

Stories of Great Spiritual Leaders

GREAT LIVES SERIES

SELECTED AUTHORS

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Selected Authors

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To Stand Where Others Stand…

[Publisher's note: This volume of stories includes many chapter's from Marcus Bach's 'Had You Been Born In Another Faith'. This is the introduction to that book.]

I remember, almost to the hour, when this book was conceived. It was ten years ago on a spring morning, just before sunrise in Chichicastenango. I had arrived in this enchanted Guatemalan town late on a Wednesday night, but wakened early the next morning, for Thursday is market day when the little village springs to life. This is when the wiry, bare-footed *cargadores* trudge in from the hills bearing crushing burdens on their bony backs, when the patient women vendors set out their various wares—ceramics, vegetables, grains—and when the peasant people from the hills and the valleys, each colorfully dressed in the costume of his clan, transform the ghost city of Chichi into a thriving metropolis.

Curiosity about the religious practices of these people, the Maya-Quichés, brought me before dawn to the market square. Here in the mystic light between night and day, I watched the Mayan priests, short, lithe men in black knee pants, embroidered jackets, and red tasseled headgear, fan the sacrificial fires on the pyramid-like steps of aging Santo Tomás church. As the charcoal mist rose from the braziers, the priests, swinging their censers, chanting to whatever gods they knew, moved back and forth and up

and down the steps in a setting as mysterious as something out of the legends of Montezuma.

The church, although once Roman Catholic, had reverted to the primitive practices of the people it had tried in vain to convert. In fact, the Catholic clergy had moved out and the animistic Mayans, in a pageantry of incense, smoke, and the incessant beating of muffled drums, were re-instating their own immortal deities.

As I watched, the Maya-Quiché worshipers climbed the steps, pausing to buy a candle from a vendor, which the Mayan priests blessed with a swish of the censer. Then the worshiper bowed and passed through the huge black doors.

Drawn by the mystery of worship, I, too, bought a candle and climbed the steps through the blue smoke curling against the church's whitewashed walls. As a colorful, bare-legged Mayan cleric, with a red cap placed almost jauntily on his head, waved the smoking censer in front of me, he said something I could not understand, but when he graciously bowed as if to say I should enter, I followed the worshipers inside.

Now I was behind the massive doors. In a spacious, vaulted sanctum without pews, where a few statues of Christian saints gazed down in wonder from their niches in the walls and where a votive light still burned, the natives sat on the floor amidst pools of burning candles. It was a garden of flickering lights. Huddled figures

crouched guardedly over their tapers. There a mother nursed her child and here a father guided his small son's hand as he lit his white ritual candle.

It struck me then that these people, most of whom had nothing in the world save a mountain shack on a plot of rocky ground, or a herd of goats, or yarn to weave, or clay for fashioning pottery, were now suddenly rich in life and spirit. They had passed through the mist and the forbidding doors and were now, by way of incantations and the offerings of their faith, identified with something beyond themselves. The hopeless disorder around me took on a semblance of order. The tallow-spattered floor and the disarray were part of the ritual. Watching these devotees and hearing their murmured, *"Ahau Ah Tohil....Ahau Ah Gucumata...."* I sensed that they devoutly believed their God or gods were good.

I knelt beside an old man and, by means of an inquiring glance, asked him if I might light my candle from his. As he nodded and turned toward me, I could see the secret pride in his eyes and together we watched the flicker of his candle as it lighted mine. Turning away again, he closed his eyes tightly, as if to resume his prayer.

As I fixed my candle to the floor and gazed into its light, something within me said, "What if you had been born in this man's faith?"

And that is when this book was conceived.

The years of gestation were nourished by visits to the temples of other people in other cultures and in other lands. Some little-known. Some well-known. I was admitted to a Parsi's temple in Calcutta where non-Parsis are commonly forbidden. I knelt in the oldest Moslem mosque in Damascus. I visited synagogues in Israel, Shinto shrines in Japan, Buddhist stupas and pagodas in Asia, and walked among Confucian graves in the hills beyond Hong Kong. I meditated in Hindu ashrams in India and at the holy ghats along the sacred Ganges. I stood in the Sikh's Golden Temple at Amritsar, and joined the people in Eastern Catholic cathedrals in the Kremlin and in Roman Catholicism's St. Peter's in Rome. I worshiped in the churches of Europe which memorialized the Reformation. I took part in the meetings in Voodoo *hounforts* and was allowed inside a *morada* of the Penitentes.

It was not only the variety of beliefs that intrigued me. It was, rather, the worshiper himself, and what he found or felt that he had found that aroused my interest and response.

Most of all, 1 was impressed by my own realization that we understand others best when we understand what they believe, and that we can never truly enter into their belief until we stand for a little while where these people stand.

Of course, this requires a bit of doing. To live, for a little while, in the orbit of the other person's deepest convictions means that we must momentarily leave the spot where years of stubborn indoctrination have rooted us. We must move into the spiritual habitue of another's mind and heart; we must become, for a time at least, one with those whose way of life and type of worship and even whose physical makeup we have viewed, up to now, only through the fixed focus of our own cherished points of view. To change, for one enchanted moment, the bent of our soul, the set of our mind, and, where necessary, even the color of our skin, is quite an assignment.

But since we must learn to live together or none of us will live, what else is there to do? And since we have tried every other known avenue for understanding, why not try this? And inasmuch as we are all mortal immortals, living for a little while in our impermanent world, and then going on to live again, why should we not embark on this greatest of all adventures?

And when we have done this and identified ourselves with the major religions of the world, what happens to us? What happens to our faith, whatever our faith may be?

What do we learn?

What do we find?

Where do we go from here?

It was not only to answer questions of this kind that this book was written, but to answer another question that

you, too, perhaps have often asked yourself, "Had I been born in another faith, what would my faith—and I—be like?"

Had You Been Born a Hindu

Had you been born a Hindu, your birthplace would very likely have been somewhere in India. Of the 350,000,000 Hindus in the world, all but 20,000,000 live in the Asian subcontinent. Followers of your religion are found in Ceylon, South Africa, Thailand, and in other parts of the world, but the faith began in India, and India is its promised land.

As a child you would have been surrounded by the sights and sounds of a country steeped in religious tradition. You would have walked through streets which sheltered sacred cows and were friendly to holy men. You would have heard the tantalizing tones of temple bells, and seen the faithful as they brought their offerings of fruit and money to the village shrines.

YOUR HINDU HOME

One of your earliest memories would be that of your family altar: a small, wooden shelf in your parental home. As a child you sat in meditation in front of this holy place while your mother's *mantras* (prayers) crept tenderly into your life,

> "Thou, God, art the cherished guest in our humble home. Thou art father, brother, son, friend, benefactor, guardian, all in one. Deliver us, thy

worshipers, from the taint of sin and, O Mighty Lord, when we die, deal mercifully with us on that final day."

Although your family worshiped at the altar at many stated times and on many holy days and holy nights, Thursday morning was always a special day. For it was on this morning that your mother never took food until she had performed her altar duties. She put a fresh flower and a bowl of rice on the altar before she seated herself in prayer. As she knelt there, she seemed to have entered for a little while into a mysterious world of her own.

Your mother had a streak of vermilion in her hair, and she once explained to you that years ago at the marriage ceremony, when she and your father sat before the holy fire, your father had dipped his finger into the vermilion paste and had made the mark upon her hair to signify the enduring holiness of marriage. This sign, which your mother renewed every Thursday morning, was a rite which held a deep meaning for her.

She also wore a small iron bracelet which had been placed around her wrist by your father during the wedding ceremony. Ever after that, whenever she worshiped, she included in her prayers the words, "O God, give us peace and quietude of heart. Grant long life to my husband." You were told that only if your father should die would the bracelet be taken off and broken.

All the articles on the altar were holy: incense to remind you of the love and fragrance of the gods and of

your love for them; fresh flowers, proof of your adoration; rice and candy, symbols of your thankfulness for heaven's blessings; a lovely conch representing life, for life began on the floor of the sea; and a small bell, a sign of invocation and welcome to the gods.

Most important, however, among the altar furnishings was a statue of Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu, and one of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. These were the gods of your home, but you were taught that other Hindu altars had other gods, for one of the great glories of Hinduism is that there are enough gods and goddesses for every class and for every type of person everywhere. *Every Hindu has the liberty to choose the god and the worship which seem best for him and which best express some deep response in his soul.* There are great gods and little gods, just as there are great people and little people, but every god, even as every person, serves a specific purpose in the mysterious web of life.

THE GODS OF HINDUISM

Had you been born a Hindu, you would move familiarly among the vast "families" of gods. You would know that Vishnu, the Preserver, has many avatars or reincarnations of which Krishna is one of the most important. You would understand that Shakti is the goddess of universal energy; Indra, the king of gods and goddesses; Varuna, the all-seeing god of the waters; Agni,

the god of fire; Ganesh, the elephant god, symbol of wisdom and prudence and good luck. You would honor Sarasvati, goddess of learning, and be delighted with Hanuman, the monkey god who, according to legend, spanned the watery distance between India and Ceylon in one mighty leap.

You would not be confused by the fact that Shakti is also called Uma and Bhavani and Devi and Parvati and Durga. As a Bengali Hindu you would look forward eagerly to the great autumn festival when Durga is honored in a mighty *puja* or worship-ceremony. Shakti is also Kali, the goddess of storms and disaster, and you would remember the many times your parents took you to pay respect to Kali in her many temples. Temples to the gods and the goddesses stand in every village, in every town, in every city. Altars and shrines are found wherever Hindus are found, for your religion, more than any other, brings gods and men into an inter-related household of faith.

In spite of numerous deities and avatars, you would know that Hinduism actually offers its believers but one God. *God is one though He is many.* He is so many that sometimes you use a string of beads to help you remember God's many names. But with all His names and images, He is one. This was explained to you when your father told you that all humanity is also one, although it has millions of forms and expressions.

When you asked your father, "Who is the one God?" you were told, "He is Brahma." And when you persisted, "Who and what is Brahma?" he said, "Brahma is the World-Soul. Brahma is Cosmic Consciousness, the Atman or Breath of Life, the Absolute, the Principle of Love and Law."

It was explained to you that all religions have difficulty in defining God. You were informed that Christians also have many names for God. They call Him Jehovah, Lord, Father Almighty, God of Gods, King of Kings. Some Christians say that God is Jesus Christ, or God is a Spirit. Others identify Him with Love, Justice, Creative Intelligence, Life, Mercy, Power, Compassion, and many more such attributes.

Had you been born a Hindu, you would also think of your God, Brahma, as having many attributes; yet he would remain the Supreme One, the timeless, limitless essence of the universe. Of course, many Hindus actually worship these *attributes,* just as people in other religions worship such qualities of God as Love, Wisdom, and Service, but this is only because the mind of man cannot fully comprehend the mind of God. Hinduism, however, tries to comprehend Brahma because Hinduism is fully as much a philosophy as it is a religion.

You would remember a day when you walked with your father along the holiest of rivers, the Ganges, and watched the scores of faithful worshipers sitting on the

bank of this sacred stream. One of them, a half -starved man, sat cross-legged in front of the statue of Krishna with the flute. How long this old man had been gazing at this image no one could say. Perhaps for months or years. He was in a trance-like state. His body looked as if it were molded out of clay. It seemed to you that he had stopped breathing. Your father said, "He is in a state of *samadhi,* a world of the spirit. He is face to face with the Infinite and perhaps merged into it." People of other religions might have asked what good the man was doing or what he was accomplishing or whether it was really true that he was "face to face with the Infinite." But because you had been born a Hindu, you would have agreed with your father when he explained, "Who knows by looking at the outward appearance of a man what is going on in his heart?"

THE SPELL OF HINDUISM

Your initiation into your faith would have come at the age of thirteen. At that time a Hindu priest and many of your relatives gathered in your home for the traditional "thread ceremony" when, in a solemn and sacred ritual, your head was shaved as you sat with your father in front of the holy fire. After the priest had pierced your ears with a needle, signifying that you were ready to assume your full religious duties, he gave you the sacred thread. You held it in your left hand, palm forward, in front of your face

with your right hand behind your head. Your eyes were fixed in meditation upon the thread while the priest chanted a prayer of dedication. For a moment you, too, came "face to face with the Infinite," as you meditated upon the true Self which is God in you. The true Self, you told yourself, *is* God. When your father whispered to you the holiest and most ancient of all mystical words: *Om,* you repeated it with deep reverence. *"Om—Om,"* you whispered, and it seemed to you as though a greater life had been added to your life and a deeper breath to your breath.

"*Om* is indeed Brahma," your father said. "*Om* is the highest and greatest reality that man can conceive. Whoever knows *Om* obtains all he desires. *Om* is the best support. Whoever understands *Om* is adored in the world of Brahma."

With the mystical *Om* fixed in your mind and heart, you were taken into a darkened room. When the door closed, the silence and aloneness greatly disturbed you, but gradually they were overcome by the feeling of a Presence. You were left alone in this room for three days with whatever your thoughts of God might be. For three days you remained in the silent dark as motionless as the holy men whom you had seen on the bank of the holy Ganges. In accordance with instructions given you by the priest, you

Put outward thoughts aside
And the eyes in the midst of the brows,
Making the outward and inward breaths
Equal in their course within the nostrils....

That is how you meditated while the mystical *Om* became ever more meaningful to you in your monastic cell. For three days, as you actually lived the life of a secluded monk, you realized what the monks and the holy men thought, what they felt and what the Presence of God meant to them.

Noises from the out-of-doors broke into your thoughts: the sound of an automobile, the rumble of a bullock cart, the cry of a vendor, the laughter of boys your age. These were the temptations of freedom of which the priest spoke. But if you were to follow them, if you were to give in to desire, you would know no peace. For a moment you might have wished with all your heart that you could escape from this faith-imposed prison, but then you came to realize that the room was not a prison. The walls did not confine you. They shielded you from the world so that you could better find the Self within you which is God. That was the lesson you sought to learn: *God and I are one.* You said it over and over, *"God and I are one."* Being one with Him, you also became one with all people. The *mantras* (prayers) helped you. A lovely thought from the holy book, the Upanishads, came to your mind and you repeated it softly to yourself:

He who sees himself in all beings,
And all beings in himself,
He enters the supreme Brahma
By this means and no other.

The hours passed. There in the darkness you began to understand what the holy men meant when they said that Brahma is found in the search for Him. More loudly now you said, *"Om—Om—Om,"* and for a little while there was no feeling of loneliness at all. You had unlocked the inner consciousness of faith.

The door to your "cell" opened, sending a flood of light into the room. Blindly you saw the outline of the priest who had come, as promised, to look into your state of mind and soul. Closing the door, he seated himself cross-legged in front of you and for a long time no word was spoken. The street sounds did not tempt you any longer. You felt honored that the priest had come, but you knew too, that honor is close to pride and that pride is close to sin.

You knew that soon your mother would come and place food—rice and a few cold vegetables—before you. You were sure that she was thinking constantly about you during your three days of retreat and that she was concerned about you. But courageously you remembered that true holy men do not think of food; they do not wish to be remembered and they would not be lured in any way from Brahma and His love. While thinking and with the

silent priest seated before you in the shadows, you advanced from childhood into the maturity of spiritual understanding.

THE HINDU TRINITY

Your religious development continued. You learned the meaning of a Sanskrit word: *Trimurti.* It means a triad or something grouped in threes. Most of all, it refers to the Hindu trinity: Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; Shiva, the Destroyer.

You learned, as all Hindus do, that Brahma, the Creator, first person in the trinity, is depicted as a god with four heads. This is an attempt to show that He is all-seeing and all-knowing and that nothing in the world escapes Him. By Him the world was made. Indeed, He made the world in such fashion that it will endure for a cycle of 4,320,000,000 years; then it will be destroyed, but will be re-established for another cycle, and another and another, through time everlasting. Each such cycle of billions of years of creation and destruction is but a day and a night for Brahma.

You were taught that Vishnu, the Preserver, second person of the trinity, sustains the world during each of its many cycles. Pictures of him pass through your mind. He has been depicted as a dwarf, a fish, a lion, a tortoise, as many other animals, and as a man. This is the symbology which interprets him as the all-knowing one. There is no

phase of life which Vishnu has not experienced, and so you worship him as omnipresent, for he is in all and over all and all life is holy because of Vishnu.

You came to understand Shiva, the Destroyer, third person in the Trimurti, for when you asked a friend about the origin of evil and suffering in the world, he referred to Shiva.

"Evil," the priest told you, "comes from a source deep within Brahma, and that part of Brahma from which it comes is Shiva. Though Shiva destroys, He also recreates. If He destroys, it is for the purpose of providing an opportunity for renewal, and for an awakening to greater enlightenment. This is regeneration. *Shiva who destroys, also redeems.* This is to say that *the nature within you which seeks to do evil, also seeks to do good. Evil is illusion, but the illusion exists. To believe that it exists is in itself evil."*

It was wonderful to have a teacher who knew, even though you did not fully understand his knowing! Priests and holy men also sought to familiarize you with the meaning behind the myths and legends of your faith. They pointed out that stories and parables were often employed by the early interpreters of Hinduism as a means for transmitting important truths to the people. The masses, unable to understand the deepest significance of the true realities involved in the faith, were, nonetheless able to recognize some personalization within the stories themselves. Legends, your teachers assured you, are

vessels holding hidden truths. When you were disturbed by the difficult subject of caste, it was explained by a wise teacher by way of an ancient story.

THE LEGEND OF CASTE

Once upon a time, says the legend, there was a god, Purusa, who told Brahma he would be willing to sacrifice himself so that man might be created. When Brahma agreed to this proposal, Purusa was sacrificed on the altar of heaven where, under Brahma's direction, a mighty miracle took place. Out of Purusa's mouth priests were created, priests called Brahmans. Out of his arms came warriors called Ksatriyas. Out of his thighs sprang business people, the Vaisyas. And from his feet emerged the menial laborers, the Sudras. All of these people were different, but all were also alike in that they all represented parts of Purusa the god.

