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THE
DIVINE
QUESTION

BY
LIONEL JOSAPHARE

SAN FRANCISCO
A. M. ROBERTSON
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THE DIVINE QUESTION

BY

LIONEL JOSAPHARE

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PREFACE AND ANNOUNCEMENT

This, the first number of the Flame Series, appears with the title "The Divine Question." The Series is to be published for six months after the appearance of the first number of this or any subsequent volume.

Within the last hundred years, so much thought has been directed upon the faith cherished by visible humanity for the Invisible that a change of opinion is necessarily to come. Man is at present taking his own testimony. He no longer looks on ancient history as something sacred, but assumes the same freedom from the assertiveness of the past that he does in his governments of the present.

In this volume due respect, but not undue reverence is granted the older teachings. The author has not undertaken to give decision for or against any belief or lack of belief, although now and then he may seem to do so in examining their contentions. The article may also seem at times inconsistent, sometimes allowing too much dignity to an already condemned theory or asserting new ones without compunction. This is in accordance with the design of treating all theories fairly. The article is merely a hypothesis, a conjecture, a presentation of statement and reasons. Ignorance debates and truth decides.

Ensuing numbers of the Flame Series will be devoted to Literature, Politics, Labor and other fundamental and artistic interests of the period. The subject matter will be interesting not only to the studen

but to all who keep in mental contact with literature and the conditions of their country and world.

There are today thinkers, who having perused the repeated generalities of the ordinary, desire to read the truth beyond editorial diplomacy when that diplomacy is directed to the prejudice of the majorities of patronage. However, the greatest number (though not for commercial purposes) is in posterity; so the voice of the people is never quite decisively the voice of God in a single election day.

Truth is born in a manger and does not acquire much veneration for the palaces of error, pretentious though they be in the long-standing devotion of men.

The articles in this series will be in treatment free as thought, yet as inoffensive to the charitable mind as the etiquette of judicious language can make them.

The leading article of the next number will be by Mr. Christian Binkley, author of "Sonnets and Songs for a House of Days."

(EDITOR)



THE DIVINE QUESTION

BY

LIONEL JOSAPHARE

In behalf of this epistle I claim neither originality nor learning. So that its better parts may be attributed to others and its error to myself. As it stands, however, the document is wider in scope while being more concise in statement and less tenacious of its theories than are other works on the subject.

While religions or creeds are generally content in making a guess at God and standing by that guess throughout a lifelong argument, this paper sets forth without prejudice the many thoughts that might envelope the mind of a man who makes a number of theories state their cases and give their evidence briefly before his judgment.

Therefore, like one who has lost his way, I approach the fortress of orthodox belief and its Biblical God, not to assail, but to question; not to prove, but to think; not proud of unbelief, but humble in lack of knowledge.

At the outset I say that it is not necessary to our welfare that we behold the browed visage of God, much as we yearn to do so. He is not for our eyes, for if He were to be beheld we should see Him every day.

As it is the profession of religion to custody our spiritual welfare, it behooves us to look into those teachings for which, from the priestly past, its altars have been lit for us. Assum-

ing all religions as purportly the same; that is, affecting to educate our souls to the end that we, through immortality, enter a place designed for us by our Creator, we may unblatphemously question by what right we are so taught; nay, so commanded.

Men are more ready to have faith in great wonders than in little things; and they who will not purchase a coin's worth of food without skepticism will accept as truth that which no one in their generation or memory has beheld. Even were the Bible in every statement true, it is our right—I shall say our duty—not to believe, but to find it true. God's dignity does not extend to render inviolable every statement made concerning Him.

Now, knowing that men are liars and especially are they untruthful in the Orient, where opened the first slaughterous chapters in the religious romance, and especially were they ignorant and frightened in those religion-making centuries, it should not seem unworthy our piety, as it befits our self-respect, that we question that which has come to us from those untruthful climes and wonderous times.

