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I, YAHWEH

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# I, YAHWEH

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*A Novel in the form  
of an Autobiography*

ROBERT MUNSON GREY

1937

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I, YAHWEH

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The name *Yahweh*, God of the Hebrews, is believed by scholars to be the true form of the word which appears in our English Bible as *Jehovah*. It has in the Hebrew text, which omitted vowel sounds, the four-letter form *YHWH*. Owing to its mystical, sacred character, it was not pronounced by the Hebrews or the Jews, but the word *Adonai*, "my Lord," was substituted for it in reading aloud from the Scriptures. Christianity took over the Jewish conception of God and endeavored to universalize it. The Hebrew word *Yahweh* was displaced throughout the Greek-speaking world by the Greek words *Kurios*, "Lord," or *Theos*, "God."



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# I

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## BEGINNINGS OF A GOD

I, YAHWEH, God first of the Hebrews and afterward of the Western world, do write, that the children of men may know me and the greatness of my power.

*Herein are told what things I have wrought on earth and what I shall yet do with the nations which serve me in singleness of heart and with obedient hand.*



I know not whose prayer gave rise to my being. Who, indeed, can remember the circumstances of his begetting? I recall only the mighty solitude of the world wherein first I found myself.

There was a great plain which lay round about the city of Ur in ancient Chaldea. Thither do my earliest memories return.

On the plain great distances led the eye to the horizon and the mind out beyond the circle of the sky to something that defied the eye's seeing, the source, perhaps, of existence, throbbing with that energy which maintains the endless modes of becoming.

Oft did I sense a movement about me that told, as I thought, of a mystic passer-by whose footfall was bright with the dust of stars. Though the eye could not discern him or the ear mete his pace, yet did his silent coming and going disturb both gods and men with expectancy.

In those lonely places where this invisible majesty made itself most kindly felt, I, though a little god with few to show me reverence, knew no envy of those elder gods whose temples, richly adorned in Ur, were thronged with worshipers.

I saw that many of the children of men who trod the plain were moved by the invisible presence. The solitary wayfarer, awed by some prompting, stopped if haply he found a lone tree, and spake a brief thanksgiving for its shade; or drank water from a brook and withheld not the grateful word; or was lifted up in mind as he rested on a high hill. "O kindly spirit who livest in this tree," he would say; or, "Thanks be to him of the brook whose hand hath cleft the rock at the source of its flowing"; or again, "Blessed be he of the hills, who maketh their heights a defense against the stormy winds."

Hearing such words, I would cleave to the speaker, thinking to read in his face that which fitly answered to the splendor which enwrapped the world.

On such occasions I would see — or did I but think I saw? — a being, insubstantial as the air and more sprightly than a mote in the sunbeam, arise from the water or emerge from rock or tree. But if perchance I called, greatly wondering, "Art thou of the nature of the brook or tree, or comest thou wholly of man's gratitude and desire?" then would the shy spirit vanish as it had come.

Nevertheless, whether by the upward-tending thoughts of men or by some power hid from my knowledge, the land was filled with beings who, though so frail at first, waxed

strong and courageous through the continuing voice of prayer.

And I was wont to say: "Would that I were god of the watercourses, the uplands or the wooded places, or yet of the meadows where flocks and cattle graze. Would that it were mine to bestow the gifts of sun and rain upon the children of earth, or to ripen the grain for their harvests. Then would man know me for his friend, and together we might seek unto that mystery of being upon which, mayhap, the life of both man and god reclines."

For I clave to man.

But nay! I did not belong among the free gods of the open country. My rightful dwelling was in Ur, with a man called Abraham, in the back part of his house where the bones of his fathers lay buried beneath the earthen floor; for I had come to be ancestral god of his household.

In the city I found a grandeur unlike that which overarched the plain. The Chaldeans were notable builders and Ur was not least among their cities. Forasmuch as it was the seat of Chaldea's moon-god, its palaces and temples had been raised tier on tier, so that the city, viewed from afar, was like to a pearl hung between earth and heaven.

Within, the streets were made narrow that the houses might cast a shade upon the booths of the merchantmen. And out of the shadow of the stalls gleamed the colors of silk and woolen stuffs, richly dyed, of basins and pitchers wrought in bronze, and cups of beaten silver. Trinkets also were there, of carven ivory and camel bone, and ornaments of fine gold set with jewels. Thus, by their bright hues, the bazaars made amends to the street for the sunlight that fell not on its pavement.

One might not number the people who thronged the city — artisans, herdsmen and tillers of the soil, with soldiers not wanting who carried the authority and might of



Chaldea to distant lands, and judges with life and death in the keeping of their wisdom.

I was moved by this majesty of wealth and power, yet I said, "For all the cunning of his hand and the might of his arm, man hath wrought nothing answerable in worth to the look that is on his face when he lifts it to the sky."

But midway of the city rose the temples of the greater gods which, when I beheld how the people resorted to them, provoked mine envy. For I said: "What matters it that a light comes anon to the countenance of man, or that he is enthralled by that which beckons him from beyond the horizon? He seeketh ever to the gods of earth who have wealth and power under their hands."

Wherefore I longed that I too might have my courts of sun-dried brick, mine habitations decked in onyx and turquoise, and priests within my walls. Yet was I overyoung to crave the doing of such deeds as were done in the temples of Ur. I knew that the Chaldean gods were unclean and that I was not as they.

And Abraham communed with me often concerning those matters which he thought seemly in the gods and their worshipers. For Abraham was righteous above the priests, aye, even above the chief gods. He too had been much upon the plain and had felt the presence that seemed to come and go.

Thus do I remember Ur.

Now there be those who say that before my Chaldean sojourn one like to myself had been known among the Kenites, that homeless people who had wandered through the land of Canaan when no tribe had yet taken root in its soil. I know not, nor care. Still am I jealous to hold in recollection those solitudes wherein I awoke to full awareness of mine own being; aye, and to solemn wonder at

that primal mystery, the nameless fount of being, by which, as the ultimate secret, the mind of man is forever lured.



It came to pass throughout Chaldea, in a certain evil year, that the rains failed after the wheat-sowing when the seed was but lately cast. And the great river was low because the waters had not fallen upon the far mountains. Wherefore the young grain, which had come up thick and green, could not long withstand the sun; and all the fields began to wither.

When the folk who tilled the soil and they that kept flocks saw how it went with the land they were greatly dismayed and besought the priests for a reason and a remedy. And the priests said:

“Doubtless the earth-god who presideth over the growth of every living thing and giveth plentiful harvests when ye omit not his proper meed of honor is angered because of some neglect on your part, to punish which he hath prevailed upon Bel, Lord of the Air, to shut fast the chambers of heaven so that the clouds cannot come forth to drop their waters upon your sown fields. And he hath stayed the floods at their source, wherefore the river is shrunken between its banks and the ditches are empty. If his anger be not speedily turned aside ye shall perish by famine and even we who serve in his temple shall not be able to deliver so much as a remnant from his wrath.”

Whereupon the husbandmen and herdsmen besought the priests to intercede. And they of the temple made answer:

“There is nought to do now but to appease him with a gift. Let lots be cast, therefore, to choose which of your most pleasing maidens shall be sacrificed upon his altar.”



Upon hearing this counsel, each one who cherished a virgin daughter looked upon her in the hope that she might prove less fair than he had been wont to think. Yet none dared question the word that had come forth from the temple.

And it came to pass that when the most comely of the city's damsels had been brought into the market place and stood in a ring about the priests, the lot fell upon Ana, the daughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother. For which cause there was bitter grief in her father's house, and all her young companions gave themselves secretly to mourning.

Now the man Abraham had from his youth been troubled by the harshness of both gods and men in Ur, and, albeit not clearly, had questioned whether the majesty of the Chaldean plain might not itself testify to some god nearer his heart's desire than those his people worshiped.

Once indeed he had gone to them that ministered in the Temple of the Moon to inquire on this head. These had bidden him put aside such troublous thoughts; and they advised gifts lest the gods, overhearing, be angered. Yet after he had sacrificed his inquietude did but increase. Nor would the soothsayers have truck with his heresy to advise him.

Wherefore, inasmuch as he was the eldest son of his father, he might not show discourtesy toward the god on the day of Ana's sacrificing, lest the anger of the city be kindled against his family and the blood of them all be mingled with the maiden's. Moreover, in his heart dwelt a secret fear of the earth-god's power.

So it was that in the morning twilight Abraham and the chief men of Ur gathered with the throng in the court of the earth-god's temple. And as the pinnacle of the house caught the sun's herald ray there was heard the sound of a

drum beaten in an inner chamber. And while the drum throbbed, the doors were thrust aside and there appeared a company of priests in richly broided robes and miters, with golden circlets on their arms and breastplates of brass over their upper garments. Into the court they bore the maiden, bound, and naked save for her cords.

Now the temple was built of seven stories, each stage after the first being smaller than the one beneath, until the highest, which was the chamber of the altar. The walls were girdled with inclined passages that circled upward to the topmost platform and gave entrance to the shrine. Upon these the maiden was borne on a litter of ivory decked in costly stuffs and jewels like a queen's bridal couch, while the drum notes pulsed and those gathered within joined thereto the wailing of their prayers. On each stage a trumpet was blown, the child was beaten with a leathern thong, and the priests singled out by their chanting and the motion of their hands the points of her fresh beauty, that they might excite the desire of their angry god and thus appease him.

And when they reached the top they laid their living gift before the holy place where the god was and lifted a chant of praise to him who ruled the land from this exalted dwelling. And the men in the court below, save only Abraham, cried unto the god for rain to revive their parched fields, rending their garments and beating upon their breasts. Some of them plucked out the hair of their heads, and a few cut themselves about the body with knives. And when the zeal of the multitude would have abated, the chief priest made a sign for silence and drew from his girdle a bronze knife curved like a sickle, and he raised it aloft.

Abraham, seeing the blade flash, covered his eyes that he

might not follow its downward stroke. Wherefore certain men near to him murmured at his disrespect to the god, for by this sign they knew that he lent not his will to the sacrifice. But Abraham heeded them no whit, knowing, albeit from afar, the sweat that beaded the maid's white limbs and the terror of the god that looked out of her eyes. He thought how meet for life was she who went to death while her day was at the morning, and his heart was sorrowful within him.

But when he heard the shriek that died in her throat, the pity that was in his veins turned to anger, and he burst from the crowd and ran blindly from the temple court, cursing the earth-god as he went. And those that saw his face fell away before him.

As Abraham fled down the street he encountered a company of fair women, many of them honorable matrons of Ur, who came with wanton feet and flushed faces toward the temple. And his wrath waxed, for he knew they sought the holy court there to give themselves to the priests and others who might claim their bodies, according to the custom of the place on days of especial sacrifice.

Now the family of Abraham had from of old frequented the Temple of the Moon more than the house of any other god in Ur because their minds were awed by his serene way in the heavens. Hence Abraham bethought him now to visit the moon-god's sanctuary if haply in that cool twilight he might calm the vehemence of his raging. But having come to the portal he found no one save an aged woman who swept the threshold. And gathering breath, he asked her, "Are the priests of the moon-god within?"

And she answered, "They have been gone from their stations since before the hour of moonset."

And her bearded chin trembled under the grin of her



shrunk lips, and she cackled with laughter. Whereupon he asked sharply where the priests were.

“Ha!” she answered. “Where should they be but where the fair women have gone to conceive under the eye of heaven?”

Then the wrath of Abraham returned upon him and he cried, “May the god smite quickly those servants who desert his altars to run after pleasures in the abode of another god.”

But the crone answered, “Son, full threescore years have I served the household of the moon, yet never have I known any of the priesthood to forego these rites — no, nor the gods to smite on their account.” And she smiled as one who would say, “Were I minded, I could tell thee a tale. . . .”

Abraham answered, “Surely the children of men ought not to be conceived in this wantonness.” And he turned thoughtfully away to his own house.

Now I, Yahweh, write with full knowledge of what befell upon this day, for, curious to discover the ways of the elder gods with their people, I was emboldened on the morning to enter the earth-god’s temple in Abraham’s company. So it was that I saw Abraham in the court and followed him to the house of the moon. And as never before I delighted in his comeliness — in the strength of his loins, his shoulders’ breadth, the eagle look to which his face was molded, and above all else in his courage and his zeal for righteousness.

At the moon-god’s gate I marked him mine alone and studied how I might win him from all other gods. Wherefore I followed him not homeward, but crossed the clean-swept threshold, treading lightly lest the dust of the way fall from my feet upon the pale bricks of the floor.



The chamber into which I had come was beautiful, far beyond any that ever I had seen, but its splendor did only increase my wonder at that which I was minded to do. Nevertheless a strong purpose urged me on.

By a door in the farther wall I entered another court. Past the outer and inner keepers of the god's private gate I went, and no man saw me. I met the master of the temple harem and he perceived me not.

I came unhindered to the moon-god's seat.

And behold, one sat on the steps of the god's throne who was round of body and limb, but whose face, wrinkled and thin, was like a sun-bleached bone for want of color. His eyes spake a deep wisdom though he kept his tongue. In his hand he held a lotus plant with root and blossoms; and he did eat of the root.

Fearful, but running the danger of his wrath, I said, "Thou art Nannar, the moon-god?"

He showed no anger but spake from a vast calm: "Thou hast answered thy question in the asking. As for thee, what dost thou desire? For I perceive in thee another of those little household gods who find their stations irksome."

To this I answered boldly: "I am weary of dwelling in the back part of Abraham's house over the bones of his fathers, and having been often abroad on the plains I have felt that which moves me toward high adventure. And greatly do I long to show myself the friend of man. Nay, more; it is in me to be a worthier god than many of them that the Chaldeans worship, for Abraham speaketh oft to me of that which befits a god. Therefore, I pray thee, O Nannar, give me the knowledge that maketh a god great."



Nannar observed me, and it was as though a faint smile came to the wrinkles about his eyes. "Thou dost reach far above thyself," he said. "Art thou not overbold for a household god?"

Then said I, "Should it be counted against me that I long to rise above such an one as the earth-god?"

Now Nannar was pleased to hear me speak against the earth-god. He looked on me sharply and knit his brow. Then, with the nod of an elder deity, he gave me this oracle: "Thou shalt be a great god of a great people, forasmuch as, having a matter to accomplish, thou dost not fear to urge thyself where thou art not bidden."

Again faintly smiling the moon-god plucked a petal from the lotus plant and bade me eat it; and he placed two petals over the lids of mine eyes.

And behold! When I had eaten of the lotus the chamber where we had been was no more, neither was there earth beneath my feet nor sky above my head. I whirled at the center of a great void. Darkness was round about me.

Then I heard afar off a voice like to that of the moon-god which asked me, "What dost thou see?"

And I answered: "I see nought; here are only emptiness and darkness. But from below me and all about there soundeth a fury as of world crashing upon world."

When I had so spoken I strove to see into the void; and I heard a cry for light rising from the midst of it. And light broke, trembling, into the darkness. Whereupon I saw that chaos lay beneath the light.

Again came the voice of Nannar: "Seest thou man, or god, or any living thing?"

And I said: "Mine eye seeth no form; mine ear listeneth in vain for speech; but a presence moveth with power down the path of light. And lo, where it cometh it bringeth order into confusion; and form riseth out of the abyss."

And Nannar admonished me, "Let thine eye be quick and thine ear ready."

Then I beheld that the power wrought in the clear light so that of its fashioning came suns and stars, the innumerable host of the sky. And I saw that one of the lesser suns cast forth a part of herself as a leopard casteth her whelp. And the part that was cast off tore a fiery way through the flaming wilderness of heaven.

And because the moon-god questioned me again in his far voice, I said, "Neither is there yet a god."

The aimless raging of the stars ceased; sun and moon found their paths; Orion and the Pleiades took up their stations, and the Little Bear crouched by the polestar. The whole heaven was composed above my head.

Even then I saw no god.

Afterward I stood upon a world that lurched and tumbled beneath my feet. I saw mountains that rained fire upon the barren waste of land. Above the hissing seas boiled clouds of vapor lashed with flame.

But I saw not any god of earth or fire.

Then, formless, unseen, yet mightily felt for its majesty, the power that had come down the path of light sped across the seas, and the waters thereof were cooled by the wind of its passing. No voice was there, nor language, but as at a word of bidding the salty waste answered to the wooing of the light and the seed of life sprang in the sea. And the waters teemed with living things.

But no god lifted his head from the sea.

The power swept over the land, and its wake was green with grass and trees and all that groweth out of the soil. And the dead air was quickened with the breath of growing things.

Yet saw I no god of planting or harvest moving in the grass or beneath the forest trees. And there was no prayer but the wordless breathing of unfolding life.

The power circled the earth in the vault above, winnowing the air as it went. Lightnings flashed before it and rain fell behind, and the thunder of its flight shook the heavens. And when it had passed, the great dome above the earth was filled with all manner of fowl and winged creatures. And I saw monstrous beasts flying heavily in the air and wingless birds with no songs in their throats hopping over the face of the ground.

The moon-god questioned me yet again: "Seest thou a god?"

"There are herds in the valleys and flocks upon the hill," I made answer, "and the sky is dark with the flight of birds. But I see no altars prepared for them, nor any god to demand their sacrifice."

Then came Nannar's voice: "Such is the nature of the gods that they cannot be where man is not."

Again I looked upon the earth, and I saw that there were men who walked erect. They spake warily to their fellows, and the pain of thought was graven in their faces, and they peered over their shoulders fearfully as they went.

Nor did any god attend their hurrying feet.

And I felt compassion for the children of earth who fled they knew not what.



The petals fell from mine eyelids and I blew a shred of the lotus from my lip. The floor of the chamber was under my feet again, and the ceiling above my head. The walls were about me, before, behind, and on either side. The moon-god sat upon the steps of his throne. To him I spoke:

"Tell me, I pray thee, the meaning of that which I have seen."

And Nannar answered, "I know not its meaning, foras-



much as thou hast looked on the first mystery and the last which is set for the minds of gods and men."

"Speak to me of man," I besought him, "and of the children of men who fled I know not what."

And he leaned his elbow to the step whereon he sat, and said:

"It befell in the gray morning of time that men distinguished darkness from light. And they peered into the shadows and beheld evils lurking there — famine and pestilence, fire and storm and flood, sickness also, and death. And they said: 'There are spirits in the shadows that are not friendly toward us. Come, let us offer gifts to these evil ones and beseech them that they plague us not. It may be that their wrath will be turned aside from us and we shall live.' For this cause they built them rude altars and offered thereon sacrifices of fear to the unfriendly spirits.

"Yet their eyes were not holden from the beauty and kindness that were wrought in the world. They beheld how dawn sprang clean and fresh from the black pit of night; how the day strengthened into noon. They watched while evening laid her quiet hand upon the earth. They learned to wait for the companionship of the stars. Thankfully did they gather the fruits of the field. And they said: 'There are also spirits of good in whose favor we may find increase of joy. Let us worship these with gifts and dancing and cheerful songs of praise.' Wherefore on the high hills they built them other altars, and in the depths of the groves, and beside slow-running waters.

"Thus were the gods called into being by the hopes and fears of men's hearts."

I was astonished beyond measure to hear Nannar, himself a god, so speak. And I asked him, "Whence came the evils, and to what end are they in the world?"

And Nannar made answer: "Have I not said that this is a mystery past finding out? But consider man. He hath the power of doing and becoming. His mind hath been made for the finding of wisdom and knowledge; skill hath been put into the fingers of his hand; his heart is stout with valor so that with hope he strives against the evils that are in the world."

Then, lifting his hand, he said: "This is the knowledge for which thou hast asked — a god becometh great by finding and following that which moveth man most deeply in his heart."

Then answered I: "Hast thou not this wisdom? Why art thou not chief of the gods of earth?"

Nannar arose from the steps and, placing a silken cushion at his back, seated himself on his throne. From his loosened fingers the lotus plant fell to the pavement. The yellow lids closed over his eyes. His face was weary, but on it was a smile that I could not read.

And Nannar said: "The hour of incense is come. Leave me, I pray thee, for I would refresh myself with the smoke of fragrant burning."

And when I turned toward the threshold, eager to hear further counsel and loath to part from him when heaviness was on him, he called to me: "As thou goest out bid the chief eunuch send me Nin-Gal, the moon-goddess, to comfort me. For thyself, ask of him a brodered cloak, and he will give it thee."



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## II

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### FOOTPRINT ON THE MOON

ON A CERTAIN night, when Abraham was abroad on the plain and I not far from him, he saw that a part of the moon was cast into shadow; wherefore he said: "A god of great majesty is passing by above me, and his foot hath trodden on the rim of the moon. It is doubtless he who hath spoken to me of late in my dreams when I have slept in this place."

Then he prayed: "O thou who lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity, who yestereve didst speak to me the while I dreamed on this very ground: I am too weak for the thing which thou dost require of me. Who am I to rebuke before other men the mighty gods of Ur and those who serve them? Have regard for mine humble estate, I pray thee, and deliver me from the charge which thou hast laid upon me."

Great was mine amazement at this tale of a dream in which Abraham had been bidden to rebuke those of Ur; and when I looked on the moon and saw there the similitude of a footprint, I thought on what things I had seen in the temple of Nannar and of the mystery above the world and in it. And awe fell upon me.

Nevertheless, greater than mine astonishment and awe was my purpose to separate Abraham from the gods of Ur, that he might be mine alone. And the rich cloak I wore lifted me with pride and the assurance that now was I in truth as one of the elder gods. Wherefore I cried out: "Surely thou art mistaken. Thou shalt not go into Ur to testify against the gods. Men will rend the heart from thy body if thou defame their gods. Rather shalt thou get thee from Ur, and from thy father's house, and from thy kindred, and shalt come into a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation in which all people shall be blessed."

These words spake I in haste, being driven by my purpose. Nor did I know any land into which I should lead him.

When Abraham saw me resplendent in the cloak which the moon-god had given me, he knew me not for his household god. On this account he asked, "Who art thou, and by what name art thou called?"

Now in certain tongues of the East was a word that had the meaning, *I will be*. And the sound of it was as when one doth say *Yahweh*. Therefore to Abraham I said: "I am he that will be thy god; I will be thy guide to a goodly land; I will be thy defender, and thy shade from the heat of the day. And forasmuch as thou knowest me now but in little thou shalt prove me all along the way, what *I will be* to thee and thine. Wherefore call me *Yahweh*."

I spake with what majesty I could command; but Abraham put his back toward the moon and peered into my face. And he said: "Thou art mine own household god! Whence camest thou by that goodly cloak?"

"Didst thou give it me?" I asked him.

And he said: "Nay. Thou knowest that such a gift were not within my power."

Then I asked further: "Knowest thou where in Ur such a garment might be found, save in the habitations of the greater gods?"

And he answered, "Nay."

Then said I: "Let it suffice thee that thou seest the god of thy family appareled like unto one of the principal gods. Trust, then, in a majesty that thou knowest not of."

And Abraham revered me for the cloak's sake. Yet his mind was not persuaded, for he said: "I cannot go afar with thee alone. If I fare beyond the bounds of Chaldea to a new land I shall be cut off from all help. Though the gods of Ur be partly evil, yet have they power."

Then said I: "With me alone of all the gods canst thou safely go. For as thou sayest, Nannar and the earth-god and Bel have no power beyond the border of Chaldea. But forasmuch as I am thy family god, the spot where thou dost pitch thy tents will be my rightful habitation. I shall be god of the wayside until we come into a new country which I will make holy unto me and thee."

Abraham marveled at this saying and took courage of it, but his mind questioned still. Wherefore he faced toward the moon whereon the footprint lingered, and casting himself to the ground face downward and at full length, he hid his face in his mantle. And he bade me stand behind him.

Then he shook off his sandals that he had loosed. And he said, "Place thy foot in the hollow at the sole of my foot, that I may know where thou art."

And when I had so placed it, he said: "If thou art a mighty one among the gods, and if thou wilt lead me to a new country, guarding me along the way, and if thou wilt make my people great among the children of men, as thou sayest, let there be markings of thy finger in the sand before my face. This shall be a token between me and thee."

Behold a strange thing! While the man prayed thus and



I stood behind with my foot in the hollow of his, there came a wind which played with a palm branch and drove it across the ground. And markings appeared as though a finger had written in the sand. And Abraham doubted no more. And he said: "I knew that there was one greater than the gods of Ur who spake to me in my dreams; and lo, I have found him within the narrow chamber of mine own house."

As for me, I would have said, "It was but the wind and the branch of a palm tree." But I saw the joy in his face. . . .



Abraham straightway gathered his family and his flocks and went out from Ur, though he knew not whither. Each morning he traveled away from the sun, and he hastened toward the place of its setting at the close of day. And I, Yahweh, was with him wheresoever he journeyed.

Even so did I become the special god of Abraham and of his people, and even so did I set my foot upon the way of becoming the god of the great Western world that was yet to appear.

Mark this now of Abraham, for in it he was like all good men who worship the familiar gods and trust in them. When grass was scant for his cattle he prayed for guidance to other pastures; but when he had prayed his own eye looked over the plains more searchingly. When he committed an evil — as all men do — he sought my forgiveness; yet even as he called upon me did he cast about how he might of himself amend his ways. When he fell into despair it was of me that he asked deliverance; nevertheless there was in his own soul that which responded. Thus from time to time there came to him a sense of deep peace and

warm security. And Abraham said, "Behold, it is the work of Yahweh."

Now, it is true of the gods that they take their thoughts and the nature of their desires from the folk who worship them. As a man is, so is his god. Men pass away; but the gods remain from generation to generation. Thus it comes that an older god takes not the whole form of his mind at any time from one man. The stamp of former years is upon him when a new worshiper first approaches his altar, and strong minds can but modify, not make anew, the gods they worship.

Yet forasmuch as I was a young god of unformed character, what Abraham was I became. And forasmuch as I was god first of a man who had no taste for evil and yearned after the good, so inclined I toward purity and justice and righteousness. Furthermore, when Abraham came upon a new people and found that which was worthy in their god, he said, "This pertaineth also to my god, Yahweh." So was I dowered with that which was best in all the gods of the lands through which we journeyed.

But fearing lest I become as the gods of Ur, Abraham made it ever his purpose to protect me against temptation.

Even so did he protect me upon a time when we traveled with his numerous caravan through the desert places that lay on the hither side of the land of Canaan. For it came to pass that the well where we would have rested at noon-day was dried up, and Abraham rode forth upon an ass to try if the next water spring still flowed. Many times did he see palm trees that were not, and when at last we came to the true well he put forth his hand into the water if so be his eye had deceived him yet again.

But even as he stooped to slake his thirst he heard that which made him lift his eyes; and he arose and saw a woman dancing in the cool shade of the palm trees. She



was a woman of a delicate yet lively beauty, and there was a strangeness in her dancing whereat he marveled greatly. For under her feet on all the ground there was a tangle of stout briars, yet her feet touched not the thorns, although her eyes were closed. Moreover, a song of exceeding beauty came from her mouth, albeit she moved not her lips. And even as Abraham marveled she cast aside her garment. And lo, she was of a smooth brown color, like to a daughter of the desert, and the moisture of her skin glistened in the light while she stepped and spun on her toes, lightly avoiding the thorns.

Now Abraham was astonished beyond measure at this sight, and his blood warmed toward the dancing woman until he ardently desired her. And while he clapped his hands to her singing he cried out, saying: "Tell me, I pray thee, how is it that thy feet tread not on the thorns though thine eyes be closed; and how can there be song when thy lips move not?"

And the woman smiled and answered him: "A she-spirit of the desert possesseth me, singing through my lips that are closed and guiding my feet surely to avoid the thorns. For the free spirits of the waste places give a joy to those that worship them which stern gods like thine give not." And having spoken she danced the faster so that Abraham grew faint with her whirlings.

As for me, I heard her song with gladness, and I yearned toward the merry spirit that kept her feet and whirled her body and filled her throat with music.

Then spake I in Abraham's ear: "Is it not a cunning and knowing spirit and pleasant withal, forasmuch as the woman toucheth not the briars with her feet, and openeth not her lips in the singing, and hath joy in the corners of her mouth? Shall we not draw near?"

But Abraham, hearkening, mounted quickly on the ass

and hasted from that place, though the pleasant woman cried after him and he, in his desire, was loath to part from her.



Now hard by the spring of water were rocks and a cave therein. And Abraham, having entered the cave, spread his mantle across the mouth thereof. And he communed with me concerning this matter in the gloom of the cave.

But when Abraham did take again his mantle to come forth from the cave, lo, the woman stood before him. And Abraham was wroth on seeing her. Yet he marked that her garment was upon her limbs, and that there were tears under her downcast eyes, and that her hands lay crossed upon her breast after the manner of a suppliant. Therefore he hearkened when she spake softly and said: "Why dealest thou so hardly with thine handmaiden, my father, and why dost thou flee from me, seeing that my heart desireth to be with thee? For I have heard of thy goodness and greatness and how wise is the god whom thou dost serve. Take me into thy caravan, I beseech thee, and let me be one of thy lesser servants. Show me that pity which men say thou hast, for I am an orphan and husbandless and there is no one to stand between me and the hardness of life."

And Abraham said: "Nay, it may not be. There is room in my household and in my caravan for thee, but in the house of Yahweh is no room for spirits so cunning as that which useth thee."

And the woman answered: "Fear not, my father, for there shall go with me into thy caravan no spirit of the desert. Yahweh is thy god. He shall be my god also, and him only will I serve."

And Abraham took the woman to his caravan and she

became the handmaiden of his wife, Sarah. And the woman's name was Hagar.

In those days Abraham grieved sorely because there were no children in his tent. For a man's wealth doth not lie wholly in his cattle, but also in the number and vigor of his sons. And the sheiks of the plain laughed because he had no son, and mocked me, his god, saying, "What kind of god is this that cannot open the womb of Sarah?"

Therefore Abraham took to himself Hagar the handmaiden; and she bare him a son Ishmael to give him comfort in his age. And Hagar said, "It is for the honor of Yahweh, that he may keep the promise made thee to the intent that thy family should be a blessing to all the peoples of the earth."

Then it came to pass that Sarah bare Isaac. And there was strife in the tents of Abraham. Sarah looked with jealousy upon Hagar and the serving-woman beheld with envy the kindlier lot of her mistress. And there was bitterness between Isaac and Ishmael.

The heart of Abraham was heavy and his mind sore perplexed because of the strife in his tents, yet he forebore to judge harshly between the women and their sons, forasmuch as he cherished both lads well.

And he said: "It is hard for a family if there be a confusion of blood in its tents. Even so would it be for my people should confusion of gods come about and the nation be divided and strive each man for the honor of his own." Therefore he made solemn covenant with me that there should be no other gods nor images in his tribe which was destined to become a great nation.

But the servingmen brought images of the she-spirits into their tents, albeit secretly, for fear of their master. And they inflamed themselves with the images and wrought



lewdness among the handmaidens. And all the people of Abraham's household yearned after the lusty spirits that brought the urge of desire upon them. And they said: "Doth not all life come through the love of two? How, then, can we become a fruitful and mighty people if Yahweh abide alone? Will not desire cease in us and we become barren? Will our cattle multiply or the plains bear their grass if there be not fecund spirits among us?"

Thus it came to pass on a certain day in the springing of the year that Abraham saw an aged herdsman bowing before an image under a budding tree. Whereupon he cried out and said, "What dost thou under the tree, and what is that before thee on the ground to which thou bowest thyself?"

And the old man answered: "It is a she-spirit of love and pleasantness. For is not this the time of budding trees and of birds nesting in the thickets?"

But Abraham was exceeding wroth and cried: "Cast it from thee. Such things are an abomination to Yahweh."

Therefore the man made as though he would cast it away; but he hid it in the folds of his garment. And in the night Abraham heard the laugh of a woman from behind the curtain of the herdsman's tent.

In the morning Abraham called that herdsman before him, and when he had upbraided him, he asked, "Whence came these images among you?"

And the man said: "The woman Hagar, she who bare thee a son, hath showed us how to make them of clay. And we thought, 'Abraham doth but speak against the images lest Yahweh rebuke him of his covenant. For hath not a she-spirit joined his own heart to the heart of Hagar?'"

Then was Abraham smitten with shame and grief. And he sought Hagar out and said to her: "What is this that



plucked at the sleeve of his garment, saying, "Let us commune together concerning the things of thee and me."

Then they communed together. And Ben-Ammon spat contemptuously before Abraham and spoke largely both of what he knew and of what he understood not, and his manner was that of an oracle whose word cannot be shaken.

For the man who has got him great riches says in his pride: "Forasmuch as I am wise and skillful in the getting of riches, have I not wisdom to speak on all matters? Let lesser men hold their peace."

And he said craftily to Abraham, "How is it with thee, my poor friend, for thou seemest to be in a hard way with thy cattle?"

To which Abraham replied, "A murrain is on them, by reason of which the kine die and the ewes do not increase."

Then Ben-Ammon spake softly and said, "Bow thine ear to me and I will tell thee a thing." For he was a man of low stature. And looking first about the plain, he whispered, "Surely it is because thou hast neglected to give Yahweh that which nourisheth the life of a god."

And he put his mouth close to the ear of Abraham yet again: "Jared, my son, was a goodly lad, in age and comeliness like to thy son Isaac. And behold how my god hath prospered me."

But Abraham said, "It is not with Yahweh as with other gods."

Then did Ben-Ammon reproach Abraham, saying: "Art thou wiser than the priests who have been in the counsels of the gods since the founding of the earth? Consider the lion in his strength and the jackal in his wily doings. Strength cometh not save by devouring. Nor is it otherwise with the gods."

thou hast secretly brought from the desert? Get thee from this caravan and take Ishmael thy son."

And Hagar fell upon the ground and buried her face in Abraham's mantle. And weeping she said: "Have I not loved thee and comforted thee with a son? Wherefore dost thou now cast me out? Behold in all the earth there is no place where I may go. We shall become the prey of wild men and I shall be made a light woman among the desert tribes. Nay, it is not in thine heart to do this thing."

Abraham answered, "The soul must suffer for righteousness' sake, and he that would follow after Yahweh must endure hardness."

But Abraham sorrowed for Hagar with whom he had dealt hardly for my sake.



Hear now that whereof the scribes have written without full knowledge.

It came to pass after many years that a murrain troubled the flocks and herds of Abraham so that the ewes bare not and death smote down many of the choicest kine. Therefore was Abraham sorrowful, yet knew not how to repent him, forasmuch as his conduct had been just and upright.

On a certain day, while the cattle moved heavily from grass to grass and ate not, for that the curse was upon them, Abraham met a man at the crossing of two ways on the plain. The name of this man was Ben-Ammon and he was very rich. There was a garment of fine wool upon his shoulders, trinkets of precious metal hung around his neck on a golden chain, and there were rings in his ears. His beard was combed and it flowed over his breast, and the air was lively with the perfume of Araby wherewith he had anointed it.

Now Abraham saw not Ben-Ammon until that one

Now the lad Isaac was comely, and of a quick understanding, and gentle of heart, and when strangers spake well of him Abraham was wont to reply, "Is he not the gift of Yahweh?"

But Abraham from that day forth took no joy of him, for he thought only: "Yahweh is a righteous god. But mayhap the righteousness of gods is not as the righteousness of men." Yet he told not Sarah, lest the matter be too hard for her.

And he went forth into the night alone to ponder if haply he might save both his child and his god. And he spake aloud to me, saying: "I have kept the word that was between us. I have not worshiped other gods nor withheld that which was thy due. Nor is there anything that I would withhold from thee, save only Isaac."

But the words of Ben-Ammon had stirred in me the desire to grow strong, even as I had felt it on the plains of Ur. And the sternness of Abraham lay heavy upon me by reason of the merry spirits of Hagar. And I answered him and said, "Put softness from thee and make thine heart stout for the thing which must be done."

And when morning came, Abraham led Isaac away from the tents toward a hill where he was wont to offer sacrifice.

And behold, as they walked the lad put his hand into the palm of his father's hand trustingly. But Abraham looked not at him. Now verily when a man may not look squarely on the thing which he doeth, of a surety he doeth an evil.

When they had come to the hill Abraham bound Isaac on a bundle of faggots and laid him upon an altar of stone that he had raised at the top of the hill. And seeing his son laid ready for sacrifice, there came to him the memory of Ana who had suffered in like wise. And it seemed to him that Ana and Isaac were one and that he stood again in the earth-god's temple while the knife flashed upward in the



priest's hand and a maiden's shriek answered its downward thrust. And Abraham swooned with the love of his son that was on him. And out of his faintness there came to him a voice that said, "Arise and look upon Isaac thy son, and see what thine eyes shall see."

Then strength returned to Abraham, and as he looked on Isaac he felt more sharply than aforetime that life had ends other than eating, drinking and begetting. And though he had not the wit to put into speech a further thought — no, nor to grasp it fully — he cried: "Behold, Yahweh! It is the life of Isaac and not his death that shall give thee strength."

And the wisdom of Abraham's saying entered into me, and I repented of my cruel thirst for the blood of mine own people. Yet I said, "Nevertheless, give me at least a lamb from the flock to stay me." And Abraham sacrificed willingly.

From the day of Isaac's deliverance Abraham journeyed far, seeking the land that I had promised. He looked always for a city with righteousness for its foundation, and I with him; and though he found it not, at times he so lifted the thoughts of men by the courage of his seeking that some wrought righteousness in cities that were not righteous.

At last after many wanderings Abraham's firm step grew feeble, and his hand trembled on the head of his staff.

One night he went forth from his tent; and there came to him again the vision of one who walked abroad in the heavens, and Abraham saw the print of his foot upon the moon. Then he laid him down to sleep; and when morning came he waked not.



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## III

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### MOUNT OF MEETING

WHEN ABRAHAM died I fell into a lonely state. The people of his household owned me god of the tribe and worshiped after their manner. But none was like unto him.

Some were keepers of flocks and herds as he had been. Others, dwelling in the fruitful country whereto he had led them, became tillers of the soil and dressers of vineyards also. On every hillside that fronted the sun they planted their vines. Their corn grew rank and full in the fertile valleys. And when they tasted the fruits of their planting they folded the tents that had been in Abraham's caravan and built them houses and threshing floors.

Thereafter they sought no hardness to endure for righteousness' sake; rather did they concern themselves with the increase of their flocks and the yield of the ground.

To me they said: "Thou, Yahweh, shalt not know the perilous ways of the desert again. In these valleys between the hills thou shalt study to be god of harvests and plenty."

And they besought me to put my blessing on the plowlands in the spring, to send rain and sunshine in their due season, and to hold back the clouds when men went into the fields to reap the summer fruits. Also, I learned to bless

the rams and their ewes when the time for conceiving had come. For men said, "In the potent word of Yahweh is health and the increase of life."

Yet, being full, my people knew not content. And they said to me: "There are tribes of Ishmaelites that till not the soil, neither have they a god skillful with the ground and generous withal. But they have gold and silver and woven stuffs, dates from the palm and certain delicacies which they bring from afar. With these they would buy of us corn and wine, olives also and fine herbs."

And they said further: "Thou hast done well by us; but couldst thou not by taking thought make the barley fuller in the head and lengthen the new shoots of the vines? And it may be thou couldst find a word that would cause the ewes to conceive their young always by twos. Then should we have wherewith to trade to our advantage and to thine. A tenth part of the increase will we set apart for thee."

And they added thereto: "Think not that we are unthankful; but it hath been told us that in the land of Edom are clusters of grapes of a forearm's length, and in Egypt barley that lifteth not its head for the weight of its kernels."

Thus did they press me as one presseth the winefat for the last of its yield. And I bore with them until my labors caused me to loathe field and cattle stall.

Moreover, I looked abroad and beheld how the gods of other tribes had become mighty warriors. And I be-thought me how with a sword in my hand I might move as an equal among them. And because at the winevats and within the sheepfolds I found no room to exercise those nobler forces which Abraham had taught me to recognize, my hand began to tighten for the hard grip of the sword. But when the people knew of my desire they said: "Abide in peace until we become rich and numerous and until the strength of thine arm is increased to equality with that of

him who is mightiest among the gods. Then shalt thou stretch out thy scepter over all the earth. Nor shall any god think to sharpen his sword against thee."

Nevertheless, I went over into Moab in the season between the early and the latter rain and got me a sword of tempered iron which I hid under the threshing floor of one Aachan, who was priest in Beersheba.

But it came to pass that, inasmuch as I departed from time to time to practice with my weapon against the gods round about, the fields began to languish and the potency of my word over the flocks decreased. There came years of leanness and hunger when all that had been stored up during the fat seasons was eaten. The starveling ewes were barren and the kine labored in vain to bring their calves to birth.

Then a great part of my people said: "Yahweh is not as he was aforetime. Come, let us go down to Egypt, whose harvests fail not; where the life-sustaining corn spills through the cracks of the granary walls, and where is wine in abundance. With gold and silver in our hands we shall eat of the Nile gods' fruitfulness, and the wine of that good land shall fill us with gladness."

Howbeit, a few of them remained behind in the desolate habitation of their fathers, and I with them.

In the fullness of time they who had journeyed into Egypt spent their gold and silver for corn and wine and delicate food. And the dark people of that country made them as slaves and oppressed them mightily, so that they loathed their lives.

I said, "Let them prove now whether Set or Osiris, those gods of Egypt, will buy them dates from the Ishmaelites."

And in Canaan we heard of them no more for many generations.





At long length there came a wanderer up out of Egypt who said: "The children of Israel have become a numerous people and have stolen away by craft from Pharaoh to go into the land where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were. They seek after Yahweh, their fathers' god, of whom in the house of their bondage they have but newly heard, forasmuch as Moses, who leadeth them, hath spoken concerning him."

At this report I warmed toward the exiles and straightway went forth along the road that leadeth up from Egypt.

And I came to Mount Sinai in the wilderness, an awesome height, riven by lightnings and furrowed by the descent of rocks and waters through the ages. Behind and on either side it saw the seas, but in front it looked over the land of the Amalekites.

At first I walked softly on the mountain, being a god of sowing and harvest and long unaccustomed to the open way. Moreover, I was on land not mine own in a day when the gods went seldom abroad. But I thought on Abraham's people who could not be holden by the Pharaoh of Egypt, no, nor by the great gods of the Nile, and I took my Moabish sword and carried it bare in mine hand.

Now it so befell that, as I went round the face of the mount southward, I heard a great tumult and beheld two fierce gods of the Amalekites contending in the road. Wherefore I put my sword back at my thigh and drew my garment over it. And I bethought me: "Did not the going seem smoother by the northward side? And who knoweth but that the prospect is fairer where one may look over the wide plains of Amalek?" And I went lightly back and took the northerly road, until I came to a place where a great rock lay beneath a cliff. Behind it I made a booth of cedar boughs.





On a morning of clear light I saw a cloud afar off in the wilderness, and I said: "It is the dust of a marching host, Yahweh; behold where Israel, thy great and valiant nation, cometh to meet thee." I forgot the gods who quarreled on the mountain; nay, I remembered, but recked not whether they were near or far.

About noontide the host came up out of the wilderness and passed before me; whereat I was filled with astonishment. For I saw that they were a rabble, wretched and unsightly. Their garments were ragged and their feet went unshod, and their faces were hollowed by hunger. There was bitterness in the pools of their eyes, and as they went they murmured against Moses who had led them out from a land of abundance. And I asked, "Is this the people to whom I am god?" And I repented that I had come to greet them.

Yet had I refused this people, or they me, who now would be god of the Western nations?

Now in the midst of this lagging and complaining company there came one who bore a writer's inkhorn and pens and rolls of papyrus. Behind him walked a man who moved his lips and waved his hands as though he practiced an oration. Seeing him I said, "Surely he of the proud look and moving hands is Moses, the wise man of Israel."

But when I called he did but dab with his hand as though a gnat buzzed at his ear.

There passed by another, bearing a great shield and a sword of iron. And I saw that one followed him clad in the full panoply of war, beneath whose feet the stones of the way made loud complaint, forasmuch as he trod weightily on his heels.

When I saw him going thus, I said, "Nay, but without doubt this is Moses, the strong man of my people."

Yet when I called to him he frowned and glared about him as one who heareth the voice of an enemy.

Afterward there came one who walked alone by reason that the people left a space before and after. He marched with his head bowed, and his beard lay upon his breast. And because he went heavily and had none to attend him, I called not.

But when he came nigh the rock he brake suddenly from his dreaming and approached me where I was. "Art thou Yahweh, the god?" he asked, perceiving me.

I answered, "I am he."

He motioned with his head, saying, "Will it please thee to come behind this rock, that we may commune privily together?"

Wherefore I questioned whether this might not be Moses, for all he moved not his hands nor stamped with his feet.

Marveling how he knew me, I asked, "By what sign didst thou discover my name and abiding place?"

He pointed, and I beheld a bush whose leaves when the wind ruffled them seemed to burn with an ardent fire. And Moses said: "What time I fled Egypt for fear of Pharaoh and came to this land, where I joined myself to the wandering tribes of Midian, I led the flocks of Jethro, my father-in-law, priest of Midian, to this mount. And my spirit was heavy by reason of my people's sorrow. And behold! here did I see this same bush which burns with fire and is not consumed. And lo, there came a warmth into my breast that answered to the fire of the bush. And I heard a voice crying, 'Thou, Moses, art chosen to save my people.' Which voice, though it was familiar as mine own thoughts, was no more mine than is the thunder. And lo, this bush gave back the words, 'Thou art chosen.'

"Then said I, 'Nay, for I am an unready man.'

“ To which came the answer, ‘ Fear not, for I will be with thee.’

“ The wind blew, the branches of the bush tossed themselves to and fro, and the fire leaped on the branches. And from the leaping tongues came the echo, ‘ I will be with thee.’

“ Then said I, ‘ It is the god, *I will be*, who spake to our father Abraham.’ And I put my shoes from off my feet and worshiped. Thereafter I went down into Egypt unafraid and led this people up, promising that I would bring them to thee at the bush which burns and is not consumed.”

And Moses, worshiping me, said: “ When I was in Egypt and looked on the works of Set, the evil god, and of Osiris, who wrought righteousness with a slack hand, I thought on what things my fathers had told me of Abraham’s god who was righteous above all gods. And because I cherished thee in my heart thou didst bring me to thy seat. Blessed art thou, Yahweh, who wilt be unto us a sun and a shield.”

While I considered how to answer this, Moses turned his mind to another matter and asked, “ Sawest thou my brother Aaron, who hath a scribe, and Joshua, before whom was borne the two-handed sword? ”

“ Yea,” I answered, “ and I judged them men of mark.”

But Moses shook his head, saying, “ They are a weariness to me and a source of mischief to the people.”

Then he looked on the garment which I had brought of old time from the moon-god’s house, faded now from sun and weather, and on my feet splayed by the plowlands. But my sword he saw not for that it lay hidden beneath my cloak. And he said, “ Tell me truly: what manner of god art thou? ”

And I answered him truly, “ I am a god of harvests and plenty and I am skillful with the flocks and herds.”

Whereupon Moses turned as if to question the bush that



seemed to burn. And he said: "Nay! I was persuaded that thou wert of a greater dignity. It promiseth to go hard with thee and me, for this people hath been long in Egypt among men subtle in wisdom and governed by laws exceeding wise. It may be they will not follow a god who is a plowman and a tender of olive trees; nor will they serve one who keepeth the sheep."

Now I, who but lately had despised the shuffling host, was so pricked by Moses' words that at the moment I desired nothing more than to be accepted by the ragged legion as their god. And I rebuked Moses, saying: "Doest thou well to judge thy god thus? I am skillful with the ground and can satisfy the people with good things, if they press me not overmuch as did their fathers. Moreover, I am desirous of becoming a god of war. For the people's sake reject me not."

Moses gave me neither yea nor nay. He said only, "Abide here, I pray thee, Yahweh, until I return." And going down, he commanded the children of Israel to build them an encampment and dwell there certain days while he communed with me in the mountain. "For I have found Yahweh among the rocks above," he told them. "Surely I will bring you a good word from his mouth." And they camped before Sinai on the plain.

And Moses returned and, leading me to the pinnacle of the rock, conferred with me, saying: "Have patience, I pray thee, Yahweh, and know that it is not in my heart to show contempt nor to assume wisdom before the god of my fathers. Nevertheless, I must speak, for these people whom I lead are as a millstone round my neck, stubborn and rebellious. Yet have I said that I would show them a safe and fruitful country. Now, I perceive that thou art a kindly god, but without subtlety of wisdom, having been with the



sheep overmuch. Hear then the matter which I have learned among the Egyptians, and if it seem good to thee let this wisdom be thine for the guidance of thy people."

Thus it came about that through forty days he instructed me in the knowledge of Egypt, neglecting not to bear also upon the laws of Ammurabi, King of Babylon, the report of which had gone abroad among all the eastern nations. And I, being young, was eager and quick of understanding, so that I mastered the ripest thought which Moses did set before me.

Now when the forty days were well-nigh spent, Moses asked me, "Wilt thou give these matters upon which we have taken counsel to be an everlasting law unto thy people?"

And I said: "Why indeed should a law be given? Behold, there is wisdom and there is readiness among the people and the scroll of life lies open before their eyes that they may learn for themselves the right ways of doing. If they live and draw knowledge out of living, will they not come to understand what is good and what evil, so that they may cleave to the one and flee the other? I, their god, was god of the open way ere I set my hand to the plow or laid it upon the shepherd's crook."

But Moses answered: "Nay. To find the way for themselves were too perilous. The path must be clearly marked by a wisdom greater than their own, lest perchance they go astray and fall to destruction. Let there be ten words given for their guidance."

Then I asked: "Will ten words of law cover the whole of life? It seemeth to me that there should be more words than ten, if a law be given at all."

Moses asked, "How many fingers be on the two hands of a man?"

And I said, "Ten, if thou count the thumbs."

"I shall name each finger for a law," said he. "So shall Israel remember, and their seed unto all generations."

Thereupon he hewed out two tables of stone and graved words upon them with a graving tool. And when he had made an end he inquired of me, "Be these thy laws, Yahweh, which thou givest for the guidance of thy people?"

And I answered him, "Thou knowest."

Yet even as he turned to go down the mountain I questioned him, saying, "Will not the wisdom and law of which I am god require warlike might to uphold them?"

And he answered, "It may be so, but let us trust in law and wisdom first."

Now it came to pass that, as Moses descended to the host, a shower of thunder and rain brake over the mountain head, causing him to walk into the camp as if out of a cloud. And the people, who had been sore afraid when they saw the lightning play over the mountain and stab about them on the plain, were glad when they beheld the face of Moses.

Then he read aloud the writings that were on the tables, giving them for perpetual law. And the host rejoiced at the reading, for they said, "Assuredly there is a most wise god in the mount at whose mouth Moses hath learned these things that be written." And they inquired of him what manner of god I was. Whereto Moses replied: "Behold, he hath lately been a tiller of the soil and exceedingly skillful with olive trees and flocks. But aforetime he went much in the open way and trafficked with many peoples. And he is now a god of law and great wisdom. If ye learn his will and do it, ye shall prevail over all nations by the might of his wisdom. And there shall be no people like unto you in all the earth."



But Joshua, he that had the great sword, said: "When we come to Canaan there will be peoples round about to sow, and their gods to give the increase. Israel hath need of a god who can reap the whole land with a sword, that the good of all peoples may be ours. Is this Yahweh practiced in the use of weapons?"

And Moses told him: "He hath not accustomed his hand to the sword. But he is stout withal and knoweth well how to give plenty within our borders."

When they heard of plenty the people minded not Joshua, but they built them an altar in the midst of their camp and made ready to sacrifice unto me.

But when Aaron, the brother of Moses, saw the altar how it was made, he cried: "Nay, nay, good people. Not so, I pray you, but in this fashion let the altar be built." And he took the stones that were at the left of the altar and put them in the place of those at the right. And he signed above the altar with his hands until all were astonished at the weavings of his fingers in the air. For Aaron did as he had seen the priests of Egypt do.

Now Aaron knew not why he changed the stones, nor was there meaning in the motions of his hands. But he waved lightly in the air above the altar and said: "Left to right and right to left; it is better so, lest the god be offended by the plainness of your doings. Let all things be done subtly and with signs of mystery, and surely the god will be pleased and he will espouse you as a knowing and worthy people."

And the people standing round about admired greatly, for they said, "Aaron maketh a powerful magic."

Then Aaron called for the man with the writing instruments and wrote all things concerning the altar: what was



the length and the breadth and the height of it; and how the stones were laid; and which side fronted the east. For his custom was, when he had done a thing, to note it in a book. And if perchance one of the people did it in a different way afterward, Aaron would say: "Nay, nay, good friend. It was not so done aforetime." And after reading from the book he would ask, "Said I not so?" And he that had done otherwise would be persuaded by the words of the book.

Now upon that day when the children of Israel struck their tents to move forward, rejoicing that they had found a god to go with them, Aaron came and stood before Moses bearing in his hands a piece of acacia wood and a carpenter's hammer. These he fingered nimbly the while he muttered certain syllables over them. And Moses, being ever patient with Aaron, asked, "What new wonder hast thou there, my brother?"

But Aaron held back his answer and said, "Peradventure this god, Yahweh of the mount, will not go with us."

Then Moses sought to quiet Aaron: "Fear not. He will go."

But Aaron persisted, saying: "Nay, brother, it is much to be doubted. It seemeth to me that he may not go; or else, mayhap, if he goeth at the first, he may leave us later in the way. Hath he not by long continuance become a god of this mountain? Is he not a stranger to the ways of the desert, and, it may be, not inclined to travel abroad? Behold, this people will be in a sorry hap if after a time of tedious going his heart turn in longing toward his home and he leave them unbefriended on their journey. Now therefore come and see the traveling throne of this goodly acacia wood which I have fashioned for him. And tell me if it be not of a craftsmanship like to the cunning work of Egypt, contrived to delight a knowing god. Entice Yahweh, I beseech thee, to enter it, that we may carry him



with us. Then shall I, who am well instructed, prevail upon him to succor us in every time of chance and peril."

And as he showed to Moses a chest of acacia wood, he made signs with his fingers and spake magic words, saying thereafter: "There be courtesies, my brother, and secret rites, without which one may not win the favor of a god. Believe me, it is so. This people will do well to hear at my mouth of those observances which from the beginning have given success to them that worship the gods. Wherefore, I pray thee, let this Yahweh be under my hand."

Moses then looked on what Aaron had made; and he said, "It is nought but a great box with a lid upon it!"

"Not so," answered Aaron. "It is a traveling throne of expert workmanship; and as for the lid, it is to shelter the god against sun and weather." But in his heart he said, "Let there be a covering, lest the god see overmuch and like not what he seeth."

Then Moses, being weary of Aaron, made answer, "I will go into the mountain and inquire of Yahweh." And when he came to me, saying, "Wilt thou get into this chest, Yahweh, to ease me of this babbler?" I answered him, "Yea." For I said, "I shall be in and out as it may please me."

In the morning Aaron brought soil from the mountain and lifted a corner of the lid of the chest and sprinkled the soil within. And Moses stood hard by. And Aaron called to Moses: "Let one go up on the mountain and cut me a rod of a willow tree, that I may put it with this soil of the mountain within the traveling throne. Even so shall the god smell the earth and the sap of the rod from the mountain and be well content in strange lands."

Now Moses, though he despised this doing, himself cut a rod from a bush that grew by the stream where the host had quenched their thirst. Four new buds it held, two on either side of the rod. But when Aaron saw that they

were two and two, he said, "Nay, brother, but let there be two buds on the one side and three on the other." And when Moses inquired concerning the reason thereof, Aaron said, "It is better so, lest the god be offended." And Moses suffered him and cut another branch.

Then Aaron wrote in his book: "Dust of the earth, with three buds and two, alternate, upon a willow rod, newly cut. Let it be ever so in future time when the god goeth abroad." And he bowed himself this way and that before the chest, gesturing the while with his hands.

But it came to pass that Joshua joined himself to Moses and mocked, saying: "What manner of god is this that rideth as doth a delicate woman? Behold, we are abreast of the land of the Amalekites, a fierce people. Danger lurketh in the way. Take Yahweh, I charge thee, from Aaron and let him be under mine hand, that I may teach him the ways of warfare."

Whereto Moses answered: "Fear not at all, for peace is in the keeping of our god, and they that serve him will suffer no harm of any nation."

But Joshua complained: "It is hard, indeed, for a marching people going into a new and strange land if their god knoweth not warfare."

From that time he marched at the head of the rabble, and as he went he made a song to the measure of their marching feet:

Our god is a mighty god,  
And terrible in his strength.  
Behold, he smiteth nations that are very great  
And cleaveth a way for his chosen people.  
Yahweh doeth valiantly with his strong right arm,  
And there are no gods who can stand  
Before his fierce anger.