You meditated on this legend as your teacher pointed out that caste is a word of many meanings. In ancient Sanskrit the word for caste is *varna,* and *varna* means color. The light-skinned Aryans who came down the Indus River considered themselves of a higher caste or color than the darker-skinned Indus (Hindu) inhabitants. Caste also means a difference in intellectual ability, in economic and social standing, in occupation and profession. Some people were so low in the social scale

that they were not included in any of the four castes. They were outcastes and untouchables.

Though the importance and rigid separation of caste are changing now, you often ask yourself, "Why did the great God Brahma permit people to be different in ability, in color, and in station in life?" The legend of Purusa does not fully explain why today some people are born rich, others poor. Some are wise and fortunate and healthy and happy, others are not. Some die young and others live to be very old. Why?

Had you been born a Hindu, you would have come to a satisfactory conclusion about these questions. You would have learned that a man is what he is in respect to his caste, his fortune and his place in life because of the "wheel of justice" which Brahma set in motion at the beginning of time, even before the creation of man *and the wheel of justice is known as Karma.*

THE LAW OF KARMA

Karma, you were taught, inexorably fixes the consequences of one's acts. *A person is what he is because of his Karma, which is destiny in action.* Karma cannot be tampered with, altered, influenced or destroyed. It is neither good nor bad. Karma simply *is.* It pertains to lives lived before and to lives which will be lived again, for the lives of gods and men have been lived and relived many times.

Had you been born a Hindu, you would be convinced that there is no other answer to the mystery of life and no clear explanation for the seeming inequality in the world than the answer found in the Karmic law. Karma assures and warns you that nothing you do goes unrewarded. Nothing is ever unaccounted for. Nothing is forgotten, discarded, or of no account. Your character and your station in life are determined by the acts, thoughts, desires, hopes and plans for which you are directly responsible.

Though the law of Karma cannot be changed, it can be influenced through the intercession of the gods. With their help you can overcome evil by doing good. With their help you can build up a good Karma. You can prepare yourself for a better station in the next life by living virtuously in this life. What you are in your present life is the consequence of what you have been; what you may be in your next life depends upon what you do in this one. Slowly, man lifts himself through the repetition of lives to reach an ultimate peak of perfection.

Your teachers explained these concepts to you and made them part of your spiritual orientation. They also told you about Karma's inseparable counterpart: Reincarnation.

THE DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION

Reincarnation is the cycle of living experiences in which the soul of man—his psyche, *Atman,* or life

essence—makes its eternal round of births and rebirths. For if a person is to reap the rewards of his deeds (Karma), it is logical that he must not only live again, but that he has also lived *before* in an earlier incarnation.

Karma and Reincarnation provide a solution to the perplexing puzzle of why one person dies young and another one lives to old age. Reincarnation explains the phenomenon of a genius, the reason for prodigies. It sustains you in your conviction that God is just and true; and it reminds you that, if you meet the burdens and challenges of this life valiantly, you will be rewarded when you return for another pilgrimage on this earthly plane. Even more, Reincarnation prepares you for eventual union with Brahma in a state of immortal bliss. For the soul which bore you is the World-Soul. You came from it and to it you will return. "Never have I not been," said Krishna to a student, "never hast thou not been, and never shall the time come when we shall not be."

LIFE IS A CLASSROOM

Had you been born a Hindu, you would look upon life in the world as a classroom. Death is a final examination. After death you remain in heaven as long as your good Karma allows you to stay, or it may be that you remain in hell as long as your bad Karma holds you there. After you serve your time in heaven or hell, you return to earth to

qualify again for the courses in which you previously failed, or to take the advanced work for which a previous life has prepared you.

THE HINDU SCRIPTURES

The Hindu holy books, very old and full of wisdom, help you in your understanding of the cycles of life. Had you been born a Hindu, you would have been taught that these books were conceived by Brahma Himself and transmitted to the world through inspired holy men, the Rishis, who perpetuated them through oral tradition for at least a thousand years before the sacred words were written down.

Among these books are the holy Vedas. Veda means wisdom and spiritual insight, and the more than 100 Vedic books are so important that the years during which they were composed, 1500 to 800 B.C., are known as the Vedic period. Four books are of special importance: the Rig-Veda, which contains 1028 hymns; the Sama-Veda, a book of revelation; the Yajur-Veda, a collection of hymns and prayers; the Artharva-Veda, a series of charms and incantations.

You would have memorized many beautiful passages from these scriptures and learned to chant the stirring hymns, like the one to Surya, god of the sun:

By lustrous heralds led on high
The fire-Sun ascends the sky;

His glory draweth every eye.

The stars which gleamed throughout the night,
Now slink away like thieves in fright,
Quenched by the splendor of thy might.

Hymns to the god Varuna would also have become a part of your spiritual treasury:

He knows the path of birds that through
The atmosphere do wing their flight,
And, ocean dwelling, knows the ships.

He knows the pathway of the wind,
The wide, the high, the mighty wind,
And those who sit enthroned above.

Enthroned within his palace sits
The god Varuna whose law is firm,
All-wise for universal sway.

From there the observant god beholds
All strange and secret happenings,
Things that are done or to be done.

You would have learned to chant the prayer of faith:

Faith in the early morning,
Faith at noonday will we invoke;
Faith at the setting of the sun,
O Faith, endow us with belief!

Another holy book, the Bhagavad-Gita, would hold a prominent place in your life. It is part of the famous Mahabharata—an epic of 220,000 lines, longest in the world—and records a dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and the god Krishna, who is his charioteer. Here in the Gita you find rules for the conduct of the true Hindu. Its pages urge you to live the kind of life out in the world that you lived during the three days of your initiation, "Holding in indifference alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, conquest and defeat, so make thyself ready for the struggle, thus shalt thou not fall into sin."

In the inspired Gita, Krishna describes the kind of follower he loves: "Desireless, pure, skillful, impartial, free from terrors, who renounces all undertakings and worships me, he is dear to me. He who rejoices not, hates not, grieves not, desires not, who renounces alike fair and foul, and has devotion, is dear to me. One indifferent to foe and friend, indifferent in honour and dishonour, in heat and cold, in joy and pain, free of attachment, who holds in equal account blame and praise...silent, content with whatsoever befalls, homeless, firm of judgment, possessed of devotion, is a man dear to me."

To be dear to Krishna, to live the life of tranquillity, wisdom, and faith, these would have been your chief objectives, had you been born a Hindu. That is why you would also turn to the holy books, the Aranyakas, for instructions on how the will and wishes of Brahma may be

attained. Here in the Aranyakas, you would find suggestions for:

THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

1. The period of student life or discipleship.
2. The period of family life or householder.
3. The period of contemplation or forest-dwelling.
4. The period of total spiritual commitment or asceticism.

Had you been born a Hindu, you would follow these four stages to a greater or lesser degree depending upon your devotion to the faith. Thus, during the early period of your life you would have been a serious student, realizing that no sharp line could be drawn between what is secular and what is spiritual. You would have studied and discussed religion with your parents and teachers. In all probability you would have found your own guru, a holy man—like your priest—who would have imparted special advice, and in whose example you would have found a pattern for your words and deeds. You would have loved and respected this guru so much that you would have placed his picture above your altar. When you thought about his faith, your faith increased; when you meditated on his life, your own life was enriched. "How else can I learn," you would often have asked, "but through someone who has learned?"

During this period of discipleship you might also have begun the study and practice of yoga. Yoga is a science of

spiritual development based upon pure thought, pure actions, pure breathing, pure exercises and pure awareness. You would have sought an accredited yogi as your practitioner who would have helped you acquire control over nature and teach you how to unfold your psychic powers. He would have instructed you how to make the mystical *Om* a usable substance in your physical and mental life. He would have taught you the proper use of food, the secrets of health, and the amazing powers of self-control. Brahma himself says in the holy Gita, "Yoga is the destroyer of misery to him who is well controlled in eating, working and sleeping." Yoga is union with God.

Unless you had decided to become a yogi or join an ashram (spiritual retreat) for the remainder of your life, you would have entered the second stage advised by the Aranyakas, that of a householder. In keeping with tradition, your marriage would have been arranged by your parents. Together with the parents of your bride-to-be, they would have consulted the astrological charts in order to determine whether you were suited to each other and to select the most auspicious time for your marriage.

Your wedding ceremony in front of the holy fire would have been a solemn and sacred event. Here you re-enacted the custom of placing the vermilion on the forehead of your bride and clasping the iron bracelet around her wrist. You were asked to keep sacred a Hindu axiom, "Marriage should be the beginning, not the end of romance." And, as often happens, you would not have seen the person you

were to marry until shortly before the ceremony. This would matter little if you had been born a Hindu, for you would trust the judgment of your parents and the guidance of the gods in the selection of your mate. Giving your hand in marriage, you would have said, "I take hold of your hand for good fortune so that, with you, we may attain old age. I am the words and you are the melody; I am the melody and you are the words."

After you had established your home and your children were grown, you might have entered the third phase: the life of a "forest-dweller." Devoting yourself to philosophical study, which the hard work of making a living for your family had deprived you, you would take a renewed interest in religion. With maturity of thought you would seek to further deepen your knowledge of Hinduism.

Perhaps you would have followed Vedanta, one of the most modern and popular schools of thought whose foremost interpreter, Shankara, lived in the eighth century. It was Shankara who said: "Brahma is the only reality. All else, the world and life, are *maya* or illusion." Shankara explained how *moksha* or salvation is attained by the realization that we are all caught in veils of illusion of which we can rid ourselves only through wisdom, the wisdom that Brahma is the World-Soul and that our soul is, in truth, the soul of Brahma. *"I am that I am...yonder Person (God) I am He,"* are the profoundest truths, and

Shankara would have been your helper in their understanding.

Or you might have plunged into Vaisheshika metaphysics during your "forest-dwelling" period, or interested yourself in the Nyaya school of logic, or in Purva Mimansa, which insists that the Universe is real, that happiness is a legitimate goal, and that Dharma (religion, righteousness) is the pathway to spiritual peace. As if preparing for the "final examination," you would hold in your heart the knowledge that your earthly sojourn must have an end; therefore, you would dwell in the forest of ideas thoughtfully and with a deepened reverence for life.

Then, according to the Aranyakas, you would be ready to consider the final stage, that of the wandering ascetic. You would contemplate seriously on the idea of renouncing your family, possessions and self to begin a lonely life of wandering with begging bowl and staff in the role of a *sannyasin,* an especially dedicated holy man.

Had you been born a Hindu, the challenge of complete renunciation would be laid upon your heart by the dictates of your religious culture. At the age of sixty or sixty-five—or earlier—you would take the counsel of the Aranyakas seriously and say, "I will give up my work and my estate and devote the remainder of my life to spiritual asceticism. My wife will enter a Hindu convent and I will become a *sannyasin.* Our family is grown. We have tasted

the world. It is now time for us to give the remaining years to God in a special way."

You could not escape the challenge. The holy men of India, past and present, speak to you. The spirit of the holy books calls out to you. Even the holy cows and the festivals with their music and incense, the sound of the gongs, the sight of men praying in the streets, all seem to ask, "How do you stand with Brahma now that life is waning and another life is dawning?"

THE CHALLENGE OF THE SANNYASIN

Something says to you, "Become a *sannyasin*. He walks alone in the lonely places. He chants his prayers after other worshipers have left the temple squares. He kneels at the shrines and washes in the Holy Ganges and wherever he goes he carries with him a serenity and an inner light which you, with all your achievements, do not have."

The *sadhus* (holy teachers) would lay the burden of the *sannyasin* upon you, saying, "When you live in society, you judge yourself by the standards of society. When you live with monks or contemplatives, you judge yourself by the standards of their lives. It is only when you live and wander alone as a *sannyasin* that you have no other standard but God by which to measure your virtue."

The words would express your point of view, had you been born a Hindu. Whether or not you took them

literally, they would echo in your heart and mind, tantalizing you to close your earthly life in the role of a holy pilgrim. Wisdom has always come by way of the four stages which the Aranyakas have set forth in clear, beguiling terms.

Because of the *sannyasins* in Hinduism, you would admire and respect the holy men of *all* religions and *all* countries. You see in all prophets the full expression of your unfinished greatness. Often you feel like saying with the eminent *sadhu,* T. L. Vaswani, "When alone and in the depth of silence, I have, methinks, seen the face of Jesus in the village folk, on the faces of the wanderers, and in the countenances of little children. I have communed with Him in the cottages of the poor. I have seen Him among the sick. In little acts of kindness, in seemingly unspiritual things, I have received His benediction. He is a rare spirit in history. His life was love and His crown was meekness."

Had you been born a Hindu, you would insist that Hinduism is interested in every man who has made God more real to a questing world. For your faith is non-sectarian. It knows no denominational lines. It sends out no missionaries. It believes "all roads that lead to God are good." It strives to meet the quest of every seeker no matter what his caste or the outreach of his mind may be.

HINDUISM IS MANY THINGS

Hinduism is many things to you. It is the influence of a Gandhi who, renouncing worldly goods and proclaiming that his people could not rightly serve God while "enslaved," instigated a movement which eventually set India free. You revere Gandhi very much and you often pause before his statues which are seen in many public squares. You visit his shrine at Gandhighat in Delhi where, in keeping with Hindu custom, his body was cremated. You feel the presence of his divine nature and remember that just before he died he asked forgiveness for his assassin. All of this is in the spirit of your faith.

Hinduism is also the work of Vinoba Bhave, one of Gandhi's disciples, who for many years has walked from village to village, persuading rich landowners to divide their land with the poor and the refugees. "What the world desperately needs," says Bhave, "is changed lives, lives that will demonstrate stewardship and honor God through sharing."

Hinduism is the activity of the Ramakrishna monks, a society of dedicated men inspired by the *sannyasin*, Ramakrishna, and his disciple, Vivekananda. They have developed orphanages and schools, hospitals and rehabilitation centers throughout India and in many parts of the world.

Hinduism is the accomplishment of Dr. M. Modi, India's famous eye specialist. A quiet-spoken, mild-

mannered Hindu, trained in American and European medical schools, he is a living example of selfless service. He travels from village to village, working unceasingly in "eye camps" to help the millions of blind and near-blind in the sub-continent. You hear him say, "The people are my god. The operating room is my temple. The instruments are my *puga* (worship)."

To you, Hinduism is many things: it is the philosophy of the eminent scholar, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan; the wisdom of the remarkable leader, Jewaharlal Nehru; the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore; the profound and practical thought of Sri Aurobindo. It is the work of Ram Mahun Ray, who founded the Brahmo Samaj (Fellowship of God) and was instrumental in abolishing the custom of *sati,* (the burning of the widow on the funeral pyre of departed husband). It is the work of translators in India's universities and the inspiration of India's thousands of holy men. Hinduism is all this and most of all, it is the hope of those who, no matter what their class or caste, feel within themselves the call of Brahma. And hearing his call, they say with the Gita, "My bewilderment has vanished. I have gotten remembrance by thy grace. I stand freed from doubt. I will do thy word."

AND SO TO DIE—AND THEN TO LIVE AGAIN

The word of faith is life. There is no death for you, had you been born a Hindu. True, at the time of transition,

your body will be burned and your ashes scattered into a holy river. As a Hindu, you would have often watched the colorfully shrouded corpses being lifted to the funeral pyres along the banks of the Mother Ganges and have waited while the fire consumed the body. Had you been born a Hindu, you would have lighted your father's funeral pyre, just as your son will one day light the sandalwood upon which your body will be placed. You would have heard the incantations and the hollow sound of the conch shells as they were blown, the ecstatic wail of the hymns and the strains of the plaintive instruments while *Om, Om* rang in your heart and mind. But deep in your soul you would have been assured that though sadness and weeping mingled with the funeral flames, there is no death.

Death is merely a release and a beginning again. You would find comfort in the thought that when the time comes for your release, you will remember the admonition of the Vedas, "Let your eye go to the Sun and your life to the Wind. By the meritorious acts that you have done, go to heaven and then come to the earth again; or resort to the waters if you feel at home there; or remain in the herbs with the bodies you propose to take."

Had you been born a Hindu, you would know what these words imply. Silently you would watch as the flames carry some beloved soul to heaven; thoughtfully you would sense the presence of God; confidently you would

tell yourself that all life is a cycle, all is Karma and Reincarnation.

True, Hinduism is in transition. India is in transition. So are all religions and all lands. Old temples fall into decay, old customs become outmoded, old beliefs are often neglected and left to die. New eras, industrialization, new thoughts, a shrinking world cause your religion to tremble beneath the giant hand of change. But always there has been, always there is, and always there will be the one and eternal Brahma, changeless and eternal.

Perhaps somewhere along the way of your Hindu experience you heard of a western philosopher, Emerson, who so loved and respected your faith that he caught the spirit of all that you believe and immortalized it in his *Brahma* when he wrote the meaningful words:

"If the red slayer thinks he slays,
And if the slain thinks he is slain,
He knoweth not my subtle ways,
I turn and pass and turn again...."

These lines would be understood by no one better than by you, had you been born a Hindu.

Had You Been Born a Parsi

Had you been born a Parsi, you would often kneel before a fire burning in a large brass urn in the temple of your faith. The vaulted room is fragrant with the scent of sandalwood and as the white-robed priest lays another polished stick on the flames, you whisper a prayer as other members of your religion have done through countless centuries. In some Parsi temples the fire, fed by the hands of the faithful, has been burning uninterruptedly for more than a thousand years.

You would know that the source of the original fire was a lightning flash. This was the elemental flame sent to earth by Ahura-Mazda, the supreme deity and guardian of mankind. Somewhere in a forest when this lightning struck, one of your ancestors captured some of the sparks or flames and from these were kindled all other fires in the temples of your religion. Fire is a sacred symbol of your faith.

PARSIISM, AN ANCIENT AND VENERABLE RELIGION

Your religion is one of the oldest and one of the smallest, numerically, in the world. It has had few, if any, converts. A person must be born into it and that is why it numbers only slightly more than 100,000 followers, almost all of whom live in India and most of them in and

around Bombay. Although small numerically, your religion is an indispensable factor in India's life. Parsis are among the best educated, the most industrious and the most cultured and charitable people of the subcontinent.

