon by

Krishna, the famous Hindu warrior, teacher and ruler, perished from Earth by the hand of that hero only to invade the Jewish and Christian Heavens under the name of Seraphim, Spirit of Light, while enjoying also in those Religions a dark and sinister repute as Satan, a fallen Angel, exiled Son of God. Finally, his latest appearance in modern Christianity, especially in Eddyism, which unwittingly gives him the greatest prominence, is as Divine Mind.

Agni, the Sacred Fire, purifying Element of Nature, sheds its sacred character to become the foundation of the Christian Hell, whose eternal flames wreak tireless punishment on Souls forever damned. Yet its Divine Nature also persists under the name of Agnus Dei, the Lamb of God, devoutly worshiped by the same Christian people.

Mitra, the Syrian version of Bel, Baal, Baal-zebub, lends his name to the headdress worn by Christian Priests of high rank, becoming the Miter of the Bishops. This puts the Christian Bishops, devoted to the service of the Only True God, in the peculiar position of deriving their title of authority from that very Devil which the God they worship is supposed to have cast out of Heaven, since Mitra, Baal-zebub and Satan are one and the same thing. As if this were not enough, the Father of Christianity himself, His Holiness, the Pope, wears that Miter, called there the Tiara, sur-

rounded by a triple crown whose members represent the rule over the Physical, the Mental, and the Spiritual domains respectively. In other words, the one who claims to be the absolute spiritual master of the Body, Mind and Soul of Humanity, the Vice Regent of God on Earth, the single Monarch in whom are gathered presumably the destinies of the entire World, upholds on his brow as the symbol of the Power by which he reigns, the personal emblem of the Devil Himself.

Ishtar, the wife of Bel or Baal-zebub, the Jewish Devil, leads a changeful life of equally entertaining celestial ups and downs. Once worshiped as Astarte, mild Queen of Heaven, she was cast down into Hell itself, according to the Talmud, under the name of Lilith, Adam's first wife. There she became the spouse of Satan, only to be lifted from this somber distinction into her original state of heavenly grace as the Great Primeval Mother, adored by the Hindus under the name of Maya, and by the Christians as Mary, the Mother of God, the Madonna—again the mild Queen of Heaven, Regina Caeli.

This mad, fantastic, ghostly dance of Priest-engendered Gods and Goddesses, whirling in a wild nightmare rout of changing shapes and shifting, interwinding forms, can only be adequately compared to the hideous Night of the Witches, the dread Walpurgis Night, presided over by the Devil in person. So, at least, it must

seem to those who, secure to-day in their Faith even as once their misguided ancestors were secure in the Faith they professed, look back from the heights of their ampler knowledge on the shadowy Deities still haunting that dim abyss of Ignorance out of which Modern Man has climbed.

Yet what scientific evidence has Humanity now that their own God, the God claimed by orthodox religious doctrines, has an existence more real than that of its predecessors? The Christian Bible, believed by its adherents to be the Book of Books, the only Key to Salvation, whose every word is true, according to the Priests of God, because it is inspired, presents the following picture of Divinity to any intelligent and impartial reader who wishes to discern the bare facts under the thick paint of fancy daubed on by a childish brush.

In the midst of Eternity the Spirit of God, which for Aeons of Time has been content to move over the Face of the Deep in utter Void and Darkness, suddenly conceives the idea of creating something, and He creates Light. Satisfied with this first act of Creation, God then successively, though illogically, creates other things also. The Earth is brought into being by division from Heaven, is therefore flat, and becomes the center of the Universe, as the Sun, Moon and Stars are created much later and then only as accessories, or

satellites of the Earth. Finally, God's creative activities culminate on the Sixth Day in the creation of Man, whom He fashions after His Own Image and Likeness and in whom, with Divine economy, He combines male and female in one.

During this creative period God constantly exhibits a trait of character which He afterwards expressly condemns in human beings, and which is strangely out of place in a Divine Nature—Conceit, or Vanity. Not only does He congratulate Himself on each new creation with the smug assurance that it is good, but He desires Humanity to praise His achievements to Him ever after. And since He Himself, wearied out by the strain of His labors, found it convenient to rest on the Seventh Day, He decrees that Mankind shall thereafter follow His example, setting aside every Seventh Day as the Lord's Day and being careful not to corrupt it with any work more strenuous than that of praising Him.

Then, perhaps dissatisfied with what He has done, and in spite of the fact that everything is already created, God starts the whole job of Creation over again from the beginning. He commands the Earth to bring forth all plants and animals, while He Himself carefully molds Man out of Clay instead of creating him out of His Own Word, as He had done before. The result of this sculpture seems to have been less complete than the previous sample, so by a clever surgi-

cal operation God separates the confused genders, carving Woman out of one of Man's ribs and giving her to him both as a companion and, as the event was to prove, the cause of his subsequent downfall.

Omniscient as He is, God now sets the stage for an amusing tragedy whose outcome He must already know. He places Man, whom He has created weak and imperfect and afflicted with limitations, though He could just as well have made him strong and immune to evil, in the beautiful Garden of Eden, where He also plants a marvelous Tree called the Tree of Knowledge, whose fruit He forbids Man to eat on pain of Death. Whether or not Adam would have been able to resist the temptation if Eve had been left out of his scheme of life, God alone knows, but the fact is that he yielded to her urgings and ate of the forbidden fruit.

Whereupon God, who knew beforehand that the feeble creatures He had created would succumb to a Natural Law established by Himself, the Law of Polarity, which prompts the individual to do the very thing he is told not to do, flies into a terrible passion. As punishment for breaking His commandment, He curses not only Adam and Eve, innocent victims of the trap He so cleverly set for them, but also the whole of the Human Race which are to issue from this first couple on Earth. Further still, He lets His curse fall on all animals, all plants and on the Earth itself, the

Center of the Universe, from which it spreads, no doubt, like expanding ripples from a stone flung into quiet waters, throughout the shoreless immensities of Space, enveloping the entire created Universe in the bitterness of God's Wrath over the mistake of two ignorant and really innocent people—a curse of truly divine and majestic scope.

Abhorring crime, God then commits the first murder on Earth, slaying animals for their skins in order to cover the nakedness of that first couple, whom He no longer wishes to behold. Then He drives them out of the Garden of Eden, stationing a Cherub, an Angel with a Flaming Sword, at the gates to see that they do not sneak back in, and condemns them to the miserable existence of hard labor, sickness, sorrow, trouble, pain and death which they are to pass on as a heritage to their descendents forever and ever.

Poor, dumbfounded Adam and Eve, suddenly stripped of everything desirable in life and exposed as a prey to everything hurtful and burdensome, seek refuge from their despair in each other's arms. Two sons are born to them, Cain and Abel. Cain grows up to till the fields, while Abel becomes a Shepherd. Both sacrifice a part of their produce to God, who accepts the lamb slaughtered for him by Abel and spurns the purer, because bloodless, offering of cereals brought by Cain. The reason for this discrimination is not clear, but it

is to be supposed that the cereals, by their very innocence of blood guilt, were offensive to the God who had killed animals to clothe Adam and Eve in their skins. Cain, angered by the obvious injustice shown him, slays his brother. Thus he commits another murder on Earth, the precedent being left with God. Hoping to escape punishment for his crime, Cain flees to the Land of Nod, where he marries among the daughters of Nod.

Now, as Adam and Eve were the first created beings, the existence of other people elsewhere presupposes either that God struck off some extra models under cover, so to say, who got into the same trouble as the first couple and were exiled like them from Eden, or they were an earlier set of children of the parents of the human race and had simply slipped their notice.

Humanity, handicapped by God's curse for the original sin of Adam and Eve, which blighted every effort of their earthly life, could hardly be expected to turn out a race of Saints. Yet they seem not to have done so badly, since they developed attractions that rivaled the allurements of Heaven itself and drew some of the Sons of God, His Angels, whom God meant to remain in a state of unwedded bliss befitting Spirits of Light, down to earth to share their lot and their women. Seeing that the daughters of Man were fair, these Angels, whom God must have equipped both with

hearts susceptible to the desire for women and with the means to gratify such a desire, forgot their duties of celibacy, loved the enchanting creatures and committed the unpardonable sin of marrying them—a very gracious crime, and the only decent way out of their dilemma, though it broke a rule of Heaven.

This union of seductive flesh and glorious Spirits gave rather good results—too good, in fact, for God's delicately balanced peace of Mind. A race of giants sprang forth. God again flew into a towering rage, repented that He had ever created Man, and resolved to drown the whole Human Race. This He did, in a World Flood, deliberately murdering the millions upon millions of people—women, innocent children, even all animals—who were certainly not responsible for Man's sins, and all of whom owed their existence, as well as their weaknesses and faults, to His whim. Noah, alone, with his family and the animals he took with him on the ark, did God permit to escape, to be the father of the present Human Race.

This ends the first period of Mankind's sojourn on Earth. The descendants of Adam and Eve, conceived in sin, flourishing in iniquity, scourged by the wrath of their Creator and nevertheless threatening the ramparts of Heaven itself, have been almost wholly wiped out. Noah and his family, the sole survivors, start with a clean slate; but do his efforts succeed in pro-

ducing a better class of people, a class that will be more of a credit to God and perhaps show Him up in a more favorable light? It can hardly be said that they do.

All through human history, according to the Biblical account, God displayed a most ruthless, unjust and vengeful attitude toward Men. For the natural and innocent fault of desiring a farewell glance at her home, crumbling to destruction amid the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah behind her, God punishes Lot's wife with instant death. Yet a short time later He closes His eyes to a monstrous act of incest, one of the crimes for which He has just destroyed five great cities, practiced on Lot by his two daughters, who first make their Father drunk and then cohabit with him in turn, excusing their conduct on the grounds that they wish to give him children, since his own legal wife has been killed by God.

Deceitful is God, sanctioning the shabby trick by which poor old, half-blind Isaac, who so completely put his trust in God all his life, was cheated into giving to Jacob the blessing of the first born, which belonged by right to Esau.

A Gambler, Jester and Faithless Master is God, according to the Book of Job, when He makes a bet with one of His Sons, Satan, regarding the integrity of His loyal servant, Job. Being omniscient, He knows what

the outcome of the wager will be, knows that Satan proposes it in order to have a good laugh on his Father God and on innocent, helpless Job, yet deliberately plays Satan's game and makes a laughing stock of Himself at the expense of His staunch human follower. Thus poor old Job becomes the standing example of human patience and human woe, showing, after all, though a member of the cursed Human Race, a much finer nature than that displayed by God Himself.

Unreliable is God, who causes His chosen people to leave Egypt, where life on the whole was not so bad for them, by His command, and then lets them wander for forty years in a wilderness they could have crossed in that many days under an ordinary reliable human guide, searching for the Land of Promise to which He had undertaken to lead them. No wonder the Jews murmured continually during that tedious journey; they might excusably have howled when they came to the end of it and saw how long it had taken them to come such a little way. Yet because they dared to betray some dissatisfaction, God punished them with all manner of deaths.

Inconsistent is the God of the Old Testament. After visiting destruction on about five thousand people for worshiping a Golden Calf, which He must have known was the medium through which He Himself was adored in Egypt, under the name of Apis, He instructs the

Jews to commit the very sin for which He has so severely chastised them and to worship a Brazen Serpent. Their reward for such idolatry of what is to them the emblem of Satan, the Evil One, whom God cast out of Heaven and who, through his connection with the Fall of Man, is responsible for all their troubles, will be immunity from the bites of poisonous snakes which were infesting the wilderness at that time.

Supremely unjust and untrue to His Own commandment is God, as represented in the Decalogue. He demands that none shall be worshiped but Himself alone, yet in Heaven decrees that One of His Sons, who at a later period is to become the Saviour of this World, be worshiped by His other Sons, the Elohims. When Lucifer, the wisest and proudest of these, refuses to do so as not in accordance with God's own commandment, God in a savage fit of anger hurls His rebellious Son down from Heaven into Hell. In order that this may not be mistaken for leniency, He condemns Lucifer, one of His Own Sons, He who was born a Son of Light, to be thenceforward for Eternity Satan, the Prince of Darkness. Finally, to round out these acts of frantic injustice, He also condemns the myriads of Spirits, whose wayward sympathies had led them to stand by Lucifer in his revolt against the Divine oppression, to share the same fate as their leader, damned to eternal Hell.

Envious is God, fiercely intolerant of any worship or praise not directed to Himself.

Revengeful—bitterly, unappeasably revengeful—is the God of the Bible, and constantly reminding people of the fact. "Vengeance is Mine," saith the Lord—"My Wrath is terrible." And indeed, He does not exaggerate; it is hard to see how He could. His Wrath is as devastating as His Temper is uncertain, and His Vengeance hangs grimly on even to the third and fourth generations, or longer. It makes no difference that a man's descendants may be completely innocent of his sin; they inherit his guilt with his blood, or at least the retribution for it. In addition, we have the assurance that God already holds in store for Humanity untold sufferings of every sort, to be loosed when His Angels shall empty the seven vials of His Wrath on defenseless Mankind.

But in His Last Judgment, Revelation solemnly tells us, God will outdo Himself in tyranny, oppression and crime. The whole of the Human Race, with the exception of a spread-fingered handful of 144,000, is to be eternally damned and cast into Hell, where for countless ages already Lucifer has suffered the penalty for daring to maintain his individual dignity in the face of an obvious and most unbelievable injustice on the part of God.

With these examples of the Biblical God's sterner

traits of character before us, let us examine into the quality of His much-prized Mercy, to which He is always careful to draw Mankind's admiring attention. He becomes angered at Humanity for their indifference to Him. From past performances, we know this augurs dire happenings on Earth. But for once God's wrath is averted. He permits His Son to descend to Earth, take the blame for Humanity's misdeeds on His own blameless shoulders, suffer untold agony, shame and humiliation at their hands and finally to expiate their foul guilt on the Cross. He mercifully accepts this sacrifice of an innocent, though willing, victim's blood, and allows the guilty ones to go unpunished. A court of law would be apt to discover more than a taint of hypocrisy in such mercy, which nevertheless drops gently from the pulpit with a virtuous and holy glow.

Such is the God of the Bible, the only True Living God, the Father of Man and of Spirits, to Whom all look for guidance and help in the conduct of their daily life. Such is the God proclaimed from pulpits, taught in Sunday Schools, adroitly presented by religious teachers, by priests, by ministers, with the earnest sanction of governing authorities, to children from whom the ranks of governing authorities will one day be recruited. Such is the God recommended to serve as a pattern to those whom the State expects to grow up into honest, just, moral, law abiding, straightfor-

ward, self-controlled, good citizens—a God Who, if the fiction of His Divinity were peeled off, would be hustled into a hospital for the criminally insane as a dangerous menace to the public safety and well being.

This God, His own record blackened with every sin, crime, prejudice and moral iniquity that He is at such pains to condemn in His human subjects, is the Religious Ideal which modern Priesthood, through orthodox Christianity, is reverently holding up to Mankind. And a large part of Humanity, still ignorant, still blindly believing without using their reasoning powers, still hypnotized into a state of stupid resignation, accept the Monster who screams his own denunciation at them from every line, on the bare personal assurances of the Priests that it is right. As in former days, a frightful conspiracy against the progress of Humanity rolls like a dark threatening cloud between Mankind and the Light of Knowledge, which burns so brightly in this enlightened Age—and so obscurely also.

What Scientific evidence is there to support those statements in the Bible, when they are examined by the cold, clear eye of Science?

Astronomy delivers the first blow which shatters to fragments the Biblical account of Creation. Before its telescopes the Dome of Heaven melts away, exposing a Universe where neither Beginning nor End is discernible, a Universe which existed eternally in the Past as it will

exist eternally in the Future, a Universe where Time is not, and where the Spirit of God could never have moved over the face of the deep in an utter Void and Darkness which never was.

Astronomy proves that the Earth is not flat, but a sphere; that it is not the center of the Universe, but a negligible mote drifting forlornly in interstellar Space, one of the least in size, age and splendor among a countless host of other celestial bodies; that, being a child of the Sun, it naturally came into existence much later than the Sun itself, as well as billions of ages later than some stars which were already old before the Sun began. Every evidence goes to show that of all the majestic company roaming the deeps of Space, our Earth is one of the most tiny, insignificant, recent and humble members—exactly the contrary to what the Bible says is true.

The Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, in 381 A.D., solemnly fixed the date of Creation at 5509 B.C.—a date correlated and precised by Julianus Africanus, a Christian writer, who by some ingenious process of reasoning pitched upon the 25th day of the third month in the year 5508 B.C. as the exact time when all things were called into existence. A most astonishing precision, since it soared over the far boundaries of Time and alit with unerring sureness on a day and month which could have had no possible being if, as the Old

Testament asserts, the Sun whereby days and months are determined did not exist, being Fourth in the order of Creation.

History now steps in to play with that tattered deceit which Astronomy has left naked and shivering behind it. Historical records of the Kings of Egypt have lately been traced by Bunsen, a scientist, as far back as 9083 B.C. or about four centuries and more before the whole Universe, according to the Bible, is supposed to have been created by God. These modern discoveries simply corroborate the statement of Plato, ancient Greek Philosopher, Scientist and Historian, who records that the Priests of Sais in Egypt gave him 8300 B.C. as the date of their Memphic Kings.

Geology comes forward with material proofs taken out of the Earth itself, where they have been accumulating through countless ages, which demonstrate the existence of forms of life on this planet, including Man, over millions and millions of years in the Past, and also show that the approximate age of the Earth can only be reckoned in the billions of years.