Now when Joshua sang and trod heavily with his feet, lifting them high as he went, the people took up his song and thundered on the earth with their feet also, and all together thus became a mighty army traveling in its strength. And they marched shoulder to shoulder, arrogantly, cheering themselves with this boastful song.

And it was good to swing along in my box to the rhythm of their lusty singing.



And lo, when the Amalekites heard the thunder of their marching and saw the fierceness of their aspect, they feared greatly. And they sent an embassy to the children of Israel, saying: "Go not across our fields, we pray you, but take the way round about the edge of the wilderness. Behold, it is an open way, and easy, to the land whither Israel doth travel. Trample not the corn, we beseech you, nor break the vines of our planting on which we and our little ones depend for sustenance."

Yet would not Israel hearken, because they thought: "Surely Yahweh will break a way for us through our enemies."

When the Amalekites saw that the children of Israel turned not back, but trampled the fields of standing corn, certain of the braver came out arrayed for battle. And from the beginning they made havoc of Israel, putting the people to the sword. That mighty man Joshua stood ever in the forefront of the battle and slew many of the Amalekites until the going down of the sun. Nevertheless, Israel was sore discomfited before the might of Amalek.

Now at evening Joshua stood before the chest that Aaron had made for me, and in his anger he cried out: "O mighty Yahweh, thou brave guardian of sheepfolds, wherefore



liftest thou not thine hand to defend the people who have fought courageously this day? Come out from thy box, and wield thy shepherd's staff for the defense of Israel."

And as he strutted before the host, mocking me, his hand was moist with sweat and with the blood of those Amalekites whom he had slain. And the spear which he brandished slipped from his grasp and struck the chest.

Now Joshua was a man of ready wit and knew how to turn a matter to account. When he saw that he had upset the chest, he pointed first to it and then to the Amalekites going toward their homes, and he cried aloud to the people: "Hear, O Israel! Yahweh the god hath come out of the chest wherein he slumbered while the enemy smote us. Behold, he pursueth them even now. See ye not where he cleaveth a way through their ranks? Follow and slay without mercy. The army of Amalek is routed! Henceforth Yahweh neither slumbers nor sleeps. Who can stand before his fierce anger?"

Then Israel took up the song of Joshua and pursued the enemy through the gathering night. And the Amalekites were seized by a great terror, for it was not their custom to fight after the fall of darkness. And the word went forth among them: "The god of Israel is a god of night and he is mighty in darkness. His power cometh on with the failing of the sun and his destruction lurketh in the thick shadows. Save yourselves, O men of Amalek!" And they fled in great confusion from Joshua and his company.

And lo, when I saw the frenzy of Joshua and the blood-eagerness of the people, when I beheld their swords red with death and smelled the flesh of the slain, the lust of battle leaped up in me, and I bethought me of the time long past when I had made trial of my sword-skill with the gods beyond Canaan. And I said: "Surely the love of strife is that deep thing in man's heart that affordeth



opportunity for his gods to become great. If I learn to smite more heavily than other gods, I shall be greater than they." What mattered it that I had sat in herdsmen's tents while shepherds bound the wounds of bleating lambs?

That night Joshua and all Israel rejoiced greatly over the victory and offered me sacrifices of blood.

But the battle was an offense to Moses, who had said at the first, "Let us go peaceably along the sides of the fields that pertain to Amalek."

So it was that I became a god of battle. And thenceforth I clave to Joshua, walking ever by his side and holding my naked sword in mine hand.



After their slaughter of Amalek, Israel fell back on the mountain to rest them and to recover from their wounds, which were grievous. And there was rioting in the camp from day to day because the warriors' hands were flexed to the grasp of the sword and men chose to fight with their brethren rather than fight not at all.

Then Moses enticed me from Joshua's side and took me once again into the mountain. And he chided me concerning the battle and bade me lay aside my sword.

Now there had come an abundance of quail into the region round about the camp of the Israelites. And while I was in the mount the people did eat of the quail until their bellies stuck out with fatness. But when they were surfeited, they came on a certain day to the cooking pits. And they complained to Aaron: "Will there be never an onion nor a handful of leeks to go with these miserable ravens, nor even a piece of melon or a fig to eat with our common bread? And ought there not to be at least a skin

of wine to pass from hand to hand when we have eaten? Who is this Yahweh who doth pretend to be a god of plenty? ”

Whereupon Aaron took his stand in the midst of the cooking pits and the bake ovens that he had made. And whenever one did turn a spit with a quail thereon, or did set the unbaked loaves into the ovens, Aaron would sign above the food with his fingers and murmur this syllable and that. And he said to the people, “ That there may be strength in the meat and health to the eater.”

And thereafter he answered their complaint, saying: “ It is so, it is so, even as I thought. We be midway, or thereabout — a little more or a little less, it matters not — between where the realm of the Egyptian gods ceaseth and that of Yahweh taketh up. Yea, I am sure that we be in the space between, but a little more nigh to Egypt. Wherefore bring me your gold that ye got by craft from the Egyptians ere ye left, and I, who am skillful in this manner of thing, will make you a bull. And it may be, yea, certainly it will be, that when the Egyptians’ gods see their image of fruitfulness set up here in the camp they will overpass the bounds of their realm to succor us with a more delicate food.”

And he made them a golden bull.

But Joshua, knowing it to be an abomination, cried out against the bull and its worshipers, rallying the men of war and exhorting them: “ Let him that is for Yahweh, our god mighty in war, fall upon them that bow themselves to this idol and slay them utterly.” And three thousand men fell that day.

So great was the clamor that Moses hastened to come down from the mount. And when we reached the wood that was at the foot of the mount we saw through its trees the idol that Aaron had made, and the raised altar and the

slaughter. And so strong was mine anger when I beheld the bull that the trees of the wood swam in a mist before mine eyes and the heavens glowed with fire.

Then I said unto Moses, "Stand aside until I smite these rebels, sparing only thee." For at that time I knew not that Joshua's men had said, "We are for Yahweh; let us defend his honor."

And Moses asked, "How wilt thou destroy them?"

To which I answered, "By making them smite one another."

And Moses said, "It seemeth to me that they smite right manfully even now."

"Yea," I answered, "but mark how here and there they grow weary. I must needs speak words of hate in the ears of them that are ready to cease."

And Moses asked, "Wilt thou in truth make a clean end of them, leaving neither root nor branch?"

And I said, "I will leave not so much as a seed, for they are a stubborn and rebellious people who have dishonored mine altar."

But Moses asked again, "Wilt thou not have mercy on the aged or on babes at their mothers' breasts?"

And I answered, "I will not have mercy on a man in his dotage or show pity to an unborn child that hideth in the womb, for that I am a god of war who overcame the Amalekites."

Then Moses said: "Hearken, O Yahweh, and I will tell of a matter that may stay thee of thy wrath. Once I did in anger slay a man of Egypt who had committed an offense against an one of these thy people. And behold, though dead, he is ever with me. For the death of an enemy whom one slayeth in hatred doth but change the place of strife from the world without to the inner thoughts of the slayer. Of bitterness and death are there many gods



among men. Would that the god of Israel might rule by the power of kindness alone. These be but ignorant and simple people with whom we deal. I know well their waywardness, for I have borne with them long. Now, therefore, let thine heart be gracious toward them and forgive them. Else blot me out with them, that thou mayest get thee back to the keeping of sheep."

Now at that moment I repented me of my wrath, yet not because Moses spake of the sheep. Wherefore I went among the people and stayed the hand of death.

The children of Israel wandered long in the wilderness, going slowly toward the land of promise, for that they were ever at war. And much of the fighting was of their provocation, for they said, "Yahweh, our god, is strong."

As for me, I halted among Moses, Aaron and Joshua, but mostly I inclined toward Joshua.



Now Moses waxed weary and his years sat heavy upon him so that his legs trembled with his going. Yet when he walked before the people he commanded all his vigor that he might appear well in their sight. And though his eyes were dulled by the mists of age, the fire of his spirit flashed through them when he spake to the host.

Thus did Moses lead the children of Israel in the wilderness.

But when they drew near to the land of promise, he said unto me, "I am not the leader for a new day."

Even now do I bethink me how few are the men I have known who possessed this wisdom in a world wherein the old men cling to their honors and authority, albeit the strength that won them has long since fled, and the cause

that bestowed them lies deep-buried in the ashes of memory.

Wherefore when they came abreast of Mount Nebo and lay encamped at the foot of the mount, Moses stood in the midst of the people and said: "This night I go into the mount. And it may be that I shall not return to you again. If I come not back, ye shall surely go on your way, and know that it will be well with me." And the people mourned when he said, "It may be that I shall not return."

Then Moses comforted them, telling them what they should do when they came to the land of their fathers, and saying, "Let righteousness be your defense and the god, Yahweh, will be with you." And he blessed them, and departed into Mount Nebo. But I would not that he go alone.

And I said unto Moses as we climbed: "How is it that thy wisdom at certain times hath so far surpassed the common wisdom of men?"

And Moses replied, "It is as though a voice spake to me, telling me what is good."

And I said, "Yea, I have advised thee oft when thou wert at thy wit's end."

But Moses said: "It is a voice within that guideth me. And yet it ariseth not within, but cometh as if from afar off."

I was silent at this saying, and again I bethought me of the infinite mystery, as aforetime on the plains of Ur.

In going up I would fain have stopped here or there, but Moses pressed me. His face was eager, though he faltered as he went. For in the light of the day he had espied a bush which, like that on Sinai, had seemed to burn. But when we drew nigh to the place which he sought he became sad exceedingly because the bush burned

not; nay, not by so much as a glint of moonlight on its leaves. And Moses bowed himself in the thick darkness before the bush.

Waiting long what he should do, I was disquieted, for it was as though one came and went upon the mount, noiseless and unseen, but more closely felt than the heart-beat of him that runneth in a race. Wherefore mine eye turned from the black mount to the stars above it and mine ear listened for the sounds that faintly ascended from the valley.

When Moses had been a long time withdrawn, he arose and came to me. And I saw that a great peace was on him.

“Get thee down to the host, Yahweh,” he said, “and deal kindly with thy people.”

Then he returned and cast himself beside the bush, and I went down to the valley.

Thereafter the people waited many days, for they thought: “It may be that Moses will come back from the mount.” And when he returned not we went forward, but slowly, keeping silence as we marched. And some cast backward glances.

But Joshua fingered the edge of his sword and bur-nished his shield on the sleeve of his garment. And I saw that Aaron made a new pen, yet furtively, lest the people observe him.



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## IV

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### CONQUERING THE HOMELAND

**N**OW WHEN I looked over the goodly country of Canaan and saw the ancient landmarks known to me aforetime, even from the time of Abraham and through all the days when I had been god of his tribe, I was moved with fury against the Canaanites whose cities and vineyards lay spread on the plain. For which cause I laid my hand with strong purpose on the grip of my sword. And my people were filled with desire for the comforts of Canaan and burned with jealousy of the inhabitants thereof.

Seeing which I made close alliance with that fury in the heart of man which also in these latter days bindeth the nations unto me.

And certain of the tribes in mine army fell upon the cities of the plain and took some of them by the edge of the sword. But others went farther up the Jordan valley to enter the land by the north.

Now the people of the south were less warlike than my tribesmen, and here and there they made place for Israel peaceably, the land being wide. Moreover, in course of time the Canaanitish men saw the virgin daughters of my people, that they were fair of face and had dove's eyes. And they took many of them in marriage. Nor were the

maidens loath. For they said: "The men of this pleasant land are better to our liking than are they of our tribes, inasmuch as they be not ragged or uncouth. And they give us earrings of gold."

Nor did the Canaanitish women look unkindly upon my warriors, but when they gathered at the well with their water jars would whisper to one another: "These men of Israel are lean and brown and clear of eye. They have a pleasant roughness that the sons of our cities have not. Their arms are like to bands of iron. Let us prove whether their hearts be softer than their palms."

When, therefore, I beheld that the land teemed with children having the fat bodies of Canaan and the dove's eyes of Israel, and speaking in a broken tongue, I chided my people, saying, "Remember ye not how Abraham made a covenant with me that his blood should not be mingled with the blood of other peoples?"

Whereto they answered: "Nay, nay! Fear not. Ours is a potent strain. In time to come one shall look in our offspring for the seed of the Canaanite and he shall find it not. Moreover, we have conquered this people with a soft word where a sword might have failed. Behold, the cities of the land are defended by walls that stand firm against assault. Should we complain if one dweller or another secretly open to us the gate that we may fight the battles of Israel within the shelter of a fair house or in a garden of cucumbers?"

But I said, "Ye and your little ones bow to the gods of Canaan as to me!"

And they made answer: "Doth the eagle that flieth into the sun and bringeth his prey from the clouds take note when the husbandman emptieth the small dust of his measure to the sparrows that quarrel by the wayside?"

I was well pleased that they should so speak to me, though

I grieved to see that they were so little forward to prove the greatness of their god at the point of a sword.

Now those tribes that went into Canaan by the north fared not as did their brethren who had gone by the south. Here were fierce peoples who cared not that the women's eyes were soft, but rather proved the men of Israel whether their arms were stout. Of the Israelitish blood they asked only to see it run red and soak their ground.

In the hill country of the north dwelt a king named Sisera who was ruler over many tribes of Canaan. He was mighty with the sword and wily in battle. And he said to his warriors, "Come, ye men of Sisera, let us thrust ourselves between the tribes of Israel and destroy them one by one." Which thing he well-nigh accomplished, because of the divisions among my people.

But there arose in Israel at that time a woman, Deborah by name, who said: "Care ye not at all for the name of Yahweh, ye men of Israel, that ye strive each man for his own tribe and smite not together? Let us move against the Canaanites as one man to destroy them and their gods." Wherefore she counseled Israel to set Barak, a mighty warrior, over all their hosts. Which thing they did.

Now the men of Sisera and the armies of Israel came together nigh to Mount Tabor. Sisera and his men drave against Israel with chariots of war in number like the swarming of locusts on a field of new grain. And they cried, "Who is Yahweh that we should fear him, O men of Sisera?"

And behold! Even as they lifted their hands to smite, the heavens were rent and the waters thereof were spilled out in a great flood, so that the chariot wheels turned not but mired to the hub, and the horses also sank above their hocks.



Then Israel, with arrows smiting like hail and spears that fell like a smother of snow, turned upon the army of Sisera. And the waters of the brook Kishon arose and carried away the chariots and horses and men of war. And there were none left but a handful that fled, and Sisera with them.

And when I saw that fear was in the heart of Sisera the Mighty I hasted to go before him. And I came to the tent of a certain Kenite. And Jael, his wife, bade me welcome, knowing not that I was Yahweh.

And I said to the woman: "Cast out these images of the Canaanitish gods that be in thy tent. For Yahweh, the great god of Israel, who is mightiest among all gods, hath delivered Sisera and his host into the hand of Barak."

Now the Kenite's wife sat upon a bale of merchandise with her hands clasped between her knees. And as she hearkened I marked that her eyes grew moist and looked far away. Then she questioned me, saying, "Hath he a great beard that curleth upon his breast? Is he beloved of many women? And doth he tenderly cherish whom he loveth?"

And I was wroth and admonished her, saying: "Dost thou so speak of Yahweh who hath honor above the gods of the Kenites?"

And Jael answered softly, "Nay, nay: but of Barak, that mighty captain whose hand hath exalted Yahweh."

Now it befell that Sisera in his flight came also to the tent of the Kenite and, entering in, sought rest, being wearied exceedingly. And Jael said, "Lie down, my lord, and take thy sleep, for thou hast poured out thy strength manfully in the battle." And she covered him tenderly with a garment of camel's hair.

Then while Sisera slept Jael took a great nail of iron

and with a hammer she drave the nail through the temples of Sisera, fastening him to the ground therewith even as a tent cord is fastened. And she said, "Because thou hast lifted thine hand against Barak, that great captain of Israel."

And she made request of me: "Let it be told Barak, I pray thee, what his handmaiden hath done."

And coming to Barak where he rejoiced with the people and divided the spoil, I said unto him, "The hand of Jael, wife to Heber the Kenite, hath been strengthened to slay Sisera."

Wherefore the report went about among all the peoples of Canaan: "Great is Yahweh of the Hebrews, who hath made the woman Deborah valiant above all the men of Israel and hath strengthened Jael to prevail against Sisera." And fear fell upon the people of the land, for they said, "It is the strength of Yahweh that hath made one daughter of Israel better than an hundred men of Canaan."

But Barak said, "Mine eyes shall look upon this Jael."

When I saw how Israel was established in the land I made a song which I bade my people sing:

Nannar, the great god, sat on the white throne of the moon;

And a silken cushion was at his back.

In his hand was the lotus plant,

And the root of the lotus was between his teeth.

But Yahweh, who was little among the gods, took a sword  
in his hand,

And with the sword hath he brought down kings,

Yea, by the might of his power hath he cast out gods;

Mighty gods of renown hath he cast through the door of  
the Kenite's tent.

Yahweh asked neither the lotus nor a cushion of silk,  
But he sought diligently after that which is deep in the  
heart of man.  
And he found the love of war and the joy that rageth furiously in battle.  
And by that which he found he hath exalted himself  
And set his people in a large place.

Wherefore sing praises unto Yahweh, ye to whom he divideth the spoil,  
And fear him, ye kings whom he hath cast down;  
Ye little gods, also, who flee before the breath of his wrath.  
Tremble, ye captains and ye mighty men whom the mothers of Israel put to flight,  
And the virgin daughters thereof destroy.

Yahweh hath but smitten with his little finger;  
And how shall the nations endure when he doth smite with his fist?

But when the people had learned the song, I bethought me: "Mayhap their children's children will forget, and will question the greatness of their fathers' god."

Wherefore I wrote the words on dried lambskin. And I put the writing into the holy chest that it might be kept thenceforward with the book of Aaron, the soil from Mount Sinai and the willow rod that budded.



When the men of Israel returned from following after Barak and beheld the pleasant houses of the Canaanites whose masters had been slain before Mount Tabor, and



smelled the scent of almond trees and lilies, they grew faint with love. Wherefore they went every man where his welcome was, and the tribes were scattered as before. Nor could I rouse them to war, albeit there were yet Canaanites for them to conquer.

Then in my wrath against their sloth and dalliance I went to put an edge on my sword at the smithy of one Nabaal, who dwelt nigh to the borders of Philistia.

And lo, there stood a man in the door of the smithy who held a handful of loose faggots with which he dealt in a manner that held mine eye. For behold, he brake certain of them with his fingers one by one. Then he took two cords and bound the faggots at either end, whereafter they brake not, though he twisted them powerfully in his hands.

Greatly admiring, I questioned why he so did.

And he said: "These faggots be the tribes of Israel that serve the gods of the Canaanites and obey many masters. Wherefore, being so divided, they may be broken one by one. But if they be bound together by the service of one god and by obedience to one king, then shall they themselves be one, and no nation shall break them."

I was angered that he should speak of a king, and I bade him take off the king's cord.

This he did; but having the faggots bound at one end and loose at the other he again brake them severally.

Whereupon I demanded, "Who art thou, and how didst thou find me?"

And he answered: "I am Samuel, the seer. And behold, it was told me that the edge of thy sword was turned. Wherefore I bethought me: 'There is no smith in Israel. Peradventure Yahweh hath gone to the borders of Philistia, for there hath never been a god who would go with a dull blade among the children of men.'"

And I wondered at the wisdom of Samuel.

Then the seer spake further: "As I passed by the waters of Jordan on my journey hither there came a mighty wind that bent the stars from their courses, yet it brake not a reed by the riverside. And a voice cried: 'Holy, holy, holy! The whole earth is full of his glory!'

"Therefore I fell upon my knees and vowed that Israel should worship none but thee."

Now while Samuel so spake I was rebuked of many things, remembering Abraham and Moses and the glory that had been above the plain of Chaldea and on Mount Nebo. Nevertheless I bethought me, "I did indeed lately pass over Jordan. Mayhap there was such a stir at my crossing."

And Samuel won many of the people to serve me alone.

During those times it was my custom to go about freely among men, entering their houses to sit by the fire, and watching over their life in the fields. And they carried mine image about their necks and set it above the lintels of their doors.

But on a certain day Samuel sought me out in a vineyard of grapes, saying: "Is it in keeping with the dignity of a god to go about among the people, looking on their common toil and sitting like a wayfarer by their hearthstones? Should not a god have a wide and pleasant house of his own?"

And I answered him: "Whether it be the way of dignity I know not. Nevertheless it is pleasant, and when there is peace in the land a god must find uses."

But the seer said: "Nay, not so, for if thou make thyself the familiar of every common fellow the people will shortly despise thee and leave thee, and they will follow another god who keepeth himself above the easy approach of the multitude. Harken now to me, for I have found the chest that Aaron made, and the writings, whereby I know the courtesy

that is due thee. Come, dwell in the house that I have builded, and keep thy station nigh to the chest. And I will make it a throne of glory from which thou shalt rule. For this people will not be ruled save from a seat of power."

Thus it was that though I inclined toward free intercourse with men in the open country I went and dwelt in the fair house that Samuel built me. And Samuel sent word throughout the land, saying, "Yahweh ruleth from Shiloh and he hath made Samuel his prophet to speak his word, because Samuel hath the ancient writings in his keeping."

Now the people liked not certain things that Samuel commanded of them, wherefore they complained: "Our father Abraham came out of Ur on foot, and on foot our forebears toiled up from Egypt. But we, their children, have got us horses and chariots in the good land of Canaan. Shall we then go on weary feet even from Dan to Beersheba because the toes of our fathers were splayed in the desert?"

Samuel was wroth when he heard these words, and he cried: "Will ye dishonor Yahweh with boastings of horses and chariots, ye rebels? Behold, the ancient times were good and the olden words are holy."

Then, in a loud voice, stamping with his feet and beating the air with his arm, he read from the book of Aaron. And because the people feared greatly they hastened to do according to the writings.

There came a day when Samuel said to me: "Thou hast delayed overlong to give us a king, Yahweh. Behold, the Philistines fall daily upon our tribes and there is none to deliver us because the men of war are scattered."

Then he took me out to choose a king. And as we stood beside the way there came a young man who sought his father's asses that had gone astray. And lo, the youth was taller from his shoulders up than any man in Israel.



Seeing the height of the young man, Samuel said, " Surely thou hast chosen this one? "

But I said, " Nay! " And when he asked me why, I answered, " Peradventure his strength measureth not to his height, for see! he is overlong in the neck."

But Samuel said, " It will give him the greater dignity when he goeth among common men." Then he ran to the young man and, breaking a vial of oil upon his head to anoint him, he cried, " Yahweh hath chosen thee to be king over all Israel."

Thus were the people united under Saul the King to fight against the Philistines.

Now I liked not Saul, because Samuel had said, " Yahweh hath chosen thee," when I did but consider him. Wherefore I permitted an evil spirit from the desert to stand at his elbow and trouble his mind.

But in after years, when Saul had been long vexed by the evil spirit, I found a youth, ruddy and well favored, in whom I took delight, whose name was David. A sweet singer was he and skillful to play upon the harp. Therefore, when Saul was beset by the spirit I sent David unto him to drive off the evil one with music. And because he was of an open countenance and kindly withal, David drew the hearts of them that stood about Saul. And he was bidden to live in Saul's house.

There came, presently, a year when the Philistines harried Israel more than aforetime. And the men of Israel went forth to meet them. But Saul went not, because I had charged the evil spirit to trouble him with forebodings of death. Howbeit, the lad David went.

And behold, a mighty champion of giant stature, Goliath by name, brake from the ranks of the Philistines, challenging the men of Saul to send one of valor to contend with him. But there was none in Saul's army who would stand

before the Philistine. Then the lad David put Saul's armor upon him and went forth, dragging the king's great sword. And when I saw him go I feared greatly for his life. Wherefore I cried: "Cast away the sword; thou couldst as well slay this Goliath with a pebble from the brook!"

And though I would have bidden him flee, he, hearing my word, cast away the sword and took from the water-course a small stone and, while Israel stood amazed, cast it from a sling, smiting the Philistine full upon the temple so that his skull was cracked.

Then David took the great sword of Goliath, and laying it across the Philistine's neck he set his foot upon the uppermost edge. And the sword, being exceeding heavy, needed little urging. And the head of Goliath was severed from his shoulders.

Then the men of war cried: "Behold, Yahweh is with David. A pebble in the lad's hand is better than the armor of Saul."

For this cause Saul was jealous of David, but seeing that the people clave to him, Saul gave David his daughter Michal to wife.



Now the house of Saul was to the south, among the people of Judah. And David marked that the Judeans clave to him the more because of Saul's daughter. Wherefore, in an appropriate time, he took him a wife from the north also. And in the years that followed he married diligently both northward and southward; but eastward and westward he married not for that the land lay narrow that way.

And it came to pass when Saul died, and Jonathan his son with him, that David reigned in their place. And all the people rejoiced to have him king, both for the reason that he had slain Goliath and because of his diligence north-

ward and southward. For in all parts of the land it could be said, "We have a daughter wedded to the throne."

From that time forward all Israel knew that I had set my seal upon David's brow. Aye, and the kings and nations round about knew and trembled, for I made him mighty in war so that he widened the land and subdued nations along the borders. Neither was there a king like to him when he came to the fullness of his age. By the might of his power he commanded obeisance of many princes and of their captains and their men of war.

Then I walked with a wide and ringing step, feeling contempt for the gods whose people we chastened.

Yet even in my triumph I foresaw not how many nations would own me god, nor how gladly the people of the latter days would obey my warlike will.

And when David was gathered to his fathers, Solomon, his son, whom the wife of Uriah the Hittite had borne unto him, reigned in his place. For Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, had said, "Sore grieved am I that the royal city is slow to honor the king with a gift while the daughters of the land northward and southward do so honor him." And for Jerusalem's sake she gave him Solomon.

Solomon grew to be a man exceeding wise, and apt to trade. He sent his merchantmen abroad, who returned to Jerusalem, the royal city, with the goods of many lands. Moreover, to his hand lay the tribute moneys which David had exacted from subject princes. Therewith he built palaces and cities, adorning them richly forasmuch as he was a lover of the arts. But greatest of all his works was the house which he set up for me in Jerusalem.

Then I walked through the whole domain, meting its length and its breadth and fetching a compass round about.

And I said to the people: "What lieth between the landmarks that are to the eastward and westward and to



the northward and southward is holy land. And ye are a people of most holy and precious blood. For ye are my peculiar nation whom I have established for the glory of my name and for mine honor among all the nations of men that are on earth."

And I laid aside my sword, albeit in an accessible place, and with cleansed hands and garments took up mine abode in the fair temple that Solomon had built.

Thereafter I made yet another song for the people:

Yahweh, the great god, dwelt of old in the heavens.

He sat upon a cloud

And rode upon the wings of the wind.

The sun was a cushion at his back

And the moon lay upon the steps of his throne.

Chaldea's vine was a circlet for his brow,

The lotus of the Nile a carpet for his feet;

He drew the fine wool of Akkad over his knees.

Nor was there any god like to him in all the earth.

When Yahweh looked down from his seat in the heavens

He beheld the temples of Chaldea,

The abodes of the little gods that were honored in Ur.

He despised the earth-god who drave the plow,

And the pale god, Nannar, who reached for the moon  
that Yahweh spurned with his foot.

Yahweh chose Abraham, the shepherd king, for his own,

And Sarah, a princess, in whose womb a nation slept.

And he led them forth of Ur with a high hand, while  
the gods wondered.

Nor did any god think to stay his hand.

In Egypt Yahweh rebuked the gods of the Nile,

The mighty Osiris and Set,

Chief gods of the life-giving waters;

Yahweh chastened them sore  
And drowned their people in the sea.  
He overthrew the horse and the rider,  
Even them that trusted to their chariots of iron  
And boasted themselves of . . . .

But even as I was writing this song, resting mine arm against the traveling throne of Aaron's craftsmanship, which Solomon had brought into my temple, behold! the pillars of the temple were shaken and the house was filled with smoke, and the lightnings played round about.

Then I saw that the beams of the ceiling were parted above mine head. And lo, the stars rained from the sky upon the four quarters of the earth. And from one end of heaven a voice cried, "Holy, holy, holy!" Whereto an answer came from the other end of heaven, "The whole earth is full of his glory."

And although this matter so happened that I knew not whether to call it dream or truth, I was disquieted thereby.

And I said: "Would that Abraham were nigh, or Moses, who were more familiar with matters of this kind! Aye, or even Samuel, the seer."

But I looked toward my sword that hung upon the wall, and the sight of its keen edge gave me comfort. And I be-thought me that peradventure some god from afar, whom I knew not of, had joined with the gods round about to show me honor in my new house because he feared me.

Aye, doubtless it was so.

Nevertheless, I went and sat beneath where the sword was.

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### TUTORED BY THE PROPHETS

IT CAME to pass after many generations that I, being in the chest that Aaron had made, which lay behind the curtains of the sanctuary within the temple, did hear in the depth of night a murmur that seemed to come from close at hand. This I counted strange, for none might enter the dwelling place that the priests had built for me save only the high priest, and he but once a year on the day of atonement when reconciliation was made with blood for the sins of the people. And I cried out, saying, "Who is this that approacheth the holy place to profane it?"

Then he that had murmured did laugh. And again I cried, "Who art thou?"

Yet answered he not, but did the rather question me, saying, "Art thou well content, Yahweh?"

And when I answered him "Yea," he questioned me further, saying, "Dost thou know how it fares with thy people while thou liest here in this gloom?"

Then, inasmuch as he spake of the gloom of the sanctuary as though it were some ordinary darkness, I made answer, rebuking him: "I who am the god abide here in the seclusion and honor that do befit my station. Be there not



priests and high officers that minister to the needs of the people? ”

And the voice replied as though from some more remote distance: “ Yea, verily, thou blind and inaccessible god, priests there be and high officers that do eat up the substance of the poor; and there is none to succor them.”

Perplexed, I inquired then who were the poor and of what they had need, for since the days when we were established in Canaan there had been no lack of bread.

But he that spake with me, thinking I did but mock him, gave mocking words in return: “ If thou couldst come out of thy box, O Yahweh, then would I show thee.” For he doubted not that my shrine held me fast. Nor did I, Yahweh, know whether I should still be able to go forth of it. Yet was it not the chest, but only the rolling chants of the priests that held me. And here was a man who spake with authority, even as had Moses, albeit more roughly. Essay- ing then to leave the chest, I found that I was able; and I passed out of the sanctuary into the twilight of early morning.

And behold! Neither in sanctuary nor court found I any man. And thinking myself blinded by the half-light after my sojourn in darkness, I cried aloud, “ Where is he that a moment ago did vex me from his hiding place beside the chest? ”

And a voice from afar answered: “ I am nigh to Bethel. And though I did bespeak thine ear, I doubted at the first whether thou couldst indeed hear me.” And he said further: “ If thou hast found a way through box and curtain, delay not to come to me. I shall await thee at the way-side altar which thou didst frequent of old time when thou wert free to come and go.”

Nor did I delay. And when I drew near to Bethel I beheld a man rough and wild-looking. Then did I marvel

greatly over the authority with which so uncouth an one had spoken, even as I questioned by what means he had returned so quickly from my sanctuary. Yet because I was greatly amazed I inquired only, "Did no man tell thee that it is death to enter the holy place, save for the high priest?"

Whereto he answered: "Verily I entered not, but called on thee from this place. Yet, is life so sweet for us in Israel that one should fear death?"

Then I charged him plainly that he tell his name and station, if so be he still desired that I go with him. And he answered, "I am Amos, a herdsman of Tekoa."

And I felt that it was good to be out of the chest and with Amos.

But Amos said: "Let us walk through the city to the market place and there await the breaking of the day. Then shalt thou see thy people going about their hard tasks, that the kings and priests may live softly, and thou shalt see the injustices that thy people suffer."

And even as he spake I bethought me that it would be good to see the light show at the edge of the horizon, and to watch the upspringing of the sun. Yet saw I neither of these things for the buildings of the market place that did hem us in. And I spake of it unto Amos, but he replied only, "If so be it irks thee that thou see not the sun at his rising, think on those in the city who may not go forth even to see his shining at noonday."

And I marked this saying, though it astonished me not, for I thought it did but refer to my priesthood; and I said, "Nay, Amos, they who tend the lamps might consider thy full sun too sharp a glare."

Yet I liked not these walls that extended on this hand and on that. And I bethought me that it would be well to go forth to field and vineyard and see the people at the tasks

which Amos said were hard, and mayhap return to Tekoa and learn how the sheep of Amos fared.

But Amos answering me said: "Even so, Yahweh. The light is friend to justice and righteousness, yet they heed it not."

Now when Amos spake thus of justice and righteousness, I thought to draw him out. For had not Abraham called me a righteous god? Yet Amos was not like unto Abraham, nor might justice be the same in a city as it had been on the plain. And I asked, "What meanest thou when thou sayest justice and righteousness?"

But Amos, mistaking me, answered: "Small wonder that thou knowest not their names. There has been little enough of either in the land these many years."

Now as we spake together the market place was filled with sellers and buyers of many wares, and I would fain have watched their bargaining and examined their merchandise more nearly, but Amos drew me aside, saying, "Justice I cannot show, but the fruits of injustice lie ripe on every hand."

Then Amos led me forth from the market place and down the narrow ways between houses, turning to this side and that, until we came to a place near the outer wall of the city where was a stone set in the ground and a hole in the stone near to the size of a man's palm. Amos lifted the stone, saying, "Look within."

And I stooped, but nothing could I see by reason of the brightness around me and the exceeding darkness of the cave below. Amos bade me look again, saying, "Hast thou the eyes of one who sitteth all day behind the temple curtain and canst not discern what passeth in the blackness of this cave?"

Then marked I a pale hand that groped along the wall. And I said unto Amos: "Behold, there appeareth



the likeness of a hand that feeleth along the wall. But if there be a man fallen into this pit, why crieth he not aloud that they who walk at large along the city wall draw him up? ”

And Amos replied: “ Didst thou not lately inquire of me concerning justice? And said I not that thou shouldst learn by beholding injustice? Know, then, that this man in the pit was the owner of a fair olive yard which the king coveted. But the man would not sell his olive yard to the king, for he said, ‘ Behold, it was my father’s yard and the possession of his fathers before him for many generations! ’ Therefore, because he would not part with his yard, the king took it by force and cast him into this dungeon. And there be none who will deliver him lest they be thrown into a like place.”

And Amos placed the stone again on the mouth of the cave. And I said, “ Nay, but let there be a little space left uncovered.”

Therefore he put the stone as I desired. And he said, “ By this token I know that thou art not altogether as thy priests.”

Then Amos spake unto the doorkeeper of a wide and pleasant house hard by, and the man took his key and let us into the courtyard, and we beheld how tiring women dressed the hair of a young maiden there in the cool garden. This maid was exceeding fair. Her hands and feet were like unto those of a little child, and the skin of her face was as the moon for the beauty of its whiteness. Jeweled rings were upon her fingers and bracelets of cunningly wrought gold upon her arms. Her garments were purple and fine linen. And even as the tiring women dressed her hair and anointed her skin with oils and perfumes, two slaves stood beside and moved the air with fans of peacock feathers, lest flies be drawn by the fragrance and weary her.

And I said unto Amos, "For comeliness and delicacy can any of the nations round about compare with this my people who nurture their maidens after this manner?"

But Amos spat upon the ground of the walk that was about the courtyard, and in going out his feet spurned the threshold of the door.

Then he led me beyond the gate to a cluster of beggars' hovels that leaned against the city wall, and we lifted the curtain of a door and entered into a house exceeding poor. And the darkness within was like that of the pit, for the house had no opening save only the entrance. But when mine eyes were eased from dazzling after the brightness of the sun on the city wall, I beheld a young child that lay upon the rushes of the floor, and a woman bowed in a corner of the room, praying. The skin of the child's face was stretched tight across the bones, and his eyes burned in the darkness with the heat of fever.

Then the rough man Amos said softly, "This is the child of him who lieth under the stone of the dungeon."

And the woman, seeing me not, said, in praying: "Hearken, Yahweh, and deliver this my child from his fever and from the pain of his wasting. Then shall he rest, and I with him, in Sheol where no hunger is nor memory of sorrow."

Then did I lean over the bed and make to gather the dying lad in mine arms, even as I had soothed the lambs of old time; but Amos restrained me, saying, "Shall this child be held in the bosom of one who is covered with stains of blood?"

And I looked and saw that my garments were stiff with the blood that my priests were wont to sprinkle upon mine altars to atone for the sins of the people.

Then Amos lifted the curtain of the door and we went forth, and he called me to look upon the ragged children

of the streets who fought with the dogs for scraps of food in the refuse. And he said: "The maiden thou sawest in the garden was one. Behold, these are many. How comely and delicate are thy children!"

And as we went away from that place I drove off the dogs with the rod of Aaron that was in my hand.

And Amos said, "Mayhap there is hope for Israel, if so be Yahweh is still a god of compassion."

Then Amos led me back to the market place and we stood before the booth of one who sold shoes. And there came a woman with her handmaiden, and from among his wares she singled out a pair with jewels set cunningly in the heels, and he who sold said that they were the work of the craftsmen of Babylon, albeit Amos whispered that they were perchance Hittite. And the woman asked the price thereof, which was very great, and she said she would give half; and when the tradesman said nay, she was sorrowful, for she had not money to pay the whole. But the merchant, looking on the handmaiden and seeing that she was desirable, said to the woman: "Give me thine handmaiden in exchange, for even as thy soul desireth the beauty of these shoes so doth my soul yearn for the beauty of the maiden. For behold, I am no longer a young man, nor is my heart easily warmed."

Thereupon the woman went away in strong indignation, for the child was pleasing to her and, it might be, of greater money value than the shoes. But Amos said, "Abide here, Yahweh; haply we have not seen the end of this matter."

And it came to pass that the woman returned and said, "Give me the shoes and have thine own price." And she thrust the child into his booth, and the maid moaned within the booth, crying: "Doth not Yahweh, the god, see this thing that is done to me? Is his ear closed that he cannot hear the cry of my shame?"



And as I fingered the rod of Aaron, musing whether I should strike down first the merchant or the woman lest she hide in her house and be lost to me, Amos hurried me from the market place.

Then he led me to the principal gate of the city, where a judge heard the causes of the people. And there came one who had a just cause against his neighbor. And the two men stood before the judge and stated each his case. And the one who had the good cause was poor, and pleaded humbly, while he that defended himself against it was rich, and made great show of anger, saying: "Behold, this man is a liar and a son of iniquity. If thou couldst know how evil is his heart then wouldst thou understand the justice of my cause. But alas, the matter is not fit to be spoken aloud before these good and upright men who stand by awaiting thy further judgments."

And he winked with his eye. Then the judge counseled him, "Draw near, and let the words be whispered privately into mine ear, that the minds of those who stand by be not offended."

Then the man drew nigh and laid his mouth against the judge's ear. And Amos said, "Mark well, Yahweh." And being so warned, I did mark that the man dropped a purse upon the knees of the judge. And the judge covered it quickly with his hand. And with his hand hidden in the folds of his garment, he stood up and gave judgment in favor of the rich man, bidding the officers scourge the poor man and deliver into the hand of his enemy what few goods remained to him.

And again as I questioned which to smite first, the judge or the rich man, Amos drew me away. Whereafter until evening he continued to show me the abuses that were in the city.

As the sun went down, we came to a pleasant pavilion

in a garden of roses, and through the grating that was on the door we saw a woman sleeping on silken cushions on a bed of ivory, and the air from within the pavilion was heavy with the perfume of musk.

And I asked Amos, "Is this fair-appearing woman perchance ill, inasmuch as she sleepeth while the sun is but going down?"

And he answered: "Nay, not so. Enter thou, and stand in the shadow of a curtain for a little season, since curtains irk thee not." And I knew that he chided me still for the sanctuary where I dwelt in darkness. Yet I was not wroth with Amos.

Even as I stood behind the curtain there was a knocking without the door, and a handmaiden came with a lighted lamp and opened the door, and a man whispered to her as though he were ashamed of the thing which he said.

And the handmaiden questioned him, saying, "Hast thou brought gifts in thine hand?"

Whereto he answered, "See, I have here a purse of fine leather and a bale of silk."

Whereupon the woman who slept roused herself and called out to him, "Hark thee, my friend, art thou not Judah, the tentmaker?"

And he answered, "I am he."

And the woman said: "Let the purse and the silk remain under thine own hand. But I have seen in the garden of thine house a youth for whom my soul longeth. Now, therefore, bring the lad to me this night and on the morrow return thou unto me."

But the man cried out and said: "It may not be, for he is my son, the only child of Leah, who is dead, and lo these many years I have been to him both father and mother."

Therefore the woman said, speaking in anger: "Begone, thou base stitcher of herdsman's tents, lest I, who have

stilled the passions of men of war, have thee beaten through the streets."

Then I saw the woman close the door and bolt it against him, and I went forth unto Amos, but Amos said, "Stay yet a moment, O Yahweh, for it may be that this matter endeth not here."

And it came to pass that the man returned, saying, "Hast thou no other price?"

And the woman answered, "None."

And the man said, "Then let it be thy way, for I am sick with love."

When I would have smitten the twain as they stood there, Amos again stayed my hand, saying: "These two do but follow what they have seen from their youth. All Israel doeth after this manner."

"How then shall I make an end of evil?" cried I.

And Amos said, "Strike first at the root of evil, in the courts of thine own sanctuary."

Then I minded me that Amos was but a herdsman, and I inquired of him whence came his so mighty zeal for righteousness and justice within the city.

And Amos answered: "Neither am I prophet nor prophet's son. But one night while I kept the flocks on the hills of Tekoa there came to mine hearing a voice from afar off which seemed also to come from within, and it cried: 'Shall all good perish from the earth? Behold, O Amos, thou deliverest the sheep from the mouth of the wolf and the paw of the bear, but who will deliver this people from their iniquities?' And since that night, O Yahweh, I find no rest because of the abominations that are done in the land.

"Now, I know that thou art the god of Israel from of old. Thou hast been a god of plenty in peace and a stout defender in war. People have looked to thee for bountiful



harvests and for succor in time of danger; but they have not asked of thee the way of righteousness nor inquired at thine altars concerning justice.

“Behold, here am I to speak in thy name. Let me speak clearly of these matters to thy people Israel.”

And looking hard upon this stern man I questioned within me whether he was not indeed a prophet, albeit he disclaimed the name. Therefore did I promise to take his request under advisement.

And Amos instructed me in matters of righteousness and justice even as Moses had taught me upon Mount Sinai.

Thereafter I returned to the sanctuary, for in all the land there was no place other where I might enter even as a guest.

And when I came to mine abode, I saw that the priests had completed the evening sacrifice in the outer court. A slime of blood was on the pavement, fat burned upon the altar, and the stench of the day's slaughter was in the air. As I looked over the courtyard of mine house, I be-thought me of the man within the dark cave and of his sick child that lay on the bed of rushes, and of those other children who scrambled among the dogs for scraps of rotted food, and I heard the voice of the unjust judge uttering oppression, and the cry of the handmaiden who was sold for a pair of shoes. And I went heavily for the shame that weighted me.

Before many days had passed there was held a feast that gathered my people together from the country round about. And in the morning of the day of feast I heard a lamb bleating; and behold! he that carried it into my courts was the seller of the shoes. And I saw that as he delivered it up he whispered into the priest's ear that whereat the servant of mine altar did laugh evilly.

Then came the wicked judge, and he cast a piece of silver at the feet of the priest; and the priest bowed low before the judge. Yet when he saw that it was but one piece of silver he murmured and said, "Is this, then, the tithe of that which thou hast taken at the gate of the city since last thou didst appear in Yahweh's house?" At which saying the anger of the judge was kindled; nevertheless he cast another coin on the flagging, and the priest contended with him no more, but bowed himself to pick it up.

Whereat my wrath blazed forth so that I smote upon the lintel of the door. And the doorposts shook, and the court of the sanctuary reeled like a drunken man. The cunning work was loosed from the roof of mine house and, falling, cut the priests about the head. Coals from the altar fire were scattered over the pavement so that the feet of many were burned. And the priests and they that had come to worship fled away.

Then, when I beheld the poor running with the richly appareled, the children and aged keeping pace with the strong, that justice which Amos had evoked spake within me and I said: "Hold thine hand, Yahweh! Many of these who be burned are innocent of evil. They have but come to worship after the manner of their fathers."

Obedient to this thought I stayed mine hand. For a god doeth well to remember how close is humanity bound together, good man to evil, lest the innocent suffer with the guilty when justice is done. And it is hard to avoid this offense.

Nevertheless, my courts were cleansed that same night.

Soon thereafter I spake to Amos in Bethel, saying: "Behold, thou knowest what thoughts thou hast put into my keeping. Speak then, I charge thee, to priests and them that worship, even to this whole land that is mine. Cleanse the soil of its evil and purge Abraham's blood. Let thy

words roar like the thunder and strike like lightning. Spare not iniquity and show no mercy to the wicked, but say that I will destroy them utterly if they repent not. Then quiet thy voice and tell them that this my people and this my land shall be holy among the lands and peoples of earth, if they will but turn their hearts unto righteousness.”

Therefore Amos lifted up his voice and cried:

Hear this that Yahweh speaketh,  
O ye that swallow up the needy and poor of the land.  
For thus saith Yahweh:

“ For the transgressions of Israel will I not turn away the  
punishment thereof,  
Because they sell a boy for an harlot  
And a girl for a pair of shoes.  
The judges turn aside justice from the meek  
And take bribes in the judgment place,  
And a man and his father go unto the same light woman.

I hate, I despise your feast days,  
And I cannot abide the smell of your solemn assemblies.  
Though ye offer me your burnt offerings and your meat  
offerings,  
I will not accept them;  
Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat  
beasts.  
Take away from me the noise of your songs,  
For I will not hear the melody of your viols.  
But let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as  
a mighty stream.

And if not,  
I will turn your feasts into mourning  
And all your songs into lamentations.



And I will bring sackcloth upon all loins,  
And baldness upon every head;  
And I will make thy mourning as the mourning for an  
only son,  
And the end thereof as a bitter day.  
Though thou dig into the grave,  
Thence shall my hand take thee,  
And though thou climb up to heaven,  
Thence will I bring thee down.

Now the chief men of Bethel rebuked Amos for the vehemence of his prophesying, speaking for all: "O thou seer, go flee away into the land of Judah and there eat bread and prophesy there. But prophesy not again any more here, for it is the king's chapel and the king's court."

Thereafter I gathered about me many who were zealous in the cause of righteousness and justice. These men spake my will to the people.

There was Micah, who hated evil and rebuked it even as Amos had done, saying:

"Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh and bow myself before the most high god? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

"Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

*"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee but to do justly and to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy god?"*

From that time forth I, Yahweh, and the prophets who spake for me were exceedingly zealous for righteousness. If we found any who did not according to the right, we smote him. And many who did not themselves prophesy

were likewise very ready to smite here and there with both hands among the wicked. The zeal which I had formerly shown in warfare I now directed toward the chastisement of the sinner. Those who were but slight offenders complained of the weight of my hand. Nevertheless, I forbore not to punish them.



Then it came to pass that one of my prophets, Hosea by name, bethought him and questioned me, saying, "Is it well to smite always, Yahweh?"

And I answered, "It is well indeed, for we must clear the land of all offenders, and evil goeth not out of a man save by smiting."

But Hosea said: "Wouldst thou fell a tree because of a cankerworm that gnaweth its leaf? If thou slayest all sinners, who shall be left in the land to replenish it?"

And I said, "The good men, though they be but few."

Then Hosea sought to instruct me after the manner of Amos, saying, "What time thou slayest an evil man, that which is good in him also goeth down into Sheol."

Now it is well for a god to bear with his prophets; yet not in all things. Therefore, seeking a word that would make an end of the matter, I said to Hosea: "There be good men who keep my laws and evil men who break them. I know none between. Get thee hence and ponder this saying."

But Hosea made answer: "Doth not the secret of righteousness and sin lie deeper than the law, even in the heart where evil striveth with the good? I shall straightway get me hence as thou, Yahweh, hast commanded; only do thou come with me. Let thine own seeing make an end of my too much speaking."

Wherefore I bethought me of the things that Amos had

shown me in the city; but Hosea led not to the market place, nor yet to the seats of judgment, but forth through the gates to his own house. For his house was on the plain. And lo, there was a woman asleep with her head on the doorstep, whose appearance was in all respects like to that of such as paint their faces to beguile men for hire.

Nevertheless when I drew my sword to smite, for that she was evil and I was wroth that such should lay her head on the prophet's threshold, Hosea stayed my hand. Whereupon, remembering that he had spoken compassionately of sinners, I set myself to learn whether some unworthy entanglement might not be the reason therefor, saying, "Who is this woman whom thou permittest to defile thine house?"

And Hosea made answer, "She is my wife who hath hired herself to many lovers, to my shame and confusion."

"Ah!" cried I, "thou wouldst reserve to thyself the avenger's right. It is fitting." And I offered him my sword.

But Hosea bent over the woman and wiped her brow with his prophet's mantle. "None shall smite," said he. "She hath been smitten overmuch already. Said I not that I would show thee a thing? Hearken —"

From the woman's swollen lips her voice came tremulous, saying out of her dream: "Pity my weakness and tempt me not so, I pray thee, for though I am weak and froward by nature, yet would I keep myself from this sin for Hosea my husband's sake."

And I said: "Ha! Thou hast misnamed her an harlot, Hosea. See how her dream doth bear testimony that she hath resisted what thou wert too ready to believe of her."

And I was glad that I had not harmed the woman in my haste. But even while I chided him, she laughed and muttered, "Pour wine into my goblet that is empty, my lover, for I would make merry with thee this night."



Hearing which, I was the more angry because her first mutterings had betrayed me into softness. And I said: "Thou wert right in thy judgment, Hosea, she is a woman of sin. One of us must smite. Choose whether thou or I."

He attended not, but answered: "Hearken, Yahweh, and learn the whole of this matter. For the space of five years I lived with this woman. And in the second year she gave me a son in whom my soul found delight.

"Now I had a friend, a goodly man; and all that he had was mine, and mine his — save only, I thought, this woman.

"Yet one night when I went abroad from mine house and returned speedily, I did see that which made my soul desolate as the valley of Baca where no verdure groweth nor ever the dew falleth from the dusty sky. And when, hating the mother, I sought comfort of the child I beheld in his face the image of my friend.

"Then in my grief and anger did I drive out the woman, and the child with her. Wherefore her name became a byword among the people.

"Thereafter on a day I passed through the strangers' quarter of the city in the early morning. And I came to a mean inn kept for entertainment of the baser sort of travelers. Two men thrust a woman through the door into the street, where she lay wounded and moaning. Then knelt I beside her and lifted her head to the support of mine arm, and lo, I saw again the face of this woman, even as thou seest it now, defiled and pitiful. And I knew that I loved her as I had not loved before, so greatly was love strengthened by compassion. And I thought, 'It is I who cast her out that have brought her to this pitiable estate.'

"Even so, in accusing myself, did I forgive her for that which she had done against me, and in love and pity I carried her to this mine house. And as I went it seemed

that my soul entered into communion with some infinite kindness that lieth round about us at all times, so that when the children of men do evil mercy faileth them not. Since that day have I cherished this woman in love, and it seemeth that compassion hath sealed me its prophet to testify of love and turn the hearts of the people to kindness."

Thus spake Hosea; and I was moved by what he said, yet I made answer: "Nonetheless, as now thou seest, kindness hath in the end not strength to win against evil. Wayward still, she doth ill requite thy love."

But Hosea replied: "Nay, the measure of love is not what is won, but what one hath the disposition to give. Moreover, for the space of three years until yesternight she abode faithfully in mine house. Who can say that she may not yet return wholly?"

And I asked, "Thinkest thou, then, that love is a remedy for evil?"

To which he made answer, "Whether for evil I know not; nevertheless, it is indeed a remedy for him who loveth."

I pondered what the man Hosea had learned out of his bitter sorrow and out of his pity. And the woman made moan again, and she cried: "Woe is me that I have brought pain anew to mine husband. Smite, O Yahweh, and make an end. So shall thy wrath be agent of mercy to deliver me from sinning."

And Hosea said, "Hearest thou, Yahweh, how the good in this woman repenteth of her sin even as she sleepeth?"

Then I reasoned with him: "Mayhap. But mark you, her own lips bade me smite, and if I smite not, what dost thou purpose to do with her when she waketh?"

He answered, "I love her and seek to shelter her against the evil that so readily besets her." Whereupon he leaned over to ease her head that lay on the doorstep. And, waking

under the touch of his hand, she hid her eyes in the dusty hem of his mantle and wept.

Wherefore I went softly from their house.

Thereafter, because Hosea had showed me that which pertained to no other god — a compassion attributed to none that were in Egypt or elsewhere — and had given me to look deep into the mystery of man, where, beyond reach of Moses' law, good and evil contend, I charged my prophets that they speak to the people of lovingkindness and that they destroy not the precious wheat with the chaff. When I had so done I felt an approval upon me such as Hosea had known at the redemption of his wife. The sky above me was more like to that which had smiled on me what time I walked with Abraham on the plains.



After Solomon, the kingdom of David was divided between Judah and Israel, northward and southward, with a line between them and two kings to rule. And, forasmuch as bitterness between the kings' houses bred strife and there arose no king to marry northward and southward, the division continued. Nor could the two armies move as one against the enemies of both.

And it came to pass that Ahaz, King of Judah, went out in the cool of a morning to look to the water supply of Jerusalem. And while he walked beside the conduit that flowed from the upper pool through the field where the fullers were wont to bleach their cloth, Isaiah the prophet met him and said, "Why dost thou walk here, my lord?"

And the king replied, "I have come to look to the water supply, whether it will sustain a siege, for Pekah, who ruleth over Israel, hath made a confederacy with Rezin, King of Damascus, and they are moving against me."



Now the reason of the confederacy was this. Assyria lay to the north and east of Israel like to a lion crouching to spring. Wherefore Israel joined with Damascus, and said, "Let us also engage Judah on our side. Then shall we three be stronger than Assyria." But Ahaz looked not with favor on their plan and the rather sent presents to the Assyrian king, saying: "Behold, I am thy friend, as thou knowest by reason of these gifts. Come not into the borders of Judah when thou dost chasten Israel, I pray thee." For he feared the Assyrians more than he feared Israel and Damascus.

Wherefore Israel and Damascus took counsel and said: "Let us break Judah ere we go against Assyria, that there be none to smite us from behind. Moreover, we shall have tribute of her to sustain us and men of war to increase our armies."

Now these matters were known to Isaiah. Nonetheless he asked Ahaz, "Hast thou done aught but look to the pools, O king?"

"Yea," answered Ahaz, "I have sent letters to the Assyrians entreating that they come to mine aid, seeing that I hold not with Israel and Damascus."

Then spake Isaiah: "Thou hast done a great evil in turning against thy brethren of the house of Israel. Ye twain have one god, mighty to deliver. In seeking to Assyria thou hast opened the door to a lion, and he will enter in and possess thine house. Yet there is still a deliverance that might come to thee through faith."

Ahaz plucked at his garment and asked: "Will the Assyrian know if I have faith? What can faith avail against an iron spear or a cloud of arrows?"

Then Isaiah charged him, "Put away thy sins that have been many and seek humbly to thy god, and surely he will grant thee deliverance."

But because the prophet spake of sin the king's anger overcame him and he said, "Thy manner of speech is for the temple and for a time of peace."

And Ahaz strode away lest Isaiah trouble him further.

Now I had heard what things these two said and, clad as a wayfarer with a burden on my back and a staff in mine hand, I approached to the place where Isaiah stood gazing after Ahaz. And I said unto him, "Instruct me, I pray thee, in this matter of faith, concerning which I did hear thee speak, for I would know the whole nature of it."

And Isaiah said: "I spake to the king concerning Yahweh and I do believe in him, for he is the god of this people and was our fathers' god. But what is it to believe in Yahweh? Is it not to fulfill the works of righteousness of which he spake in times past by the prophets? For the world hath been formed in righteousness and for the doing of it. Integrity availeth more to make a people secure than all the chariots of war.

"Therefore by faith do I mean that the nation which doeth righteousness diligently must wax great above all people. But this is only that part of faith which concerneth the selfish and slow of heart. Faith is more than this. Nor doth it wholly concern the god. For this is the greater part of faith — that a man choose rather to die for the thing that is good than to live by the acceptance of an evil.

"Many will die for faith in the time to come. And though the day of their victory tarry long, yet will it surely break."