For this purpose, then (perhaps in a spirit that seems audacious to the priest and timid to the thinker), let religion be as a quantity of ore that goes to the assayer. Let it not be assumed on the assurance of the prospector, wise though he be. Let it not rest upon the appraise of an unauthenticated lip. Take it into the room of weights and arithmetic, a room which honor need not fear. If it is gold

6 it will stand the test. I shall not claim that the microscope can disprove religion if, on the other hand, you will not claim that it cannot. My purpose is not to discredit, but to observe how the subject matter of belief will act when brought into contact with the ordinary solutions for ascertaining the truth.

Therefore, divide the subject into three parts:

1. As to the Bible.
2. As to God.
3. As to the soul.

Whoever credits all the Bible has not read it all. Before believing we should understand; and we are just beginning to understand the Scriptures. Once we had faith in its unintelligibility. We may now pause before that blood-stained book and ask whether the horrors it recounted and the glories it promised are still appared in the divinity which enchanted our fathers and made the sounds of death and war heaven-directed music.

The authors of the Scriptures, having, in accordance with their times, but small resource of spiritual or sentimental words, exposed their emotions in language of the flesh. Perhaps in their vernacular they had ways of distinguishing between the psychic and the physical meaning. We can only interpret them now by distant reasoning. In Ezekiel is the passage: "And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give to thee. Then did I eat

it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness."

That reads like the usual digestive facts; but the passage means, Listen to that which I tell thee. Then I listened to his words, which were pleasant to my understanding.

There is the same symbolism of eating spiritual grace in the eucharist.

When Jesus drove the dealers and changers from the temple, the bystanders asked Him for some sign of His authority. And Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and in three days will I raise it up. Even they, who should have been familiar with his language, did not understand what John declares to be the meaning; to wit: that He meant the temple of His body.

The star of Bethlehem was the knowledge that was beginning to form in the minds of the three wise men, who represent the thinkers of the world. For of such was their system of literature.

Expounding for ourselves this beautiful but inaccurate language, their whole pellucid fabric of Heaven, Hell and immortality may have been allegoric terms. And we do not know how far their sublime thoughts were corruptible with such interpretation.

"I am the resurrection and the life" means, The truth that I speak will free you from error.

"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," has the same meaning, "dead" meaning "spiritually stupid," as

the first "dead" in "Let the dead bury their dead."

The truth is seldom given in the virgin gold. We learn to separate it from the rock.

Similar reasoning is put upon the episode in the Garden of Eden. For it is hard to believe that upon a young, inexperienced, unmothered, untaught, bewildered child of suddenness, as Eve was, with no knowledge of right and wrong, should devolve the happiness of the human race. And however we revere the authors of the Scriptures and believe in their sincerity while aware of their treacherous literary style, we would like better proof than their faith, purer evidence than their symbolism, more definite answers than their poetry, before we believe in the miraculous authority that seems infringement upon what may be the immutable laws of nature.

In the Old Testament, the usual occurrences of life, such as child-conception, growth of crops, success in battle, are made to appear as the deliberate and special act of Jehovah. Perhaps the authors innocently considered their thoughts and dreams as likewise inspired. Whether they had some grounds for such attributions of divine interference or these were mere pious exclamations, we can never know until we hear from the patriarchs or Jehovah again.

If, as Moses and Peter say, a thousand years can be as one day with the Lord, it is but a few days since the age of miracles, and there is no wisdom in calling this a profane epoch.

Besides that, some of the Old Testamentary authors, and, I daresay, the most solid and profound thinkers therein, living in the miraculous periods, mention nothing of those exorbitant performances, and seemingly never beheld anything unlawful or disorderly in the natural appearances about them. But they who, like Ezekiel, wandered in the phantasmagoric landscapes of their own imaginations, could meet a miracle at every tree.

What is a miracle? An action at variance with the laws of nature. But the laws of nature contain complete ingredients for their own defeat. He who understands can turn them to his purpose. It is not for all to say what is miracle and what natural. All miracles may be natural. Some day every man will stand in the den of lions unharmed and walk upon the waves, with the same power as now he uses a finer light and gazes among his own bones. Science is the knowledge of God through study. Who can say what was known of old?

The fact, however, that many of the myths in the Bible are paralleled in the mythology of other races is not to be taken against them, as is done by some commentators. The stories of Adam and Eve and the flood, for instances, have counterparts in many alien folk-lore. This, for its universality, and with excuses for racial deviation, is more of an evidence of their truth than fiction.