Parsis was a name given to those Persians who migrated to India a thousand and more years before the time of Christ, bringing with them the religion of the great seer Zoroaster, who lived, authorities say, six thousand years—some say six hundred—before the Christian Era. Whenever it was, Zoroaster, spokesman for Ahura-Mazda, is acclaimed by many historians as the seer of seers. You are often referred to as a Zoroastrian, though Parsi is the more accepted modern term.

There is something wondrously rich about the life and worship of your people: the bearded priests dressed in spotless white; the young scholars bending over the ancient holy books; the calm conviction of the adherents to your faith, the holy temples into which only Parsis are admitted; the Tower of Silence where your body will some day be solemnly laid after death, there to be devoured by the vultures; all are distinctive features of the religion of the inspired Persian prophet, Zoroaster. Always there is the temple fire, endlessly burning in its huge brass urn.

The temple fire is so holy that no non-Parsi is permitted to look upon it. Your people visit the temple almost daily, make their ablutions and proceed reverently

to the place where the fire burns, there to say their prayers. They offer the priest a piece of polished sandalwood and he places it as an offering into the fire.

As the fire is fed, so also must you *keep your faith alive and burning by nourishing it with good thoughts, good words and good deeds.* Faith lives just as the sacred fire lives because the keepers of the temple sustain its holy flames with sticks of sandalwood, day and night, year after year. Faith, like the fire, demands constant care.

PREPARATION FOR THE FAITH

The formal introduction to your parental faith came when you were nine years old. For two years you had been preparing for a momentous childhood ceremony known as *Navajot.* You attended an out-of-doors school and learned your lessons under the scorching sun. Although some people say that Parsis are sun worshipers, you know they are not, even though you were taught to reverence the sun as a principle of life. Actually, during your school days, you considered the sun a rather fierce disciplinarian, equally as fierce as your bearded, priestly teachers. They stood over you with a stick, demanding perfection, especially in the prayers and recitations from the Avesta, the holy scriptures of your faith.

"Once more!" your teachers would say. "It must be like this," and they would demonstrate just how you were to accent *"Ashom Vohu,"* which meant "Most High God,"

with which almost every prayer began. Over and over you recited from the Gathas and the Yasts and the Vendidad, the ancient and difficult books of the Avesta.

Etched into your mind were the mighty sayings of Spitama Zoroaster; for example, his Golden Rule, which said, "That nature alone is good which shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self."

You knew that three strokes of the stick would be your punishment if you made one mistake, five strokes for two mistakes, and if you made three, you might as well beg for mercy. Those were the days you had your first struggle with Zoroaster's commandment about "good thoughts, good words, good deeds!"

"Let's break their sticks!" you would whisper when you got together with the other children. But sticks could easily be replaced.

"Let's run away!" But where would you go?

"Let's tell our fathers!" But you already knew that your father would tell you, as he always did, "Someday you will be grateful you had to learn the prayers and the holy words. And, remember, soon it will be time for *Navajot.*"

Navajot. You did not know exactly what it would be like. No one told you the details. The bits of information you picked up from an older brother or sister were unofficial. All you knew was that whatever *Navajot* was, it could not be more demanding or more burdensome than all this training, this standing in the broiling sun by day or

sitting under a smelly kerosene lamp at night, reciting at the top of your voice, mysterious and little-understood words such as, "When Ahriman came seventhly to Fire, which was combined against him, the Fire separated into five kinds, which are called the Propitious, the Good Diffuser, the Aurvazist, the Vazist, and the Supremely-Benefiting. And it produced the Propitious Fire itself in Heaven whose manifestation is in the Fire which burns on earth, and its propitiousness is this, that all the kinds are of its nature...."

"Why must I recite so loud?" you once cried out. "Is God deaf?" "No!" was your teacher's reply. "But I am!" And down had come the stick.

THE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD BECOMES CLEARER

A week before *Navajot* your mother said, "Soon you will no longer wear the *zabhalan*." This was a sleeveless garment, a sack-like kimono, tied around the neck instead of the waist and worn by both boys and girls. You had looked forward to discarding it. On the day of *Navajot,* just before the ceremony, you would put it away forever.

Two days before *Navajot* a bearded priest came to your home. But this time instead of a stick, he carried candy and fruit. He was a jovial and happy man who filled the house with joy. "The days of learning are not over, my boy," he said, "but the hard training will now have its

reward. *Navajot* is your day. You are the hero. You are God's chosen one. God wants you to be happy and free and share His love. You have no idea how quickly *Navajot* is passed and how soon one grows old."

After this he spoke long and tenderly about Zoroaster and of how the Prophet had believed in one God, of how Zoroaster had called God the King of Kings and how he had wished that all the world would learn of His love. Then when the priest took your hands in his and looked down at you with love and tenderness, your heart was singing. You could not understand why there were tears in his eyes.

Your father, too, was something of a riddle to you during these days. There had always been deep affection between you and him, although you had known him as a stern man who, like your teachers, demanded perfection from you. These days, however, his voice was gentle and his thoughts seemed far away as he took you aside and said, "So, my son, let me hear the prayers just as you will say them at *Navajot.*"

You prayed and he listened with closed eyes. For the first time the words you had learned mechanically took on a solemn meaning: "*Ashom Vohu!* I hereby make an attempt to ward off all evil. Help me in my task. Oh, my God, I am your ardent follower. I promise to live by all your precepts and I promise to be an ardent Zoroastrian all my life...."

When you finished there was a long time of quiet. Finally your father opened his eyes and nodded as if to indicate you had pleased him very much. Putting his arm around you, he said, "You are my true son. I want you always to be my true son and a loyal Parsi."

RELIGION IS A RITUAL

On the morning of the great day of *Navajot* at five o'clock, the household was already stirring. You had just memorized what you were to do. First there was the bath, during which your mother poured milk and sugar on your body. Then you put on the *zabhalan*—for the last time—and went alone into a room for prayer. There would be no breakfast for you, not even a sip of the customary tea, but there would be plenty to eat later—a feast, in fact, in your honor. Like any boy of nine would have done, you let your thoughts wander while you prayed, for you could not forget that today you were, as the priest had said, something of a hero. You were proud and excited to think that all the hurry and the preparations, the singing of folk songs, and the sipping and sampling of wine were in your honor.

Soon the priest and your father came to you. "We are beginning with the small ceremony, namely *Nahan*," your father said. Then your mother came forward and taking your hand, led you to the door of the family bathroom where the ceremony was to begin. The priest asked you to stand before the door and face the east. There you stood;

you in your *zabhalan* and the priest in his white garment. He began a prayer. You repeated it after him as perfectly as you could.

Then the priest asked you to extend your right hand and he placed into it a small metal cup containing a yellow liquid. You looked at him as if to ask if the liquid was really *nirangdeen*. You had heard of that, for it was the sanctified urine of the holy bull. In every large Parsi temple there is a courtyard where a great white bull is tethered. A sacred animal, he is kept spotlessly clean, a symbol of the creative power of God. The bull is not worshiped, as many non-Parsis believe, but like the fire, it exemplifies a spiritual truth, the power of procreation. Knowing all this, you were quite sure that you were holding the *nirangdeen,* even before the priest continued his prayers.

Fixing your eyes on the liquid and whispering several words of the prayer, you lifted the cup with both hands, remembering that you had been told that *nirangdeen* had the power to take away all the evil and sin which you had accumulated since birth. It was a purification. All Parsis believed and trusted in this mystery. So you closed your eyes and tipped the liquid into your mouth. Three times you drank until the cup was empty. After each sip, the priest handed you a pomegranate leaf which you slowly chewed, recalling that pomegranate is a symbol of everlasting life and that its leaves bring you the assurance of immortality.

A PARSI PURIFICATION

Then the priest and your mother took you into the bathroom for the purification. A spoonful of the sanctified urine of the bull was placed in the palms of your hands. You rubbed it over your face, over your arms from the elbows to your finger tips and from your neck down to your toes, covering every part of the body. After you had done this three times, you dried your body with a handful of sand. This done, your mother quickly washed your body with warm water and dried you with a towel. You took the lower half of a pair of white pajamas, a black cap and easy-to-remove sandals which she gave you to put on. The upper half of your body was left exposed. You then folded your *zabhalan* and though you had thought you would feel like throwing the childish garment away, you found yourself pressing it once more to your body as if saying good-by to a loving friend.

The priest then placed a cocoanut in your hands and escorted you to the verandah. Your relatives, forming a procession behind you, began to sing, creating an atmosphere of festivity all around you. Your mother, hurrying ahead, crossed the threshold leading to the verandah and waited there for you, holding in her left hand a tray on which were rice, a cocoanut, an egg and a pitcher of water. When you crossed the threshold—right foot first as you had been instructed—you waited while your mother took the cocoanut and then the egg and whirled them above your head three times. When she

broke both the egg and the cocoanut on the left side of the threshold, everyone watched because it would have been an ill omen if the egg had been rotten or the cocoanut milk discolored.

Suddenly you realized that you were confronted with a large group of relatives and friends all looking up at you. As you approached a lovely carpet was unrolled at your feet and you remembered to step out of your sandals. Then you walked to the center area where twelve scholarly-looking priests were waiting. Dressed in white and wearing white turban-like caps, they reminded you of your teachers, but they were priests and they carried no sticks.

TODAY IS NAVAJOT!

In the center of the carpet was a low wooden dais, some three feet long and six inches high and covered with a pure white cloth. On the dais was an urn in which the symbolical fire was burning and from which rose the wondrous scent of the sandalwood. Nearby on a pedestal was a tray containing pomegranate seeds, almonds, cocoanuts, raisins and rice. Another pedestal held a large bronze tray laden with clothes and gifts.

The officiating priest escorted you to the cloth-covered dais where you were instructed to seat yourself, cross-legged. Into your hands the priest placed long strands of thread and a number of rupees. The twelve

priests gathered around you as you sat facing the east. You remembered how your father had once told you not to look to the north during holy moments, for the north is the stronghold of evil forces, magnetic forces which disturb the mind and distort the influence spun by the priests as they intone their incantations. Their prayer was a chant which you knew so well that you repeated it with them word for word and pause for pause.

THE THREAD CEREMONY

Then you stood facing the east while the priest walked behind you and removed the white shawl from your shoulders. Placing a strand of thread around your neck, he let it hang down over your breast. As you recited the main prayer, the priest dressed you in the sacred shirt. First, he put on the right sleeve, then the left, and finally slipped the garment over your head. Gently arranging and smoothing this close-fitting white garment around your body, he took your hand in his as he continued the recitation.

He then took another thread, waved it three times to drive away the evil spirits and tied it around your waist. This was the greatest moment of all. The shirt would be your constant reminder that religion is a protective armor. The thread around the waist would be a symbol of the middle path, the path of moderation. The cap which you would later receive would signify spiritual adornment. But

now the time had arrived for you to pray the prayer your father had so often heard you say, "*Ashom Vohu!* I hereby make an attempt to ward off all evil. Help me in my task. I am your ardent follower. I promise to live by all thy precepts and to be an ardent Zoroastrian all my life. The preachings and the practices of this religion are my only guiding rules."

Then you seated yourself on the white-covered dais while the priests gathered around you and the officiating priest recited a blessing and "sealed" you as a Zoroastrian with all the virtues and hopes of those who follow the Persian seer. As you heard this final pronouncement, you knew that never before had there been a day like this day and in a little while, there would be music and merrymaking all because of what was happening to you.

The priest's voice chanted on, but you had your own secret prayer, unlearned and unrehearsed. "O God," you whispered to yourself, "I never want to be in the bad pages of your book. I want always to wear the sacred shirt and the holy thread. A moment without them would be my greatest sin. They will always be next to me like my flesh and skin. I promise it to you, O friendly priest. I promise it to you, dear father and mother. I promise it to you, O Zoroaster and especially do I promise it to you, O God!"

You never wondered whether you could actually keep all the promises you were making. At this moment, you did not think about tomorrow. You only knew that Ahura-

Mazda, God of the Parsis, who rules the world and watches over all His people, understood and accepted your prayer, for today was *Navajot.*

RELIGION IS A MATTER OF LEARNING

Had you been born a Parsi, your study of the faith would have continued for many years. But even with all your learning, you would have always found the teaching extremely difficult. That Zoroaster believed in one God long before the rise of monotheism in other faiths, that he preached about God's righteousness and love in days when the gods were still thought to be demanding and cruel, these were things you grasped easily. But that the great God Ahura-Mazda, somehow represented a good spirit called Spenta Mainyu as well as an evil spirit, Angra Mainyu, remained a mystery. Who and what were these conflicting heavenly beings? Were they sons of Ahura-Mazda in much the same way that Christians spoke of Logos and Lucifer? Were they entities or qualities or merely concepts? And if God was good, how could evil exist? These were questions which troubled you greatly as you continued your study in the beliefs of the Parsis.

RELIGION IS A STRUGGLE

The priests, however, seemed to understand these problems. Life, they insisted, is a matter of choice and there could be no choice if everything was good. But how could a good God create evil? Somehow he must have

because Ahura-Mazda was continually saying to his children, "Choose ye this day whom you will serve." You often wondered about the Zoroastrian concept of good and evil principles or good and evil spirits. You were told that the warfare between right and wrong in men's hearts was also the world struggle. It was more. It was the struggle in the unseen world as well. Hosts of demons were continually contending against angelic hosts.

You concluded that evidently the great God Ahura-Mazda needed help. That was why your scriptures say, "When a person becomes fifteen years of age it is necessary that he should take one of the angels for his protection, one of the wise as his own sage, and one of the high priests as his own high priest."

Seeking further understanding in this problem of good and evil, you were introduced to the concept of the Amesha Spentas. These are said to be six holy spirits emanating from Ahura-Mazda. They are, in effect, personified influences of God readily available to man. You also learned that Ahura-Mazda, the God of Light, is opposed by Ahriman, the prince of darkness, and that the Amesha Spentas are opposed by demon spirits which are their evil counterpart. You now saw the struggle in the world and in life in terms of an equation, a battle line in which the forces were clearly drawn:

AHURA-MAZDA	opposed by	*AHRIMAN*
The Amesha Spentas:		Demon Spirits:
Asha, knowledge of right and wrong		*Druj,* false appearances
Vohu Manah, good mind or love		*Akem,* temptation or evil
Kshathra, strength of spirit		*Dush-Khshathra,* cowardice
Armaiti, piety and faith		*Taromaiti,* false pretenses
Haurvata, health and perfection		*Avetat,* misery
Ameretat, immortality		*Merethyn,* destruction

RELIGION IS A MATTER OF CHOICE

Your mission in life, as far as your religion was concerned, was becoming ever more understandable. You realized it would be necessary for you to resist the demons or evil spirits by summoning the Ameshas Spentas or good spirits to your aid. When you felt yourself beset by Evil (*Akem*), you would have to call upon the Good Mind (*Vohu Manah*). Or, if you found yourself overcome by *Avetat* or misery, you must quickly arouse *Naurvetat* or health and perfection to help you. Life, you learned, is a

continual battle and you must ever depend upon your faith to help you. Life is a matter of choice in which a man can call upon either the god of light or the god of darkness. *The purpose of life is the attainment of good, but this attainment is meaningful only if evil exists, for in this way every man is called upon to exercise his choice.*

Had you been born a Parsi, you would have learned that this choice constitutes a law which says: If you follow that which is good, good is your reward; if you follow evil, you will be rewarded with evil. So you must continually pray for wisdom and seek, by every possible means, to determine what is evil and what is good.

Many years ago Zoroastrians were interested in occultism, alchemy, astrology and almost every form of mystery and magic which, they felt, would guide them in their quest for goodness and truth. Some Zoroastrians were known as Magi, highly skilled Persian mystics. Three of these wise men followed the star to Bethlehem, as modern Parsis now follow the light of truth wherever it may lead. As a Parsi you realize that there is much truth in Christianity and you are convinced of the greatness of Christ, but you believe that the surest guidance always came from Zoroaster. He speaks to you in many ways, but most clearly out of the Pahlavi Texts, which tell about his life and death, and out of the Avesta, the scriptures which explain and confirm the teachings of your faith.

THE HOLY BOOKS, A GUIDE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD

The Avesta teaches you that in order to be truly good, you need to be kind to all things: to people, to animals, to the earth and even to the thoughts you think. It says, "God created all creatures for progress, which is His wish; and it is necessary for us to promote whatever is His wish that your wish may be realized."

The Avesta reports that Zoroaster once inquired of God how he and his people might worship best and what manner of sacrifice they should make. Ahura-Mazda answered, "Go, O Zoroaster, towards the high-growing trees, and before one of them that is beautiful, high-growing, and mighty, say thou these words: 'Hail to thee! O good, holy tree, made by Ahura-Mazda! *Ashem Vohu!*'" Then Zoroaster was instructed to cut off a twig and hold it in his left hand, keeping his eyes fastened upon it and offer it to the fire while meditating upon the highest thoughts of goodness, beauty, and truth.

"Worship the earth," Zoroaster commanded his people, "worship the heavens, worship the good things that stand between earth and the heavens...worship the souls of the wild beasts and of the tame, worship the souls of the holy men and women, born at any time whose consciences struggle, or will struggle, or have struggled for the good."

THE AVESTA ALSO SPEAKS OF MARRIAGE

"He that hath a wife," says the holy *Avesta,* "is far above him that liveth in continence; he that maintaineth a household is far above him that hath none; he that hath children is far above him that hath no child."

Words such as these caused you to think about your own marriage when you reached a marriageable age. Parsis believe that next to a good education nothing is more important than finding the right partner in life, a partner who belongs to your country and most of all, to your religion.

Had you been born an orthodox Parsi, you would have tried to find an orthodox marriage partner; or if you were a reformed Parsi, whose beliefs are more liberal, you would have sought a mate among the reformed Zoroastrian group. Your religion allows first cousins to marry and such marriages are looked upon as propitious despite the biological threat of inbreeding.