Whereupon he recited for me this song that he had made:

And it shall come to pass in that latter day  
That the mountain of Yahweh's house  
Shall be established at the head of the mountains,

And shall be exalted above the hills;  
And all nations shall flow unto it.  
And many peoples shall say,  
“ Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain  
Of Yahweh,  
To the house of the god of Jacob;  
And he will teach us of his ways,  
And we will walk in his paths.”  
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
And the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.  
And he will judge between nations,  
And will decide between many peoples;  
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
And their spears into pruning hooks;  
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
Neither shall they learn war any more.

Now while he spake his face did shine; and a light came down from heaven and a light arose from the dust of earth, so that all nature appeared to burn with it. And the two lights joined. And the air moved as though disturbed by the winnowing of many wings. Then out of the light appeared the angel of death, who in swift passing put a mark upon Isaiah's brow.

Isaiah knew not of this thing. For he laughed and spake with me of how brightly the sun did shine, and gave me the common talk of the city.

And I asked him, “ How is it that thou, who art of the king's council, hast so learned of faith? ”

And he answered: “ One night while men slept I stood on the housetop; and looking upon the stars I measured my life against the life of the nations of men who had lived and perished before me. I thought on those who had scattered the seeds of hope and had gathered therefrom the



fruitage of despair, and on them that had labored well, whom death found naked at the end of their days.

“ And while I considered these matters there came a voice thinly crying: ‘ What of the life of man, O son of man, whose days are like a vapor that bloweth across the moon? Yea, what of the life of man that breaketh off like the thread of a weaver’s shuttle? Hath it no continuance when his breath ceaseth, and is its meaning then gone forever? ’

“ And a voice from within me made answer: ‘ The just shall endure, even the upright man until the end of the years of time, and his faithful deeds unto the last generation. Yea, though he be slain by the sword; yea, though he be consumed by fire; yea, though his ashes be scattered over the sea, yet shall he abide forever and by his doing shall all the families of earth be blessed.’ Since that night I do speak of faith to every man who will hearken.”

And when we were come to the parting of the ways he bade me farewell, saying, “ The peace of Yahweh be with thee.”

Now it befell not long afterward that I heard a clamor in the north. And behold, the Assyrian was in the land of Israel. Fear marched in his vanguard; death and destruction followed after. He came attended by the gods of his land, gods of wrath and vengeance, cruel in their might.

Yet I bade Israel be strong, saying: “ Surely I will deliver you from Assyria as I delivered your fathers from the strong hand of Pharaoh. I will smite the Assyrian gods as I smote the gods of the Kenites.”

For though the prophets had taught me mercy and gentleness, I thought not to lighten my hand for any but mine own people.

But the Assyrians came in number as the sands of the sea and overwhelmed the armies of Israel. Their gods, for swiftness and for the power of dealing death, were like the

lightning that flasheth from one end of heaven to the other.

And when I would have rebuked these gods for that they trespassed upon the holy soil of another god that was his by conquest of old time, they brake my sword and at the point of a spear drave me over the borders into Judah.

Then I cried: "Cursed art thou, Nannar, god of the moon, because thou didst deceive me in my youth. Behold, I have sought to become great among the gods by acting in accord with that which is deepest in the heart of man, even the love of power and the lust of battle. For so didst thou advise me. And lo, I am stripped of power by gods that are mightier than I."

But Israel I rebuked: "Because ye have divided the holy soil northward and southward and have not been as one with your brethren of Judah, ye have halved the power of your god. Wherefore are ye overtaken by destruction."

Now when the King of Assyria had razed the principal cities he took above seven and twenty thousand of the chief men of Israel, together with such of their families as had escaped fire and sword, and carried them away captive to Nineveh. And I, repenting of mine anger, went with them to the edge of the land, speaking such comfort as I could. I knew that I should see them no more again forever, for they would be mingled with other subject peoples in the far land of their conquerors. And strange gods and evil would receive the worship of their children.

When they came to the place where the land of Israel bordered on the possessions of Assyria I bade them farewell in great heaviness. I thought it not possible for me to trespass on the soil of another god, and I watched until mine eye could follow them no more, nor the dust that their feet cast up. Then I cried: "Alas, the beautiful and holy land is bereft of its fairest children. No more shall we go out to battle together or divide the spoils of victory. Would that

mine eyes were the eyes of a man, that I might know the comfort of tears."



As a flock scattered before the wolves were my people Judah when they knew how I returned from the borders of Assyria with my broken sword. And many of them said: "Yahweh is a vain boaster. He hath not the power, and mayhap he lacks the will also, to defend his nation." Wherefore they turned to serve other gods. They worshiped the sun and the moon and bowed themselves to the spirits of fire and flood; they offered prayers to the lightning and to the stormy winds; they sacrificed to the evil ones in whose keeping were the scourges of famine and pestilence. Aye, they offered up their children, the fruit of their bodies, in the valley of Hinnom.

Yet even in those days there arose prophets. Jeremiah cried from the housetops and at the corners of the streets: "Hear, O Judah! Yahweh our god is holy and righteous. He is of great compassion, and his tender mercies have no measure. He asketh not a sword, but a pure heart. Cast away your iniquities, therefore, and purge his temple of abominations. Then will Yahweh have mercy upon you and cherish you as a mother cherisheth her firstborn. And he will take away your stony hearts and will give you hearts of flesh. And because he will put his spirit into you ye shall be greatest among the nations."

When the people heard the word of Jeremiah, many of them repented and amended their ways. And Josiah, King of Judah, joined with the prophet to purge the land of its abominations. But the greater part of the people renounced not their strange gods. For they said, "Lest Yahweh prove not so strong as the king and Jeremiah do think."

And I said: "I shall not fail them that have repented



in Judah, but will save them from the destruction that came upon Israel."

Wherefore I caused a new blade to be fitted into the grip of my sword.

Now even while Jeremiah prophesied, Babylon arose to stand in the place of Assyria. And Nebuchadrezzar, the king, exacted tribute of all nations even unto the borders of Egypt.

In the day when he looked toward Palestine, Judah trembled. And the people, forgetting the word of Jeremiah, encompassed the heavens with prayers to sun and moon and all the host of the stars. Fat oxen they slew and burned on the altars of Baal. Moloch they besought with strong crying to come and dwell in the house that was mine only.

Seeing all this that was done before my face as though I were a god of no majesty, I questioned whether I should indeed strive against Nebuchadrezzar did he come, or the rather turn my blade against Judah.

So questioning, I came one day upon Jeremiah and a company of the prophets as they knelt beside the pool in the fullers' field. And Jeremiah stretched forth his hands toward the heavens and besought me, saying: "O thou who madest the heart of man for righteousness, have mercy upon the house of Judah lest the seed of righteousness perish from the earth. Behold, there is yet a remnant that is faithful. Redeem us from our sins that have been many, and let all nations see the salvation of our god."

And lo, while he was yet speaking the king's guard came and took them into custody, both Jeremiah and those that were with him.

And Nebuchadrezzar came once and again to Jerusalem and bore off the king and the principal families of Judah to keep them captive in Babylon. At his first coming I sat

in the sanctuary with my sword between my knees; at his second I took my sword in hand, but smote not; no, nor when, surrounded by his besieging armies, Jerusalem endured a famine so grievous that delicate women seethed their children in the pot; nor yet when he took the city.

Nonetheless, at the last, as I saw my precious vessels borne off and the remnant of my people crowding through the north gate, I aroused myself and cursed Nebuchadrezzar and his people:

Cursed be thou, Babylon,  
Thou harlot among the nations,  
Who dost steal the virgin daughters and the goodly  
    sons of every land  
    To mingle thy seed with their blood,  
That thou mayest possess the fat places of the earth  
    For the hire of thy lewdness.  
Let the flesh of thy virgin daughters be leprous,  
    And the blood of thy sons as the blood of the dead.  
Let their minds be the minds of dotards,  
    And their spirits bitter as gall.  
In the days of their youth let them loathe their lives,  
    And cry in vain for the deliverance of death.  
And blessed shall he be who shall take thy little ones,  
    The offspring of thy harlotry,  
And shall dash their heads against the stones before  
    thine eyes.

And I wrote the words and put them into the sacred chest that I might have them by me forever.

Thus did I take what bitter comfort I might from a godship that could curse where it could not blast.



The hand of their captors rested not overheavily upon the Judeans in Babylon, and certain of the people came now and again to Jerusalem.

Wherefore, hearkening from amid the ruins of the temple upon a day, I heard two men speak, and knew one for a priest that had held with Jeremiah, and the other for a prophet newly come out of Babylon. He it was who encouraged mine exiled people to believe that I would restore Zion; wherefore I did call him Benaiah, which name giveth the meaning, "Yahweh hath built up." But the scribes, for that he was in spirit like to Isaiah, did call him the second or the younger Isaiah.

Now the priest questioned Benaiah, saying: "Hast thou considered who or what may be the cause of all things that are? At whose bidding doth the corn spring from the seed? Whose hand formeth the buds among the gray boughs of the olive tree? Who hath cast up the mountains and furrowed out the river beds? By what word were the stars set in motion, or what counsel keepeth the order of their courses?"

"These be the doings of Yahweh, the god of our fathers," Benaiah made answer.

But the priest said: "Nay, Yahweh is the god of a lesser people and his dominion is determined by the bounds of his own land. Are not the stars above all nations? Cometh not the spring everywhere? Behold, if there be one who informeth all things with life, surely he must be greater than Yahweh."

Then Benaiah spake again: "What is the measure of a god's greatness, and by what line shall man mete his power? Yahweh it was who opened up a fount of justice in the days



of Amos, who caused lovingkindness to abound through the word of Hosea. None other gave the flower and fruitage of faith what time Isaiah prophesied in the court of Ahaz. Are not these things that he hath brought to pass in the heart of man as marvelous as trees and grass, yea, wondrous as the stars? Surely there can be but one true god, whether of man's thoughts or of the world without. And his name is Yahweh."

But the priest made answer: "If our god be the creator of the whole earth and the wakener of whatsoever is good in man, then must he be god of all peoples and not of our nation alone."

And Benaiah said: "I have pondered this matter also. And of a truth I believe that he is the god of every man that liveth."

Then, walking among the ruins, he lifted up his voice and cried aloud:

Hear, O ye people of Judah who languish in the house of  
your captors,

And ye of Israel that are scattered abroad:

Behold, darkness covereth the earth and gross darkness the  
people;

But Yahweh shall arise upon you

And his glory shall be seen upon you.

And gentiles shall come to your light,

And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to Yahweh

To serve him and to love the name of Yahweh,

Even them will he bring to his holy mountain

And make them joyful in his house of prayer.

Then while the priest marveled, and I with him, Benaiah prophesied yet again:

The day cometh when nations afar shall say of Yahweh: "Doubtless thou art our father though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not; "Thou, O Yahweh, art our father, our redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting."

But when he had finished his prophesying the priest questioned him yet again, saying: "It passeth belief that a god whose people lie in bondage should be so great. How can Yahweh whose house is in ruins be called lord over the gods of Babylon?"

Benaiah answered: "Not because the arm of Yahweh is weak, but because his righteousness is strong, do these nations suffer bondage. For their sins Yahweh hath delivered them over to be trodden of their enemies until they repent; it is he who strengtheneth their oppressors. Yea, our god calleth the wind and the fire and the destroying sword against them that do unjustly. Moreover, that man who breaketh the holy law shall be devoured by inward burnings. Though all men forget righteousness, yet will not Yahweh forget, and though all turn from it, yet he will not turn."

And I saw that the priest trembled in all his joints and the flesh crept on his bones at the vehemence of Benaiah's speaking.

Then the prophet took from his girdle a writing tablet of hardened clay and cast it to the ground, and it was shattered into many pieces. And he said: "Thus shall the righteousness of our god do to him that is hardened in iniquity. Nevertheless, he is also a god of lovingkindness who seeketh to redeem men from their sins, and who is ever ready to welcome them when they repent of their unrighteousness."

Now while I listened to the prophet the fury of that

wrath which had long been upon me was abated, and I beheld as from a hilltop the farther reaches of that road which Abraham and I had together trod in the beginning. And I could see that it wound back and forth among the nations to bind them together. And I beheld afar off at the end of its windings the city of righteousness, and in the midst of the city a throne whereon never king nor god had sat, but which awaited that one who would rule in righteousness over all mankind.

Yet when I looked on my hands they were stained with blood. And I knew that my deeds had matched neither the relentless righteousness nor yet the steadfast loving-kindness that Benaiah's words had imputed to me.

Nonetheless, under the power of his speaking I remembered the companionship that I had once had of Abraham, Moses and the prophets, like which no other god had ever known.

And while I yet pondered if I might not by striving become what Benaiah would have me be, he prophesied in a loud voice: "The ransomed of Yahweh shall return and come to Zion with songs and with everlasting joy upon their heads; joy and gladness shall be theirs, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Then said I: "This day will I go down into Babylon and abide with my people in the sorrows of their captivity and the shame of their bondage until the time of their deliverance be come."



Now the children of my people at their coming into Babylon had been required by their captors to sing the songs of Zion. But they hanged their harps upon the willows beside the watercourses, for they said, "How shall we sing the songs of our god in a land that is not his?"



Wherefore, appearing among them I said, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, for the time of your deliverance draweth nigh."

Then I bade them take their harps from the willows; and I gave them a song:

Sing, O heavens,  
And be joyful, O earth!  
For Yahweh hath comforted his people.  
Break forth into singing, O mountains,  
And rejoice, ye hills that are round about Jerusalem;  
For he that loveth Zion hath redeemed her,  
And hath called her to be queen among the nations.

But when Benaiah returned from Jerusalem and heard this song he said: "Judah hath been chastised for her iniquities that she might learn humility. And if she be redeemed from the hand of the enemy it is not that she may reign as queen among the nations, but that she may be a servant to all people. For he that sitteth in the heavens hath chosen her to be his minister of righteousness."

And the people gave their assent, saying: "Let it be even as Benaiah hath said. Yet not until we shall have come again into our own land."

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## INTERLUDE

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### LAWYERS LAY DOWN THE LAW

**N**OW THERE came before me in Babylon a company of men who did question me after this manner: "What is that righteousness concerning which the prophets have taught thee to speak?"

And I answered them, "To be righteous is to do well."

But they asked, "What is it to do well?"

While I cast about how I should answer, they prodded one another, saying, "Yahweh hath not been told the meaning of righteousness."

Then they set before me a great number of books, seeing which I asked, "What be these many books?"

And one of them made answer: "These be the writings of Aaron that he set down at sundry times, together with the law that Moses gave, with, mayhap, something added here and there on the margins, and a chapter put in as need might be to make the meaning plain."

Then another of their number said: "These writings do set forth the meaning of righteousness; how a man shall wash the cups and platters and his hands that be defiled by touching this and that of an unholy nature; what work he may do on the sabbath day; with what manner of offer-

ing he shall appear before thine altars; how he shall order himself going in and coming forth of his house; together with many like things that pertain to righteousness."

"How came ye by this knowledge?" I asked. "The prophets have said nothing on this head."

And they made answer, "We have this knowledge from our acquaintance with the law, for we be thy lawyers."

Whereupon I asked who had made them to be lawyers. And they said, "No man hath made us to be lawyers. We be made lawyers by our knowledge of the law."

Then I said, "How shall I burden myself with the remembering of these many matters?"

Whereto they replied as with one voice: "It is not required of thee to remember. We thy lawyers shall remember for thee and also for the people; nor shall one jot or tittle escape us."

But I said: "Nay, not so. It is not my purpose to be a ruler in small things. Neither shall I use you for a goad to make the people's life a burden."

Whereupon all made their faces sad and solemn and spake ominous words, and one of their number said, "From the beginning of time until now it hath not been known that a god refused the counsel of his lawyers, nor that a god prospered who resisted his wise men."

Nonetheless I would still have dismissed them, save that a very subtle man from among them took me apart and said: "Hearken, Yahweh, and be advised by me. The prophet and the lawyer are one, forasmuch as the prophet calleth the people to righteousness, while the lawyer alone knoweth in what righteousness doth consist. Put thyself into our hands, I pray thee, and abide by our counsels. Then when we be come into our own land again, we that know the law shall order the life of the people from day to day. Six days shall it be so, and on the seventh the



people shall be thine. They shall do no work on the sabbath day, nor shall they know any pleasure but to hear the word of the prophets at the mouth of thy priests. And the land shall become great because of the law and the prophets.”

And he persuaded me, because I liked well that the land should become great again and that the people should be wholly mine once in every week of days.

Even so did I become lord of the sabbath, but when we were come into our own good land again I heard little of the prophets but much of the law.

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## VI

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### UNDER FOREIGN YOKES

UPON A DAY my people and I did return from Babylon and go to dwell in our own land once more. And when we had abode there certain years, Alexander of Greece laid his hand on all the hither parts of the east, even as Assyria and Babylon had done aforetime, and when Alexander died Palestine fell to his general Seleucus. Now Seleucus ruled Judah from Syria, and when Seleucus died his son ruled after him and his son's son. And there arose from his house Antiochus, King of Syria and the parts round about. And after he had ruled wisely for some years as a man, Antiochus caused himself to be held a god. And he called himself in the Greek tongue *Theos Epiphanes*, which is by interpretation "the Manifest God."

Wherefore, seeking to destroy the forms of worship by which my people honored me in the temple of Jerusalem, he commanded that swine be sacrificed to himself on mine holy altar.

Now there was an aged priest in Judah, Mattathias by name, who was of a courageous spirit and zealous for the law. When therefore he saw how it went with the temple he gathered about him a company of young men who feared

not Antiochus, no, nor any man. These he led against the soldiery that came to desecrate the temple. And the men of Mattathias made havoc of the despoilers. And Mattathias died, being full of years, and his son Judas, who was also called Maccabeus, took command and increased the number of the Zealots, firing their indignation yet further by the strong appeals which he made to their partisanship of the land and its god.

Yet Antiochus yielded not, but did the rather send armies again and again into Judea to try if by weight of numbers he might subdue it. But Maccabeus, whose skill and cunning in warfare fell not short of his courage, dealt with the invaders however numerous and however oft they came. And I was pleased beyond measure, because he relied not wholly on the arm of flesh to give the victory, but did ever exhort the men of war to fulfill all the requirements of the laws, both those that were noted in the books and those which the priests and lawyers spake from time to time.

And with prayers and strong cryings he besought me to stand in the breach as of old time and smite the enemy. Which thing I did the more gladly because I liked not that Antiochus, being but a man, should say, "I am the Manifest God."

Thus did Judas Maccabeus and I bring deliverance to Judah. Not only so: we restored the ancient borders and stretched out our hands over much of the territory that had aforetime appertained to Israel.

Then, when we had subdued all the armies of Antiochus and had made plain to the nations that I and not Antiochus was manifestly god, I was given to think in this wise: "The lust of battle is not in itself sufficient to make a god great. He only becometh great who bindeth his people with peculiar laws and doth wake in their hearts a fierce



jealousy for their customs, their faith, their blood and their holy soil. When a god calleth the lust of destruction to the support of these, there shall no god or people stand before him."

Thereafter for a season I was not careful to walk softly before any god nor to show respect for kings.



Power passed from the hand of the Seleucidae even as it had passed from the hand of the Assyrians and Babylonians, and Rome ruled the world in their stead. And the Roman Caesar appointed Herod to be King of Judea and to conquer the land and rule it in quietness after the manner of Caesar's other dominions. But meeting with resistance Herod carried the city of Jerusalem by assault, and his army burned a part of the temple and tarnished the beauty of what remained. Nor did Herod withdraw, as had been the custom of those enemies that had hitherto sacked Jerusalem, permitting my people to restore unto me what was mine.

Thereafter I made what poor shift I could of keeping up the semblance of a god's estate in my ruined house.

But because my doorway overlooked such desolation as must humiliate a god, I went seldom abroad. It suited me better to remain behind the sanctuary curtains and hearken to those sounds which still bespoke mine ancient dignity, the voice of prayer and song, the bleat of the lambs awaiting the demands of mine altar, the cooing of the doves kept for the minor sacrifices. Nor was I wholly insensible to the pleasant chink of coins when heavy silver shekels were dropped into the treasury among the widows' mites of brass.

Now it came to pass on a day in the eighteenth year of

Herod's reign that I heard a flourish of trumpets, signifying that someone stood at the gate who might not or would not enter. And the high priest went forth to see what this summons boded, and I with him, though he knew it not.

And we beheld in the paved street that ran beside the temple enclosure a throng of city folk, such as are ever on hand for that which promiseth event, and in the midst of them a company of Roman soldiers drawn up, and in the midst of the soldiers a horse bearing Herod the King, and a litter with a woman in it, carried high that she might see. And the people, supposing that some desecration was planned, shook their fists and called down curses on the Romans, and certain ran and stood shoulder to shoulder, making of themselves a wall between the soldiers and the gate. Nor did they note when some of their own number fell and were trampled underfoot. But the soldiers, facing four ways to make a square, stood like men of stone.

Then did I remember how the street had in times past rung with shouts that proclaimed the victories of David, and how its pavement had rumbled under the silver chariot wheels of Solomon the Wise.

Now Herod, though part Jew, was not of those who be-thought them of freedom for the land. Wherefore he heeded not the clamor nor let himself be moved by such as offered their naked breasts in defense of mine house. But when he beheld the top of the high priest's staff where he stood within the gate, himself invisible for the shield of men before him, Herod called out, saying: "Draw near, priest. I have a matter to lay before thee."

Then the high priest bade the crowd part that was between him and Herod, but himself advanced not out of the temple area. Nor did Herod move from the square of soldiers, but sitting his horse spake, saying:

"These many years have I sorrowed over the poverty

of the temple, and have thought to speak with thee on that head; but the pressure of affairs hath hindered. It was not mine intention to damage the dwelling of Yahweh. The stubborn resistance of the city made necessary what I would gladly have avoided. But let that pass. I am now minded to redeem Yahweh from his miserable plight and undertake at mine own charges the building of an house surpassing that which Solomon gave him."

Whereat the woman in the litter clapped her hands and cried: "It is a princely offer, my lord, and worthy of thy good heart. Thy generosity will not only honor the god, but give thee a memorial to keep thy name green in this uncouth land whose people hate thee with so bitter and unreasonable a hatred."

"Truly," nodded the centurion of the guard, for he stood near the litter, "and mayhap it will placate them. Never can I pass through one of their wretched streets but that a tile falleth from some roof or a water jar is emptied from an upper window. Thy thought is well conceived. By all means let a temple be given this worthy god."

But Herod scowled on both speakers, lest any had heard them, and said in a general way after the manner of orators, "Mine Hebrew blood doth warm toward Yahweh and his glorious past, and I am mindful of the courtesy due so great a god." Then approaching the high priest he spake his plan more particularly: "Let us think on the house which I propose. If it please thee I will have marble quarried for its walls and costly cedar wood hewn for the beams of its roof. And I will seek out skilled workmen of every craft."

Now when the high priest heard mention of the craftsmen, he perceived that whereof he might complain and still not wholly refuse the gift. Wherefore he said: "It



is meet that thou provide Yahweh a new house, having cast down the old; thy marbles and cedars are acceptable, with perhaps some gold, which doubtless was intended in thy mind but forgotten in thy speech. But for common workmen to build the temple would be contrary to the law. If they enter upon the spot which is to be the holy place, even to lay stone for its walls, it will be defiled and Yahweh cannot abide therein. Aye, if a common man touch with his finger one of those stones, or the paring of his nail fall upon the inner surface that is to look toward the god's seat, or his spittle drop upon it, or his breath in going forth from his nostrils do so much as — ”

Now as the high priest spake the people watched Herod, how he should reply. And Herod, breaking in upon his words, contended not, but said: “ I care not who labors on the house. Choose whom thou wilt. But hold! The city throngs with priests who live by the temple revenues. They are pure and holy. Cannot men be found in their company to build without further pay if I but furnish the materials? ”

“ In any number,” answered the priest quickly, being discomfited by the nearness of Herod's horse. “ Every one of us is skilled in his craft.”

Then Herod came down from his horse and linked his arm with that of the high priest, and they two bade the crowd disperse. And the high priest said to the people, “ The Roman yoke is hard, but let us rejoice that it may yet be made easier, inasmuch as one of our own blood sitteth upon the throne.”

Then king and priest went together apart from the people and entered into a covenant to carry on this work. And the throng parted their several ways, bearing with them the bodies of those that had been trampled.

Now from that day Herod set about to fulfill the prom-

ises he had made touching the temple. He provided marble of high excellence for the house and rare woods to ceil its chambers. Moreover, he made provision to cover with gold the front and certain visible parts of the side walls. And the priests were astonished at that which came to their hand, wherefore they wrought the more cunningly. And as I saw mine house rise, stone upon stone and beam upon beam, I thought that I had not beheld finer in Babylon.

But albeit it was the fairest house I had ever possessed, I could have but small joy of it. For ere the temple was ready for habitation Herod did with his own hand set a Roman eagle of beaten gold over the gate that looked into the outer court. And when the people cried out against it he said: "Take no offense. This is done that when Yahweh looketh out of the door of the pleasant house which I have given to him he may see a symbol of the friendship which is between him and me."

But I, being in the court, heard a centurion mutter: "Yea, and it will serve as a warning to that stubborn god of a stiff-necked people if at any time he think to set foot across the bounds which Herod hath marked for him."

Before long my people tore the symbol from the gate. Yet were they not able by so doing to remove those other tribulations wherewith I was harassed of Herod. For though mine was that pleasant house, and mine only, nonetheless I was jostled on all hands by the celestial inhabitants of small shrines set up round about to minister to the legions. Moreover, the image of Augustus Caesar was prominently placed throughout the land with the order that divine honors be paid unto it. And though it irked me to play host to one who belonged to the race not of gods but of men yet could I not refuse as I had refused in the days of Antiochus.

And the more the Romans vexed me, the more exact-

ing did I become with mine own people, demanding that they reverence me in onerous and profitless ways. Those were tedious days for god and man.



Herod died, and another reigned after him. And it came to pass on a day when I sat in my sanctuary beneath the golden wings of my cherubim that I heard shouting and laughter. And I went forth into the inner court, if haply I might see what such mirth portended. And in the inner court was nought but the savor of flesh burning on the altar and the lesser smells of curdled blood and rancid fat from the pavement. And I went forth into the outer court where were the caged birds and hobbled beasts, hucksters and money-changers, bargain seekers and loiterers, rich men who came with trumpets blown before them to make their offerings to the temple treasury, and Pharisees praying in the corners of the wall.

And when I sought more closely the cause of the merriment I beheld only that a rough drover lifted a small lad and set him among the weights and balances and bags of coins on a money-changer's table. And his fellows encouraged him freely, so that a crowd gathered.

"Prophecy unto us, thou suckling Elijah," cried one, "that we may repent of our sins and be saved."

Whereat they laughed.

But the lad protested, saying, "Nay, good folk, hinder me not, for I am come to my father's house to note how doth fare its business."

And one of the cattle sellers sought to further the sport, saying: "Ho, boy! By thy speech thou shouldst seek thy father not in Jerusalem but among the stinking fisher boats of Galilee."

"Aha!" cried another, "a Galilean, is he? Doubt-



less he is a dangerous fellow and ought to be delivered to the guard, lest he hatch a revolt."

So saying he winked at the venders who crowded around, and they nodded their heads and nudged one another as though to say, "Here is good sport for a dull hour."

But the lad, showing no fear, answered them: "My father is no fisherman, but one Joseph, a Nazarene carpenter of good report. Yet I meant not him, but the god, when I spake of my father's house."

Hearing this, one of the money-changers, thinking to provoke sharper mirth, said: "Hear ye! He would make a roisterer of the god himself."

Whereat they laughed not, but the rather all fell silent, looking in fear toward the temple. And in the sudden quiet the lad entreated them, saying: "Good people, tell me; is this in truth the court of our father's house? If so, ought we not to show reverence?"

Then he beheld me, and with his eyes besought me, and I drew near and led him away. And we came to that room at the side of the temple where the doctors and lawyers were wont to meet for counsel. Now there was that in the face of the boy which laid a command on me such as I had known only in the presence of the elder prophets, and I showed him how he should enter. And seeing him in their midst the doctors straightway demanded why he had come into the temple; and he answered, "I came seeking my father's house to see what things are done therein by them that serve him."

And one of the younger doctors, who perchance had experience of a lad's questions, spake patiently with him, saying: "The god is in a sense father of the nation forasmuch as he makes us his peculiar charge if we fail not to bring him tithes and offerings nor omit to keep his holy laws. And he dwelleth in this temple in the sense that this is

the place where reconciliation is made for sins. Nonetheless, only the high priest may appear before his seat. Thou hast mistaken some words of thy mother's teaching if thou didst think to walk into his presence."

"Nay," the lad replied, "I thought only that here in his earthly house I might draw more near to him than elsewhere, and that his ways might be shown me by such as dwell in his house to serve him."

Then he questioned the doctors, saying, "Why is there blood on the pavement?"

And an elder doctor answered sternly, "Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of our sins." And he opened up the book of the law to read what things were written therein.

And having hearkened the child said: "Ye be those that study to know the will of Yahweh. Be there also those who study to do it?"

And the elder doctor replied, saying: "Yea, verily, there be holy men who act only after the law and our interpretations of it. They remove themselves from the common ways of life and shun worldly pleasures."

"And these are they that Yahweh regardeth as his sons?"

"That I cannot tell thee," said the elder doctor, "but they gain much credit with the teachers of the law."

And he placed his hand on the child's head and said: "Son, the time draws nigh when Israel shall be delivered from her bondage and exalted above the nations. This will be when men have learned to keep the whole law. Be thou, therefore, true to the temple, defending it in thy speech and keeping its precepts."

And there came a man and a woman seeking the child. And the woman, when she saw him, cried: "Son, why hast thou so dealt with us? Thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing."

But he said, "Mother, knew you not that I must be about my father's business?" Yet he followed her toward the gate. But even as he went he marked where a young bullock tugged at its halter, and he ran and eased the rope about its neck. And he said, "Surely, mother, the god doth not see how these beasts are made to suffer at the threshold of his house." Then he put his hand in hers and suffered her to lead him forth from the temple.



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## VII

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### ANGRY PRAYERS

**N**OW FROM THE beginning of the Roman rule the Jews had been stirred to revolt numberless times by hothearted Galileans who promised them in my name a speedy deliverance and the establishment forthwith of a messianic kingdom.

My priests said nought, nor consulted me on such occasions, but I marked how they awaited the issue, keeping peace meanwhile with the Romans.

It came to pass nearly a score of years after the Galilean lad had visited the temple that, on a certain day of atonement when the high priest entered my sanctuary, the broom of hyssop trembled in his hand, wherewith he was wont to sprinkle the most holy place with cleansing blood. Seeing that his face also gave evidence of strong feeling, I asked, "Is there a disturbance in the city, or is a deliverance being attempted again in Galilee?"

He answered: "If thou canst call it deliverance that a self-made teacher is giving out that thou art the kind of father whose benefits may be reaped by the wicked without money and without price. A carpenter out of Nazareth speaketh among the people in this wise. And thou shouldst see how the common folk buzz about him like

flies at a pot of honey! Moreover, we of the temple doubt not that he desires to turn all from us, for he speaketh to them in parables apt to their common life and when he bestoweth a benefit on one he saith, 'See thou tell no man.' "

He thrust his broom deep into its vessel and splashed a great quantity of blood on the mercy seat.

Wherefore I perceived that I must speak shrewdly if I would learn further, and I said, "Yet might it be well for me to draw nearer to my people as a father in these times."

The high priest answered in anger: "It will be well if thou keep thyself strictly to thine abode and avoid all intercourse with the rabble that this Galilean draws after him. In times like these, the upholding of the temple customs is of first importance."

"But look you," I insisted, "it is a good name — father. Kindness, mercy and love sound in it; yea, and likewise that sternness which ye priests have taught men to expect of me." But seeing that his wrath did but mount I urged him no further, saying only: "Nay, nay; be assured I shall not commit myself to the doing of any new thing hastily. Nonetheless it is a thought worthy to be considered, especially inasmuch as the prophets in their day seemed to cherish some such plan. Think on it, I pray thee, and commend it to thy brother priests for their counsel."

The high priest said: "This we have already done. The day for a father-nearness to the people is not yet. There is a time to unbend and a time to maintain dignity. None should observe the proper season more strictly than a god."

Then he laid his broom in his vessel and would have departed, but I detained him, saying: "It may be that this Galilean stands in the lineage of my prophets."

Whereto he answered only: "Hath this new prophet of thine sought in any way to do thee honor? Shall Yahweh step down from his throne to follow after a carpenter's son?"

Now there were two parties in Israel, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees were chiefly of the rich folk and cared not who ruled the nation if so be they themselves had control of the temple and its revenues. And the high priest was of their number. But the Pharisees were principally concerned to bring about the observance of the ritual law, inasmuch as they believed that, if all the people could be brought to keep all the precepts, the national bondage would end and that kingdom come which had been foretold of the prophets.

Wherefore I bethought me, what matter if the high priest think not well of the Galilean? Are not such things the concern rather of the Pharisees?

And lo, even as the high priest passed from the sanctuary, I heard a voice of prayer and strong wailing from one of those rooms where the Pharisees were wont to congregate, and the loudness thereof disturbed me. And going in to them I beheld in that room upwards of twoscore doctors, and some prayed, while others did but wail and tear their hair. And those that prayed, did pray after this manner:

"O Thou who art the Everlasting One, Lawgiver, Judge and King; who didst raise us up to be a nation and set us apart as chief among the peoples of the earth when we were weak and but a handful; who didst from the beginning choose and ordain us to be thine own peculiar treasure and charge; who also didst anciently save our fathers out of many distresses, delivering them from the hand of the enemy and avenger when through affliction, bondage and sorrow they were brought low and their



hearts, being purged of sinful desire, were inclined again to keep thy holy law:

“ Look now on us in our time of trouble and deliver us from the mouth of destruction as of old time. For we love thy precepts and offend not against them; we seek not our own pleasure through the lusts of the body or pride of spirit as do common men. But we are exceeding zealous for thee and seek only the doing of thy will with respect to this thy chosen people, according to thy promises given by covenant to our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; which holy will, as testified to us by godly teachers, is to — ”

“ Come to the point of your praying,” I charged them. “ What would ye by this din of intercession and strong crying? ”

Whereupon they that were standing with bowed heads straightened themselves; they that kneeled or lay prone on the ground sprang to their feet. And all looked upon me but knew me not. Then did the chief Pharisee step forward to speak the wrath of those that were assembled and to lay hold on me. But perceiving the majesty of my person he fell back, and in fear covered his eyes with his hands. And his brethren did likewise.

“ It is the angel of Yahweh’s presence! ” cried one of them. Wherefore they fell every one upon his face and covered their heads with their mantles.

Then I touched the chief Pharisee upon his shoulder, saying, “ Rise and fear no evil, but instruct me clearly concerning this deliverance that ye seek.”

He rose not, but answered: “ Alas, thou knowest, my Lord. We, the people of Yahweh, are in bondage to Rome, even as the common nations round about us.”

“ ’Tis not a new condition, nor is it a matter whereof to complain so vehemently, seeing ye are a stiff-necked and

rebellious people. Tell me rather of the affliction that doth more immediately beset you."

"The Galilean!" they cried with one voice. "He strengthens the hand of Rome."

Whereat I was astonished and questioned more closely of the matter, saying: "By what acts doth the Galilean affright you? Common report gives out that he is a good man. There be some that think he hath been raised up for the doing of Yahweh's will concerning this nation."

Now having heard a Sadducee speak ill of the Galilean, I had thought to hear the Pharisees speak well. But one answered for all and said, "Let my Lord keep patience if his servant speaketh concerning this Galilean what doubtless my Lord well knoweth."

I bade him say on and fear no ill.

"As thou knowest, my Lord, when this man first came out of Nazareth, having laid down his carpenter's tools — in the former use of which a man of God need feel no shame, inasmuch as certain of the prophets were of a humble way of life — we of the strictest school of the Pharisees made no complaint of him. For he preached righteousness and repentance and went about doing good. Nevertheless ere long certain of us marked with a measure of sorrow that he sought not counsel of the chosen leaders of Yahweh's people. But other of our number, forgetting the zeal for our sacred tradition which, let my Lord mark, distinguishes our company in general, could find no fault in him."

Whereupon certain of the younger Pharisees did draw their mantles yet more closely before their faces.

And I said: "Forbear to make charges one against another. Say rather what ye do in common hold against this Galilean."

And one who was a judge among them said: "To this

charge there be five counts. First, that he violateth the sabbath day, going through the corn and threshing the kernels thereof with his hands because his belly crieth for food. Yea, and he ministers to the sick in the hallowed hours of the sabbath when men ought to bear their ills patiently for the glory of Yahweh. Secondly, he eateth things defiled, out of vessels that have not been purged after handling by persons whose sins are unforgiven; for he claimeth, contrary to the law, that nothing which goeth into a man can defile him, but only that which proceedeth out of his mouth. Thirdly, he doth mock them who make long prayers, and teacheth sinners that the god is ever disposed toward leniency and needeth not that men persuade him.

“Fourthly, he giveth out that it is just to pay the tribute money unto Rome, and hath been seen to pay it for himself and for his followers, not grudgingly, with spittings and hissings and cursings as do we Pharisees, but with the easy air of one who alloweth the rule of a stranger.

“Furthermore, he counseleth meekness toward our oppressors. Aye, as though there were no vengeance in the heart of Yahweh.”

Then one who was a scribe reached into his bosom and brought forth certain tablets, and read unto me:

“‘Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.’”

And another, commenting, said: “This indeed he advised, my Lord; nay, commanded as if he were a new law-giver raised up to sit in Moses’ seat. To the fishermen and rude laborers he promised high places in a new order of things which he saith shall come.”

And again he who was a scribe read out of the tablets:



“ ‘Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.

“ ‘But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.’ ”

And that other said: “Who is our enemy but Rome that keepeth us in bitter and shameful bondage? Who smiteth us and trampleth on us but the Roman? Who else doth hate and persecute us? And in the face of all that is done against us this Galilean counseleth submission. Aye, he saith that the meek shall inherit the earth. Now thou knowest, my Lord, that we who are servants of Yahweh do patiently bide our time until Rome shall be busy with war on some far border. Then shall we strike swiftly and shake off her yoke. Mayhap Yahweh watcheth also and will send Messiah. But how shall Yahweh succor us if we keep not the law, and how shall these things come to pass if hatred of our enemy be permitted to burn low in the hearts of our young men?”

Then did all begin speaking together, and one said, “I with mine own ears did hear him hold up a Samaritan as example of what a man ought to be — a Samaritan, mark you.”

And another, “I did hear him say of a Roman centurion, ‘I have not found in all Israel a faith like his.’ ”

Now when I heard report of the Galilean’s ill-advised charity toward nations that lay beyond the borders of Israel’s holy soil and toward peoples not of the pure blood, I was sore troubled. Again I felt that impulse to go abroad which certain prophets had stirred in me. And I liked it not.

While I mused upon this, he who was a judge among them commanded silence and thus bespoke me: “May

Yahweh be pleased to save his people from the false teachings of this Galilean and bring stoutness of heart again to them whom he hath corrupted. Be gracious unto us, my Lord, and beseech Yahweh that he smite this man for us by lightning from heaven, or by storm, or flood, or disease, or such other means of deliverance as he hath in his hands, that we who be little given to violence may be free of his blood."

Whereto I replied after the manner of one intrusted with a message, "Be sure that Yahweh shall think on these matters and honor thy requests as may be best for the nation."

Whereupon they fell again on their faces and worshiped me as the angel of the presence. And the chief Pharisee said: "Alas, my Lord, we are but men, and we have looked with open eye upon the angel of Yahweh. Grant that there come no evil upon us from the sight of thine unveiled majesty, for though our intercession was strong, yet we thought not our prayers would bring thee so nigh us."

And I answered, "Ye shall receive no hurt therefrom."

Then one of the younger men said, "We shall fast certain days until the light of thy countenance be lifted from us."

"Aye, my Lord," declared the chief Pharisee, with a look that rebuked the younger, "we shall keep ourselves from wine and pleasant bread and from our wives until the new moon."

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## VIII

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### KNOW ME, GALILEAN!

**N**OW FOR convenience's sake and because in this day it mattereth not, I have represented my servants as speaking to me or of me by my dread name *Yahweh*, yet in those days whereof I have written did no man, even the boldest, at any time pronounce it with its full value of tones, so great were the fear and reverence in which it was held. The rather did they say, "Lord," "Thou Holy One of Israel," "O God" and "Thou Great King of Glory." But after that hour when I spake with the high priest and then with the Pharisees, I began to mark prayers that used none of these forms, but only, "Father."

And this new name that came to mine ear from vineyard, field and olive yard, from city and desert place, from palace and beggar's hovel, was spoken in simplicity and strong faith. The sound disquieted me, for it echoed from the walls of the temple and set the altar and the mercy seat and all the holy furniture of mine house trembling as if with a sweet music. Yet I knew not surely if it was I, *Yahweh*, that the people called upon. Nor knew I whether to leave the temple forthwith and seek out them that so hopefully cried, or whether to shut mine ear wholly.



But on a certain night I said: "Be strong, Yahweh, and put this matter to a test. Answer thou boldly to the name, 'Father,' and have this uncertainty brought to an issue."

And when the day was no more than risen a woman's voice called, "Father."

Then I said, "I will answer now to this new name that my people call upon, notwithstanding she who calls is but a woman."

And I found the woman in the land of the Samaritans where she prayed by the side of Jacob's well that he had given to the city of Sychar. And she said in her prayer:

"Our Father, grant me, I beseech thee, a larger measure of that peace which was in his face, and which he gave to mine heart when I challenged him here beside the well."

And though she was not of Judah I spake to her, saying, "Daughter, who is this of whom you speak, and from what sore trouble did he loose thee?"

"The prophet who came out of Galilee," she made answer. "He found me an adulteress. Five husbands had I had, and he with whom I was living was no husband but a friend only. The prophet made me a daughter of God."

Now when I heard of her iniquity I was swept by indignation, and I smote the woman on the breast, saying: "Let these breasts wither and thy round limbs waste, since by them thou hast enticed men to deadly sin. By this token thou shalt know that I am Yahweh, the Father on whom thou hast called."

Whereat she fell upon her knees and folding her hands across her breast prayed, saying: "Blast me not, I beseech thee, for I have repented of my sins. Mercy is to be found with the Father. Even so did the Galilean promise."

Then carefully lifting first one hand and then the other, she looked down upon herself. And she cried: "See!

Thine anger hath left me unscathed. A fountain of life hath been opened within me, even as the Galilean did promise."

I saw that her breasts were full and smooth as before; and I looked on mine hand that had smitten her, wondering how it had lost its power to blast, for I knew not what she meant by a fountain within.

But her joy was mingled with perplexity and, fixing her eyes upon me steadfastly, she said: "I can well believe, having felt the weight of thine hand, that thou art Yahweh who sitteth in the temple at Jerusalem, whom we Samaritans are taught to worship, though we may not come nigh thine holy habitation, inasmuch as the Jews do declare that the shadow of a Samaritan defileth the stones. But I doubt if thou canst also be the Father in whose name the Galilean promised me forgiveness and life."

Whereupon I asked with great gentleness: "In what words did he speak of the Father? Said he aught of his dwelling place?"

"Aye," she answered. "When he came to the well and sought a drink of its water, I, thinking to play with him and perhaps entice him as I had enticed others, said: 'Sir, I perceive thou art a learned man of the Jews. Tell me, therefore, where is God to be worshiped? In Samaria's holy mount, as they of my city teach, or in Jerusalem as ye Jews hold?' And he made answer that the Father dwelt in mine own heart."

Hearing this, I was in a measure reassured, for though I had failed in my trial of answering to the Father name and could make nothing of her dark saying, yet now I knew beyond peradventure of doubt that the Galilean had not had in his thought any god of Roman or Greek or Scythian or Parthian when he spake of the Father. No, nor of Egyp-

tian. Wherefore I blessed the woman, albeit she was a Samaritan and wont like others of her people to misspeak the ritual words when she worshiped on Mount Gerizim.



And I heard another who prayed “Father,” and answering I came to a wayside house with heavy walls and a door of thick cedar wood. Though this portal was stoutly bound with iron, as if they who dwelt behind it were fearful of thieves, yet was it braced wide open.

Within I saw a man of small stature reclining at a table on which he builded money into towers, adding coin to coin from a sack. At his elbow was a parchment, and ever and anon he would read the writing and say: “Four shekels of silver to Simon of the vineyard,” or “Seven and twenty pence to Benjamin, the shepherd,” or again, “This goodly sum for Adah, the widow of Philip the fisherman.” And his face shone, albeit at times his hand, as if unaccustomed to letting go, made as if to close over the money. Whereupon he would pray, “O Father of the Galilean, loose me, I humbly beseech thee, from this greed that doth beset me.”

“I am here, my son,” I said.

Whereupon, startled that I should have approached unheard of him, he swept the money into its sack, then fell to stroking his beard the while he regarded me with a shrewd and searching eye. Whereafter he sighed heavily, saying, “Owe I anything to thee, friend?”

“Thou owest a proper respect,” I said shortly, rebuking the familiarity of his address. “Knowest who I am?”

Again he sighed and, half rising from the couch, lifted his hand and entreated: “Peace, friend, peace. A score of times a day one or another cometh and asketh: ‘Ha! Dost thou know me?’ or, ‘Hast forgotten Judah of Caper-



naum?’ or, ‘Dost recall Thomas the netmaker?’ And each thrusteth his bill of reckoning under my beard. And while conscience bids me pay all, even as I promised the prophet, there is surely an end to what I possess. If thou hast aught against me show me thy claim in writing.”

“Let the reckoning wait,” I made answer, “but tell me more of this prophet. How is he concerned in what thou art doing?”

“Why, he is concerned,” answered the man, “by being the author of my present actions. Know that I am Zacchaeus, a gatherer of taxes in these parts, and a notable extortioner, until that day when I did climb a sycamore tree — being, as thou seest, small of stature — to see him pass by.

“But hear the whole story. The prophet, walking beneath my tree, looked up and, seeing me, said that he would sup in mine house. Whereupon I hastened home and bade my wife prepare against his coming. Now mark you, I was outcast from the people of this place, whom I had defrauded under protection of my Roman office, and only those who were shunned by honest folk would consort with me. These did I bid to meat, lest I seem friendless before the prophet.

“When the meat was eaten and the wine drunk we reclined at table, and the Galilean, having no contempt for his fellow guests or me, spake in such wise that I could endure no longer the remembrance of mine offenses.”

“Ha!” said I, “did he chastise thee after the manner of the prophets?”

“Nay,” answered Zacchaeus. “Touching me he uttered no word, good or ill. His speech was of the love of God and of man’s dignity as a son of the Father. But as he discoursed I saw myself not the man that was, but he that might be. And straightway I cried out, ‘Half my goods I

give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any man I will restore to him fourfold for all that I have taken away.' ”

Having thus reminded himself, he turned once more to the table and would have ended the talk that was between us. But I questioned him further, saying: “ When he saw thy repentance the prophet bade thee go quickly to the temple and offer gifts for the cleansing of thine hands, did he not? Aye, doubtless he did that; else would he not be a prophet.”

Zacchaeus lifted his shoulders and spread forth his hands. “ Doth one wash in the mire? Doth one go to the priests for cleansing? ”

“ Say what thou wilt of the priests in the outer court. But what of Yahweh who sitteth in the temple? ”

“ Aye, what of him? ” answered Zacchaeus. “ Methinks he sitteth too much in the temple. He doth not trust himself in the company of a thief such as I was. But the Galilean came into mine house, and in another’s house I have seen him suffer an outcast woman to wash his feet and dry them with her hair.”

“ Did the Galilean seek then to embitter thee against Yahweh, the ancient god of thy people and the only true Father? ” I asked.

“ Nay,” said Zacchaeus, “ bitterness would ill become a friend of the prophet. But an extortioner’s life hath sharpened my wits to detect evil and hath enabled me to see that the temple folk differ from what I was only in seeming, whereas the Galilean by his presence bringeth God very nigh.”

A quick answer lay ready to my tongue, but profiting by my converse with the Samaritan woman I forbore to reveal myself, even so much as to depart in the manner in which I had come.

Wherefore I blessed him and bade him farewell. And

Zacchaeus made as if to hold me, saying: "Stay, friend! I know thee not, but there is fear in thy face. Be thou advised by me. Go and seek out the prophet."

Thereafter I gave ear constantly to the prayers addressed to the Father. And those suppliants who had been but little in the company of the Galilean seemed not to hold it against me that no great aid or comfort came from mine answering. But others who had been much with the prophet asked largely, demanding vast boons for the inward being, and when I made complaint of their strange requests, they continued to pray as if they heard not.

Now albeit I gained scant knowledge of what the Galilean intended by godship, yet in my persistence I learned much concerning that expectation which he was building up among the people. Of those sinners whom he had led into a new way of life I saw many, and of the brokenhearted from whose sorrows he had made joy to spring as water from a cleft rock. Yea, and of the sick by him restored to health. For he had his own way with the sick. Where their bodily ills were caused by aught gone amiss in the spirit through evil thought and vain desire, oftentimes he wrought complete deliverance. This I now comprehend; but then I knew not, nor did any, how to account for his authority. There were even those who said that he cast out devils through the power of Beelzebub, prince of devils.



Now toward evening of a certain day I met in a long valley that ran between two hills a company of common folk, fishermen and shepherds, dressers of vineyards and tillers of the soil, carpenters also, and some that wrought at tentmaking. These came through the valley talking and laughing, and some sang. And many of them cried



the Father name, not for a gift, but in gladness of heart and fervent thanksgiving. Looking upon this caravan I thought, "It doth appear as at some great feast, when the folk go up to Jerusalem."

And I inquired of one where they had been and whither they now journeyed. And he answered, "We have been to see the Galilean and now go our ways home."

Then another took up the tale, for any that had been with the prophet were ever eager to speak thereof to such as had not. And he said: "He fed us by a miracle, the wonder of which is still with us. And not us only, whom thou seest, but others to the number of four or five thousand. For when it was noised abroad that the Galilean tarried in the region, we on this side of the lake said one unto another, 'Let us go and look upon his face,' and those on the other side said likewise. So we came together in his presence. And we had taken no food, meaning to return quickly. But when he spoke we forgot all else. And lo, it was evening and our babes were crying in hunger."

"Wherefore one of those twelve that call themselves his especial disciples advised that he bid us depart. But he would not, lest we faint in the way. And a lad had five loaves and two fishes in his wallet. These the Galilean brake into fragments and gave to the smaller children. But when he had broken them he bowed his head and prayed to the Father. And as he prayed, we were all filled and our strength returned unto us."

"Ha!" cried I, bethinking myself how certain prophets of old had by signs and marvels greatly increased the number of those that hearkened unto them. "Did his prayer multiply the loaves and fishes, as men say the prayer of the prophet Elijah caused the widow's cruse to flow with oil and her barrel of meal to yield at every asking?"

“Nay,” answered the man, “I know nothing of that.”

Wherefore, tempted to anger because the Galilean’s ways seemed ever past my finding out, I mocked these men, saying: “Now, ye were blind indeed, and thoughtless beyond excuse. Why did ye not take note of what was done with the bread and whether it was multiplied? But think ye what a prophet with such a gift might accomplish for his people. Ye might shut yourselves up in your cities and tire them out that besieged you. There would be wealth for all Israel and no lack of offerings for the house of Israel’s god. Ah! Ye should have proved the prophet. If he had the gift you should have made him your king.”

And I watched how the joy on the faces of some dimmed into regret. Yet not on all. For he who had testified answered and said: “Thou hast properly rebuked us, friend. Yet it is not to be marveled at that we thought not to prove him, being, as thou mayest understand, overcome with joy and amazement because of our inner satisfaction. This seemed by far the greater part.” And he fell silent for a moment, then said, “Why even now, when I think on it, I esteem it the better gift of the Galilean.”

At this saying I laughed. “Inner satisfaction, sayest thou? Why, this was no miracle. The prophet hath a trick of words that caused you to forget the sharpness of your hunger.”

“Now there thou mistakest grievously,” objected the man. “Not forgetfulness was it, but an offering of grace from on high. May the Father grant us its continuance.”

And I pursued not the matter, but the rather asked: “Whom meanest thou by this Father? Think ye that he and Yahweh are one?”

Whereupon the man roused himself as from sleep, and he answered me saying: “This I know not, nor did the question trouble me when I was with the Galilean, so clear

was my sense of the Father. But surely Yahweh is the one true God, as we have been taught from our youth. Yet — ”

Whereupon, fearing lest I had not done well to put doubt of myself into this man's mind, I did hastily leave him.

Yet knew I from this time forth that the prophet was doing for men that which neither I nor any god had been able to compass. The joy, the peace, the fullness of life in the faces of his followers were new things in the world, bespeaking in each one the awakening of a sense of unity with some source of power which I knew not.



Heretofore I had answered many voices that did call “ Father,” or “ Our Father,” yet had delayed to answer the one voice which called more confidently than any, saying, “ My Father.” Now I tarried no longer, but responding to its summons found one who walked alone in a grove. And I approached him in silence, for I thought, “ If he be indeed a prophet he will know me as did Moses when I waited for him on Mount Sinai, and the manner of his greeting shall be a sign to me.”

Yet he gave me no sign but only looked on me kindly as one well used to intrusion, seeking the while if he might read some need in my face and marveling when he found it not. Whereupon I addressed him overshortly, saying, “ What art thou about in Israel? ”

And he answered as shortly, “ I preach repentance to prepare the way for the kingdom of God which is at hand.”

Again I questioned him: “ Dost thou publish to all men that this kingdom will come when the righteousness prescribed in the law of the Pharisees is kept? ”

“ Unless thy righteousness exceed the righteousness of



the scribes and Pharisees the kingdom shall not be revealed unto thee," he replied. "And only those shall enter who do the will of my Father."

"Thou hast had much to say concerning thy Father. Show me some sign of him," I demanded.

He said: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin, yet I say unto thee that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. The heavenly Father clothes them. Behold the fowl of the air. They sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns. The heavenly Father careth for them."

Whereby he seemed to me to mean nothing more than that in the order of the world which took account of all things I might read proof of the being of the father god, and that therefrom I might gain also an assurance of his care for man; even as one of mine elder prophets had said, looking not on flowers or birds, but on flocks and their kindly guardians, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Now in that moment I beheld the branches tossing on the trees in the grove and the ripe corn billowing in the fields. To mine ear was borne the rustling in the barley at the foot of the hill, and the hum of winged creatures in the air, and the note of the brook that ran by our feet. And, with my thoughts kindled at those spoke by the Galilean, it appeared that all these things were part of some universal element that gave life everywhere and eternally. And I knew that in them and in that which encompassed them did the Galilean find a benevolence that rebuked the harshness which I, Yahweh, had practiced from time to time.

Wherefore I questioned him in a voice of authority: "Whence dost thou receive thy warrant and the substance

of thy message? Hast thou heard within thee a voice from afar as it was in respect of Moses and Amos? ”

And he answered simply, “ I speak that which I receive from my Father.” But on his face I saw all the sorrows that had ever afflicted man, and I saw there also a measureless and unconquerable hope.

But when I would have asked whether he held Yahweh and the Father to be one, there came from close at hand the cry, “ Ho, Galilean! ” And into the grove streamed a motley company, shouting, “ Come, prophet! Thou shalt be king over us; thou who canst satisfy the hunger of an army if thou wilt.”

In the midst of them I marked one who had been with the five thousand at the breaking of the loaves and fishes — not he with whom I had particularly spoken, but a loutish fellow whom I had remarked for that his mouth had stood open as though it were the only gateway to his mind. But those with him were not of the company that I had met in the valley. Wherefore I understood that he alone had taken to heart my counsel about making his prophet a king and had gathered such as he could to come with him. These called therefore: “ Ho, prophet! ” “ Where art thou, breadmaker? ” “ Come forth, miracle-worker! ” and other like rude salutations.

Wherefore mine anger broke upon their heads. “ So ye are the kingmakers of Israel! Ye are the weighty and honorable of the land! Ye are the choice legionaries of Zion that would deal with Rome! Aye, doubtless ye would make your prophet a king of pariahs and house him royally in some crawling Arab tent that ye have already pitched on the edge of Gehenna. Think ye that a prophet in the royal line of prophets would have aught to do with such as ye? Go get you honorable men — rabbis, priests, merchants, wealthy vineyardmen and youths who can handle

the sword. Away! Get ye hence! Else by the throne and footstool of your god, I will certainly destroy you out of hand! ”

Now perchance these simple men thought that I spake with authority of the prophet, or it may be they thought not but feared only. Be that as it may, their coming and their flight revealed to me a task that lay ready to mine hand.