Leaving the Bible, we come to God, and, unterrified by terrestrial teachers, question

ourselves of Him in whose image we are made. These questions are:

1. Of what does He consist?
2. Does He ever, to answer a prayer, perform a miracle?
3. How many Gods are there?

I shall notice the last question first, as, perhaps, it is the most conspicuous and holds the attention.

Here it is asked, What idea, what fact in Nature, what argument brought to prove the existence of God, is evidence of an only God?

Having believed so long in a monarchical Heaven, it may be hard to change our belief now. But if ever we shall be blest with sights unknown to our mundane eyes, there will be many surprises for us.

Unity, or oneness, as we know it, is not productive in Nature; every atom, every seed of plant or animal, every chemic movement, force of Nature, storm, planetary attraction or system of worlds, has some kind of duality or counter-influence to which it owes its stability and existence. If we are made in the divine image (as vitally every living thing is in the same image) why imagine the Father of All a being of sublime loneliness? Does He regulate Nature or is He Nature? If the latter, it must be remembered that Nature is double and the participation is generally of two distinct forces; there being, though, hemaphroditic conditions in vegetation.

If God is the universe, then His duality is implicate, or within itself, a state of being im-

aginable in spirit. But if, for the purposes of Christ's incarnation, He obeyed a law of earth, it is not inconceivable nor repugnant that He once obeyed spiritually a similar law of Heaven, where He knew the harmony of an Equal, who could approach Him with adequate understanding.

The fact that the early Scriptures acknowledge other but less influential Gods is not to the purpose of this speculation; it merely betraying that the Bible is a lay record and, like this, inconsistent with itself. Those who desired to impress their selfish acts with divine sanction were divine traducers, and the character of God, as pretended in their boastfulness (even in the selfish, egotistic David) is as far from the God of their better moods as the character of Christ, in the New Testament, is unlike Jehovah in the Old.

The deeds of Jehovah in the Old Testament are not pictures or demonstrations of His man-given attributes. The narrators, in their failure to make His actions live up to their flattery, were like some story-writers, who give their characters intellectual parts which are not manifested in the story. In fact, all people praise their God for mercy, justice and love, yet their recordings of divine manifestation are filled with cruelty, slaughter, vanity, revenge and irritableness.

Of what Godhood consists, I, unlike those who, having seen Him by the River of Chebar or in Heaven's thunder and lightning and speak of Him in devastated obscurity, can but

drop the futile pen in ignorance. He lives in His thoughts, and this all article is a thought of Him.

Whether or not the Infinite and Eternal hearkens to our prayers is a question awaiting proof. Having here a world of about a billion characters and perhaps a billion other worlds, to which probably He has given laws that lead to happiness when obeyed by all, it is hardly reasonable that He listens to the selfish wails of distress continually escaping from these habitations of sin. Misfortune is the sinning of the individual or the race, and the reform of the race is the prayer that helps.

A personal God's omniscience of even one worldful of prayer at a time is incomprehensible to me and to you. Do not think that God, because He is all powerful, can do and does do all that you do not understand. Prayer is doing, and doing is understanding. A prayer for mercy and forgiveness feels powerful to move the heart of God. But do not try to move God's heart until you have first moved your own. When your own heart is perfect, other perfections will move harmoniously about it.

Tell me and I shall know, is your prayer. But if you doubt always, when will you know? Doubt and die, and others will know with your death. We are small in body but large in mind. Contrary to our sights of space, the material universe may be as a solid. The sky's flames, revolving in their places, may have the same relative distances as in the human body the molecules have one to the

other. And our limbed bodies, the makers of war and glory, the shouters of triumph, the wearers of wreaths, may be in God's estimation nameless things upon a floating molecule, eagerly questioning the ones at the telescopes their opinions of the surrounding corpuscles pumped from the one great heart of things. Such is body. But mind goes wherever infinity is.