You would also remember the "Square of Sanctions," which is a way of saying that in an ideal marriage all four sides or parties must agree. The four parties are: the girl's parents, the boy's parents, the girl and the boy. Parsis are very anxious to have their marriages turn out well and they know that it is difficult to secure a "Square of Sanctions" when one party is a non-Parsi.

When you talk of choice of partners you mean freedom of choice, but it is usually freedom within the

Zoroastrian community. As a rule, Parsis have a dual system; either the parents choose the partner or the boy or the girl makes the choice. Both ways are considered valid. In olden times if a son wished to get married but lacked the courage to seek his own mate, he would drop some salt into his father's drinking water as a reminder that the father should begin looking around for a daughter-in-law. A girl, on the other hand, often confided her wishes to a friend, the friend conveying the wish to the girl's mother and thus the search for a marriage partner was begun.

MARRIAGE INVOLVES MORALITY

Somehow, just the right person was usually found and divorces among Parsis are practically unknown. The scriptures of Zoroastrianism have much to say about marriage and sexual relations and are tolerant towards wives who yield to temptation. One such reference in the holy books—the Vendidad—says, "If a man, knowing the woman's shame, wishes to take it off of her, he shall call together her father, mother, sisters, brothers, husband, the servants, the menials and the master and mistress of the house and shall say, 'This woman is with child by me.' And they shall answer, 'We are glad that her shame is taken off of her.' And the man shall then support her and her child as a husband doth." The same scriptures, however, are opposed to willful prostitution or licentiousness and

Zoroastrian morals are among the highest in all the ancient faiths.

Had you been born a Parsi, you would have received much counsel about morality prior to your marriage. The priest would often have spoken to you and to your partner prior to the wedding day, stressing the sanctity of married life, emphasizing the need for living close to God and reminding you that you are to perpetuate in your children the cardinal Parsi ideals: *faith, wisdom, and charity, the three great credentials of Zoroastrianism.*

"Worship together in your home," the priest would have told you, "and your home will be a truly spiritual existence." He would have impressed upon you that children are a man's richest blessings, a point that was established long ago in one of Zoroaster's dreams. "I dreamed I saw a rich man without children," Zoroaster said, "and he was not exalted in my eyes; and I beheld a poor man with many children and he was exalted in my eyes."

MARRIAGE HAS ITS SYMBOLISM

On your wedding day, a garden spot would be festooned with colorful streamers, a platform built and decorated, chairs set out for relatives and guests and musicians engaged for the great event. Two white-robed, turbaned priests would be in attendance. Solemnly you and your partner would follow them to the platform where two chairs have been placed on either side of a white

curtain suspended from a wire to separate you from your marriage partner. You would be able, however, to see the people, dressed in their best, listening attentively while a priest questions both of you on your marriage intentions. He wants to know whether you will promise to lead an exemplary life, if you will love and honor each other and be true to the teaching and the counsel of the holy books.

Satisfied on these matters, he requests that you give each other the right hand, which you do beneath the curtain. While your hands are joined, the priest wraps a long string around your hands seven times, continuing to wind the string seven times around the chairs. Seven is a propitious number. There are seven chapters in one of the oldest Gathas, there are seven virtues and seven deadly sins, there are seven archangels before the throne of God and, of course, there are seven good and seven evil spirits vying for the souls of men.

Having finished winding the string around the chairs, the priest returns the ends of the string to your hands and ties a knot. Meanwhile, he has been chanting impressive passages from the Avesta. Then he speaks of the good life, of the struggle between good and evil and of the need for faith. When he has finished, he removes the curtain which has separated you and your mate. He explains that the bound hands are a symbol of spiritual union and that the bound chairs signify that religion will bind you forever to your home. So saying, he solemnly unwinds the thread.

Now you are each given a handful of rice and, at a signal from the priest, you toss these grains at each other, as a universal sign of a fruitful and prosperous life. The people, enjoying this little byplay, applaud while the musicians play briefly. This is the prelude to a sermon in which the priest dwells at length upon the five attitudes necessary for the good life: *innocence, discrimination, authority, reverence and steadfastness.* The service ends with a prayer and the time has come for the customary congratulations, gifts and the wedding feast.

Often, after this, when the priest meets you, he will say, "May the Amesha Spentas grant you honor among men through your offspring."

LOVE OF PEOPLE AND ANIMALS IS LOVE FOR LIFE

Your people are among the happiest in India. They are noted for the close fellowship that exists within the community of believers. They have a reputation for being industrious, highly moral and dedicated to the principles of their faith. They are also respected for their love for animals. In a country like India where everyone has been taught to reverence all life and where the cow is especially holy, there has, nonetheless, often been great neglect of animals, particularly of dogs and of beasts of burden. No religious prophet spoke more clearly on this subject than did your prophet Zoroaster. Even Nietzsche, in his book,

Thus Spake Zarathustra, (the Persian name for Zoroaster) pays tribute to the love the prophet had for animal life.

In the holy books Zoroaster reminds his people that, "In the ox is your strength and your reliance. In the ox is your victory; in the ox is your food and your raiment; in the ox is your tillage that causes food to come forth to you." And every Parsi knows the thoughtful tenderness with which Zoroaster spoke of dogs. "The dog has been created by God to be self-clad and self-shod, watchful and wakeful, sharp-fanged, born to accept his sustenance at the hand of man and to safeguard the goods of man....Whoever shall strike a shepherd dog, a house dog, or a stray dog, or a hunting dog, when the soul of that man shall pass into the other world, it shall howl louder and grieve more sorely than the sheep in the forest when attacked by the wolf."

ANCIENT TRUTHS WITH MODERN MEANINGS

But if Zoroaster had much to say about animals, he had more to say about human life and how men should live. Commenting on temptation he said, "When an action or an opinion appears and one does not know if it be a sin or not, then, if it be possible, it is to be abandoned and is not to be done at all."

Speaking of sin, he declared, "God has given to all men sufficient ability to save themselves from sin as well as from the devil who is the source of their sins and woes."

Of rewards and punishments, he wisely proclaimed, "He who injures my possessions, from his actions no harm can come to me. The harm will return to him, to his own flesh, and will keep him far from the good life."

Few prophets spoke in more modern terms about healing than did Zoroaster when, thousands of years ago, he advised, "One may heal with the law, one may heal with the knife, one may heal with herbs, but among all remedies the best healing one is that which heals with the Holy Word; this one it is that will best drive away sickness from the body of the faithful; for this is the best of all remedies."

Zoroaster's words convince you that he was a man truly called of God. He walked among men like a messiah. Although little is known about his life, it is said that he was married three times, that by his first wife he had one son and three daughters and by his second wife two sons. He began his ministry at the age of thirty, confident that God had revealed Himself to him in visions and in dreams.

DEATH IS INESCAPABLE

Had you been born a Parsi, you would believe that Zoroaster came to show you not only how to live, but also how to die—nobly and without fear. You would remember his words when the hour came for you to embark on the great, mysterious adventure of immortality. "Fate has come upon me, it cannot be cast off. I come, O God, I rejoice, I submit!"

In keeping with Zoroaster's teaching, you would believe that after death your soul will be judged and rewarded according to the deeds, words and thoughts which were yours during this present life. You believe in heaven and in hell; the first as a place of loving fellowship, the second as a dark well of loneliness. Because heaven and hell are very real to you and because the destiny of your soul is all-important, you have learned a "prayer for the dying" as part of your religious training. You learned it so well you feel sure you can recite it even though death itself is waiting at your side: "I repent of all sins, all bad thoughts, all bad words, all bad deeds, which I may have thought or said or done in this world. O God, I repent of all these sins with all my thought, word, and deed, physical or mental, worldly or spiritual."

Your people take this confession with utmost seriousness, and you have seen men die peacefully because of the power of it. You have often gathered with your relatives when they prayed for the salvation of the departed during the three days following a death. You believe unquestioningly in the efficacy of prayers for the dead, convinced that the spirit of the departed hears and acknowledges both the confession and the prayers. Surely the Fravashis—the spirits of the ancestors and the holy angels who have ever watched over the one who has died—hear the prayers too and are now prepared to lead the liberated soul across the bridge of judgment. The ceremonies and prayers for the dead are intended to

influence the Fravashis particularly, for their help is needed at this critical time. *But there is no fear of God among your people any more than there is fear of death.*

WHY THE DEAD ARE DEVOURED BY THE BIRDS

There is but one fear: contamination. Deep-seated in your mind is the belief that death gives the demon spirits a chance to use the corpse as a spawning ground for all sorts of evil and infection. To resist and counteract these influences, the holy books prescribe many important acts. The corpse must be washed and attired in a spotless, seamless white shroud. The sanctified urine of the temple bull must be employed to anoint the body of the dead. The ritual also suggests that a dog be momentarily brought into the dead man's presence, especially a dog with a spot above each eye which gives the impression of a four-eyed dog, for he will be a mystical guide for the soul during its pilgrimage after death.

Where shall the corpse be laid? When Zoroaster asked this question of God, God said, "On the highest summit, where there are always corpse-eating beasts and corpse-eating birds!"

The "highest summit" is the Tower of Silence or *Dakhma,* a lofty structure that looks like a campanile surrounded by gardens. Inside its circular walls is a section of stone slabs, open to the heavens, one for the corpses of men, one for women and one for children.

It is to these slabs that the corpse-bearers take the body. "Two men," says your holy scriptures, "strong and agile, having changed their garments, shall lay the body where there are the corpse-eating birds." To non-Parsis this may seem primitive and barbarous, but you know there is a deeply philosophical meaning behind the act. For it is believed among your people that the demon spirits have rushed into the corpse seeking to triumph over it. Instead, the birds of God's heaven triumph over the demons. It is a mystery which only you and your people fully comprehend.

You comprehend it, for you have seen the vultures soaring, waiting for their sacred prey and you remember how a devout follower of your faith once remarked, "When I give my body to the birds, this is my final act of charity."

You alone know the feeling of faith that floods your hearts as you stand with your people in the garden near the Tower of Silence. Only you know the depth of meaning when, on holy days, you look up beyond the Tower into the sky and say, "I repent of all my sins."

Some Parsis believe that some day the practice of disposing of the dead in the *Dakhma* will change and there have already been Parsi burials in the ground or in sepulchres above the ground. But custom is deep-seated and tradition is sacred. Therefore, because you have been taught that the dead body is contaminated, you would not

defile the earth with it, nor would you desecrate the sacred fire by using its flames for the purpose of cremation.

The Towers of Silence still stand in India and the prayers of penance will continue to be repeated for countless years to come. In the ageless temples of Zoroaster the scent of the sandalwood still rises from the bronze vessels where the fires burn. The chants of the priests are still spoken in the old Avestan tongue and the holy books are still fondly read. "Holiness," says your scripture, "is the best of all good. Holiness is also happiness, and happy is the man who is holy with perfect holiness."

This is the ideal toward which you strive. This would be your creed, your hope and your faith, had you been born a Parsi.

Buddha

About five hundred years before the birth of Christ a mighty king reigned in India over the land of the Sakyas, from which the snowy tops of the Himalaya Mountains could be seen. His name was Suddhodana and he had two wives called Maya and Pajapati; but for a long time they bore him no children, and the King despaired of having an heir to his throne. Then Queen Maya bore a son and after he was born, the legends tell us, she had a dream in which she saw a great multitude of people bowing to her in worship. Wise men were summoned to interpret the dream, and they told her that the King's son, so golden in color and so well formed, was destined for greatness as surely as rivers ran to the sea—that he would become either a mighty conqueror who would subdue all the people of the earth, or a holy saint, a "Buddha" (the word for one enlightened) who would have more power over the minds of men than the mightiest conqueror could gain over their bodies.

All this was confirmed in the minds of the wise men on account of the wonderful portents that took place at the birth of the child: flowers bloomed in barren places and springs gushed from dry rock on the day when the Prince was born. He was named by the King, "Siddartha,"—a word meaning one who always succeeds in what he undertakes—and because of the portents at his birth the

King himself bowed down to his own son and did him homage.

Now the King desired greatly that the first of the two prophecies should come to pass. He wished the Prince to be a conqueror, not a Buddha, and extend the power of the Sakyas by the sword through every part of the world. And he did everything in his power to bring this end about and to weaken the possibility that his son should ever be a holy man.

When the child was still very young a further prophecy was made to the King—namely that the Prince would only become a Buddha after he had seen four common sights which for him would be four omens—an old man, a sick man, a dead man and a holy man in the yellow robe of a beggar. Then and then only, said the prophecy, the Prince would leave his country; furthermore, if he remained at home for a certain length of time he would never leave at all, but would turn all his attention to the art of war, and his armies would sweep over the face of the earth like a devouring flame.

The King summoned his counsellors. He commanded them to make sure that no sick men or old men, no funeral escorts or beggars should ever be allowed on the streets of the city when the Prince was passing. All ugly sights were to be kept from him; he was to be surrounded with such pleasures and such beauties that he would never desire to leave his home; he was to know nothing of the meaning of

death; poverty was to be hidden; suffering and sorrow of all sorts were to be concealed in his presence. In these ways, thought the King, any desire to be a priest would be stifled in the Prince, and he would at last become a mighty conqueror as the prophecy had foretold.

In pleasure and luxury, surrounded by beautiful attendants, fed on the most delicious viands, hearing no sounds save music, laughter and the voices of delight, Prince Siddartha passed his boyhood. The King allowed him to study under wise men (who taught him only the most carefully prepared lessons), and it was notable that he easily learned all that was imparted to him and in a short time appeared to be wiser than his instructors. It was notable too that he possessed extraordinary skill at arms, for the King sent to him also the keenest archers and the mightiest swordsmen in his dominions, to teach him the art of war. These men whispered to each other that no more terrible warrior had ever been born than Siddartha, who soon was more than a match for the best of them and whose strength in comparison with theirs was as three to one.

When a young man the Prince was married to his cousin Yasodhara. His mother had died in his earliest childhood, but that sad event took place too early for him to remember. Now he was happy in the possession of the most beautiful wife in all his father's dominions, for Yasodhara had been chosen for him on account of her great loveliness as well as for her sunny and gracious

nature. Truly in all the history of the world no son of fortune had more in the way of love, treasure, beauty, and all things that make for happiness than the blessed Prince Siddartha!

Up to his twenty-ninth year no sorrowful sight had come before his eyes, and he knew nothing of Death, Sickness or Old Age. Then, however, he stepped into his chariot one day to visit the pleasure grounds of the city, and on his way thither an old man ran across the street and fell in front of the horses and barely escaped death. Siddartha was startled at the sunken eyes, the wrinkled yellow cheeks and the gray locks of an old man, and turning to his attendant asked him what terrible misfortune had brought such a fate upon a fellow creature. And the attendant, inspired, we are told, by Heavenly spirits, said to the Prince that what he had seen was nothing but old age and the lot of all men—a lot to which he himself and the Prince with him must surely come in time.

Sadly the Prince rode back to the Palace with his appetite for pleasure spoiled for the day, and when his father heard what had taken place he was greatly alarmed, for the first of the omens had now been fulfilled.

It was not long before Siddartha looked also on Sickness. Try as he might the King could not keep sorrowful sights from the eyes of his son any longer. One day as the Prince went out behind his splendid horses, a

man, writhing in the agony of disease, lay by the roadside, and the Prince was told that he suffered from some complaint of the body such as all men are heir to. And again he returned to the Palace more sad at heart than on the occasion when he had seen Old Age.

When the Prince next went to drive in his chariot another terrible sight met his eyes. He beheld a still form carried upon a bier and asked his companion what it might be. He was told that he was now in the presence of Death, who came at last for all men, cutting them off from their friends and relatives and bearing them away, none knew whither. And the Prince returned to the Palace in deeper sadness than ever. Of what worth were all the joys that surrounded him if they were to be taken from him after he had learned to love them, and how might a man take pleasure in Love and Life if these were to be snatched away as soon as he had grown to realize their full value? The Prince could no longer take delight in the pleasures that surrounded him, or even in the love of his wife, who was about to bear him a child. And he was sick at heart with the fear that he would lose the things that he loved.

When the King heard that three of the four omens had been fulfilled, he trembled with apprehension and stationed guards at all the city gates to intercept the Prince should he fly from home; for now that the prophecy had so far been fulfilled the King was sure it would soon be completed. Nevertheless he sent his soldiers to scour the

streets for beggars and holy men and drive them away from the city.

Only a few days afterward, the Prince again went forth in his chariot just as a beggar in yellow robes approached the walls. There was an expression of great peace upon the beggar's countenance, and he seemed far happier than the Prince himself. Siddartha asked the attendant who the man might be and what he did, and he received the reply that the stranger was a priest and sought happiness through giving up all the joys of the earth and begging his bread from door to door—and it seemed to the Prince as though a great light had suddenly burst through the clouds of his unhappiness, and he knew that he too must give up his palace and his pleasures, his wife and his future child and fare forth as a priest. Surely, thought the Prince, all the things that he enjoyed were no better than wraiths of mist that rose from the river in the morning, since like the mist they were forever changing, and must surely be terminated in sickness, old age or death itself; and he resolved to search for things more lasting than the happiness and pleasure of his youth.

He also resolved to leave his kingdom and become a beggar in a foreign land, attempting to find through fasting and contemplation the truth that must lie behind the changing forms of life, for he knew well that there must be some deep cause for all the things that he had witnessed and some impelling force behind the universe. Otherwise the whole earth and all that was in it and all things that

breathed upon its bosom would be idle and wicked delusions. And the Prince knew too that in him lay the power to discover the truth if he should search for it diligently and give his whole heart and mind to this one purpose.

Just then a messenger came to him telling him that his wife had borne him a son. On hearing this the Prince cried out that he wished it were otherwise, for his new-born son would be a hindrance to his design and an added bond that he must tear from his heart before he could go away.