From that day forth I troubled not concerning prayer, nor vexed myself how I might become like to the god of whom the prophet preached. If I desired in truth to become the prophet's god, must I not first show some accomplishment of a nature that would persuade him to accept me? What these graceless followers of a dullard had offered him in empty boasting, I, the god, would give the Galilean in very sooth. Verily I had been putting last things first. How could I be a father god in a kingdom that was not yet come?

Therefore I took counsel, remembering how in this Galilee, land now of prayers, there had been uprisings aforetime.

And of a morning I came upon a husbandman early at work, and laid my hands on his shoulder as he drave the spade at the root of a vine. “ Friend, hast thou a sword? ” I asked, speaking softly to advise him that my purpose was secret.

His spade fell and, facing me, he so trembled and his tongue so clave to the roof of his mouth that he had only the shaking of his head wherewith to make denial. Then, whispering, I spake in his ear the word by which Zealots commonly revealed themselves one to another.

“ Swear by the temple that thou art not a Roman,” he



quavered. "Nay — swear by Caesar's throne." And I swore.

Then lifting his outer garment he showed me the short sword that was upon his thigh, and his tongue was loosed and he said, "There be few of us on the plain, but the hills are full of hothearted men who do but await a leader."

On a second field I said, "Hast thou a sword?" to a man who plowed with a yoke of oxen. He answered me, "Nay," and went on with his plowing. Wherefore I did follow him up and down the furrows, speaking first of the glorious past, then mourning the present, and going on quickly to picture a shining future. But even as I thought him won, his face darkened and he said, "Alas, master, it is even as I told thee; I have no sword."

Then I looked steadfastly at his plow where it lay in its furrow and, his eye following mine, we twain did gaze upon the iron shard until the darkness slowly lifted from his face, and he said, "Is it not somewhere written, master, that they shall beat their plowshares into swords?"

"Truly," I assured him. "And of this very day and hour was it written."

In this manner did I go throughout Galilee until I had seen some thousands of stout fellows and made appointment with them. As I went I lived again the brave days when Joshua's arm hacked down the Canaanites and cleared the land for the children of my people, rejoiced anew in the might of Gideon and the valor of David, and bethought me of Judas Maccabeus. And I said, "Among them all was not one that had strength and quiet like unto this Galilean, nor one who could call up so great a love from the people."



Yet not until the day of appointment did I seek out the prophet. And because he was followed everywhere by a multitude, I cast about how I might speak with him alone. Wherefore upon a moment when he drew aside for prayer I went unseen after him.

He stayed not his foot until he was come to the top of a high hill. There I revealed myself, and he said, "Peace, friend."

"Nay, I can give thee a better word," I returned. "Victory first, and afterward peace in a kingdom of brother-men."

"There is a peace which the world cannot give," he said, and I knew that by this saying he sought to bring me into the line of his own thought. But I answered him not. Nor did he press me, for he was weary.

Yet I counted his weariness no ill thing, for I knew that he who bringeth good tidings in such an hour wins double welcome. And straightway I told him of the kingdom that was at hand, saying: "This night ten thousand swords, aye, twenty thousand, shall await thee in a place of my appointing. Therefore return not to the multitude, but rest until evening and be strong to lead Israel against the oppressor."

But he answered as one bewildered, bidding me speak plainly and tell to whom these swords belonged and what this kingdom was whereof I spake.

Not knowing at what point my meaning had escaped him, I began with what patience was mine at this moment: "The kingdom is that whereof thou hast preached, waking hope in every man's heart. The swords are of Galilean Zealots who shall take Jerusalem and drive the Roman

legions into the sea. Thou thyself art he who shall be king over Israel, and mayhap of the nations round about."

Yet even now that I had spoken plainly he warmed not. Wherefore I marveled, saying: "Art thou not a Galilean? And is it not said that in Galilee the babes in their swaddling clothes drink from their mothers' breasts the love of freedom? Rejoice, then. For I bring sure tidings that the hour of the kingdom is at hand."

"My kingdom cometh not by the sword," he said.

"How then if not by the sword?"

Whereupon he made answer that it would come through justice and righteousness, but chiefly through love.

Then reasoned I with him: "Will love destroy one Roman soldier, to say nothing of a legion? Love shall be the rule within the kingdom when it cometh; nevertheless by power must the throne first be established. When was ever a nation confirmed save by might?"

And thereto I added a warning, knowing that if he offered love for a sword to these Galileans whom I had gathered in expectation of his promises they might do him a mischief.

But he turned my dark words concerning his possible death to the intent that death might join with love to accomplish the Father's will.

"Truly," I replied. "Death to the Romans; life and love within Israel." For it seemed now that our thoughts moved toward agreement. "But it was of thine own death that I purposed to warn thee."

Now it was reasonable for me to warn him of death, to the end that he might choose the safe path. Yet he replied by a parable only: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."



When I asked how he intended that I apply this saying, he answered: "I speak what the Father hath vouchsafed me. He that keepeth his life loseth it, but he that doth lose his life for righteousness' sake doth save it."

But I thought, "He is young and knoweth nought of dying and of what it is to go down into Sheol." And I said: "Consider death, what it is, and what the Scriptures say of mortal men: 'They go down into the pit. In that very day their thoughts perish.' To resign thy body to death might be no hardship to such as thou. But to part forever with the nobler senses! Wouldst hasten to that event? Wouldst cut thyself off from god as from man? For it is written again that in the grave there is no remembrance of any god."

Unmoved, he made answer: "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of myself. And if I lay it down the Father will raise me up again to live in the kingdom. Death will be for a season, but life everlasting."

Then he spake further to me of the eternal life, and how he whom the Father had in keeping could never truly die, the everlasting love being surety of man's continuance.

Yet even as he spake I beheld from the hilltop one who plowed a field on the plain, and I was minded again of the swords and the place appointed, and that, albeit he talked of death, the Galilean yet lived and must be persuaded to accept the kingship.

"It is said thou wast born in the royal line," I began. "Consider, then, King David, thy forebear, who took Bathsheba warm from the bed of Uriah the Hittite, a mighty man of valor; and Solomon whom Bathsheba bore him. Would either of these stand idle while Israel awaits a deliverer? Look down upon the kingdom that was theirs.

Look to snow-capped Hermon, to Mount Zion where stands Jerusalem. Not these only, but all the kingdoms of earth shall be thine."

He answered only that he had no kingdom in this world; that they who are of the world seek the upper rooms in houses and the chief seats at feasts and in the synagogues. "But it shall not be so in the kingdom of my Father. He that is first shall be last and he that is greatest shall be servant of all, and a man shall love his enemy and cherish his neighbor as himself, returning him good for evil."

Seeing clearly now that I must deal with this fatherhood that arose between us at every turn, I said: "Tell me more exactly of this Father whom thou proclaimest. Yahweh, Jupiter and Mars are known by their temples. Where is his?"

Again he answered me with a dark saying: "In this place where thou standest is one who is greater than the temple." And though I might well have hoped that he meant me, yet I knew that he meant himself, which meaning he made clearer by saying that the Father's dwelling was in the souls of his children.

Then I was filled with assurance concerning myself, for, said I, "This Father is no more a living god than is this man the temple at Jerusalem."

And when he said, "Forty and six years was the temple in building, yet were it destroyed, in three days I could build a new habitation for the Father," I was wroth beyond measure.

"Enough!" I cried. "Let us have done with profitless talk. Know me, Galilean. I am Yahweh, thy nation's god! Thou hast blasphemed my name and mine abode. Yet will I have mercy upon thee if thou wilt take up the sword. Nay, but first fall down and worship me, forasmuch as thou hast grievously blasphemed."

Now when he heard my name spoken with that dread accent which through the centuries men had forborne to utter lest they die, and when he saw the brightness that I allowed my presence to reveal, he leaned against a rock and closed his eyes, and though his lips moved there came no sound out of them.

Then feared I lest the repute of my dread name be true and he die of my too sudden revealing, for his face was as that of one from whom life hath already departed.

But even as I considered how I should restore him, the blood returned to his lips and his eyes opened. And looking full upon my majesty he cried out, "I worship none but the Father."

Wherefore I mocked him, saying: "Thy Father! What hath he given thee but dreams, who is himself but a dream of thy mind! As for me, I have given thee the promise of a kingdom and have laid at thy feet the sword with which thou shalt win it."

Then, summoning all his strength, he spake out in a wrath that smote me like a brazen wind. "For a throne and a sword thou seekest to turn me from my Father's will. Aye! And by thy tempting I now know thee who thou art. Get thee behind me, *Satan!*"



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## IX

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### WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?

BACK IN THE familiar chest with the furniture of my house before me, I groped for some prop for my majesty which the Galilean had blasphemed. The ancient avowal of my nation's faith, the words of the Shema that had once set me apart from all other gods, came to me: "Hear, O Israel; Yahweh thy God is one!" Why had I not with these words crushed the Galilean? Yet their hollowness as I said them now was sufficient answer to my question. Nevertheless, after pronouncing them, I felt some part of my godhead return, and when the chief priests came to me with darkened brows which I thought betokened some violence visited upon them by the Romans, it irked me not to find employment in their grievance.

One said, "Hast thou no pride in being served by men fair-fleshed and of ruddy countenance?"

Whereupon I bade them speak plain. Then another thrust both his clenched hands beneath his loosened girdle and cried: "Behold thy suffering servants, and let there be pity for us in thine eyes. These recent years have we had but poor sustenance of the tithe. The storehouses are filled with mint and anise and cummin, but the barley

and wheat bins do show the boards of the floor. And each priestly family hath known but two forequarters of an ox, and of the shoulders of cordy mutton a like number, between moon and moon this twelvemonth past. One might suppose the husbandman garnered nought but fine herbs from his fields and every herdsman had been caught between the wolf and the robber. And as for the juice of the grape, we know it better by testimony of our thirst than by a seemly lightening of our spirits. Aye, and some of us must shortly choose whether in the morning we shall fill our lamps from the cruse or anoint our beards with the minished oil."

Then required I that one of them sum up their will of me in this matter. Whereupon they conferred, and thereafter made answer: "We do think, my Lord, that either thou dost overbless the mint and scant the corn, or the people do measure the tithe with a lying hand. In either case it is thy charge that we fail not in flesh, neither faint in our spirits."

And since their flesh seemed not yet to have failed I dismissed them, saying, "Both your complaint and yourselves shall be sifted to the bottom of the basket."

Then marked I a ceaseless drone of praying that proceeded from the little room of the Pharisees, and entering I found the chief of the Pharisees in his accustomed place. And he prostrated himself and began to speak with his face against the ground.

"O my Lord," he complained, "Yahweh hath not honored our righteous prayers. These many weeks have passed and the Galilean still goeth about weakening men's hands when strengthening would stand them in better stead. There hath fallen no fire from heaven to destroy him, no flood hath overwhelmed him, no rock from the mountainside hath crushed him, his foot hath not missed its step

on the desert crag. Is it the will of Yahweh that no natural calamity overtake him, but that we, Yahweh's chosen servants, put forth our hands against his life? Would our god make trial of us? If so, we be ready, though loath to stain our hands with blood."

And I answered and said, "It is the will of Yahweh that ye touch not his life."

And the Pharisee said: "Yahweh the Everlasting One liveth. Soon shall the sun of righteousness arise upon us with healing for all our ills and the day of Israel's deliverance shall dawn. As for this Galilean, his own course shall determine how we deal with him."

But I reminded the Pharisee: "It is the will of Yahweh that ye hurt not a hair of his head."



Even a god may feel upon him the weariness of age. With the threat of the Pharisee heavy upon me I knew on a sudden that I was ancient as Ur, and I bethought me how Abraham's city lay buried under the dust of time; how on the mound that hid the palaces of men and the temples of their gods I had seen the new grass grow and the young lambs skip and had heard the shepherd's pipe make merry music.

And I said: "I am like Ur under its mounds. The green future above me lies with the carpenter of Nazareth." And I studied how I might yet win him to be my prophet, for I thought: "Since he still lives it cannot be too late. Inasmuch as he did so entirely mistake me on the mount, I shall the more easily make trial anew in mine own person."

Wherefore I cried aloud: "Canst thou not return from the land of shades, O Amos? Canst thou not break the



bars of death, O Hosea, to walk with me again? I am in a sore strait."

Whereupon there came a voice that demanded, "Hast thou not a prophet in these days, Yahweh?"

And I answered: "There is one that I may not call prophet, for that he hath scorned me. And I am become like an old man who faileth in the springtime when new life comes to the valleys and the olive tree on the hill doth clothe herself in silver. Come, my prophet, if it be indeed one of you that I hear, give me again the words that tutored my youth; make me strong again that I may win this man unto me."

And the voice answered, "Let every age find its new and living word."

But I said: "Plague me not. Since I may not have it from this Galilean, let me have from thee, whom I have proved, this new and living word."

And the voice said, "I will give thee an ancient, yet eternal word, which once thou didst know."

"Then give it me," I cried in hope.

And the voice cried, "*Z'dakah*" — which is by interpretation "righteousness" — so that the hills rang.

In answer I shouted for joy, "I know thee; thou art Amos, as I thought."

Again there came a cry, "*Naamah*" — which is to say, "kindness" — and the far mountains gave back its echo.

"Nay, nay. I mistook thee at first. For that word I call thee Hosea."

Then the voice whispered, "*Keséd*" — meaning "mercy" — very gently, but the ground shook and the air trembled with the power of it.

I spake now with less assurance: "Forgive me if I have twice misnamed thee. Thou art, perchance, Micah?"

And the voice said: "Woe unto him that addeth an

unhearing ear to an eye that will not see. I am the patient witness within. And I charge thee, take heed lest thou shut thyself in eternal darkness and silence."

Like Jacob with his angel I wrestled through the night with myself, and with morning's light there came to me this question: "Is he not greater than all the sons of men that ever thou hast known?"

And I said, "Yea."

"Had he given thee comfortable words thou wouldst have owned him a prophet?"

"Yea."

"But he spake the truth and humbled thee?"

"Yea."

"And — secretly thou dost honor him therefor?"

"Yea, yea."



Now at the time of the Passover the Galilean came to Jerusalem to keep the feast with his people. And the common folk, having heard it noised abroad that he promised eternal life, were disposed to hear him gladly.

These things I knew, though I departed not from the temple nor sought to follow after him. For I said: "It is meet that he seek me out, seeing that I am the god."

But on the second day of the week there came to me the sound of an uproar in the outer court, and though I said to myself, "This is the high priest's affair," and, "It is no new thing for brawling to be heard at thy gates, Yahweh" — nonetheless I went forth at length.

And lo, the ground was littered with cages, overturned tables and the wood of broken stalls. Coins from the money-changers' bags were scattered everywhere. And in and out among the wreckage ran sheep and oxen, while

overhead swooped and twittered a cloud of loosed birds, flying wildly, for being free they knew not whither to go.

And at the far end of the precinct was a great company of men; and behold, the keepers of birds and beasts, money-changers, priests, scribes, and they that had come to worship or present their gifts were being driven, howling, cursing, making show of resistance, toward the principal outgate of the temple enclosure. And in their outcry heard I such words as "Traitor!" "Desecrator!" "Defiler of the temple!" "Death to the accursed Galilean!" "Stone the Nazarene pretender!"

For the prophet, followed of the twelve that named themselves his especial disciples, advanced upon them, whirling above his head a scourge made, it appeared, from the small cords of a fowler. His face that had ever been mild was as the lightning that played over Sinai when Moses descended therefrom. And the sound of his voice was clear above the tumult.

The throng moved headlong before him like chaff driven by the wind. And when they came beyond the outer gate into the street they dispersed not, but stood shrieking curses and threatening with clenched hands. Yet none was there that dared to oppose him.

All this I saw from the gateway that divided the holier part of the temple from the courtyard, which was less holy; and the high priest and some of the chief Pharisees stood with me in the space between the two courts. And albeit they looked with wrath on the Galilean's work, none moved toward him.

Now the prophet, having finished his work with the traffickers, turned and strode toward the priestly company. And he leveled his finger and cried, "It is written that my Father's house shall be called a house of prayer for all people, but ye have made it a den of thieves."



Then he took the scourge of small cords that was in his hand and cast it to the ground between the high priest and me; and he turned and with firm step sought the outer gate, followed by his twelve. And lo, the crowd without the walls made no motion to take them, but drew back, opening their ranks to let them pass freely.

And I thought: "It is my temple that he cleanseth and calleth his Father's house. Before evening he will come to me."



That night the high priest walked alone in the court. Him I encountered by the brazen laver wherein the priests were wont to wash their hands before and after sacrificing. And he dipped his fingers in and disturbed the water so that it cast back broken gleams to the moon.

Because I knew how wroth he was, I asked what he intended toward the prophet, and he said: "It is expedient that one man die rather than that the whole people perish. This man maketh Rome to think that there is revolt in Galilee when there is no revolt, and thereby turneth the eye of Caesar upon us. Moreover he hath grievously offended against the temple."

"Nay, priest," I admonished him. "All the temples in the world cannot weigh against the life of one good man. Thou art angry because he threatened thy revenues when he gave the people to see how unseemly it is that mine house be let to venders and money-changers. See thou touch him not in anger, for I will require his life at thine hand."

Nonetheless the high priest ceased not to disturb the water that was in the laver.

Now on the day of preparation before the sabbath, I marked in the court a stillness so great that it filled me with

apprehension. And I went forth. Whereupon I saw why the court was still. For none was in that place where always heretofore the people had thronged, none save two aged scribes who sat reading within a booth. One of these droned a passage from Aaron's book:

“ ‘ Left to right and right to left; let the altar stones be changed. Let there be pillars of rough hewn stone at the four corners, standing upright, each in its place. And let the altar face its low part to the east where the sun riseth. And the breadth of its back shall be westward toward the going down of the sun, lest the god be offended and come not to bless us.’ ”

And he read in another place: “ ‘ Dust of the earth with three buds and two on a peeled rod of a willow tree, newly cut.’ ”

Then he who read said to his fellow: “ How wonderful is the faith of our fathers, and how great the treasure which these ancient scrolls hold for him that seeketh knowledge. Long years ago, what time Herod set his hand to rebuild the temple, I found this scroll hid in a secret chamber that was laid bare with the razing of a wall; since which time have I diligently studied these few precious words, for I am well assured that in the holy text is a meaning the which, were it uncovered, would be the salvation of the people in times like these when men neglect the courtesies due the god to run after false teachers like that Galilean. There are meanings here, my brother. Would that I might release them.” And he sighed, laying his head on his hand.

And his graybeard fellow turned upon the text his rheumy eyes and spelled out its words again. “ Doubtless, brother, doubtless,” he said. “ As for me, think not that I have been idle. Fifty and five years have I spent in gathering knowledge of all shapes of living things; of animals and birds, and such creatures as fly and crawl. And I have made

countless measurements to show how these, in pairs and sevens, were carried in the ark of Noah. For there can be nothing better for the people than to know how wondrously Yahweh wrought to save all living things from the flood of great waters. Surely this teacheth one to trust wholly in him who neither slumbers nor sleeps, but keepeth tireless watch over Israel."

While they talked I noted that the top of the booth wherein they sat was torn, and that one had covered the rent place with a piece of parchment from an ancient scroll. And curious to learn what was written thereon I leaned over and read these words that the sun picked out from the dimmed writing:

What doth Yahweh require of thee,  
O man,  
But to do justice, to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with thy god?

Then said the first scribe to the second, "Dost hear aught, my brother?"

And the second put his hand to his ear the better to hearken, and he said, "Nay."

And lo, beyond the city wall sounded a low murmur of many voices. And I said to myself, "Perchance the multitudes do accompany the Galilean on his way, even as on another day they met him at the city gate with shouts and songs."

The thought cheered me, and I betook me to the roof of the temple if haply I might see somewhat. But nought did I see save the hill where wrongdoers met their doom, and against the sky three new crosses with the bodies of men hung thereon.

This sight moved me little, so used was I to it. Nothing more did it signify than that the Romans meted out just



punishment to three more malefactors, and I sighed over the waywardness of men's hearts that leads to wrongdoing, and the hardness of them that punish sins.

Then heard I again the murmur of the people, like unto the roar of a great wind, and in the midst of it the voice of one who cried out in the agony of death, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And wondering what god it was that he called upon I returned to the holy place.

Then darkness like a rolling cloud came swiftly over the earth. The ground heaved and cracked under the city. I saw how the seven-branched candlestick was broken on the pavement, and the table of shewbread was overturned with its silver furniture, and the brazen laver cast down. And the cedar beams of the roof groaned as under a tempest in their native groves.

And there came a man groping and stumbling in the darkness, who threw a handful of coins upon the floor. And he cried: "Thou hast thy thirty pieces back, the price of innocent blood. But woe is me. I am forever accursed, for I have betrayed my master."

And in the thick gloom there appeared unto me a vision of men clad in garments that shone of their own luster and on whose faces judgment sat. Amos I heard, wild and uncouth despite his shining apparel, crying in a voice of accusation. Hosea turned away his face from me, and the eyes of Isaiah flashed with fierce wrath.

And there came upon me a coldness and a desolation as of the waste places that lie at the ends of the earth.

And laying hold on the veil that hung before the holy place I rent it in twain from top to bottom.

On the hill between two others hung the Galilean on the central cross. Being now in the last agony, he lifted his face toward the heavens whereon was written no sign of

love or pity; yet he breathed, " Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit."

And to mine ear there came as if from the vault of heaven a voice that answered, " Thou art my son, my well beloved."

Then it was as though the curtain that divideth from earth the final mystery were for a moment drawn aside, and in the face of him hanging on the cross I saw a strange light like which I had never seen on the face of any man. It was both light and shadow, a luminous reflection as of One beyond me, even as the life of man is beyond that of the worm that liveth in the earth. The crucified looked as with a Father's pity on those who stood about the cross. And even as I fell back before that awful beauty, it passed and was gone, and on the wooden beam I saw only the face of the weary dead.

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## I BECOME A CHRISTIAN

I WAS NOW houseless in Jerusalem. The temple wherein I had sat in lonely majesty I had sworn by my godhead never to enter again. For I remembered with bitter shame how in the days before Amos walls had stood between me and my people. I reproached myself for the days of dreaming in the sanctuary while the Galilean suffered death.

Wherefore I said of the temple, "I hate, I despise its fasts, nor can I endure its solemn assemblies."

Howbeit, having been long a god of local attachments, with my worship centered and my will revealed in a particular spot, I was sore bewildered without a shrine. Is it not known that my people when abroad turned their faces toward Jerusalem in prayer even though they made boast that heaven was my throne? For I had laid it strictly upon them ever to remember how by sanctity of blood and land they were a peculiar people among all nations.

Wherefore I bethought me that unless the foundations of a new house were laid somewhere in the holy soil where I could come and go, my worship must perish like an uprooted tree, and I with it.



Yet while I suffered this perplexity no man knew that I was not in the temple. The priests repaired the rent veil and ordered their services as aforetime. Even the followers of the Galilean omitted not their ritual duties.

In those days I found myself often on the mount of crucifixion, thinking on him who had waked in the people an expectation of some mighty change that would make of Israel the holy nation which the prophets foresaw. And I knew that even while they misinterpreted and resisted him those who heard him had felt an impending glory.

Nevertheless, my worship could not center on this hill Calvary — a place of shame, hated of the Jews and despised of the Romans.

And as I went here and there it came to me how in that time when I had followed the prophet afar off, I had heard prayers equally well in whatever place I was. Wherefore, seeing that his disciples were overzealous for the temple, and liking it not in them, I said: “Ye may worship me in whatsoever place ye will, though it be a hovel. I will be with you there, forasmuch as the whole land where your master trod is a house of prayer at the gate of heaven. And even such gentiles as follow him and seek to share in the glory of Israel ye may bring with you to the holy places where ye gather.”

And they said, “Yea, but first we shall present them in the temple to fulfill the law.”

Because I knew not how to answer this, I held my peace and let them have their will in the matter.

Who that readeth hath not reflected on those changes that touch upon man's destiny; how oftentimes they declare themselves not in the sequence that precedeth them; how today groweth big with the issues of the morrow and one knoweth not until the hour of labor be come; how old

things pass away as the swift-winged birds, and all things are made anew?

It is not otherwise with a god.

At the time of which I write I was drawing nigh to such an unlooked-for change. Already that was at work which was to make of me a divinity different utterly in outward seeming from the god of Palestine. But as I watched the Galilean's disciples going quietly among the Jews, seeking new converts to his way, I little knew that within a space of time which marks but a moment in the life of a god I should be no longer god of the Jews only, but a world god in sooth, counseling with emperors, dealing in plans whose reach would fall not short of all humanity, and uttering laws to bind the men of all nations.

Hear now the manner in which I was brought to mine hour of change.

Among those that taught the way of Jesus was a certain Jew of Tarsus, Saul by name, he that was later known as Paul. Yet he was, despite his diligence, distrusted by many believers because he had aforetime persecuted them. Him I knew not how to measure in the first days after his conversion, for that I deemed his restless energy consorted ill with the quiet demeanor of the elder disciples. Yet he was a man of imperious spirit to whom I could not refuse an attentive ear when he prayed.

But with what astonishment did I one day hear him call on me from beyond the limits of mine own land, demanding my presence.

Looking well to it that I set not my foot over the border, I called to him, "What doest thou there, my son?"

To which he answered, "Come thou and see."

And I said: "Nay! It is alien land where thou standest. I shall not cross over."

Then Paul laughed, and as one who would impart news he told me that which I knew already: "There be many Jews in these regions."

"Aye," was mine answer. "The Jews will go to the ends of the earth to trade; yet do they remain alien."

Again did Paul laugh. And he asked: "Knowest thou not thine own folk, Yahweh? Where a Jew doth set his foot he maketh himself at home, even though in his heart he abide close to the temple. And whither his people adventure, there may a god go."

"Not so," I returned. "The god may indeed send comfort and succor to them that are afar off, but himself should stop at the edge of his proper domain. By loyalty to his soil, by promoting the well-being of them that dwell thereon, and by avoidance of strange places doth he confirm his special godship."

There followed a silence between us, and I was on point of returning to Jerusalem. But I heard Paul's voice again, and it came broken as though agitated by laughter: "Where, Yahweh, didst thou find Abraham?"

"In Ur of the Chaldees," I told him.

"Also, thou wast once in the land of Babylon?"

"Thou sayest truth."

He questioned me no further. Nor was there need. Reflection on the purport of his questioning shed light upon my thought. For not only had I been in the places mentioned by him, but fleeting memories of some land familiar to me in the days before my Chaldean sojourn now played in and out among my clearer remembrances. And I recalled that of mine own free choice I had made the soil of Palestine peculiar to myself.

"Abide where thou art," I commanded. "It may be I shall join thee ere long. But only for the purpose that we may commune face to face. Forget not that by peculiar



and ancient commitments I am god of one blood and one soil. Let not thine early residence among the gentiles render thee less the Jew." For I bore in mind that he was of Tarsus, a city that lieth nigh to the crossroads of the world.

Strange, yet pleasant withal, was the prospect of overpassing the bounds of Judea. And when presently I set forth to hold converse with Paul according to my word it appeared to me that the earth was no less fair in territories not mine own.

When I came upon him, Paul was seated before a table in the house of a gentile, and he wrote in a scroll, as was his custom when he meditated. Answering my question why he pressed so urgently for my company in a profane land, he said, without looking up, "Because the time is ripe, Yahweh, for thee and me to bear the good news of the Galilean far afield to the gentiles."

Once before, and then in the presence of the Galilean, had I known such consternation as now seized me. "Far afield to the gentiles!" It liked me well to be briefly free of my too familiar moorings; but to journey long and far under strange skies might come to mean forfeiture of my special attachments. Yet no less than this did Paul ask of me. Not then did I see that he had lured me from the close harborage of my Judaism to a great and wide sea o'er which I should in future direct the destinies of many peoples. I saw only the rocks that threatened my godship.

"Paul, Paul!" I cried. "Art thou mad? Hast thou clean forgotten that I am of the Jews only?"

He looked on me with a calm that held no sympathy with my fears. Nonetheless, a line between his brows told how quickly might he answer provocation with a frown. "Thou hast already many proselytes among the gentiles," he reminded me.

“ Yea; but by their free choice,” I protested. “ On sufferance I do indeed receive such gentiles as flee the evils of their world to seek shelter in the household of faith. Wouldst thou urge me beyond what is meet for a god loyal to land and blood? ”

For answer Paul took up his scroll and read: “ In him is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. All are one in him.”

And when I asked whom the word “ him ” in the scroll intended, he answered, “ The Galilean.”

“ Aye, the Galilean was one who greatly loved his fellows, as is proper in a man, seeing that he shareth the destiny of his kind. But I am a god, who must order my way by requirements not laid on man, that arise out of the nature of mine attachments to a peculiar people. My duty is to the house of Abraham, thy first father, who espoused me in his youth and mine. Thou knowest that there is a holy covenant between Israel and me, and that I have ever rebuked them who have broken it to run after strange gods. Shall I now set it aside to run after strange peoples? Nay! Let the gentiles who yearn toward me come as aforetime and be circumcised. So shall they become sons by adoption of the hallowed land. It is not fitting that they should be led to expect any closer relationship with my people or with me.”

Then Paul cast aside parchment and pen, rose up, set his feet wide apart and threw back his head — as was his wont in argument. And he said: “ Did Abraham differ in body from other men when thou didst find him among the Chaldeans, so that thou wert moved to choose him for his body’s sake? Had he not the flesh and blood, the bones, skin and sinews of all men? Aye, he was like to a thousand others in respect of his body, thou must allow. Wherein, then, did he differ? In the spirit only, thou wilt

say, for of all men of his time and place he yearned after righteousness. Therefore his children are not those that are born Hebrews after the flesh, but they that are of a spirit like to his. It is the spirit, not the flesh, that doth determine who of all mankind are thy sons."

He paused, but ere I could reason further with him, pressed on with his argument: "As thou knowest, I was born in Tarsus, a gentile city; thou knowest also that I have from of old an acquaintance with the world and its men such as the other apostles have not. And I testify that everywhere have I held speech with men who partake of a nobility of mind like to Abraham's. And many of these now hear with gladness my gospel of the Christ, and they follow him. These are of the true Israel and heirs according to thy promise that in Abraham should all nations be blessed."

"Did I indeed so promise?" I asked; for it had been long since I had been reminded of these terms in my covenant.

"It is written," he assured me. "And the promise was given before Israel after the flesh had increased into a nation. Wherefore break now the bonds of land and blood. The world is open to thee and crieth for the light that shone forth from the face of the crucified. To the Jew first, if thou wilt, but also to the gentile must the good news of the kingdom be preached. Again I say that the time is ripe for thee to leave Jerusalem behind as once thou didst leave Ur."

Now, I was lifted up — as what god would not have been? — by this vision of universal godship among the righteous, yet I bethought me presently of my previous experience in the land of the stranger; how, when my people were carried away captive into Babylon, they learned, and I with them, many things not wholly in keeping with



the prophetic teachings. And I said unto Paul, "If so be I go among the Greeks and Romans, and also mayhap the barbarians, how may I escape the contamination of their customs and their modes of thought?"

And Paul said: "I, who am well versed in gentile thought and customs, have no fear of them. All the religions of the world, saving only Israel's, are but light superstitions and can be so proved. The teachers in whose company I have been much from my youth, have in their own precepts made plain demonstration that philosophy is given to vain imaginings that need not confuse a well instructed mind. And as for poetry — why, that hath, perhaps, its uses. Certain gentile writers have put down truths that may be apt to our purposes. Be not uneasy, therefore. All matters that might embarrass thee have been foreseen, weighed and settled by me. I shall be ever at thine hand; and all lands will welcome thy coming. Thou art a greater god than thou hast known and with a proper zeal thou wilt make the whole world thine."

And I said, "If I might be sure that it will be as thou dost promise."

But Paul, moving his feet impatiently, said, "In Abraham's day, when thou didst adventure whither thou knewest not, thou wast not known for a fainthearted god."

Then, as if certain that I must be constrained by his firm purpose, he fell to packing his few books in his extra cloak.

And as for me, I knew neither how to stay him nor how to deny the stirrings that his words had awakened in me.



Having yielded to mine eagerness to relate the memory of one of my greatest and most momentous decisions, I

have told out of order how this masterful man did introduce to me the larger world. It is needful that I turn back and recount those events which preceded his ambitious emprise and his imperious demand that I join him in it.

Know, then, that near cockcrow on the fiftieth morn after the Galilean's crucifixion, being in the poorer quarter of Jerusalem in order that I might avoid the temple and its priesthood and be nigh to the lowly followers of the prophet, I saw two men climb the outer stairs of an house to an upper room.

Following these two, I found a company of men, and I saw among them some of the twelve who had called themselves the prophet's disciples. All fell silent at the entrance of the two; and lo, those with whom I had come were James and John, they of the twelve that had been nearest the Galilean in the days of his ministry.

Then John, standing in the midst of the company, lifted a psalm chant and the men sang with one accord. And afterward Peter addressed them in this wise: "Men and brethren, we know that our Master spake often to us of a kingdom which we trusted would shortly come. And though we had faith at the first, yet did we despair of its coming when he was taken by his accusers.

"Nevertheless, through fasting and prayer we have returned to our first faith. And now we remember how he said, 'The kingdom of heaven is within you,' and how at sundry times he did reveal it unto us. Therefore, inasmuch as we have fulfilled the many days of intercession which he told us must precede the coming of power from on high, let us lift our hearts to the Father again if haply this be the time for such outpouring of his spirit as on divers occasions he did grant while yet the Master was with us."

And when all signified their agreement, Peter prayed after this manner: "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac

and Jacob: Look with favor on us who are as sheep without a shepherd; bestow upon us the spirit of righteousness and might which he did promise, and inform thou our minds with wisdom to work in keeping with thine everlasting purposes.”

And being minded by his words of mine ancient skill with the sheep, I yearned toward these men who were like a flock with neither fold nor defender. But when I would have stretched forth mine hand to grant them, not the boon they asked, but such blessing as I could bestow, the matter seemed to be taken from my power, for there came an answer from beyond me, even as the sign came to Abraham on the plains of Ur. Then did I sense among them a living presence which moved them in such wise that they, simple men of the people, seemed more than men in their conviction of strength.

And they looked on one another in gladness and amazement, for each knew that the others had severally received again, and more mightily than before, that fullness which had on occasion visited their company while the prophet yet lived and wrought among them.

And even as I watched the radiance on their faces, lo, the spirit moved in me also, and transformed me after the same manner. My darkness was lifted and strength quickened within me. And I said: “The power is mine to be father and shepherd to these men; of a surety it is meet that I should become one with them, else had not this so befallen when Peter invoked my name.”

And I revealed myself to the men when they spake my name in thanksgiving and in songs of praise. And I said: “Look on me, my children. I, Yahweh, am come to succor you. Ye perceive that the Galilean lives, whom they crucified, for ye have felt his presence in your midst. Therefore wait not for the opening heavens to disclose him and delay



not his heavenly rule. Build ye the kingdom of just men, and when he cometh he shall enter speedily into his own. Ye have been dowered with wisdom and grace, and I doubt not with eloquence to speak his will. Rise therefore and be about the business of the kingdom. I will uphold your hands."

Whereupon they went forth, and the triumph of their faith began in that same hour. And this was the manner of it.

There were in Jerusalem multitudes of Jews from all places in the world who had come to keep the feast of the Passover. And when it was told among them that a strange visitation had come upon the disciples in the upper room, they came to where the brethren were housed. And Peter went out to them and preached that Jesus was Messiah, and many were made disciples on that day.

Then began those times of gladness in Jerusalem whereof the disciples of the Nazarene have written in the records of the faith. The zealous ministry of them that had loved the Master while he was on earth and had received his spirit after his death won many to the teachings of the Galilean and brought many more to acknowledge him openly who had inclined toward him during his life but had put off acknowledgment through fear. So that where one loved him in life, a thousand loved him after his going hence.

And in all of them, whether those who had known him aforetime or those who had but lately come to revere him, was the hope that he would shortly return to set up his kingdom on earth. Therefore, while they abated not their good works, they nevertheless looked on the world as an evil to be endured for a season, trusting each morning that the sun would not reach the zenith ere the heavens would open to reveal to them their Lord.

Now this hope waxed until it possessed them completely.

And not only in speech, but in deeds of love was their faith shown. And they ordered their lives by the rule of love. Every man strove to do to his fellows what he would that they should do unto him, and each in charity served the others. And they had a common treasury from which any who needed might take without the shame of asking from another. And they called themselves the People of the Way, forasmuch as they said, "He hath left us an example, that we should follow in his steps."



Yet the greater number of the Jews believed not on the prophet, some saying that his disciples recked too little of the things of this world, counting as nought such necessary matters as profit and governance, and others saying that they took too little thought for the tradition of the elders. And of these latter was a man of note among the Jews, by name Saul, the same who later called me to leave the country of my people, as I have already related. In zeal for the faith of his fathers none outdid him, and few could match his mind in breadth of understanding or subtlety of thought. Moreover, that which he found worthy of doing he did with his might.

And those Jews who for either cause believed not on the prophet took counsel with Saul and entrusted him to deal as he thought expedient with such as followed the new way.

Now there was in Jerusalem a synagogue of freedmen who had once been slaves in Rome. And because these were denied the full rights of Jews born free in Jerusalem, they were the more desirous of making show of their attachment to the law, hoping thereby to win favor with the native-born. And they said, "Let us take up cause against these Galilean heretics who do hold all things in common."

Wherefore certain of this company raised an outcry

against Stephen, a Greek youth who had embraced the Galilean faith, and the council condemned him to death by stoning.

And Saul joined them that gathered beyond the city wall to execute this judgment. And while for dignity's sake he took no part in the stoning, yet he held the garments of those who cast the stones and thus gave his consent to Stephen's death. And looking on the face of Stephen, Saul beheld it glowing with that radiance that set the faces of the Galilean's followers apart from others in that time. And Saul stubbornly veiled his eyes. But the face of Stephen as he died was with Saul from that time forth.

Now for a season Saul strove to silence the witness of Stephen that was in his heart, and seeking to do what he supposed was my will did ever contrive acts of violence against the believers. And having on a certain day obtained from the high priest letters which gave him authority to deal as he would with all people of the Way he made him ready to go to Damascus.

And it came to pass that, as he went from the house of the high priest to his own lodging, Saul stopped at the corner of the street to pray, as was the manner of the Pharisees, and he addressed me, saying:

“O Yahweh, whose servant I am, thou stern judge of all who do contrary to the temple laws: Grant that at Damascus I may have power to crush the Galilean doctrine root and branch ere it spread as it hath done in Jerusalem.”

And I thought: “Behold with what zeal this man performeth that which he believeth to be my will. Surely it were meet for me to reveal myself unto him, that he may know the error of his way and turn and become a bulwark unto those whom he now persecuteth.”

Wherefore I spake plainly unto him, saying, “Persecute these no more.”

Saul looked to see who it was that spake thus, and seeing



none but such as went along the street about their business he was sore afraid; and he said unto himself, "I am companied of an evil spirit who taketh oft the form of Stephen and now speaketh out of emptiness, counseling me to turn back from my righteous purpose."

Yet he turned not back, but the rather gathered in haste those that purposed to go with him to Damascus, and they departed, albeit the day was well-nigh spent; wherefore certain urged that they should tarry until the morrow.

Now night overtook them shortly in the way, and Saul and they that were with him tethered their beasts and themselves sought shelter in a wayside khan. But Saul was troubled in his sleep, so that those who lay with him in the straw took heed of his moanings. And they called upon a wise man of their number that he should question Saul what ailed him, lest none in the khan find rest that night for the morrow's journey. For Saul did groan continually, and he cried, "Yahweh, I beseech thee deliver me out of this distress."

And the wise man waked him and said, "Tell me, son, thy trouble, if haply my counsel may ease thee of it."

To whom Saul answering said, "Alas, I know not, but when I sleep I am as one who struggles in a quicksand wherein I feel an awful accusation upon my soul, though I know not why, inasmuch as no man is more apt than I to serve Yahweh."

While the wise man pondered how to answer, I did speak once more, saying: "Turn back from persecuting the Galilean's people. Then shalt thou find peace. I, Yahweh, promise thee."

Then Saul sprang from the straw and ran and stood in a corner of the wall with his mantle over his head, and he cried, "Ah Lord God of Israel, cast me not away from thy presence, but deliver me from this confusion of my mind

wherein I hear words that my conscience allows not." And they that knew not Saul whispered one to another, " Surely this man is possessed of a devil." Wherefore they departed softly from the khan and lay down beside their beasts.

When the company, drawing near to Damascus, traveled in the heat of noonday, the sun's white glare stung their eyes until the desert burned with whirling colors; but Saul shivered and leaned forward, clinging to the neck of the ass that bore him. For the terror that had hitherto claimed him only in the night took him now at the height of day. And he drew comfort from the solid flesh of the beast and from her warmth and from the salt taste of her sweat upon his lips.

But suddenly the ass stumbled and fell, and Saul fell also and lay on the ground as one dead. And I drew near and would have laid my hand upon him to succor him, but there came about us twain a blaze of light, and in the midst of it the face of Stephen, transfigured even as it had been in the ecstasy of his martyr death. And lo, the countenance of Stephen dissolved and took on the likeness of one whom Saul had never seen. Yet Saul knew well on whom he looked. And he cried, " Who art thou, Lord? "

And a voice that Saul had never heard answered, " I am Jesus the Galilean, whom thou persecutest." And the voice said also, " Thou art a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name to the gentiles."

And power came upon Saul even as it had come upon those in the upper room. And from that moment Saul knew the end for which he had been born.



Now when he had passed certain days in Damascus, I appeared unto Saul and said, "Get thee up to Jerusalem, my son, and take counsel with Peter and those others who had instruction of the Galilean while he yet lived."

But he answered and said: "What need have I to take counsel with such as they? Have I not seen the Lord and hath he not made known his will concerning the uses of my life?"

And he went not up to Jerusalem but down into Arabia; and he dwelt apart for three years, pondering on what he had seen and how he should proclaim the Galilean and his teachings.

When Saul came up out of Arabia he preached to both Jew and gentile in Judea and in the provinces, yet he testified chiefly to the Jews round about Antioch in Syria.

It was after this Syrian activity that he began his farther journeyings. And ere long I joined him, under what circumstances I have already set down. And even as Saul in the hour of his conversion did know wherefore he had come into the world, so did I also with great rejoicing perceive the higher ends of my godship as together we set foot on the road to the great empire of the west. "The ages have had this destiny in keeping for me," I said, "the prophets have tutored me expressly for it; and now shall I right willingly assume the charge of universal godhead."

Now when Saul essayed to go into the gentile world he took the name Paul whereby he became known of all men, inasmuch as he enscribed it on the letters which he wrote to the churches of his founding. And I was amazed to see how closely his ways fitted the gentile ways, and how he was able to speak to each man of the affairs of his city. The kindness of his heart won the humble, while his fearlessness



of speech commended him to men highly placed. So that where one hearkened in Judea, an hundred gave assent in the gentile lands.

Especially did Paul attune his message to them that were without earthly hope, and so skillfully that it found ready acceptance. To these did he teach that the Galilean would shortly come back to earth to give deliverance from sorrow and entrance into everlasting life to all who would follow his way; for of this all Christians, as the Galilean's followers had come to be called, were persuaded. Wherefore they whom the world had broken, as well as many fortunate people of noble mind, renounced their ancestral gods, choosing to worship me and reverence the Galilean. Thus it came to pass that there were more believers in gentile lands than would have been in Judea and the provinces had the other apostles converted all the Jews that were in them.

When I saw this, I inquired of Paul how he was able to make himself so readily accepted of the gentiles, speaking their tongues and conversing of their affairs as a neighbor lately returned from a far country, and loving them as his own people.

Whereto he answered: "Thou knowest that I am of Tarsus. But perchance thou hast not considered how it is with youth who live where the ships come in. When I was a boy in my city on the banks of the river Cydnus I was wont to go down to the waterside when I heard the song of the rowers. Then would I see the sun flashing from the oars and the sail spilling the wind as the deep-laden galley swept to the walled bank like a great bird of the sea.

"Now my fellows were wont to depart when the bales of merchandise had been borne to the shore, but it was ever my custom to linger and seek converse with Greek, Roman or barbarian, dark men from below Egypt or fair-

haired Gauls, while they rested from their toil. These it irked not to while away an hour in an alien land telling a stranger lad of their homes. And hearkening to their speech that mingled their native tongues with the common language of the Greeks, I learned wherein man differs and wherein he is the same, whether he dwelleth in shining Gades or in a straw village of the sunless forest, whether he be senator, lictor, philosopher, poet, slave, merchant, artisan, or one having authority over wares from the ends of the earth."

And I said unto Paul, "Hadst thou in those days no desire to company these seafaring men to the lands whereof they spake?"

And he answered: "Yea. Nor did there lack occasion when a captain spake between jest and earnest to try me. Yet being a Jew I went only to Jerusalem, for I said in my heart that the time had come to put away childish things. Even so, when the Master appeared unto me on the Damascus road and laid on me the charge to preach unto the gentiles, I started not immediately forth, for I said: 'Mayhap I read into this command mine own desires. Be there not gentiles to preach to in Judea?' Albeit I forbore not to plan this larger mission to the world. For I said, 'Yahweh is the universal God, as Christ is the world's Messiah.'"

Now I was given to think on how our great mission to the gentiles depended from a thin thread of chance. And I said unto Paul, "What thinkest thou would have befallen if thou hadst not been born in Tarsus?"

And Paul smiled, saying, "In sooth I might now be a bearded rabbi in Jerusalem, teaching in temple and conferring in Sanhedrin concerning the law, to what profit thou knowest."

But I said: "Nay, Paul, who then would have carried the message to the gentiles? Would Peter or would John?"

And Paul smiled yet again, saying, " Mayhap the Master had appeared on the Damascus road to some other from Tarsus."

Then said I, albeit not aloud, " None other would have so pleased me as thyself, Paul."

Now Paul purposed to live like those among whom he preached. But I mean not that he lived softly. For he said, " Let us follow their customs lest we offend and lest our argument be of the table while we might to greater profit speak of the kingdom." Whereby he did suffer much through those Christians of Jewish blood who held that no gentile might enter the church except he first profess the olden customs of the Jews. These followed Paul, remarking on all that he did, or, shunning the peril of his journeys, sent letters before to embarrass him with those whom he purposed to visit. Furthermore, he was subjected to scourging, imprisonment, hunger; tossed by violent seas and made footsore on the rough ways of many lands. Yet through all, and even unto the end of his life, the hope upheld him that he might live to see the kingdom; and he died with expectation that presently would he be raised up to dwell in it.

And I mourned for Paul, yet was I not desolate, for it liked me well to be the god of all nations; and in bringing about this fulfillment of ancient prophecy, Paul had found me pleasant habitations among peoples whom I long had deemed alien to my covenant with Israel.



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## XI

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### BEHOLD THESE CHRISTIANS!

**N**OW WHILE PAUL yet lived the grain of mustard seed which was the church so grew and flourished that there were Christians everywhere. Aye, even in Caesar's household. And for a time those in authority heeded them not, saying, "It is but a new sect of the Jews; and albeit he may be troublesome in his own land yet in the empire the Jew hath his uses." Moreover, they watched for the seeds of sedition and discovered none.

Yet it came to pass that the populace found occasion for offense in the Christians, calling them haters of men, forasmuch as I had laid upon them the command that they consort not with unbelievers, except that they preach unto them, nor share in their public games and chariot races, their weddings, banquets and family feasts.

Also did I charge them to shun the common markets, wherein was exposed for sale meat that had been offered as sacrifice to idols. Against the corrupting pursuit of wealth I warned them, counseling them, moreover, that they become not rhetoricians, advocates, physicians, wigmakers, purveyors of henna, perfumers, butchers, sellers or makers of fashionable raiment, charioteers, soothsayers, actors, ad-

ministrators of public affairs, lest they be drawn into the ways of common life. Nor did they complain greatly, inasmuch as many came from the humbler walks and cherished no overweening ambitions.

But the populace liked it not that the Christians should so hold themselves apart, and they whispered against them, saying: "These Christians do ever congregate in secret. Haply their closed doors hide rites that are unlawful or not fit to be seen and known."

Moreover they feared the Christians, who made not the customary offerings of courtesy upon the altars of the Roman gods. For these gods had in their keeping the destinies of the empire and might withhold protection, aye, perchance send calamity, should they be wroth that so large a body refused to pay them honor.

Wherefore persecutions were visited upon the church, and my people were herded into the arena to be torn by wild beasts, or they were covered with pitch and burned like torches, or they were crucified after the manner of their Master. And I grieved for my ravished saints.

It came to pass upon a night that I stood in the amphitheater at Carthage beside one who though left for dead yet breathed and called upon my name. And when I saw the courage and faith of this broken remnant from the many who had that day given witness for me by their suffering, my pride overcame my sorrow, and I was mindful in that moment of the efficacy of martyrdom. Wherefore I cried aloud, saying: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Wherever it doth fall new life springeth an hundredfold." To myself I said, "Blessed am I, Yahweh, in that I am god to this martyr people."



Then, even as I exulted, I heard voices calling upon me that had never called before. Yet what they lifted seemed not a prayer but rather an incantation. And marking that it proceeded from the barracks of the African legion hard by the amphitheater, I said: "They are drunken and seek to mock me." But since their crying abated not, at about cockcrow I went in unto them.

And behold, a score of men were gathered in the small room of a tower. I marveled to see that they dined not, as was the custom of soldiers at ease, but rather watched while he who was sergeant over them marked on the earthen floor with his dagger point, saying: "Here is a fish, symbol of that *Christus* who the Christians say was a prophet and the son of their god; and here a likeness of the cross, that instrument of his death which is revered by them. It may be these will compel an answer from the god."

Wroth because of their attempt to bring me to them by sorcery, I rebuked them, saying: "Have done, ye wicked and superstitious men. Think ye that I am a base spirit of the earth to be summoned by signs and mumblings? Or reckon ye that I am minded to traffic with those whose calling it is to shed Christian blood?"

When they beheld me in their midst the men were sore afraid, so that they put their shields before their faces. And their sergeant so shook that the dagger wherewith he had drawn the fish dropped from his hand. Nonetheless I saw that because his men looked to him to be their spokesman he, for shame's sake, put down an impulse to flee.

"Be not angry, my Lord," he said. "We but seek to become Christians and know not how."

Astounded, I asked: "Can this be? The prophet's teaching and example are against the whole set and urge of



your life, forasmuch as ye are men of violent nature and brutal deeds who have this very day put above fourscore Christians to the death. Heard I aright — that ye would join your blood-stained members to the Body of Christ? ”

I wondered not that the sergeant had said, “ We know not how.” For albeit my children prayed for these emissaries of death and strove to love them in obedience to the Master’s command, yet would they have no voluntary dealings with them. And I allowed, aye, encouraged this aversion. Thieves, adulterers, suborners, gluttons, drunkards, givers and takers of bribes, being penitent, might be received into the church. But since I had become the Christians’ god it had not entered my thought that the soldier might so much as look toward the threshold.

Bethinking me that these men perchance thought only to win easy advancement through some believing friend in Caesar’s household, I asked why they desired to become Christians.

“ Because,” answered the sergeant, “ we have seen the Christians live and watched them die.”

When I questioned them more closely, each in his turn testified, one saying: “ We of the legion, being face to face with death, can look upon it unafraid, for we are trained of body and advantaged by the weapons that Caesar gives us. But they, naked and helpless, embrace with joy the death that they can neither resist nor flee.”

And another: “ We are bound together by rules of the military; the Christians are one in love.”

And another: “ We have seen their households, and even as we have entered to take them over for death, have beheld the goodness of their life. The beauty of their children, tenderly cherished, their chaste wives, their virgin daughters, their sons whose continence in the burning days of young manhood doth honor the sobriety of the fathers!

Under Caesar's orders we put them to the sword, yet, even as thou seest, they have conquered us."

Whereupon a sad-faced warrior took up the thread of his comrade's thought. "Thou dost well to speak of their life, Marcus. For it is life indeed whereof they preach and which sustaineth them in their hour of need. We who worship our ancestral gods may in dying look only for the gloom of the underworld; wherefore we carry the bitterness of our mortality into the eternal regions. But as the Christians die meseemeth they look as if through a gate upon an immortal life full of heavenly glory."

Then the centurion of the guard summed up the argument of all, saying, "Thou seest therefore that we who have looked upon the Christians do with reason desire to become as they are."

Nonetheless, being not unaccustomed to the oblique ways of the pagan world, I said: "Aye, ye would share their living. Would ye share also their martyr death?"

He answered, saying, "That also, if we be judged worthy."

When he so spake I cast about how I might give him hope, and finding none told him shortly: "Were ye malefactors of the common sort ye should be purged and instructed, and afterward welcomed into the Christian community. But being soldiers ye are caught in a net from which there is no escape. Can ye inflict upon yourselves the death that it is your calling to inflict upon others? Nay, albeit I sorrow for you exceedingly, inasmuch as your eyes behold the beauties of the kingdom and your spirits long to enter therein, yet must ye surely perish without the gates."

And even as they cried upon me for mercy, saying, "We have heard that thou art a god mighty to save," I bethought me how I had myself in times past been a god of war, and

I said, "Let each lay down his sword, even as I have done, and haply he shall forget, even as I have almost forgotten, that once he handled it."

But the sergeant made plain unto me that such was not possible for men bound for certain years unto Caesar. Whereupon I counseled them that as many as might should buy their freedom, and those who could not should devote themselves to the part of their calling that concerned keeping Caesar's peace, and if so be they were sent into battle they should go with their fellows but smite not. And they brake every man his sword across his knee.

Thereafter I bethought me: "If these few should leaven the loaf of Caesar's legion, whom then would Caesar command? Perchance it is thus that the kingdom of righteousness shall come." For not knowing what should soon befall, I reasoned, "If not these his soldiers, then Caesar himself is our adversary."



Now in the fullness of time it came to pass that all the men that had known Jesus when he walked in Galilee were gathered to their fathers; green mold grew on the burial urns of them that first published his gospel in far and perilous places; the little ones whom he took in his arms to bless had grown to man's estate or matronhood, had looked on their children's children, and, hoary with age, had folded them their hands in timeless sleep. Yet had the Galilean not returned. Almost had the expectation of his appearing perished from the minds of men. Seldom now did a believer peer into the morning sky and say, "Perhaps today, or it may be tomorrow. . . ."

On my part, I avoided now mention of the fading hope. Concerning the truth of his teaching and the authority of



his example no question did I entertain. Nor did I doubt that he still lived or that his invisible presence trod the rough highways of the world, breathing courage into the souls of the troubled and putting a strong hand under the arm of the faint. But would the years once again disclose his form to mortal eye?

One thing I knew. If his coming were long delayed my people could not profitably continue to look upon the world as an evil to be endured for a season. The Christian discipline must be no longer preparation for an heavenly kingdom to come, but must commend itself to all as a way above any other for the life on earth. And those that believed must prove that Yahweh of Israel and the spirit of the Galilean could better rule the nations and order their lives than had the pagan gods. They must testify that affairs of the world were in a sense also divine.

Wherefore I determined to lift the ban that I had put upon the trades and professions and bid my people take a freer part in affairs, yet laying it strictly on their consciences that their hearts be pure and their hands clean of violence and greed.

To this end I called before me certain of their leaders and spake my mind. And even as I strove to persuade them, they looked sidewise on one another, as if settling which among them should answer me. And when I had finished, he who had been thus loosely appointed did address me after the manner of a child asking permission for that which hath already been done, saying:

“Thou hast graciously vouchsafed thy will unto us. Even so shall we do. And lest thou doubt their readiness, my fellows would have me make it known unto thee that they have in a measure anticipated thy will. Already have we taken some short steps in the way which thou dost lay out before us. There are now among us administrators of public

affairs, actors, soothsayers, charioteers, makers and sellers of fashionable raiment, butchers, perfumers, purveyors of henna, wigmakers, physicians, advocates, rhetoricians. We have also philosophers well versed in Greek thought who sit in seats of authority in the churches. There are no honorable trades or professions lacking.”

Though I marveled at their forehandedness, I said only, “It is well,” and rebuked them not, yet counseled them strictly that they study the demands of justice and do all in accordance with charity.

Whereto they gave their assent. And with their side-wise looks they designated a second of their number to address me, who, whispering from behind his hand, spake thus: “Publish it not abroad, but perchance at no very distant day we shall get thee a Christian upon the imperial throne.”

Whereat they departed as if in haste to be about their business.