Evolution destroys the flattering Priest-made theory and Biblical conceit of Man's special creation, relentlessly exposing his humble ancestry among the animals in the dim Past, uncovering his steps in a growth which is seen to be an increasing and unbroken development, extending through millions of years, from the lowest

condition in the scale of animate being to that enviable height which he now occupies, and throwing into relief against the glowing horizon of the Future those lofty pinnacles of Achievement which challenge his Progress of To-morrow.

As regards that magnificent disaster, the Flood, in whose wrathful waters all Mankind is said by the Bible to have perished from the face of the-Earth, except the few who were in the ark, there is no possible crack in the busy pages of History where it could be inserted. The Septuagint places its date at 3426 B.C. Josephus locates it in 3146 B.C. while the Samaritan Bible brings it down to 2998 B.C. Yet records of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Babylonians, Syrians, Hindus, lavishly attest that during these very times when all Humanity was supposed to be perishing in a World Flood, their ancient civilizations flourished without a pause, building and destroying, warring and sinning, with an unconcerned ardor and enthusiasm which it would have taken more than an ordinary rain storm to damp. There is even no record of a dangerous flood of any kind at that period, which might lend some shadow of plausibility to the Biblical myth.

The dramatic tale of how Joshua caused the Sun to stand still, so that he could complete the extermination of his enemies in the battle, loses what little credence Ignorance was able to lend it when we reflect that

Humanity is still inhabiting this planet and will probably continue to do so for some time to come. If the Jewish warrior had succeeded in disrupting the celestial scheme, as the Bible says he did, and had suddenly stopped the rotation of this ponderous Earth on its axis, every movable object on it, human beings, animals, trees, houses, rocks and oceans, would have been hurled with inconceivable velocity into Space, much as the driver of a fast car would soar on into the next field if a brick wall should halt the progress of the machine under him. All life on Earth would thus have come to an untimely end, which we know is distinctly not the case. But as long as people believed the Earth was stationary, and the Sun a sort of swinging lamp, the story served very well.

Even the fatal Tree of Knowledge, whose tempting fruit brought about the Fall of Man, totters before the assault of pickaxe and spade. Modern excavations in Babylon have unearthed records which establish historically that this Tree, the Tree of Knowledge, was planted in a sacred grove around the Temple of Anoo, in Babylon, on the private property of an older and alien God, thus shivering to splinters the legend of its location in the Garden of Eden, together with the story of Man's Fall and the Original Sin which is built around it. Like the bulk of that weird, grotesque, oddly embellished narrative called the Old Testament,

it is merely an interesting tale lifted bodily out of an older and richer religious setting.

These same Babylonian records exactly corroborate the modern theory of Evolution, which marshals to its support a wealth of physical evidence, sifted from the remnants of millions of years of Man's evolutionary progress on this Earth, to prove that Man, though once very low in the animal kingdom, has gradually worked his way up, by development of his Mind, to the topmost place in the scale of Life. It explicitly shows that Man, far from having suffered the Fall attributed to him in the Bible, has been constantly and uninterruptedly on the Rise, thus pinching out that slack in his supposed career wherein reposes the doctrine of Original Sin and Eternal Damnation. So vanishes also the only valid excuse for God's Wrath and His terrible Curse on Mankind; while the sacrifice of His Son, considered in the light of atonement for the Original Sin, becomes both unnecessary and useless, since the Original Sin was never committed except in the resourceful fancy of the Priests.

Heaven and Hell have exploded like iridescent bubbles when pricked by the searching lancet of Science. Astronomy has combed the starry reaches of illimitable Space, Geology and allied sciences have probed the nethermost depths, without discovering the faintest trace of those localities so vividly and picturesquely

defined by Religion. The striking descriptions of them given in the Bible have no counterpart outside its pages; they appear now only in their true character—ghost stories manufactured by Priests to lure or terrify Humanity into submission to their assumed authority.

And God Himself, the orthodox God of to-day, the living heir of all the dead Gods of the Past, leering down from His pedestal on the Great Wall of Religions, stands condemned by His own supposed Creation, and in terms which cannot be misunderstood. No enlightened man or woman of this present century, looking out over the Infinite, Eternal Universe unrolled before them, watching the harmonious operations of never conflicting, never changing, perfect Laws, as irresistible as the ponderous globes they hurl through Space, as delicate as the compass needle quivering to the North, can swallow the bland assurance that all this is the product of a changing, revengeful, conceited, unjust, immoral, deceitful, unmerciful and supremely hypocritical God.

It is impossible for reasoning, self-respecting human beings to submit themselves to the yoke of such a God and accept Him as the only true God to be worshiped. And as that God, the latest one, is after all the only orthodox Deity served up to people to-day by the Priests who govern Religion, it logically and inevitably leaves Humanity in the same position that many Religions have left them in before—without a God at all.

CHAPTER V

THE FRIENDS OF MAN

BUT what of those Great Men of the Past, who tower like lofty pillars above the troubled seas of human history? What of those moral and intellectual giants, those True Friends of Humanity, who have stamped the impress of their beneficial influence on all the succeeding generations of Mankind? The Religions with which Priests have cloaked the Teachings of men like Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Lao-tse, Jesus, seem to prove by thousands of years of fruitless application that these Great Men were mistaken or hopeless dreamers—that their Teachings, though beautiful, were absolutely impractical, therefore useless to Humanity.

Yet is it really so? Is it reasonably acceptable that Men of such caliber could have been so utterly mistaken or, still worse, that they could have consciously deceived those who put all their trust in them? Energetic, intelligent, practical, honest, sincere, optimistic, far-seeing and above all supremely unselfish, Men of

deeds as well as Men of thoughts, they proved their quality as fearless builders of Civilization by every act of their lives. It would seem as if they could have given only principles and teachings of a sort which would forward the good of their fellow beings, teachings which would help people in their evolutionary progress through Life.

However, the History of Mankind appears to prove that just the opposite is true. } What is the reason for such an apparent contradiction?

Divested of the Superstition and Mysticism under which Priests have hidden their Original Truths, those Teachings of the Friends of Man are nothing short of sublime. Simple, practical, easy for everyone to understand and use, they give to Mankind a conduct of life which covers every human need. How could the whole of the Human Race, who profess devotion to one or another of their Great Leaders, have embodied such Teachings in their daily life without bringing about an extraordinary improvement of conditions in every direction? But again facts seem to prove that this is not the case, and that the priceless contributions, the unselfish efforts of the Friends of Man were wasted on Mankind.

A critical comparison of the Teachings which characterize the various Faiths brings to light a startling discovery. Underneath the violent religious differ-

ences which set them apart one from another, they are astonishingly alike, both in Fundamental Principles and, frequently, in their ways of presentation. Rama, Zoroaster, Krishna, Lao-tse, Buddha, Jesus did not teach separate ways to reach rival Gods. They taught practically one and the same thing—how people might conduct their activities in accordance with certain unchanging Basic Truths, in such fashion as to live a healthier, happier, more normal and more successful life on Earth.

The records of Religions, on the contrary, show that Priests, for selfish purposes of their own, were far more interested in maintaining the prestige of their respective systems of worship and such manufactured Gods as they made the central figures in them, than they were in promoting the welfare of their fellow men. In vivid contrast to the Great Teachers, who knew that the Laws of the Universe are immutable, beyond any human power to modify or arrest their operation, and who therefore devoted all their efforts to teaching Man how to adapt himself consciously and intelligently to them, the Priests endeavored to represent those Laws as merely the inscrutable Will of a Deity Whom they could influence to fit His Whim to mortal needs, by petitioning Him in proper form. Their religious creeds and doctrines were designed to protect this vicious belief, keeping Man in ignorance of that changeless

Universal Plan to which he must conform in order to progress and fostering in him the conviction that, as long as he submitted to the guidance of the Priests, God would shape the Infinite to his convenience—though it appeared in practice that Divinity must often be very careless or very wrong.

The stupendous task which confronted every Friend of Man was to liberate Humanity from the condition of utter Ignorance, Darkness, Superstition and Limitations of every sort into which the Clergy, for their own selfish ends, had deliberately plunged them. They were to restore to Mankind that original Sense of Dignity, that birthright of Free Will and Self-Determination of which a few greedy, clever and unscrupulous individuals had deprived them. Alone, they were to stand up against those who, posing as Interpreters of the Will of God, had imposed their own ambitious will on credulous human beings, diverting people from the straight course of their Evolution, separating them from the natural way of thinking and living, tangling them in the bonds of a fear-ridden servitude which was riveted securely on their Minds by promising to bring them near to the very Powers for which their hearts yearned, and which the Priests called God.

Having dedicated wealth, fame, friends, talents and life itself to this one magnificent Purpose—the Liberation of the Human Race, their Emancipation from

wrong influences, the Awakening of Man to his own True Self, his Success and Happiness in Life—the Great Friends of Man set out in the most logical and systematic way to achieve the quickest and best results. They knew that the dominating influence in the heart of Man, the die through which a certain character is stamped into the raw metal of his life, is his Faith—Faith in Good, in Ideals, in Perfection. Priests, by intruding upon his beliefs the false Ideal of a domineering, willful, capricious, partial, vengeful God, who was in reality but the pictured image of their own ambitious natures, had imparted to his being the complementary insignia and worth of a slave, human coin which they exploited for their own profit. The Great Teachers determined to clear away this degrading substitution, to expose Man through his Faith, so to say, to the real Supreme Ruling Power, which would impress a nobler value upon his life.

So they endeavored first of all to give him a right concept of that Supreme Ruling Power, which the Priests called God, but which the Friends of Man called the Father. Thus they etched upon human understandings the Perfect Ideal of an Eternal Father, not remote, not stern, not vengeful, not unjust, not indifferent, but One vitally interested in the welfare of His children, always to be looked up to, trusted, followed as the Guiding Star in the dark night of

human Ignorance, during Mankind's further uncertain steps on the way of their Evolution. This Power, the Source of all other powers, of all that Man might need or deserve in his earthly career, did not hide behind the mask of a tyrant responsive only to slavish adulation, flattery, dread, but by its very nature—and on this point the Great Teachers laid particular stress—required to be loved, with all one's heart, soul and understanding, supremely, above everything else.

In this way the Friends clarified for Man his relation to the Supreme Ruling Power, giving him a wholesome Ideal to rely on, from which only constructive influences could penetrate into his life.

However, there was another side of Man's life also to be considered—his relation to his own fellow men. Human beings had to live among themselves, to adjust their activities one to another in such fashion as to bring forth mutually constructive, successful, progressive and harmonious results. What bearing did their relation to the Supreme Ruling Power have on this most pressing problem? How could that Serene Ideal be transmitted into practical expression through the conflicting wants and desires, hopes, aims and needs of the teeming myriads of separate individuals on Earth? It seemed a conundrum to stagger even a Divine intellect. Yet the Friends formulated the solution in

one simple instruction which they gave to Mankind—
“to love others as much as one loves oneself.”

Being deep students of human nature, they knew that every individual naturally loves himself first and his neighbor next. But real coöperation and collaboration are impossible while people are always ready to sacrifice each other, no matter how little, to their own interests. Therefore, they set before Mankind, as an Ideal to be realized, the elimination of that margin of safety which people left for themselves in their attitude toward their fellows. As Ideals are of value only in so far as they are practical, no better one than this could ever be devised, since it simply calls upon human beings to “do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” Such an Ideal, if practiced, obviously must bring about the most desirable and harmonious relations among Humankind.

Thus the Friends established through the mists of wrong teachings of the Clergy a clear and simple conduct of life, defining first Man's proper relation to the Supreme Ruling Power, called God, but considered the Father of Mankind, next his relation and attitude toward himself and, at the same time, the attitude and relation which should exist between him and his fellow beings. The solution of these three main and logical relations which underlie Man's whole being,

and whose fair observance cannot be termed "duties" because it is natural to every normal and free-minded individual, formed the plain, Fundamental Principles on which were built the Teachings of all the True Friends of Man, the Great Teachers.

In those Teachings the Friends never attempted to give any special definition of the Supreme Ruling Power, or God. They knew that it would be futile to try to explain something so infinitely deep and great to limited human Minds. Their efforts were for the masses, the huge, sluggish bulk of Mankind, who were not intellectually equipped to grasp anything in the least complex or abstract; they gave exoteric, or open Teachings, simple and practical, and not esoteric Teachings, which mean inner, occult, reserved for the few who would like to make of them a course of detailed and specific instruction for themselves. It was enough that people should understand the Nature of God as the Father, whose Laws the Friends presented directly as principles and commandments and embodied concretely in striking parables and comparisons.

Jesus, the latest and perhaps the least understood of those Friends of Humanity, openly recognized the impossibility of giving people a more adequate idea of that which he conveyed to them in a form suited to their mental capacity at that time. He declared that he spoke to them then in parables, veiled, but that the

time would come when Teachings would be given to Humanity which would explain everything clearly and scientifically. Even to his immediate followers, his friends and disciples, who stood closest to him and were presumably most fitted to understand him, he said, "Many things have I to tell you, but you cannot bear them now."

There were two obvious reasons why the Friends referred to God as the Father. First, because the Supreme Ruling Power, the Original Source from which all forms of Being, Man included, sprang into existence, is in Its truest sense the actual Cause, the Invisible Heavenly Father of Mankind as of all other existing things. Second, because they wished to impress upon Man's Consciousness the realization of his kinship with that Power, of his nearness to It, bringing him again to the once natural state of unhampered communion with It, from which he had been warped by the perverted doctrines of the Priests. They wanted to make him feel that intimacy, friendliness, trust and directness of relations with It which normally exist between Father and Child.

In this way they indicated as forcibly as possible that, just as there was no need of a go-between in the relations of Parents and Children, so on the larger scale there was no need of any Intermediaries, or Priests, between Man and the Supreme Ruling Power. They destroyed

at a blow the only valid reason for the existence of the Clergy, thereby wrecking the first great Wall which closed in Man's Mind, and by so doing they automatically did away also with the other two Walls buttressed on the institution of Priesthood—Religions and Rites. They taught human beings to commune with their Heavenly Father, to pray to Him, within the secret chambers of their own hearts, away from all other people. Temples, churches, shrines and all the imposing paraphernalia of worship were not only unnecessary, but actually detrimental, having no place in the living plan they mapped out.

The Great Friends themselves, in fact, never went to the temples to pray. They went there on occasion, perhaps to teach the multitudes assembled at that civic center of the community or, like Jesus, to correct some of the flagrant abuses perpetrated in the shadow of its "holiness." Even so, they much preferred to teach in the open, away from the stale atmosphere of Priests, of Religions, of vain pleading and profitless ritual. But when they wished to commune with the Father, they did so in beautiful groves, or on the free hillsides, in the glorious Temple of Nature, not built by human hands.

Their communion, moreover, had about it no taint of the abasement usually associated with prayers. It was by no means a supplication, but rather a direct

and confident Union with the Supreme Ruling Power, a drink from the Living Fount of Universal Life Itself, which is all the time inviting Mankind to partake of Its refreshing Waters. They prayed with their inner being, in a language that needed neither voice nor words to express it, and when asked by their listeners for a form to serve as a guide in communicating with God, the prayer they suggested was more a simple statement of the attitude to be taken toward the Supreme Ruling Power than anything else. It was for Man, not God.

The Father, they said, knew all human needs even before He was asked to meet them, and He was always ready to fulfill those needs abundantly. Therefore, it was merely a waste of time to rehearse the details to Him, or to beg Him for aid which He was constantly prepared to offer. His children did not have to persuade Him to help them; their only concern was to open themselves to the help He was eager to give.

But distrust, or fear, such as was implied by any of the supplications which Orthodox worshipers were accustomed to address to Divinity, closed the very channels in Man through which his needs were to be supplied, making it impossible for him to receive that which God has already given to him. Pleading and explanations were but the negative way of expressing both doubt in God's knowledge of the facts and ap-

prehension as to His willingness to lend assistance. That is why the prayers of Religions have always been so singularly barren of results; by their very nature they shut Man off from real Communion with the Supreme Ruling Power, from which alone the necessary support and strength can come.

This is the reason that the Great Teachers seemed so little concerned with the form of prayer, and so urgent in their advice to believe, when praying, that the response desired would be given by the Father. Words, they realized, were of no use where the Supreme Ruling Power was concerned, though they had a certain value in formulating for Man himself the attitude whereby he could contact that Power most effectively. Faith was the only medium through which the Father could touch His children and impart His bounty to them, and Faith could not survive in the presence of Fear.

The Omnipotence and Omniscience of the Father were thus practically explained by the Great Teachers, who embodied the recognition of these Qualities in the statements they gave as prayers. Their further assurance that He was always at hand to answer Man's call added to these Divine Attributes that of Omnipresence.

But no concept of a Personal God could survive such ample endowments as these. Obviously a Deity who

is present everywhere throughout the whole Infinite and Eternal Universe at the same time and in the full tide of His Omniscience and Omnipotence cannot be cramped within a finite form. Above all, it can never be crowded into a figure modeled on the general human pattern, no matter how prodigiously magnified such a Being might be by baffled religious imaginations.

The Friends made it clear that they did not advocate communion with the Supreme Ruling Power, with God, merely as a means to obtain satisfaction of material human wants. Their vision extended far beyond the grudging limits of daily life. They knew that Humanity had a long and steep path to climb in its evolutionary Progress throughout unnumbered Ages, and that the material difficulties which loomed so big in human eyes at the moment would dwindle to fractional importance in relation to the whole course to be traversed. Such details had their purpose and were not to be ignored, but their place was not foremost.