That night, however, when all lay sleeping the Prince and one faithful servant made their way secretly from the Palace. It had strangely come to pass, perchance through the work of spirits, that all the guards at the Palace and the city gates were asleep, and the two went forth unhindered, riding on horse-back; and they spurred their horses to the utmost so when the morning came they would be far away. Then the Prince gave his attendant, who was named Channa, all the money and jewels that he possessed and told him to return to the Palace and tell the King that he, the Prince, had gone forth in search of enlightenment and would some day become a Buddha.

When Channa departed, the Prince gave his fine clothes to a beggar who was passing and took in return the beggar's faded yellow robe, and he, who had been used to all the luxuries of the Court, went from door to door begging his food and eating the bitter bread of poverty.

He crossed the river called the Ganges and came at last to a city named Rajagha. And here he soon attracted attention because his appearance and mien were so noble that even his coarse clothes and his new way of life could not disguise him. He called himself a prince no longer, but instead took the name of Gotama, this being one of the names of the family from which he sprang.

In course of time the King of the new country where the Prince was begging his bread and meditating on Life and Death desired to see the holy man of whom he had heard much talk, and he offered the Prince lands and riches. But the Prince told him that he had already laid aside far greater riches than these, and that nothing in life mattered to him except his quest for the truth, which one day he would surely find. And the King, whose name was Bimbasari, asked him when he had found the truth to return and teach it to the people of his country—and this the Prince promised to do.

For a long time the Prince lived in a cave not far from Rajagha and studied the faith of India as it was then taught, but his studies brought him no nearer to gaining the truth. So he went into the wilderness, where, he believed, fasting and meditation might bring him the things he sought.

He traveled southward for many miles and entered the very heart of the great Indian jungle, teeming with poisonous snakes and filled with savage beasts. Here he prayed and fasted, seeking enlightenment; and he carried

out his fasts with such severity that he nearly died as a result of them.

While in the jungle the Prince met five other holy men who were so much impressed with his fasts and his thoughtful demeanor that they became his disciples. But when he ceased to fast because he did not come any nearer the truth by going hungry, these disciples left him, believing that he had strayed from the path of the truth and never would gain the enlightenment he sought.

After several years the Prince left the jungle and commenced traveling through the country, begging his food wherever he happened to be. And now he was close to gaining the vision that he so greatly desired, for without his knowledge his years of thought and of self-denial had borne their fruit.

One day, bitterly discouraged, and heartsick with his many failures and temptations, he seated himself beneath a peepul tree with the firm resolve that he would not stir from the spot until he gained the truth that he sought. And while he sat there, the legends tell us, he was assailed by all the powers of darkness and evil, and devils crowded upon him so thickly that they darkened the sky and threw all Nature into convulsions in which the earth shook and the air was filled with thunder. All night the Prince sat motionless and all through the night the evil forces strove to turn him from the truth that they knew he was about to achieve. In the morning they departed, and the Prince as

he sat, saw flowers spring up and blossom all around him with miraculous swiftness. The air seemed purer than ever before, the sun was wonderfully bright and a peaceful serenity seemed to enfold the entire earth. And when night came and the stars awoke, the truth for which the Prince had been seeking flowed into his soul. He had indeed become a Buddha.

Gone were the temptations and the sorrows in a divine peace—a peace that became the reward of all disciples of the religion that he founded. This peace was called by him Nirvana and his disciples say he is the only man who attained it in his lifetime, for Nirvana is supposed to come only to the spirits of the dead, who have purified themselves not in one life, but in many. In Buddha's belief (for as Buddha we shall now know him), human beings live many times and receive the reward or the punishment of past existences in those that follow. This belief is known as "the transmigration of souls." It is the foundation of the faith of Buddha which is believed in to-day by millions of persons in India and China, as well as in other countries.

In the truth that Buddha had acquired he learned many things. Chief of them, as he believed, are four great facts of life and nature from which the soul cannot escape—that there will always be sorrow and suffering in the world; that these are caused by clinging to things that are always changing or dying; that the only way to obtain peace is to renounce these things and care for them no longer; and that the only way to live is to walk in the paths

of righteousness, honesty, virtue, and to believe in the Buddhist faith.

Buddha also believed that animals have souls just as men do, and that by some good action these animal souls become the souls of men. Then the souls go through many existences. If they are righteous they approach the peace of Nirvana, which is attainable only when they are entirely purified; if they are unrighteous they are cast down again into lower forms of life and once more have to struggle upward toward the truth. There is no escape from the consequences of sin in the Buddhist faith. Just so certainly as a man sins he will be punished for it—if not in this life in the next one—and if his sin is sufficiently deadly he will lose again the form of a man and return to the shape of a snake or a lizard to expiate his wickedness through countless generations.

Heaven and Hell have a place in the belief of Buddha also. They are different from the Heaven and Hell that Christians know because in the Buddhist religion they are only temporary abodes for the spirit between its many existences on earth.

When his new faith had come to him, Buddha left the jungle to preach it to mankind. On his way he met the five disciples that had deserted him and he told them that the truth had indeed come to him and that he was now a Buddha. After they heard him preach they were converted, and after three months the number of

Buddha's disciples had increased to sixty, who, like himself, gave all their worldly possessions to assume the garments of beggars and ask for their bread from door to door.

Buddha then told his disciples that they must go in different directions and teach all that desired to learn. He himself went back to Rajagha where King Bimbasara, who desired to know the truth, was living. And he preached to King Bimbasara and converted him, and the King presented Buddha with a bamboo grove in which he might hold his assemblies and preach to the many thousands that now came to hear his sermons.

The fame of Buddha's teachings soon reached his native city and his father, the old King Suddhodana, yearned to see the son who might have been a great conqueror but who had chosen to be one of the most enlightened teachers that the world has ever seen. So he sent a retinue to greet Buddha and ask him to return to his native city. One thousand men went forth upon this errand, but none returned, for all were converted by Buddha and remained to listen to his teachings and then to spread the faith themselves. Then King Suddhodana sent another thousand, and these too remained with Buddha. At last, however, he sent one messenger, the same Channa who had accompanied the Prince when he left the city, and the faithful Channa bore the message to Buddha.

Buddha decided to visit his father and see his family once more, for he desired to bring the faith to the land of the Sakyas. With thousands of his followers accompanying him he went to the royal city and met his father without the walls. And the father's heart was heavy to see how the son had changed, for Buddha was no longer young, strong and handsome, but wrinkled and emaciated, with gray hair and a bent figure from the hardships he had endured in many years of wandering and preaching.

Buddha would not enter the city of his countrymen but preached in a banyan grove without the walls. And when he preached he converted many of his former friends and relatives. His wife whom he had deserted and who had grieved for him ever since, gained happiness once more, for she too, became converted to the Buddhist faith, and entered the Buddhist sisterhood, becoming a nun. Even the King himself was finally converted by Buddha's teaching, and we are told that he too entered the faith and became a disciple. The son that Buddha had only seen once when a day old became a disciple also, and, when he had mastered the teachings of Buddhism, was made a monk in the Buddhist order.

Buddha lived to be eighty years old and all the rest of his life was spent in traveling through the world and preaching the faith wherever he went. The land that he visited most frequently lay on both sides of the river Ganges and for thousands of years has been called the

Buddhist Holy Land. Wise men of all ages have believed in the faith as he taught it, and even to-day and in modern European nations there are those that profess to be of the Buddhist faith.

The order of monks that was founded by Buddha is the oldest existing religious order in the world. For nearly two thousand five hundred years these monks have practised renunciation and high thinking and have worn the yellow robes of the holy man and the beggar.

Many tales and legends sprang up concerning Buddha even in his lifetime. In fact it is only through legends that we know he was ever a Prince at all. He had a marvelous faculty for controlling the anger of wild beasts and once tamed an elephant that had killed many people, simply by speaking to it in a quiet tone, at which the great animal, which had been raging through the streets of Rajagha, followed him like a dog. A tale of his great wisdom that is still told by his disciples, is of a woman who had lost her child through Death and who came before Buddha maddened with grief, begging him to bring the child back to life or at least to provide some comfort from the sorrow that tortured her. And Buddha told her to get mustard seed from a house that Death had never visited and when she had done so to bring it to him and he would bring the child back to life.

The poor woman went from door to door asking if Death had visited there, and in every home the answer was

"yes!" Nowhere could she find a house that was free from the blight of Death. Then the woman saw that the only happiness lay in renouncing the ties that bound her to other human beings and in seeking the peace of Nirvana, for Buddha had taken this way of teaching her that Death is the common lot of all; and she entered the Buddhist sisterhood and found there the happiness that she sought.

Buddha was supposed to have lived many times and there are many tales of his deeds in previous lives. Some of them tell of happenings when he was an animal and how he finally acquired the human form. Others tell of his good deeds when his spirit had entered the human body but was not yet ennobled sufficiently to become a Buddha.

There are hundreds of such tales in the Buddhist faith. Some deal with Buddha himself; some with his disciples. In all the stories, however, the virtue of self-sacrifice and of renunciation is strongly painted. It is the cornerstone of the Buddhist religion.

When Buddha grew very old he called his disciples around him and enjoined them to preach the faith after he had passed away for he knew that at last the hand of Death was near. He died in a little town in the depths of the jungle, and heavenly music sounded and the trees burst into blossom as his spirit passed away. He was given a funeral with all the honor due to a mighty king and after his body was burned, eight cities requested a share of his

ashes. These were placed in eight great tombs, and the ruins can be seen to the present day.

After the death of Buddha the religion that he preached rapidly spread through Asia. To-day it is taught in very different forms in different countries, and the Buddhism of Thibet in China has many elaborate ceremonies attached to it that the Buddhism of India lacks completely. Unlike most of the great religions of the world, Buddhism has never been spread by the sword, but has crept into the minds of men through its own power. And everywhere it is granted that Buddha was a great man and a great teacher, and that many of the principles he taught are second only to those included in the Christian faith.

Had You Been Born a Buddhist

Had you been born a Buddhist, you would realize that your religion has unusual world importance, not only spiritually, but as a social force throughout Asia, India, China, Ceylon and Japan. It has also been introduced into America where its temples have been built in metropolitan centers, particularly on the East and West coasts. Of the 200,000,000 Buddhists in the world, some 85,000 are in the United States.

You would be the first to admit that Buddhism in America is different from Buddhism in Asia, that Buddhism in China is different from Buddhism in India, and that all-in-all your religion represents a maze of contrasts. But you would contend that all of the sects and groups in your religion in the various countries are linked together by a universally accepted "creed." You call it:

BELIEF IN THE THREE REFUGES

Throughout the realm of Buddhism, all of your people are united in this belief when they say, *"I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in the Dharma; I take refuge in the Sangha."*

What are these Three Refuges? The first, of course is the Buddha, the founder of your faith. He was an inspired teacher who lived some six hundred years before the birth of Christ. *When you say that you take refuge in him you not*

only mean the Buddha as a man, but you mean as well that the Buddha is a spirit and a consciousness, a state of mind and being. For "Buddha" is a title meaning enlightenment or awakening. "I take refuge in the Buddha," means that you are confident that the enlightenment which was the Buddha's will guide you and help you in all your needs. You mean that you are identified with the creative source and power of the universe.

When you say, "I take refuge in the Dharma," you mean that you are trusting completely in the teachings and promises which the Buddha revealed. You mean that you are prepared to practice what he proclaimed and to demonstrate what he declared. You mean that the path of truth which he walked, the righteousness he revealed, the salvation or destiny which he promised are provable and real. Dharma is a process which, like the Hindu Karma, is based on an immutable law. It is faith in the law of cause and effect; faith in the universal principles which can be trusted as the basis of justice and love. *When you affirm that you take refuge in Dharma, you are saying that no matter what happens, no matter how unfair, unjust, or unreasonable life's circumstances may appear to be on the surface, you are determined to trust the unseen, sub-surface power that governs the universe and guides the world.*

The third Refuge, Sangha, means fellowship or communion. Specifically, it refers to the order of monks and disciples founded by the Buddha himself. But it means something more. When you say, *"I take refuge in the*

Sangha," you are testifying that there is a mystical fellowship of believers who are links in a chain of brotherhood and understanding. Both the seen and the unseen congregation are bound together by the spirit of the Buddha. Sangha is that spiritual community whose influence molds and directs the destiny of men. When men worship together a power is generated, that is Sangha. When devoted followers of the Buddha, bound together by the quest for Buddha-hood, do the Buddha's will and follow his teaching, one here, another there, unknown to one another, unseen by one another, that is Sangha. When you begin your worship, kneeling or sitting before the little shrine in your home, the first words you whisper as an invocation are, "I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in the Dharma; I take refuge in the Sangha." As you fix your eyes on the statue of the Buddha and breathe in the incense which reminds you of his teaching, you sense the Three Refuges. But when you intone your *dharanis* or *mantras* (words and syllables from the Sutras or holy writings), when you lay a flower on the shrine and see in it the hoped-for perfection of your own life, that is when you express the Three Refuges in your heart.

THE WORLD OF BUDDHISM

Often, when you have finished your meditation, you remain for a long time before the shrine and your mind reaches out to Buddhists everywhere. Your meditation on

the Three Refuges brings the heterogeneous groups into a unified Buddhistic world. It is a colorful and dramatic world. It includes barefoot monks in saffron robes, who shuffle thoughtfully through ancient streets, carrying their clay bowls which are sometimes called "begging bowls." Many loyal Buddhists would not think of eating their first meal of the day without placing a token of food in a holy man's bowl. It is their acknowledgement of gratitude, their "grace before meals." This is Buddhism.

It includes thousands of other monks, also saffron clad. Monks called *phongyis* or *bhikkus* or *bonzis,* move among the people, live the life of religious men, reside in monasteries, teach in schools and do social service. Their shaved heads signify humility and discipline. They live by rules called the Vinaya, which bind them to a life of austerity. You see them bent over ancient texts, Pali texts, deciphering and interpreting age-old Sutras. You hear a scholar say, "Greatest of all is the Lotus-Sutra, for it teaches the way of salvation." And another answers, "Surely the Pajnaparamita Sutras are greatest because they teach the true meaning of self." This is Buddhism.

You envision temples such as no other religion in the world can claim. In Rangoon, Burma, stands the Shwe Dagon whose forest of shimmering spires is covered with pure gold. Often, when a Buddhist dies, a loved one honors the departed by spreading a bit of gold leaf over one small section of these mighty towers, or a devoted follower shows his gratitude for some blessing received by

performing such an act. Inch by inch, through hundreds of years, the patient, loving hands of worshipers have covered the massive pillars of the Shwe Dagon with imperishable gold. You remember the towering solid gold statue of the Buddha in Bangkok's Wat Bovornives monastery. You see again the giant, awe-inspiring figure of the Buddha in Kamakura, Japan and the unbelievably intricate carvings of the reclining Buddha in the Ajanta Caves in central India. You visualize the indescribably beautiful temples in Ceylon. All this is Buddhism.

As you sit before your shrine you are part of it, part of the monastic life, the teachings, the temples. You are part of the threefold belief: the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha. Over and over you tell yourself, "Buddhism is not divided! It is one invincible faith founded on the Three Refuges."

LAMAISM-THE BUDDHISM OF TIBET

Had you been born a Buddhist, you would know that, among non-Buddhists, there is great misunderstanding and misinformation about your religion. Take, for example, Buddhism in Tibet. For more than a thousand years, Tibetan Buddhism has been a mystery shrouded in the awesome mists of the Himalayas, romanticized by writers and glamorized by weird tales filtering through forbidden monastery walls. Out of Tibet came stories about prayer wheels endlessly turning, of haunting

Tibetan horns continually being blown to frighten away evil spirits and of temple gongs eternally echoing in shadowy rooms plated with gold. When people talked to you about your religion, they wanted to know about Tibet. Was it true that there were oracles and soothsayers there who could look into the future? Were there, high up in that fabulous spiritual retreat, strange monks who could leave their bodies and magically span the earth?

What could you reply? Like most members of your faith, you were reluctant to say just what some Buddhist adepts could achieve during periods of meditation. Strange and wonderful things did happen in Buddhism and no one had ever exhausted the full power of the mind or the mystery inherent in deep meditation. Tibet was a mystery, even to you, but it was not a "queer" country nor was Buddhism in Tibet all mystery and magic. It was a philosophical approach to life based upon the belief that a true realization of self can come only if a man frees himself from the desires of the flesh and attachments of the world.

THE DALAI LAMA

You would know, however, that Buddhism in Tibet is actually Lamaism, a religion of priests who practice many rituals and make up an hierarchical organization with the Dalai Lama at its head.

You would be familiar with the Communist invasion of Tibet and the flight of the Dalai Lama. Escaping with a

hundred of his devoted followers, this spiritual leader fled to India in 1960. The non-Buddhist world and the press described the Dalai Lama as just another man, not unlike other religious figures, a mortal man subject to the circumstances of life just as all men are. But to many Tibetans he was a god or the incarnation of a Bodhisattva, one of that group of chosen souls who prefer to live on earth and help people rather than to live, if they wished, in heaven. He ruled like a king and it was believed that no force in heaven or on earth could ever dislodge him; yet he, even as many others, fled before the guns and planes of the invaders.

The Dalai Lama had a rival, called the Panchem Lama, and their rivalry was fully as political as it was religious. When the "Red invaders" came to Tibet, it was said by some authorities, that they drove out the Dalai Lama and set up the Panchen Lama in his place. Other reports maintained that the Dalai Lama fled for fear of his own safety, relinquishing the field to the Panchen Lama. But no matter what actually happened or who may be right, it is your belief that both the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama believed in the Three Refuges: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

BUDDHISM IN CHINA

Buddhism in China has had a glorious history ever since the first century A.D. At that time, according to

legend, Emperor Ming had a wonderful dream. He saw a man whose body was covered with gold step out of the blazing sun and stream down to earth like a golden ray. He saw him conquer the world with his beauty and the challenging power of his thought. Astrologers interpreted the dream by saying, "Surely this golden man is the Buddha!" So the emperor requested that the Buddha's statue and Buddhist priests be brought from India to China to teach his people the Buddha way of life.