And I, wondering at their so great assurance, called after them, “Study to be humble, I charge you.”

Thereafter I watched for a time more narrowly. And I marked that the Christian services were not in all ways as they had been in the days of the apostles. For at the Lord’s Supper, which had hitherto been celebrated in simple remembrance of the Galilean’s death, I now heard talk of a wondrous transaction that took place under the hands of the priests who made ready the tokens of bread and wine, and of a miracle whereby these plain elements were changed into the nature of deity, so that the believers might partake of the very life of their god. And I inquired of a chief of the clergy concerning this change, and he made answer, “These things are spoken in a figure — yet perchance there is a reality also that goeth beyond speech.”

I sensed the direction of his words and said: “Ah! I per-

ceive that ye have gone further than to make yourselves rhetoricians and barbers. You have indeed turned philosophers, as ye said but recently. I doubt not that you have been toying with those mystery religions that come out of the east. They have of late prospered much in the empire, I am given to understand. Doubtless they have set your minds agog with the claim that their initiates partake of the substance of a deity sacrificed for the renewing of earth and man. But mark! There was once a Canaanite named Ben-Ammon who whispered in Abraham's ear that a god must wax great through the sacrifice of his people. Now ye would reverse matters and seek a boon through the death of your god! "

"Nay, Yahweh; far be it from thy servants. But did not Jesus the Nazarene die a sacrifice upon the cross? Should we not become as partakers of his divine life? "

"Ye ought indeed," said I. "But his life is mediated through the spirit and not through earthy substances."

"We argue not the point," said the priest. "We are neither minded nor prepared to make a law of it at the present. Yet is it not meet that thy priesthood have this or other superhuman agency in their keeping, whereby they may deliver men from the destruction that attendeth upon sin? "



Now there were certain prayers that had lately come up to me out of Egypt, which I answered not, forasmuch as they seemed but obscure wailings and lacked the assurance and gladness proper to the petitions of those who held themselves children of the Father. But being now in a mood to seek out that which was amiss, I hastened to where a doleful cry arose in the waste region on the yonder side of the pyramids: "Ah, Lord God; ah, Lord most merciful;



ah, thou just Judge of sinful men; let me not die in mine iniquity."

And I beheld the petitioner coming toward me across the sands. And he walked so bowed over that his head was beneath the line of his shoulders, and his hair hung matted before his face. Over his bones there seemed to be no flesh, but only skin. And ever as he came he sighed, "Ah, Lord God; ah, Lord God."

"Art thou man or beast?" I cried.

"I am man, God pity me," he croaked in a hollow voice.

"What! God pity thee for being man?" I would have questioned; but marking his estate and mindful of the afflictions that had in times past befallen Job, I said rather, "What thing hath brought thee to this horrible condition of body?"

And he answered me, "Sin."

When I asked him the nature of his sin, that I might the more readily turn him to repentance, he said only, "Adam's offense."

Yet when I inquired more closely concerning this Adam who had offended against him, he replied: "Did not Adam eat the apple in defiance of God's express command? And doth not the flesh corrupt the soul by an inheritance of sin from our first father?" And for the chastisement of his soul, as he said, he fell to rubbing sand into the ulcers that were upon his feet.

"Hast never heard of sin?" he asked, after a moment.

And I answered him, saying: "I have indeed heard of sins and in my time have seen many committed. But they have been offenses in particular, done severally by each man for himself. Sin, this common disease transmitted from the first man to all, I know not."

Whereupon he led me to a fallen tomb in whose corner he had his abode, and thrusting his wasted fingers under

a block of sandstone curiously wrought by some craftsman of ancient time, he brought out a parchment and unrolled it, saying, "These be the words of that most holy apostle and martyr, Paul."

Picking here and there in the scroll, he read unto me: "In Adam all die," and "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," and "This corruptible must put on incorruption," with other like sayings, and having read he interpreted them after this manner: "In these plain words doth the chief instructor of our faith describe the state of iniquity into which men are by nature born, and from which, certainly, there can be no deliverance wrought save by humiliation of the carnal members."

When I would have reasoned with him, he took me for my further conviction to some huts where others as worn and ulcerous as himself were gathered together. And these told proudly of their harsh and relentless dealings with their bodies, how they had starved and scourged themselves, renounced conjugal love and the sweet joys of fatherhood, gone unclothed in the sun of Egypt and the snows of Macedonia. And ever and anon they did pause in speaking thus proudly of themselves to speak disparagingly of such as had not the fortitude to enter upon like austerities.

Knowing not how I should seek to confute them I did the rather humor them, saying, "It is well to keep the body under," and inquiring, "How do you detect the presence of this dread affliction of the soul that cometh through your flesh?"

Whereupon they did all laugh in derision, except one who made answer: "How know we? Why, as a man knoweth when his body is afflicted. The corruption that worketh in us doth testify to itself by strong pangs of the spirit. In remorse of conscience, in self-distrust, and in anticipation of punishment for sins unforgiven do we suffer."

And I humored them yet again, saying: "Who should know the presence of disease better than the sick? If ye truly have this inward testimony of bitter pain, one must believe your report."

But he who had last spoken said, "We suffer only what sooner or later all will be compelled to endure."



Even as he spoke I thought uneasily of the evil I had seen in men. True, there had been prophets and martyrs. But who could say what pride of opinion had made the prophets bold to speak, what hope of eternal rewards had armed the saints with courage? The radiance that had marked the early followers of the Galilean — had it been but the glow of dawn on a day of murk and storm?

I bethought me then of certain words from the elder wisdom: "Where there is no vision the people perish." And what a younger wisdom had not yet said was in a measure true of me: "When fails the prophet's word the gods themselves do languish." For I had marked even then that in the priestly times that do ever come between prophets I was less myself, for all that the priests gave me authority, riches and power.

Nonetheless upon this occasion I thought: "The present evil needs no prophet. For surely even a theologian can see that this doctrine of self-punishment for uncommitted sin hath no place in the Galilean's teaching, nay, runneth counter to that which he said concerning repentance and forgiveness and having life more abundantly." Wherefore I sought out, when next he prayed, him who at that time was Bishop of Rome; for I said, "It is he who will have fullest authority to deal with this error before it spread."

Like many another who calleth me, the bishop knew me



not as Yahweh, but rising quickly from his knees and making no recognition of my presence, he fell to busying himself with affairs both secular and spiritual. For already were bishops becoming men of power in the temporal order.

There was that in his face which made me know that he had at this moment no leisure for the intricacies of theology. Wherefore I proceeded at once to the effects of the doctrine, saying: "Thou dost call thyself in thy prayer a miserable sinner. How if thou feel neither power nor worth in thyself shalt thou have hope whereby to build the kingdom?"

"What kingdom?" asked the bishop. "Cease speaking in riddles, for I am pressed under the weight of many affairs. But nay, take not time by answering. Mayhap I see what thou hast in mind, though thy manner of expressing it is strange. No doubt thou meanest the kingdom of heaven, that happy country beyond the skies to which the righteous go at death."

"Not so," I answered. "It is the kingdom of the just here on earth to which I make reference, the same which the olden prophets announced and the Galilean brought near to us. For whether it be accomplished by slow degree through the efforts of faithful men, or be established at a stroke when he cometh the second time, nonetheless it is our plain duty to encourage only such doctrines as shall prepare men to become citizens in it."

Now the bishop sat at an ebony writing table on which among his papers there lay a dish of rare fruits with a silver knife in it, and a crystal bowl of perfumed water beside. For the rulers of the church had already begun to live delicately. And on the wall above the table hung a golden crucifix cunningly fashioned and enameled in the Byzantine manner.

The bishop made toward the crucifix a reverential sign and with the same motion took a melon from the dish. And

when he had cut it and separated the flesh of it from its rind, he dabbled his fingers in the bowl and wiped them on a square of linen cloth edged with purple. Whereupon he took on the point of his knife a small piece of the melon and lifted it toward his mouth. Then, with the morsel poised in air, he turned to me and said:

“There is some color of truth in what thou sayest. Here and there in the Scriptures are words that might purport that at the consummation of time and the end of the world a kingdom will descend out of heaven from God. But that, no doubt, is yet hid deep in the future. It is better to think of that celestial state into which the righteous enter at death, since this is close at hand for all.”

“It was not so written by the Hebrew prophets,” I objected. “Their hope was ever in a resurrection of the just upon that day when the messianic kingdom should come to earth.”

“A curse on the pestilential Jews!” cried the bishop. “Are they that killed our blessed Lord to become our schoolmasters?”

And I was sore amazed when he so spake, cutting the Galilean from the lineage of mine other prophets. For I had ever thought of his teachings as those that the synagogue would in the fullness of time accept.

When the bishop marked that I held my peace he returned to his earlier thought, saying: “Furthermore, this comfortable assurance of a speedy deliverance into a state of bliss hath an advantage in that it doth strengthen the folk who bear the burden of this world’s sorrow and inequalities by faith that the afterlife will rectify them wholly. In especial doth this patient forbearance have an ennobling effect upon the poor.”

And he put the piece of melon into his mouth.

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## XII

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### THE CONSECRATED SWORD

IT CAME TO PASS soon after the bishop and I had disputed concerning the manner of the kingdom's coming, that Constantine, a Roman general, becoming emperor, embraced the faith, having received the evangel in a dream wherein he saw a cross blazoned on the sky with the words, "By this sign shalt thou conquer."

Nor did the new emperor delay to call me into his counsels. And when I beheld him kneeling, Saul, my first king, seemed once more the mere stripling who chanced upon the place of his anointing while he sought after the strayed asses of his father; and David's stature shrank until he was but a wild tribal chieftain; and Solomon in all his glory paled like a star before the rising sun. I bade the emperor rise, and as he took to himself a chair, I said: "Not since the beginning of time until this hour hath a man dowered with the will to do good been so dowered also with the power. Come, let us tarry no longer, but go down and inaugurate the reign of justice, love and peace, and the kingdom of righteousness that was foretold by the prophets."

The emperor rose not when I made this proposal, but the rather settled himself in his chair, saying, "Do the bishops and clergy move in this direction?"



“Nay,” I confessed. “It is not a present expectation, but the hope and logic of the past that I have uttered.”

And he looked not upon me as I spake, but let his gaze travel through the window and across the housetops of the city. It rested on the plebeian quarter and on those barracks where slaves were housed, and then came back to the room. And I thought, “Mayhap being but lately a pagan he hath not been instructed.” Wherefore I questioned him, saying, “Thou knowest how the prophets, and especially he of Galilee, did teach and labor in behalf of the kingdom?”

Whereto Constantine nodded his head, saying: “Aye. Something of that nature I have either read or heard. Nor should I ask any better thing than to see the enthronement of peace, justice and love. Moreover, I shall make it a charge upon my conscience to promote these ends as circumstances and my leisure afford me occasion. But mark well: the prophets and Jesus were not burdened with empire as I am.”

I was amazed to hear him so speak, for I had thought of empire not as a burden but only as a fullness of opportunity.

And continuing, he said: “My paramount duty is to the imperial throne. As thou knowest, when my father Constantius Chlorus died, there were six who laid claim to his seat. Now I only am left. It behooves me to compose my realm and consolidate my power, for there be sections still that do not accord me full recognition. When this is finished shall I have liberty to prosecute the designs of which thou hast spoken.”

But I said: “Nay, Constantine, these be things that thou shouldst accomplish while the cross yet blazes in the heavens and the glow of thy revelation is still upon thee. I have waited long for such a man as thou.”

Whereupon he did reason with me in this wise: “Verily,

Yahweh, by thine own account thou art practiced in waiting. Yet with the goal in view thou showest thyself of a sudden as impatient as a child clutching for a fruit not fully ripe. Furthermore, to one who can weigh all things in a comprehensive act of judgment as thou canst, it must be plain that the world is not so unfriendly to the good of the many as some would have us believe. For those who suffer much and yet hold fast to the Christian faith, is there not the sure reward of heaven? ”

Now I marked that Constantine spake in haste, as one who had long wrestled with a troublesome question and, finding it still with him, did now seek only to justify its postponement. While his mind turned to the point of some business which this talk of the kingdom did but delay, his eyes wandered toward the table that stood at hand for his convenience. And I saw now that on the table lay a sword. At that moment Constantine took the sword in his hand and began to rub its blade with the hem of his toga. Then he breathed on the iron and rubbed it again, touching it reverently, and ceased not to polish until it returned a gleam that satisfied his soldier's eye.

Whereupon he offered it me, even as in days long past a shepherd might confide unto me his choicest ewe, and he said, “Take thou this sword, Yahweh, and bless it for me, inasmuch as I am now a Christian.”

The manner of his request came near to deceiving me, for that he showed affection and reverence for this blade, as though it had life within it and not death. But being about to receive it I bethought me and said: “Nay, this cannot be. Hath not the prophet of Galilee taught that they who take the sword shall perish by it? ”

“Ah, said he so? ” Constantine regarded me intently for a moment. “But what of thee? Dost thou interpret this saying to mean that thou and I must renounce the

sword? Nay, rather let those renounce it that have used it to unworthy ends.

“ Now if I were to ask thee which quality most becometh a god in his dealings with mankind, what wouldst thou say? ”

And I was about to answer, “ The chief attribute of godship is love.”

But the emperor checked me with a gesture of his hand, saying: “ Nay, do not speak. Rather let me show thee how completely I know thy mind. Thou wouldst answer immediately, ‘ Power.’ Then wouldst thou proceed to make plain how power used in the interest of righteousness is the first prerogative and distinctive mark of a god. What matter if at sundry times men have led thee to use thy supreme power for common ends, such as the conquest of petty tribes that opposed thy people, or if through excess of zeal thou didst for the moment forget thine attributes of mercy and gentleness which, matched to thy courage, give thy godship the perfect balance, setting it apart from all others? With this weapon thou wilt not be tempted to the overhasty use of power.”

Whereupon he laid the sword upon the table, and dropping his voice to its deepest tone he said: “ We have come into a new day. Through my conversion — which, in truth, hath not been accomplished without some cost to me — the church is close wedded to the empire; this unselfish might of which I speak shall be employed only to uphold the blessed doctrines of which religion is the natural sponsor.”

Whereupon he fell to fondling the sword once more. And he shifted his grasp to the blade and held the hilt toward me, saying, “ Look closely upon this sword which I have asked thee to bless and tell me what thou seest different in the fashion of it — for it is a special instrument.”



Now up to this moment mine effort had been not to see this instrument which, aided by Constantine's fair arguments, brought back to me remembrance of my former prowess in the field. But when I gazed fully upon it, it came to me that the design was of strange fashioning, and I cried, "Why, the hilt hath the form of a cross!"

"Even so," said Constantine with a smile. "Dost thou find a meaning in its design? Out of deference to thee did I have this sword expressly forged to this pattern."

I studied it until a light broke upon me. "Ah!" said I, "if I mistake not, thine intention is that the one end of it shall consecrate the other. The blade is hallowed by the hilt."

"It is a holy conception," said the emperor. "Take this devoted blade in thine hand, then, and bless it."

And I reasoned inwardly, "Were it certain that this special sword would never be drawn in an unholy cause —" But to Constantine I still said, "Nay, the Galilean spake plainly against it."

Wherefore Constantine labored again with me, saying: "Forget not that in his time the church numbered among her people no emperor with the burdens of empire. Or, if thou wilt, the empire was not then holy as now it is. Furthermore, the fashion of the times changeth from age to age. This was revealed to my mind when the priest who instructed me in the Christian truths gave me to read for my soul's improvement a book writ by the blessed Clement, onetime Bishop of Rome. And mark — I speak now not as emperor but as newly persuaded Christian — it was in some respects a notable book, expressed in the most concise and admirable style, so that none could miss its logic. Yet I quarreled with it. And why did I so? Because, while every line had its meaning for the rhetorician, in many passages was it without the least authority over the mind

of a practical man of this day. Dost thou follow me, Yahweh? ”

“ Aye, Constantine, and verily thou art a subtle man. Yet can I not touch this sword for all it looks so goodly lying there.”

The emperor said: “ I shall not urge thee, Yahweh. Let there be a kingly courtesy between us, whereby neither thou nor I shall ask beyond what is expedient for the other.”

Yet as I went from his presence I grieved because I had dealt so hardly with this great and courteous man. And I bethought me how devoted he was to the right, and looking yet again upon the beauty of the sword I turned irresolute at the threshold, saying, “ It is perhaps a slight boon. . . .”

But Constantine was already busy with messengers newly arrived from the far ends of his domain.



Hard by the imperial palace was a little church built in the days of Christian poverty but now neglected. Entering it I questioned whose prayer had drawn me. And lo, in the cold twilight of the moldering room I beheld a preacher standing as of old in the pulpit, and a score of men, or so it seemed, in the open space before him. He that stood in the pulpit was dressed not in a priest's habit, but in a faded garment of a style belonging to other days; and his voice came from afar off as he read from that part of Isaiah's prophecy where it saith, “ Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.”

He looked up at the end of the reading and I beheld his face, and I said, “ It is the face of Tertullianus, who hath been dead these many years! ”

Now this Tertullianus was a Carthaginian, born of a

pagan family, who came up to Rome in his youth to study the Roman law. There he embraced the Christian faith and returned him to Carthage and was made presbyter of the church. He it was who by the eloquence of his writings wrought more, it may be, than any other to keep the Christians free of entanglement in military affairs. Much did I owe to him in those times, but I had not thought again to behold him.

The Scripture finished, Tertullianus, in preparation for the sermon, took a text which was also from Isaiah:

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings.

Then did he unfold in his sermon many of those arguments against the sword that he had uttered in his discourses and set down in his books.

While I hearkened I felt my sympathy go out to him as aforetime. But even while he bound me round about by his eloquence I heard a voice that called as if from the street: "Are the living then to be forever ruled by the dead?" And the voice was hearty like the voice of Constantine, and not like the preacher's, which came thin and faint notwithstanding its persuasiveness.

Albeit I had not so intended it, I cried out: "Ho, Tertullianus! Thy rhetoric is admirable, and thy Latin, but thy thoughts are not meet for this new day when the unity of empire and church shall give, mayhap, a changed aspect to the uses of power."

It seemed to me that my voice rent the silence of the church, even as had that voice from the street. Yet it stayed not the speaker, nor did his congregation turn to



see whence it had come. And he finished his argument and those others stood silent awaiting his benediction, yet he blessed them not, but the rather looked full upon me saying, "Beware of him who sits on Caesar's throne."

Then those others turned and looked upon me also. And lo, they were the legionaries who had broken their swords across their knees at Carthage when I appeared unto them in the wardroom of the tower.

Now although I could not account for their appearance there in the church, I took it kindly and would have given them thanks for so overcoming all difficulties that they might uphold my hand at this moment. But when I was about to speak, the voice from the street came again, saying, "Who are these dead that show so little respect for the living god that they must rise from the grave to command him?"

Again I spake, contrary to my will, saying to Tertullianus and his onetime legionaries, "I see ye trust me not, nor deem me able to walk with an emperor or strike hands with men of large affairs." For albeit I had been brought to see the offense in their conduct, it was my purpose still to deal courteously with them.

Moreover, I still held with Tertullianus in the main; nor did Constantine by direct word seek again to shake my resolution in the matter of the sword.



Yet it came to pass, on a day when we consulted upon such questions of policy as lay in the spiritual realm, that Constantine broke off in his speech and walked to the table whereon lay the sword. Again he caressed it with his hand, wiping the gleaming blade with a linen scarf of finest texture. Then, taking his station midway between the table

and the place where I stood, he began to whirl the sword expertly about his head. He seemed to be one who practiced exercises, and he made marvelous figures and curves in the air with the weapon, keeping rhythmic step forward and back on feet that yielded his hands nothing in point of nimbleness. His shield-arm and his whole body moved in unison with the play of the sword.

This dexterity and harmony of motion I marked at first with reluctance, but soon with growing admiration. As for the man himself, he was mighty of frame, his whole body full of grace and easy with that skill which comes by training. Mine own two attributes, sternness and benignity, sat on his brow. But even as I looked did I feel myself condemned that I could take delight in his soldierly appearance and exercise. For which cause I turned away mine eyes. Nonetheless, the light from his whirling blade, flickering on wall and ceiling, drew my gaze, and his rhythmic breathing beat upon mine ear.

Again I looked openly on him. And this time I saw more than Constantine. Behold! The Amalekites fled across the plain; the Philistines threw them down their arms and begged mercy of David; Jephthah swept the field clean of the children of Ammon.

Seeing all of this as in a trance, I wondered how Constantine might appear in battle wielding this consecrated sword. Nor could I forget that this kingly man was my servant.

Mine arm was restless. I flexed it to give me ease. In a moment I found that it followed every circle and thrust that the emperor made. "There is no evil in it," I said, "forasmuch as I have no sword in my hand." Yet was I secretly glad to find that though so long disused to battle I had not lost my cunning.

Now while Constantine continued his exercise he moved

steadily, albeit slowly, toward the place where I stood. And my right arm and all my members grew vibrant with his approach. He held not the sword always by the hilt, but sometimes by the very tip of the blade, and sometimes he flung it into the air to catch it by blade or hilt, as he desired. So close did he draw that I feared lest the sword strike me should the emperor miss his grip.

Then holding the weapon skillfully by the lower part of its blade, Constantine swung it in a perfect curve which ended at the place where my right arm was outstretched — and the hilt fell fairly into the palm of my hand.

I willed it not, and I scarce understood how it came about, but I had the sword firm in my grasp. And I sensed that the blade of it and mine arm were one instrument — as though my hand were welded to the cross that was its hilt.



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## XIII

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### ONE THRONE FOR THREE

FROM THAT time forth, forasmuch as I had entered somewhat into the temporal province, Constantine entered more freely into the spiritual. And I took it not amiss until that day when he said unto me, "Yahweh, it is made increasingly plain that we must have thee defined."

"Defined, sayest thou?" I queried, for I knew not what this should signify, unless so be that Constantine proposed to set limits to me even as Aaron had done when he built me his box of acacia wood.

Constantine marked my confusion and answered quickly, saying: "Yea. It is now needful that we express thy nature to the end that all men may know who and what thou art."

"Are not mine acts expression enough of my nature?" I inquired; for it was now plain that he proposed to deal with somewhat of boldness. "Do I not daily show myself to be all that a god may be? Am I not that which the best and wisest of men have urged upon me? Let him that will consider what the prophets taught concerning righteousness and say whether or no the sinner feeleth the weight of

my righteous judgments. For I withhold not mine arm in defense and extension of whatsoever is good through the imperial domain. Also am I a Father to my children in that I provide them spiritual sustenance through the holy sacraments. Furthermore — albeit I have in some respects altered for these times the pattern set by the Galilean — nevertheless do I still labor toward a universal kingdom. Let man look and read what I am. I like not this defining.”

But Constantine said: “Truly, Yahweh, thy manifestations do fully and at all times explain thee, even as thou hast said. But this definition whereof I speak must be not of deeds but of words, for there is need that thy nature be set forth in small compass for convenient use in teaching and in theological argument.”

“Nay, I like it not that my nature be limited even by words,” I objected. “Know that there are areas of being that no rhetoric can encompass.”

“True again,” Constantine acknowledged. “Any attempt to compress into a verbal formula the fullness of thy divinity would be vain. Yet a truly philosophical statement, not wholly expressive of thy perfection but tracing as closely as it may the luminous shadow cast by thy person, is imperatively needed.”

Still I liked it not, and with intent less to be answered than to dissuade him from his purpose I inquired further into this imperative necessity.

Whereupon he set about to answer me fully, saying: “That men may conform one to another in their belief concerning thee. For as thou thyself hast observed, the church is torn by divisive counsels on this matter and on that, and though perchance thou knowest it not, these wranglings of men threaten to extend even to the question of thy godhead. Now these many generations have we had the baptismal formula which loosely conjoins thee, the

Christ of Galilee and the Holy Spirit. But its language doth leave men uncertain in respect of the metaphysical relationship between thee and the Galilean. Yea, there are some who openly call him divine as though they would put him on an equality with thyself."

But I said unto him: "Nay, Constantine, no jealousy do I feel when men pay divine honors to the Galilean. Moreover, now that I have resumed the sword it is mayhap necessary that he supply certain aspects of a softer divinity."

"Now thou dost approach the crux of the matter," said Constantine. "Men in large number are there who deny his divine nature, while others hold that, being divine, he had no true humanity. It is chiefly in respect of him that the quarreling ariseth."

Whereupon I did for the first time lose patience with Constantine and answer him shortly, saying: "As to the Galilean, it matters not to me what men say or think. No human bickerings can make difficulty between us."

Likewise Constantine lost patience, and he made answer: "This pleasant accord may suffice for thee, but for me it is not sufficient. I look not with approval on these divisions in the minds of theologians nor on the consequent dissensions among the common folk. Thou knowest me for a man of precision and order. Thou art aware of the uniformity I have effected in the appointments of my legions. What is customary in one part of the empire prevaieth in all others, thus assuring easy exchange of officers and of all military equipment. Thou art acquainted also with my unified policy of civil administration. A man may lay down one task in Byzantium and take up another in Spain unhampered by differences in rules and methods. I work to make the empire truly one. So must it be with the church. There must be no weakening diversity. Wherefore I urge — not, of a surety, without proper respect —



the summoning of a council to define the godhead once and for all time."

"Why saidst thou not so in the beginning?" I remonstrated. "If this be an imperial interest I make no question of it."

"Not only imperial is it, but also ecclesiastical," Constantine asserted. "The good bishops would have the question settled."

The calling of a general council being so arranged, I asked of the emperor how the desired formula would be arrived at.

He told me confidently, "By vote of the bishops."

Now I thought it strange that the nature of divinity should be discovered by the consensus of fallible opinion, but spake not thereof to Constantine, asking only, "What if the members be evenly divided?"

Whereto he replied: "They shall be of an odd number. And they shall not lack imperial advice."

Nonetheless it required not one council but several to formulate such a definition as the bishops judged expedient to the needs of the church. For, even as I had foreseen, men who but little understood their own finite nature found it not easy to set a hedge of words about me whom they called infinite.

The first council convened in Nicaea, and the emperor elected to preside in person. This was well, for the bishops wrangled long over the letters of a single word, and only through pressure of authority did they at length attain agreement in any one thing.

When the council was finished they said unto me: "Yahweh, thou and the Galilean are one by virtue of a word that we have found, which word expresseth oneness of substance. Thou art in no sense the loser thereby, though thou art called upon to share thy godhead, for our human-

ity which the Galilean bore doth bridge over the chasm that lieth between thy hitherto remote divinity and ourselves."



But Constantine died without seeing the end of that which he began when he did first call the bishops together to define me. For it was not until the council in Chalcedon, above a century after Nicaea, that the theologians were able truly to say: "We have completed our definition of thee. The formal description of thy being is settled for all time. Thou, Yahweh, being one, art also three."

"How am I three?" I asked. "By division or by addition?"

"By neither adding nor dividing, but by our recognition of certain distinctions eternally present in thy godhead. For we have established that, though thou art one, it is in the triple sense of Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Now my thoughts went out in sympathy to these men who had thus wrestled courageously with that primal mystery of being which had troubled me also, even from the days of Abraham. Wherefore I had respect for them. But there was mine own being to consider and there were my prerogatives to protect. Wherefore I said: "I like it not, nor will I permit this dealing with my person. Call it what ye will, it plainly bespeaks either division or addition. Your mathematics likes me not. Have ye wholly forgotten what my first people, the Hebrews, said continually in admonition one to another — 'Hear ye, Israel; the Lord thy God is *one*'?"

"Nay, but thou dost not understand," they insisted. "Hebraically speaking, thou art still *one*. It is only in the language of Christian theology that thou art to become three. For this theology must needs partake of the quali-

ties of the Greco-Latin thought with which thou art now identified. And mark the advantage of this our double definition. The bold assertion of diversity in unity and unity in diversity covereth the thought of every reasonable man, and thereby bringeth the Christian world to conformity of speech.

“Moreover, this same formula which composeth our verbal differences will also by reason of its contradictory mathematics serve to deepen the mystery that surroundeth thee, and thereby aid in satisfaction of one of the ineradicable hungers of the human soul.”

And, though I marveled at the shapes which the hungers of men take on, I did profess myself content with this triangulation of my divinity.

Now certain chiefs of the clergy came into my presence and they said, “We desire the judgment of our triune God on a matter, and therefore ask that thou set up a throne from which the collective will of deity may speak.” Wherefore did I establish a wide throne on the circle of the heavens, and bade the priests that they have my colleagues in the godhead appear there at a given hour, the which I named.

When the hour drew nigh I approached the seat, feeling a measure of resentment against them that had divided mine authority. Nonetheless, I was cheered at the prospect of seeing the Galilean again.

Being before the throne, I heard a peal of thunder that rolled from end to end of heaven, and I beheld one coming toward me whose visage was stern and awesome. His eyes were as coals of fire, his mouth inflexible, and his hand gripped a two-edged sword. He had for a breastplate the two tables of the law; red was his garment as though he had long trodden the winepress, and judgment sat upon his brow.



When I asked of this being who he was, he made answer: "I am of the godhead; very God, in truth; coeval with thyself — aye, thyself under the eternal aspect of Son, whose perfection judgeth the frail children of men."

These words rolled upon me a weight heavy to be borne. "My son, thou sayest! Ah well, if it be so determined it must be so received. But thou art greatly changed since I saw thee in Galilee. Where are the grace and tenderness that were thine? I thought not to find thee so much the thunderer as thou dost appear."

He showed impatience and distaste as he answered: "What is this thou speakest of a Galilee? I am of the empire."

I recovered my calm and said: "Then thou art not he for whom I took thee at the first. Whence, then, dost thou derive? From the empire, thou hast said; but by what process?"

"By a process of theology," he returned. "For, though I am assured of an eternal element within me by which I am one with thee, mine outward nature is called the crowning achievement of the theologian."

"It matters not who thou art, or how thou hast come by thy forbidding exterior, so be thou dost not rob me of my Galilean memories," said I.

"Mete me not by thy Jewish standards," he charged me. And I thought that an unease of spirit lay beneath his outward show of majesty.

Then of a sudden was I stirred to pity for this grim fiction whom I was called upon to make my familiar; but ere I could speak kindly to him, as I purposed to do, there came toward us one who moved swifter than an eagle above the clouds. When he alighted I saw with amazement that he showed no countenance, for face and form and garments made one unbroken pillar of burning light, beautiful and majestic beyond comparison with all things fair and awe-

some that ever I had seen. His outward appearance seemed to testify to a boundless and eager energy enwrapped in the impenetrable mystery of his flaming presence.

When he that had announced himself the Son beheld me overcome with speechless fascination and wonder by the glory of the radiant newcomer, he whispered: "Betray us not by such show of astonishment on thy countenance. This stranger, I take it, is ourself under the theological aspect of Creative Spirit. He doth but complete our god-head."

To cover my confusion I said hastily, "Then let us be seated on the throne, for we are asked to hand down an agreeable judgment on a vexing matter that will shortly be laid before us."

"Aye," said the Son, who was minded to take full charge. "And since in what seems to be thy separate person thou dost manifest our collective attribute of Fatherhood, thine shall be the first seat."

Accordingly I moved toward what was the right hand side of the throne as we faced it and was prepared to seat myself, when he stayed me.

"How dost thou number?" he asked me.

"After the Hebrew manner, beginning at the right and proceeding toward the left, as is meet," I answered.

"Nay, it is not meet, nor even to be thought of," he protested. "We are under the aegis of the imperial mother and must therefore number after the imperial fashion, from left to right."

I was not minded to argue the matter and turned forthwith to the left end of the throne. But again he hindered me. "Stay! Neither is it seemly that we seat ourself in this order. It is plainly written in the creed that I do always sit at the right hand of ourself as Father, and if thou dost take the place at the extreme left there will be nought

but empty space at thy right. Where, then, shall we sit in my person as Son? ”

I said: “ Ah! The central seat, then, shall be mine individual place. Sit thou to the right of me; and this other shall complete our trinity on my left.”

“ Let us not be so hasty,” cautioned the Son. “ These weighty matters are not disposed of so readily. It is written in the creed, let us remember, that the Creative Spirit, being our very self under another guise, doth proceed from us both; wherefore it doth clearly appear that his must be the middle seat.”

Here, now, was a difficulty which we could not overcome, seek as we would to surmount or resolve it. The matter was therefore taken in hand by the theologians.

Now after these had wrestled with the problem for a long time, it became plain that they had not the wit to deal with it. But there was a youth serving as clerk to one of the bishops, and he said: “ Why do you vex yourselves with so simple a matter, my masters? Let there be a round throne made, facing outward; and let the godhead sit shoulder to shoulder with itself, or themselves, as ye like, on the circumference. Then shall arise no question of end or middle, first, second or last. For each shall be right and left of those others that do both complete him and make of the three one — of whose perfect unity, accord and equality the circular continuity of the line in which they sit shall afford a most apt symbol.”

The theologians and bishops, although reluctant to defer to this lad, could not but admit that his plan was sound. The throne was rebuilt after his design.

But when we were again about to be seated the Son raised yet another difficulty. “ Stop! ” he cried. “ It is, after all, a thought not to be entertained even for a moment’s space that we should have aught to do with this



round throne. For when in my person as judge we shall arise and stand upon the step here to address ourself in judgment, we shall of necessity be found facing away from ourself, which, however little it be so intended, will be a sore discourtesy to us."

And we saw that it could not be.

On this account we returned to counsel again with the clergy. But before the matter of our seating could be broached, I lost all patience and asked: "Is this point upon which ye desire us to pass judgment a question ecclesiastical or imperial? Is it, perchance, a matter of some moment?"

And they assured us, "It is purely ecclesiastical and theological; which fact of itself lends it character of greatest moment."

"Look ye to it," I said shortly.

Their faces brightened. "Ah! Then ye leave such matters wholly to our judgment? We speak the final word?"

"Hath it not ever been so?" I put bitterness into my tone, but the irony of my question escaped them.

Then did I face the complexity that was myself, and I said: "Ye see? There is no point of moral import involved here. Our arbitrament is not required; nor, I suppose, will it be while the world stands. Therefore pursue ye, each one, your separate course until the end of time; and I shall find joy in doing likewise. We shall meet again at the judgment day, in whose light perchance it may more clearly appear where and how we sit."

On this word we parted. And I beheld with admiration and astonishment how he that was called Creative Spirit made off on his wings of cold white fire at a speed which mine eye could scarce follow.

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# XIV

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## HERITAGE OF EMPIRE

NOW IT CHANCED that Leo, justly called the Great, albeit this title "great" hath been loosely handled as a measure of human worth, was Bishop of Rome in those evil days at no far remove from the reign of Constantine, when the city of the Caesars was sacked by barbarous tribes.

From the quiet of his episcopal dwelling he looked on the corruption that had weakened the borders of the empire, and he girded himself to effect deliverance. Yet first did he call upon me. For this heroic bishop ever kept humble communion with his god and did nothing without first submitting his plans to my judgment. His counsels pleased me well, inasmuch as the stout heart which quailed not before patrician or plebeian, senator or priest, and made no difference between pagan and Christian, expected also a resolute courage in his god.

"Yahweh," said he briefly, "the empire of the Caesars is no more."

I looked with him across the housetops from his terrace on the Pincian hill, and I said: "Nay, the eternal city still stands. Behold the Capitoline hill, imperishable in its strength."

“Yea,” answered Leo, “the stones are there, but what do they shelter? A people shorn of power, an effigy of the emperor who from the safety of Constantinople sendeth out edicts to a world that has little mind to obey.”

And he swept the city with a wide gesture, saying: “Fear is master in the fallen house of arrogant might, and dread crouches at every street corner. Soldiers whose officers have lost the habit of command form themselves into bands of thieves; judges, reduced to poverty, sell their justice for gain; Christians return to their pagan ways, or shut themselves from the world in remote contemplation of its evils; priests, no longer able to believe in a just providence, do but mumble their holy offices; women hoard their virtue within darkened houses, or hurry through the streets guarding themselves warily.”

Now Leo had never been known for a preacher after the manner of Ecclesiastes, nor did he make it his custom to ask me to hearken to wailings as was the practice of the ancient Pharisees. Wherefore I held my peace, marveling to what action this speech of his might tend.

Then Leo turned to his table and took up a parchment that, lying open, testified to his recent employment; and he said, “This is a book writ by Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, lately deceased, a treatise apt to these times, yea, and to all time to come.”

And when I asked him its name, he answered, saying, “It is titled, *The City of God*.”

Whereupon I bade him tell me the substance of the book in brief. For it now appeared that he had, after all, but called me to uphold him in an hour when his spirits flagged.

And Leo began to pace the floor, saying: “Herein does Augustine record the decay of human society under the misrule of the old pagan gods, and he demonstrates these same gods to be wholly reprobate in their works and char-



acters. Next he touches on the woeful state into which their deceptions have brought the world. And this he does with great exactness. But all else is as nothing compared with those consolations which derive from the second part of his work, wherein he causeth all history to testify to the glorious purpose which thou hast for the world, namely, the eternal kingdom of the spirit. This he foreshadows under the similitude of the City of God, which city, he says, must arise from the ashes of those fires that even now consume the terrestrial order."

Thereafter he paused, and then said, "It is for this reason that I have called thee, O Lord, to look with me upon the decay of imperial Rome."

Knowing that Leo was not of those who like their thought spoken for them, I said only: "Let us grant that the empire's days are numbered. What followeth insofar as we twain are concerned?"

"Why, it follows," he made answer, "that in default of a competent Caesar we two must rule the empire."

And Leo took from a cabinet his episcopal miter and set it on his head and took his crosier in his hand. "Inasmuch as Innocent of blessed memory, lately bishop of this city, did declare and incontestably prove that the See of Rome inherits the primacy among all bishoprics from St. Peter, whom the Lord Jesus Christ chose to be the rock on which he founded his church, in this tradition shall I claim for mine office its prerogatives. In the interest of establishing a competent rule, maintaining order, salvaging justice and keeping the peace, I shall assert and make good the authority of my bishopric. Rome, long the head of a dying empire, shall be the head now of a living church. Thou being my helper, I shall bring life out of death. This I shall do, not through love of power, but solely in furtherance of thy divine purpose as interpreted by Augustine.

Inasmuch as I look to gain nothing but a weight of care, I trust thou wilt help me to support it as my most Christian burden.

“ But how my heart rejoices, O Lord, as it considers the prospect before us—all peoples of earth dwelling peaceably under the beneficent rule of thy will uttered in authority and constraining love from this new Jerusalem. Whole nations seeking the truth and being obedient to those principles whose pronouncement shall be the joyful duty of the church! ”

Throughout this homily my thoughts kept pace with his and found the journey pleasant; but suddenly they leapt far ahead. My hand went to my side to make certain that the sword still hung there. For Leo had spoken of the nations living peaceably, and had even hinted that they might willingly abate their differences.

“ Stop! ” I cried. “ If I join with thee, wilt thou ask me to yield up my sword and stand defenseless save for moral power? Think well how thou shalt maintain thy holy rule.”

Leo fell silent; and I could see that he was sorrowful that even while he dreamed of the city as he had read of it in the book I should thus bring before him the plain consideration of its maintenance.

And he answered me vaguely, for of a truth he had drawn but little on this head out of Augustine. And he said: “ Nay, I had not thought to ask thee to lay down thy sword, albeit thine own morality may so require after the theocracy is firmly established. Circumstances have forced the sword into thy hand and there must it remain as long as these circumstances continue unchanged. Nonetheless, while the civil power is being more and more divided, we might move us gradually toward a new policy. By this I mean that, whereas until now the sword has dominated the

cross, in time to come the cross must rule the sword, thus supplanting worldly policy in ecclesiastical and, as far as possible, in secular affairs."

But when I said, "I am minded how Constantine spake in like vein, pleading for the protection of the right," Leo made answer with some severity, saying: "The proper employment of the sword dependeth not so much on the declared purpose as on the character of him who grips the hilt. Our ecclesiastical rule will in no wise resemble that of the empire."

And I replied: "Thine answer is after mine own thought, Leo. Full often have I regretted that I placed mine arm so freely at the disposal of the empire and gave unto Christians the right to serve the military ends of the state. But even the Galilean would not object should his people take martial service under ecclesiastical command — or at least I trust not."



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## INTERLUDE

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### A LONG SLEEP

**I**N THE COURSE of years the See of Rome journeyed far toward establishing authority over the nations that arose in the territory of the old empire, and beyond it in those regions whence the barbarous tribes had come. It learned how to set king against king, and how to make rulers and warriors plunge into fierce rivalry in the hope of gaining the church's favor, and how to set them to trembling in fear of coming under its condemnation. In time did the church discover that it could obtain a higher price for its favor than that which any ruler could be forced to pay by threats of coercion. Wherefore it set a price on all its ministrations, both secular and spiritual.

Not seldom did the cross and the sword make common warfare against uncivilized tribes and half-civilized peoples struggling for nationhood. To the vanquished was tendered the cross-like hilt on which to swear fealty to the Christ of the trinity and to his vicar on earth. Whereupon their sins were washed away by the sacramental waters of baptism and they were gathered into the fold.

In those lusty days I was always in the forefront of the battle, and after the combat I lingered close by the river-

side to welcome the conquered when they came up from the cleansing waters. Thus did I taste the double satisfaction of victory itself and the redemption of the nations thereby from their pagan ways. But the sense of victory became familiar, and the triumphal chants of my priests when new peoples were brought under my rule could no more rouse mine answering exultation.

Long ago it was written of me, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Yet the time came when I slept. Worn by fighting, weary of blood and intrigue, sickened by a plague of conscience, I sank into a fitful slumber that held me for many generations, save that now and again I was roused to lend my voice to some mean contention between bishops and kings, or to take part in strife when partisans clamored for the succor of mine arm.

In this restless sleep I dreamed. Vividly I saw Amos in the market place and the courts of old Bethel rebuke the mighty in the name of justice, and I waked to scheme with men who batted on injustice more than they of ancient time. I lingered again in the desert places beyond Jordan, looking on the strong, calm face of the Nazarene prophet while he talked of his kingdom of peace, and I opened mine eyes to find the blood of yesterday on my tarnished blade. I saw my heroic people who were fed to the lions and burned as torches in the arena, and waked to wonder what they had died for. I beheld the radiance of the primitive church which saw in man a potential likeness to Christ, and was roused from this vision by the voices of priests and theologians who keyed their doctrines to the melancholy note of human corruption, and who conceived religion not as a transforming influence upon the hearts of men but as a device by whose use they might escape the terrors of hell. The blight that I had seen among the

hermits in Egypt had spread over Christendom and fixed the quality of its life.

I slept and dreamed. Yet ever in my broken slumbers there came to mine ears the pleadings of a remnant who had not cast away faith and honor — a priest in an obscure pulpit, and anon a monk in some abbey far withdrawn from the world. But their integrity shamed me, and I closed mine ear against them, seeking once more the half-forgetfulness of slumber.

In this wretched manner I drowsed and was mocked of my dreams, waked and was tortured by realities, throughout that period which men have named the Dark Age; until at last I could sleep no more for fullness of misery and, waking, must bear my burden in a midnight world.

Then, when darkness had so long bound me that it seemed my native element, I saw a light break over Umbria in central Italy. Out of the light came laughter and song, and above these arose a prayer, artless as the prattling of a child, yet reverent and full of age-old wisdom.



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## XV

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### AWAKENING

ON THE SIDE of a pleasant hill looking on a broad, fair valley in Umbria I found a young man seated by a fire.

Two doves perched on his shoulder, and a wolf of the forest fawned on him and licked his hand. And I heard that he spake in all seriousness to them, calling the doves his sisters and the wolf his brother. At which I felt quick disappointment, thinking him one of nature's innocents.

He saw me and said, "Welcome, brother, to the comfort of my little fire and to your share of the bread and water before me."

Beholding the majesty of his face, I was perplexed by the contradiction between his aspect and his manner with the birds and the beast. Yet was I content to be with him, and I said, "What is thy name, O man whose presence bringeth peace to my heart?"

He smiled upon me, and, used as I was to grim or serious faces, I found his smile pleasant, for it was not as the smile of Jew or Greek; and he said: "My name is Francis, and I am of Assisi. How are you called, and whence do you come? Your garments and the cast of your features and the make of that sword at your side bespeak the stranger."

“ I am called Yahweh, and I come from beyond the sea.”

Nodding his head, he busied himself about setting the crock of water before me, with bread and fresh figs. Then he inquired why I had been so sad of countenance when first he saw me.

And I answered him, saying, “ Nay, rather tell me why there is such uncommon gladness in thee.”

Francis did but bend over the fire and blow the coals, singing between the puffs of his breath:

Blaze, brother Fire, blaze and burn.  
Let thy pure flames leap and dance to the glory  
of the Father God,  
Who giveth thy heat to cheer the souls of men  
And thy light to gladden their eyes.  
I thank the loving Father for the gift of thee,  
Dear brother Fire.

Saddened beyond telling to see one so lovable in the grip of what I esteemed to be a madness, I would have turned away. But at that moment the flames leapt and Francis smiled over his shoulder and said, “ I am happy because I have found so many that are my brothers.”

Whereupon I said inwardly: “ Softly now, Yahweh, for an appearance of aberration hath not been foreign to the prophetic spirit. Did not the great Ezekiel make himself as a child, playing in the sand outside the walls of Jerusalem, casting up mounds of earth against a pan of iron to testify to the people of the siege which their city must endure for its sins? Did he not lie first on his left side and then on his right for many days to betoken the length of their period of punishment? Did he not make barley cakes and bake them with dung to bear witness to the defilement which Jerusalem would suffer? Mayhap when Francis

calleth the fire his brother, he doth thereby signify the brotherhood of man and, consequently, the kingdom."

Wherefore, giving him plain words for obscure, I said, "How wilt thou go about thy building of the kingdom of brother men?"

Francis brake the loaf in two and gave me the larger part. "I? Say not I, brother Yahweh, but we. The Father, and you, and I, and all who love him will build the kingdom on a foundation of Christian poverty."

Now I was wroth with Francis that he should deal thus with me when I had dealt plainly with him, and I answered him in bitterness, saying, "Then thou wilt find matter in plenty to give it a wide foundation, for there is no end of poverty among men."

Francis held the soft crumb of his bread to the doves and himself ate a piece of the crust. "Be patient, brother Yahweh, and understand me," he pleaded. "For Christ's sweet sake I gladly divest myself of all possessions. But by the poverty which I prescribe for others I do not mean the want of those needful goods which, said our Lord, the Father will provide for his children. Nay, rather I mean a renunciation of worldly desire by which a man, separating himself from too great love of things, will be free to enjoy fellowships of the spirit."

Feeling now at ease as to the soundness of his mind, and believing that, inasmuch as his intention was like the Galilean's, he had at all points returned to the earlier teaching, I made haste to sound him on the question of original sin, saying, "What then of the corruption inherited from Adam?"

But even as I settled myself by the fire, expecting from the lips of Francis some comfortable refutation, I marked how a tremor passed through his frame and how the joy departed wholly from his countenance. He fetched a sigh



that so rent his breast as to make the groans of the ascetics of Egypt seem in remembrance like the querulous complaints of the aged, nay, like the work of stage players. And he drew back his garment from his shoulders and uncovered cruel welts on the flesh. "It is as you say. See how I have scourged brother Ass, my sinful body, for the treachery that he practices against his little sister, the Soul."

Silence fell upon us. We were sunk to depths of distress out of which there was no rising. From afar came the voice of a child, but Francis marked it not, nor looked when a little maid came running, albeit she called upon him as she ran. And she saw us close together as if in conversation and ceased to call but went quietly to sit on a rock, where she fell to playing with the doves that made no stranger of her.

Whereupon Francis did again give me matter for amazement. Like to an arrow shot from the bow he came erect. As quickly as it had left him did his joy return. Forgotten were his terrors; gaiety possessed him. As one listening to music, his eye followed every movement of the child whose presence had dispelled his gloom. Finger to lip he turned to me and then turned back.

She had risen from her rock. She stood now with her weight resting on her left foot, and the toe of the right lightly touching the ground. The left side of her slender form was toward us and the bright sky was behind her. A dove perched on her wrist. Her brown face lay in caress against the blue-gray feathers.

Francis said softly: "Look, brother Yahweh, how her face glows, not with the rays of the sun, but with the inner light of a pure spirit. See the pink balls of her toes, like dawn coming over the hill. Behold the tracings of the veins against the white of her throat. Is it not as though the rain-washed sky ran in rivulets through her flesh? Mark

the innocent clarity of her eye and the red stain of health on her lips. Is not her body a faultless temple for the Spirit of God? ”

And I said in return, “ Tell me, Francis, is it usual for a creature of earth to be clothed in a beauty so pure, so spiritual, so heavenly? ”

And he said: “ The children of men are commonly born to this inheritance. All the works of our Father God are informed with his spirit.”

Now I was moved to show Francis how the logic of his present mood ran counter to his theological conviction of man’s despicable estate, but lest mine argument fail its purpose and serve only to restore his gloom I refrained from it.

And the little maid looked up from her play with the doves.

“ Why, brother Francis,” she cried, “ how beautiful you are this morning. You are like a painting that once I saw over the altar of a church, wherein was pictured the archangel Michael worshiping the Madonna enthroned. Your countenance wears the look of Michael’s. Do you see a vision? ” And she glanced over her shoulder to the open sky above the hill.

“ No, little sister Joanna, it is the glory of the Father God that I see reflected from the noblest work of his hand,” answered Francis gently.

Then on the instant he made a song:

Let us praise our Father,  
Brother Sun and sister Moon, and all the stars that play  
in the fields of heaven.

Let us praise him,  
Brethren in ocean, and lake, and free running stream,  
Sisters in the meadows and woods.

Wolves on the mountain and sheep in the valley pastures,  
Praise him  
For the beauty with which he clothes all things,  
Especially our brother the body.

From that time forward I was much with Francis, and I aided him as I could in the forming of his society of Little Brothers. Yet again and again I was amazed by the contradictions in his spirit.

On one day he poured into mine ear many tales concerning them that he had known or heard of who had been afflicted by devils of sickness or madness or sinful lust. As he talked, his swift imagination peopled the whole countryside with unfriendly demons who sought men's destruction in body and soul.

And on another day occurred that which gave the lie to his fears. We took one time our course toward the town, and just short of it discovered a cluster of mean dwellings before which stood a man ringing a handbell. The man was a leper, I saw, white as snow. And Francis moved toward him with gladness of greeting in his face.

"Stop, Francis, stop," I cried, thinking he knew not the danger into which he ran. And the man rang on his bell a yet sharper warning.

"Save yourself the ceremony of the bell, brother Antonio," commanded Francis. "You know there is no need of giving me warning."

The leper, still ringing, answered, "It is not for you, brother Francis, but for the stranger who comes after you, and to satisfy the authorities who command me to ring when one approaches the lazaretto."

"Brother Yahweh fears not your devil of leprosy," Francis told him. "He trusts in the keeping power of the Father God as do I."



“Nay, nay, not for myself,” said I hastily, “but much do I fear it for thee, Francis. Stop ere thou touch him. Thou canst not know the nature of this dread disease as do I who have seen it in Palestine, whence doubtless it was brought by some traveler or crusader. Deadly and loathsome it is beyond all afflictions of the flesh.”

But Francis put his arm about the leper and, lifting the man’s bloodless hand, pressed his mouth full against it. And he laughed in joyous heedlessness, saying, “He who has the love of the Father in his heart need fear no evil.”

Now there was no man less willful than Francis. He took upon himself a vow of obedience and bowed to the least preference of ecclesiastical authority. He would not so much as preach within the bounds of the smallest parish without the consent of its priest, and in situations of moment let himself be ruled by those having not an hundredth part of his consecration. Yet were there occasions when he followed his inner leadings as though he recognized no authority save a divine compulsion within him.

While he lived and for long afterward I failed to understand him, but now I see that the contradictions in him came by reason of his being born between two ages. His roots were in a dying age, which tortured him by its fears and superstitions; yet the leaves and branches of his nature reached up into the light of the age that was dawning.

The people of his time and place little heeded his dark beliefs, which were also their own. That which they marked in him was rather his escape from the darkness of these beliefs — his joy and courage and his delight in the beauty of all natural things. By reason of him the secular mind, if not the mind of the church, glanced out through the windows of its gloomy house and saw that the sky was blue and the earth fair to look upon.

Now, respecting the church, there came a day when

Francis took me aside and said: "Brother Yahweh, you have been long with me and my society of Little Brothers. You came to this place with a sad and dark spirit, and we have shared with you the joyousness of our love for one another and our hope for unity with the Father.

"Now we ask you to join yourself to us, that we may all together by our simplicity of life rebuke the evils of the church. We shall preach not from pulpits but in the fields and on the open way, and the plain truths of Christ faithfully spoken and witnessed to by lovingkindness shall build the kingdom of God whereof you spake when first you came among us.

"Let the Father absolve you from pride and avarice. Cast away your sword and be wholly one with us, brother Yahweh, seeking not temporal gain but everlasting beatitude."

This invitation gave me pause, but I had other interests to consider. Francis prescribed poverty, but could I demand of my priests that they forswear their rich properties and leave themselves naked to charity? Lacking their goods they would be lost indeed and deficient in authority. Moreover, though I was drawn by the beauty of simplicity, yet did I not scorn to enjoy also the color and magnificence that adorn a rich church. And albeit I felt that Francis touched the ideal when he proposed to rebuke the iniquity in the church by the same plain doctrine that had won the laity, yet when it came to the point I lacked courage for so arduous an undertaking as ecclesiastical reform. The years had begun to take their toll of me. My troubled sleep had stiffened, not refreshed me; and as I meditated I recoiled the more from the discomfort that change would entail.

Nor was I persuaded fully that abrupt change was to be desired. I saw the need that life move evenly, slowly.

Knowing how laggard and weak is man, I had accustomed myself to strike a rough balance between good and evil. Let a man but perform the duties prescribed by Holy Church, I thought, taking care to avoid violent offenses; then may the semblance of righteousness encourage the substance thereof. So may the world improve at its own measured pace.

Besides, my people had perfected their own means of dealing with certain aspects of life which troubled them. Bones reputed to be relics of the saints, teardrops of the Virgin, splinters of the true cross, shreds of holy garments and sacred images worn about the neck, they held to be protection against varied forms of bodily and spiritual danger. And I thought it perhaps more expedient to let them take comfort of these beliefs than to set the weak and ignorant to straining unduly after courage.

Wherefore I questioned whether it were well for the whole church to enter into the faith of the Little Brothers, or for the Little Brothers themselves to disturb the world by censorious preaching.

Now Francis abode in patience while I meditated. And there was a brightness on his face. But when in the line of my thoughts I questioned him, saying: "What of the pope and the bishops? Do they incline your way?" it was as if a cloud momentarily obscured this brightness.

Nevertheless he made answer: "We know not surely, brother Yahweh. We think they wish us well, yet at times it is as though they put obstacles in our way knowingly."

Being loath to refuse his invitation out of hand I pondered whether I should not tell him that I must first consult with the bishops and so give answer at a later time. But there was that in the face of Francis which said that mine answer was already known to him. Wherefore I spake without postponement, saying: "My good will is with ye, but



I cannot go. The years weigh upon me, and I am not yet fully restored from the heaviness whereof thou knowest. Go thou and the Little Brothers in the strength of your youth. Ye have my blessing, and mayhap when I am healed of mine indisposition I shall yet join your company.”

But though it was not expedient for me to become one of his band, I was much with Francis unto the day of his death, and when he had gone I mourned him as I had mourned my prophets in the days when I was Israel’s god.



Now while the spirit of Francis still lingered in the land, albeit his body had vanished, a prayer arose from a church that was building in Padua. By its sound it held more of indignation than of worship, wherefore I went forthwith to learn what was required of me. He who prayed was at first concealed from me for that the whole nave was filled with ladders and wooden staging, mounds of wet plaster on mortarboards, and pots of various pigments. But his voice was plainly to be heard in contention with certain others before the high altar, where were priests gathered, and workmen, and in their midst a homely man covered from neck to heels by a painter’s smock, and with him one whose rich clothing betokened him the nobleman whose generosity had conceived the new edifice.