Some day, here on this despised earth, we shall see God, not with the color of our eyes, but with the understanding. Some day we shall speak to Him and receive a present response, an immediate revelation. It may not be in our alphabetic language; it may not be on the sensitiveness of the five; but we shall know Him. And we could have known Him long ago had we tried as hard to see Him as we try to know the Devil. Satan, or Error, is visible in the day. Death, disease, old age, conflict, falsity, the flesh; these are evil and error. Life, health, unchangeable perfection, love, truth, mind and infinity; these are God. There is one God, because there is one infinity. And even did two Gods think themselves two, still are they one. Even as there is one mind which we all use for thought as we use one atmosphere. The soul is not imprisoned in the body. Matter cannot imprison spirit. But these multitudinous bodies walk in one soul.

A box of apples is in a sense not apples but apple, although they seem to be many and each spherical. The apples on all the trees in the world are merely manifestation of the

Apple Idea which is one. So is the Idea of human beings one and their multifold differences the deviations of error. The eye says we are many; but the eye is material and not the sense nor the principle of sight nor yet the last phenomenon by which impressions are conveyed to the mind.

The five senses are gradually refined manifestations of one principle. Feeling requires contact. Taste performs a second thought upon this contact. Smell tastes the distant object. Hearing feels an indescribable change in phenomena that can be more distant. And sight makes the object appear. Each sense has five considerations to itself. In sight: the object seen; the eye; its mere cameric workings (including light); the medium with which the image is connected on the mind; and lastly the mind itself. Reverse the course of an impression through the weird mazes between the object and the mind, and it might be that the apparent order of things is a mistake. Objects can be seen inverted vertically as in the concavity of a spoon; perhaps horizontally, too, they suffer inversion, and sight works not from the object to the mind, but from the mind to the object, making mind the only real existence of us. For as the mind can work without sight, so might the principle of sight work without material objects, as in dreams, and consequently all earthly furniture be the labors of an unbodied mind.

The picture that the eye gets is anyway not what the mind sees. For the images of every-

thing, diminutive and great—an insect, a horse, a house, a mountain, a landscape, the skies, all go through the little dark pupil of the eye and are received on the one tiny retina. In a camera these impressions are about the same size; a landscape looks like a few square inches. Why does the mind make a larger view of the miniature lensed in the eye? If it is the eye that takes the picture, how does it take it so large? If sight is a radiation from within we can understand its pictures enlarging until they stop, at a certain distance, a certain size. Even perspective does not tell us how small are things in the eye. It seems that everything is magnified and magicked and unreal—our bodies included.

The contemplation now comes to the soul of man.

The existence of the orthodox God does not prove the existence of an individual human soul. It merely gives rise to the questions, Having caused us to live, would He be so cruel as to let us die? Are life and thought a little warmth generated by the frictions of the blood? Is the brain a magnetic sponge that attracts thought or soul from the circumjacence? Or is the soul an inner shape? Or are we all spirit and our bodies the shape of our thoughts?

The usual proofs of immortality are so inadequate, so childish, piteous, weak and disheartening that they show to what a sharp little thorn we will cling in order to smell at a rose.

One of the lessons brought to our attention by men who stand ostensibly before the world, and ostentatiously before God, as great thinkers, is the spectacle of a flower shrinking on the stem, withering and dropping the seeds from which will rise another lily. Artless hope! A new flower unfolds, but where is the old one? Rotting in the soil to nourish the next tenant of the clod. The same performance goes on with human beings, save that we do not die to drop our seed. Yet here it must be remembered that it is not the blossom but the bush that is the individual, the person. The flower is but a beautiful manifestation of the sexual parts of the bush. Is your father immortal because you live when he is dead? Is the oak tree, sculptured into furniture, an immortal oak because its acorn sprouts again? Poor child of death, no. The immortality is not in the tree, but in the oak idea. Who or what is that idea?

Another analogy of which we hear is of the sun, as that: At night the orb of day sets with gloom, and darkness is over the world, but on the morrow its immortal light again breaks forth to gladden us. This, although a more splendid illustration, is more easily refuted. The sun does not set nor is it ever in darkness. It is always bright in its own beams. When we have night, the solar blaze is still making day on the other side of our world and on other worlds. The phenomenon of night and day is not more proof of immortality than is the turning of our heads from a bright object and looking back again.