The people of China interpreted Buddhism as a religion of renunciation because monks and priests pledged themselves to live according to the three monastic vows: *poverty, defenselessness, and chastity*. Many Buddhists in China who became vegetarians, refused to kill any living thing. Others spent their entire lives in meditation. But in all their practices they never set absolute rules or prohibitions for their followers. Buddhism, they insisted, made every person responsible for his own acts and it urged every individual to find peace and tranquillity within himself and for himself.

China followed Mahayana Buddhism, a theistic form, whose devotees adhered to the ancient Sanskrit texts. Mahayana was a philosophical approach to life that permitted adjustment to ever-changing political scenes. It was referred to as the "greater way" to distinguish it from Hinayana, a non-theistic and almost entirely monastic form of faith whose scriptures were written in the Pali language. Hinayana, also called Theravada Buddhism,

flourished in such countries as Thailand, Laos, Burma, Cambodia and Ceylon, while Mahayana claimed China, Korea and Japan. Wherever Buddhism spread, it soon developed groups within groups and sects within sects. But wherever it was established, whether in the most remote Himalayan retreat or at the shrine at which you worshiped, the faithful follower always said, "I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in the Dharma; I take refuge in the Sangha."

GOD AND BUDDHISM

Not much was said about God as far as your faith was concerned. Any concept of God was beyond man's grasp and since Buddhism was a practical approach to life, why not deal with practical things? India, where Buddhism was born, had so many Hindu gods that no one could number them. They were often made in the image of men, but Buddhism was made in the image of concepts, great concepts about life and how life should be lived. If the truth were known, you often tell yourself, Buddhism has no God in the Hindu or Christian sense, nor does it have a saviour or a messiah. It has the Buddha. And he was the Enlightened One, the Shower-of-the-Way.

The Buddha! His name as far as you are concerned is above every other name, yet you do not worship him. You worship through him. Through him you find your own true nature, the nature of reality and your relationship

with all of life. You have a statue of the Buddha to help you in this awareness. Many Buddhists do not believe in statues and you secretly wonder whether the Buddha himself would not be a bit displeased if he returned to earth and found statues and images of himself. But just as people have pictures of their loved ones to remind them of their nearness, so you feel it is right for you to have an image of the Buddha.

Some Buddhists even say that the life of the Buddha—the Buddha as a man—is unimportant. They emphasize that it is only his message and his disciplines that are important. But often, as you meditate, as you sit before your shrine perplexed about life's problems and wondering how other people come to terms with them, you find inspiration in the story of the Buddha as a man. For you believe that the soul of the Buddha lived in heaven from the beginning of time, waiting for the moment in which it was to reveal itself to the world. And you may wonder whether your soul lived in heaven before it came to manifest itself on earth.

It is not quite clear just where and what heaven is, but you believe that somewhere there is a realm of emancipation, a state of bliss and a oneness with reality that underlies all life. You have a name for this state of "non-existent-existence"; you call it Nirvana. While Nirvana is a kind of heaven, it is, even more, a perfect blending with the essence of life. You believe that

somewhere, somehow, the spirit of the Buddha was waiting in a Nirvanic realm, waiting to be born as a man.

THE BIRTH OF THE BUDDHA

In the year 563 B.C., the Buddhistic soul, the Bodhisattva, entered the body of Queen Maya, wife of King Sudhodanna Gautama who ruled the Sakya clan in the Himalayan valley of the Ganges in India. The annunciation came to Queen Maya in a dream. She dreamed that a magnificent white elephant descended from the skies and entered her body. She told her dream to the wise men in the king's palace and they said it meant that she would give birth to a son who would be either a great emperor over a temporal kingdom or a great teacher over a spiritual world.

While waiting the birth of the child, Queen Maya decided to visit her parents in the village of Devahrada, but along the way she heard a voice warning her that her son would be delivered before she reached her parental home. Seeking refuge, she retreated into Lumbini Park. Reaching up to support herself by holding to the branches of a tree, she discovered that the tree miraculously bowed down as if to worship her. Here, alone, and yet sustained by a great power, she gave birth to Prince Siddhartha Gautama. At that very moment seven other births took place in the Sakya kingdom: five male children who were to become Buddha's disciples; a baby girl who would one

day be his wife; and a horse which was also to become important in the unfolding of the drama of Prince Gautama, the foreordained Buddha.

When Queen Maya returned to the palace with the child, the king and his people staged a great celebration. The young prince was taken into a Hindu temple for consecration. There three Brahman wise men repeated what had already been proclaimed: the child would either be an emperor or a teacher at the age of thirty.

THE BUDDHA'S BOYHOOD

King Sudhodanna, concerned over the prophecy that his son might some day abandon the throne, vowed to shield Prince Siddhartha from the world. The king had been warned by astrologers that if the prince ever became aware of the suffering in the world, he would surely try to help mankind through spiritual rather than material aid. Therefore, the king commanded his subjects never to let Prince Gautama be exposed to either the sight of sorrow or the presence of death. And so it was that within the kingdom walls Prince Gautama, living in a sort of make-believe world and enjoying a sort of make-believe peace, saw only the happiness of his father's court.

During this sheltered existence many miracles took place in the life of the young prince. These are part of the Buddha legends and you, as a Buddhist, see in them

psychological truths, although some people take them literally. One story relates that one day the prince fell asleep in the shade of a tree and although the shade of every other tree shifted with the sun, the cool shadows never changed at the spot where Prince Gautama lay. Another account tells that, at the age of twelve, he confounded his teachers with his superior knowledge. At sixteen he so distinguished himself at archery that he won the right to marry his cousin Yasodhara who, as has been said, was born connaturally on the day of his birth.

For twenty-nine years Prince Gautama was spared the sight of suffering until one morning he drove into a city in his horse-drawn chariot. There he saw an old man wearily making his unsteady way along the road. The prince was confronted for the first time with the tragedy of age. Then, in quick succession, he saw a sick man bowed down with disease and a dead man being carried to the waiting funeral pyre. These three scenes revealed to Prince Gautama the true nature of suffering. Here were the agony of age, the tragedy of disease and the sorrow of death; from one or all, no living soul is spared. It was a divine drama and it plunged the prince into deep sadness. He was never to forget what he had seen, nor could he forget the contrast which he observed in the face of a serene and peaceful monk who quietly made his way along these same streets. Surely the monk had found the answer to life's riddle. Surely the man who had set his heart on self-discovery would find peace.

Prince Gautama was never the same after this experience. Haunted by his thoughts, he finally made a tremendous decision. He determined to give up his wife, his only son, his parents and his kingdom and resolved to walk throughout the world as the monk had done. He would search for the answers to the question of suffering and pain. This was to be his mission. This was why he had come into the world.

THE GREAT RENUNCIATION

Thus, one night, a night which you and all Buddhists still refer to as the Night of the Great Renunciation, Prince Gautama left his father's house. In a chariot, drawn by the horse which had been born on the same day that he had been born, the Prince started toward the tightly barred palace gates. As the horse approached, the gates mysteriously opened of their own accord. The prince and his charioteer rode through, out into the world.

Carrying neither money nor food, the prince proceeded deep into the forest where he shaved his head and put aside his royal garments to don the lowly garb of a monk and to begin his pilgrimage. The charioteer, after vainly trying to dissuade him, returned to the palace. Here, confronted by the royal family, he told them the story, witnessed their consternation and then in anguish, died of a broken heart.

Such is the legend of the Buddha, from his advent to his renunciation of a worldly kingdom. Such is the narrative of the prince who became a beggar and entered into his "hidden years" at the age of thirty. Then the story continues, telling how he studied with Brahman priests, how he walked observingly in the world, how he shouldered the burdens, the sorrow and the pain of the people and unceasingly sought for wisdom.

HOW DOES A MAN RECOGNIZE HIS OWN DIVINITY?

Was he aware of his divinity? Did he know throughout his wanderings that he was the Buddha and that his spirit was the spirit of Eternal Consciousness? You are not sure. There are some things about your faith you cannot answer decisively. There are too many speculations among your people for you to be arbitrary about many things. As a devout Buddhist you realize there are three kinds of truth: *absolute truth, relative truth, and illusory truth.* Buddhism, you contend, is always reasonable in its points of view, Buddhism is willing to speculate on all questions of life and that is why you are reluctant to say decisively that Prince Gautama knew he was the Buddha before he became the Buddha. Does every man know whether he, himself, is divine? Who is to say that every man is not a potential Buddha!?

As you worship before your shrine, you know that for you Buddhism holds great meaning. You remember how, when you were four years old, you had been initiated into Buddhism in an impressive ceremony. Your head had been shaved, you were given the garb of a monk and you had carried a begging bowl for part of a day. The ceremony was to impress upon you the influence of the Buddha. Many of your boyhood friends became monks at the age of nineteen or twenty because they wished to continue the special religious life which had been impressed upon them when they were four. Girls often became Buddhist nuns.

The most wonderful part about Buddhism, you believe, is that it helps an individual to experience what the Buddha, himself, went through in his life. This is what the priests in the temple tried to make clear to you during the ceremony and later, during your school years when you were taught by Buddhist monks. *Buddhism is a religion of teaching.* There are no sacraments, nor elaborate ritual; no redemptive plan, nor promise of heaven or hell, no doctrine that man is conceived and born in sin. *Buddhism is an awareness.* It is belief in the Three Refuges: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

If you feel sometimes that there is a miraculous force at work in your life, you recall that this too was part of the Buddha's experience. Although Buddhism lays no stress on miracles, there are wondrous legends about the founder of your faith. Once he tossed a rice bowl into a

river and it floated upstream. On another occasion a pile of straw on which he prayed was transformed into a beautiful altar. Gods, disguised as devils, tempted him, offering him the kingdoms of the world if he would but bow down and serve them, but he refused. All these things are links in a chain of remembrances that must surely have led the Buddha back to a realization of the heavenly abode from which he came and sometimes during your meditations, you have the feeling that your soul, too, was once a Bodhisattva living in heaven since the beginning of time.

The true awareness of who and what the Buddha was came to Prince Gautama through prolonged meditation. For seven weeks, in fasting and prayer, he sat beneath a Bodhi-tree (the pipal or sacred fig tree), determined not to rise until he had solved the problem of suffering and the mystery of pain. Here in Bihar, India, deserted by friends, weak from hunger and longing, he received his illumination. It was as if he relived the endless cycles of cause and effect existent since the beginning of time. He gradually saw the world of truth unfold for him. His mind was opened. A light surrounded him. He discovered that the cosmos and he were one, and it was at this moment that he realized his Buddha-hood.

THE BUDDHA AND YOU

Had you been born a Buddhist, you too would see yourself under the Bodhi-tree. You would also wish to make the discovery that your leader made. You would believe that your true Self is God and that God is the true Self—although even as you said this, you would substitute the term "Universal Consciousness" for "God."

Self with a small "s" is mortal, subject to pleasure and pain, responsive to life's highs and lows, bombarded by change, wrecked by the three tormentors: age, sickness, and death. But all of these occurrences, while appearing real and important to self, are immaterial to the higher Self. True life, according to Buddhism, is a superconscious life, and in this you admit there is a close parallel to the Christian concept of "dying unto self" in order to realize the Christ within.

THE BUDDHA AND CHRISTIANITY

Had you been born a Buddhist, you would recognize many similarities between Buddhism and Christianity. Although the Buddha is in no way a messiah, as was the Christ, he came to save men; not from sin, as Jesus had done, but, rather, from *nature* by demonstrating that nature is an unreality. The Buddha gathered his disciples around him and preached his "sermon on the mount" at what is now Sarnath, India. Here, in a deer park called Isipatana, he related what had been revealed to him

throughout his pilgrimage and during his meditation under the Bodhi-tree.

"Hear, O my disciples," he said, "I will explain to you the truth of suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering and the way that leads to the end of suffering. Birth is suffering; old age is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, dejection and despair are suffering. Contact with unpleasant things is suffering....And these are the causes of suffering: the craving for pleasure and lust, the craving for passion, the craving for existence, the craving for vanity....Now, the cessation of suffering is to cease from attachment. Attachment originates in craving, and craving originates in ignorance. To cease from suffering, cease from attachment; to cease from attachment, cease from craving; to cease from craving, cease from ignorance...."

So spoke the Buddha to his disciples and having captured their minds with his logic, he now proceeded to capture their hearts with his love. It was all very well to talk of suffering and the cessation of suffering, and it was reasonable to warn people that they must "cease from craving, cease from ignorance," but how could this be done in actual practice? The Enlightened One had an answer and had you been born a Buddhist, you would hold it as a cardinal creed. The answer lay in what the Buddha himself called the Eightfold Path. It consisted of:

1. Right views

2. Right intention
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

The Buddha also referred to these eight principles as the Middle Way, and he meant that a man should live moderately between extreme spirituality and extreme secularism. This, he felt, was a rule which all people should follow. "My doctrine," he said, "makes no distinction between high and low or between rich and poor. It is like the sky. It has room for all; and like the rain, it washes all alike."

For forty-five years he preached and lived his gospel. For nearly half a century he went about doing good, telling his disciples, "Let your light so shine before the world that you, having embraced the religious life, according to our well-taught doctrine and discipline, may be seen by men as possessing forbearance and meekness."

He established Five Great Commandments:

1. Do not kill
2. Do not steal
3. Do not commit adultery
4. Do not bear false witness
5. Do not abuse your body with strong drink.

He was not interested in final answers. His mission was to turn men's hearts from fruitless speculation into a way of life. His aim, he said, was to lift men above themselves or out of themselves into a higher consciousness where they could realize the greatest potential of their spiritual natures. When someone asked him, "Where is heaven?" he replied, "Walk the Eightfold Path." When he was prodded by those who wanted to know what the soul was like and how and in what form a person would live again, he told them, "Let that which I have not revealed remain unrevealed."

"But, Master," asked a disciple "of what does religion consist?"

"It consists," the Buddha replied, "in doing as little harm as possible, in doing good in abundance, in practicing love, compassion, truthfulness and purity in all walks of life."

So spoke the Buddha and shortly before his death, he called his disciples around him and said, "Go now, O monks, and wander for the benefit of the many, for the welfare of mankind, out of compassion for the world. Preach the doctrine. If it is not preached to men, they cannot attain salvation. Proclaim to them a life of holiness."

There were many likenesses between Buddhism and Christianity, but there was also one major difference. Buddhism did not believe in salvation through a messiah,

a redeemer, or any person. It believed in salvation through oneself, meeting one's own problems, exonerating one's own sins, and finally, facing death itself with a supreme confidence in Self.

THE DEATH OF THE BUDDHA

In a grove of trees, near the holy city of Benares, India, where he had spent his years of ministry, the seventy-five-year-old Buddha clasped the hand of his best-loved disciple, Ananda, which means the blessed one, and told him not to weep. "Whatever is born," explained the Buddha, "bears within itself the seed of dissolution. Impermanent are compound things. Work out your salvation with earnestness."

Had you been born a Buddhist, you would often meditate upon the death of the Buddha because you knew that your life, too, carried within it the "seed of dissolution." Where would you seek help? In the Three Refuges: the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha. And what happens after death? Buddhists are divided in their opinions. Some, like the Lamas, believe that the mind guides the life essence into another stage of consciousness. Others, like the Mahayanas, believe that a process or an energy is reincarnated in another life, perhaps on this planet, perhaps elsewhere. Hinayana or Theravada Buddhists often cremate the body, keeping the ashes in an urn somewhere in their home. The Buddha

was buried, though no one knows exactly where. Relics of his body, including the famous tooth of the Buddha in the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, Ceylon, began to be revered. It was said that miracles took place in the stupas and pagodas where these relics were enshrined. You wonder whether this would have been the Buddha's wish, even though, as you know, entire cities—like the one at Pagan, Burma, once built to honor him—were later abandoned and reduced to ruins by the ravages of time.

The Buddha's words and the Buddha's teaching, you feel, are far more important than stupas and pagodas or even cities. His philosophies and sayings, collected after his death and assembled into scriptures called Pitakas (which means baskets), are the true treasures of your faith. The sacred canon of Buddhism contains three such "Baskets" and they are called Tipitaka or Tripitaka.

THE HOLY BOOKS OF BUDDHISM

The first Basket is known as the Vinaya-Pitaka, a book of rules for the various orders of monks and nuns. It contains the history of how the disciplines and the orders were formulated, how these should be enforced, and what the Buddha had to say about them in his sermons and discourses. The second Basket is the Sutta-Pitaka or book of sermons containing the gospel according to the Buddha. It records the Four Noble Truths:

1. The truth of suffering

2. The cause of suffering
3. The cessation of suffering
4. The way that leads to the cessation of suffering

It also explains the Eightfold Path and offers instructions in the form of dialogues between the master and his disciples as well as a summary of Buddhist ethics under the title of the Dhammapada. The third Basket is the Abhidhamma-Pitaka and is called the "Basket of Development." It discusses Dharma, the way of life, and the cause and essence of all living things.

There are also other writings, such as the Jatakas, comprised of more than five hundred legends; they deal with accounts of the Buddha, many of which are supposed to have taken place in his previous incarnations. It is believed that the soul of the Buddha may have manifested itself many times before he came to earth, just as it is believed that he has, no doubt, reappeared many times since he died, perhaps even as a Jesus or a Mohammed or some other famous personage. But the greatest thought among all of the writings is this: "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha."

THE SECTS OF BUDDHISM

As you worship before your shrine, secure in the Three Refuges, you feel as though you were in the very center of the stirring world of Buddhism, a world which, you insist,

is based on equality and justice. It is a world which has never denied admittance to anyone, no matter what his race, color, or station in life may have been. Around you are many "Buddhas" or, rather, the Buddha as known by many names, such as: Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha; Amida, the Buddha of eternal light and life; Avalokitesvara, the Buddha of love and Kevannon, the Japanese Buddha of mercy. Around you is also the great galaxy of Buddhistic expressions represented in more than forty schools of thought, all claiming to be truth and all, apparently, able to prove their claim to the satisfaction of their followers.