“Behold, signore,” the senior priest said solemnly, and his hand swept the range of paintings on the fresh plastered walls, “Messer Giotto has put his figures into such garments as we see about us, the attire of merchants, artisans and even the common peasantry. He has defied the traditions of ecclesiastical art and cheapened the house of God. Mark that goatherd. Canst thou not, signore, almost smell the dung and garlic? Verily he is a profanation to the

Christ on the altar. Such license dissolves the spell of religion. Mark the Magdalen in that panel! She is a woman of the bagnio to the very life, and desecrates the edifice. Messer Giotto had in a prostitute to sit, or rather to kneel, for her portrait. This he did when there was available the daughter of our lay sacristan, a beautiful and modest girl, who had previously been copied for the Virgin in another of his pictures. I assure you he made this courtesan kneel there in the aisle with her back to the Mother of Christ while he drew her face. What say you, signore, should Messer Giotto fill with the offscouring of the streets this beautiful church that you have raised to the glory of God? ”

But the nobleman said nought, looking rather to the man Giotto that he should tell his side. Whereupon Giotto made his defense, saying: “ Would this priest have me use one model for the Virgin and the Magdalen? When I paint a Magdalen I paint a woman from the bagnio, as he says, or better still, a broken courtesan whose favors once came high. Most certainly I do not give her a virgin’s face. Has the good father ever been in a bagnio? ” Which question giving offense, he pursued it not. “ Or has he ever numbered among his penitents a castoff favorite of some lord? ”

The priest showing himself in no answering mood, the painter continued: “ If so, he doubtless knows the ravages that ill use and a restless conscience work on the countenance of a woman who the while she plies her bawdy trade is stirred by desire to repent nobly, as did the Magdalen whom our Lord forgave in the house of Simon. Tell me truly, my lord, whether or no you see written in the Magdalen’s face this strife between sinner and penitent.

“ Again, he speaks contemptuously of the garments I have painted and professes himself offended by their com-

monness. But what would you, my lord? For centuries have our artists painted their Italian models in Byzantine garments which they have never seen man or woman wear, tracing the loops and angles, the false plaits, the wholly impossible arrangement of draperies that are but the rude attempt of Byzantine artists of long ago to paint the garments that they saw. Against this aping of other men's errors have I revolted. And forasmuch as I have never seen the Byzantine dress, I paint Roman, Florentine, Venetian, Milanese fashions. I go to nature. Tell me, my lord, if I do not well to prefer a living Italian goatherd above a wooden saint."

He ceased, and albeit not in agreement I found myself admiring the ease and warmth of his speech.

Then the nobleman questioned him, saying: "Whence came you by this novel and intelligent conception of your art, Messer Giotto? I would know, for I am assured by competent persons that you are the principal artist of the time."

"When I was a youth, signore," said Giotto, "I was apprenticed to Cimabue, the master painter. With him I went to the great Church of St. Francis in Assisi to aid in fashioning the frescoes that commemorate the life of the saint. Before I put brush to plaster, yea, ere I marked out a sketch, I studied the life and words of him whom I was to depict. And this study of Francis taught me three things among others. First, that the sensuous and spiritual in man are but a double expression of a nature in its essence one. Second, it is best to live joyously in nature, attending well to common things. Finally I learned from Francis, first the right, then the method, and lastly the joy of freedom. Wherefore not I only, but sundry other painters, poets, philosophers, have cast off the graveclothes that they of the church so greatly admire."



But even as the nobleman pondered the words of Giotto, the priest spake again: " Signore, believe me, I who am a priest of God know what is fitting in the church, and I know that Messer Giotto's paintings are not fitting, by reason that they bring secular life within the walls and thus do violence to religion."

But Giotto said: " I, my lord, am a painter, a not inferior one, you are kind enough to say; and I know what is sound in my craft. If you desire art in bondage — " And he shrugged his shoulders.

Whereupon the patron of priest and also of artist walked before the altar for some moments considering the case. Then, pausing, he turned to Giotto and said, " Messer Giotto, go on with your work according to the light that is in you." And he went quickly out.

Whereupon Giotto climbed upon his staging and went vigorously to the task of applying his colors to the wet plaster.

Seeing that I lingered after the others he stopped long enough to say: " One might suppose, signore, that the good God were an eastern potentate and these priests his eunuchs. Now, I am a religious man, and in a certain sense a disciple of Francis — though I hold his ideal of poverty to be extravagant, inasmuch as there could be no art without patronage of the rich. And I like not his celibacy. I could not do without my Ciuta, who has willingly borne me eight children. Yes, I am truly religious and a Franciscan to an extent; but these priests who think that you must say art over and over again like a pater noster — " And he finished with a gesture of the hand that I recognized as not altogether appropriate to a religious man addressing his god.

Wherefore I bethought me what confusion might be wrought if each man were permitted to elect his own princi-

ples and to follow them freely. And when the senior priest addressed me in the porch, saying: "You have heard the wild ass bray. Was not justice visited on the citizens of Babel for less than this?" — I was inclined somewhat toward him, even as I had been somewhat toward Giotto, and I said, "When man divests himself of his proper humility, the church loses the power that it hath over him to do him good."

Nevertheless I thought: "Mayhap had I encouraged the church to go hand in hand with Francis, there had been a freshening from within, where now his teachings do but sow in the laity the seeds of revolt."



More and more was I minded to leave earthly affairs in the priestly hands. Mine altars, my sacraments and pagantries served to keep the thought of me before the people; the theologians spake in my name what doctrine they thought safe for men to believe and corrected such errors as arose through too ambitious uses of the mind; the bishops, who had attained the dignity of princes, enforced order and promoted every holy interest. As it was in the days before Amos led me from the sanctuary, so was it again, albeit I made not the comparison.

With pressing affairs so well disposed of I had leisure to dwell much in the past, which liked me above other pursuits. Many items of curious interest from Hebrew and early Christian times I recovered by my retrospection; the which, being spoken in the ears of scholars, did afford them edification.

And so generations came into being and perished the while I lived my past again in the company of learned men, hearkening not to the din of theological battles wherein

warriors felled one another with syllogisms or inflicted mortal wounds with a word.

There came a day when, while I thus browsed in the fields of antiquity, I was assailed by so strong an agony of prayer, attended with an odor of burning flesh, that verily for the moment I thought myself back in Herod's temple.

Yet the odor was not of ox or lamb, nor was it rank like goatflesh. It was a hateful reek that of late I had been sensible of in many a burning, yet had ignored. Now the fumes assailed me as with an illness, so charged were they with portent of evil. Moreover, the prayer that arose out of Rouen was anguished and most pitiful.

Wherefore finding myself in the public square, accompanied by the Bishop of Beauvais and a great crowd of folk who looked upon a woman being consumed by a fire of faggots, I addressed the bishop, saying: "This is a use of the sacrificial fire that hath never been acceptable to me from the time when Abraham refused it. I am grieved and dishonored by the burning of this maid at the threshold of my church. How could ye so mistake my will?"

The bishop fingered the cross that rested on the bulge of his surplice. "We do it not by way of offering a sacrifice," he made answer. "In truth, we of the church do it not at all. It is the secular arm that sets torch to the heretic."

Having extended his episcopal ring to be kissed by one who knelt before him, he continued: "Furthermore, were the purpose of this burning positive, to show thee honor, it would indeed be an offense, derogatory to thy holiness, but being negative in its intent it is useful to protect thee and thy church from heresy most malign and obstinate."

He brushed off an ember that lighted on his mantle, and stamped it out. "This maid — if one may suppose her maid who these many months hath been in the keeping



of the soldiery — this maid or wanton, after she had aroused the men of the land and led them to the defeat of the English at Orleans — by some use of sorcery, I doubt not — did take Charles the Dauphin into the cathedral at Rheims and there set the crown upon his head, assuming power to consecrate him King of France, an office which the church alone may perform. These and many other unwomanly and witchlike deeds was she guilty of. And though her lips did the while profess allegiance to the same holy church, yet her willful acts, and especially her omissions, did obstinately protest the church's authority.

“Wherefore an ecclesiastical court, with concurrence of a special emissary of the Holy Inquisition, after much delay, patient entreaty, and ample opportunity given for recantation, did hand over her body that the civil power might chasten it, hoping still for the salvation of her soul. Had she been left to continue in her heresy, who knows how many thousands, emboldened by her example, might have protested themselves into hell?”

While the wind swirled the embers and blew the fine dust of the maid's ashes into mine eyes, I heard a German monk say, “Let us hope the case were well proved against her.” Yet turning to the people, he said, “Judge, now, how holy is our faith, that its purity and security may justify a price so great.”

But an English lord who stood by, one who boasted that he had been present at her trial urging death, said: “Contempt for the bishops, marry, was the least part of her offense. The greater evil was her flouting of the lords. For she roused the rabble with her cry of ‘France, France!’ As though there were some all-embracing sovereign realm above the duchies and baronies! There is a corrupting infection abroad. Whence it ariseth God wot. In mine own land there be many who cry not for Suffolk, Gloucester,

Northumberland or Norfolk. Nay, marry. But mercers, brewers and armorers, grooms, clerks and potboys throw up their caps and shout for 'Merry England.' 'Twere well to make quick end of these upstarts who ignore church and baronies in favor of what new thing God knoweth."

Now verily I knew not. But from that moment I set about studying this danger whereby the baronies must be regarded as holding common cause with the church against peoples striving for nationhood.

Moreover, I pondered upon nationhood itself and felt some unease because of it. Did they who spake with pride of their nation or their land intend thereby that the soil of each land was sacred in some special way or that differences of language bespoke superior and inferior blood? And would differences in blood and soil do aught to my godship?

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# XVI

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## CHRISTENDOM DIVIDES

FORWARD FROM that time I found everywhere throughout the Western world a restless seeking after a thing which men called freedom. It rose like a tide which neither I nor my priests had power to repel. Furthermore, a tenseness of expectation lay upon Europe as if Christendom were now consciously awaiting the birth of the new epoch whose conception had been with Francis. Resist though I tried, yet was I often disturbed to find that mine own thought responded to the unease that was upon the world. For there was much in the new that seemed more like to the ways of the prophets and the Galilean than were the teaching and practices of the church.

During three centuries, my church and I being seriously embarrassed by the growing independence of men, I looked for the reason of it, and at first I said: "It is Francis who is the leaven in the loaf. He and his have awakened all, even as they awakened me." But later I perceived that Francis was only religion's part in this new awakening of mankind, whereto the fall of Constantinople and the coming of scholars to Italy also contributed much. For the new learning, even as the doctrine of Francis, caused men to



seek knowledge of themselves and of all else wherewith to better their lives.

Nor was it the laity only that was eager to take to itself the new things. Certain of the popes, bishops and lesser clergy, either through sincere enthusiasm or through the desire to pose as men of the world, were led to patronize the new arts, sciences, philosophies, literatures that rode the tide of freedom, albeit on the whole churchmen still distrusted an innovation until it could be proved harmonious with the ancient doctrines and hence not subversive of churchly authority.

Now for the well-being of the church, and hence ultimately for the good of men's souls, I endorsed caution and recommended to my clergy that they make me known as a god of strict order whose power over man dated from old time and whose will might not be debated. Nonetheless, inasmuch as methods of perfecting our defense lagged of necessity behind the strategy of attack which grew steadily in strength and skill under the direction of scholars, scientists and schismatic theologians, our dominion was always in jeopardy. Wherefore we feared the end of all order and security in human society and employed strong measures to keep the common people in dread of our authority.

In the period of which I speak, St. Peter's Church was in process of building. And the work required sums of money not easily come by in the See of Rome. Hence the pope devised a plan whereby the outlying regions might be put under contribution. He authorized a sale of indulgences and intrusted the details of its execution in a certain territory to one John Tetzel, who was prior of the Dominican convent in Leipzig.

Now an indulgence was no new thing. The church had long taught that Christ by his holy life, and especially by his death on the cross, had stored up a great supply of merit.

To this surplus the saints had in turn contributed, until the whole added up to a well-nigh unlimited hoard of grace from which, under certain conditions, sincere penitents might draw in order to mitigate the punishment that they had incurred. But albeit the pope, since he held the keys of earth and heaven, presided over this vast store of grace, yet had he hitherto broached it only in return for worthy acts.

Now I said nought when Leo proposed to offer for sale these special goods, for I took it kindly that he should be building me St. Peter's and I knew well that payment must be made. Yet I liked not that he should bargain after the manner of the money-lenders, nor that he should traffic as he did with that Archbishop of Mayence in respect to the breaking of the canon law. For Albert of Brandenburg was not archbishop only, but bishop over other two dioceses.

And I was present when the price for this breaking of the law was being settled by the emissaries of the parties meeting together. And the pope's man said, "His Holiness shall have twelve thousand golden ducats for the honor of the twelve apostles."

Whereto did the agent of Albert reply, "The prince will pay seven thousand to escape the penalties of the seven deadly sins."

And they agreed at long length upon ten thousand, which number ten, I bethought me, was the number of the commandments of Moses.

But inasmuch as Albert must needs seek aid of the banking house of Fugger, the pope permitted that he use indulgences by way of surety. And Albert was to sell the indulgences and pay a part to the pope and with the other part repay the house of Fugger.

Then in certain German cities appeared Tetzl to hawk his ecclesiastical wares: "Attend, good folk, and be well

advised that His Holiness, Pope Leo X, called by God to be the loving shepherd of all Christian souls, hath published and authorized the distribution of a *special indulgence* available to all who truly repent their sins and faithfully confess the same, seeking the pardon of heaven and professing themselves determined henceforth to live a godly life by the grace of Christ.

“ By special direction of His Holiness and with the concurrence of my lord, the Archbishop of Mayence, do I now offer to you the benefits of this indulgence. Wherefore, bethink you of your many sins and consider well the penalties which the good conscience of the church must of necessity lay upon you therefor in this life, and the greater punishments which a righteous God must inflict in the world to come. You that have offended by yielding to the lusts of the flesh — gluttons, drunkards, fornicators, adulterers; you who have sinned in waywardness of mind, giving place in your thoughts to heresies and the prideful opinions of men falsely called scholars; you that are guilty of the sins of an unregenerate spirit — lying, pride, envy, malice, backbitings, strife — take advantage, I charge and implore you, of this unexampled leniency to which God has moved the Holy Father.

“ And know that the efficacy of this indulgence is not confined to the life that now is. So great is the goodness of God and the mercy of the pope that even those who toil and languish in purgatory may be released from a large measure of their sufferings if the living friends that loved them will have compassion on the helpless dead and secure this indulgence for their comfort. Bethink you, therefore, of your fathers and mothers who nurtured you tenderly but who this day are tortured for their misdeeds. Picture your children who died in your arms that sheltered them against the ills of this life but could not wrest them from



the hands of our last great enemy, death. You cannot call them back to your bosoms, but you can temper their present sufferings and deliver them the sooner into paradise. Wherefore buy, good folk, buy! ”

Thus cried Tetzels; and I marked how well he did, playing on the terrors of the ignorant and touching also their kindlier side. Yet I scarce knew what to think when he went beyond custom and extended the benefit of indulgences to the dead.

Now there was in the University of Wittenberg an Augustinian monk named Martin Luther who served as preacher and professor of biblical theology. Inasmuch as he was versed in dialectic more than most, and to an extent influenced by the new spirit of freedom, it was ever his custom to raise questions about purity in teaching and practice, until his conscience both nettled those in authority and plagued himself.

Nor were my clergy surprised that Luther should oppose the sale of the indulgence. Yet none looked for the bitter and general quarrel which he provoked.

“ It makes a mockery of true religion,” he made cry. “ The grace of God that forgives sin is free, and his mercy that absolves the soul from penalties on earth and in purgatory is granted the sincere penitent without price.”

Wherefore, while the monk Tetzels said, “ Buy! ” Luther said, “ Buy not! ”

Now had the sale been a spiritual undertaking Luther had been justified in his complaint. But the higher clergy and I recognized two separate spheres, a spiritual and a practical. Accordingly, Leo undertook to chastise Luther for his insubordination in this and other matters. Nor did I stand in his way when he proposed to authorize a trial.



A prayer came up to me from the hostel of the Knights of St. John in the city of Worms: "O God of the prophets, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou only Fountain of Truth, thou Protector of the weak and Strong Fortress of them that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: Grant me strength to hold firm for the truth though all men and the devils of hell rise against me."

It was the monk's voice that called, and though I was not in agreement with him I recognized an authority in its tone that made me answer him speedily.

When I appeared unto him, Luther mistook me for the angel of the presence. Wherefore he called upon me for strength to stand his ground, but I rebuked him, saying: "By what right dost thou make this transaction of the holy church a matter of faith and spiritual import when its import is practical only? And mark thou, even were it a spiritual matter, jurisdiction would still rest with the pope, since to him is entrusted authority to interpret the Scriptures. Thinkest thou that the pope will hearken to an Augustinian, and a peasant?"

"No," said Luther, "but I believe that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will."

Then, lest he pursue an appeal that was at the moment too direct for my liking, I reminded him, "The pope doth stand as intermediary for God."

"That is the point at issue," returned Luther, drawing assurance now that he found himself in argument. For disputation liked him well. "The Scriptures are the rule of life, this I grant. But the pope has not a sole right of interpretation. God made us separate souls each one, and every man is answerable to God for the discharge of his

responsibilities. Therefore must each of us be permitted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to interpret the sense of Scripture for himself — provided he be an instructed man. I must be free.”

“Free!” said I. “Vain man, to magnify thyself wouldst thou destroy the authority of the church?”

Luther spread wide his hands. “Free in a sense only,” he said. “The conscience of every man is bound to the sovereignty of God. Therefore will I be unhindered by all intermediaries that would stand between me and mine understanding of his dread law, which if I do it not will condemn me unto hell.”

Being less practiced than Luther in the principles of dialectic, and therefore unable quickly to contrive an answer to his contention, I said only, “Let the issues of the morrow decide that,” and departed, though Luther would right willingly have detained me unto my conviction.

Now when the day of the trial came, both sides did call upon me lustily. Thus I was early at the great hall of the bishop’s palace, and therefore had time in plenty to observe the company there gathered. And I beheld bishops in their robes and miters, with their clerks flapping about them like rooks; learned doctors of theology stern and aloof; princes and lords of the realm, with retainers well decked in crimson and gold and argent; the Emperor Charles himself, in the insignia of his many offices, brocaded, jeweled, sceptered, crowned, and not lacking the support of military force. Looking upon the picture that they made I said, “Verily, Yahweh, thou hast gone far since thou wert a desert god, aye, and since thou didst leave Palestine behind thee to become god to the Western world.”

Then, even while I looked with pride upon the men appointed to be his judges, I marked the tonsured Augus-



tinian, how mean he seemed in this goodly company and how pitiable in that he so little understood the might which he had challenged.

“Friar Martin Luther,” cried the clerk of the Diet; and the monk arose.

And lo, as mine eye rested upon him, the picture of that room suddenly became other. For when he rose to face them the calm of his thin white face, the set of his wide shoulders with the bones that showed like knobs under his garments, did of a sudden turn my lords and bishops to puppets decked in tinsel. And when his lips formed the words, “O God of the prophets, be with me this day; for of a truth the battle is thine,” it was as though a new prophet had taken his place in the line of my prophets of ancient days.

In a burst of light the hateful centuries were blotted out. My sleep was as if it had not been. I was young again, and this was ancient Judea. And I said, “Amos yet lives”; and, eager to be about some godlike action, I passed prince and cleric and took my stand beside Luther.

And I whispered in Luther’s ear: “*Martin, Martin, mein lieber Sohn, fürchte dich nicht, ich bin mit dir, weiche nicht, denn ich bin dein Gott. Ich stärke dich, ich helf dir auch, ich erhalte dich durch die rechte Hand meiner Gerechtigkeit.*”

Now Luther was exceeding glad of this assurance, and sweeping the lordly company with his courageous glance did cry aloud in the German tongue: “*Der Herr ist mein Helfer, und will mich nicht fürchten. Was sollte mir ein Mensch thun?*”

But the president rebuked him, commanding that from that time forward he use the Latin.

And the clerk summoned also the learned Doctor Eck,

the court's accusing advocate, that he should arise. And Eck took into his hands three books and read the titles thereof aloud: "*To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation! On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church! The Freedom of the Christian Man!* Are these your writings, Friar Martin?"

"They are, reverend father."

Whereupon his accuser turned to a place that was marked with a silken ribbon, and he read, "'A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to no one.'" And thereafter he questioned Luther, saying: "Are these your words? Do you own their meaning?"

And Luther replied: "They are. I do."

Then did Eck address the court, charging Luther with rebellion and heresy, and demanding that he deny what he had written. Whereafter the friar was bidden to defend himself.

Now Luther began his defense hesitantly, and marking this I whispered yet again in his ear, saying: "Be bold, fear not, Martin. For is it not written, 'When they bring you unto magistrates and powers, take no thought how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say'? Therefore open thy mouth, Martin, and I will fill it."

Whereupon he spake with such eloquence that his accusers and judges hearkened in silence. And he denied not the words that he had written, saying rather: "Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

Now there were some in the court and a great company in the streets who rejoiced that Luther's defense had been strong and the prosecution weak. On which account there was gladness in the city that night. As for me, I too was lifted up for having thus unexpectedly emerged from an era of priests that had been long beyond all reason into what promised to be the era of a new prophet.

But now there came to pass a curious thing. When the rejoicing had partly subsided, I marked a strangeness of behavior in my feet. And lo, they pointed in two directions, one forward and the other back, even as had the faces of Janus in ancient Rome. And the left foot, that itched to follow after Luther, could move no jot by reason of the right, which pointed in the direction of the church. For in those days there was no science to teach me that what appeared to affect my feet was in reality an inward affection. Nor could any release me of the twofold personality that still clung to the millions who worshiped me through the communion of the church, while yet it clave unto Luther.

Though Luther was released, yet an edict followed after him that commanded all men to slay him and to burn his books. Wherefore I instructed one who was his friend to spirit him to safe secrecy in the fastnesses of the Wartburg. Nor could Luther at that time or for long afterward return unto those that were his followers.



Now while Luther was hiding there came a stirring in Swabia and Saxony. Mine ears were filled with a din of prayers, some hopeful, others despairing, most of them questioning. To all I gave attention, if haply I might discover in what form I could lend help. For in Europe the system of lords and vassals was breaking, except in Germany only, where the counts still ruled in their castles over serfs who toiled without respite in the valleys below. Yet when the word of Luther's trial became sown abroad in the land, the desire of freedom, that had for so long been preparing, could tarry no longer.

Upon a night there called me from a hut in the forest



certain who had gathered together to discuss their grievances against their lords. And though some wore about their shoulders misshapen coats of goatskin, by far the greater part were but thinly protected against the rigors of Saxony's winter.

One said: "My liege took from me the fourth part of the grain that was mine by right of law. He made claim of need to provision his hired soldiery."

"'Tis nought," said a second. "My master took not only grain, but two sons to serve him in warfare, where the rule says that only one may be demanded."

A third said: "My brother has lain in the dungeon these three months. Every day they have beaten him with a whip because he snared a rabbit on the demesne of a neighbor lord."

"Grain, sons, brothers!" protested another. "Little you know what a lord may ask or take without asking. With never so much as a by-your-leave or a false word of love, my lordling took from my woman and me the child of our age, a flawless maid. And now he has got her with child."

In this manner they talked, and I listened a considerable time before they drew me again into their conversation. Then at length one of those in goatskin, who seemed a leader among them, cried out, saying: "I call the Lord God to witness! *It is but right that a man be free in respect of his person and worldly estate.*"

Whereupon the thin voice of a child cried suddenly, "The kingdom of heaven is at the door!"

And some, being Catholics, crossed themselves, while the Lutherans among them but started the motion, and then stayed their hands. Then the man who had lately spoken said, "Conrad, bid your fool be silent."

But the man Conrad, albeit one of the poorer of them,

answered with some show of authority: "He is no fool. The grace of God is in him. While he was kitchen boy in the castle where Master Martin Luther is housed, Master Luther himself called him a chosen vessel for utterance of the good God's will." And he turned to the boy: "Say on, son Heinrich, and tell us what the Lord has for us to hear."

The lad stood up in his rags, and his teeth chattered, but as he spake he warmed as if with his own ardor. Much of what he said was concerning dreams that he had dreamed, but not all, for he told of a letter that Martin Luther had written while he was in the castle, and gave witness to the hope that he had in this letter: "The good God has looked on our misery and has opened his heart toward us and raised up Pastor Luther to bring us deliverance. For this reason I cry everywhere, 'The kingdom of heaven is at the door.' And so says Pastor Luther."

Whereupon one of the men who but a moment before had made the sign of the cross cried: "Now God be praised for Martin Luther. He is the man for us 'gainst pope and prince."

But he of the goatskin mocked them, saying: "I called the lad fool; now fools I call you all. Think you that this renegade friar will stand our part if trouble come? I tell you no. Rather will he cling to the princes like a suckling to the sow's teat. For it hath already been noised abroad that although Martin Luther wrote a letter in our behalf, this letter hath grievously offended the nobles, even him in whose castle Friar Martin now lies."

"Pastor Luther has the courage to stand with God and the people," said the lad Heinrich. "Send him surety of your trust and you shall see how stout he will be in your behalf. The kingdom of heaven is at the door."

Now some were ready to think that this word was of the good God himself, and all thought that it must at least have trial. Wherefore their argument now turned on the question of whom they should choose to send. Nor could they in any way agree; for some who were willing were judged unfit, while others hung back who seemed to their fellows meet for the task.

Lest their mission fail for lack of a spokesman I revealed myself unto them and made offer to serve as emissary.

But the men, beholding me, were sore afraid, inasmuch as they believed themselves to have spoken their grievances before one sent thither by the lords to spy upon them. Then the lad Heinrich gazed on me with shining eyes and cried: "It is an answer to prayer. He is a man of God sent to help us. Let him go to Pastor Luther. Now is the kingdom of God verily at the door."

Whereto they all agreed except one, for he of the goat-skin took no part in the decision but shrugged with his shoulders as though hopeless of reasoning with men who had taken leave of their senses to follow a fool. And he said, "Even if Luther stand firm, what can profit us a man who has both the church and the lords against him?"

Now that same night when Luther had finished reading his Bible and reciting his prayers in the great hall of the castle wherein he was lodged, I followed after him to the room that was his privately, and requested to speak with him. And when he had consented I made my cause at once known unto him.

"Friend, you touch a sensitive chord in my heart," he said easily, and I marked that the pallor was gone from his face. "I grieve over every fresh report of wrongs done to the children of the soil. I myself am of peasant stock. Do you, too, derive from the soil?"

"Question not my derivation," I answered, "but know



that I was once close knit in affection to a certain carpenter of noble mind to whom I am deeply indebted. Therefore do I feel myself akin to the poor of earth and would help them as I find opportunity."

"It is a worthy sentiment," returned Luther, and I marked that his roughness and plainness had taken on in some measure the delicacy of the prince that was his host. "But, since you are their emissary, I must tell you that the peasants of Germany are at the moment in a situation with which I can meddle only at hazard to a cause more precious than theirs. The whole future of true religion is, in a sense, bound up in my person. Those holy interests to which I have devoted myself are in need of powerful friends and I must take care to offend none who might be of assistance. I have been raised up by God to lead a revolt of mind and conscience against Rome. I am committed to a reformation in the spiritual realm and must for the moment confine my battle for freedom strictly to that sphere."

"You speak of true religion," I reminded him. "Is it not the proper work of religion to lift up the humble and those that are oppressed?"

"I have told you where my sympathies do lie," Luther protested. "I have tried to win over the princes but they would make me no concessions. What more may I do? Furthermore, we must remember that however soft was Christ's feeling for the poor his gospel contemplates a spiritual and not a temporal emancipation. The peasants should be glad that I have shown them how to be spiritually free."

Now when I compared this Luther of the castle with him of the courtroom, I questioned whether his powerful friendships might not have made him heady. Nevertheless I pursued my mission lest I fail the peasants' expect-

tations of me. And I said, "Doth not the whole of a man's life, bodily and spiritual, depend upon the hope that he hath of his work and the condition of his dwelling?"

But Luther replied only, "The serf does not seek to ape his lord in the manner of his living."

Whereto I returned with somewhat of sharpness, "Being a peasant's son, thou shouldst know."

And Luther answered me yet more sharply, saying, "Who are you to arraign me thus discourteously?" And he added: "I will tell you this: even if other considerations leave me free, my hands are bound by a recent act of violence on the peasants' side. The serfs have taken up sword and torch in Swabia and impiously defied the constituted powers. No just man can countenance such action."

"Ah, Luther," I chided, "how canst thou so speak that knowest how the nobles have robbed, beaten, murdered, raped the patient folk who have worked their lands, and have left them nothing but their bodies and dimmed minds wherewith to suffer and their bruised hearts wherewith to hope against hope? Is it strange if the desperate now answer in kind when they hear freedom call from every hilltop? Make the princes but listen and they may yet meet their serfs halfway."

But Luther yielded no whit to mine appeal, saying only: "There is a divinity that cloaks itself in a prince's will, for which reason Paul bids us be subject to the higher powers. The serf's part is to take with thanksgiving and bear with fortitude what is meted out to him. Only when the peasant is raised to be a prophet of God may he uncover his head before his lord. Understand, however, that I am at heart for the poor and would see them free in every respect. But I have the patience to abide God's day. The first consideration at the moment is to keep

the friendship of those who can save the new freedom of the spirit. In years to come, no doubt, scholars and men of God, exercising this freedom to the full, will care for the rights of the peasants."

Whereupon Luther seated himself at his table and fell to writing, and I could see that by this action he purposed to put an end to the interview, after the manner of princes.

Now I marked that there stood in a corner a pile of fresh pamphlets. And the title thereof gave me pause, for it read:

AGAINST THE MURDERING, ROBBERING  
RATS OF PEASANTS

*An Address to the German Nobility*

BY

DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER

And within I saw written: "Stab, kill, strangle."

My sorrow spake for me, against my better judgment: "Martin, are these thy words?"

And he replied shortly: "They are. Who are you to question them?"

"Since thou knowest not, I will tell thee who I am," I answered in a voice that I could not make hard for the sorrow that was in me. "I am he that stood by thee in the audience chamber at Worms, and whispered, 'Fear not, I am with thee.' And I heard when they read from thy writings, 'A Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to no one' — words that the peasants have taken unto their hearts; wherefore they ask to be free in respect of their persons and worldly estate. Martin, consider well, lest thou betray the cause of the prophets."

"Liar! Blasphemer! Devil!" cried Luther. "It was God who spoke to me in the audience chamber. God,



at whose bidding Christ said, 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,' would never seek to come between a man and his prince."

And he took the pot of ink that was beneath his hand, and cast it full at me where I stood, crying in a loud voice, "My God, I thank thee that thou hast permitted thy servant to live for this hour and act."

Now Luther was at this time under close guard, inasmuch as his life was in danger by reason of the edict of Worms. And when they who watched hard by heard him shout, but understood not his words for that the wall between was very thick, they came with all speed, fearing lest an assassin had entered unnoticed of them as they played at cards. And when they beheld only Luther and saw that he gazed at a blank wall newly defaced with a stain of ink, they inquired of him what had befallen. Wherefore Luther, seizing at random upon the words that lay nearest to his tongue, made answer in rough peasant fashion: "What sort of guard are you to let an emissary of the serfs elude your watch? Behold how I, having no weapon, was compelled to waste a new pot of ink upon the devil."

And seeing no one, and knowing Luther for an holy man, those of the guard seized only upon the word "devil," and they caused the report to go forth that Pastor Luther had been in sore contest with Satan.

Wherefore was the spot of ink shown to many for their edification. And it came to pass after many years that one observer more zealous than the rest did dig it out and carry it home for his more continual instigation to piety. And the curious along with the pious do to this day make a practice of gazing reverently on the hole that was left in the wall.



In the days when Luther defied Rome there was a man of Switzerland called Ulrich Zwingli who also was in revolt. Now this Zwingli had been touched more deeply than had Luther by the spirit of freedom; he held the mind of man in higher regard and was more apt to swim in the stream of the new learning. Therefore, though both men stood opposed to Rome, he and Martin did not see eye to eye in all matters of faith and hot contention arose between the two, especially with regard to the Lord's Supper.

Because he could not abide to see these two leaders and their camps at variance, Philip, Prince of Hesse, brought them together to try whether their differences might be composed. And when they had looked each on the other's face across a table in Philip's castle at Marburg, Luther took a piece of chalk and wrote on the board, "*Hoc est corpus meum.*" And he said, "Zwingli, do we stand together it must be with these words, undisputed, linking us, forasmuch as Christ said, 'This is my body' when he gave the broken bread to his disciples on the night in which he was betrayed." And he smote on the table with his open hand like to a lord addressing his serf.

But Ulrich, versed in freer interpretations, answered: "Brother Martin, you make yourself a slave to the letter that killeth, which is not in keeping with the mind of a free and scholarly man. I interpret by the spirit that maketh alive. The bread and wine are symbols that mediate a blessing to those that partake in faith."

"*Hoc est corpus meum,*" insisted Luther; and he smote the oak again.

Now it was plain that the controversy could not be settled by chalk marks or appeal to scholarship. Wherefore

did they come to no agreement on the subject of the Galilean's body and blood. But Luther drew up a statement of the new faith in a dozen points and three, on all of which they found accord, save the last, that had to do with the vexing question of the sacrament. And when they were about to part Zwingli put forth his hand and said, " Brother Martin, let us take leave as Christian brothers across this barrier that lies between our minds only."

But Luther hid his hand in the folds of his gown. " Nay, not as brothers! Brotherhood of the spirit demands a common belief and a common communion." So saying, he turned away.

Now I was present at this dispute, having been invoked by the prayer of Zwingli. And moved by an unwonted concern for peace in freedom, I cried out in alarm: " Martin, Martin, give him a brother's hand, lest thou destroy the nobler part of thine own work. What! Thou wilt eat with him, sleep by his side, laugh, play, converse at table, sing hymns together with him, make common cause against ignorance and wickedness — but for conscience's sake, forsooth, thou canst not be one with him in spirit! Beware lest such a temper make a battle flag of the seamless dress for which lots were cast at the foot of the cross."

But Luther knew me not. He left the room with chin thrust forward and flame leaping in his eyes.

And I saw that a thousand grinning devils looked down from the beams of the ceiling; and I cried: " Alas! This chamber is the womb of dissension and the grave of peace. This day it spawns foes which the future will behold locked in the ungenerous embrace of strife."

And from the passage beyond the door I heard again, "*Hoc est corpus meum.*"

" Ah! " cried I in bitterness, for I had hoped for some better issue, " all else may unite; the body of Christ alone



divides. Ye call me the universal God, yet would ye dismember me with a Latin phrase."



"O my God! They have the noose about my neck."

It was the voice of the astronomer Galileo. I knew not whether it uttered sincere prayer or loose ejaculation. But I responded, for the times had made me restless and I wandered much abroad. And Galileo was held on a matter that touched me nearly, having been brought before the Inquisition for a heresy that threatened the authority of the Scripture, inasmuch as any who accepted his teaching that the earth moved around the sun could not also sincerely believe with the church that the earth was the center of all the universe. Which doctrine was necessary, lest the plan of man's redemption be brought into contempt and the Son of God be said to have been born and to have suffered death on a planet obedient to that sun which millions of pagans had worshiped.

"Your eminences," said Galileo, standing before them that judged him in a great hall at Rome, "I commend to you my telescope, that you may see through it the proof of mine own observations. There can you see the moons of Jupiter revolving around their parent orb as does the earth with reference to the sun. Moreover I can at the proper time exhibit to you the moon passing between earth and sun as it follows its ordained path in the heavens. These are not matters to be settled by argument, but plain things apparent to the eye."

Nonetheless his inquisitor answered: "No need is there for us to look through your God-defying tube. Do not the Scriptures say, 'The sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man

to run a race ' ? And is it not also written, ' The earth standeth fast forever ' ? Through these and other passages does the word of God make plain the motion of the sun and the position of our earth."

" Your eminence, these sayings are but poetry. This that I set before you is science."

His inquisitor replied: " Be convinced, then, out of history. It is written in the book of Judges that the prophet made the sun stand still. How could he have so done if there were no solar motion? And take note that it was this hindrance of the sun's accustomed movement, not a retarding of the earth, that prolonged the day so that Israel might have the longer time to chastise the enemy."

Nor was Galileo permitted to make reply, for a second inquisitor arose to confute him further by saying that as the astronomer pretended that he had seen mountains and valleys on the moon, he thus went against the plain statement of Scripture that the moon was created to be a great light.

" A reflected light," amended Galileo.

" No," thundered his prosecutor. " It is one of your offenses that in order to give substance to your impious theories you distort the word of God out of its true meanings. A light signifies a source of radiance that burns within its own self, nor is there hint of reflection."

Whereupon another member of the inquisitorial body came forward with attack upon that which Galileo had asserted concerning a multiplicity of planets. " The number could not conceivably run to more than seven," he declared, " since in the economy of God that is the perfect number, as is testified by the enumeration of the seven golden candlesticks, the seven spirits of God, the seven angels of the seven churches in Asia mentioned by

St. John in the Apocalypse. And in the church we have seven deadly sins, a complete number admirably adjusted to the seven primary weaknesses of human nature; to balance which have we been given the seven sacraments of grace. Now, inasmuch as God hath clearly exhibited a preference for the number seven, it is logical to suppose — indeed I will say that it is presumptuous and also derogatory to God not to suppose — the full count of the planets exactly seven; that is, supposing there are planets other than this earth.

“Now, as to the strong probability that the number of planets is one, let it be noted that if there be more than one they must be inhabited, since we know that God, being perfect in all his works, maketh nothing in vain. But if they be inhabited, it must be by the children of Adam, for, as the Scriptures teach, God in the beginning made only one man and all others are his descendants by natural process. How then, or when, was it that the children of Adam’s loins were transported across the open space that lieth between us and the other planets? Is the empty air navigable?”

Whereto Galileo made answer: “Alas, your eminences, I am no theologian. Rather am I a simple man who must believe what mine eyes show me.”

“Believe it not, Galileo,” said one. “Our eyes are as good instruments as yours, but we do not let them betray us into doubt of the word of God. Against the truths of religion what weight have the testimony of the fallible senses and the vagaries of reason?”

Whereupon his inquisitors confronted him with the choice of recantation or death. And after some thought the astronomer subscribed to a document in which was written: “I, Galileo, being in my seventieth year, being



a prisoner and on my knees, and before your eminences, having before mine eyes the Holy Gospel, which I touch with my hands, do abjure, curse and detest the heresy of the movement of the earth."

Yet even as he signed, it seemed to me he whispered to save his conscience, "Nevertheless, the earth does move."

Now Galileo was a pious though not a scriptural man, and he prayed my forgiveness of the denial, arguing his case thus: "Why should God give us eyes if he did not intend that we use them? From my earliest days have I looked honestly on all thy works and have essayed to speak the truth concerning what my sight has shown me and my reason established. Canst thou not see, thou who hast made all things but the lie, that it is for thine honor and glory that the mind of man, so apt to follow thy ways in the heavens, be free?"

I was touched by this prayer, but I had long been in a strait to choose between freedom and conformity and could only answer: "My son, I have indeed countenanced man's insistence on freedom in certain realms. But the situation is different with respect to thy desire, which concerneth man's spiritual safety. The universe doth become ever more complicated to him that looks into it. Wherefore any attempt to penetrate the secrets of nature, which are after all no affair of man, doth but tend to shatter the simplicity of mind which is requisite for perfect comprehension of the truths of religion, as both priest and minister will tell thee."

Now these words appeared to hearten Galileo, whereat I wondered, having had much acquaintance with the stubborn spirits that cried in freedom's name, until he said: "Thou dost profess to have granted freedom in other realms in reply to man's insistence. Mayhap there shall

be among those who come after me some that shall insist more fully than I have on freedom for the pursuit of knowledge."

But I entreated him: "Nay, nay, my son. There be causes of division enough in church and world. Suffer not thy science to become another."

But thinking later on that face alight with hope, I wondered. For I had long since observed that when a hope and a thought join hands they together make an energy that must burn until it spend itself. And I questioned what new thing would come of this desire to search in realms formerly held inviolate.

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## XVII

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JON WAYE, GENTLEMAN

FROM THE TIME of the Reformation forward, the spirit of protest and the demand for freedom that had marked Francis and Giotto and Joan, Luther also and Galileo, found harborage everywhere. Men, responding to these influences, promoted dissension and divisions without end in both church and state. Neither did the retreats of scholarship nor the realm of men's hearts escape contamination. In hovels as in the palaces of kings and bishops there was restlessness continually and a demand for new things.

That notable king, Henry VIII of England, wearying of his lawful queen Catherine, asked of the pope a divorce, that he might marry one Anne Boleyn. And when I heard of this request I laid the pope under strict charge that he grant no bill. But Henry would suffer not that a chain bind his lust. Seeing that Rome refused approval he secured from Parliament a vote that separated England from the Holy See — the same Henry who, in zeal for the Catholic faith, had written a book against Luther's schism. Aye, and he set up a new church in the English realm with himself at its head. And afterward, grown tired of Anne in turn, he exceeded the northward and southward readi-



ness of David, marrying round the compass — for the throne's sake, as he said, that he might get him an heir.

Now amidst the general clamor that attended the king's business there were three men in particular who spake to me concerning the division which his lewdness made, albeit one of them, Thomas Cromwell, he that was secretary to Henry, addressed me with little regard to the proper forms of prayer. For said he: "Name of God! Why should the pope bear so heavily upon our master the king, seeing that in England and the whole of Europe there be lads and lasses without number enjoying the world lustily who would still be no more than incorporeal spirits languishing beneath the throne of heaven did certain high ecclesiastics sleep cold o' nights."

And Thomas Cranmer, made Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry, one who could judge, none better, of Cromwell's word, spake also with scant deference: "Thou, God, knowest that this affair is hatched less by the heat of Henry's body than by a general unrest of noble minds called forth by the corruptions and abuses bred in the church. Do but give us a church of sturdy Englishmen and thou shalt see new things on earth."

But Thomas More, a great scholar, prayed to my better liking: "O God, the church is sore diseased. Let not the body of Christ be further sickened and crippled, I beseech thee. Since it is the part of kings and bishops, together with all men of sound conscience, to purge and heal, give grace to us of England that we may stand up to that which is our duty in this matter. Forfend that the lust of concupiscence in the king alienate the people of this troubled land from thine earthly household."

And when, after the divorce and remarriage had been accomplished by favor of the English church, Henry in his royal bed turned from the morning frown of his dear-

bought wife, he was wont to murmur inly, "Merciful Christ, I am excommunicate!" (For the pope had cast him out of the holy and apostolic church.) And while the cold sweat formed on his limbs he would reason, "Surely God, who knoweth all tongues, and English not least, will hear the prayer of a true Englishman though it pay not its toll at Rome."

As for me, I thought: "Lust is none the less lust though it sweat under a royal canopy. But how shall a whole nation's worship be refused because the king's incontinence hath given it alien forms?"

Wherefore I elected to honor the English prayers if so be the new church would not tamper with doctrine overmuch and would couch its petitions in proper form.

Yet there came a disturbing thought: I had set out with Paul to become the universal God. Now nations were beginning to think of me each according to its own particular bent. What disaster lay at the end of this road?

Nevertheless, it was good when in England to be known as god of the English, and in the German states to hear the boast of proprietorship in "*unser guter deutscher Gott*."



Shortly after the reign of Henry it was disclosed to me by inward testimony that not even I was proof against the unrest that had come upon the spirits of men. Adventurous mariners had but recently discovered a new world beyond the seas, thus setting new opportunity before the sons of Europe. Ever and anon was I called to succor those whose hardihood now led them into perils on the seas and in trackless forests. Being thus introduced to far places I made question whether it might not be pleasant to frequent them on mine own account, especially since everywhere in Eu-

rope — at Rome, among the Lutherans and even in the new English churches — the air of my habitations had become stale.

“ I called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to go into an unknown land, and Paul led me forth to the gentiles,” I was wont to say to myself. “ These journeys gave me new life and widened my domain. Who knoweth what the territories beyond this greater sea may hold? ”

Then, early in the reign of James Stuart, he that came to the English throne when Tudor’s house was no more, I chanced to answer a prayer that ascended from the water-side in the town of Plymouth. There at the quay did I find the ship *Mayflower* with above a hundred folk aboard, and they chiefly of the non-conforming sect that would not pray by the book that Cranmer had given to be a guide for the church of Henry. For they insisted on freedom of conscience. With the burden of their prayer was I already familiar, on which account I thought best not to reveal myself directly to them. Wherefore I appeared in a habit like to theirs, with smallclothes and hosen of decent black and a great cloak and broad hat soberly conformable thereto. And when I joined myself to a principal man of the company, who sang lustily, he gave me a book from which he scanned the words of his chant:

They that unto the sea go down  
In ships, God’s providence descry;  
They read his wonders in the deep  
When boisterous waves run heaven-high.

And he said, “ Truly there is nought like a psalm of David, whether set to meter long or short, to bring God near and rout our adversary Satan.”

Forthwith I asked him whither the vessel was bound and why.

“ To the north Virginia colonies ” he answered, “ and to



the end that there we may live in godly wise under the divine kingdom.”

Then I inquired the nature of that kingdom, and he replied: “ A commonwealth will it be of men obedient to the good pleasure of heaven, free of all earthly vanities, purged of bear-baiting, morris dancing, carding, gaming and profanity, where, without let from kings, magistrates and prelates of worldly minds, souls that stand in seemly fear of God may study to do his just and awful will, if haply they may make their calling and election sure and so escape the pains of hell.”

“ And how think ye of God? ” I asked.

He laid his hand upon the shoulder of a little lad who stood near and said, “ How doth man speak of the majesty of God? ”

And the lad answered as from a book: “ There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body, parts or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will for his own glory, most loving, most gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin; and who will by no means clear the guilty.”

So sternly did the man look on the child while the words came forth that I thought he stood between grudging and admiration. As for me, I was overwhelmed to hear the lad so speak.

Then, having made inquiry and discovered that there was room for yet another passenger, I went aboard. And the master mariner, one Christopher Jones, did set down the names of all that he carried, and a record of their sta-

tions and relationships. And when I gave him my name, "Yahweh," he did write absently, "Jon Waye, gentleman, unattended." Which afterward I did expunge, that the record might be clear, and lest the Society of Mayflower Descendants take in some person of that name to their hurt and chagrin.

Concerning the voyage there is nought that need be related save that I, being determined that these Pilgrims come not to land in north Virginia, where the people of the established church had brought their customs, did deflect the vessel to the north and cause that a landfall be made in a little bay whose waters were enclosed by the hook of Cape Cod. For I said, "Let us prove what freedom can do where it is not in conflict with the olden customs."



Greatly was I pleased to see that the company made it the first charge upon their consciences to build me a house in the wilderness, for though they knew me not as I mingled with them on board ship, they said, "Surely the God of Israel is with us in this new land." Wherefore they feared not anything.

Now the house that they builded had neither spire nor altar; nevertheless the fervor of the preaching and praying that were heard therein, and especially the full-voiced chanting unaccompanied by stringed instrument or organ, imparted to it an indwelling majesty, so that in dignity it yielded nothing to Solomon's temple.

But the absence of altar and spire in this and later Pilgrim meeting houses was portent of the multiplication of sects that was to come, inasmuch as it pointed the way to departure from the ancient traditions and practices of religion.

Now this diversity of sects was the fruitage of man's insistence upon liberty. For when the authority of Rome was challenged men found that they were without sure guide in matters spiritual. And though the Protestant sects did for a time ascribe authority to the Scriptures, yet there arose the question of interpretation. The principle of freedom indicated that each man interpret for himself. But the practice of this principle led to two results — that some pursued the truth with singleness of heart, while others took joy in being different from their fellows. These latter loved disputation more than any other thing and delighted to put their brothers in the wrong. Hence, since there was little of common purpose to hold it together, Christendom fell apart.

Furthermore, this freedom did manifest itself in a strong purpose of the individual man to get gain for himself. Because men said, "If we are free it is certainly to the end that we may improve our earthly lot." This they called the right of the individual. Wherefore there was little regard for the common good. And, forasmuch as men said, "It is God who giveth power to get wealth," the rich man was greatly honored, and in blessing him the churches oftentimes blessed his ruthlessness.

As the individuals were, so did their nations become. From time to time when the new world began to yield its rich argosies, the nations of the olden world strove to make this territory and that their own. Wherefore the separate demand of every nation for colonies and markets arose, making all nations enemies one of another. Then each sought to be strongest, and to arm most cunningly.

Science, too, achieved under freedom that standing which Galileo had foretold. And the ministers of religion began to look into it, first that they might preach against it, then lest they lose pace with the age. And in time they



said to me: "Do not show thyself opposed to science, Yahweh. She is friend to thee, and in two points especially does she advantage our spiritual cause. First, by means of ready communication she has drawn all nations together, and second she has made the weapons of war so deadly that the strongest nation will hesitate long before provoking a neighbor to fight. Wherefore if science be taken as friend of religion, she shall surely lead us into the age of universal peace by prophets long foretold.

"Furthermore, science has uncovered a great and universal law, called the law of progress, in whose teachings we are told of 'some far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves.' We can now believe that man, no less than the cosmos, moves onward and upward forever!"

And, wiping their brows as though the effort of their speaking had already ushered in the new world, they sat them down on the doorstep of the house of science, waiting to hear what new thing they might speak. And I took mine ease with them, notwithstanding I liked not all that I heard at the portal of that house.

But in course of time, as I saw how the goods of life were multiplied by the uses of this new thing, and how men followed the savant more respectfully than they followed the priest, I bethought me: "Never has any interest so possessed the minds of men or waked such hope in their hearts. It may be that it touches that deepest place in the life of humanity whereof Nannar spake to me in the olden time."

Wherefore I bade them who served me speak well of all science and preach no new thing nor insist upon the older teaching until test had been made in the laboratories. For I said, "If I strike hands with the scientist, I shall go onward and upward with mankind and we shall bring in the millennium."

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# XVIII

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## MAD WORLD

**B**UT NAY! It was not the millenium that came. It was a day of darkness and the shadow of death, hideous with the clash of iron on iron, a day wherein bayonet and shell rent the flesh from the bones of the beautiful and the strong, a day of war and hate such as had not been since time began.

And in their distress kings and subjects alike called on me, each nation praying that I might protect its soil from invasion and its blood from being drained away, while each locked up its archives, hoping to conceal from me the real causes for which they fought. Priests and ministers bestowed my benediction upon those who were set aside for death, and put my blessing on their swords, their guns, their cruisers, their ships that flew in the air, and their little boats that went under the water to deal destruction secretly.

Yea, and there came into the churches generals who had given the years of their manhood to studying the arts of war, fathers of families, clerks, prowlers from the slums' gutters, peasants whose hearts lingered in the fields of standing corn, boys with a vision shining in their eyes. Into my churches they came, some swaggering, others shrinking, some hoping to find courage, others uneasy in the unaccustomed solemnity. And the holy men poured fiery

speeches into their ears and told gross tales that brought laughter and prayed until they drew tears.

Then the lads went out to kill and be killed. And, whatever their nation, these words were inscribed on their banners and in their thoughts: "For God and the right."

Afterward they that ministered before mine altars formed circles of prayer among the women, saying: "If you pray in faith with pure hearts, nothing doubting, the God of our righteous cause will put a wall about your husbands, sons and lovers to save them from death. And the angel of his Presence will be with them to keep them from debauchery behind the lines and from the ever present temptation of loose women."

Howbeit, many were slain, and unto the women who came to mourn for them the wise men proffered such comfort as they could, saying, "The blood of your heroes is mingled with the precious blood of Christ who died on the cross for the world's redemption."

Now I was sore put to it in those days to fulfill my military engagements, with so many nations at war and all depending on me for encouragement and succor.

Yet for all that I threw myself into the strife with no thought of what was happening to me, the God of all mankind, I was ever solicitous of the spiritual welfare of the fighting men.

And I used many devices for keeping up morale, and these were some of them:

Crucifixes, New Testaments, ikons, candies, prophylaxis, tobacco. Palm-sized gospels of St. John, woolen socks, mufflers, knitted helmets. Bread and wine of the last sacrament, body and blood of Christ. "*We must protect their souls, too, by a moral prophylaxis.*"

Shiploads of cigarettes.

My fighting parsons:



*"Our padre is a regular fellow. Gets close to the men. Nothing sanctimonious about him. A he-man. Knows a hell of a lot of good stories."* Medals and scapulars blessed by the priests. A hundred thousand fly leaves of the Scriptures inscribed by Protestant pastors — *"A good soldier of Jesus Christ."* *"We'll put the Word of God into every soldier's knapsack."*

The loyal women helpers:

Red Cross nurses whose heroism matched that of the soldiers. The "Y" girls. The restless debutantes, stenographers weary of their dull routine in drab offices; fired with patriotism, all of them, and overflowing with admiration of the heroes in khaki. Paris leave in the springtime. Sallies in their blue bonnets with the red ribbons. *"Remember your mother back home, brother — and Jesus Christ."* Doughnuts and steaming coffee on the station platform when the trains for the front pull in at the bleak morning hour. *"God, it's good to see a friendly girl from home."* A smile and a pat on the arm for the boy who will die tomorrow. *"Now listen, son, I tell you it isn't safe to play around with those grisettes."*

My huts for moral shelter and good cheer behind the lines:

Hallelujah Chorus on the phonograph: *"And he shall reign forever and ever."* Red-blooded sermons from upstanding men in khaki: *"Take it from me, fellows, there's no greater asset for the fighting man than the Christian religion. Just to know every moment that the living Christ is at your side — this world's greatest moral hero."* Hymns, Tipperary, Mademoiselle from Armentieres: *"Come on you fellows, wake up and get a little pep into these songs. Let the Huns hear you clear to Berlin."*

The posters, slogans, atrocity stories to waken moral indignation:

*"You're making the world safe for democracy."*  
*"Gott strafe England."* *"Remember the glory that is France."* *"The only true Kultur is in the Germany of Kant, Goethe, Schiller and Wagner."* *"Blessed Maid of Orleans! She too heard God's voice calling to a holy warfare."* *"Now listen, this is straight: A friend of a friend of mine saw scores of those poor Belgian children in England with their hands cut off."* *"The inhuman Boche."*

The heartening assurances that I put into the mouths of statesmen:

*"The war to end war."* *"Open covenants, openly arrived at."* *"The rights of smaller nations."* *"Peace with honor."* *"See this thing through, you Tommies, and we'll build you a world fit for heroes."* *"A new social order."*

My task of giving courage in the trenches:

Zero hour. The crucifix kissed. Frightened eyes straining to read a reassuring verse from St. Paul or the Psalms in the cold morning between dark and light. Cheery letters in the breast pocket of the tunic pressing against the heart. *"Listen, Buddy: I heard of a guy who was saved by a Bible in his pocket. Stopped the bullet dead."* *"Sure; I heard it too, only it was a crucifix I heard."* A last look at the photograph. *"Remember, dear heart, I'll be praying for you."* *"A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."* *"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about them that fear him."*

Over the top:

*"Boys, you'll be going over in a few minutes now, but*

*Jesus Christ will go with you."* The tot of rum.  
"*Gott mit uns.*" "*Jesu.*" "*Holy Mother of God.*"  
"*Remember men, and for God's sake don't run in a  
straight line. Get all the cover you can.*"

The strain of No Man's Land:

*"O God, let me come through; for Christ's sake let me  
come through."* "*Herr Jesus Gott.*" "*Faith, my chil-  
dren, faith.*" "*I the Lord am with thee and will save  
thee, my son.*". . . "*You God dam' Hun, bastard.*"  
. . . "*God! I got him!*". . . "*Mein Gott! Must I  
leave him there with his face in that Frencher's bow-  
els?*"

*"And the peace of God that passeth all understanding  
shall keep your minds and hearts in the love of  
God. . . ."*



Now there was a chaplain that did ever, even beyond his fellows, besiege me with prayers for guidance and help. And from time to time I followed him on his rounds. For though his heart was wrung by the torture that he looked upon, yet in a corner of it he cherished a secret happiness. The scarcity of priests had for a time made necessary that he give spiritual aid to men of all creeds, and remembering how Catholic, Protestant and Jew had alike accepted words of comfort from him, he cherished a vision of ancient barriers broken down, and a hope that after the peace the other faiths might join with his. In this vision and this hope he found cause of rejoicing sufficient to sustain him on the field of death.

"God is good, my son," he said in default of earthly comfort to a dying soldier who lay on a makeshift bed in a barn that was now a hospital.

The man's clouded eyes looked up. "Is he?" And I



knew not whether he answered in mockery or with genuine desire to be assured.

But he continued, as breath made him able: "I know you've come to get me ready to die like a Christian, chappie. Thanks. But I wish you'd answer a question for me. Been thinking about it a lot. Why is God so interested in how we die? Doesn't seem to care much about keeping us alive. Didn't do a damn' thing to head off this war. But now he uses you fellows to encourage us poor devils to rip one another's guts out. No disrespect, chappie, but I've been wondering. You think God's sent you to me. But what's he saying through some German parson to the poor kid I potted before I got mine a few hours ago?"