There may be eternity in mankind, but it is probably in the human race as a life-producing colony, not in the integer man. Man is immortal, but, as yet, not each man.

There is in us a yearning for a deathless career. That this ecstasy has been used as proof of its own ultimate fulfillment is one of the many cajoleries to which human nature has subjected itself.

Even one of most atheistic perversion must admit that our temperaments are finely balanced, too finely sometimes for stability. Our emotions nullify one another, as if Some One had studied them to be just so. This suggests a careful Creator, but does not ensure a perpetual soul. We are deluded by error at every turn; for what if any purpose we do not know. One of the most fascinating of emotions is that alternate passion and depression, faith and jealousy, vivacity and dejection, fervor and dullness, namely, the so-called divine sentiment that exists between man and woman. Yet apparently that sentiment is a servant to the physical consummation that is all the while surreptitiously re-peopling the earth while others are dying.

And, as love serves this purpose until we lose our beauty and have no use for the world, and it none for us, so may the emotion of hope be put among our others with equal cunning and for no further divinity. Hope leads us to effort as a tightly-wrapped prize hung up for competition. But, as love is useful only to the youthful, perhaps hope is only for the living.

While we live, hope serves its purpose. When we shall be dead, we shall have no comprehension of things and it will matter not how we have been seduced into religion, nor how long we shall be dead; for we shall not know. Has God deceived us? No; we deceive ourselves.

Many people have died surrounded by the living; yet of these there have been few seen departings of any Heaven-fated spirit they might have had. This is not proof there were none. For our eyes may be of too coarse instrumental power to behold the mid-heaven cherished by the living bosom. Or the fault may be in the condition of the light, it being unfavorable to observance. That is possible in view of recent discoveries in light and ingredients of light.

We have solemn accounts of ghosts in war-like accoutrements and apparel. A ghost should be nude. Metal and woven fabrics have no phantoms unless they are phantoms at all times. We can even go beyond that and declare that this soul, this earthless ward of an earthly church, has not necessarily a human form. Our body is the medium of the organs within, a system of conduits for the use of our carnal appetites and the economy and wastes thereof. These, I take it, are not characteristic of the spirit. Should the soul have no stomach, bowels, lungs, heart, blood, etc., it need not possess the shape that compactly carries this apparatus.

If each of us has an immortal soul why is

not that possession self-evident? If life is a thoughtful spirit why does it not know of its own existence or regard the presence of the flesh as foreign matter? Why has it any apprehension that this soft-moving statue of visible complexion will some day perish miserably and drag down all thought into eternal death? If the brain is not the mind, it is so vitally related to it that we fear the soul could not think without it and its blood-flames of life.

If the soul does not know itself from the body, will its emancipation bring further knowledge? Or, is emancipation, under such conditions, possible? To say that the spirit freed from its corporeal partnership will have its own mental equipments is to say that the part is more mental than the whole; that flesh is a stupefaction, and that knowledge will rise from the corpse.

Then, again, as to the senses; are they attainments of the flesh, and the freed phantom without use of them? In such disadvantageous condition, the soul would be a mere life principle and without employment unless it have new harmonies of its own. It might no longer hear music but be music.

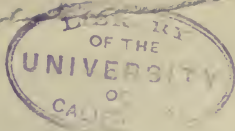
The existence of a soul does not require a postmortem Heaven. An angelic reservation of this sort would be contrary to the economy of things as we know them. That an amorphous spirit should occupy paradisial space forever as a reward for the few days' questionable virtue while sojourning here, or that

it should suffer torment for the sins of a willful flesh-material that allegedly is no part of itself, is a thought that Nature does not express nor Authority expound. The orthodox Heaven is a lazy, jejune, sexlessly lascivious place. And God has not to our eyes yet shown a spot of laziness in Nature.

It might be that this Vatican within our worthless bones creates its own Heaven and Hell as a kind of dream after death. That there is life and thought in the brain after the heart has stopped and the breath gone and the body cold is possible. The brain would not need more than a very little stagnant blood to do a little thinking. The very act of decomposition might cause a real mental action in the brain. Whatever has been the habit of thought or conscience of the individual would surround itself with adequate visions.