These many "denominations" bear ambitious names: Tendai (salvation for all); Nichiren (named after its thirteenth century founder); the Mystical School (a pantheistic approach to universal understanding); the Shingon School (a school of mystical enlightenment); the Hsuan-tsang School (named after its seventh century founder); the Pure Land School (a pietistic sect of the Mahayana movement); and many more, including the group which has captivated the attention of America: Zen Buddhism.

Zen, you tell yourself, although a highly mystical expression of your faith, is not as rational as Buddhism usually is. Its exponents, however, would be the first to say it is one of the most practical and reasonable of all the groups and sects. *Zen seeks to help men realize the universality of the Buddha nature in themselves, in the*

universe, and in the living essence of all life; but, most of all, it seeks universality in the interrelation of all three.

Zen is neither easy nor simple. In Burma, the form of the word is Zan; in India, Jhana; and in Japan, from where it spread to America, it is Zen. The Burmese Buddhist uses Zan as a very mysterious and profound process to attain supernatural powers through concentration. He strives to attain trance-like states, to study color absorption, and to develop various degrees of meditation which eventually lead him to perform supernormal acts. Indian Jhanas resort to yoga practices in an effort to enter a state of bliss called Samadhi. But the Japanese believe that the aim of Zen is to return man to his true form of being and to recognize that that form is formless.

Zen does not believe in institutionalized expressions of Buddhism; it has no set pattern, and it will have nothing to do with the deification of the Buddha. "If you meet the Buddha, kill him," says a Zen teacher, by which he means not only that the Buddha never wished to be worshiped, but that there is an awareness greater than Buddha-hood, the awareness found through abstract meditative practices.

The founder of Zen was Bodhidharma, who was born about a thousand years after the Buddha. He not only opposed the formalism that had grown up around the Enlightened One, but he was disturbed by the cults that presumed to re-interpet the Buddha's teaching.

"Religion," said Bodhidharma, "has but one goal: the direct realization of truth. Anything that interferes with this must be swept away."

"Let us not be concerned about the way toward the goal of truth," said this reformer. "Let us be concerned only about truth. Every act, every thought, every impulse is your religion. Do not talk religion; do not argue religion; do not teach religion; just *experience* religion."

Zen grew out of the deepest possible interpretation of the triple Refuge: the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha. It surrounded itself with stories and paradoxes in an effort to find and teach "truth." It ridiculed people who thought they were being religious when they merely talked about religion, or monks who imagined themselves Buddhas because they sat under Bodhi-trees, or people who said they could not worship unless they had just the right temples and priests. It said that a man can be a spiritual being no matter what his occupation or place in life may be and no matter where he may live or worship. *The faith of every man has already been planted in his consciousness,* said Zen.

Soon people were devoting themselves to *zazen* (ascetic meditation) seeking to achieve *satori,* a state of enlightenment. They began employing philosophical problems called *Ko-an* on which they meditated. These required a high degree of "intuitive reasoning." A favorite *Ko-an,* so popular it soon became a cliché, proposed, "If

clapping two hands makes a sound, what happens if you clap one hand?"

Zen stories caught the popular fancy and many people claimed they found some deeply hidden truth in them. "Once there was a pilgrim who came to a Zen and said, 'I want to find the Buddha.' The Zen, who was drawing a bucket of water out of the well, pulled it up slowly hand over hand. When he got it to the top of the well, he poured the water over the pilgrim's head. Frightened, the pilgrim cried out, 'Why did you do that?' The Zen replied, 'It is just as sensible for me to pour water on you as it is for you to ask me to show you the Buddha. If you must ask where the Buddha is, no one can tell you.'"

Another story told how two men came to a river where a lovely girl was afraid to cross. The older of the two men picked her up and waded through to the other side where he set her down and she went her way. The two men walked on together all day, saying nothing. Toward nightfall the younger of the two spoke. "Brother," he said, "I do not think it was proper for you to carry that girl across the stream." The older man answered, "Brother, I carried her only for several moments while crossing the water. You have been carrying her all day."

All this is Buddhism. From Lamaism in Tibet to Zen in the United States, the Prince who became a beggar left a profound impression upon the world even as he inspires you to meditate before your shrine. As he challenges the

world, so he challenges you. His voice and his words seem as real to you as though you had lived with him during the days of his ministry. His image will be before you in the dwindling light of your old age. Although the incense on his altar will burn low, what he represents to you will become ever clearer as the years go by.

THE BUDDHA'S LIFE IS THE LEGEND OF EVERY MAN

"I, too," you tell yourself, "was born in a palace,' the child of a king, as was the Buddha. I, too, came into the world bearing with me something of the divine. Protected for a while from the full impact of the world, I was never quite inspired to think about my destiny and the meaning of life until I saw, as did Prince Gautama, the manifestation of suffering, sickness and death from which no one is spared."

Like the young Prince, you must seek to recognize your Buddha-hood. You must learn that nothing is permanent. Your heart must be fixed on eternal, not on temporal, values. You must realize that to do good is the greatest joy; to love peace is the highest motive; to live as though this life is but part of an onward-going life is the deepest truth a man can ever find. And what is the greatest law by which a man can live? The Buddha called it not a law but a golden rule. He said, *"Hurt not others with that which fains you."*

Had you been born a Buddhist and were you seated in the shadows, alone before your shrine, and were you to think about the Buddha's golden rule, you would wonder if, perhaps, his faith has been made more complex by his followers than he ever intended it to be.

You must keep uppermost in mind the truth that realization of self can come only if a person frees himself from the desires of the flesh and the attachments of the world. There is a technique in Buddhism which tells you how to meditate. It says that, as you sit quietly before your shrine, you should visualize a cup of muddied water. It is muddied because it has been shaken and disturbed, but as it is quieted, all the murk and sediment go to the bottom. Then the water becomes clear. It is suggested that a man's mind is like that cup of water, and it is the silence of meditation that induces the mind to be stilled and cleared.

Sometimes it seems to you that Buddhism itself has been muddied; time, political discord, and theology have caused it to be so involved that its simple beauty and directness have been obscured. Yet, as you journey back through the maze of meanings and clear away the trappings with which the Buddha has been enmeshed for 2500 years, you stand face to face with yourself, your true self, made in the image of what the world calls God.

Then when your mind is stilled, when you wonder how you can more fully realize that Self and hold to it and truly walk the path your Founder trod, you know there is

a way. It is found in the threefold Refuge: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Knowing their deepest meaning you can live at peace, and die, as did the Enlightened One, in the knowledge that dying, too, is a part of life.

Such would be your faith—had you been born a Buddhist.

Had You Been Born a Confucianist

Had you been born a Confucianist, you would be a member of a movement which was never intended to be an organized religion. You would adhere to a system of opinions which was not designed to be regarded as scripture. You would be following a man who had no desire to be a messiah, a prophet, or a saint.

There are followers of your faith wherever there are people of Chinese descent, whether "overseas Chinese" in Taiwan and southeast Asia, or Chinese in the Americas. But the chances would be ten-thousand-to-one that you would be living on the Chinese mainland where the great majority of the world's 320,000,000 Confucianists live. That vast and sprawling Asian continent now called the People's Republic, which westerners refer to as "Red China" would very likely be your home.

It is not Red China to you even though a red flag with five stars flies over it and even though you and your 650,000,000 fellowmen are Communist controlled. You do not see your nation through western eyes. You see it through the turbulent flow of history, the history of your homeland; a nation which is and always will be known to you by its native name, *Chung-Hua Min-Kuo,* the oldest empire in all the world, the largest republic in all the world, and the dynasty of the world's most venerable sage: K'ung-fu-tze (Confucius).

CONFUCIUS AND YOUR COUNTRY ARE INSEPARABLE

Confucius is not only a man and a legend; he is also the spirit and the hope of your people and your land. Born nearly 600 years before the time of Christ, he grew up in the village of Chow which is in the state of Lu and in the province of Shantung. Even today many refer to the province as holy ground.

There is a question as to whether Confucius' mother, Ching-tsai, was officially married to Shu-liang Ho, the military officer who was to become his father, or whether she was his concubine. There are also conflicting stories about her age. Some authorities say she was fifteen; others, seventeen, when Confucius was born. But all agree about the age of Shu-liang Ho; he was in his early seventies when he met Ching-tsai. Even though he had already sired nine daughters by his first wife, and one son, a cripple, by a mistress, the virgin Ching-tsai accepted all this because of her love for Shu-liang Ho.

History has it that they prayed together for a son at ancestral shrines and that they went together to sacred Mount Mu to offer sacrifices and to plead with all that is holy that they might be blessed with a healthy child. The answer to their prayers was Confucius, born on an autumn day in 551 B.C.

There is also the legend which relates how, during her pregnancy, Ching-tsai had a dream. One night a rare and fabulous animal, the *chi-lin*, part-tiger, part-dragon, whose function it was to announce the coming of kings, appeared to her. In Chiang-tsai's dream, the *chi-lin* prophesied that her child would be born in a "Hollow Mulberry Tree."

As this was the designation for a certain cave in the vicinity of Chow, Ching-tsai went there to await the birth of her firstborn. Unattended, she brought him forth while two benevolent dragons stalked the skies, putting the power of evil to flight, and while five of the planets, disguised as ancient sages and guided by a voice from heaven, circled the holy place of birth. Later, when she carried her son into the village to their home, the trees bowed down in worship to the young mother and her child.

Had you been born a Confucianist, you would accept both the man and the legend. You would also accept the spirit and the hope embodied in what Confucius represented in the life and history of your people. You would enter into the sentiments of your most noted historian, Ssu-Ma Chi'en who, writing in the first century of the Christian era, said, "While reading the works of Confucius, I have always fancied I could see the man as he was in life, and, when I went to Shantung, I actually beheld his carriage, his robes, and the material parts of his ceremonial usages. There were his descendants practicing

the old rites in their ancestral homes; and I lingered on, unable to tear myself away."

That is how you feel today as you live and move among the rapidly shifting scenes in your teeming nation. The hope and the spirit of Confucius are always there, just beneath the surface of the visible life. And although the old ancestral homes are reluctantly giving way to a new era, you know that he is still walking with his people through the triumph and the pain of change. He was a peripatetic teacher like Plato and Socrates, a seeker of the Way, like the Buddha. He was a philosopher not unlike his countryman, Lao-Tze, whom he met but once. To those who knew him, he was the immortal sage.

Sometimes he rode in a bullock cart while his students walked alongside. He had the wit and the wisdom they needed, and he lived the kind of life they felt stirring within themselves, a life which, they believed, could remake men and remake their country, too, and help both to realize their greatness.

The heart of this greatness was, according to Confucius, "true gentlemanliness." That was his touchstone; what would the true gentleman be like, what would he do, how would he act, what would be his highest aspirations and his major concerns? Confucius found the perfect image of the perfect man among the divine sages and the valorous heroes of the past. Actually, they may never have existed except as archetypes, but for Master

K'ung these men were real. He believed that they lived just beneath or within the surface man. To him, they represented an idealized past through which he hoped to create a perfect present. But how was this to be done? Through many things and in many ways. Through the true recognition of one's duties, through knowledge, through ritual, through respect for one's ancestors, through an awareness of one's potential and most of all, through love, which is Tao, the Way.

With such ideals Confucius lived and by these rules he taught, never proudly, never feeling that he had attained, and never boasting about his own achievements. He was a happy, yet a lonely man; a knowledgeable, but a searching man; a tranquil, yet a frequently disturbed man; a humble man, convinced that there were others more humble; a wise man, confident that there were others more wise; a man of uncommon sensitivity, who drew unto himself the heart of every other man who ever felt the divine discontent in his own unfulfilled life.

"Many," said the historian Ssu-Ma Chi'ien, "are the princes and the prophets that the world has seen in its time; glorious in life, forgotten in death. But Confucius, though only a humble member of the cotton-clothed masses, remains among us after many generations. He is the model for such as would be wise. By all, from the Son of Heaven down to the lowliest student, the supremacy of his principles is fully and freely admitted. He may, indeed, be pronounced the divinest of men."

CONFUCIUS AND YOU

If you could hear the rumble of your Master's bullock cart today, you would no doubt be walking beside it. Your respect for Confucius is that great. It is as great as that manifested in one of his disciples, Yen Hui. This young man, separated from Master K'ung during a riot in a city, was reunited with him only after a considerable period. Confucius said to him, "I thought you had died." And Yen Hui replied, "While you are alive, how should I dare to die?"

Had you been born a Confucianist, you would often say the same, "How can I die while the spirit and the dream persist; the spirit of what the Master taught—gentlemanliness, and the dream he inspired—a society of gentle but superior people living together in righteousness and truth?"

You met Confucius first in your parental home. Because of him you were taught quietness and reverence for all things. You were reminded that you should respect all life, that you should be observant and courteous. Even in little things, the presence of Confucius seemed to stand over you. You never discarded paper upon which Chinese calligraphy appeared or where the printed word was used, for this would have been a mark of discourtesy. Politeness, filial piety, love were part of the Confucian tradition. His *yen yu* (words that work) were implanted in your mind as

part of a folk tradition, as part of a philosophy, and as part of a living faith.

You were taught his Golden Rule: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."

You were instructed in his definition of love and wisdom: "What is love? To love mankind. What is wisdom? To know mankind."

You memorized his counsel to youth: "Youth, when at home, should be filial, and when abroad, respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all and cultivate the friendship of the good."

You never forgot his challenge to goodness: "If you really want goodness, you will find it at your very side."

You understood his insight into learning when he said: "Learning undigested by thought is labor lost; thought unassisted by learning is dangerous."

Confucius and you grew up together, united, not separated, by the more than 2000 years that stretch between your lives. Often when you hear the rumble of a bullock-drawn cart, you imagine Master K'ung as he sat in the jostling vehicle, amused at himself that he should occupy such a make-believe throne when he knew it was but a lowly traveling school. He also knew that no matter how far he went or how long he traveled, he would never catch up with the ancient sages of the land he loved: those men whom he created in the image of his dreams.

He was a player on life's stage re-enacting their ideals, and within the drama were truths enough to feed a hungry heart for all its life. Even when he was a boy, he gathered other lads around him and directed them in the presentation of the rituals for the dead. They would make believe they understood the symbolism of the ageless Chinese forms, the winged dragons and the personified planets. With utmost seriousness, they played their divine games while their elders, watching, began to wonder how all this hidden knowledge had been revealed.

Confucius said that he learned it at his mother's knee. He had lost both his parents when he was quite young, for his father had died when he was two years old and, when his mother died, while he was in his teens, the make-believe ritual of his childhood became a reality. He observed a three-year period of mourning with strict observances of the amenities of ancestral worship. "When parents are alive," he told his companions, "they should be served according to the rules of propriety. When they are dead, they should be buried according to the rules of propriety. After they are buried, they should be honored and sacrificed to according to the rules of propriety....Though a man may never before have revealed his true self, he is certain to do so when mourning for a father or a mother."

Such counsel, passed by oral tradition from generation to generation, found its way into print and became part of your heritage. In fact, your most important training for life

was by way of the *Five Classics,* books which Confucius distilled out of the religious lore of the Chinese ancients and to which he added his own insights into the meaning of the spiritual life.

Like hundreds of millions of Chinese who have come and gone since Confucius walked the earth, you, too, have been favored as one to whom he spoke from the pages of these treasured writings: *The Book of History* (Shu Ching), the emergence and progress of your nation from 2357 to 627 B.C.; *The Book of Changes* (I Ching), an esoteric study devoted to divination, symbolism and oracular sayings; *The Book of Rites* (Li Chi), a study of ceremonial forms; *The Book of Poetry* (Shih Ching), a collection of more than 300 songs, odes and ballads; *The Book of Spring and Autumn Annals* (Ch'un Ch'iu), events in the state of Lu before and during the period of Master K'ung.

Later you were introduced to the Confucian scriptures, commonly known as *The Four Books.* Here were the renowned *Analects* (Lun Yu) or conversations of Confucius; *The Book Mencius* (Meng-tze), which holds the teachings of Master K'ung as seen by his most famous interpreter, Mencius; *The Doctrine of the Mean* (Chung Yung), a catechism of Confucian teaching prepared by the grandson of Confucius, K'ung Chi; and *The Great Learning* (Ta Haio), a treatise on the proper conduct in the life of the individual, the family and the state. That is how Master K'ung became your teacher and how he seemed almost like an ancestor and a parent to you.

THE DEIFICATION WAS INEVITABLE

Because millions of your countrymen long before your time felt as you did about this nearness to the master teacher, they made the sage a savior quite against his will. They built temples and shrines to honor him and if there should ever be a state religion in your country, it would be founded upon the life and the sayings of Kung-fu-tze.

Even though the red flag may have cast a shadow over religion, and Communism may have persuaded many people that speculation about the Way of Heaven is a sign of immaturity, your temples are open and public gatherings to Confucius are carried on. His birthday is still observed on September 27 and his spirit is still your people's spirit and their dream.

His deification, represented in temples and in special festivals, is first of all an attitude in the human heart, for that is where Confucius lives. Form and ritual, he insisted, must always contribute to an enrichment and an improvement of life. Unless they do, they are empty and meaningless. "In the morning," he said, "hear the Way of Heaven; in the evening, die content." He spoke with the wisdom of the mythological seers who were his models and it was inevitable that his apotheosis should eventually take place.

It began even before Master K'ung departed this life. It was in the making whenever the bullock cart lumbered

through a village street. It was hastened every time one of his 3000 students or one among his 72 superior scholars said, "I have met the Master and he spoke to me." But it was in the summer of the year 479 B.C. that his canonization took recognizable form. Because he was ill, it was hinted that the time of his demise was near. Despite his seeming indifference to fame, he confessed concern that after his death he would soon be forgotten. "The path which I have laid out," he murmured, "will soon be obscured by weeds and grass. How then shall I be known to posterity?"