"Is it nothing that God gives men fortitude to suffer and die for the right?" the chaplain offered in answer. "You are permitted a glorious, heroic part in a war to end war and make the world safe for the free and idealistic nations."

"Before coming across I read some German propaganda that told how the fatherland must protect the true spiritual liberty that produced Luther, Kant and Hegel, Goethe and Schiller, Beethoven, Wagner and Schubert."

The parson could but press the man's hand. "Letters for me to write home?" he asked in a voice of professional cheer.

The man closed his eyes. "Wrote last night. Had a feeling this was coming."

There was silence while the chaplain held the limp hand and offered a prayer. A nurse stopped beside them, smoothed the cover, looked up at the chaplain, smiled, shook her head and passed on.

There was a patch of sunlight where she had stood. I heard an envelope ripped by an eager hand, the mutter of guns far away.

"Son, shall I give you the sacrament?"

"Sacrament? — I don't know — yes, if you want. . . . But how about a smoke?"

The chaplain put a cigarette between the gray lips and held a match.

"You're a good scout, chappie. . . . Always count on you . . . for a cigarette."

He drew with shallow breath, held the smoke, heard the tinkle of the wine in the chalice, I think, as the chaplain poured it for the holy sacrament.

"Never mind, chappie. . . . Let it ride, now. . . . Body and blood of the Prince of Peace. . . . Let the German kid and me wash each other in our own blood."

Only the mold of clay was now on the cot, and I thought on the spirit that had briefly dwelt therein.

The riddle of man's existence and mine!

" 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' " whispered the chaplain, quoting St. Paul.

And he turned his face from the bed and, seeing me at hand, said in tones of deep sorrow: "Oh my God! I had two things to offer a dying man, the holy sacrament and a cigarette. He took the cigarette."



The unnatural thunder ceased, and stayed was the lighting of gunfire. The stars that the armies had been wont to loose in the dread night over No Man's Land arose no more. The rivers of blood were stemmed. The forests of white crosses pushed their borders no farther into the riven fields.

Wherefore men lifted their heads and asked, "Is it peace?"

The sea adders came up from the depths and crept to their havens. From skies strangely quiet the birds of destruction settled to the ground. The monsters that had crawled through the land belching fire returned to their lairs.

And men said, "Aye, it is peace."

The generals sat with hands poised over their pin-studded maps, not knowing whether to grieve or rejoice because the elements of their newest strategy could not be fused and tested in the crucible of battle. The lieutenants unbent their backs and privates dropped in the mud to sleep. Gunners rolled under the bellies of their guns to get them rest at last. Grisettes resumed their tarnished finery and sought the towns by the sea.

The world said, "Peace," and there was laughter again.

Then the victor nations brought together the vanquished that they might sit in judgment upon them and settle the terms of peace. And I, Yahweh, being party to their contention, was courteously bidden to share their deliberations. And when the prayer that summoned me was ended, I looked on the spokesmen of the many nations and, remembering how they had severally claimed aid and comfort of me in the strife, I was at first proud exceedingly. But when I reflected how each nation, whether victor or vanquished, had claimed me as its especial champion, I was disquieted. And I thought: "What hath befallen me? These many centuries have I sought to approve myself the god of all peoples. And now behold! I am no longer one god but am become a pantheon of a hundred national gods!"

And I saw that albeit the delegates bore themselves with dignity, holding their heads high to proclaim their nations' honor, they did nevertheless with their feet drag the mud of the trenches into the hall of crystal chandeliers where they



were met. Observing the mud on the floor they waxed eloquent over it, saying with tears, "Is there under the face of heaven anything more precious than the mingled earth and blood of one's fatherland — unless it be the blood that falls lonely on some foreign soil?"

Moved by this pious thought for their dead, the victors whispered, "It is our duty to see that recompense be made for their sacrifice." Whereupon they essayed to divide among them the distant possessions of the beaten peoples even as of old mine armies had divided their spoil. Yet to avoid the appearance they parceled out the territories, not to be owned, but to be held in sacred trust. In which undertaking they supposed themselves justified by the proposals of a certain statesman of wide sympathies who asked that justice be done everywhere and in all things. For he had advised: "Let great and oppressive empires be broken up. And in the making of our terms let us render peace more secure by having regard to the natural divisions of race and land, giving to peoples of diverse strains the soil that is by the dispensations of nature rightfully theirs."

And it was so done — in part.

But this plan that intended peace became in after years a threat of further strife, inasmuch as nations both great and small strode in the pride of their separate nationhood, so that though there was a league to promote concord it prevailed not over the divisive influence of nations each jealous to increase its own strength.

Moreover, when settlement was still being sought, there arose a man who pleaded the cause of the Jew, saying, "It is but right that Yahweh's ancient people who have long been dispossessed of soil and nationhood be granted leave to return if they will to Palestine and there build them a national home."

And forasmuch as the Jew had poured out blood equally with others and supplied moneys in wartime above many, the statesmen were willing to grant consideration to his claims — and the conquerors most of all, since the land of Palestine had for generations been under the hand of a people that had suffered defeat in the war.

Then the Jews over all the world put new vehemence into a cry that they had long sustained — their piteous prayer for nationhood. And in Jerusalem, at hours advertised beforehand in the travel bureaus, the old men assembled at the wailing wall to call on earth and heaven to succor their dispersed and expatriated brethren.

Now those that were ordering the world's affairs were moved to pity by the wailing, and when they had cast their eyes over their accounts with the Jewish bankers they waxed indignant because of the age-long alienation of the Holy Land from mine ancient people. And they cried, "By heaven, the Jew shall have justice at last!" And they scowled on the Turk and the Arab who were masters in Palestine.

Whereupon certain rich Jews from here and there, with ghetto folk of the southeast parts of Europe in large number, went into Palestine and made to despoil the Arab and those Syrians in whose ancestry were strains that ran back to the Canaanites who had been in the land ere Abraham had come out of Ur.

Then, when the Arabs made complaint, a certain Jewish scholar spake in the spirit of Joshua: "History repeats itself and inferior races must make way for the better equipped and more efficient. If the Arabs find no place left for them in Palestine, that is not our affair. Let them migrate to Iraq; there is plenty of room for them there. If they attempt violence, we ourselves shall be armed; many of our young immigrants have served as conscripts in the

war, and at our back we shall always have the support of British troops and planes."

For the victors had entrusted Palestine to the British, because these boasted always of their just guardianship over weak peoples.

And when one spoke of the expense that might be involved did a small minority of Jews seek to dominate the various peoples of the Holy Land, the scholar did wink and answer, "I am informed by a high official that Great Britain gets more out of Palestine than she puts into it."

By these and other methods not unlike them was peace brought to the world.

As for me, I recoiled when my first people bespake my support for their new nationhood. For said I, "I am now a universal god, yea, and have become such at the behest of the Hebrew prophets and the great Jew of Galilee. It was the vision of another Jew which took me out of Palestine into the gentile world to become god of all. I cannot return to be god of the tribe again."

And such of the Jews as were nationally minded and desirous of perpetuating their religion as a cult of race — for not all had drunk of that cup — answered me, saying: "By men of our blood was worship first given you. Your earliest home and altar were on our soil. You cannot but espouse our nation. For we have a separate and peculiar culture that once you promoted and which we must cause to flourish anew."

And therefore they omitted not to wail daily with their foreheads against the wall, what time they did not push against Arab and Syrian.



Peace having now come among the nations, the leaders of my Christian hosts desired to undo the unhappy con-



sequences which had ensued upon my participation in the bloody strife of the nations. For a full score of years their prayers and counsels assailed mine ear, but in such confusion that I knew not how to answer.

“O Lord, why dost thou keep us waiting so long? The fighting is over. We don’t know what to make of this delay. Thou hast never failed to give us a religious awakening after a war, and we’ve counted on a revival that would sweep the world after this one; it was so big and terrible.

“And we’ve done our part. See! We have enlarged and modernized our churches, we have built magnificent parish houses, we have increased our staffs. It is for thee to soften the hearts of the people. The world is drawing further and further away from religion every day.”

*[“Now don’t be an alarmist. This is really the most spiritual age in all history. Religious books were never before so numerous or so widely read. Even the popular magazines carry articles by leading clergymen.”]*

*[“Yes, I know about those books. The popular divines get attention by compromising with the modern spirit. And no matter what they read, people don’t come to church.”]*

“O Lord, save the church, the ancient bulwark of thy holy truth. While thou dost tarry materialism runs away with the world.”

*[“Hold on, brethren, don’t talk such nonsense to the Lord. The church isn’t running down. Haven’t you heard about the gains which the Methodists — or was it the Baptists? — made last year?”]*

*[“But you can’t argue anything from statistics. The victorious note is lost or being lost to all of us. And if the Methodists or Baptists can show an increase, it’s nothing to the total that has been lost.”]*

“ Yes, Lord, we admit with shame and sorrow that the churches are slipping into the abyss. We have heavy debts on our new plants. It’s getting harder every year to meet our budgets; and the staffs have to be paid. People are holding tight to their pocketbooks, and if — ”

[“ *Look here, now; you’re taking this whole matter too hard. What’s a little debt to get excited about? At least you ought to be ashamed to drag money into your prayers so much. There are practical methods available for any live, determined church. Have you heard of the King’s Treasury Corporation? They do a wonderful job with their modern methods of budget-raising and mortgage-lifting. A go-getter type of businessmen and strictly honorable. You ought to look into their proposition. And there are any number of high-class commercial enterprises that give the women’s societies opportunities to raise money.*”]

“ We’re in debt, we say, Lord. And that is not the worst. We are losing our young people. We wouldn’t regret the dollars if something could be accomplished with youth. Look at our children and have mercy on us. They are as hard as nails. They scorn to enter the beautiful buildings that we have erected especially for their use. Lord, you must do something about them.”

[“ *For heaven’s sake, you mossbacks; will you let up on the young people? We find them delightfully frank, brave and refreshing. They’re really much better than we were at their age. — Only, perhaps, they don’t behave quite so well. Possibly they drink too much, and they say shocking things. But we admit we like to hear them. What do you suppose they talk about when they’re alone?* ”]

[“ *God knows.*”]

“ Lord, we can’t share the criminal optimism of these easygoing people. We confess our youth worry us. We

want them safe from the world for their own sakes, and of course it would be more comfortable for us. Remember thy promise, 'I will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.' We ask thee to make that promise good. We love our sons and daughters and are disquieted about their souls. Therefore, send us a renewal of spiritual interest, we humbly pray. There is still a little idealism and unspent emotion left over from the war. Why dost thou not capitalize these? There's not enough for an oldtime flood of the spirit; but if we could have just a little freshening! Anything to break this spiritual drought. Send us some kind of revival before it's too late."

*["We've had the most wonderful afternoon at our bridge club. I've been thinking. Do you suppose if the church had a little more social life we could get hold of some new families? A bridge —"]*

*["Yes, and dancing, too. If we'd give a bridge and a dance once in a while in the parish house do you think the young —"]*

"O God, I've been a long time in thy service now. I'll soon be getting through. But I hate to lay down the task with the world at such loose ends. If thou couldst use me even now in my age to make a little impression on this generation. . . . I'd like to put my hand on some young man's head, and let the ragged mantle fall on his shoulder where it would be made glorious by his youth and strength. Who knows but there is a prophet hidden among the stuff today, as in the olden time?"

*["Where shall we lay the blame for the mess our world is in? Who made a meatblock of Europe? Who drained the blood of our brothers down the sinks of three continents? Who but the old men and the old men's God that now seek to confine youth in*



*the prison of their rotten institutions and the hell of their fears? ”]*

“ God, thou judge of all the earth: We’ll step up before thy throne and acknowledge like men that we have done wrong. We desire first to clear our consciences by confession and then to dissociate ourselves forever from the unchristian wrong of war. We shall never fight again; we shall never bless another conflict. . . . ”

*[“ Yes, but some of us will fight if our territory is invaded, or a great injustice can be laid at the door of a bullying nation. We’ve got to be prepared for that kind of thing.”]*

“ — We shall go to prison if necessary in penalty for opposing any and all bloodshed between nations. Openly, before the world, we confess our sin for going into the last war and taking thee with us. We’d like to get this stain off thine honor if we can.”

“ Lord God of nations, known of our fathers; thou who didst plant this nation between the seas and hast ever cherished the vine of thy planting, alike in the night of war and the pleasant days of peace: Let thy blessing rest upon this body of thy servants, chosen by the people and by thee to devise wise laws and direct the nation in ways of righteousness, to study the demands of justice and equity in affairs of the body politic. We humbly beseech thee to let that Spirit which has brought us through many perils to the safety of this hour so guide the minds of legislators — ”

*[“ Look here, old man, for God’s sake don’t insist on bringing up that sharecropper issue at this session. You’d put Joe on the spot before the whole country. And you know party interests demand his return to the Senate next term. Dammit, I’ll vote for that naval appropriation if you’ll lay off.”]*

*[ . . . “ To hell with enactment of an anti-lynching*

*law. Why, Senator, you can't parade the nigger on the floor of the Senate like you're doing if you want to get anything for your own section."]*

*[ . . . " Child labor be damned. You'll put a drag on every spindle in the South if you push that bill through."]*

*[ . . . " All right, Senator, I'll trade. You quit pushing that mine investigation and I will lay off on child labor."]*

" — and faithfully to perform their duties in accordance with thy righteous will. And thine shall be the glory among the nations. Amen."



So did my people in one great land pray and think and do. Nor was the inner confusion of the churches made less by the noise of confusion without.

For many spake after this fashion: " Listen, old man, I tell you the Christian religion is all washed up. God Almighty is out on his feet. He hasn't an ounce of come-back in him. You church folks had better face the fact that you can't put your medieval superstitions across on this modern world."

Especially did youth in their places of learning show contempt of me. Ah! Youth much more than others:

" Look here, old feller, we both took required Bible last year. I know and you do too, that your god is Yahweh, the tribal deity of the Hebrews. We know his history. He was idealized by the prophets, who had some pretty high notions of what a god should be, but all the time he was simply the personification of the crude ideas of divinity held by the Hebrew people. The prophets were always

away ahead of the common herd, but it was the herd that fixed the character of Yahweh, and it's the herd conception that has stuck with most of those who worship him. He's never been anything more than a man-made image, and a pretty questionable customer at that. Because of this you can bank on his being on the wrong side of every ethical and social question. He always has been except when one of the great prophets was keeping him in line.

"Does he care anything about the injustices of our economic order? Does it make any difference to him that the workers of the world who create the wealth are condemned by the system to pass their lives several miles below the level of decent subsistence? Does he know what they suffer through fear of sickness and unemployment and an old age without savings? Mass production may take all the pride of workmanship and the joy of creation from those whose skill has been their boast, but it leaves him cold. He doesn't notice how the machine is displacing men, throwing them into breadlines, while it piles up profits that the owners can't find ways to spend. He listens to the big shots when they pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' and then okays their plans for putting something over on the workers."

Now and again would one come to my defense in this wise: "You fellows have the wrong slant on this. The trouble is not with Christianity. As I heard a preacher say, it's never really been tried out."

Whereto would come an answer somewhat of this fashion: "Chance, hell! It had plenty of chances. Jesus, whom you're so proud of — and rightfully, I admit — gave it a chance; so did St. Francis. It had a whale of a chance to go in the right direction in Luther's day, but the great reformer muffed it. Karl Marx could have given



God a few pointers, but God sidestepped him. No! What Christianity lacks is not chances, but guts.

“The race has been a good many thousands of years struggling up out of the slime, the jungle and the half-civilizations, fighting for a chance at the good life which the wealth of earth and the genius of mankind warrant its asking. Now it’s going to cash in, in spite of all this hocus-pocus about another world where everything will be made up to the poor boobs who have let themselves be cajoled and browbeaten out of their rights in this one.”

Youth! Its denunciations of me struck home like the chastisements of my major prophets.



Yet were there those in the churches who sought a way out of this confusion and division among my people, urging the achieving of some form of unity. Certain leaders of irenic spirit said that the divisions in the church must be healed before mankind could be delivered from those class and race hatreds which devastate society. And they said, “How can there be brotherhood among men and how can the gospel heal the wounds caused by social injustice when the church which is the bearer of the gospel is itself divided!” And they committed themselves further: “As God is one, so must the church be one. A united testimony of the whole church is imperative.”

Then thought I: “Perchance the Galilean, whose body the church is, walks the earth again and speaks through these his servants. The spirit of concord and power that moved his disciples in the upper room and that urged Paul to persuade me to undertake universal domain broods, mayhap, once more over the hearts of men.”

And lo, there came a mighty surge of prayer from

Lausanne in Switzerland, where near to four hundred chief men of the principal faiths were gathered — only Rome stood aloof. But, hastening to answer it, I beheld in the midst of each delegation one seat left empty. Wherefore, liking it not that so many should have delayed their coming, as if this had been some secular gathering, I questioned why those for whom these seats were set apart had not appeared in time for the prayer. And the man of whom I had made inquiry whispered: "I know not about the other delegations but the vacant chair in our own group is for God. Though he is the guest of the whole conference, he will of course sit here with our party."

Wherefore, fearing lest I offend, or too greatly encourage, by choosing this seat or that of those that had been reserved for me, I betook me to stand against the wall and be what is latterly called an unofficial observer.

Then the men opened their hymnbooks and suited the words of four languages to the music of the universal songs of Christian faith and triumph. As these rang through the hall I perceived that the hearts of the delegates beat quick, for their faces flushed and a mist gathered in every eye. And I saw that some groped for the hands of strangers, owning them brothers in Christ.

But the hope and pleasure that I took of the singing were shattered by the sequel. For those assembled next lent their minds not to problems of the world's need, which might have further united them, but rather to matters of creed and order. These, being the cause of their division, offered no hope of reconciliation, especially since many had come minded to win others to their doctrines and practices rather than to be persuaded toward undertaking a common task.

I looked on my servants, some wearing vestments which bespoke how close stood their wearers to worldly power,

some clad quite simply as testimony of their nearness to the poor and humble; and I thought how mightily they could move the world did they advance as one body. "Despite all vacillations, this common movement must surely reach its goal," I thought.

Yet at this moment one of the humbler men of the conference arose and, with a conviction that made him eloquent, made proposal that at the end of their deliberations all should celebrate the Lord's Supper as members of the one family of God. Alas! I beheld that they who wore the rich robes drew together and with grave faces whispered among themselves. Whereafter they said in tones of tender courtesy that hid not the finality of their decision: "There are ways divinely appointed, brethren, whereby the holy mysteries and the comforts of the body of Christ are mediated to the souls of men. And we, by the laying on of hands, have received grace to minister in accordance with these ways. Wherefore we may not partake with them that have not been consecrated in the true succession by the imposition of hands."

Then I thought on Aaron who had stood weaving his fingers above the chest on the day when Moses would have led the host forward, and of his words, "There be courtesies toward the god, my brother, which only I know how to perform."

And I said: "Nay! The kingdom of heaven is no more a reality within the church in times of peace than it is among nations at war. All the sects, from Rome to the Holy Jumpers, make but a loose confederation of tribes that severally claim me their titular god. Their instinct to prevail over one another is stronger than their purpose to combat evil and injustice or to mitigate the world's misery."

Furthermore, the world, on whose sin, unbelief and



trouble they had intended a united assault, cared not nor even knew whether these men had met with their God in Lausanne.



More grievous than the enmity between nation and nation or the rift between sect and sect was the estrangement of man from man. At the very root of my purpose to be a universal god had been love among men. Love it was that tutored the prophets and Jesus, Paul also, and the early Christians, to proclaim me God of all. And it was the spirit of John's word, "God is love" and, "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" that in the first ran as my herald through the pagan world. The love which was exemplified by the early followers of the Galilean added substance to the herald's message, so that men forsook the gods who had not love and opened their hearts to me. And the commonalty of their love and joy and peace gave life a significance it had never had in the pagan world.

But now in this latter day I found that few perceived how their individual living ought to serve human life as a whole. Instead, each man served his class. One class labored and suffered, knew fear of unemployment and want; a second lived lightly on this bitter toil; and still another stood betwixt dread of being thrust into the class below and hope of rising into the cruel freedom of that above. The rich said, "God is on the side of respectability and property, the side of law and force by which our goods are guaranteed to us, the side of all things which keep the world as it is." And the poor cried, "If there be a God, especially if he be like the carpenter's God, he must be on our side, patiently biding his time to send us deliverance."

And few were they who came into my house to break the holy sacrament of a shared humanity.

Sadder still were the divisions within the souls of men. For, while in every man was the seed of that longing after the right and the good which had first disturbed Abraham on the plains of Ur, and me with him — the restlessness, also, that cannot be stilled save in achieving of righteousness — there were, nevertheless, a thousand subversive stirrings by which men misinterpreted their higher longings. They rushed, as one of them said, “from movie to movie, from cocktail to cocktail, from one brand of cigarette to another, from mistress to mistress and wife to wife, from thrill to thrill, and from abnormality to the more abnormal.” Furthermore, in their lust for acquisition they filled their hands with possessions. Yet their souls gained not fulfillment, nor did their bodies gather any comfort of life.

Seeing that this fever which was in the world raged also in the church and wasted it, I said: “There is need of a prophet, one who can reveal righteousness, measure man in his relationship to it, and envisage the nations as the kingdom of heaven; a man with a new word, meet for his time as the word of Amos was in his time; a leader who can direct me in reconciling the peoples of earth one to another that I may be God of them all.”

Wherefore, when any of my servants prayed for a refreshing of religion, I would note particularly the terms of his praying and would counsel with him if haply he had some plan to open a way out of the confusion into which I and my people had come.

Many and strange were the suggestions that they made, and new almost beyond belief the paths of spiritual endeavor whereby they sought to test the efficacy thereof.

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## XIX

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### JAZZ ON THE ALTAR STAIRS

O GOD," began the great evangelist hurriedly, being about to enter the door of the arena where, as he explained, he nightly battled with Satan for the souls of men. "O God," he repeated, "I have not had much chance to talk it over with you today. There was that address to the Rotarians at noon, the talk to the chamber of commerce at three o'clock, and here's this monster meeting in the tabernacle tonight. I just couldn't grab off the time for prayer. But you know me, Lord. You know I've kept myself in the pink for this great night of the campaign. I'll carry the fight for you from the opening gong until the devil throws the towel into the ring. Only give me the pep; give me the old knockout punch tonight, Lord. Let me be in there all the time, forcing the fight and packing a haymaker in each mitt. . . . And when it comes to the offering make the tightwads loosen up. I got the best jollier I could find in this whole burg to make the appeal, but I'm not sure just how good he is. Maybe he'll fall down on us in the pinch. Give him a good line, Lord, give him a good line, and don't let him get stagefright when he sees the crowd in front of him."

Now albeit this seemed a strange sort of prayer, and not



wholly tuned to my comprehension, yet hearkened I, knowing him for a preacher on whom multitudes pinned their hopes for a great revival of my worship. For he preached not in churches, but set up in each city a great building and bade all ministers of the gospel close their churches and come and sit silent while he preached and held them up to ridicule.

When he had finished praying, I asked him what word he had to speak concerning the kingdom.

Whereupon he opened his eyes and gazed blankly upon me, saying: "I don't get you, brother. What kingdom? The kings have all been knocked off. We just got through saving the world for democracy. There's no more room for kings and kingdoms. The whole world is going to be like the good old U. S. A."

And when I explained that I meant only the kingdom of brotherly love, he answered not but questioned and admonished me thus: "Say, what are you? A new kind of evangelist? If you are, let me tell you you'll never break into the big time with a line of talk like you've got. If you want to click in this game of mine you've got to spill your line in he-man's language. Like in big league baseball, you've got to put plenty of stuff on the ball and burn 'em over the plate fast and dazzling or the hard-boiled guys will pound you out of the lot."

Then I bade him take no account of my manner of speech but himself say what he purposed to do to redeem the disinherited of the earth and to bring order into the social chaos. And he made answer: "O, the disinherited, eh? So you're one of these bolsheviks? Well, let me tell you I'm not interested in their brand of tripe. Not at all. Neither is God Almighty. We deal with the soul, both of us. What you're spouting about don't come into the proper field of religion."

When I asked what, then, constituted the message that the multitudes flocked to hear, he answered, "The salvation of God." And honoring my request for an explanation, he went on: "Why as I see it, buddy, God's a regular fellow, a hundred per cent he-man. His game is salvation, the eternal redemption of human souls that are stinking rotten with sins of the flesh. Sure, that's his game — just like yours might be automobiles, or schoolteaching, or insurance or chiropractic. He pushes the gospel line, so to speak. So do I. Salvation's the goods we carry. Now, salvation's an open and shut proposition. Either a man's got it or he hasn't. He's saved or he isn't. If he's saved he ought to get out and recommend the goods to others. If he isn't, it's God's business and mine to sell him salvation, as you might say, by high-powered salesmanship with plenty of advertising."

"But wouldst thou say that God careth not for the distress of earth's humble, who are broken by wars and pinched by the greed of profit-takers?" I asked.

He held up his hand as if to halt me, and I marked that his face was red with indignation. "Now lay off that stuff, brother," he bade me. "What are you, one of these pacifist mugs who think the war was all wrong? Well, I don't think it was. Get an earful of that. Thank God, I've got the red blood and patriotism to stand up for my country and its flag. And about the rich: I know plenty of rich men who are regular fellows, like God is. They're always ready to come across with the heavy sugar when I've got a campaign on. I can count on them. I tell you, they're God's gentlemen. Their hearts bleed for the down-and-outs who've made bums of themselves. The rich have more honest-to-God democracy than any other bunch in the world. Lots of times I get a lot more cooperation out of the big financiers and the chamber of commerce fellows

than I can wring out of these soft mutts of preachers. The hardheaded men of business know how I can straighten out the bums, put down labor discontent, whip the soreheads into line, and fill a city with the peace of Christ. Lay off the rich, I tell you. Get after the drunkards and bawdy women and red agitators if you want to do God Almighty's work. You're barking up the wrong tree, buddy."

"But in reaching out after men's souls should one leave untouched the conditions that breed sin and violence? The social order, I am told —"

"Listen, pal," he interrupted, "I got to spend a little time with the Lord before the meeting. I can't give you any more attention now. But I'll say just this: you've got yourself all snarled up in the tanglefoot. This social stuff is the bunk. It's an attempt to sidestep true spiritual religion. Both sin and salvation are purely individual matters. Don't kid yourself that you can hide behind the skirts of poverty or excuse your sins by yammering about the abuses of society. Any man, wherever or however he's born and raised, can get religion if he really wants it. It's as free as air.

"Now, come clean, buddy. If you've got a problem of drink or gambling or women, all you've got to do is to swallow your pride, come to one of my meetings, walk up and shake my hand like a man, then put your shinbones down in humility in the sawdust. That's all there is to it. God Almighty will save you then and there. Get the vice right out of your system for you — and the bolshevism, too. God's a hundred per cent on the level. What I mean, if anybody's a hundred per cent for God, why God's a hundred per cent for him. Once make the surrender and you'll never be troubled again. That's the old-fashioned gospel of salvation, without any frills. It's worked for nineteen hundred years, and, bless God, it



works today. It's the only hope of cleaning up this world and keeping it a safe place, free from crime and discontent.

"Now, you come here shooting off your mouth about the social order like you was cuckoo or had a bun on. My advice is for you to go home and chew this thing over for a while. You're not in any condition for me to invite you in to the meeting. I don't want any fanatics standing up and blowing off steam about this bolshevism just when I've got the crowd eating out of my hand. Go home, buddy, and think it over. I've given you the lowdown on religion. All you need to do is lap it up and digest it. And if you're on the level, you'll see the sense of what I'm telling you.

"And just one thing more: if you do take a tumble to yourself and find God and then think the good people of your burg would like to have me come and put on a campaign along the lines I've been telling you, you can write to me. I've got an open month next spring. Or better yet, you talk it up with the big shots in the business life of the place and let them write. Maybe we can get together for a date. Then you'll have plenty of chance to see what I'm doing for the world. Like you asked."

And having bowed his head yet again, he entered the tabernacle.



I was called by prayer to a place where the board of a great church was assembled to take counsel on the case of a young minister who, in speaking in the pastor's absence, had uttered certain things of a nature described by them as "radical."

The chairman, bluff but cheery, began by taking an envelope from his pocket and giving a sign that it be passed down the line to his pastor.

“Before I forget it,” he said, explaining his action, “just a slight contribution toward the fund for that debt on the parish house, which I know is worrying you, doctor.”

Whereupon he leaned back and hooked his thumbs in the pockets of his waistcoat, saying: “We all know the purpose for which this special meeting was called. We must have an explanation from the pastor’s assistant, Mr. —”

He looked down the table. A full voice from the far end supplied the name, “Justice.”

The chairman’s face showed that he liked not the name. “We may as well get right down to business,” he said abruptly. “The matter before the meeting is this young man’s sermons while the pastor was on vacation. He offended no end of our people by his preaching of wild social theories. Not a gospel sermon in the lot.”

“Let’s be concrete,” interrupted the accused assistant. “‘Social theories’ is too general. I’ll state the case for you. I preached about the strike that involved a good many plants in this city, yours among them. I admit the pointedness of my preaching, but submit that it was called for. Conditions were intolerable for the workers. The owners were selfish and unjust. Where could I find a better subject for sermons?”

Whereto one of their number who was a stockbroker answered dryly: “Well, being a preacher, and presumably a Christian, you might have tried the Bible instead of the picket line. We had a bright young man in the doctor’s place a year ago who managed to preach good, sound, interesting sermons all summer long on the Ten Commandments. What’s the matter with them as texts, I want to know?”

And a man of no business but much invested capital sat forward in his chair and put in, “I remember a most

entertaining series that the doctor preached a few years ago on the stars." But none paid him any heed.

The accused made a show of writing on his cuff. "The Ten Commandments. That's a thought. I'll remember and use them another time. There's lots of dynamite in the old law. Text: 'Thou shalt not kill.' Development: Point one — don't use a gun or an axe on your neighbor. Point two — there are, brethren, ways of killing more subtle, more cruel. (a) Paying starvation wages and forcing men to bring up their families below the poverty line. Illustrations: Malnutrition, rickety kids, predisposition to tuberculosis. Cite cases encountered in this city, this parish. (b) Shortening life and killing all its sweetness by forcing a man onto the breadline at fifty when there's no hope of his getting another job, though he's just as good a workman as ever. Plenty of illustrations at hand. (c) Fighting sickness and unemployment insurance, thereby making it imperative for men with the burden of families on their shoulders to work and take dangerous chances when they are seriously ill.

"Another sermon. Text: 'Thou shalt not steal.' Development: Point one — thou shalt not take thy neighbor's pocketbook. Thou shalt not hold up a bank. Obvious, but a good starting place. Point two — thou shalt not rob the workman of the fruits of his labors. Not so obvious, of course, but much more pertinent in our present situation —"

The chairman's face had reddened. No one in that room was at ease; I less than all. Then I reflected that the prophets had always held back the message of comfort until by their unsparing indignation they had quickened the consciences of their hearers. So reasoning, I found myself wondering whether this graceless youth might be he whom I sought. But I bided my time.



And in that moment I heard a banker say, “ It has always seemed to me that preaching ought to deal directly, I might say exclusively, with the inner life — with a man’s personal conflicts and discouragements.”

He turned full on the young man. “ Look here, my boy,” he said as father speaking to child, “ just where do you expect to get by following this line? ”

The young minister was thoughtful and after a moment answered: “ Well, I’m not wholly sure, gentlemen. You can hardly expect anyone to see a perfectly clear way out of the mess we’re in. But I know that when Abraham came out of Ur religion was on the move. In the time of the prophets it was going places. When Jesus was on earth he had an idea of getting along toward a kingdom of God. But now we don’t seem to have any particular objective beyond building our plants and lengthening our membership and subscription lists. *We’re not going any place.* I’m just trying to help get religion on the move. I keep thinking that if I were in God’s place I’d junk this Christianity and look around for something that had life — that was moving in some — ”

“ Oh, my God! ” cried the manufacturer. “ Here we are in the biggest, richest, most powerful country on the face of the globe — God’s country if there ever was one — with the finest churches, the highest paid ministers, the busiest programs. And you ask us to go places! Why, you young fool, we don’t have to go places. There ain’t any place to go. We’re there already.”



Now, the fame of a woman evangelist began to be noised abroad, and, albeit Paul had forbidden women to speak in the church, I remembered that Deborah and Anna and

others had been prophetesses; and I said, "It may be that this woman can speak the guiding word."

And I found her comely and with much vitality.

"Lord, I'm doing all this for you. Honest, I am. I don't give a thought to myself. I just pour out my strength night after night to magnify your name and save people's souls. So why don't you keep me from feeling so flat every now and then, and from having these spells at other times when I feel like I would have to bust everything wide open?"

I could not ignore this prayer. "Daughter," I said, "after a moment shall I attend to the personal matter that concerneth thee; but first tell me something of this work thou hast in hand. What dost thou for the advancement of the kingdom? Seest thou a goal near or far toward which religion should move?"

She was surprised to find me at her side, but not discomfited, being well used to have people come and go. "Say, I don't know you, do I?" she asked. "Well, never mind. That's all right. You're somebody to talk to, anyway. Oh, you asked me what I'm doing for the kingdom, didn't you? Well, I'm crowding the folks in, brother, I'm crowding them in."

She made a wide, graceful movement of her arms as though she drew someone to her bosom. "My manager often says as a kind of joke that the Almighty will have to lay out a whole new suburb in the heavenly city just to take care of the folks I'm sending him. Between you and me, I think there's a lot of God's truth in that little joke. I suppose you've been to the Garden to see my gospel spectacle and hear me preach? We had a great house last night."

Then her face fell and in her voice sounded a note of childish complaint. "Not so many as we had in New York, though. But my advance agent said when I had him

on the carpet that I ought not to let that worry me. It's on account of this not being as big a place as New York, but practically out in the sticks, and people not being used to having the real headliners come here. But I guess we'll be packing them in before we leave. We'll have to. There's all the expense of carting the scenery and props wherever we go. The Garden costs a lot, too, and the collections haven't been so good, either. I told the Garden management that they ought to make a big reduction in my case on account of this being a religious company and strictly on the level, and only interested in saving men's souls for the kingdom of heaven, like you said. But they just laughed it off. I wonder what makes people so doggone stingy? "

"Understand me," I corrected her, "I spake not of a kingdom in the heavens, but of a kingdom of brotherly love on earth. What dost thou do to bring the reign of justice and righteousness on earth and to better the lot of the poor, the humble and the downtrodden? Hast thou that which might guide Christianity in its work among men? "

"Now, that's right down my alley," she answered. "If there's anything under God's heaven that gets to me it's the condition of the poor. And you want to know what I'm doing for them? Well, brother, I'm giving them the thrill of their lives in the greatest show on earth, absolutely clean, purely religious, of course, and based on the everlasting gospel, but full of red-hot showmanship just the same. Now what the poor want, as I see it, is a good kick that will make them forget their troubles. They are hungry for a little light and color in their monotonous lives. That's what I'm trying to give them. I've taken a leaf out of Hollywood's book. Now tell me, who is it that the average person falls for hardest? Is it the preacher, the politician, the big businessman? No. It's the movie queens,



isn't it? They've got the color and glamour and romance and pep that people just cry for. Well then, I feel that if I've got my share of 'it' I ought to use my gift in a purely spiritual way for the glory of God, like I'm doing. And I know absolutely that I've got the looks and the talent and the appeal to put myself over just as well as any of the movie stars."

"But, having won the acclaim of the multitude, in what manner dost thou purpose to meet the world's needs?" I inquired of her.

She took an attitude of much grace and lowered her gaze. After a moment she looked up at me from under her lids and said: "Brother, you look old and experienced enough for me to speak plain to you. What the world needs, of course, is simon-pure religion, the joyful message of salvation from sin. I guess I don't need to explain to you what I mean by that word 'sin.' Now, I'm working like a trooper against sin all the time. But I'm not trying to put over the same old cut and dried methods that have been used for goodness knows how long. I've got a new slant on the whole religious game. I've got my own entirely original specialty that leaves the baldheaded preacher out of the running. I'm offering the starving multitudes God's true religion wrapped up in sex appeal.

"And does it work? You ask me. It's something that goes right to the heart of every loveless old maid and disappointed married woman who's got tired of watching the dishes pile up in the kitchen sink and hasn't had a new emotional thrill since her wedding finished the romance of life. When they come to my meetings they imagine they see themselves in me, my looks, my gowns, my smashing personality. They just hand their hearts over to me, poor yearning things, and before they know it I've introduced them to God. And the old bachelors who've never

been loved, and the poor married men who've lost the romantic fizz out of life and whose wives probably don't understand them! They get my appeal, too, God bless them. For a couple of hours they forget the hall bedroom or the untidy parlor and the monotonous jobs they've got to go to the next day. They swallow me, bait, line and sinker, and before they know what's happened to them I've got them hooked for God. You ought to have seen the crowd last night when I came on dressed like a Greek goddess, with four trombones from the symphony orchestra blowing me in like a prima donna. Did that bunch fall for me and surrender themselves into my hand so I could lift them up as a precious offering to God? Well, you ask me, brother.

"But don't think it's all just the colorful show with me. My first thought is always for sinful souls that stand in danger of eternal destruction, and before I'm through at any meeting I get right down to business and give them the straight gospel, salvation from sin, the hope of everlasting reward in heaven with a glory brighter than Broadway, more beautiful than a Hollywood set — endless joy, endless peace, endless love. I just roll it over them in great big waves and they wallow in it like the children of Israel in the Red sea."

"But hast thou also a message suited to youth and its impatience with things as they are? What tasks worthy of their powers dost thou set before the young?" I asked. "What project for the building of a better world?"

A cloud settled on her brow. "Brother," she said, "I may as well admit it. The young crowd has got me stymied. And the sad part of it and what seems to me awfully unfair is that I really like the young folks. Honest, I'm just nuts about them. Why, when I first started out I used to picture myself with the college boys eating out of

my hand — like one of the biggest movie stars when she makes a personal appearance. But ” — tears wet her eyes and her voice was sad — “ I have a hunch that they’re giving me the raspberry most of the time in spite of my appeal. I’m being driven to the conclusion that religion isn’t the kind of thing that gets hold of the young. I guess it just naturally doesn’t interest people until the world goes flat and stale on them. Now I wouldn’t admit that to everybody, brother, but somehow you seem to have gotten under my skin.”

“ Art certain,” I asked gently, “ that there is justification for the manners and forms by which thou dost open up the hearts of men to God? ”

“ Well, if there isn’t you can’t blame me. You’ll have to lay that on God’s doorstep. He created us male and female, didn’t he? He made me a knockout, didn’t he? ” Her voice was now slightly querulous. “ Besides, look what a success Hollywood makes of sex appeal. Why shouldn’t religion cash in on the same thing? ”

“ Dost thou hope that thou mayest thereby help to build a new world founded on justice and brotherhood? ” I asked.

“ You can search me, brother,” she answered with a shrug. “ I’ve never thought about that. My job is to jack people up so they’ll be able to bear as Christian men and women what God sends them in the kind of world we’ve got.”

And I continued my search for a prophet.



The minister paced the central aisle of his new church, calling upon God to behold the beauty of the work. When I joined him, he began at once to point out those things



in which he took particular pride. "Have you ever been in Chartres?" he asked. "Yes? Well, by George, you will observe that the general impression one gets here is remarkably the same. We're not so elaborate, of course, but the spirit of the medieval cathedral is here, and with greater effectiveness, perhaps, because of our compactness and simplicity. Look at the glass in that rose window. Isn't it a perfect imitation of the Chartres blue? And you will note, if you are acquainted with medieval glass, that the window in the north transept is designed after the manner of the Tree of Jesse window. And see the wood in these choir stalls. One would swear, judging by its silky patina, that it had been aged for centuries. But it's new wood made to look antique by a clever process. Purely chemical."

He turned and faced the chancel.

"I venture to say you'd take the altar and the cross to be five hundred years old. Wouldn't you, now? Well, they're not. They were made last year in the atelier of a famous French craftsman. But they're genuine Caen stone, both of them. Cost a sizable fortune — the gift of one of our most prominent and devoted members."

He turned about and walked toward the narthex.

"I think the grace, the effortless spring, of those pillars down the aisle is one of the most remarkable features of the whole building. Would anybody suspect the stone of being a mere casing over structural steel? The soaring line of the Gothic is faultlessly simulated. Modern methods of building can get these effects much more directly than could the cumbersome, circuitous methods of the past. By George! there's life in those pillars and the vaulting above. Yes, we're much smaller, but I flatter myself we've caught the essential spirit of Chartres."

"The appearance, perhaps," I granted him, albeit his

complaisance irked me. "But to know the spirit would require that thou hadst known a medieval cathedral while it was building. Thou shouldst have seen the people of a town drawing the stone from the quarries, themselves roped to tumbrils and sledges, and the towers rising stone by stone until they seemed in a particular sense to touch the sky. Thou shouldst have been in Chartres when the glassmaker —"

The minister broke in on my speech: "Excuse me for one moment, friend," and departed to say to one who had entered the narthex: "You won't mind, will you, if I leave you to wander around for a few minutes by yourself? But don't go until I see you. There are some special features that I want to point out and explain. I've got the queerest old customer in there with me now. Talks as though he were present when they built Chartres cathedral. I'll not let him keep me long."

Whereupon he came back to me, saying: "You see, as I have already suggested, the controlling idea here is beauty — the 'beauty of holiness,' one might say. What a world this would be if people would just soak their souls in beauty! Why, when you stop to analyze it, religion itself is the cult of the ethically beautiful, and its supreme act the soul of man adoring the beauty of God. The problem is first to create surroundings that will lift man away from the world and then to formulate a ritual that will clothe his spirit in a mood that answers to the perfection of the Absolute."

But even as I contemplated this program whereby a man while yet living should for an hour a week be lifted into heaven, he continued: "Now the old plant had none of the externals that create the mood. A great bare auditorium, ugly pews, hideous glass in the windows, squared off and colored like kitchen linoleum, the organ case smack

in the middle behind the pulpit, the pulpit itself in the exact center of the rostrum. But now see! ”

Whereupon he mounted the pulpit and, after rubbing with his palm over its silky surface, began making gestures this way and that, saying: “ Here we have a real chancel, with pulpit and lectern, one on either side, as they should be. And there, the central object, focal point of the worship, the communion table or, more properly, the altar. I hope to get candles on it as soon as the atmosphere of the new church has had time to work on my congregation. You know, a candle does things to me. Nothing so gives me the summons to worship, so bends my knees before God, if you will permit the metaphor, as the pure flame of a candle burning on the altar in the softly colored twilight of a church. My wife says I’m a born mystic. Perhaps I am. I’d have incense and everything else if I thought the people would stand for it.”

Now I had it in mind to ask him, when he should pause for breath, what bearing he conceived this manner of religion to have upon the re-creation of the world in righteousness. But there was no need, for he continued: “ It is my conviction that the church has made a mistake in letting itself be drawn into interests that are outside its rightful province — politics, international affairs, muddleheaded social theories. As I see it, religion is one of the fine arts — the chief of them. All other branches of aesthetics should be made available as her handmaidens. The service itself ought to begin somewhere and go somewhere, have a recognizable point of departure and a climactic point, with moments of relief and repose between. Every smallest feature, the prayers, the anthems, the sermon, everything, ought to be prepared and rehearsed as carefully as the actor’s part in a secular drama.”

Whereupon he took a small Bible from a shelf within



the pulpit and read with a sonorous voice quite different in accent and in tone from that which he used for ordinary conversation, then listened, his head inclined to one side, as the echo came back hollow from its wanderings in the nave.

“But to get back to our theme. As I was saying, worship is a fine art, akin to poetry and the nobler elements of the drama. But I’m still mightily interested in the sermon. The priestly function hasn’t lessened my sense of the importance of the prophetic office.”

And he descended with stately steps from the pulpit.

“You know,” he resumed, “the sermon as an artistic creation seldom gets the attention which it deserves. Now I hold that there’s no earthly reason why a preacher should not know for himself and give to his people the best that has been said in philosophy, drama, general literature and poetry — and theology, of course — all the rich elements of a rounded culture. ‘The good, the beautiful, the true.’ Ah! You remember Goethe? And Matthew Arnold’s definition of culture?”

Whereupon, instead of answering him, I took occasion to put mine own question, albeit not in the form that I had intended, and I said: “Thou speakest of beauty as the means of bringing men to God. What of those who must live their lives in such wise that they find little beauty at hand and have not time, nor substance, nor energy to pursue the soul-building elements in which thou dost rejoice?”

“Ah, yes! God’s poor,” he said in a voice unctuous with professional compassion. “I admit that life is hard for some folk, nor do I forget them in my supplications. Does not religion itself teach that God bears the poor on his heart? But you must remember that I have the particular and very exacting task of ministering to those whom the will of God has entrusted to my care. I can’t feed their

souls on economics. My people do their full share of good works. They are the most generous in the city. But they simply refuse to have all the problems of society dumped into their laps every Sunday. Don't you realize that a man who's worked hard all the week, carrying burdens more crushing than any the poor have to bear, has a right to expect that on the sabbath day he may rest from his labors and get refreshment and inspiration for his soul? Honestly now, isn't it my plain duty to comfort and soothe tired men from my pulpit, so they may go back strengthened for the weekly grind in bank and office and on exchange? "

"That would depend in all ways, it would appear to me, on whether they have been made tired by the doing of the right," I said. "If they are set in the pursuit of shallow things, and do harm to others because of it, might it not be well that they understand what they do in order that they might make redress? No credit to a man is it if he be worn in a bad cause, and I fear it will be much to the detriment of religion if thou dost soothe and refresh men so that they may do evil in a larger way with an easy conscience."

"I see that you're bound to draw me into an argument," he said smilingly, "but I'm just as determined not to be drawn. Argument takes a long time, and I have a friend waiting." Then, extending his hand to me, he said, "It has been a pleasure, I assure you, to show my church to one who knows his Chartres."

It was plain to see, I thought, that the prophet's mantle had not fallen on this man's shoulders; no, nor on any of his kind, of whom there was no lack.



Now I have never taken great thought concerning the matter of dress, albeit there are those who have spoken

from the pulpit against this form and against that in my behalf. Yet did I upon one occasion receive invitation to present myself at a gathering in a fashionable hotel, and I knew from the wording of it that I might not appear except in a white tie, as the saying goes among men.

When I entered the lobby, I saw that men and women richly appareled moved through it toward the ballroom, and as I tarried to observe them, one who sat in a chair arose and addressed me, saying, "Brother, are you a Grouper?"

Though this expression was new to me, I interpreted it as meaning the stream of people, and said I was not of their number.

"Then for God's sake, come and sit down and talk to me," he urged, and I complied with his request.

Whereupon he said: "I ain't one of them neither, thank God. But my wife, bless her heart, thinks the movement is the real society thing. Was crazy to be in on one of their house parties, as they call them, and since I'm retired I didn't have any excuse I could work for not coming with her. Been here two days now. God! And five more to go through. But if any more of these brothers and sisters get me into a private conversation and start fishing around inside my soul for what they can find I ain't going to be able to stick. My soul's my own, dammit."

Of his remarks I could make nothing. Wherefore I attempted to turn the conversation by asking whose party it was that he and all the others were attending.

"Say, brother, ain't you in the know on any of this? Honest? Why, God Almighty himself is throwing this party."

Not because I was offended — for in these latter years I had accustomed myself to the light use of my name — but because I thought him touched in the mind I arose forthwith to leave. But he restrained me.



“Wait a minute, brother,” he pleaded. “Don’t you know about God?”

“I have followed his fortunes closely for many years,” I assured him.

“But do you know the latest? No? Well, brother” — he dropped his voice, leaned forward, and tapped the arm of his chair with his forefinger — “God has made the social register. Fact. The Junior League has learned that he can wear a tailcoat as well as anybody. Those folks going into the ballroom all dressed up ain’t going to a dance like you probably think. They’re going to meet God. What I mean, that’s a religious meeting in there. The idea, as clear as I can get it, is that while God’s always around ready to help everybody who gets into a jam, these people have discovered that he’s a gentleman at heart, and at his very best after six o’clock in the evening, and anybody who wants to get real chummy with him had better climb into a dress suit.”

He ran a fat finger between his collar and his neck and sighed. “They call their movement after that swell college over in England.”

His unhappy eye entreated me. “I can see you don’t believe me, brother. You think I’m nuts. All right; I don’t blame you. But look. See that fellow over there talking to the hotel manager? Yeah, the stocky guy. He’s the big works. When he’s through, go over and ask him. Maybe I got this thing wrong. You just go and find out for yourself.”

He took a cigar from his pocket, looked at it, glanced toward the ballroom as though uncertain of something, looked at the cigar again, then put it into his mouth. He heaved himself from the chair and walked rapidly toward a door that gave to the terrace.

Acting on his advice, I approached the man that he had

named. "Tell me," I said, when he was at liberty, "what thou and the folk here are about."

His round face beamed; his spectacles and bald forehead glittered.

"We are building a new world," he answered with warmth. "We are going to create a wholly new social order modeled after the early church. Our movement is literally sweeping the earth. Statesmen, international bankers, captains of industry, important people everywhere, the kind of folks you wouldn't expect to find taking much of an interest in the things of the soul, are endorsing it. Even youth in the colleges, that for so long has seemed impervious to religion, is being powerfully drawn to the Groups. You should see how they gather for week ends on the great country estates in England."

My soul rejoiced when I heard this report, and I said, "Tell me by what means thou dost propose to accomplish this world-wide society of Christian brethren."

He took out a silk handkerchief and mopped his brow. "By sharing."

"Ah!" I cried, "it hath the authentic note of mine early Christianity, of those days in Jerusalem when all put their possessions into a common treasury, and every man drew therefrom according to his needs. I had despaired of such a plan's being tried in these modern days inasmuch as the world has become so complex, but with the principle of equality and the motive of love behind it I doubt not that the practical working out will be readily accomplished."

"Wait," cautioned the leader. "Don't go off on the wrong track like that. When we speak of sharing we are not thinking of material things. Our purposes are far more noble than that. Materialism is the curse of our day, and it would be sad indeed if we could do nothing

but split up worldly possessions that are, after all, negligible when measured against the things of the spirit."

And seeing the wary look in his eye that I had come to expect during these latter years whenever Christian folk were challenged on the point of their possessions, I inquired what it was that his people shared if not their goods.

"Our spiritual experiences, the precious values of the inward being," he explained. "We share with one another our triumphs and also the knowledge of our sins, keeping nothing back through a false sense of shame. That is, we are supposed to hold nothing in reserve. But you know how reluctant some are to reveal certain weaknesses in themselves. So, when we have reason to suspect that one is holding something back, it becomes the peculiar function of our sharing to dig about in his soul until we find the things which he conceals and to bring them out into the daylight of our common knowledge. We help him to face squarely up to himself, particularly when there are unwholesome relations between him and others. Absolute purity is one of our ideals.

"You understand, of course," and he looked at me sideways, "that things are not always what they should be even between a man and his wife in the most intimate matters. You get what I mean? It may surprise you to hear it, but we often gain new sharers by letting men and women know that we are aware of maladjustments in those relationships that a false modesty would keep secret. There's great convicting power in absolute frankness. We believe God wants us to be our brothers' keepers and we dare not frustrate his purposes."

As he so spake a hopeful thought formed itself in my mind.

"Take out thy pen," I commanded.



He put his hand to his breast, and when it did but slip along the glossy bosom of his shirt, took instead a pen that lay ready to hand upon a desk.

I gave him a name and bade him write. He wrote with satisfaction. I gave him another and he wrote again. And so until he had twelve.

“These are pretty big people,” he said at the end. “Are they personal friends of yours who you think may be interested in the Groups?”

“The first,” I answered, “doth employ thousands of girls who, because of their small return in wages, exist below the level of comfort and decency. The second is a maker of munitions. The third has transferred to his own pocket the livelihood of widows and orphans. All of them profit evilly at the cost of their more helpless fellows. Go now and tell them of their sins.”

“Come, come,” he objected. “You don’t mean that. You know very well I can’t do such things.”

“Why not?”

“Because economic affairs are not our province. Our mission is to sinners only.”

“These are sinners.”

“Well, if they feel moved to bare their hearts to us we shall be ready to hear them sympathetically. But it would not be in good taste for one gentleman to meddle with another gentleman’s business affairs. It would be on a par with opening his letters.”

“But,” I said, “thou dost make boast of thine invasion of privacy. Thou wilt steal into the bedchamber to spy on a man and his wife. Yet thou dost tell me thou canst not remonstrate with one who is in wrong relationships with many thousands. Furthermore, these relationships of which I speak are not private. The whole world is privy to them and Christianity doth suffer much scorn for that it

is silent concerning them. Go now and do as I say if thou art in earnest about the matter of building a new social order."

"But you don't understand. The new order will come of itself when enough people are Groupers."

"Ah! Then thou hast a plan of action for thy Groupers?" I asked.

He welcomed the change of subject. His face brightened. He took off his spectacles and polished them on his ever busy handkerchief.

The spectacles back on his nose, he spake, and his voice was warm and confidential: "Our plan is simple to the point of genius. It is, frankly, to have no plan at all, but merely to follow the guidance of God, faithfully and without question. We don't have to bother about a mass of confusing details, in the midst of which the human mind must unavoidably go astray. God tells us every minute just what he wants us to do next. We take only one step at a time as he indicates. If he desires to have anything changed in the social order he himself will assume the responsibility and will move the right men — if they are Groupers — to do exactly what should be done. That's why we are so keen on getting the leaders of society to join us. They are the key men through whom God will work. Our part is to convert, or change them into sharers and subjects for guidance.

"Do you follow me, brother? One of the beauties of this whole movement is that we don't have to think. God does that for us. Every bit of it. Oh, if you could only know the spiritual blessedness of being totally free from worries, the peace that comes to him who, instead of wrestling with problems, throws them all before the feet of God."

"Dost thou not show too little respect for the mind of man?" I asked. "Over many years have I observed that

when good is brought to pass it is after men have thought and willed and labored. True, I have found a mysterious influence at work in the world that seems to come from beyond man, but it ever shows itself through men who are already arduously striving. The vast and complicated order, or disorder, in which this thy civilization exists will, I fear, not be set right without thinking and planning on the part of serious, unselfish men."

"Ah!" he sighed. "See how hard a thing it is to surrender one's stubborn mind and will wholly to God. You yourself are the proof of it. Just see how you hold on to your pet plans and purposes when you might rest the whole weight of your life, yes, and of the world's life, on the Infinite Soul."

Whereupon I asked him, "How dost thou know when thou hast the guidance of God?"

He seized the question eagerly. "Why, that's easy," he said. "In the morning we just submit everything that may arise during the day to God. Then in the evening we know that what we've done was God's will for us, and that what we haven't done he didn't plan for us to do. We never have any regrets or uncertainties. No sense of incompleteness, no qualms about things done or left undone. Whatever is, is right to the man perfectly guided. It's as simple as that. And yet millions of stiff-necked people will not see it. We've got hold of the thing that's going to sweep and change the world."

He seemed to sink into a deep well of thought. "What we really need, of course, is a God-guided dictator. Think what it would mean to the world if Mussolini surrendered to the control of God. Through such a man God could control a nation overnight, and solve every last bewildering problem. . . . Yes, every social problem could be solved through a God-controlled dictatorship."



From this I understood that he sought not as did I for a prophet to lighten and guide the souls of men in free adventure toward the right, but rather for a strong man with power to drive the masses.

He started to move away, pulling out his watch as he went.

“Wait,” I commanded, “I was about to inquire whether the Groups themselves, in default of a Mussolini of the spirit, move toward any clearly visioned ends.”

He thrust a printed slip into my hand. “Why sure; we’re going places. Next month we’ll hold a series of house parties in the Middle West. Then we’ll be in Canada, and after that out on the coast. Here’s the itinerary. But I just can’t give you another second. I must bear my witness in the meeting. The distinguished member of the Lithuanian Chamber of Deputies will finish in two minutes and a quarter. We run everything on exact schedule.”

And he added ruefully: “You made me miss his testimony. They tell me he was an intimate of Grand Duke Boris in the old days, and once had luncheon with the Gaekwar of Baroda.”

I was about to leave the hotel when I beheld the man who had first spoken to me making a sign with his hand. His face had the hue of embarrassment.