Man's Destiny, the fulfillment of which he was unconsciously striving to work out, was to develop into its full power of expression that higher Inner Self called his Soul. The Great Teachers realized that unless human beings were able to stimulate their own individual inner forces and powers through constant communion and actual contact with the Universal Source of all powers, they could not grow and prosper through

Life as they should. Their Real Self would be stunted in its unfoldment, too starved for lack of nourishment to withstand and overcome adverse circumstances, which would crush them.

Yet those same adverse circumstances, courageously met and conquered, formed the very rungs of that ladder on which Man must climb from his low estate, deep in the somber Valley of Ignorance, into the bright Sunlight of Knowledge which floods warmly over the Higher Peaks. They were the foils to challenge the exercise of those qualities which he would otherwise allow to remain dormant, and were indispensable in the service they rendered by building his character and giving him a fresh impulse to proceed further, to mount higher, to achieve more.

The obstacles which impatient Mankind were accustomed to regard as Evil, seeking to block their way, the Friends understood in a different light. They perceived that there was no Evil in the obstacle itself; the only Evil which could be associated with it was that which resulted from Man's own weakness, his own inability to master the situation. In such lack of power, in such human failure to measure up to what was required of them, lay all the wrong.

Human beings, the Friends recognized, were not strong enough to stand alone. In order to turn the apparent Evil in their path into true stepping-stones to

Good, they had to have the support of a Power greater than any they could supply by themselves, of an Energy unique, immutable, never failing, stable as a rock, of the Supreme Ruling Power, called the Father God. Consequently they laid the greatest emphasis on the point that Man should rely first of all and above all on that Power, on God, and then only on himself as the channel through which this Greatest Power would work if permitted to do so.

To open that channel, the Great Teachers endeavored to rouse Man to a consciousness of his Higher Self, his Soul, to awaken him to those sacred birthrights of Individual Liberty, Self-Determination and the Pursuit of Individual Happiness which it confers on everyone born to this Earth, but which trusting Humanity had permitted to Priesthood to take from them. They tried to break the hypnotic spell of Religious Creeds and Doctrines by which the Clergy bound human Minds in abject submission to them. They told Man that he is free born, a Son of God instead of a Slave, that his heritage is Dominion, not Submission—exactly the opposite of what the Priests had persuaded him to believe.

Then, to give Man the possibility of bringing out that Freedom in his life, they explained to him the Laws of the Supreme Ruling Power, his Guide Ropes to the individual power in which real Liberty resides.

They showed him that those Laws and the Laws of the Universe are one, that their nature is invincibly constructive, that they tend unswervingly toward the very goal to which Mankind aspire, supporting human beings in every right action, imposing no limits to any constructive efforts, and opposing only negative tendencies through which Man would lapse into slavery to his own weakness.

Evil, the Great Teachers revealed, is not an affliction visited on people from outside by some malign Force. Mankind are the authors of their own Evil, which is nothing more than the result of their violations, conscious or unconscious, of those Laws of the Universe. It is Nature's way of telling people that they have gone in the wrong direction, the symptoms which warn the individual that he had made a mistake, just as in the body the pangs of indigestion protest the admission of unwholesome food, and exact the corresponding penalty for *that* error also. It is of human origin, mostly the product of human Ignorance, and has no being elsewhere. Moreover its only cure is a human cure, by the simple process of learning how to conform consciously to Laws which have been ignorantly transgressed.

This way of defining Humanity's real place in the Universal Scheme went far to cure their sickly attitude toward God and toward Life. Man, confronted with immutable Laws of the Universe which were no re-

specters of persons, were utterly impartial to all and could not be moved by supplications or bribed by offerings any more than they could be misused for a destructive or wrong purpose, could perceive at last that it rested with him to be *with* those Laws and achieve Success in Life, or to be *against* them and incur by just that much a Loss of Power, or Evil, Failure.

Thus the Friends swept into the discard vicious beliefs which had long kept Man cowering under the threatened wrath of an angry Deity, or patiently suffering evils which he supposed to be thrust upon him by an ill-disposed Devil. They showed him his own responsibility to win intelligently his Individual Happiness in life, instead of waiting for it to be donated as a gift, and left him no one but himself to blame if he failed. In other words, they scooped his Mind out of its confining shell of Religious untruths and restored to him his original Sense of Dignity, his Individual Liberty, which his former degrading beliefs had made it impossible for him to retain.

The Great Teachers had made it plain to Man that he was the Creator of his own Destiny, either good or evil. But in order to enable him to shape that Destiny consciously, to develop in him Self-Determination, they had to give him some means to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil. Therefore they taught him Discrimination.

This quality, one of the most essential for sound character building, must usually have been in an almost embryonic state, since it appears to have been conspicuously absent from Man's religious education. One fails to understand how, for instance, in the Biblical narrative, God could have forbidden Man at the very beginning of his career to partake of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which conferred upon him such a precious and necessary aid for his Evolutionary unfoldment in conformity with the Law of Eternal Progress. While such an attitude is quite in keeping with the Nature of a God who subsequently committed all the crimes recorded against Him in the Old Testament, it can scarcely be reconciled with the Ideal of Divinity which Mankind was expected by its Priests to entertain.

"What a Man sows, that shall he also reap," was the lucid way in which one of the most widely known and generally unheeded of the Great Teachers summed up a Universal Law of God and Nature, a Law which has shaped the slowly rising structure of every life ever lived. All human actions, good or evil, return inevitably upon him who sent them, just as the echo flings back the shouted word, automatically and exactly, no matter whether it is good or evil. There is no way of avoiding the operation of that Law; neither will Ignorance avert, nor Regret assuage its functioning.

Yet, when understood, it gives Man the possibility to know beforehand, by the nature of his present thoughts and actions, what future fruit they are going to bear in his experience. It becomes his tool to carve out for himself the destiny he desires, to shape his life deliberately instead of trusting to the direction of blind Chance.

The Friends of Man never taught the forgiveness of Sin, in the shockingly perverted sense attributed to that term by Religions. Such abject doctrines as God's willingness to let propitiatory offerings, repentance, constant prayer or individual remission purchase His indulgence for wrongs done—a disgraceful philosophy of weakness which even a halo of holiness cannot disguise, and which finds its most immoral expression in the idea of the "Vicarious Atonement"—have no authority in their instructions. On the contrary, they emphasized time and again the unvarying Natural Law that once a cause has been started, nothing can stop it from reacting with the corresponding effect. Jesus reiterated the vigorous assurance that he who sows the wind must reap the whirlwind, indorsing it with the words "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again—full measure, pressed down and running over."

What the Great Teachers wished Man to understand, when they told him that God is always ready to forgive his sins if he repents, was that the Supreme Ruling

Power is eternally at hand to throw Its full strength in support of any right action, regardless of how many wrong ones the individual has committed in the past. Repentance, in other words, consists simply in a transgressor's recognition of the fact that he has been violating Immutable Laws of the Universe and his very sensible readjustment of his activities to conform with those Laws. The initiative does not come from God; the Laws themselves operate as exactly and impartially afterwards as they did before. It comes from Man.

This is why the "Repentance" advocated by Religions has seldom produced the expected results. Merely to regret former sins, to say "I'm sorry" and leave the rest to God, is not enough. Man must not only see that he has made a mistake; he must see why it was a mistake, and use his intelligence to avoid repeating such mistakes in the future. It is for his own advantage, not for God's pleasure. Natural Laws are not hurt if they are violated; only the violator is hurt. Neither are they resentful; if rightly used, they are as quick to benefit the most consistent sinner as they are a saint.

Herein lies the "Patience of God" and that quality of Grace claimed by Religions as a highly redeeming feature of their respective Deities, who by their records certainly stood sadly in need of some such compensating virtue. Naturally, since to sin is but to transgress

a Changeless and Eternal Law, the choice is always with Man to stop transgressing that Law, to stop sinning. In that case he is With the Law instead of Against it and will enjoy the corresponding advantages, just as a drowning man will stop drowning if he will lift his nostrils out of the water and let them breathe in air. The air is always there; its patience is infinite; but the man has to come and get it.

Yet neither the Repentance of Man nor the Grace of God is sufficient to remove the penalty for wrongs already done. The Great Teachers made it unconditionally clear that for every mistake, for every evil act, human beings would have to pay the price. Sins not only *might* be corrected or compensated; they *must* be. This was the only "forgiveness" of Sin that people should ever wish or could ever expect. The same Law which determined that they must reap the fruits of their good actions operated just as impartially to make sure that they reaped also the consequences of their bad ones.

Within the determining bounds of that Law can be found no room for the Heaven and Hell of Religion. No matter how many mistakes an individual may have made in his life, no matter how great an amount of Evil he may have accumulated against his score, Eternal Punishment as taught by the Priests would be out of proportion, an unjust and unfair price to pay for it. A mortal whose experience is wedged between the lim-

iting bounds of birth and death cannot expand his guilt to the dimensions of Infinity, which alone would render him liable to such a penalty. Neither can he accomplish the amount of good that would merit a return of Immediate and Eternal Bliss. Heaven and Hell are definitely pinched out in the more equitable policy of Nature, as set forth by the Friends.

Man's Future, according to their sane and wholesome Teachings, builds itself unerringly on that which he has made his Past. Only in proportion as he lifts himself from a lower into a higher state of consciousness, so that he is able to adapt his life more successfully to the Universal Laws which govern it, does his existence become more harmonious and enjoyable. And not until he will have eliminated from his character, through countless conscious efforts in individual unfoldment, all possibility to make a mistake, to think, feel or act wrongly, will he bring about in himself a condition which could be termed one of Eternal Harmony.

Such a process of Evolution, the Friends knew, could never be accomplished in one brief earthly existence. It would require unnumbered Ages to reach its fulfillment. Therefore Man's expectations of stepping from this troubled little life into a State of Eternal Perfection after he dies could encounter nothing but disappointment. Death brought no severance of earthly

ties, no release from the responsibilities incurred here. As the individual's unfoldment was during his human experience, so would his status be determined in that Future Life awaiting him on his departure from his perishable body.

How sound, logical, just and natural are such teachings, how completely opposed in every way to the fantastic doctrines of the Priests, who go so far in the wrong direction as to take into their own erring human hands the power to remit sins, to usher an individual into Heaven or condemn him to eternal damnation in Hell, at the prompting of their own personal judgment or whim.

The wild conceit that the Keys of Heaven and Hell were placed in human hands crumbles to nothingness when tested by the standard of those Fundamental Principles and Laws of Nature brought forth by the Friends. Like the imagined Realms they were supposed to unlock, they are seen to be naked fictions devised by Priests to strengthen their hold over human Minds. By such a simple expedient the Clergy stripped Man of all independence of thought and action, making him completely dependent on them through Fear of the terrific punishment they could presumably mete out, or through Hope of the rewards they pretended to have within their gift.

Moreover, the idea of usurping the authority of God

by establishing oneself as His Vice-Regent on Earth is neither new nor Christian in its origin. About fifty centuries ago, in the year 2950 B.C., one of the first Chinese Emperors, Tohee, a Pagan, created that precedent, borrowing all the majestic power of Heaven to prop him securely on his own earthly throne.

When Jesus, voicing the principles taught by every Great Teacher before him, said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven," he made it very clear what he meant by that advice. The Friends knew that Man, in order to accomplish all that is expected of him in his earthly life, must develop Self-Reliance. But Self-Reliance, in its turn, is possible only if there is a real Strength of inner, finer qualities on which to rely. Man's problem, his vital need, is to bring out those Latent Qualities within him, the Qualities of his own Higher Self, his Soul.

To that first advice, therefore, was added the directing instruction, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." In that clarifying assurance the whole glittering structure of a Priest-made Hereafter melts like a frost crystal at the touch of flame. There is no remote Heaven outside the individual, no distant place of serene accord to which a human gatekeeper can give admission. Harmony, power, all that Heaven represents, is within one, waiting only to be brought out by the actual development and constant use of those

qualities which comprise it. This Teaching, which snatched Man's vision back from profitless contemplation of a nonexistent future Heaven and fastened it on the clamorous demands of the moment, was one of the noblest and most practical ever given to Humanity.

Yet how violently in contrast to such a concept is the perverted idea held out by orthodox religious doctrines, which build up an imaginary Heaven somewhere in the dim fastnesses of the Unknown and tell Man to try, by contemplation and meditation, to reflect that ideal condition in the mirror of his own Inner Self. As a reward for such a useless waste of time, talents and all the qualities which have been given to him to be exercised in constructive activities, the successful meditator will achieve a State of Ecstasy, a delicate trance which not only upsets the equilibrium of any normal person, but renders him totally unfit to meet the demands of a very often dreary and uninteresting daily life in the proper practical way.

When the Kingdom of Heaven advocated by the Friends has been found, according to Jesus, people will know it by a sign which cannot be misunderstood. Then "all these (other) things shall be added unto you," he assured them. And by the well-known Parable of the Talents he made his meaning unmistakably plain. Only as Man will develop through use those qualities and powers which are within his Inner, Higher Self,

his Soul, will he become strong enough to overcome all obstacles in Life, thereby gaining the other things which go to make existence worth while.

Man's immediate and vital problem, therefore, is to unfold the natural Inner Qualities and Powers by which alone he can attain Health, Success and Happiness in Life. Lacking them, he is a futile drifter, a weakling, dependent on the will of others for even the miserable existence he is permitted to eke out. But once they are brought into expression, he becomes dependent on himself alone, because he feels within him the power to meet every requirement squarely. He acquires Confidence in himself. Thus is born Self-Reliance, that indispensable factor on which is conditioned Man's Progress in his Evolution on Earth.

However, the Friends realized that Man's brief stay on Earth, mere drop as it is in the Limitless Ocean of Eternity, was not the only question demanding their attention. His Soul, its eternal existence as the unquenchable Spark from the Eternal Fire of Universal Life Itself, required that Man should consider also that most important though least known part of his being.

They explained to Man that he will discover in his Soul not only all the human qualities necessary for his Success in Life, but that he will find there Inspiration, Ideals, the imperishable elements from which each forward step in his evolutionary progress must come,

both in his earthly existence and in the unending continuity of existence confronting him. From it proceeds that natural, instinctive Urge, "Onward! Onward!—the unresting cry of Man's own Soul for Eternal Progress, throughout endless Cycles of Time.

Yet the Great Teachers never tried to picture the conditions under which that future Progress would be achieved. Beyond indicating that each successive existence is, so to say, a preparation for the next one to come, and that by Man's life on Earth will be determined his life in the Future, they made no effort to precise the Hereafter. They had swept the Infinite clean of its illusory Heaven and Hell; they had freed the way for Man to build his own habitation there; they had shown him how to make it according to his desire. But they knew that it would be impossible for human beings to grasp mentally anything outside their present state of consciousness, and that any attempt to embody that Future in terms within the reach of their understanding would be futile.

Hence the statement, in itself a marvelous promise, concerning the wonderful things which no Mind of Man can conceive, being prepared in the next life for those who love God—that is, who follow His commandments, live the life outlined to them by the Friends.

Looking through the eyes of the Great Teachers, Man saw himself with a new vision. He understood more

clearly than ever before two baffling mysteries which had confused him and left him wandering forlornly at random through Life: his relation to himself and his relation to the Supreme Ruling Power. It remained now to determine from these two the fundamental and natural principles which should govern the relations of human beings one to another.

So the Friends laid bare the bed-rock qualities on which human relations must rest for a firm foundation—Honesty and Good Will. "Do unto others," counseled Jesus, "as you would have others do unto you." In such apt form did he outline the guiding principle differently expressed by other Great Teachers. Be true to others, they advised, because in being true to others you will be true to your Higher Self, consequently to God also. Be friendly to others, because in that way you will sow the seed of their friendliness to you. Express to others that which you desire to receive yourself, for so must a Law of Nature Itself operate to return it to you.

Even that astonishing precept, to love one's enemies, seemingly the most unnatural and illogical of all advices among the natural and logical instructions of the Friends, takes on a very sensible aspect when the Universal Law behind it is perceived. An individual, by hating another, is simply piling up hatred for himself. Realizing this, it is plain to see that a more practical

as well as ideal course could not be recommended than this of loving one's enemies, though it appears on the surface to be so impractical and impossible.

To love one's enemies, however, does not mean to try to whip up an artificial affection for some one who is so far from being lovable personally. It means to rise above the offense, above the evil thoughts that enemy is discharging at one. The results of this will be that the hatred which is not returned will soon eat itself out, like a fire which is not fed. Moreover, that eating process will take place at its own source, in the individual who entertains the bitter passion. He alone will suffer the destructive effects of his own evil, which becomes a sufficient natural punishment for his offense. Ultimately, also, he cannot help being impressed, even against his will, by the impersonal friendliness, the sense of harmony and superiority, of the object of his dislike, and from an enemy may become a real friend.

The non-returning of Evil, a policy which can proceed only from a genuinely strong character governed by a sure realization of the purpose and meaning of his attitude, is not to be confounded with what is usually understood as the Non-Resistance of Evil. Not to resist Evil does not mean submission to it. Weakness is always wrong. To tolerate, to yield to Evil is inexcusable, and deserves the unhappy consequences it will certainly bring. The only Non-Resistance of any

value is that which comes from such complete domination over Evil, by rising above it, that there is no necessity to resist it. It cannot reach one.

Man's Aim should be to identify himself as completely as possible with the great Universal Forces and Laws whose product and embodiment he is, and in whose ruling embrace he conducts his life. Those Laws, though they never yield, also do not bear any grudge or resentment against those who violate them. They are as ready to help the most persistent transgressor as if he had never offended at all, once he acts in accord with them. That is why Man was told to forgive his offender seventy times seven times, if necessary—that is, never to bear any grudge or resentment in his heart, but to keep the opportunity always open for his enemy to make matters right.