There are two other futures for the separate man that may rescue him from loathed mortality.

The first is in the possibility of acquiring such a knowledge of ourselves that accidents will mar and not kill, disease will be readily cured, and old age unaccompanied by physical defect, temporary death by violence a matter of resuscitation, the laws of reproduction be controlled, or the spaces of the air and perhaps other planets be occupied; or appropriating a more spiritual mind, we may solve the illusion of the flesh and understand that matter has no sensation in itself and that reproduction of beings is a useless multiplication of at-



tention and therefore a constantly moving dividend of love.

The second hope is not a spiritual one. It is on the theory that we are material and matter is indestructible. If consciousness be made of indestructible stuff, the flesh could suffer death and its atoms continue wherever they are cast, until opportunity, through vegetation and so forth, brings one of them into the molecule impregnated upon a future parent.

For instance, assume imperishable pieces, or atoms, of consciousness; the owner dies; these atoms cease thought, not being assisted by the blood; but they remain unchanged, awaiting such assistance. Whatever becomes of these atoms—if hundreds of years afterwards they become a part of the soil or atmosphere and are taken up in vegetation—they may enter into any living creature and eventually man. But this is a hazardous journey, and in any stage they may be expelled from the body in the course of its animal functions. Even should some almost reach the goal by getting into the human blood, there is very small chance of one particular atom uniting at the proper time and place with other atoms in fertilizing new life. Then too is the likelihood of that atom becoming part of a plant or beast, and the theory of reincarnation suggests itself. This human atom might be unable to think until properly stationed in its own environment or it may influence life wherever its destiny runs, and thus leaven the whole lump. The brain might be myriads of such atoms, and, of all who have

died, there would always be many in readiness for another human being. There is no evidence of an atom carrying a memory of its former habitat. But we are content in finding ourselves alive without such memory.

However, we must have been at some time some other form of life, or many forms, animal and vegetable, which nourished our fathers' loins and feed us now; although our memory does not go back into the thoughts of these animals. Yet if we had to depend on our own memory we would not know the manner of our birth. Not even does memory go into the first year of our lives, when there is a complete but uneducated human being to bear a consciousness into maturity.

Arises the question, Would it not be possible for many lives to spread from one man; that is, in time there be many Julius Caesars, even living at the one time? So it would seem. For who denies that in a way all men are brothers and very much alike?

We are of the earth, and man gradually assimilates the eatable beasts and vegetables about him. All of us, plant, beast and man, cultivate the thin upper turf, and, in time, the same material earth is used over and again. We should be buried in the wheat-field, not in grave-yards. Perhaps this is a base kind of immortality, after all our dreams, but immortality it is. Written history becomes the preservation of intellect and by our efforts we can make our world more pleasant for that time when we shall appear in it again.

So many religions have been given to us! But we can demur that to the living they neither offer anything new nor explain the old. As far as we know, religious duties are a worship at the shrine of an interrogation point. Nations glitter and fade like trees between summer and autumn; religions flourish and fall with them as if they were sustained by temporal power; and gods die for lack of worshippers.

Whereupon comes to us the thought of the pleasant relations boasted of by the ancients; comes the misgiving, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Is God alive and able to communicate with us or are we dropping through space on a spent world, dancing in our bright garments in an eve before Waterloo?

For explanation we must trust to science or to death. We may some time solve the situation; but in our present state, science is like a wanton boy peeping under the robe of Mother Nature. We do not understand the mature mysteries of her love and hate.

The human race follows science grudgingly; if it ever tells us what we are, the knowledge may come so gradually that it will not be appreciated by those alive at the time. It, like other discoveries, will be taken as a matter of course and the world remain as selfish. The human race did not carry with it a traditional account of its development from the beast; and if it ever achieves evolution to something better than the present, there will very likely be

nothing left but a little internal evidence to prove the change.

Man was not created from the dust with a word, even as he is not now born full-grown. Thought created for itself its dust and worked up from that dust through beasthood into man. The manhead was a lesson a long time in learning. Darwin says that the love affairs of the brute caused evolution. But the sexual selection was the material part of it; vanity, thought, mind, spirit, the power to evolve, made the change. Sexual selection was the use of that power. God, or nature, or existence, being once less than man, looked up, and there was light; and man was made in the image of the brute.