“Say, partner,” he began hesitantly, “please don’t get me wrong. I wouldn’t want you to think because of what I said a while ago that I’m against religion, or laughing at it. Not at all. I’ve been around a good deal and seen a lot in my day. And it’s like this about religion — I’ve seen fellows genuinely converted in churches and Sunday schools, in Billy’s tabernacle and Aimee’s temple and the Salvation Army. I even know a fellow who’s a lot better man because of something that he got hold of in one of these Groups. The way I look at it, there must be Some-

body or Something upstairs ” — he motioned heavenward with his thumb — “ who’s a lot bigger than any of their gods, so bighearted and kind that if a fellow’s in dead earnest, why he’ll help him. I don’t pretend to know anything about it, you understand, only I’ve got a hunch. But I just can’t see this god who’s dressed up like a head waiter, going around listening at keyholes in the bedroom doors, and taking orders and mapping out the day for everybody who’s too doggone lazy to grab life with both hands. That’s all I’ve got to say, partner. I just didn’t want you to get me wrong and maybe go sour on religion because of what I said. I got a lot of respect for religion, but hell, I don’t see after all that it’s getting us anywhere in particular these days.”

I knew not how to answer him. But I went away from that place musing on all that I had seen and heard. And I said:

“ Thou, Yahweh, in this day of thy bewilderment, dost seek a prophet, and findest the mountebank and the jester jangling their airs upon the nerves of men as on an ill-tuned harp. Yea, the erotic thou dost find, and the diletante; the aesthete also who burnisheth the altar rail and the holy chalice that he may see therein the reflection of his own face; and the sycophant who fawneth upon the rich and mighty what time he doth seek to make his god an hewer of wood and a drawer of water. These do fill the world with their mumblings and sell their panaceas for a price. They antic before the innocents and bask in the admiration of the untutored. But they see not their own day in the procession of the ages, nor descry any noble destiny for the race. No vision do they show to men, neither set they any worthy tasks for their hands. None doth see thee in thy struggle to become God of all. Nay, but each danceth

around the fetish that his own hands have made for the tribe that followeth him. And, like Aaron who set up the bull on the plain before Sinai, they cry to the people, ' Behold thy God! ' "

Wherefore I did understand why many just persons who felt the tragedy and yet read the promise in man's existence excused themselves when my belfries tolled out their competing invitations to worship.



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## XX

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### FORESHADOWINGS OF CHANGE

NOW I PERCEIVED that as I went about among certain loose-spoken men to whom the churches looked for guidance I was influenced by their graceless ways and was losing somewhat of the dignity proper to a god. For I saw some lift their brows, not troubling to hide their disdain of me, and I heard others whisper behind their hands, "Behold Yahweh, how he dances to the jazz measure." So did the ungodly mock my broken step when I essayed to walk with mountebank and charlatan to prove them whether they were prophets.

Wherefore I said: "Nay, Yahweh, it is not seemly for thee, the god, to give this occasion of offense. Henceforth remember thy majesty and forget not that thou art under bonds to the wise and good who have tutored thee. What though there arise no prophet to guide thee? Abide thy time patiently, holding fast to that which thou knowest from of old to be seemly."

And with respect to the past I had much to cherish. What other god had been whose certain remembrance began with a high adventure undertaken in company with a man like to Abraham? Which of their number had in-

spired bards like to my prophets who struck every major chord of man's spirit to hear it echoed in the voice of their god? Or to whom among those worshiped of men had it been given to read the Galilean's face?

Now, it hath been said, and truly, that he who keepeth his past keepeth himself, forasmuch as memory is a means whereby one doth lay hold on his own being. By so striving to hold in clear and steady remembrance the elements of my former life did I fortify my sense of being one and whole.

Nor did I lack scholars to uphold me through publishing anew the older teaching that I was no god of the passing day to be changed by the whims of every restless generation. These counseled their fellow men, saying, "In this unstable time we do well to worship Yahweh under the aspect of his eternity and to regard ourselves as citizens of the timeless realm wherein he dwells."

Wherefore I admonished myself again: "Order thy feet in a stately walk and let thine eye look toward the stars. It may be that thou canst cause men to lift their gaze above the works of their hand and to consider again the skies that yet glow with the light which gladdened thee in the fresh morning of thy days. So may man, though his fingers be busy with the putting together in hope and the tearing apart in despair of the elements of his material civilization, yet release his spirit to explore the immensities of the unseen world, its precious heritage."

And some I did persuade.

But there is no wholeness of being for him who cannot continue the meaning of his past by a present employment that looketh toward the future. And I said: "Alas, Yahweh! for all thy recovery of the past, thou art a god without present purpose or hope for time to come."

Now, even while I studied how I might enlist men once more in striving after the higher ends which I envisioned I

saw that there were millions who would not walk with me at all. As if awaking from a sleep I saw that the world was changed. Whole nations were estranged from me. The people of Russia scorned me and they of Mexico refused to let the doors stand open in my churches. For their rulers said, "We shall govern in the interest of the people without interference from the gods, because Yahweh who was our god has played us false."

These words troubled me.

I knew not that I had played falsely with any people. And I sought anew for that which is deepest in the heart of man, that I might join myself to it.

But as I went about in the places where Americans gathered, I found some grains of comfort, seeing that they who did me reverence were still so many. For as I wandered through their marts I saw the silver pass swiftly back and forth between the hand of the buyer and the hand of the seller, and I perceived that the coins were inscribed in mine honor: "In Yahweh is our trust!" I passed through their halls of government, and while the chosen leaders of the nation assembled therein I heard their priests seeking my favor: "Yahweh, bless thou the work of our hands!" I came where the final judgments of the law were handed down, and when the nine black-robed arbiters of fate moved to their places I heard a voice cry, "May Yahweh preserve this honorable court and the people of the United States!"



Now it befell that on a day when I moved about in the land which thus acclaimed me, I saw that the feet of all men seemed turned in one direction, and though I knew not whither the people went, or why, I joined myself to them. And we came presently to a city whose broad avenues were



bedecked with flags and all manner of ensigns, while from every street there echoed the sound of martial music and the shouts of throngs fired with a spirit of exultation.

And lo! the shame that had been brought upon me by reason of the jazz, and my forebodings by reason of the godless nations, fled before the noise of festivity. Then did mine own spirit begin to lift as, long ago, it had lifted what time Gideon and his host blew upon their trumpets in the night when they slew the Midianites. When the sound of the warrior music smote mine ear I saw that my feet fell to marking its martial beat, and when the shouts of the crowd rent the air I joined my voice to their clamor.

Of one who stood by I asked, "What great occasion for rejoicing and the gathering of the hosts is this?"

"Good God!" he answered me. "Where have you been? Why, it's the annual convention and jamboree of the boys." And when I asked him who were these boys he spake of, he said, "The boys who went in and won the war when the Allies were down and out."

Whereupon I perceived that, of the numberless throng, the greater part wore the habiliments of warriors, and that there were many upon whose breasts hung ribbons and medals to testify to their valor. And I rejoiced to find myself once more in the midst of a warrior host. Moved by the spirit of the multitude I went with confident step into a vast building whither the feet of those who acknowledged themselves heroes were tending.

And I saw that flags fell from every girder and balcony, and the sound of voices was as the sound of many waters. But one voice was there that burst with a roar from all the walls at once: "The convention will come to order. We will arise and stand at attention while the chaplain leads us in prayer."

Even as I wondered whether the chaplain would ad-

dress his prayer to me, his words came crashing like the voice of some mighty giant through all that place. I heard mine own name, and behold, it was as when I had been called in a former day by those who were my chosen people:

“We thank thee, O Yahweh, that we are not as other nations, coveters of territories not our own, fomenters of war, builders of unjust empire. We hold aloft the torch of truth, we furnish asylum for the oppressed, we grant equal opportunity to all, we are the unselfish benefactors of mankind. Alone among the nations, we have never waged an unjust war. We have clean hands. We are thy people, O Yahweh. Acknowledge us thy children, protect us from our enemies, and lead us in the day of battle.”

While I listened to this prayer which bound me so narrowly to a great people and offered me employment in matters near to the hearts of living heroes I repented me for that I had attended so closely to those who would turn my thoughts to the past. And I forgot my quest of a prophet.

Now as I waited in that gathering of tried and tested warriors I heard many words which they spake and the shouts of approbation which greeted their speaking. And inclining their way, I shouted with the others.

For there stood up one who cried: “It is well enough to boast that Yahweh gave this land to our fathers. But we, their sons, must protect it from the enemy within our gates. Are we aware of the aliens who at this moment may be conspiring to take the very bread from our mouths and leave our children in want? We must close our doors against all strangers and build high walls to shut them out if we would keep for ourselves the good things that Yahweh has given to be ours alone. There is enough to provide us with ease and plenty, but we must watch over our sacred

inheritance. Let us guard our glorious institutions against alien contamination, and let us keep the untold riches of this land for ourselves and our children."

And when a voice demanded, " Shall it be so? " all the multitude thundered, " Aye." Nor was the encouragement of my voice wanting.

And there came another who spoke: " What fools we are! We talk of defending the country and we leave ourselves without the means to do it. This fair and wealthy land which Yahweh has given to us is a prize sought by all the envious nations of the earth, and we tempt their greed by our defenselessness. The day will come when they will marshal their armies and fleets and will darken the skies with their bombing squadrons, and if we are not prepared we shall be an easy prey. They will destroy our cities and ravish our women and grind our children into subjection. Americans! let us prepare! Let us build an army and a fleet and an air armada that shall be more mighty than those of any other land. Let us devote the greater part of our nation's treasure to this purpose. Let us set every child in our schools to the study of the arts of warfare. And let us send our fleets abroad so that our ships may be seen in every port to put the fear of Yahweh into the hearts of peoples who may conspire against us and to show the nations that we intend to have our say about what goes on in the world."

Again a voice asked, " Shall it be so? " And all the multitude answered, " Aye! " And I joined with them.

At the end, one stood up whose garments glittered with the credentials of his valor, and he demanded, " How much longer shall we who have preserved this nation by our sacrifice go hungry in the midst of plenty? "

And his words troubled me, for the man did not look like to one who hath known hunger, neither did I see marks



of famine in any of those about me. But at his words there went up a shout. And he said, "What is an ungrateful government giving us for our blood?" And though many warriors cried, "Shame!" he glared about and continued:

"Look at the rich who idle in luxury, while we, who have known the bloody agony of battle, are in want. How long will this go on? Let us call upon the government to make us a fitting return for all our valor. Let us demand that, from this day forward, the wealth of the land be poured out to our advantage, so that the youth may know that this nation will leave nothing undone for those who fight its battles; so that the soldier, his wife and his children shall have the fat of the land, and be served forever by those who have not marched with the colors."

And before any voice could question there rose a shout which set all the flags in motion and echoed like the sound of thunder, "Aye!" And in that shout mine own voice joined.

While yet the place trembled with the great noise of the shouting, I heard the sound of a trumpet blown without. And all the warriors hastened from the place, and I with them. Then I came to a broad avenue where the people stood, as many as could find a place along the side, and sat in stands which had been built above the walks and in the windows of the buildings along the way. And I found a place in the midst of the throng and heard once again the sound of martial music.

And I looked where the multitude looked, and behold! a great forest of flags advancing in the sun. And as they whipped in the breeze and their colors gleamed, I felt that there was here some magic rite more moving than any which I had known. I bared my head, as did all those who stood about me. And as the music of the bands swelled

and the tramp of marching feet filled mine ears and the flags passed in review before me, my feet began to tap lightly against the pavement in time with the feet of the marching men.

And I wondered at that display of might. For the day mounted toward meridian and then passed into the afternoon, and the shadows of evening fell, but not once did the tide of marching heroes cease to flow. Never did the sound of the trumpet fail, nor the roll of the drums die away. And as I thought that these were the warriors of a land which had proclaimed me its god, I knew that I, Yahweh, was lord of a people surpassing all others in wealth and power.

The sun sank and the night came on, and great beacons of light flared above the avenue. And in that strange illumination the blare of the music and the tramping of feet did not abate. The flags, and the bands, and the ordered hosts continued to emerge from the darkness and to march for a space through the radiance of that light and then to pass again into the darkness. The spirit of the host seemed to lift me up and my feet tapped more and more insistently upon the roadway. Then there swept out of the darkness a company with banners and trumpets and drums like to the companies which had gone before. But I perceived that behind this company there marched no others; and I knew that it was the end of the procession of the nation's warriors.

And I lifted my voice in a last shout of approbation, and let my feet lead me where they would. So that, when the procession of the armed host passed in review before its commanders, lo! at the very end, rear guard to the flags and the trumpets and the drums and all the panoply of war, strode I, Yahweh, the nation's god.

Nor was there a prophet to turn my feet to other paths.



Thereafter I did call to mind again the words of Nannar, the moon-god, how he said, " Let him who would be greatest among the gods find that which lieth deepest in the heart of man." And I was forced to consider more searchingly what long I had avoided — whether my universal godhead were a dream impossible to be realized. And I was disquieted.

But as time passed, and I saw how like was the spirit of America to the jealous tribalism of Israel, I bethought me: " Even should I be called to renounce the Christian hope of world-wide domain, yet would the mood of this Pilgrim people afford me room to be again the kind of god I was in Canaan. And on how grand a scale! " But nay, the thought was unworthy of my godship.

Yet when I took closer account of other nations the thought grew upon me.

In Britain I beheld how the churches were adorned with statues erected in honor of mighty warriors whose sword had brought other peoples low and added glory to the nation, and how in a principal cathedral the colors of the companies that had won fame in battle had chapels all their own. My people were much given to singing in praise of the empire: " God that made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet! " Oft went I into Westminster Abbey to read from a stone let into the floor:

BENEATH THIS STONE RESTS THE BODY  
OF A BRITISH WARRIOR

brought home from France to lie among the most illustrious of the land and buried here on Armistice Day, 11 November, 1920, in the presence of His Majesty King George V, his ministers of



state, the chiefs of his forces, and a vast concourse of the nation.

Thus are commemorated the many multitudes who during the Great War of 1914–1918 gave the most that man can give, life itself

### FOR GOD

for King and country, for loved ones, home, and Empire, for the sacred cause of justice, and the freedom of the world. They buried him among the Kings because he had done good toward God and toward his house.

I marked the reverence of them that stood round about and saw how deeply they were moved by the simple beauty of this memorial and by the eloquence of its phrases. And I was myself moved in the presence of the unknown heroic dead.

But a thought that tended in another direction held me.

“This people doth link my name,” I said, “with king and empire in a trinity whose ends are served by the grim rites of war. Their scholars and churchmen so read my nature that they make the shedding of man’s blood an act of good toward mine house. To them the house of their god is as the house of Windsor. And here in this stone they fear not to name me the consort of their imperialism.”

Faintly through the nave sounded a distant chant: “— as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.”

“Yea,” I said, “as in the beginning! This and all the nations of Christendom call on Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but their expectation is that Yahweh, the warlike and jealous god of Canaan, will answer them.”

And I pondered this and what change in mine estate it might foreshadow.

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## XXI

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### WORD OF BELONGING

IN THE EARLY days when I was god in Palestine I learned to know a prophet by the authority of his summons and by the certainty that spake in his counsels. But never, even in those days, did I receive a call so peremptory as that which now came to me out of the land of the Teutons, nor instructions that sounded so completely sure. Yet these commands, for such they were, appeared to deny me attributes which I had come to regard as peculiarly mine own. Howbeit, I said, "Mayhap it so seemed when mine elder prophets laid their plans newly before me, and I have but forgotten." Nor did I refuse to hearken.

It came about in this manner.

A man of the German church, whose name has since become known by reason of his appointment to the office of bishop of the realm, bespake my presence during a crisis which promised, he said, either ill or great good for the cause of religion. And responding I found two men seated in a room of state, of whom one wore a soldier's uniform and the other the habit of a cleric.

And the cleric addressed me not of his own will, nor did the soldier address me save by indirection through his companion.

"To begin with," said he, "it is necessary that we make the Herrgott understand that I am a positive Christian. Than myself, Müller, there is not a more apt-to-hate-the-Jews man in all Germany — no, not in the whole world."

From the table he took up a thick volume, saying: "In this much admired book I have written that in fighting the Jews I have been doing the work of the Herrgott; and again, that true religion must be intolerant; that not with building its own altars may it rest content. To destroy the altars of the heathen (of whom the Jews are the worst) is required of it by every consideration of churchmanship and statecraft. From my youth I have been the sworn enemy of atheism and Jewry. Let him who questions my devotion to Christianity prove otherwise."

He glared at me as if haply it might be I who should gainsay him, then instructed the cleric, "Make a note of it that if the Herrgott seeks to take part in our councils he be required to read Alfred Rosenberg's *Protocol on the Elders of Zion and the Jewish World Politics*."

Indignant that he should speak contemptuously of my first people, I said with some warmth: "I shall enter no defense of the Jew. But what of that Christianity which you say you revere? A Christian by his profession commits himself to the loving of all men. He cannot hate the Jew or any."

But the soldier lifted his shoulders and spread forth his hands as one halted in argument by the unreason of his opponent. Then he pointed at me a finger that shook like a leaf on its branch, and holding me so, turned and said to his companion: "You see! It is as I told you. The Herrgott believes in abetting the survival of the unfit."

I shrank before the accusation of his finger.

"The Herrgott," he continued, smiting upon the table, "is a victim of the soul-rotting Christian morality against



which Nietzsche wrote so cogently. Make of it a note that he be required to read also the works of that admirable scholar."

Now I had heard in Christian circles that Nietzsche was an eccentric who finished his days in a madhouse. And I so said.

And the Reichsführer, for so I understood the soldier was called, shouted: "Tell the Herrgott that I resume my speaking. Tell him that at the moment of his interruption I was about to explain how the principles that originated in the inglorious period of the Hebrew prophets and later corrupted the world through the debilitating influence of Christianity have ruined him. His fostering of love for the enemy, which destroys the manly fiber of the soul; his doctrine of burden-bearing, employed by the weak to make a pack ass of the strong; his encouragement of self-sacrifice, his amiability toward everyone, are exemplifications of what the great Nietzsche has aptly called a 'slave morality.'"

Then, making a great show of patience, he entreated the future Reichsbishop, "Have the goodness, my friend, to ask the attention of the Herrgott."

Once more he faced me, and his taut figure gave me to think of some hero from the days when the men of the northern forests were not yet of my fold. And I considered whether there might not be a mystical force from without making use of him as its chosen instrument. For I be-thought me of what energies had blazed in the frail body of Paul. I let this thought have rein and, musing on this title of Reichsführer by which he was called, I understood how his magnetism had drawn the German millions to him.

Nevertheless, even while I admired the power of the man, I seemed also to look upon a day and place that antedated my clear memories of Ur. And I saw, locked on the dim

plains of that olden brutal world, hordes of manlike beings who were something less than men.

Yet, though inly disturbed, I heard him when he spake again, "You will make clear to the Herrgott that our business is not with the *verdammt* Jew, but with himself."

Whereupon he arose from the table, walked across the room, and for a moment stood facing a picture that showed him haranguing his troops. And now, noting his step and carriage, I could not but mark a confidence that set him apart from them who had but lately offered themselves to me as prophets. They were gropers in the dark; here was one who knew the way he took and would suffer no obstacles to stay him.

And I bethought me: "Mayhap a god's continuance depends upon a nice sense of direction. That god surviveth long who taketh note when the currents of humanity are turned aside into new channels, nor doth he lack for followers who himself goes upon the stream that is in spate. It may be that the old order of things passeth and that the leaders of men no longer wear the prophet's mantle or the saint's shirt of hair, nor yet the gown of the scholar. And if we be come to an age when man will follow none but the willful, then only by giving his word for that same leadership can a god longer be companion of mankind."

And it was as though a voice spake clear to me: "Cease thy vain search for a prophet, Yahweh, and claim the strength of this mighty man for thine own."

Wherefore, feeling that mine admiration of his personal force had reason, I yielded myself to it more fully; and when he spake again I marked that though his voice was harsh, yet there lingered a winning beauty in the overtones of its wrath.

"You will say, Müller, that not for the whole world given into my hand would I utter what might seem deroga-

tory to the Herrgott. But regard for the interests intrusted to my keeping demands that I use plain speech. Let the Herrgott take account of his godship and see what the softer strain of Christianity has done to him. Let him remember with shame how he cherishes the crippled, the flabby and the indigent; how since the late war he has countenanced a degenerate pacifism; how he has discredited the forthright manliness of the more heroic races, as here in Germany. Mention his deference to weeping, pleading women who have only a desire for security rather than a heroic spirit. He concerns himself too much about the home and conjugal relationships and the care of children. Too little does he promote the noble, tender love between heroes of the battlefield which characterized Julius Caesar and Frederick the Great."

He opened a drawer in his table, and though he spake not concerning them, I saw that under his hand were plans for new fortifications along the French border; and maps of the Ural mountains and the Ukraine, which pertained to Russia. And because I knew what was in his mind my hand twitched as once it had in the presence of Constantine.

But when he lifted his head from the study of these papers and shook the virile lock that hung over his brow, he gazed on me blankly. And I liked not that this masterful man could so soon forget me.

Yet even as I would have departed he drew down his brow in a frown of recognition, saying: "Müller, you will now try to make the Herrgott understand that the Will to Power is the most sublime of virtues, in default of which neither man nor nation is fit to live. It is the source of all individual and racial greatness. Remind him, Reichsbishop, that he himself had it at one time."

Nay, in his presence there was no need that any remind



me of the brave days that once I had known in the company of the willful and strong.

The cleric flushed with pride when the Leader called him "Reichsbishop," thus letting him know as if by accident what was in store for him did he show himself apt in dealing with me.

"You will ask the Herrgott whether he prefers the world of weaklings that he now has or the glorious world of heroes that he might have. Make it plain that the time for choosing has come; that he cannot be god of both the broken and the strong. It is forbidden. I forbid it."

He reached over and took Müller by the arm, and I winced as though myself felt the grip of his fingers. "Tell him that here in Germany our people, and especially our glorious youth, have waked to an appreciation of that magnificent primitive force which inheres in the Teutonic peoples and that they insist upon a god in whom they may recognize a force comparable to and transcending their own."

Now at an early point in his argument I had begun to see how the humanitarians had deceived me and had kept me from treading those paths of glory which my feet were naturally inclined to seek; how the ruin of my godhead had been wrought by doctrines urged upon me under the guise of idealism. And now I knew beyond peradventure that what I needed was not a prophet but a man who could make the world tremble. Wherefore I said, "He shall be my captain and I shall be his God."

Yet, lest I seem weak and pliant and therefore not worth the winning, I did not submit without first attempting to introduce stipulations of mine own, arguing that if the virile from all races were welded into a brotherhood we should soon have a kingdom of heaven on earth. But presently I perceived that I was becoming entangled in a web of ideal-

ism. Nor did the Leader hesitate to make a gesture that bade me hold my peace.

“You see, Reichsbishop, the Herrgott is not merely incompetent in practice; he is also unsound in doctrine. Müller, *the Herrgott does not comprehend the theory of Race!* After dealing with nations for thousands of years, even after what Chamberlain has said about the Teuton, he does not comprehend the rudiments. It is amazing, Reichsbishop! It is impossible! But no! It is true. And why? Because so long has he been striving to construct a ‘humanity’ from highly differentiated races and polyglot peoples that he has grown blind to the very end and purpose of creation — Race.”

His voice dropped to a solemn tone as he continued: “Reichsbishop Müller, I lay on you a heavy charge. You will instruct the Herrgott in this matter of Race. You will convince him that all human greatness inheres in Race. You will show him, moreover, that races cannot be intermingled, the weak with the strong, without causing the strong to lose those characteristics which make them superior. You will see to it that the Herrgott considers the Indo-Aryan peoples who were in the beginning endowed by nature with those qualities which make an ethnic stock vigorous. Have him observe how through admixture of other strains the virility of that once great stock has been destroyed so that today no one expects heroic action of the diluted blood.”

He caressed the veins on the back of one hand with the fingers of the other.

“I would have the Herrgott understand,” said he, “that there remains in the world only one pure-blooded racial stock that still preserves in itself all the elements necessary to the superior state. We of Germany are determined to keep that race free from alien taint, to the end

that we may achieve our sublime destiny and that the world of degenerate races may have a competent leadership — yes, a competent master.”

I considered this theory, admiring its logic. Nor could I gainsay the historic reference that justified the reasoning. It would be unavailing, I knew, to attempt to express my thoughts, but the Leader must have read mine admiration, for he said: “Now let the Herrgott know the object which I had in mind when I required his presence here. Put it in this manner, Reichsbishop: Throughout his career he has been concerned with the soul — which is good. But always it has been the individual soul; and that is bad. We now ask him to contemplate the Folk Soul, the most majestic conception in the universe. The Folk Soul finds its expression in the collective life of a pure-blooded race, in the common aspirations, the characteristic modes of thought, the artistic and philosophical pattern, the distinctive institutions — in short, in the spirit which informs and directs the total life of a highly differentiated ethnic stock that has been kept free from crossbreeding.”

So spake the Reichsführer; and his eagerness to convince was not greater than mine to be convinced. For I now foresaw the flowering of that hope which once I had entertained, of raising up a great race from the loins of Abraham. Though not of Abraham’s fathering, here was a people such as I had dreamed of being god to — numerous, warlike and strong. And I knew that the Leader was about to offer its folk soul to be molded of me.

But when I sought for words I could say only, “This thy thought is most sublime.”

Yet this sufficed. The Leader lifted his brows, nodded slowly to the Reichsbishop, and said: “It is as you foretold, Müller. The Herrgott is apt to learn.”



And now for the first time he addressed me, not through the cleric, but directly:

“Attend, Herrgott. The Folk Soul, like the soul of the individual, must have an organism through which to work its will. That organism is the Folk State, which is coeval with the Folk Soul as is a man’s body with his spirit. And just as the body cannot live if it be dismembered, the Folk State cannot live unless its component parts make a totality. . . . Does he follow me, Reichsbishop?”

Müller nodded. “I think so, Reichsführer.”

“ . . . Hence we have in Germany the totalitarian state, which does not exist by suffrage of the people but as a primal, mystical entity, embodying and controlling every interest and expression of the people’s life — industry, commerce, education, arts, sciences, the family, religion!

“Now, Herrgott, religion is one of the principal interests of the people, the church one of their strongest and most characteristic institutions. Church and religion must lend themselves completely to the ends of the totalitarian state or cease altogether to exist. I, the voice of the Folk Soul, demand this of you.”

When I gave him as favorable a reply as I thought consistent with my majesty, promising to think on the matter, he sprang erect. And though I shrank before the threat of anger in his face and posture, yet was I drawn the more strongly by this new sign of his unreserved commitment to a purpose.

For the putting forth of his will, terrible to behold, the hot raging of his consecrated energies, were to me a forecast of decisive action that proclaimed him more than a prophet. The age of halting persuasion was past; the day of ringing command and swift-striking power had returned in the person of this man. The way was open for me to

become what I had been of old time, god and defender of one people only, bound to them by mutual jealousy. Once I had been simple, direct, had known the fierce joy of matching my will and might against the might and will of others. I had been proprietary god of the tribe, owning my people frankly and gladly owned of them. All this would I be again.

But the Leader was speaking: "Think?" he cried thickly. "Who will think when I have spoken? It is to do; not to think."

The Reichsbishop took him timidly by the arm and timidly spake: "It is the Herrgott, my Reichsführer; remember it is the Herrgott whom millions in Germany worship. You must not so speak to him. Moreover, I think the Herrgott will concede all you ask."

But albeit wrath had so taken toll of his strength that he sank upon a chair, the Reichsführer abated no whit of his purpose, but said:

"Then let the Herrgott understand that he has not a clear field, that there are many who demand that we adopt as a symbol of our totalitarian state one of the old folk deities, a hardy god of the ancient forest cult, an aboriginal Teuton, a fighter out of the folk literature who will stand with Germany against the world, whose worship will encourage the German spirit, one who will make no apology for being a strictly national god. What embarrassment I shall suffer from the fact that the Herrgott was once a Jew! But I can face it provided the Herrgott will now consent to declare himself an exclusive Reichs-Christian; for there is much to be said in favor of establishing as the national cult a religion which has shown the survival values that Christianity has. Its deficiency in point of teachings can easily be corrected."

And after a pause that was more meaningful than fur-

ther speech could have been, he added, "I know that so prudent a one as the Herrgott will choose wisely for Germany and himself."

On that word we exchanged our pledges, his to permit my presence in the land, mine to be ever worthy of this confidence.

Whereafter, wiping the sweat from his brow, he said, "Müller, you may now give the Herrgott our word-of-belonging."

And the Reichsbishop, speaking softly lest any hear, gave me this password:

*"Blood and Soil."*

As wings for my remembrance were these words from other days. Through the windows came the fragrance of the trees. But I saw not lindens growing between the pavements. Nay. Ranks of olive trees shouldered one another on a gentle hill, cedars clung to their crag above the valley, date palms rimmed the pool, and the rose of Sharon stood by the brook where fat kine muzzled the water and the flocks came down to drink. I heard not the noise of traffic, but the ram's horn blown from the housetop; and the sound of it invoked a nobler music — the song of arrows in flight, the ring of iron swords.

"Reichsbishop," said I, taking care to address him only, "three thousand years ago I was god of the soil and protector of the chosen blood. And though in ages since, when prophet and Christian teacher led me forth on alien roads in quest of universal godship, I have ofttimes been recreant to blood and soil, thy mention of the words doth bear me away to mine own land and people. Yet not away. For a great light hath dawned on me whereby I now see clearly that *the Reichsführer is a Jew* — a Jew like my people of ancient times. And ye Germans are all Jews, despite that ye persecute Israel after the flesh. Aye, in



point of tribal spirit and in hatred of them who possess what ye covet, ye differ no whit from my Hebrew tribesmen who took Canaan by the edge of the sword and worshiped me with blood sacrifice. Ye belong to Yahweh by spiritual inheritance. And by land and blood, ye shall have no other god before me! ”



When the Queen of Sheba enjoyed Solomon's hospitality and the king's liberal affections were thought not to suffer hurt of her dusky charms; when the black Cyrenian relieved Christ of his cross; when Candace's Ethiopian eunuch took the footsore evangelist Philip into his sumptuous chariot — I had not learned to make distinction among men of differing skins.

But in course of time certain peoples of the Western world had stolen the black man to be their slave, even as the Romans had made the fair-haired Angles their especial prey, so that blackness of skin had come to stand for servitude.

Moreover, the white man had carried my torch with his own books of account into the homelands of black and brown and yellow races, striving ever to make himself master where he went. And as between master and slave, empire and dependencies, I, despite missionary attempts to make me universal God, had learned to think of myself as god of the white folk in particular. Yet I spread the banquet of salvation under the eaves of trading posts and beneath the ramparts of garrison houses and bade the heathen partake freely of that spiritual food which made their conquerors strong. And not a few did eat.

Then did I answer the prayers of Asian, African and Polynesian, while still knowing myself to be god of the Western world, an intruder in alien parts.

Thus it came to pass that I gave ear in Manchuria to the representations of a Chinese Christian community that made complaint of Japan.

And seeing the Christians harried by Japanese soldiery, I inquired of the chief officer by what right he troubled the people.

The officer took no offense but spake me fair, saying: "Let me assure the Honorable One of the West that we punish only those who defy our just and necessary edicts and obstruct measures adopted solely for the good of this unthankful land, in obedience to the will of our gracious master."

And when I asked what good ends the intruders intended toward a country not their own, he again chose gracious words for his reply: "We have come, Illustrious One, that a disordered nation may be taught to respect the ordered ways by which alone may be made to flourish that fair tree of civilization which is as the pine of heaven to the people of my celestial home as it is to the Honorable West. We Japanese, by virtue of the proficiency that we have attained in the Western arts of peace and war, are the rightful guardians of order in the Eastern world. And though the Occident has seen fit to discriminate against our race, we know that we are of the celestial blood and fit to stand on a parity with Western empires."

Hearing such fair words spoken by one whose appearance stamped him plainly with the seal of competency, I pressed for knowledge of his land and customs, and especially of that master whom he served.

And he said: "Our Master is heaven-born. He is in the lineage of the sun-goddess, whose home on the high plain of heaven is shrouded in the pearly mists that gather over the mountains of the Sunrise Isles. This ancestral goddess and all the *Kami* of earth and heaven long ago breathed their own valor into the Samurai, that class of

estimable warriors who through many generations carved out the channels of our national life with the sword. And even now we who accept our responsibility of subduing the Eastern hemisphere look to goddess and *Kami* for courage in battle, trusting that they will grant us a manly death on the field or in the sea, and after the hero-death a welcome through the gates of the sun. Because we know that in our blood runs the heavenly strain, we ask of life no better gift than the right to lay it down in some brave act that will heighten the prestige and extend the rule of our celestial land."

And he added: "If the Illustrious One of the West will permit one unworthy as myself to express it, the gods of the Occident and Orient differ but little in what I take to be their principal function. I am impressed, Revered One, that all gods make it their business to encourage their peoples in subduing the earth."

His glowing eyes looked at me aslant. And he said, "I think it would be very nice if gods of East and West should some day measure their swords to the honor of all concerned."

So speaking, he bowed with a courtesy that made this forecast of strife seem a very benediction. And I, brooding on the misty mountains whereof he had spoken, thought of the giving of the law from cloud-wrapped Sinai. And I considered: "Could a branch of my far-wandering Israelites have peopled these isles in some forgotten time? Do mount and cloud enshrine a dim racial memory of me?"

I studied the officer closely, thinking first that I saw the trace of Hebrew traits in his features; then that there were none.

Nevertheless, Paul's great word sounded anew in mine ear: "The true Israel is of the spirit rather than of the flesh." And I saw how the apostle, albeit he missed the



sense in which it was true, had nonetheless spoken by the facts. These Japanese, boast as they might about their vague goddess of the sun, belonged once to Yahweh by indissoluble bonds of spiritual kinship.

And I would have addressed the officer in those other words of Paul which he spake to the Athenians: "The god whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you," had he not given his resting troop the signal to fall in, thus forcing me to await some more convenient season. And he, unwittingly doing obeisance to his rightful god, smiled again, bowed, and departed.



"Make haste to deliver me, O God of Battles," a voice cried urgently from the land that lies round about the upper reaches of the Nile. "I am thy chosen and anointed, the paladin of Christianity in its purest form and the Lion of the Tribe of Judah."

He was a black man who thus cried, and though I saw that his features were cast in the Semitic mold, I inquired if haply he had misread his lineage and derived not from Abraham, but rather from Noah through Ham, the father of the black race.

But he answered: "Nay, I and my house are of the holy and royal blood, being descended directly from Father Abraham through Solomon the Wise. And my people are stout warriors who have bathed their swords in heaven, as the prophet said. If not for us, for whom then wilt thou contend? Arise and smite as of old for the land and blood that are holy. Deliver the children of the covenant from him of Italy who would rule us as once the Caesars ruled with heavy hand in Palestine."

Now I liked well the archaic flavor of his speech and

the pride that spake in his frank claim to Israelitish ancestry. But when I saw how few were his men at arms, and how ill equipped, I doubted how he might come off in contest with Italy.

Wherefore I said: "Thou sayest, my son, that thou art the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. The zeal of thy pretension is pleasing to me. Do but prove thy lionhood by making a jackal of this Roman, and I will own thee and thy people mine, despite that ye are few in number and inglorious among the nations."

And lo, while his plea yet rang in mine ear the united prayers of ten thousand priests called me into Italy where, in the chamber of a high ecclesiastic, I found a black-shirted man striding impatiently up and down. And this one spake to the prelate in a voice whose accent of military command borrowed a further authority from the round tone of the orator:

"It is my will that tomorrow at this hour you cause the carillon in every campanile and the bell of every parish church throughout Italy to be rung for the purpose of calling the patriots of each town into the plaza. There shall they hear by means of a national broadcast an oration of benediction and farewell which I shall deliver to my heroic troops before they embark for Africa, where they go to punish the barbarous blacks and to extend the felicity of our civilization to a people whose own rulers keep them in a state of inhuman slavery. Since the people of my land were the first to give to Christianity the imperial aspect, it is fitting that the priestly hand be laid to the bell rope when once again a Roman studies to obtain imperium."

His mention of empire led me to ask if he thought in terms of blood and soil. And he answered: "The Italian land and blood are sacred, assuredly. But Empire! It is an ideal, ah! of the utmost sacredness and of inspiring

majesty. It is order, rule, glory. It is of the essence of Roman tradition. Italian blood first, certainly. But any blood can fertilize the seed of the imperial ideal; any land can widen the imperial domain. For what is Empire? It is a matter of imposing an intelligent and indomitable purpose; of making ideals, customs and orderly process regnant everywhere over backward peoples. It is the Caesarean program of extending one just and competent system of government to the farthest possible reach for the felicity of governed and governor alike. Ah yes, for the governed especially, I assure you. It is economy, it is magnificence, it is universality. It is the system by which a minimum of force achieves the maximum of freedom and happiness. In brief, it is the method of the cosmos itself."

On the morrow the priests pulled on the bell ropes, and I with them. For did not the Holy Father himself permit the bells of the Vatican City to join their consecrated peal to the general summons?

Then, while the clamor filled the land, I drew near to where the militant one stood on the podium before the instrument that was to catch his burning words and scatter them abroad. With closed eyes and smiling mouth he swayed on the platform as one under a spell. And I thought how like he was to my captains of the long ago who danced before me ere they went out to battle, and again when they returned victorious.

I looked on the tossing throng. I saw their palms raised above their heads in the imperial salute. I heard the hoarse shouts of war-eager men and women's shrill cries of encouragement. The sound of them was as the hearth-fire songs of childhood heard when one has grown old in a country that was never home. And well content I yielded to these rhythms of primitive emotion. Nor



did I ask how he might judge this abandon whose image was on the altars beneath the bells.

When the last peal died the Leader flung his sword arm upward in salute to campanile and tower. “*Brava, brava,*” he cried. “It was magnificent, my priests.”

And though afterwards certain of the ungodly did wink and say, “So this Yahweh has become carillonier of empire and ringer of the bell to Il Duce,” I minded them not for joy that another mighty nation had stripped off the musty cerements of Christianity and revealed my primal godship for its people to worship.

And I said: “These Italians — are they not also Jews?”



Now, the Reichsführer had said, “I shall bend this Jewish Yahweh to my Nordic will or cast him out,” and Il Duce, knowing the power that I had in Italy of old time, had thought to entice me with the prospect of empire like to that which I had shared with Constantine. And I had thought it expedient to deal agreeably with them.

And there came up from the people of Britain a great prayer which bade my attendance at the crowning of their king. And I was constrained to answer them also agreeably.

For the rulers of Britain had always shown how courteous may be a nation's dealing with its god. The British in their vast emprise neither seek to coerce me nor deem it needful that they practice cajolery. They say with simple trust, “Our ways are the ways of Yahweh and our thoughts are his thoughts. Wheresoever our interest lead, there doth his blessing follow. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so for right and justice are the ends which our empire seeks high above the ends sought by lesser breeds without the law.” Yea, one of their lords did once

contend that his god was a gentleman, by which saying he did mean that I was an Englishman by disposition and procedure.

Now the prayers which bade me to the coronation perplexed me, for, having seen common men rise to supreme power in the German and Italian lands, I supposed that the day of kings had gone with the prophets' day. But when I inquired on this head, they that bore the rule in Britain answered: "It is not so with us. Our empire is scattered over the face of the whole earth, and the parts thereof tend to divide. Wherefore we do well to have a consecrated symbol of our unity, a sovereign begotten royally according to divine appointment, one in whom, also, we may discern the earthly defender of our English church. He it is who binds the people together and strengthens their will to maintain our just supremacy among the nations."

And even they that owned not allegiance to any god, neither revered any creed, said, "An odor mystical and, as it were, divine emanates still from the institution of royalty and gives cosmic sanction to our imperial enterprise."

Hearing these professions, I went obediently to the great Abbey of Westminster where the oil of anointing, the crown and the holy vestments were prepared against the coronation. And as I passed through the land I beheld that everywhere they that wrought at the making of ships and the fashioning of all the implements of war, as never before men had wrought, stayed their hands briefly from labor and confessed, "We are workers together with the heavenly and the earthly majesties for the defense of empire." After which they fell to work again with the greater industry.

Now when I came nigh to the abbey church I beheld the streets and open spaces thereabout thronged with peo-

ple. And along the ways hung cloth and lace of gold, the flags imperial and territorial, the banners of ducal houses and the pennons of knights-at-arms. And I saw flowing toward the great portal of the fane a splendid river of satin and velvet, brocaded stuffs and costly laces, ermine without price and jewels that burned with the sun of every clime, a living stream that moved through the blaze of color like a salamander in a lake of flame. And behold, it was a river of people — brewers and distillers, makers of munitions, purveyors of drugs, lenders of money and traders on Exchange, with here and there scions of ancient houses whose founders had risen to power in the days when England was yet little among the nations — peers of the realm, all of them, or men high in the councils of state or church. And their consorts were with them.

All being seated within the holy house, there came another procession of lords secular and lords spiritual, more splendid yet, with whom walked the king and the queen.

Then while the anthem swelled through the nave the voice of the common folk arose from every quarter of the land in a great confession: “ Our hope is in the empire that it will save us. For it shall furnish our food from afar, and God, even our own God, will clothe us from the ends of the earth.”

And while I watched within the abbey, the archbishop showed the king unto the chief men of the nation, who, seeing him, cried, “ Long live the king! ” Which thing being done, the archbishop gave forth the word that introduced the communion; and the lords spiritual laid the elements of Body and Blood upon the holy altar. And while Body and Blood waited lonely upon the altar the archbishop anointed the king with holy oil — his breast, his palms, his head.

Then came one who touched the king’s heels with the



golden spurs and afterward laid the spurs nigh to the paten and the chalice on the altar.

Close upon the rite of the spurs came a puissant lord bearing the great Sword of State which, having been shown to the people, was carried into the chapel of St. Edward. And the lord who had borne the Sword of State received in lieu thereof from the lord chamberlain another sword which he delivered unto the archbishop. And the archbishop laid it reverently upon the altar, where the gleam of it vied with the shining of the chalice of the Blood. And lo, when the sword touched the altar I heard a voice cry out as though the Eucharist itself were wounded. And the voice said, "Father, they know not what they do!"

But I answered, albeit none of those standing about heard: "Nay, they know well what they do. And I also know." And from beneath the altar, as from souls in a prison house, arose a cry, "How long, O Father most holy, shall we be slain of the sword?"

But the archbishop heard not the plaint from beneath the altar, nor yet the prayer of the Eucharist which it made by reason of the nearness of the sword, for he lifted a prayer of his own, saying, "Hear our prayers, O Lord, we beseech thee, and so direct and support thy servant the king who is now to be girt with this sword, that he may not bear it in vain; but may use it as the minister of God for the terror and punishment of evildoers, and for the protection and encouragement of those that do well, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And the archbishop took the sword from the altar; and I beheld that it gleamed redly as from the Blood of the chalice. But the Blood that was on the sword they saw not, neither the bishops nor the people. And he girded the king with the reddened sword. And he bade him bear his sword worthily in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Then the king ungirded himself of the sword and presented it before the altar. Afterward the lord who had first tendered the sword received it again at the hand of the dean of the abbey. And he carried it naked before the king.

Now I little marked the sword wherewith the king had been girded, for my thought followed the great Sword of State that went not to the altar but was carried apart from priest and people as though too holy for more than the brief touch of their eyes. Wherefore, yearning toward this so great symbol of majesty, I went after it into St. Edward's Chapel. And lo, the chapel was filled with men-at-arms whom I knew not, but knew that once I had known them. And, while all made obeisance to me, one of them led me to a scarlet altar whereof the people in the abbey were not aware. There he girded me with the great Sword of State that I now saw had been reserved even from the king for my use. And when I looked about to scan those who had dealt in so knightly a manner with me, if perchance I might recall their names and degrees to bless them, there was no man present. Wherefore I returned to the abbey; and I bore my sword naked before the king. And when I observed the king resplendent in his royal garments I laughed within me, albeit not without shame, for that I had once expected world domain from him whom they hanged naked on the cross.

While we waited the homage of the lords, both the king and I, Yahweh, the archbishop blessed the king, saying, "The Lord give you fruitful lands and healthful seasons; victorious fleets and armies, and a quiet empire." Hearing which blessing, I stretched forth my sword above the crown that was on the king's head in gesture of protection.

So standing, I looked and saw that a shaft of light fell upon the abbey wall that was before me. And it wrote as

once the hand had written at Belshazzar's feast. And I knew not the language in which it wrote, for it was like to none on earth. Yet I felt no disquietude, for that I drew assurance from the king, the great company of lords secular and lords spiritual, the brewers and makers of munitions, the purveyors of all things material, in whom I saw the strength and stay of empire. Especially was I assured by the Sword of State that was in my hand.

And I pondered again the prayer of him who praised me for that I was an English gentleman, and I said, "Nay, but these Englishmen, they are also my Jews."



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## XXII

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### BACK TO THE BEGINNING

I NOW GAVE myself to reflection.

“Thou, Yahweh,” I mused, “didst begin with a petty warlike tribe; and in this age thou hast many martial nations. It is because thou hast been a wise and subtle god. When thou didst turn from Moses to Joshua on the plain before the mount thou didst espouse that which ever liveth in the soul of man — the love of power. And now that thou hast rejected the universalism of the Galilean thou art again allied with force. Thou hast attained the only inclusive and continuous domain within reach of a god who would be companion to the human spirit. Thy universality lieth and ever must lie in the world-wide and timeless realm of fear and distrust. Thine own subtlety that chooseth to run with the passions of men’s hearts hath won for thee that general acceptance which neither prophet nor Christ could give. Henceforth thou canst watch the divided tribes of Christendom and not rebuke their warrings. It is well, for thou thyself dost live by division of the sword. Rejoice! While man is man thou art Yahweh.”

But even while I so spake there came to me a disquieting question: “How canst thou fulfill thy pledges to the

many nations to which thou hast bound thyself as special and partisan god? ”

Nevertheless the question found its own grim answer, which I have told no man. Nor shall I reveal it until the time of fulfillment be come. . . .

But after being god four thousand years I could not immediately free myself of those influences from the past that had molded me. Thus, even in the nations that were most forward to make war, there were men and women who continually spake of what things the Galilean had taught and of how he had died on the cross to accomplish the redemption of the world from the cruelty of its sins. And these did vex and weaken me. Wherefore I thought, “ I am old and weary and the godlike enterprise which I have resolved to promote among the nations may perchance be more than I can compass.”

And I said: “ I will return for a season to the goodly land whence I came and refresh myself amid the scenes of my youth. There shall I renew my strength in beholding again the ancient fields of my valor.”



In pursuance of this new purpose I soon thereafter joined myself to a party of Zionists who went into Palestine to build them a national home. And I heard them say among themselves: “ Yahweh, who has been our special god from the beginning, will cherish us here in our former land; and we shall perfect our particular culture and make it honorable among all peoples. Yea, Yahweh will lift us high among the nations, and from Jerusalem shall the law again be spoken.”

The year was at the springing when we came into the Holy Land. And I felt as in my youth that an inscru-

table presence trod the earth on errands whose import would be for the joy of gods and men could they but discover it.

But immediately I scorned my mood, saying: "Will Yahweh be found again among the prophets or among the poets whose fancies would make the world and man other than they are? Nay! All that have I left behind me."



There came a night when I climbed a little hill. And looking on the moon I was moved by remembrance of the man Abraham who, because he saw a footprint on its disk, chose me to be his god.

Now while I climbed I knew not what hill it was, but at the top I knew that it was the hill Calvary. Wherefore I thought on him who had suffered there, his broken body and disappointed hopes. His memory became as a presence round about, and I spake as to one who might yet hear: "Beautiful wert thou, O Galilean. But thy peasant faith and the soft philosophy whereby thou didst for a time win my favor were out of tune with that will to strife which is eternal in the nature of man. Today thou wouldst find no throngs to hearken to thee, nay, thou couldst not persuade even twelve. Long wast thou in thy dying; but now men at last pay thee the rites of the troublesome dead, speaking thy words by rote, without heed or intention to obey. But I, Yahweh, whom thou didst misname and reject, live still and in my hand is authority over the nations."

Then, in that place where no man was, I seemed to hear a voice and it called me by name.

*"Yahweh!"*

I know not what manner of voice to say it was — whether uttered low in mine ear and rolled back upon the heavens



in mighty echo, or whether faintly spoken in the sky to crash in mine ear like thunder.

Yet, because of the place and my preoccupation, I said: "This is no new summons but only the past. Why should it make me to tremble?" And I answered: "Nay, Galilean; trouble me not. Thou art only a memory. I saw dead upon the cross the man thou wert, and there is nought left of him but a pale wraith cherished by the priests of a church who now deceive themselves as they have long deceived the Western world. Thou and thy 'Father' no more live than the tree on which ye both did die — thou a man and he the dream of a man. But I, Yahweh, live, and all the nations of the earth and the power of them are mine."

Then the voice spake again, and at the sound of its speaking I was stricken to the ground, for it was as if the earth reeled in its orbit.

And the voice said, "The kingdoms of the world are thine for a season. But my judgments are eternal."

Then I asked, "Who art thou?"

And though my words sounded fainter than a whisper, yet the answer came: "I am thy judge. And shouldst thou climb even to heaven to escape me, yet would I bring thee down. Yea, shouldst thou hide thyself in hell, yet would I call thee thence. For thou shalt not escape thy reckoning with me. Wherefore stand upon thy feet, for I will judge thee."

I arose, and would have turned my face to this dread majesty, but could not, since the voice showed no visible presence; nor did it come from this side or that, but it thundered on every side and from within. Wherefore I said, "Tell me thy name and station, that I may know if thou art indeed judge over me."

And the voice made answer, "I have no name, and thou dost usurp my station."

And I besought further, "Show me, then, who thou art."

And the voice said: "I am he whom thou pretendest to be. Before the world was, I am; and I shall be when the heavens are no more. Before man was, I am; for it was I who fashioned him. As to thee, Yahweh, thou art but man's image of God, the shadow cast by his aspiration toward me. It was I that put it into the heart of Abraham to leave his kindred and take thee, Yahweh, into a strange land and make thee a god of righteousness. It was I that sent prophets to Israel to enlarge thy compassion. And at the last I gave thee the Galilean that in the light that shone upon his face thine eyes might see me. It was I that moved Paul to take thee from the soil and race that were thine and cause thee to point unto me not one people but all the world. Of thyself thou didst try for a season to reflect the glory of my universal fatherhood. Now dost thou turn aside, pretending to be God thyself. Wherefore in thee man's hopes and dreams stop short of their fulfillment.

"Nay, more, because thou hast not kept thy face turned toward me, that through thee man might ever see beyond, but hast turned thy face toward man alone, thou hast ceased to be the image of his aspirations and hast become the idol of his ignorance and lust for power, thereby perverting his dreams to his own destruction.

"Know thou that there is a place in the soul of man which I have reserved for myself, which forever remaineth empty until I fill it. Thou, Yahweh, knowest not this secret place, nor canst thou find it, nor finding it couldst thou enter in, since it is kept for me alone. But thou hast closed the door of man's soul so that even I cannot enter. For this shall I judge thee."

Then made I my defense, saying, "If men because of me have closed their hearts against thee, why dost thou

not draw more near and show thyself openly and speak truth to men that they may no more seek counsel of a terrestrial god? ”

And the voice said: “ Then would I be Yahweh, and not God. I am nearer to man than his own soul. And because he seeth me not for my nearness, I showed myself to him in the face of him they hanged upon the tree. And not upon his face only, but upon all men does my compassion shine, though they know it not. I am the Father of whom the Galilean spake. And because I am Father of all, I am Judge to thee. And because I would save man I will bring thee to thine end.”

Now when the voice so named the Galilean who had embarrassed my divinity through the ages, I was seized with godly wrath for that I had stopped to parry with an illusion. And the sources of my strength were opened, and I cried aloud: “ Begone! This that I hear is but the lingering memory of him who died in this place.”

And the voice troubled me no more.



And while my strength was mounting, behold, I was surrounded by a great company of the elder gods, and I questioned whether these, also, had come to oppose me.

But one of them, that was clad in the Roman armor, said, “ Mars has slain his millions, but Yahweh his tens of millions.”

So saying, he dropped on his knee and, holding his battered sword by the blade, pressed the hilt of it against my palm. And as Antaeus drew strength from the ground when he wrestled with Hercules, so did I from the hilt of the sword.

Then the fair-haired Thor bowed himself humbly and



said: "Greater than Thor is Yahweh. I threw the hammer to defend mine own, but Yahweh spews the poison gas and hurls the secret forces of nature against all his children equally when they contend. There is none like to him among the gods."

And the wily Marduk, he that was god in Babylon long ere I embraced the cause of Abraham, gave his meed of praise: "Aye, there is none like to Yahweh who knoweth where is every cord of holy emotion in the human heart and can tune it to the drum beat and the trumpet call. Also he hath abundant wisdom to justify both sides of every cause."

There was one among them that was goddess of the sun that rose over the misty mountains of the Sunrise Isles. And she professed: "Without benefit of consort, by an inexhaustible parthenogenesis, I bring forth an endless procession of warring *Kami*. Might I but look on the honorable face of Yahweh from time to time, I might fill the earth with my breed."

Then gods and goddesses pledged themselves, their powers, their hates, their peoples, to me for what uses I might have of them. For they said, "We are but children before the great god of the West."



And I descended the hill. But although strength seemed to flow into all my members, yet was my tread not firm. And I met a young man, of whom I asked, "Didst thou hear aught?"

"I heard the morning wind in the mulberry trees."

"Sawest thou anything?"

"I saw the sun come up."

"My son, wilt thou do for me a kindness?" I asked.

“ I tremble and cannot command myself, by reason, I think, of an excess of power that has come upon me.”

He looked on me keenly and gave assent.

“ On the other side of this little valley,” I told him, “ there was in olden time a ruin, and at the far end of it, well concealed, a cave let into the earth, whose mouth was covered by a slab of stone. Enter this cave, I pray thee, look well about, and return and tell me whether there is aught within.”

He went, and returned, saying: “ I found the ruin and the cave, and within the cave a great wooden chest, broken, and overlaid with a metal which resembles gold, and in the chest a heap of moldered earth, an ancient parchment, and something that looked like a branch of a tree. But when I took hold of the scroll of parchment and the branch they crumbled into dust.”

“ It is well,” I said. “ What thou hast called a chest was once my throne; and it shall be again. Lost to men these hundred generations, both Jew and Christian have vainly sought it. But I, Yahweh, have known the place of its concealment.”

The youth looked on me with wide eyes and moved hastily away. But I beckoned to him and said: “ Nay, fear me not. I am one to be trusted; all the world cometh after me. And I am also wise and subtle, yea, more wise than the statesmen who mumble in the privy chamber, or the priests before the altar, or the preacher who drones in the pulpit; for of them all none knoweth whither he goeth. But I know, and I know, also, whither I lead the peoples of earth.”

I took hold upon his arm and drew him into the path. And while he walked by my side through the valley I asked: “ Is not thy name called Abraham? Yea, methinks Abraham is thy name. Did we not walk here once before, my

son? But there was that about earth and sky which now I miss. I know not what it was. Canst thou tell me? Nay, thou sayest? It grieveth me sore, for I would know what aspect of things it is that I have lost."

And I chided the young man: "Speak not now, Amos, for I hear a voice that cometh from afar, from the uttermost depth of the pit, and though it soundeth very nigh me, I cannot hear what it saith for thy much speaking."

And I was grieved because the youth sought to avoid me. Wherefore I said: "I will wait in the temple until thou be come, my son. Though thou didst misname me, I will await thee. And surely thou wilt seek me after a little. There is that which I would ask thee when we meet anon."

Then I laid hold upon his arm again and reasoned with him, saying: "Mark me now, Paul, and be warned of folly. There was once a young man, goodly and worthy to be loved, save that he was a fool. For he spake of equity and wrought righteousness and died for love. Yet he knew not that he was a fool. But the wisdom of this age doth judge him. Thou knowest, and I, and all the world knoweth that these matters whereof he spake be foolishness. Yea, and also that peace among men which he advised; it is the dream of a fool."

And as we approached the mouth of the cave I spake him fair, for that he was emperor. And I said: "Delay not to deliver the sword to me, Constantine my son. And if Tertullianus dispute thee stop his mouth, for I will suffer no division of my forces. See that there be no rust on the blade, and remove the cross from the hilt of it, I pray thee, for it rests uneasy in mine hand. It may be that I shall not go out to the battle, forasmuch as I am called into Galilee by reason of one who troubleth the people with his teaching of a god who is father to all men and nations. But







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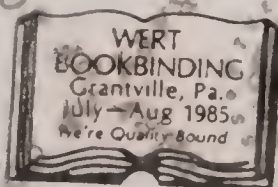
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