The more an individual expresses in his own nature the Laws which rule the Universe Itself, the higher he rises in his moral development. He assumes the qualities of those Laws, which are reflected in a balanced development through the respective members of his triune being. As he approaches more nearly the condition of equilibrium which they represent, he will find emerging in his human life one priceless quality distinctive of them—Patience. Eternal Laws are eternally patient, and for Man to be patient also is but to follow a pattern originated in Eternity Itself.

Through continual use of Love, the Greatest Power of the Universe, in one's daily activities, this quality of Patience can be so developed that finally it offers an impenetrable barrier to anything negative from outside. The individual achieves a poise which renders him immune, without effort on his part, to any destructive influence that may be directed against him. There is no flaw, no weakness left in his nature to make him vulnerable to the evil intents of others.

The reason most people have trouble with their fellow beings, have enemies, is because there still exists within them enough latent disharmony to flare up in response to whatever wrong note the other has struck. Even the most friendly and peaceful individuals, perhaps without being aware of it themselves, retain in their characters some unhealed crevice where rancor may fester secretly, especially if they have failed to understand the necessity, for their own advantage, of getting rid of it.

Yet the moment one realizes what a perilous indulgence that negative trait is, because of the Natural Law behind it, then the supremely practical value of the advice given by Jesus becomes manifest. To love one's enemies, to return good for evil, far from being as incredibly altruistic and irrational as it sounds, is simply a wise and sober precaution to insure one's own welfare. For the strong to return kind and compas-

sionate thoughts to those who are so weak or ignorant as to cultivate a hatred for them is not difficult; an elephant can afford to regard with tolerant consideration the angry mien of an enraged ant. Moreover, in the end both will be better off.

All Civilization and Progress, the Friends knew, rise on the foundation stones of Truth, Honesty, Good Will and Love. Those qualities call for Collaboration and Coöperation among human beings, the mutual adjustment of activities without which no great constructive effort is possible. "In Unity is Power" is a truism that every page of History has proved from the beginning to the present day. That Unity the Great Teachers taught to Mankind on the broadest conceivable scale—Unity with the Supreme Ruling Power and Its Laws, Unity with one's own Higher Self, Unity with one's fellow beings.

Such a plan of life gave to Humanity all they could ever need to make them strong in Body, clear in Mind and Happy in Soul. It placed in their power the means to remove every obstacle to their unfoldment, to develop into good husbands and wives, intelligent parents, loving children, true friends, broad-minded and progressive citizens who would be a priceless asset to their own community and country in particular, and to the Human Race in general. It enabled Man to control not only his destiny in his earthly career, but to shape the

course he will pursue in the life that will be his next step in his Evolution, to secure for himself the surest, best and most practical results, whose sum will give the trend to an endless sequence of continued existences through which he must go.

If human beings had been left alone to practice Teachings so superlatively direct, simple and complete as these, there can be no question but that the improvements bound to follow at once would have exceeded the most lofty expectations. But this was not to be.

No sooner did the Friends depart, often with the assistance of the Religions they had fought, from this earthly theater of their activities, than the Priests once again stepped into their former station of Intermediaries between Man and the Supreme Ruling Power whom they called God. Busily they mended the broken Walls of Creeds, Dogmas and Rites which the Friends had trampled to ruin; cunningly they built up around the unsuspecting human Mind the same old religious structure which had shut out the light of Truth for many dismal Ages before, as it would for Ages to come. Cleverly they warped the Truths which the Friends had brought and misinterpreted them to lend authority to their own false doctrines. New Gods, perhaps, to inherit the vacant Throne of Heaven; new embellishments to disguise the unchanged purposes of His worship; new forms, new temples, new faces and

new dress. But the system underneath—the Same.

The incalculable harm which man-made Religions have done to simple-minded, trusting people, under the appearance of doing good, can only be suggested by the greatest single losses they have caused—the loss of Man's real Friends. Those Friends of Man were never the Friends of Religions. While they lived, they fought and destroyed Religions, fearlessly exposing them, branding their Priesthood generations of vipers, men who, according to Jesus, would take their place on the Day of Judgment behind publicans and harlots, and who, lacking a comparison among the lowest of the living, must find one in the habitations of the dead—a whitewashed sepulcher, painted on the outside but full of uncleanness within.

Against attacks such as these no ancient Gods, or Creeds, or Rites, or Faith could stand. They perished. But the deadly principle behind them was not destroyed—the principle of human greed for power on which Religion is based. The mere fact that Priests, as History proves, were the implacable enemies of the Friends of Man, in whom they recognized the greatest menace to their hold on human Minds, is sufficient evidence of the irreconcilable difference between Teachings and Blind Faith. The Clergy left no stone unturned to stop the progress of those Teachings, resorting, if possible, even to murder to close the mouths that condemned

them, which in the cases of Krishna and Jesus succeeded.

But in the end, it must be confessed with sorrow, Religion won back its lost ground. The Light of Truth, intended to illumine Men's Minds, was boxed in dead doctrines and made to illumine with its living fire only the painted image of a Priest-made God. And the stroke of perverted genius by which the Priests accomplished their end, borrowing from those very Friends of Man who had wrecked their former false Creeds the greatest authority to support their new ones, deserved to serve a better purpose.

They merely deified the Friends of Man. Those whose sole aim in life had been to further the welfare of their fellow beings, in whom Humanity had learned to place all their trust, all their confidence, all their love, who were, above all, Men among men, were made to appear Gods, the central figures of a new Worship, betraying their followers into the toils of that very religious system from which they had rescued them. The whole value and object of their Teachings was deflected to support the selfish designs of their bitterest foes.

The Great Teachers have never ceased to stand in the eyes of Man as Friends. Confidence in the worth of their efforts wanes as the passing years of religious practice bring no abatement of the evils they endeavored to cure, but an undefinable sense of the friendliness of their motive persists. Faiths decay, hopes subside, old

Gods lapse into disuse. Each succeeding Religion, usually a masterpiece of the craftiness and hypocrisy of the Priests who established it, dims a little more the original simplicity, beauty, truth and practicability of their Teachings.

Yet Man, turning sick and disheartened from the altars which have drunk in the best of all he had to give, and answered nothing, lingers to cast one grateful glance at Those who are still his Friends—whom he has never understood.

CHAPTER VI

DAWN



ET, consciously or unconsciously, human beings have endeavored throughout all times to break away from the Domination of Priests and Religions. God after ancient God, tumbled from his age-old pedestal of Power, marks the steps in that gigantic struggle of the Mind of Man for Enlightenment, for Liberation. But in spite of their efforts to shake off the fetters with which the Clergy had bound them, Mankind could never escape the consequences of their own Ignorance and Fear. One of the saddest and darkest pages in human history is that which presents the spectacle of Man, on the whole a trusting, friendly, optimistic, easily led creature, who depended more on his Blind Faith than on his Reason, casting aside the yoke of a bondage into which he had been betrayed only that he might tamely bend his neck to a new bondage which his old masters were ever ready to impose.

In the Past, Humanity has always looked to its

Priests for guidance along unknown paths. And Priests, quick to take advantage of the confidence reposed in them, did not hesitate to sacrifice Humanity on the altar of their own Selfishness. With their artificial God as a blind, they exacted the heaviest toll they could wring from their too trusting followers, physically, mentally and spiritually. The fact that they allowed Mankind to survive at all was doubtless due, not to any pangs of conscience or belated feelings of compassion on their part, but purely to the business wisdom of preserving the goose that laid the golden eggs. Priests knew only too well that if Humanity perished, their own power and prosperity would perish also, simply for lack of elements on which to prey. So they were always careful to preserve their game, though in such a state of complete submission, such a condition of utter poverty and darkness of Body, Mind and Soul, that their own authority was never threatened until the Great Teachers came to expose them.

But the Day has come now when that age-long tyranny is drawing to an end. Humanity, swept by the cleansing tide of Knowledge which has poured down on them of late, are awakening from the hypnotic spell cast upon them by the Clergy. Modern Youth, buoyant, irresistible, uncontrollable, lifted on the crest of that onrushing Wave, dash from their path the old traditions, the time-worn concepts, which are

too narrow a mold for their eager and growing Minds. Like a mountain torrent, swollen with the melting snows of Spring, which sweeps the collected rubbish out of its way to the sea, so this Torrent of Youth leaps forward in the Springtime of our Human Race, gathering might from energies and activities long frozen in the grip of bleak religious doctrines, but released at last from the Winter's sleep by the warm Sun of Knowledge. Already this Torrent has burst the barriers of beliefs considered impregnable, because consecrated by the Ages, and it promises soon, very soon, to sweep into oblivion also those three greatest obstacles ever to block the Progress and forbid the Happiness of Mankind—the triple Wall of Priesthood, Religions and Rites.

In the light of Modern Science, Mankind are beginning to perceive for the first time that the endless procession of Gods they have worshiped was but ghostly shadows, projected upon the purposely darkened screen of the human Mind. Before the revealing radiance of Knowledge, those shadows fade and vanish, together with the panoply of doctrines which lent an illusion of Life to their splendor and their terror. Yet—what of those Principles taught by the Friends of Man, those Truths distorted and perverted by the Priests into apparent support of their divine hoaxes? Are those Principles also doomed to take flight, to dissolve under

the testing glare of scientific discoveries, when compared with facts uncovered by modern research?

Science has lately opened the eyes of Mankind upon a Universe which transcends anything that the boldest intellect could ever conceive. Boundless in its immensity, without beginning or end in any direction, extending itself throughout Infinity and Eternity, this Universe nevertheless manifests itself in countless agglomerations of celestial bodies, no two of which are alike, all varying in size and aspect, yet each forming a perfect link in the delicately balanced scheme of the whole, having its proper place, its appointed course, its own unique character and destiny. Measurements so colossal that they baffle the power of Mathematics to express them, distances so vast that the human Mind, no matter how hard and deeply it may ponder, can never hope to grasp them, characterize this Universe which has no limits, whose confines could never be reached even if one were to flash through it with the speed of light during Eternity itself. Yet so exact, so nicely synchronized, so minutely ordered are the activities of all its individual members that if an error of seconds is detected in the centuries-long orbit of a comet, it is a debatable point whether the Universe or the Scientist is wrong.

This Universe, expanding itself in every direction, unrolling new vistas ever greater, more varied and more

wonderful than the old, with neither beginning nor end of Time, having always existed as it will always exist, complete, perfect, immutable as a whole, yet constantly changing in its component parts, immovable as a fundamental fact yet moving without a pause in its expressed activities, reveals in its very texture a miraculous wealth of Qualities and Laws which upset the most firmly rooted ideas of former days and spell out marvelous lessons to the groping eye of Science.

First among those Qualities apparent in the physical structure of the Universe is Life. Everything, without exception, is full of Energy, moves, lives. From the largest celestial body, floating in the deeps of Space, to the smallest particles of Matter, there is nothing where motion, unceasing, dynamic, is for a moment absent. Ponderous planets, hurtling on their courses, manifest that motion on the greater scale; electrons, darting about within their atomic walls at a speed beyond our ability to imagine, manifest it on the smaller scale. Nowhere can be discovered a condition where Motion is not, a state of utter Inertia where activity in one form or another is completely suspended. Perpetual Motion, Eternal Life, is the basis of all Existence, the very stuff of that Universal Substance out of which all forms of Matter are erected, throughout Infinity and throughout Eternity.

This Quality of Motion, therefore, permeates even

those things which appear to be motionless, things which are called dead. Scientifically, there is no Death. There is continual change, continual transition from one form of life to another, in that endless cycle of Life, of Motion. But only human Ignorance could admit such a false concept as Death to be applied to those changes in the forms of Life. All is Perpetual Motion, Eternal Life, indestructible, triumphant, of which not one vibration, not one movement, ever can or ever will be lost.

Because of that Life, that irrepressible Energy, new Worlds are forever coming into existence—colossal Nebulæ, the dust of old Worlds which have crumbled away, gathering together in interstellar vacancy, to become the nucleus of future planetary systems. Because of it, all celestial bodies whirl unerringly on their respective orbits throughout Infinite Space; Electrons, the foundation of Matter, dash and spin within the precincts of their atoms, making even so-called inanimate Matter a living, moving Substance; seeds germinate, plants grow, animals exist. Unnumbered Acons ago Life molded the blazing Sun, the Planets, our Earth, the Moon, the Stars, and breathed into them the glow of its palpitating presence. It clothed this globe with an atmosphere of Air, knit gold and iron and treasures yet unknown to Man into its rocky ribs, drenched it with many waters, polished it with winds and, burning

through it as through a prism, emerges in countless shifting and blending forms, which in the end it will dissolve into the Elements from which they came.

Because of that Life, we human beings also live and progress through the mounting Cycles of our Evolution. Quickened by it, the remotest and smallest cells in our body can perform their functions properly, contributing their individual activities to the general activities of the whole and forming that unified Life which is but the aggregate, the totality, of all the billions of separate lives—of organs, of cells, of the myriad electrons which go to form the atoms of those cells—of which it is made. Every form of life, reduced to its original constituents, splits into countless individual units of life; all units of life, incalculable in number, unceasing in activities, taken together, throughout Infinity and Eternity, comprise the Sum of All Lives, the One Eternal and Boundless Life of the Universe from which everything, human beings included, is derived, and of which all things are an integral part.

This Universality and Supremacy of Life is the stupendous fact revealed by Science to Humanity of to-day—the greatest and most far-reaching of discoveries, since it establishes Life as the Fundamental and all-pervading Power of the Universe.

In such a fullness of Life there is no factor of Time. Life is ageless; only Man's concept of Life is subject

to the yardstick of years, months and days. Eternal Life itself has no Past or Future; it is in a condition of perpetual NOW, a state of active Being without beginning, without divisions, without end. That is why, when Health abounds and living is a Joy, a constant Triumph, there is no room for Time. Days flash by unnoticed, because the individual, by identifying himself completely with the original Life from which he sprang, has left no empty margins in his being for calendars to record. To him, dead Past and unborn Future are dissolved in the living Present, the one Vital Moment, embracing all, expressing all, which Life Itself knows. It is a mistake to think that clocks measure Man's Life; they measure only his failure to live.

This is Man's reason for being—to live NOW, as best he can, right HERE on the Earth whose inhabitant he is for the time, the life which has been given to him. It is the one tribute of esteem which Life demands from all of us—that we use It to the uttermost, enjoy It to the fullest, live one hundred per cent of It, put the most we can into It and get the most we can out of It. If we so honor that priceless gift, the magnificent Power of Life Itself, and attune ourselves to the demand It makes upon us, we find that It never fails to come to our aid in meeting the ever more difficult requirements of Progress.

As everything in the Universe is of one Flesh, so to say, with the Universal Life it came from, Nature has made provision for each expressed form of life to maintain its free contact with the original Life Current on which its continued existence depends. The Radio Principle, whose marvels Mankind have just begun to discover and apply mechanically, has been in operation from the time when Primal Energy first clotted together to produce a physical body, whether of a gas, a mineral or any other element or creature. That Principle, being an integral part of Nature, is built into the very structure of every individual member in the entire scale of Being, equipping it with the means to contact, directly or indirectly, through a bodily wireless set, the Life Vibrations outside, which it can draw in and apply to its own particular uses.

Human beings, like all other things in Nature, are furnished with such a wireless set. In them it is called the Human Radio. Its discovery has been so recent that knowledge of its operation is still very incomplete; yet the practical results already obtained by investigators in that field of wireless transmission have opened up a startling prospect. When the present experimental Science of the Human Radio will have developed into a real Science, and when the possibilities, now clearly discerned, of using that apparatus to absorb into the Physical System at will Universal Forces and Powers

which can then be concentrated on the intensive growth and unfoldment of the individual, physically, mentally and spiritually, shall have been realized, Mankind will enter upon an Era of Progress far exceeding the boldest speculations of the most advanced and daring Minds of to-day.

Such Progress is the goal toward which Humanity has been struggling blindly through millions of years of slow and painful endeavor on Earth. Though evolved from Eternal and Universal Life Itself, people have until recently subsisted only on the outer margin of that Power, unaware of Its vitalizing presence, ignorant of Its properties to bring out in them all their wonderful latent Forces and Qualities of Body, Mind and Soul. But Mankind have now already entered upon a career of rapid achievement, made possible by the new knowledge of how to establish complete and permanent Reunion, by conscious use of the Bodily Radio, with the Life Energy of the Universe, which indicates a Future of unbounded Progress—a Future built on the intelligent development and constant employment of the Radio of the Human Body by everyone, to whom that factor in their lives will become a prime necessity more natural, more vital and more indispensable than breathing is to-day.

That Goal—a Life more abundant, more successful, more happy and constructive, right here on Earth

while we live and not in some unknown, remote Future after we die—Science has brought within the reach of present-day Humanity. With every new revelation, Man's gaze is being dragged from those nebulous regions beyond the grave which it has contemplated so long and so unprofitably, to be fixed upon the real, solid benefits obtainable through exploiting the more fertile regions in which he dwells now. A conviction, incredible but persistent, is dawning upon him that he is not likely to find a greater Leader than Science, a Light more radiant than the Knowledge which explains all things and ministers so capably to all human needs, physical, mental and spiritual.