Creation was a gradual thought; so too evolution; but not necessarily a good thought. It might have been spirit's forgetting of spirituality in pursuance and curiosity of creative thought. The law of compensation is terrifying. Perhaps to attain Heaven we must retrace the steps of evolution. Our greatest victories in the field of immortal truth might from now on be at the expense of mortal wounds. In the discovery of the principle of life might come the revelation that it is death; life being the accumulation of a poison; that poison being necessary to the action of the heart. Our beliefs will undergo great revolutions, and other Christs will walk on other waters before the strife is ended. Grief is selfish. Upon a loss we mourn lest we be unable

to enjoy the future. Children, we should be grateful for what we have had.

In trying to understand God we should look into ourselves rather than the hidden places among the stars, where, perhaps, other worlds are telescoping for Him.

When we have thought other thoughts, comes the conception that all we see is unreal; that all is infinite mind; that matter is falsity; flesh a belief; and feeling an error.

Thinking of God when He said, Let there be light, who, including even God Himself, can declare that what He saw was not merely the reflex of an omnipotent imagination, and that we, the many reproductions of His mind do not but still see that fancied sun which infinity made appear from within Himself?

It is hard to consider the world as made up of two elements, matter and spirit. To many, spirit is merely etherealized matter; but such ideas are lack of fancy. Either we are all material or all spirit. Flesh could not act upon mind nor mind on flesh unless one were the product of the other. If mind is produced of matter, it is a little heat generated by the workings of the living body. If matter is the offspring of mind, it is a fiction, a phantasma or belief, and all our woes are errors of thought and not material. Then God is a truth to be lived and not an enthroned spirit to be seen or worshipped. God, ourselves! matter a dream! By selfishness and carnal transactions we nourish and solidify the falsehood that claims to be body and have sensa-

26 tion. By wisdom and purity we dissolve it and undo the illusions which we once called physical pleasure; through understanding, disburden ourselves of the fleshy incumbrance, proving the truth as we go along, finding death a result of sin, all belief and indulgence in matter being sinful to the spirit, and thus may we achieve immortality without entering the tomb.

THE SHROUD OF THE LIVING

I walked across the landscape of the world,
Whose fragrant hills and furnishings of flowers,
And rivers tortuous, and branches curled,
Were spaciouly established there in bowers.
I walked the path of graves and read the stones
Cut to commemorate the mindless dead
And advertise the virtue of those bones,
Whose vanity in death still raised its head.
Death decorated seemed no whit less fair,
With weeping sculptury and many a grace,
Designs and echoing vaults and flowers rare,
As were no corpses underneath the place.

I stood upon the sands, and forth beheld
The ever-changing but immutable sea,
Whose crooked shore of billows loudly belled
And 'larmed the proud conceits that played in me.
What baubles are we filled with evil pride,
Which from the scant in formidable soul,
Would stink in Hell (if we that shall have died
Be worthy such a penitential hole.)
I thought that if in pleasure I be found
By you, do not recoil in ugly fright,
Seeing my brow with shrunken horrors bound,
For I have sorrows for the longest night.

For I am dead, (or, death is couched in me)
Which to forget is now beyond my part.
To lock the landscape with a door and key
Were less than bolt that knowledge from my heart.
O world, my world, I have surveyed your charms;
Your women and your music I have known;
But beauty ever tells my dotting arms
The form I clasp is death's and not my own.
Your wisdom is to give despair a drug,
While mouthless Time its breathing prey devours.
The ignominy of death for us is dug;
The foul taint of mortality is ours.

The world's philosophy is faintly writ
To sweeten to our fears the nasty grave,
Else the most holy saint that hope e'er quit,
In death would tumble like a poisoned slave.
Out of the icebergs of the past we come;
What frigid end awaits, we cannot gauge.
Is pride so deaf or is creation dumb
That still we hope for life beyond our age?
As light prevails in the surrounding dark,
Hope shines, a lamp within our meagre ken;
But when the oils are sucked within the spark,
The waiting darkness closes in again.

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