What place, then, will be occupied by Religions, if Man's allegiance is to shift from their "inspired" guidance to the practical and triumphant Leadership of Science, one may ask. No place at all, is the answer. In the Light of Knowledge, all mysteries, superstitions and fears will melt away, perishing together with Blind Faith in the man-made God which they alone support. Just as crumbling temples, ruined altars, broken fragments of dead Faiths preserved in museums and libraries now, commemorate to our enlightened generation bygone periods of unbelievable Darkness and Slavery of the human Mind, so we have every reason to expect that existing Religions will one day, not far distant, suffer the fate of their predecessors,

leaving behind only curious monuments of an Ignorance and Folly from which Mankind have happily emerged.

Science, investigating still further the structure of the Universe, has discovered that besides Omnipresent Life, another Quality equally important is manifested throughout all Nature, wherever the activity of that Life is studied—Intelligence. Movement, in other words, is never haphazard, but proceeds according to a plan most minutely and ingeniously designed. A rudimentary Intelligence guides the tiny electron, spinning on its own axis while it revolves at the same time about a central nucleus, inside the atomic walls. Chemical reactions take place because the elements brought together exercise a choice, selecting from each other the company they will keep and abandoning old relations to enter into new combinations, entirely different from the first. Gases, stones, all minerals come into being and go out again through the same process; everywhere throughout the physical Universe there is a constant trade and exchange taking place, a shrewd bargaining which clearly proceeds from an Intelligent Source.

The latest researches in Plant Life have yielded the most amazing discoveries in that field of Knowledge. Plants have been found to possess not only an unconscious intelligence, but even reasoning powers which enable them to solve successfully problems of growth of a totally unusual and unexpected kind. The aggre-

gate rudimentary intelligences of all the electrons comprising them are clearly organized into a centralized and governing individual intelligence, which endows them with the faculty of taking up those various problems in a logical, systematic order and, in most cases, arriving at a satisfactory solution.

Plants, for example, temper their activities to the elements with a shrewdness and foresight that human beings, in spite of their scientific aids, can scarcely equal. They anticipate the approach of a dry season by directing their energies mainly into their roots, burrowing deep into the soil in order to insure for themselves a plentiful supply of moisture against the coming drought. When a rainy season impends, however, they send their forces into the leaves and branches, stimulating their outward growth as much as possible.

Similarly, in meeting the different conditions imposed by the changing Seasons of the year, the plant displays an intelligence no less remarkable. Not only does it vary its activities according to the changes in its environment, but it utilizes to the utmost every factor which will enable it to counteract hostile forces most effectively. Warned by the keener breath of Autumn that Winter is approaching, it withdraws its energies from the exposed trunk and branches, and stores all its vitality in its roots. It drops its leaves, useless now on the slumbering boughs, and makes them serve as an

added protection for its roots against the cold of Winter, after which they will still help to sustain the life which produced them by fertilizing the ground in which those roots are embedded. It covers its buds with a heavy sheath that no wintry blast can penetrate, and tightens its own bark to make it cold-proof. No details are slighted, no precautions are overlooked by the plant. So wisely and thoroughly does it use its intelligence in making its preparations that it usually is able to ward off the attacks of the bitterest Winter most successfully.

Clever as it is in marshaling its resources for defense against unfriendly conditions, the plant is just as alert to make the most of all the opportunities presented to it in the Spring. No sooner does the grip of the frost loosen than the energies so long pent securely in its roots are roused and put to work, probing cautiously into the wet soil, creeping up under the bark, swelling the buds until they burst through their protective coating and come out to do their part in sustaining the life of the plant.

Such intelligently directed activities are merely the routine tasks of the plant; but instances are observable everywhere in which extraordinary emergencies have been met in an extraordinary way. The writer once saw in the mountains a fir tree, perched on the top of a huge, smooth granite boulder, flourishing richly though it had no visible means of support. Closer examination

showed that the tree, confronted in the dawn of its existence with the problem of subsisting on a rock which was as bare of nourishment as the outside of an egg, had arrived at a solution as direct and simple as it was ingenious. Since food would not come to it, it had gone to the food, sending out an exploring root which had finally reached a fertile patch of ground some fifty feet below and split into a matted network of smaller roots suitable for absorbing the needed elements from the soil. Though comparatively undersized in its upper growth, the tree had developed formidable roots, and had solved its seemingly impossible problem of survival in a way that showed a remarkable degree of intelligence.

Trees that think, flowers that reason, vegetables that possess a mind of their own—these are the astonishing facts that Science is revealing to us human beings who, in our conceit and pride, believed ourself to be the only thinking creatures in the World.

As for the intelligence manifested in the Animal Kingdom, particularly among some of the Insects, such as Ants and Bees, it is of an order that has even yet not been paralleled by Man in certain respects. Millions of years ago, when human beings still dwelt in caves and trees, in individual families only, Ants and Bees had developed a most complex and orderly community life, an advanced civilization characterized by

cities built according to scientific principles, on most skillful architectural lines, and ruled by an extraordinary form of autonomic self-government, a sort of constitutional monarchy presided over by a queen. Each ant hill and beehive is a model town of its own, an independent nation in which specialized activity has been brought to a logical and perfect climax.

In those cities are workmen whose province is to build and to take care of the needs of their community, nurses to rear and educate the youngsters, soldiers to protect them all and argue their quarrels with neighboring settlements, a queen whose duty is to repopulate as well as govern her territory. What humanly constructed cities represent on a large scale, the cities of insects present more elaborately on a small scale. Warehouses to store food, dormitories to provide living quarters, nurseries for the children and a special royal suite for Her Majesty, equip hive and hill to fulfill all the requirements of a modern community.

Moreover, in the conduct of their government, these insects surpass all that their human imitators have ever been able to accomplish. There is no unemployment, no politics, no leisure class and no idle mischief. Everybody works and works gladly, for the common good of all. All know their duties and perform those duties conscientiously, with one hundred per cent efficiency. The whole of their activities are based on

Coöperation and Collaboration. The wealth of the community is not drained away in support of non-workers, criminals, weaklings, lunatics. There are none; they are not tolerated. The system is unsentimental but effective. Its result is a happy, industrious, constructive and prosperous association of individuals, in which all is productive industry and nothing is waste. How many human governments of to-day can boast the same?

The art of War, with all its ramifications, was practiced by Ants long before Mankind discovered equally efficient methods of destroying each other. Well-disciplined armies, operating on a plan of the most intelligent military strategy, launched brilliant campaigns against each other, employing scouts, ambulance corps, foraging parties, etc., just as they are to be found in modern armies among human beings now. While Men of countless Ages ago had not progressed beyond the very rudiments of warfare, in which armies were undisciplined family mobs and strategy was merely to hack at the nearest foe, with short shrift for the wounded, these insects were using tactics which the greatest geniuses of the sword and gun have not been able to improve upon fundamentally. The logical conclusion is that Man learned the principles of organized warfare from these humble creatures who first developed them.

In the comparatively new science of Eugenics, the

art of systematic and scientific breeding, Ants and Bees still far surpass the utmost that human beings are able to accomplish. They are actually able to mold Nature to their special needs, to such an extent that they can produce from an ordinary larva, by suitable modifications of diet and surroundings, exactly the sort of a mature individual they want, totally different in character and appearance from the others. If ants are short of workers, they produce workers; if they lack fighters, they shape the material on hand into soldiers, adapted in physique and armament for that profession. Even a queen, whose entire nature, physiological activities and functions in life are totally distinct and unique among all the members of the colony, is produced from the larvæ of ordinary working bees or ants by a special method of handling and feeding under the care of those charged with that work.

Certainly such miracles of breeding are far beyond anything that human beings have been able to achieve in the field of Eugenics, even with animals, to say nothing of their own kind.

As for the intelligence manifested among the higher animals, there is no need to dwell on it at any length. Experiments and investigations proving the extraordinary reasoning powers of Rats, Migratory Birds, Seals, Horses, Monkeys, Elephants and Dogs are common property, and have long ago washed out of people's

Minds on a flood of incontrovertible evidence the quaint conceit of a human monopoly on Rational Thought.

Yet at the top of the evolutionary scale stands Man, in whose elaborate thinking machinery the Intelligence manifested throughout all Nature converges toward its most brilliant expression. The human brain is the most wonderful and complicated apparatus imaginable—a central switchboard through which the Mind controls every faculty, every characteristic, every activity, conscious or unconscious, of the individual. Motor impulses, sorted and re-sorted with a swiftness inconceivable, make possible every blending shade of motion; delicate currents, flashing and flickering through the maze of nerve wires, knit the speeding fabric of our thoughts; contacts made and broken dash their stinging charge into our shifting play of emotions. Every center of the Body, continually gathering in its impressions from outside, sends its message to the brain, receives almost instantly the command as to how it shall react, reports its movements back to headquarters, and continues that endless cycle during every moment of the individual's life. Those activities of the Mind, working through the material instrument of brain and nerves, can according to their nature and the soundness of that instrument help or block the expression of the Ego or Soul of the individual.

Each of the billions of individual cells in the various members comprising the human Body possesses a separate intelligence of its own, organized under the centralized authority of the unit to which it belongs. Just as the army private is directly responsible to the corporal of his squad, so the intelligence of the electron is directed by the guiding intelligence of the atom, while the ultimate control converges through cell, group and organ to the ruling Mind, operating through the brain. There the command is given which sets uncounted millions of workers about their respective tasks and receives constant reports of their progress, adjusting their activities one to another and telling all what to do next.

But woe to the brain which fails to coördinate those activities properly, the Mind which sends wrong instructions to its willing army. The success or failure of the individual, his health or weakness, mental, physical and emotional, is the product of those reactions between the two. Revolutions occur if the leadership is ineffective; the subordinates go on strike; the strike of cells arrests the functioning of centers, paralyzes the organs and, carried to its logical extreme, causes the cessation of all work for a common purpose in the system—a condition known to us as Death. A well-trained, active, balanced human Mind, ably seconded by an efficient instrument to work through, is essential to

maintain perfect control over the billions of aggregated tiny minds which make up that Body whose natural and rightful ruler it is.

Just as the aggregated minds of the electrons form the collective mind of the cells, so the aggregated minds of cells, organs, etc., form the collective mind of the Body, called the human Mind. All human Minds, taken together, in their turn represent the collective Mind of Humanity itself.

Similarly, the aggregated minds of all things throughout the whole Infinite and Eternal Universe, of the smallest and of the greatest, of Electrons, Atoms, Creatures, Planets and Worlds, all lumped together, represent the One Infinite, Eternal and Supreme Intelligence—the Sum of all Intelligences, which possesses within Itself all Knowledge, all Mental Powers, all that ever has glowed or ever will glow into active expression on the filaments of individual intellects, and which is indeed Omniscient.

Our human Minds are a part of that Supreme Intelligence. They partake of all Its qualities, share Its nature, just as the drop of water scooped up from the sea partakes of all the qualities of the Ocean from which it came. Naturally, therefore, the human Mind can vibrate in tune with the Universal Mind of which it is the product, can blend itself in with that vast Ocean of Knowledge and gather behind its puny individuality

the resistless Might of an Intelligence which admits no bounds. Physically, Man is limited; mentally, he limits himself. But he has at his disposal all Knowledge, all mental powers, without any restrictions whatsoever, to draw upon at will, once he has learned how to do it.

Many have unconsciously succeeded in tapping that Mental Reserve. Every contribution which has expanded the limits of human Knowledge, added something previously unknown to the slender stock of human Experience, was derived from that inexhaustible Source. The amazing achievements of the Scientist, the Chemist, the Biologist, the Engineer, the Electrician, the Architect, the Physiologist, the Psychologist and others are the results of their discovery of some of the various Laws which are governing everything in the Universe. Through the eyes of Science, Mankind are beginning to perceive that they are caught in a mesh of inescapable Laws, impartial, unvarying, whose proper use insures Success just as certainly as their abuse, whether through Ingorance or deliberate Intent, brings inevitable failure.

Blind Faith has no place in this exact Scheme. Once a Scientist discovers a Law of Nature, he knows absolutely that it will work, no matter whether he chooses to believe in it or not. There is no doubt, no question. His personal feelings, his mental attitude, are incapable of influencing it. He can pray his head off and it will

work just the same. So instead of railing against it, he gets busy to see how he can take advantage of it in a legitimate way and exploit it for his own profit. Consequently, we have the Law of Gravity, for example, contradicting what was once supposed to be its own nature by supporting huge masses of metal, wood and cloth in the empty air.

Enlightened Faith, based on absolute Knowledge of the operation of Universal Laws, is the Torch borne by Science into the dark places of the human Mind. Man finds that it is his job to understand and adapt himself to the Universe, rather than to expect the Universe to adapt Itself to him. The appalling Truth is brought home to him that he will not only have to do the right thing, but exercise his own intelligence to find out how to do it, if he wants to get anywhere at all in this World. Virtue, instead of being an accomplishment to be proud of, a concession made to God at the cost of rigid self-discipline and denial, drops its halo and sticks out as a very practical necessity, once it is seen to be simply a sensible conformity to Laws of Nature which will exact a corresponding penalty for every violation.

Those Laws of the Universe are not limited by Time or Space. They function To-day precisely as they functioned an Eternity ago, and as they will function an Eternity hence. Immutable, Universal, Eternal,

they operate here on Earth, just as they operate in the remotest fastnesses, so to say, of Infinity, never ceasing, never hastening, never faltering. Suns blaze and grow cold in the Heavens, Worlds form out of star dust and crumble away, life throbs and vanishes on the surging planets, but those Laws go on forever.

For that reason, everything in this Universe is kept in a perfect order. No change in its structure or its conditions can take place at one spot without a compensating adjustment occurring at another. This holds true throughout the entire hierarchy of Nature, from the greatest divisions down to the smallest. No detail is too insignificant to escape the attention of those Laws, no problem too great for them to handle.

Violations or transgressions of those Laws of the Universe measure out their own consequences. Every Law is invincibly constructive. To go against it is merely to engage its force correspondingly in opposition to the destructive tendency. The harder one hurls himself at a brick wall, the more convincingly, as it were, he is stopped, and the larger the bump he acquires. The more vigorous the violation of a Law is, the more destructive is the reaction—a response as automatic as it is inevitable, in exact proportion to the cause which produced it.

To be in tune with such Laws, therefore, means to live, to succeed. To transgress them, either through

Ignorance or through conscious violation of them, is by just so much to die, to fail. A Planet or a World which errs even a little from its appointed course incurs a bitter penalty for its infraction of the Law of Gravity. It has destroyed the delicate balance of the Universe; it reaps the punishment of destruction. An individual, although he be a man, obtains no better consideration.

Evil is not a self-existent power. It is but the by-product of Man's violations of the Laws of Nature in the course of his Evolution. Those mistakes were due in the Past to Ignorance—an Ignorance which also prompted Man to believe that he could escape the consequences of them. Religions sprang up to exploit this lack of understanding of the workings of Universal Laws. But when Humanity will perceive, as they have begun to do, that they alone are the source of their own Evil, and will realize that escape from it lies only in conforming to Laws of Nature which they have perhaps unwittingly violated, and which mark out the only way to a happy, successful and constructive life, Evil will gradually be eliminated. Destructive consequences will diminish as Knowledge teaches Man how to avoid producing destructive causes, and will disappear entirely when there is no further reason for them to be.

In this way only will Evil perish from the Earth. Man is the cause of it; Man is equipped with the mental machinery to get rid of it. He can do so by applying

the faculties he has to the task, but not by wasting his time and efforts in futile supplications to a Priest-made Deity to do the job for him. Until he has learned that lesson, Evil will remain as a dominant power on this planet.

Contrary to the character imputed by Religions to their Gods, the Laws of Nature are not of a forgiving disposition, at least in the sense generally attached to that word. For every infringement, whether committed deliberately or unconsciously, they exact their due meed of retribution. Democracy, before them, ideally fulfills its definition, for they are no respecters of persons. Impersonal, just, incorruptible, they set a standard to which all must conform, or suffer consequences in proportion to the degree of their failure to do so.

But the patience of those Laws is beyond the power of words to exaggerate. However often an offender may have erred, he can always be absolutely certain of their unstinted help and support when he acts in harmony with them. Forgiving without end, in the respect that they never hold resentment, they are eternally ready to throw all their weight in favor of any constructive endeavor, though never omitting to impose the merited penalty for violations. To them, "the vilest sinner may return," and not in vain. They are, indeed, Ideal Patience Itself.

Being utterly impartial, Laws of Nature cannot be made to operate in the interest of one at the expense of another. Their trend is invincibly constructive. Used constructively, they benefit all. But if an attempt is made to use them destructively, they react destructively on all. There is no way to avoid this backlash; Man's only solution is to be sure that the backlash will carry a caress instead of a sting.

Such are the facts which these Laws present to those who have examined and tested their workings. They do not have to be accepted on faith; they can be found in almost any textbook of Science, watched in operation in any laboratory. Their full significance may not have been appreciated before, but it is plainly there. How different is the Universal Scheme they map out, how completely at variance with the old, generally accepted belief that prayers, offerings or intercession of some kind could avail to alter the workings of Laws which cannot change!

Man's life has been wasted for countless centuries because of his conviction that a Supernatural Power exists, on which he can in some way prevail to cancel the operation of Forces and Laws of Nature. Only when he will have learned that no such possibility exists, that there is no such thing as a Supernatural Power which can disrupt the relentless workings of Nature, will he stop depending on a mysterious man-

made God for support and guidance which it is his problem to find within himself.

The hardest lesson for Humanity to learn is that no manner of pleading, bribery or petitioning can ever remove the effects of Laws of Nature. It is utterly impossible to influence them in the slightest degree, either by human persuasion or by so-called divine intervention. But as soon as Mankind will learn that Lesson, will recognize the fact that no Supernatural Power can exist, since all Powers, the Supreme Power included, are a part of Nature or the Universe Itself, they will set about developing those highest and finest traits of the human character which alone make possible Man's enfoldment during his life on Earth, Self-Dignity and Self-Reliance.

There has never been and will never be a miracle on this Earth, in the commonly accepted meaning of that word. That is, no individual has ever been able, by the help of a Supernatural Power, to arrest or divert the operation of a Natural Law. Many have used their superior knowledge of Laws of Nature to produce remarkable results, in a way that less informed people could not understand. This, to the latter, was a miracle. But it was a miracle only to their ignorance and superstition. As knowledge of Natural Laws increases, the miracles of previous times become ordinary occurrences.

Every particular Law of the Universe has its own

specific field of action. For instance, the Laws which govern chemical reactions, those which work through electrical phenomena, others which determine atmospheric conditions, are all different. So are all other Laws; yet all, like the many different branches of a tree, are united in the common stem from which they spring, grow forth from the same main trunk. The infinity of separate Laws can be traced to their Source in the One Law, the Great Law of the Universe, from which every one emerged and which governs through them in myriad detail the eternal activities of the Universe Itself.

No problem is too big for that Law to bring to a successful solution, no problem is small enough for It to overlook. It guides the movements of countless celestial bodies as they surge on their gigantic evolutions throughout Infinity and Eternity; It sweeps over the face of the Earth in the stately procession of the Seasons; It breathes through the slowly heaving Tides and beats in the drifting grains of sand. In obedience to It the drop of water rises as vapor from the ocean to the clouds, is drawn to the mountain tops, sinks as snow and, melting, runs down the valley slopes again to the sea, ending where it began a journey estimated to last three thousand years, yet never for a moment lost from under the absolute control of that Law. Electrons flash on their ceaseless rounds with

the atom at Its compulsion; It is behind all the so-called material phenomena; It rules every action, conscious or unconscious, during every moment of our human life.

There is no possible escape from that Law. By day and night, tireless, constant, It operates throughout every aspect of Creation, setting the Standard to which all things must conform or perish. To act in accord with It means a healthy, constructive, successful and happy life; to act in opposition to It, whether through Ignorance or through conscious intent, means a corresponding degree of destructive results. It functions on every Plane of our being, as absolute in Soul and Mind as in Body; It is Supreme, All-Inclusive, Universal.

Only when Humanity will recognize the plain fact that there is no Power superior to that Law, no Force able to arrest or divert Its operation, will they enter upon the career of rapid development possible to them. Once they learn to apply It in all their daily problems, physical, mental and spiritual, and, by adjusting their activities to Its demands, arrive at practical solutions which idle praying could never bring, the limitations which are at the bottom of most troubles will be overcome. Wars will cease; Social Barriers and Castes will crumble away; Sickness of Flesh, Mind or Spirit will find no lodgment; Wealth will seek a more equal distribution as people achieve a more equal development of qualities. Conditions of life on Earth will change completely, a

new and truer perception of values will emerge, and Mankind as a whole will live a healthier, more progressive, more constructive and consequently far more interesting and happy life, as well as a much longer one also.

As Humanity adapts itself gradually to that Great Law, priceless lessons will take shape in the great Social, Political, Ethical and Industrial Reforms which such a process will bring about. Foremost among them will be one which is already bred into the very being of lower forms of Life in the scale of Evolution—that in Unity is the greatest Power. Man will perceive that the strength of the individual alone is a futile weapon but becomes a tool to be reckoned with when it can multiply itself by the strength of many. Different spheres of activity will no longer tend to a confusion of their relative values; the vital necessity of a whole-hearted Coöperation and Collaboration, for the greater Advantage of all, will be appreciated by everyone.

But Coöperation and Collaboration are based on something deeper than mere Reason. Those who are to work together, while they may be drawn by a common interest, can combine their efforts only if they are united in their natures also by the bonds of mutual attraction. They must actually feel friendly one to another in order to mesh the gears of their individual activities and progress toward their goal.

Attraction is to be found everywhere in Nature. It is both a Power and a Law. As a Power, It holds together the whole structure of the Universe, which would instantly collapse if that Influence were withdrawn. Because of It, individual vibrations of Energy are concentrated to form electrons, electrons are grouped into atoms, atoms into molecules, molecules into cells and cells into various bodies. The Earth itself, with all on it, is glued together by the Power of Attraction, working through its component elements.

Gases, rocks, plants, animals, all things on the surface of the Earth, remain there only because the Power of Attraction prevents them from being hurled into Space by the rotation of this globe on its axis. The Earth itself is held suspended in Space, where it swings on its endless course around the Sun, by the same all-pervading Force. The stars, the planets, the streaming multitudes of celestial bodies which throng the boundless deeps of Heaven, keep their distances one from another and find their respective orbits without colliding, by means of the mutual Attraction they exercise on each other. Attraction, working through the greatest as well as the smallest fractions of the Universal Scheme, determines their exact relations and sustains that whole admirable Structure in a condition of perfect order and harmony, a state of equilibrium

which would subside in the chaos of complete destruction if that Power were for a moment removed.

The Law of Attraction is most widely known to Man in Its aspect of the Law of Gravity, whose discovery marked the beginning of a period of the greatest progress Humanity has experienced. It literally opened a door upon the Universe to the inquiring human Mind, long cramped under the ponderous dome of a Sky peopled only with fearful Superstitions. The Great Law of Attraction, exercised throughout Infinity and Eternity, reveals Itself as the subtle yet all-powerful bond which links the countless Worlds, welding all separate members of Creation in One Endless Chain of which human beings also are an integral part.

The Law of Attraction is thus found to be the Basis of Eternal Harmony. But the quality whereby It produces that astronomical accord referred to as "the Music of the Spheres" does not lose strength with Its applications in lesser details. The most ordinary of daily human activities cannot take place without the Law of Attraction entering into the equation. Like Life Itself, It is a Fundamental out of which all things grow.

The Architect, measuring stresses and strains, can build only in conformity with the Law of Attraction. The Engineer constructs bridges, makes roads, bores tunnels by knowing and using that Law. It underlies

all the work of the Physicist, who could do nothing constructive without It, and makes possible in the laboratory the various chemical reactions on which the Science of Chemistry is based. The Electrician must understand how the Law of Attraction operates in his province in order to construct his electrical devices; the Radio Operator employs It to attract the vibratory wave he wishes to contact by "tuning in" on that wave. It keeps the automobile on the road, permits the springs to absorb the knocks, enables water to flow, steam to rise, feet to walk, machinery to run, every kind of power for individual needs to function.

The Stenographer, when typing, can fix words on paper only because the Law of Attraction holds together on the inked ribbon of her machine the little particles of coloring matter and enables them to cling to the new surface against which they are struck. The machine and the fibers which comprise the paper itself stick together by virtue of the Law of Attraction working through them. The Baker bakes his bread, the Housewife cooks her meals by Its help. It is present in the hats, clothes and shoes we wear, in the tools we use, in the food we eat. When we sit in a chair, we intrust our safety, comfort and dignity to the Law of Attraction, which gives stability to the arrangement of sticks and upholstery beneath us and gives us the necessary "weight" to sink into it. The street car uses the Law

of Attraction to pull it along the rails; the elevator employs It to lift one to offices hundreds of feet above ground.

Every implement of Civilization measures its usefulness by the yardstick of that Law. Steel is more resistant to outside forces than iron because Attraction makes its constituent parts cohere more firmly. Concrete makes a better road than sand or gravel for the same reason. The wearing qualities of bank notes depend entirely on the Law of Attraction, which is responsible also for the protection afforded your valuables by the complicated safe in the bank. The floor under your feet, the walls around you, the roof over your head, stand only while the Law of Attraction functions through them. It enables the Shipbuilder to build his ships, enables the ships to float, enables the propeller to drive them through the water or the wind to blow them along. It makes the nail or rivet hold, the automobile run, the airplane fly.

Unless that Law operated ceaselessly throughout all things in Nature, the Farmer could never supply us with food. There would be no crops, because the seeds would not be able to attract from the surrounding earth the elements they need in order to grow. Sap would not rise and circulate in the trees; orchards would produce no fruit. The intricate chemical processes by which the cow transforms the grass of the field into milk

would not take place. Concentration of the particles in milk which form cream, and which are further condensed into butter and cheese, would be impossible. Eggs would be nothing more than a legend or myth without the Law of Attraction to put them together inside the hen and wrap the soft yolk in a hard shell for safe delivery to the frying pan.

Life itself flourishes only because the Law of Attraction makes it possible for the seed to germinate and the plant to grow, for animals and human beings to come into existence and prosper. It is, indeed, the most wonderful, far-reaching Power and Law we know—a Power, a Law underlying everything, pervading everything, governing everything, sustaining everything and containing everything. In other words, It is a Power which identifies Itself completely with everything in existence and, like the water whose solid aspect is ice, permeates all that has crystallized out of It to form the Physical Plane.

But Attraction is not restricted to the Physical Plane alone. It operates just as strongly through the Mental and Spiritual sides of Nature also. No constructive mental activity, whether of an electron, a chemical, a cell, a plant, an insect, an animal or a human being, can take place independently of the Law of Attraction. It is the basis of all harmonious activities on each of the three Planes—the Physical, the Mental and the Spiritual.

The vastly improved conditions of Life in general to-day are due exclusively to the constructive, progressive thinking of modern Scientists. These pioneers, actuated by a sincere desire to better existing conditions, never wholly satisfied with what has been done, seeing, beyond the results obtained, new vistas of Achievement to which Eternity Itself puts no end, open to Humanity the possibility to grow and develop in accordance with the Law of Evolution, of Eternal Progress, which is itself based on the Law of Attraction. To-Day better than Yesterday, To-Morrow better than To-Day, and so on forever, is the Urge which has survived even the most stagnant period of Mankind's history in some adventurous minds and hearts.

The present Restlessness of the whole of Humanity, especially of the Younger Generation, indicates that this happy infection has spread and is pricking the bulk of Mankind out of a lethargy which has endured for centuries. Roused by the wonders that have been accomplished, people are awakening to that inner Call, that Urge to Progress, to step from the dull security of the Known into thrilling fastnesses of the Unknown. Nothing can stop that Restlessness. Having once tasted the fruit of distant fields, the Peace of other days is gone. A new appetite has been created, a hunger for things which Man feels within the scope of his freshly discovered inner Forces and Powers. Thus

the Law of Attraction works to Its fulfillment through the medium of human Minds.

Yet there is another aspect, quite distinct from Body or Mind, through which the Universal Power of Attraction flushes into Its most glorious expression—Love. Everything and everybody are subject to the irresistible influence of Love. It brings out the best and finest in Nature, asserts the fundamentally perfect qualities buried in every form of Being. All activities, all efforts, reach that culminant point where they blend in absolute Harmony through the power of Love.

Love makes the trees and plants blossom and lingers in the fragrance they loose upon the winds. Love stains the petals of the flowers, glows in the fresh green of new leaves, dresses the members of the vegetable kingdom in their most gorgeous attire. In the same manner, Love sweeps through the Animal Kingdom also. During the mating season all the myriad varieties of animal life flaunt their richest gifts in order to attract their prospective partners. Some spiders, for instance, use music to speak their charms, playing on cobwebs as on a harp. Others try to win favor by dancing.

Moths, butterflies and most of the winged insects employ up-to-date methods in their courting, making "dates" by means of wireless messages which they transmit and receive through their feelers, keeping their appointments with commendable accuracy and

promptness and seeking to impress the object of their love by the odor of strong perfumes which they are able to concentrate—devices not wholly unfamiliar to the human species, though seldom as skillfully executed. Even reptiles resort to this provision of Nature; an alligator conveys its message of Love through the scent of musk quite as effectively as if it had a vocabulary at its disposal.

The most beautiful and varied expressions of Love, however, are to be found among the birds. Some make their bid for consideration by building beautiful nests; others lay out around their dwellings artistic gardens formed of shells, glittering pebbles and even flowers. Many, like the nightingale, whose liquid notes charm human ears quite as effectively as their own, pour forth the story of their desire in song. Birds in the tropics generally make their appeal to the eye rather than to the ear, and don brilliant wedding gowns for the anticipated occasion. The male in particular displays the most gorgeous hues, hoping doubtless to strike the female bird dumb by his splendor and awe her into loving submission. In such instances the emotion of Love works so strongly physiologically that it is able actually to change the pigmentation and the appearance of the feathers of the male bird, which in ordinary life is usually of an unassuming aspect, not greatly different from the female in coloring. Only when the

impulse of Love burns through from within does he become a most superb-looking creature.

It is a well-known fact that the higher animals, and especially human beings, are at their best when the emotion of Love floods at full tide through their being. At its prompting, they often soar to startling heights of courage and unselfishness which would otherwise be totally beyond their power or desire to reach. The self-sacrificing loyalty of dogs, horses and other domesticated animals, which have often gladly flung away their lives for the sake of a loved master, is too familiar for comment. The same magnificent spirit has frequently been noted among the wild life of the forests and plains, in lions, leopards, bears, deer, the fiercest and the mildest, fearlessly ready to abandon their own safety in order to protect a mate in peril.

The extremes of sacrifice to which human beings can go in the service of Love form the framework of History and Story alike. The joyous willingness to give everything, even life itself, for that cause is much more common throughout Mankind than is usually supposed. An individual who really loves, whether it be one of the same or of the opposite sex, is ready to yield not only his greatest earthly treasure, Life, but even that more precious treasure, his Soul, for the sake of the beloved.

Yet this Love, which brings out the strongest, finest,

highest and noblest traits of human character, which surges through the emotions of animals as through Man, which burns through the foliage and quivers in the very fiber of the Earth, is but that same Power of Attraction which underlies, governs and sustains everything in Nature, Electrons as well as Worlds, keeping all in a condition of perfect Harmony. No matter how many or how varied may be the aspects under which that Attraction manifests itself, no matter in how many different ways it works through countless individual channels, it is fundamentally One Individual Power, One Basic Force—the most stupendous, all-pervading Power of the Universe.

The only logical conclusion to be drawn from this is that the more all things in Nature, human beings included, permit Love in its numberless aspects to be the guiding factor in all their activities, physical, mental and emotional, the more they will identify themselves with that Universal Law of Attraction. They will experience in their own lives an increasing measure of the Eternal Harmony, Equilibrium and consequently Power which are the products of that Law, becoming more normal, more healthy, more energetic, more successful, more optimistic, more joyful, more spiritual, more beautiful in features and in character, happier and infinitely more unselfish all the time.

The ugliness in human existence, of every kind, is but the disharmony of human relations with the Law of Attraction emerging into expression. When Man, with his superior intelligence, will have learned to attune himself consciously to that Law to the extent that lower forms of Life unconsciously attune themselves to It, when he will respond to It as promptly and unreservedly as does a chemical or a current, then, and then only, will the discordant elements be wiped out, making possible on Earth the ideal Brotherhood of Man, which is but a part of the Brotherhood of all Nature.

Just as all the myriad rays of the Sun, if gathered together, would represent the Sun, so all the individual loves throughout the endless Universe, the love of the electron, the love of the cell, the love of the plant, the animal, the human being, loves primitive and loves sublime, loves great and loves small, collected in One, represent their Source, the One Great Love, the Power of Attraction of the Universe Itself. This Love, the Sum of All Loves throughout Infinity and Eternity, is consequently a Power as real, as substantial, as any of Its various manifestations, but incalculably greater than all—a Power which has no equal, and by whose strength all other powers exist.

Obviously, therefore, every individual human love has the support and backing of the Great Universal

Love from which it springs. But the extent to which that Original Power of Love can express Itself through the different channels depends on the capacity of those channels to transmit It. The more one exercises love in his life, the greater will become his ability to do so. Love, in its Universal Aspect, will penetrate in an ever increasing flow, influencing the physical, mental and emotional sides of the nature through which It works, until they attain a concord in keeping with It, making the individual stronger, finer and happier all the time.

The Brotherhood of Nature, an Eternal Existing Fact, is based on this Community of all the various loves through which that One Original Love asserts Itself. Numberless individual loves, springing from the same Source and manifesting through their respective channels the same Fundamental Quality, coöperate and collaborate in their mutual reactions, converging on a Common Goal, the Harmony and Perfection of everything. All work together for the good of one in that Great Task; each, acting its own part in the separate sphere assigned to it, thereby works also for the good of all.

A more scientific, practical and ideal Fellowship than this Fellowship of Nature could not be conceived. The only discordant notes which mar its realization among Mankind are struck by human beings themselves, who in their ignorance prefer to let their thinking be

done for them rather than go to the trouble of thinking for themselves. False concepts, which for centuries have arrested the Expansion and Progress of Humanity, were able to survive only as long as people failed to exercise their own intelligence, and perished the moment a breath of real knowledge was allowed to invade the mental vacuum in which alone they could exist.

This mental vacuum Religion called Blind Faith, commending it as a virtue indispensable for spiritual improvement. But Blind Faith, stripped of its glamour, becomes merely the sentimental term for Absence of Intelligence—Man's excuse to himself for his own mental laziness, his tendency to take for granted at their face value statements which he is too indolent to pass under the analytical inspection of his own Reason.

Though Brotherhood is a condition already existent in the very fabric of Man's being, it can never be actually achieved through Blind Faith, or Belief unsupported by Knowledge. Based on a Law, an Eternal, Immutable Law, which nothing and nobody can alter in the slightest degree, it will emerge as an Expressed Fact in human relations only in proportion as people adapt themselves consciously and intelligently to that Law. Merely to believe in Love will not make an individual loving, any more than to believe in Electricity, without knowing how to handle it, will make one able to harness and use it in daily activities. Love, like every Force

of Nature, must be understood in order to be made useful.

Self-Interest is the mainspring of human behavior. Only when all people will perceive and realize that it is to their own greatest Advantage, from every point of view, to make Love the Dominant Power in their lives, the ruling factor in all their transactions and contacts with others, will that Universal Law of Attraction, or Love, come into Its own on Earth. The old idea of Love as a charity offered in the name of God will be exploded. Mankind will find Love a tool to their hands instead of an insurance premium against the Hereafter, and will discover that Self-Interest is after all the one reliable guide, provided by Nature Itself, to help them develop Unselfishness in its fullest measure.

Teachings founded on Blind Faith have never been able to show Man any tangible reason why he should use love in his life or how. They taught him to admire Love as a Quality of God, to prostrate himself before It as an Ideal, to talk about It, but not to make It a genuine part of his life. The Law of Attraction, or Love, must first be understood in order to be used advantageously. Then only will Man understand also the great wisdom, the scientific meaning, the true practical value to him of that great advice, "Do unto others as you would like others to do unto you."

It is to this Goal, the Great Brotherhood of Man,

that Science, with its Torch of Knowledge flaming ever more brightly as laboratory and test tube wrest new discoveries from the Unknown, is now safely leading bewildered and misdirected Humanity.

An analysis of the Substance of this Universe, therefore, reveals Four Fundamental Powers ever present and ever manifest as the Basis of Its being—Motion, Intelligence, Law and Attraction. So intimately related are these Four that one cannot function apart from the rest. Where there is Motion, in that Motion must invariably be found an Intelligent Order, sustained by a corresponding degree of Attraction. They may not appear to be present in equal proportions, at least to our fallible human perceptions; one may seem to be dominant in a certain instance, whereas another is supreme in a different case; but wherever one is, the rest are sure to be.

These Four conjoint Powers, from the combination of whose activities everything in existence is derived, are thus the Four Corner Stones, so to say, of the Universe Itself. They are the Four Elements on which the entire Universal Structure rests; yet, as the four fingers point to their common source, the hand, so these Four distinct and individual Powers point to One Original Power, the Supreme Ruling Power of the Universe, of which they are but the Four Main Aspects. That Power, the Origin and the Ultimate of everything, is called Universal Life Energy.

Self-existent, without Beginning and without End, including in Itself all Infinity of Space and Eternity of Time, creating everything, constituting everything, governing, sustaining, pervading and containing everything, that from which all things come into existence and to which all things return, the Source of all Powers, all Forces, all Laws, yet at the same time the fulfillment of them also, their expression in accomplished results, Immovable in the midst of Eternal Motion, Immutable in the midst of Unceasing Change, the Foundation of Matter, the Substance of Mind, the Essence of Spirit, the Life of the Universe, Its Creating Intelligence, Its Great Law from which all the specific Laws emerge, Its Universal Power of Attraction, binding all into a coherent Whole—this is Universal Life Energy, the Supreme Ruling Power of the Universe.

Ever present in Its full Power everywhere, because It is the Sum of All Activities, All Motion; containing All Knowledge, Omniscient, because it is the Sum of All Intelligences; Omnipotent, because It is the Sum of All Powers, Universal Life Energy is as directly and intimately related to everything in Existence as water is to the ice which crystallizes out of it. Everything, therefore, can be in constant contact with the Power which gave it being. Man, as a part of Nature, is also the outgrowth, the product of that Power, which permeates him completely as It does all other entities.

The material elements comprising his Body are formed of Universal Life Energy; his Mind is a ray of It, proceeding from that particular aspect of It which we know as the Governing Intelligence of the Universe; his Soul, finally, is but a living spark of the same Eternal Power. Within each individual, in every particle of his triune being, is that Supreme Power, working through his Body, his Mind and his Soul.

But that Power is also working outside of him. Man is, so to say, simply a portion of that Power, condensed and outlined, like a little eddy in the smooth current of a river without shores. All he needs to do, in order to draw from the surrounding Current all the strength and support he wants, is to open himself to It and let It pour in. There is no need whatsoever of intermediaries to induce It to come, or to dip It up and dole It out to him in precious dribbles. Universal Life Energy works directly and perfectly whenever and wherever Man gives It the opportunity. It is impartial, answering every call without distinction of race, color or creed.

This is the Power that Man has vainly sought in his Religions, and that Priests have vainly promised in their Gods. It is not remote; It is near at hand. It does not require Priests, Ministers, Intermediaries to make the connecting link between It and human beings. It is the very Stuff of which human beings are made,

and Its constant demand is to be permitted to blend with Its Creation, instead of finding contact only by proxy. By Its very nature It condemns the whole body of the Priesthood as not only useless, but decidedly detrimental, standing between It and Mankind and hindering the growth and development of the human character toward that Final Reunion with It which Evolution will eventually bring about.

With the Priesthood must perish also Religions. Such a Power obviously does not need to be worshiped; It needs to be USED. The most urgent praying, the most abject solicitations will make no impression on It. Simply to believe in It, to accept It on Faith, is futile. It must be investigated, tested intelligently, understood, in order to be of use to Man.

Since Prayer and Ceremony are of no service in contacting It, the necessity for special places of Worship, such as temples and churches, no longer exists. That Power is everywhere, instantly at the command of anyone who chooses to call upon It in the proper way, no matter where he may be. One Temple is Its home, where It abides forever in the Fullness of Its Strength—the Great Temple of the Universe Itself.

The moment Humanity will have opened its eyes to the plain facts which Science places before them, will recognize in Universal Life Energy the Supreme Power of the Universe which they have long sought in vain

through false teachings, the triple Wall of Priests, Religions and Rites which has so long barred them from communion with the Power they yearned to know will crumble to dust, leaving free the way of Man's Life on Earth.

The trend of Universal Life Energy is invincibly forward. Separated from It, human beings are at the mercy of whatever may block their path. Allied with It, all obstacles which interfere with Unfoldment and Progress are swept away. Ignorance, Superstition and False Beliefs are broken and cast aside as soon as knowledge of Its Laws and Powers starts a mental expansion. It establishes real Justice on Earth by bringing out in the characters of Mankind that latent Brotherhood which is dormant there, a part of the Brotherhood of all Nature. It eliminates Wars, correcting in the characters of Mankind the disturbed balance which they try to repair by bloodshed and mutual extermination. It does away with material Poverty, an unnatural condition in a Universe of Limitless Abundance; It expels Sickness from the Body, Disharmony from the Mind, Ugliness of every sort from every aspect of Life.

Contact with that Power gives to the individual an inexhaustible store of energy, not only sufficient to enable him to do his own daily work, however hard the work may be, but enough in addition to make him realize the joy of living, the possibility for everyone

to experience his share of that Happiness which is the Sacred Birthright of all beings born to this Earth. It teaches him how the power to succeed in Life is implanted in everyone and everything, and shows him that such Success can be achieved by the understanding and efficient use of the Laws and Forces of Nature. It brings Man to the threshold of a New Era—an Era of unprecedented Progress whose possibilities have but just begun to loom in breathless vistas through the achievements of recent years.

The condition which political and social reformers have dreamed of establishing, which philanthropists have hoped for, which educators are spending their best efforts to bring about, is being built stone by stone into the Civilization of To-Day by the untiring efforts of countless Scientists, working in laboratories and machine shops, in factories, on experimental farms, in jungle wilds and in teeming cities, in the dust of excavations, and in the pure air of lofty mountain peaks, as they wrest from Nature her jealously guarded Secrets. The bowels of the Earth and the star-flecked deeps of Infinite Space have yielded to them those priceless treasures of Knowledge which have enabled Mankind to climb so fast and so far during the past hundred years, and to which Religions and Philosophies have vainly aspired to find the Key.

Universal Life Energy, the gift of Science to Human-

ity, is indeed the great Redeemer and Liberator of Mankind, Whose general use is destined to bring to a solution the evils, troubles and problems for which Pulpit and Pen have alike failed to provide their promised cure. When Man will recognize It as the Supreme Ruling Power on Earth as It is throughout the entire Universe, when he will make a conscious, intelligent effort to attune his life to It, he will gain through his own endeavors that Redemption which he has been taught to expect and await only in the person of a supernatural visitant from an unreal Heaven.

Toward that Day of Freedom the Law of Progress is urging Humanity all the time. Nothing can prevent the Dawn of that Day. No physical, no mental, even no so-called spiritual powers can quench the rising Light of Knowledge whose first faint flush has already spilled over Man's mental horizon, illuminating for him the massive clouds of Ignorance whose very extent he had not been able to perceive before. Invincible, inevitable, pursuing a Path appointed since Eternity Itself, that Supreme Ruling Power of the Universe is at last coming into Its Own.

And all those who stand in the way, whether they are the most powerful human institutions, numbering millions of adherents and consecrated by thousands of years of tradition, or prominent individuals who take the lead in molding men's opinions, or half-mythical,

recluses who are considered by some to be the invisible Masters of human destinies, they are doomed to perish like the shadows from which their prestige is derived. Neither adverse thought, nor word, nor deed can stay the advance of that Supreme Universal Power, which slowly but surely levels all obstacles in the way of Progress and clears the road for people to get all that was intended for them, the Best and the Most out of Life.

In that Day, those who have opposed the growth and unfoldment of Humanity, whether from a mistaken idea of principle or at the prompting of a selfish ambition, will learn the bitter lesson that they cannot escape paying the corresponding price. Instead of the compliant God of their Superstitions, they will find themselves face to face with a more just, a more equitable Master—the Impersonal Forces and Laws of the Universe, with Which no compromise, no pleading, no excuses, no bribery are of the slightest avail. They will perceive that in all the Universe there is no such thing as a dumping ground for the errors and evils of the Past, no place where wrongs committed can be thrown away and forgotten, but that each item, adding to or subtracting from the score, measures out to everyone his exact deserts. The sooner all human beings recognize this fact, the better it will be for them.

The one constant and foremost demand which Univer-

sal Life Energy puts upon Man is that he unite himself with It, that he use It without ceasing, in every activity of his daily life, that he let It flood through him into expression in every department of his complex modern scheme of existence. Only by so doing can he hope to achieve the best results and to realize to a substantial degree the Purpose for which he is here—to advance further in the Scale of his Evolution.

Until now human beings have never been the Masters of their Destiny, not because they were incapable of it, but because they had no compass points by which to lay out a definite course. Not knowing where they came from or where they were going, they could not well determine how to get there. They lived Life blindly.

But in the Light of modern discoveries, that old uncertainty is gone. Science has rubbed thin the dividing wall between Man and the vast Unknown in which he lives, exposing there neither the Heaven nor Hell of his imaginings, but simply a marvelously blending Mechanism of ordered Forces, of which his own world and he himself are integral parts. By revealing to him his own self-imposed isolation, it has clearly outlined the Task which confronts him, to identify himself with the Life Energy of the Universe, to become ONE with It, in his Heart, in his Mind and in his Soul.

To understand that Power, to realize Its practical

value in the development of the individual and to love It unreservedly, first in Its glorious Aspect as Primal Energy, the Source of all created things, and next in Its countless visible expressions throughout the Universe, is to gain a new perspective of that which has been before merely a bewildering chaos of material Effects. In all that is beautiful and constructive in Nature we see the tremendous Harmony of Forces behind it; in all that is ugly and destructive we see the futile violations of the Natural Law. A man is no longer just a man, or a tree a piece of wood; they are symbols of all that went to make them as they are. A human being, an animal, a plant, a mineral, a flower nodding in the field, a beautiful waterfall sparkling over the sullen rocks, a sunset blazing amid the clouds, a distant constellation glittering against the dark Sky—each is a window opening upon the Infinite, to the one who sees with an understanding eye.

Once Man will have learned to feel at One with Universal Life Energy, both in Its Aspect of the Visible and the Invisible, the Material and the Immaterial, he will actually have made himself what he is supposed to be, the Master of his Destiny. He will be able then to cast off the shackles of Superstitions, False Beliefs and Blind Faith, which have bound him in a condition of abject slavery, and will find himself restored through Science, which is organized Knowledge, to his original

status of a Free-Born Being, worthy to Rule this Earth.

For uncounted Ages Mankind have worshiped God in some form or another. Does the ruthless advance of Knowledge, then, doom God to extinction? There is unquestionably a strange similarity between the Teachings of the Friends of Man and the Discoveries of Modern Science. The identical Laws, Forces and Principles whose operation was told to Humanity by men like Rama, Krishna, Zoroaster, Lao-Tse, Buddha and Jesus are now being proved step by step in the laboratories, appearing in an atmosphere of test tubes and chemical formulas not as miracles, but as solid, rational Facts. Yet they are blasting from His Heavenly Throne the very Divinity these Great Ones are supposed respectively to have taught.

Have Scientists of to-day perhaps discovered God under a new name? Are Primal Energy, the Supreme Ruling Power of the Universe from a scientific point of view, and God one and the same thing? Is there after all a God who rules this gigantic Universe? Still Humanity is asking itself the question, still it is fumbling for the answer to that great baffling Problem, unsolved in This enlightened Day as it was in the days of the Past.

CHAPTER VII

IS THERE A GOD?



MARKING back over the misty Span of Ages that stretches between modern Man and his aboriginal ancestor, Humanity of To-Day perceives that One Heritage, at least, has come down to them unchanged—an inextinguishable thirst to KNOW. Blazing in savage breasts at a period when Man's field of Knowledge did not extend beyond the range of his own appetite, it lashed the human beast from tree to cave, from cave to hut, from hut to palace and to dominion over a World which once grudged him even a bare existence. Yet, in spite of the undoubted improvements in every direction, physical, mental, spiritual, social, political, financial, moral, due almost exclusively to the hardly won and no less hardly accepted contributions of Science, the same unappeasable Thirst still rages in human hearts, a rankling, a seeking, a longing for Something, Man knows not what.

To satisfy that Longing, Mankind have stormed the rugged bulwarks of the Unknown through every con-

ceivable channel. They trusted to Religion, which promised them an answer that it utterly failed to provide. They tried to find a solution through Rationalism, only to discover that it led them in a futile circle which ended where it began. They endeavored to dissipate the pressure of their inner yearning in the great rush of an overrushed, overstrained Activity, but even that could not dull the sharp edge of the insistent Craving within.

Baffled in every attempt, Humanity to-day, as in days gone by, are still suffering, still unhappy, still sick, still praying without answers to their prayers, still hoping against hope, without their hopes being realized, still desiring without their desires being fulfilled. From everywhere the Question rises—from the frozen North and from the languid South, from the old East and from the new West, from all Races, all Nations, all Creeds, from every Rank and Walk in life, from City and from Country, from Factory, Farm and Barracks, from Universities, from Monasteries, from the lurking places of Ignorance and Superstition, from Churches, from Banks, from Gambling Dens, from Thrones, from Mansions and from humble Cabins lost in the forest depths, from Above and from Below, from the Earth, the Sea, the Air, from Rich and from Poor, from the Healthy and from the Sick, from every

place where beats a human heart—the Great, the aching Question, Why? Why? Why?

Why, if there is a God, a Supreme and Just Ruling Power of the Universe, does Justice so little prevail upon this Earth? Why is the bulk of power so frequently gathered in the hands of a Few, who often are not even fitted to wield it properly, while the rest must slave for those Few? Why are some born to all the good things of this World, while others inherit an existence of continual misery? Why is Wealth so unequally distributed on this planet, certain ones having so much that they do not know what to do with it and others scarcely able to scrape together enough for their bare needs? Why do some people succeed apparently without an effort, while others fail completely, no matter how hard they try? Why are some endowed with magnificent health and some with a wretched constitution? Why are some happy and some sad, some handsome and some ugly, some attractive and some repellent? Why must some favored individuals possess the faculty of winning more friends than they can wish, while others, in spite of their greatest longing for companionship, must walk solitary and alone? Why are some intelligent and some imbeciles? Why does Fate treat some like its own beloved children—and some like foster children? Why does Evil exist, and why is

it permitted to flourish and prosper, if there is a God—a God of Good?

Why, in a Universe ruled by an omnipotent God of Peace and Love, should there be continual friction, quarrels, hatred, fights, strikes, revolutions, wars? Why must Humanity suffer the scourge of pestilence, famine, earthquake, fire, flood and a host of similar afflictions totally foreign to a God of Mercy and Compassion? Why is Truth like a voice crying in the wilderness, scorned and rejected by those who swarm in eager millions to the carrion feast of Lies, avid to swallow blindly and without discrimination the deceptions, the false doctrines, the wrong teachings, the superstitions which have misguided and enslaved Mankind from the beginning?

Why do people cling with impassioned loyalty to beliefs which degrade them, and shun with cold suspicion any True Knowledge which will help them in their lives and liberate them from their present limitations? Why do they shrink from using Laws and Forces of Nature, whose workings are always clear, direct, simple, beneficial and supremely natural, and dabble by preference with the mysterious, the obscure, the so-called supernatural, unknown and unproved powers? Why do they prefer blind Faith to Understanding? Begging to Earning? Subjection to Independence? Why? Why? Why?

There are thousands, there are millions of "Why's," great and small. Wherever one turns they are to be found, perplexing, tantalizing, fretting like the waves of an unquiet sea against the rugged, heedless shores of the Unknown. Is there an Answer?

Ignorance is the only answer. The cause of all that unbelievable confusion is Man's own Ignorance of true conditions. Ignorance of the Ruling Powers of the Universe and Its Laws; Ignorance of their bearing on human beings; Ignorance of Man himself, of his nature, his status in Life, his place in the Universal Scheme; Ignorance of his relations to the World outside of him, to his fellow beings, as well as Ignorance of his inner World also. Ignorance of all that Life owes him as his right; Ignorance of the duties and responsibilities he owes to Life; Ignorance of what Life is, of its countless opportunities and its specific demands. Ignorance of what men call Death.

At the very roots of Man's being, a Fundamental Ignorance which penetrates like a stubborn poison into every department of his earthly career. Ignorance of his Body, its real significance, its uses, its care; Ignorance of his Mind and how to train it effectively; Ignorance of his Soul and its proper unfoldment through Mind and Body. Ignorance of how to select a life companion intelligently, how to make marriage happy, how to bring forth the right kind of children and

educate them in a manner that will develop their best and strongest qualities into balanced expression. Ignorance of how to select business associates, ignorance of how to make such associations yield the richest returns. Ignorance of how to work most constructively with those who occupy positions of superiority, and of how to handle those who are for the time being inferior. Ignorance of how to make money honestly, ignorance of how to spend it wisely. Ignorance of how to be generous without wastefulness, and thrifty without becoming stingy. Ignorance of how to approach and solve racial, national, religious, social, political, industrial and financial problems according to certain Basic Principles and Laws of Nature Itself, of how to adjust human activities consciously to the governing trend of Universal Powers without whose harmonious coöperation Success is impossible, Failure and Ruin inevitable. Ignorance of how to take Life at its flood and ride it to a triumphant conclusion. Ignorance of how to be just an ordinary, law-abiding, progressive, fair-minded citizen, a precious asset to any community or country.

But most appalling Ignorance of all—Man's Ignorance of his own Ignorance.

Yet, in view of the stupendous conspiracy into whose grim mold unnumbered successive generations of Mankind have been born, this is scarcely to be wondered at. Religion after Religion, decked out with its chang-

ing garniture of Gods and Creeds, has risen on the ground plan of a policy which has never changed since Priests first assumed dominion over human Minds—to stunt, retard and pervert mental growth and progress. As History clearly indicates, the representatives of the different Faiths have endeavored by every means in their power to keep Humanity in the darkness of Ignorance and Superstition, because such a condition was imperative for the survival of their own authority.

This is the reason that Religions have always been so "conservative"; they had to be, or perish. Whenever a fresh idea or discovery which threatened their dogmas budded through some unruly intellect, they quickly pruned it away, even if they had to prune the individual with it. Priests ridiculed Columbus in his attempt to sail around the World; they forced the famous astronomer, Galileo, under penalty of death at the stake, to renounce his statement that the Earth was moving around the Sun, and not the Sun around the Earth. They burned as heretics millions of innocent people whose only crime was that they had dared to think for themselves, groping for some ray of Light in the midst of the utter mental obscurity imposed by orthodox beliefs and thereby jeopardizing the integrity of the Church.

Modern Priesthood, Ministers and Clergy, can no longer resort to steel, fire and cord as pruning shears

to trim down unwanted mental growth. Yet with the more refined weapons left to them by Modern Civilization they are fighting, To-Day as in the Past, every attempt of Humanity to gain more Knowledge, more Freedom, a happier and better life on Earth. They fight the Theory of Evolution. They fight the natural right of every individual to dispose of his time as he sees fit, compelling him to observe Sunday as the Lord's Day, whether he believes in heathen Jehovah or not. They fight games which improve the health and character of the Race. They fight entertainments, theaters, movies, which offer people a restful diversion, a relaxation and happiness, if only for a short time. Inexplicably considerate of male lewdness of Mind, they fight the indomitable upward trend of women's skirts, their more healthful and consequently more "daring" style of dressing, their honest, therefore reprehensible, behavior, their growing independence in every way.

They fight Progress in every line of thought and in every field of material achievement. They demand that Science shall consider every statement of the Bible as true, and they reject as untrue, in so far as they can, any reasonable conclusions which combat those statements. But when Science produces facts which prove with remorseless certainty the falseness of Biblical teachings, the Clergy immediately fish out a so-called "spiritual interpretation of obscure passages" and

thereby seek to appropriate the credit in the name of some long extinct prophet or seer of good religious standing. As in the case of Joan of Arc, whom Priests first burned and then sainted, Ethics are not permitted to interfere with a chance to enhance the prestige of their institution.

Most astonishing of all, however, is the odd fact that such grotesque teachings, such obvious untruths, find staunch supporters among people even of the thinking class, those who claim to shape the thoughts and opinions of their fellow beings. In this connection may be recalled a certain prominent man, one who, by the way, died from persistent overeating during the course of a notorious trial on Evolution in Dayton, Tennessee, and whose claim to distinction rested largely on his rigid and well-advertised adherence to the letter of Biblical teachings. He is quoted as stating before an assembly of intelligent and highly educated men that he firmly believed the World, meaning the Infinite, Eternal Universe, was created some six thousand years ago, simply because the Old Testament says it was. On the strength of that belief, and in the face of incontestable evidence to the contrary, he tried vigorously to have Laws passed in various States of America forbidding schools to teach the Theory of Evolution, which blasphemously transgresses by some millions of years the orthodox origin of all things.

Yet, no matter how stubbornly the Clergy, still champions of Ignorance and Superstition, struggle to plug up the rifts in their crumbling redoubt of religious fallacies, they can no longer withstand the irresistible tide of Progress which is sweeping Man forward and upward. The human Mind, impelled by the Laws and Forces of the Universe itself, is bursting the cramped walls of concepts which have long prevented its normal evolution and it promises soon to destroy any further obstacles that may interfere with Man's unfoldment.

Mankind, as their glance penetrates at last to those spacious virgin fields which they are about to enter, are aware of a new and glorious concept of the Universe breaking dewy fresh from the dull cocoon of their old habits of thought. They begin to perceive, in place of the starry stamping ground of pompous Celestial Majesties, a most sublimely ordered Scheme of Creation, fitted within the governing embrace of Immutable Law,—a Universe of unconquerably harmonious and constructive activities, in which no discordant alien note is permitted to endure. A realization, dim yet, but unmistakable, is slowly dawning upon them that Evil is not self-existent, an independent negative Force occupying its allotted niche in the general plan, but that it is an intruder brought into being simply by violation of Laws of Nature and as such doomed inevitably to perish. They see that anything which

is wrong, destructive, against Natural Laws, is bound to be eliminated by the operation of those Laws. And of all undesirable and destructive conditions, as was stated before, the most undesirable is Ignorance.

When people will know that there are no Powers on Earth or in Heaven that can modify for them the workings of Immutable Laws of the Universe, that no Supernatural Powers exist to which they can apply for any slightest abatement of the Supremely Natural, that they alone are responsible for the good or evil which they experience individually as human beings and collectively as the whole of Humanity,—when they will learn to think instead of to pray, they will have taken the first step toward a Freedom which they can implore and await in vain as an unearned gift from a God Who was never known to be so reckless in His charities.

Man has been endowed with the scepter of his Mind; he has been taught to ask others to wield it for him. When he will recognize the Power to which it is his Key and will use it to unlock the Door of Knowledge which has been shut against him, when he will fight Pestilences with sanitary measures instead of with supplications, will master Plagues by scientific means, will avert Floods by proper handling of the waterways, he will have entered upon his Heritage—will start to draw substantial interest on the Talents intrusted to him to be invested, not buried.

When he will understand the true nature of the Universe he inhabits, he will find that the needless burdens and perils to which his ignorant blunderings have exposed him in the Past will cease to trouble him. Farming will give way to intensive Cultivation, earthquakes will be regarded as necessary adjustments which take place in certain areas to allow for the Earth's contraction in the process of cooling down, rather than as visitations of an angry Deity, and provision will be made to avoid their consequences. He will see the importance of keeping a certain portion of this planet always covered with forests, so essential for regulating the distribution of rain and snow over its surface and automatically controlling the climate.

When human beings will dare to claim as allies every Force and Power of Nature; when they will subdue the running Waters, the Tides, the Winds, the Sun, the Moon to the service of Mankind; when they will sift out Earth's richest treasures through scientific Cultivation as well as through mining and will put them to practical use for the betterment of the Human Race; when they will learn to face confidently and solve correctly all problems, to overcome all obstacles, through Knowledge; when they will discover that the more they know, the more they are able to get out of Life, and of its best—when they will perceive, in other words, that to be One with Nature, with Its Supreme Ruling Power, with

Its Universal Life Energy, with Its Marvelous Laws, means a successful, happy, ever unfolding, more interesting, more thrilling and infinitely more abundant life on Earth, they will have begun to fulfill in an adequate fashion the purpose for which their mortal experience was designed.

And when Mankind, having rid themselves of the handicaps which dulled their understanding of their present existence, will look clear-eyed into the wondrous depths of Life Itself, they will forever banish that grim dread which has stood ward at the portal through which all believe they must pass. Investigations and discoveries will reveal that it is not necessary even to die, in the conventional meaning of that term, but that it is possible to pass from this existence into another without actually losing Consciousness for a moment, without suffering the great physical and moral agonies now associated with Death.

When Man will finally be able to correlate his life here with his life hereafter, of which it is but a transitory phase; when he will come to love life on Earth, because it will give him so much to live for, yet will face with the greatest eagerness and interest his next step when that life is done; when he will see his further experience in the evolutionary cycle as the Great Adventure of Eternal Life Itself, the greatest of all adventures for adventurous Humanity and immeasur-

ably more enthralling than that of Death, which is merely a passing condition, a moment that flashes and is gone; when he will laugh at Old Age, the Lesser Death, and relegate it to the lists of myth and legend by his faculty of drawing on the Living Waters of Nature, the Fount of Everlasting Youth and Strength, Universal Life Energy; when Ugliness of every sort, physical, mental, emotional, will have been completely eliminated from a Human Race that knows how to think, feel and live harmoniously—all in all, when the Light of Knowledge will have flooded into the most hidden recesses of Man's threefold nature, illumining for him the dark places of his own understanding, exposing to him in all its splendor the World in which he lives—then only will he be able to say to Life, "Abide forever; thou art so wonderful!"

And in that Day will be established on Earth the Peace, the Harmony, the Justice so ardently awaited, so vainly sought, by heart-sick Humanity, the Perfect Accord which prevails now as always in the Universe, throughout Infinity and throughout Eternity.

Meanwhile, Humanity has to fight its way through Life as best it can, with the means it has on hand. Tools must be forged before they can be used, and though no effort in the right direction is ever lost, it must first be made. Mental growth and expansion, like any growth in Nature, is not a sudden process; it progresses logically

and gradually, building upon what has already been achieved. But Mankind is awakening now to its true mission in Life. With the generations to come in mind, it is paving the road, stone by stone, over which they will soon travel to a more successful, more generous, more pleasant existence, is planting in the soil of to-day the seed whose harvest they will reap to-morrow.

Men, the Pygmies of this Age, are not so by nature, and need not remain so except by choice. As long as they believed the Priesthood, who called them the unworthy servants of God, the sinners, the slaves, wretches cursed by God (according to the Bible) to a career of misery, abasement and pain, they were cast in that mold. They came into the World through a gateway of anguish, submitted to the decree that condemned them to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows and expect the Earth to yield them nothing but tares in return for their labors. But the mold is cracking; the Giants of the future are beginning to emerge.

In spite of the pernicious teaching of the Fall of Man, Modern Humanity learns to walk erect and proud, undeterred by any sense of guilt, free to carve out their own destinies and self-confident of their ability to do it well. In spite of the doctrine of the Original Sin, that mental ball and chain which fettered human beings to hopeless earthly degradation, they are discovering a wealth of Latent Inner Qualities and Powers which they

can and do start to develop. In spite of the promise of a Redemption to be bestowed only vicariously through the efforts of One, Man now takes upon himself the responsibility of paying his own debts to the Laws of Nature, actually redeeming himself from the condition of a Ward dependent on the bounty of a benefactor and relying on his own efforts and merits to win for him his rightful place as a full-fledged Citizen of this World. In spite of the divine curses which crack the lash of fear over cowering mortals, in spite of the exclusive Heaven which glitters behind the altar gates for meek and submissive worshipers of a Priest-made God, in spite of the blazing Hell which roars under the heels of the intractable, people are daring to think for themselves, to see the motive behind these childish attempts to flatter or intimidate them into obedience, to laugh at their own stupid folly in believing such obvious falsehoods.

For many ages Mankind have looked outside themselves for the Heaven their imaginations painted on the back-drop of the Infinite. They accepted the assertion of the Priesthood—the Super-Salesmen of All Times, since they sold the World “Nothing” at a most exorbitant price—that the One way to Salvation lay through Sacred Books, through Religions, through Worship, through Creeds. To shake off the fascination of such a dream is not an easy task.

Yet Modern Humanity, its vision still blurred by slumber, is nevertheless awakening to realities. Through the dissolving mists of its long sleep, it perceives a Truth which many of its Great Ones have proclaimed to it in Vain—that the only Heaven is within oneself, that its rewards are improvement of Self, improvement of conditions, improvement of life, and that it can be attained only by a greater Knowledge of Life Itself, practically applied.

To-day the World is splitting into two factions, as distinct and apart as Day and Night. The strife is joined, the battle raging. On one side is the Army of Light, its ranks recruited from those energetic, fearless, enlightened, noble men and women who fight for Knowledge, for Freedom, for Progress. Their Aim is to make possible a better, finer, richer, happier life for all people, without distinction of Race, Class or Creed, right here on Earth and *Now*. Their emblem is Light, the Light of Knowledge, dispelling the Night of Ignorance and Superstition. Under their Standard are enrolled the rapidly increasing numbers of all who contribute in some measure to the advancement and well-being of Human Kind.

But arrayed against them is the great Army of Darkness, formed of those who battle for the perpetuation of Ignorance, of Superstition, of outgrown Religions and dead Faiths. Their aim is to keep Man enslaved, full

of Fear, oppressed, chained forever in the thrall of a Divinely ordained servitude which he is not supposed to alter, the helpless puppet of a capricious and unrelenting God.

However dense the ranks of Darkness may yet appear to be, they are crumbling slowly but surely before the lancing rays of Light which dart forth from Laboratory, Study and Field to puncture their obscurity. As the glow of new Knowledge floods ever more brightly over the World through Minds which have caught a spark of the Universal Fire, the shadows of Ignorance pale and recede, dwindling toward that Limbo into which they must eventually vanish before the glorious Dawn of a New Day, a Day of Freedom, Justice and Happiness on Earth.

Wars may still drench the Nations with smoking seas of blood, but the character of those wars will no longer be the same. Men will fight, not for greed of conquest, but for the sake of an Ideal, a selfless desire to make Right ultimately prevail over Might and thus do away with the cause of wars by establishing a condition of mutual understanding among human beings. Earthquakes may wrench the foundations of this globe; floods, cyclones and storms may devastate its surface; famines and pestilences may ravage its teeming lands; but human beings will nevermore crouch terror-stricken and helpless under their scourge, as under the Wrath of a revenge-

ful God whose Anger no mortal can hope to avert. Knowing that such calamities are rooted in natural causes, Man will fling all his energies, all his intelligence, into the work of discovering and stamping them out at their source. Instead of submitting, he will rise in revolt; instead of praying, he will fight; instead of depending blindly on a Deity he does not know, he will put his faith in the Science, the Knowledge he does know, and will conquer.

The Age of Humility and Meekness is passing away. Intolerance of Evil, impatience with Wrong and Weakness, is rightly taking the place of Patience and Long-Suffering. After every trial, every sorrow, every loss, every difficulty, every defeat, Modern Humanity will rise stronger, wiser, finer, more daring and nobler than before. Neither Heaven nor Hell can longer subdue the rebellious Spirit of Man, who finds that through his rebellion he is coming at last into his Sacred Birthrights of Individual Liberty, Self-Determination and a fair portion of Happiness on Earth.

It was inevitable that Evolution, no matter how desperately opposed, should at length compel the development of Man's Latent Powers. That Day is here. Man's Mind has more than fulfilled the larva stage of its growth. It is no longer willing to crawl in the dust of the ground, not daring even to lift its gaze to the Heavens above, but has sprouted wings on

which it aspires to rival the eagle's flight, soaring higher and higher into the Open. As it lifts Man to ever loftier heights, the broader and more wonderful becomes his vision of the World he has now to explore, the truer his perspective, the more correct his judgment and the clearer his understanding. And, already discerning beyond the Horizon of Human Limitations the rising Sun of the Truth of All Things, he no longer shrinks from its radiance as in days gone by. Free from his ancient Fear, he is able to turn his gaze boldly on the face of that Light and joyfully hail its appearance on Earth.

To-day Humanity is gathering together all its Physical, Mental and Spiritual Energies to fight its Life's Battle, to succeed in that tremendous Adventure of Life Itself. Modern Man, adventurous as he is, well equipped to meet any problem, energetic, curious, daring, optimistic, confident, enlightened, is determined to emerge victorious by overcoming all difficulties, unveiling all secrets, dispelling all mysteries, asking all questions, venturing all things.

Before such resolution, the unbroken Silence of Heaven is destined to be rent at last. That Sacred Realm has lost its terrors for a Humanity which is no longer content to endure its obstinate aloofness, its serene and utter indifference alike to human pleas and human woes. Nothing having been gained by waiting for Heaven to

open its bounty upon the Earth, Man is ready now to storm the Battlements of Heaven, to batter down its inhospitable Gates with the Magic Sword of Knowledge, to wrest for himself from its stern, unyielding Silence the Answer to his eternal Question—"Is there a God?"