Foreshadowings of his departure deepened his concern. There was the occasion when a hunter came to him and asked if Master K'ung would kindly identify a mysterious animal which the hunter had killed. Because it was a strange and frightening beast, he had dragged it to a rubbish pile and there discarded it. The hunter was so concerned over what he had done that he had come to see the wise sage, hoping that at least he could tell him what it was.

Old Confucius took his staff and walked laboriously with the hunter to the refuse heap. There lay a lifeless animal which appeared to be part-tiger, part-dragon. Confucius stood looking down upon it, his wrinkled hands steadying his trembling body on his staff. He shook his head in anguish. "It is the *chi lin*," he said. "But why was he slain? Or why has he appeared at all at such a time since he is supposed to come only when kings are to be born?"

He worked doubly hard after that, seeking to complete his *Book of Spring and Autumn.* He worked as though the hunters with their guns stood over him. When the book was finished, he summoned his best-loved disciple, Tze K'ung. The weakened Master dragged himself despairingly back and forth across the courtyard of his home.

"Why are you so late?" he asked Tze K'ung. "The sacred mountain is crumbling, the roof beam is breaking, the old sage is withering away."

Tze K'ung whispered, "If this is true, to whom then can I go?"

Because of love for him, Confucius wept.

EVEN THE WISEST OF MEN MUST DIE

Had you been born a Confucianist, you would realize how often your path crosses the path of Master K'ung as you try to cope with the world in all its many phases. How great his wisdom really was! How quickly his maxims find response in your heart!

You visualize his meeting with Tze K'ung, how Confucius retired to his chamber, and how he sat alone prepared to entertain his final guest: Death. What thoughts passed through his mind? Once he had said, "When people want you and need you, go to them; when they set you aside, then hide." Age and a changing world

had set him aside as he reached his final hours. Perhaps he wanted to hide, not only from people, but also from death. Did he dread to die, you wonder? Hardly. He had often said, "Heaven has endowed me with what I am, what have I to fear?" Confucius, teacher of gentlemanliness and shower of the Way, seemed to be always honest in his counsel and harmoniously attuned with his teachings.

Perhaps, there in the shadows, the "crumbling mountain" looked back across the winding path over which he had come in his seventy-seven years, looked back all the way from the "Hollow Mulberry Tree" to the darkening edge of an ancestral tomb, from the *chi-lin* which had announced his birth to the dead *chi-lin* in the refuse heap. He must have seen, as does every man, the passing sequence of life and have felt the truth of his words, "He who seeks nothing more than a bit of rice to eat, a bit of water to drink, and a bent arm for a pillow, he will, even without looking for it, find happiness."

Along memory's path he caught glimpses of the boyish rituals which he had instigated, then his marriage, a not too happy one, and the birth of a son and a daughter. Then there were his careers: first, that of a tithing master who recorded the tenants' grain for their feudal lord, then the keeper of a granary, then an administrator of public works, then Grand Secretary of Justice in the state of Lu, then Chief Minister, but in every position he was always the teacher, devoting himself to the development of gentlemanliness in himself and others.

"True manhood," he insisted, "consists in realizing your true self and in restoring universal virtue. Whosoever will realize his true self and restore universal virtue, the world will follow him."

But the world did not follow him. The world did not learn of him. The world did not become virtuous. "Why are you so late, Tze K'ung?" he had said to his faithful disciple, and this must have been what he felt like saying to the world, "Why are you so late, O world? Why are you so late?"

Born a Confucianist and living on the Chinese mainland, you would share not only the old Master's concern but occasionally his tears. For your country, no less than many other nations, is late, so very late in believing in the wisdom of the Master. As in the days of Confucius when the dukes and the lords fought for power, so governments and war lords are fighting for power in your time. And as the people 2500 years ago were reluctant to adopt his teachings, even though his teachings had worked when sincerely tried, so today they are still being rejected of men.

The "gospel" of Master K'ung did work indeed. It worked so well for a short time in the state of Lu that people said, "We have seen what paradise is like." In that brief Confucian period, love was really love and justice was really just. There was a saying that theft ceased to exist among the people because it had been removed from

people's hearts. An era of trust and mutual faith had been ushered in. The good of one was premised on the good of all. Anything lost on the highways was restored, and any wrong was righted because gentlemanliness was man's richest prize. In those days Confucius said, "The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell."

The Utopia did not last. The Prince of Lu, in whose employ Confucius served, fell from grace. It happened that the neighboring state of Ch'i, concerned that a miracle in morals had taken place in Lu and fearing that its people would soon be moving to the "land of Confucius," set out to prove that all states are vulnerable. The Baron of Ch'i sent a harem of beautiful dancing girls as a gift to the Prince of Lu. In due time, despite all efforts on the part of Master K'ung, the Prince was neglecting his observances of both "state and church." "I have never yet," said Confucius, "found anyone whose desire to build up his moral power was as strong as his sexual desire." So saying, he resigned and, for a time, left the state.

"Government," he declared, "consists of the correct choice of officials. One must elevate the just men so that they can exert pressure upon crooked men, for in this way the crooked may be made straight." But he saw that the crooked again had become crooked because the straight had become crooked. And the old sage demurred that the saddest thing about the world is the fact that "virtue is not cultivated, that knowledge is not made clear, that people

hear of duty and do not practice it, that those who know they are evil do nothing to improve themselves."

"A gentleman," he concluded, "is one who is at least troubled by his shortcomings."

You hazard the guess that these were some of the things that Confucius thought about as he sat in the shadows awaiting his final guest, looking back over the years of his life. And you wonder again what his thoughts would be if he were walking your nation's streets today.

His sovereign sayings hint at an answer, "From life to death is man's reach," he said, which seemed to infer that there is nothing which a man cannot conquer if he will but conquer himself.

"What is wisdom?" he had asked, and then had answered his own question by saying, "It is to know mankind. And what is love? It is to love mankind."

How shall one meet the inevitable? "Wade the deep places, lift your robe through the shallows."

And if that is not enough, then, "Keep your will on the Way of Heaven, lean on the mind, rest in love, and move in art."

"But, Master," you say, "now that you must die, what do you think? Do you believe that you will live again in a life to come?" And you remember how Confucius said, "We do not yet know about this life. How then can we know about death?"

And so he died, as a gentleman, attended only by a grandson and several of his disciples, chief among whom was Tze K'ung. They performed the solemn rites and buried him on the bank of the River Szu. Ironically it was the Duke of Lu—who was anything but a gentleman—who ordered that a song of mourning be composed in which he said, "Merciful Heaven, surely thou hast no compassion upon me, for thou hast not left me the one aged man fitted to protect me, the Unique One, during the period of my rule. Full of mourning am I in my pain. O woe! Father *Ni!* Now I no longer have anyone who can serve me as a model!"

If the old Master heard the song, he no doubt shook his head and said, "Why are you so late?"

THE CONFUCIANISM OF CONFUCIUS

Had you been born a Confucianist, you would realize that the institutionalized form of your religion is closely interrelated with the destiny of your country. So are the other traditional religions in China: Taoism and Buddhism. There are also some 50,000,000 followers of Islam and approximately 4,000,000 Christians, mostly Roman Catholic, but since the advent of the Communist regime (1949) foreign religions and foreign missionaries have no longer been tolerated.

You are often bewildered as you seek to appraise the Chinese religious scene. You are permitted to maintain

your home altar where a small table inscribed with the name of Confucius holds a prominent place and where you observe the amenities of meditating on the good life. You may also worship at the ancestral shrines where the soul tablets of older generations are preserved and you may honor the individual graves with your sacrifices. *In many homes, a tablet on the altar depicts in artistic ideograms: Heaven, Earth, the Rulers, Ancestors and Confucius.* You may worship here or you may go to the temples if you wish, but you know that the consensus of government officials is against such practices. Communism opposes any and all religions, philosophy, or ideology which are not in conformity with Marxist views.

Open opposition to Confucianism is demonstrated by your Communist leaders in many ways. The printing and the distribution of *The Five Classics* and *The Four Books* have not been ordered stopped. Atheistic teaching has not succeeded in subverting the immortal sage or reducing his teaching to folk tradition. Confucius is treated by the Communists as an historical figure important in Chinese history. Wherever his teachings agree with Marxist views, his teachings are endorsed. But the spearhead of opposition is the creeping propaganda which is directed against all religions in an attempt to persuade men that religious idealism and religious practices are a sign of immaturity and that respect for spiritual traditions is wasteful superstition.

Determined to make an objective evaluation of Confucianism's true merits, you are being driven more and more to an investigation of the intrinsic value which it embodies for you and your world. You wish to discover with absolute certainty what there is in Master K'ung that, under the pressure of modern circumstances, you will be willing to live for and if necessary, die for. You wish to be fully convinced of its truth. Your faith, assaulted by a dynamic, authoritarian force, is on trial and you know that if it is to endure, it must recover an equally vital dynamism within itself.

You do not find this dynamism in the temples or even in the Confucian cult which perpetuates the ceremonials; neither do you find it in the outward forms or in the emotionalism with which some adherents approach the faith. All such expressions, you feel, are vulnerable and could be submerged by a powerful secular state. What can never be conquered, however, is the "Confucianism of Confucius" by which is meant the understanding of human nature in its relationship to divine nature, a concept so ancient and so deep-rooted that it represents the very essence of your people's life and thought.

It often seems to you that Confucianism in this sense might profit from the threat of communism by putting its house in order. For Confucianism, as a temple cult, had fallen into a sterile formalism long before Marxism unfurled its red flag over your republic. Many Confucian temples were in disrepair and in disrepute generations

before Communism came. They had become little more than museum attractions. Rituals had been neglected, precepts were ignored and the way of gentlemanliness was ridiculed as the ghost of an unrealistic past.

Now, however, under the harsh intrusion of a regimented rule, a rule which reaches down into every ancestral home to disintegrate that home and into every individual life to dominate that life, thoughtful people are becoming introspective and are re-examining the depth and sincerity of their old beliefs. They are searching not only for the meaning of existence, but are relating this meaning to the divine wisdom of their neglected sages, particularly the wisdom of Master K'ung.

You, like others of your faith, looking back into the past, hoping to find a way for the future, realize that more than 3000 years *before* Confucius, your ancient mentors speculated that life has purpose inherent in itself and interconnected with powers beyond itself. Man's recognition of this union was considered a decisive factor in the development of the individual. One of the earliest of the sages, Yu, who lived in 2000 B.C., said, "Follow what is right and you will be fortunate; do not follow it and you will be unfortunate; the results of life are but the shadows and echoes of your acts." The holy Tang, an equally ancient seer, declared, "It is Heaven's way to bless the good and to bring calamity to the evil."

Confucius, the spiritual protégé of such men, became the Master who formulated these concepts into a philosophy which fulfilled the needs of a people who were innately questing by nature. His religion encouraged man's search for dignity, man's search for the highest possible social order and man's determination to come to terms with the universe which is his "cradle and his grave." Confucius, motivated by the conviction that each individual is dependent upon the other and that all are dependent upon Heaven, came with the simplest of all messages—a message built upon a single word, *jen*, a synonym for all that is good. It was *jen* that Confucius saw as the secret and elusive ingredient which transforms men and gives rise to a new-born social order. The manifestation of *jen* in the individual projected itself into society as universal virtue or *li*. *Li* is many things: it is ritual, it is protocol, it is a rod that means "give room to others." According to the Master, *jen* was perfect manhood, *li* the perfect social consciousness.

Jen and *li*, like the hypothetical sages whom Confucius dramatized in his illustrious sayings, are conceivable but perhaps unrealizable ideals. Like the ancient zodiacal light, seen fleetingly in the west at twilight and in the east before dawn, *jen* and *li* might be, for most men, no more than a mirage of goodness, but for Confucius they were real. *Jen* was the logos of the gospel he preached and the life he lived; *li* was the "holy spirit" of his teaching in the world.

When you are sensitive to the needs of others, that is *jen*. When you are good in a world that is evil, that is *jen*. When you are honest at a time when it would seem to be expedient to be dishonest, that is *jen*. Whenever you seek to realize your highest nature, that is *jen*.

When you do not raise yourself above your fellowmen or lower yourself because of them, when you walk without pride in your achievements and without remorse because of your limitations, that is *jen*. *Jen* is the heart and soul of gentlemanliness; *li* is the spirit of gentlemanliness universalized.

The Master said, "A gentleman takes as much trouble to discover what is right as lesser men take to discover what is profitable."

"In the presence of a good man, think of how you may learn to equal him. In the presence of a bad man, turn your gaze within."

"A gentleman in his dealings with the world has neither enmities nor affections. Wherever he sees the Right, he seeks to identify himself with it."

"The demands that a gentleman makes are upon himself; those that a small man makes are upon others."

"Clever talk and a pretentious manner are seldom found in *jen*."

"The gentleman is one who takes the right as his material, and ritual as his guide in putting into practice what is right."

"In private life, courteous; in public life, diligent; in relationships, loyal." That is *jen*.

The harmonization of our moral being with the universe; that is *li*.

Although Confucius made no reference to a personal God, he did teach about the over-ruling *Tien*, the immutable force to which men and society are subject. Reluctant to discuss the possibility of man's immortality, he, nonetheless, endorsed the ancient and noble tradition of ancestor worship. Deprecating the need for prayers, he never ceased to urge himself and others to live every moment as though Heaven were watching. Heaven to him, as to all Chinese, was but another name for *Tien* or God. Thus, religion for Confucius embraced philosophy and philosophy embraced religion, and as you review the Confucianism of Confucius, one thing remains clear: the person who dedicates himself to goodness finds his place in life and fills it, and by so doing he fulfills himself.

THE DISCIPLES OF CONFUCIANISM

As the ancient sages linked Confucius with the historic past, so the Master's disciples formed a living bridge between his era and the present. This "apostolic succession" began in earnest when his disciples came to pay their respects at his grave on the bank of the River Szu

in the state of Chow. They observed the traditional three years (twenty-seven months) of mourning, and the Duke of Chow offered cattle and sheep sacrifices, as was the custom.

Tze K'ung dramatized his personal grief by building a hut near his master's grave and living there for the remaining six years of his life. Following his example, almost a hundred other admirers of Master K'ung did the same, some building shelters large enough to house their families. A village called K'ung-lin grew up, a ceremonial hall was dedicated, and Confucianism rapidly became a cult.

Meanwhile, the disciples became masters in their own right, reinterpreting, redefining and all too frequently, paraphrasing and altering the words of Confucius to fit their personal and preconceived ideas. Every step hastened their Master's apotheosis. His writings were canonized and his legends became the basis for divinations. His death day was made a time for rituals and sacrifices, and his birthday a holiday marked with ceremonial extravaganzas. Temples, shrines and halls of learning rose across the land and as was bound to happen, sects sprang up, each claiming omniscience in interpreting the Master's will.

Among the votaries none was more like Confucius than his disciple. Men Tzu (Mencius), although he lived only thirty-nine short years (371-289 B.C.), he made his life

an imitation of his Master's in both thought and deed. Like Confucius, Mencius stressed the quality of *jen* as the hallmark of true manhood and of *li* as the credential of an acceptable social order. To *jen* and *li*, he added "righteousness" as the supreme virtue of the Way, and the belief that man himself is a symbol of the universe. Like Confucius, he immortalized the ancient seers and with them as his models, he, too, traveled from state to state as Confucius had done, trying to persuade rulers to try the great experiment: the governed will reflect the conduct of their governors. "Goodness," said Mencius, speaking as Master K'ung had done, "must have its source in the rulers themselves. If not, where will the people go for their contemporary examples?"

He was no more successful than Confucius had been in changing the rulers' attitudes, and eventually he confined himself to the task of enshrining *jen* and *li* in his disciples. In this he seemed to excel. Those who made up the Mencius school became, for a time, the true Confucianists and after Mencius died, he was mourned and revered even as Confucius had been. His disciples, too, compiled his sayings with affection. They became teachers in their own right and developed, as Mencius had suggested, schools of meditation.

Then the elements of *Yang* and *Yin*, the positive and negative forces in the universe, became identified with Confucianism, giving it a cosmological emphasis. Later, neo-Confucianism made the role of reason ever more

important in the growing tenets of the faith and more schools of thought arose. Neo-Confucianism had its disciples in such scholars as the statesman saint, Wang An-shih (1021-1086), the idealist Ch'eng Yi (1033-1108), the reformer Chu Hsi (1130-1200), the mystic Lu Chiu-yuan (1139-1193) and others. Meanwhile, a new gospel of eclecticism sprang up within the movement, bringing an ever greater amalgamation of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism into evidence. Often such an approach, hailed as a religion for the masses, spread itself so thin that it drifted into nothingness or everythingness, depending upon the point of view.

Master K'ung would hardly recognize his teaching or his disciplines were he to return to the "New China." He would not only find his teachings encrusted with a rigorous theology and his simple sayings coldly encased in complex rituals, he would see that superstition, legend and mythology are intermingled with a critical rationalism in a hard-to-identify approach to faith. Most of all, he would discover that in the religion called by his name, the goal is to worship the messenger instead of seeking to live his message.

Witnessing Communism's advent, he would, no doubt, feel, as you often do, that perhaps Marxism is the nemesis in China's religious history and that a living faith is desperately needed if a people are to survive.

TO BE REMEMBERED IS TO BE IMMORTAL

Confucius is the example. When you see your old way of life slowly disintegrating under a new political and social order, you turn with thoughtful sincerity to your immortal sage. You find him beside you in every emergency and in every new, forbidding crisis. Riding in his bullock cart, he is with you as you walk searchingly through the loneliness of crowded city streets.

He lives in your heart as the realist: "I do not expect to find a saint today, but if I find a gentleman I shall be quite content."

…..as the humanist: "They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it."

…..as the counselor: "In the presence of a good man, think of how you may learn to equal him. In the presence of a bad man, turn your gaze within."

…..as the mentor: "If I were to select one phrase to cover all my instructions, it would be, 'Let there be no evil in your thoughts.'"

…..as the balanced man, "To exceed is as bad as not to reach."

…..as the mystic, "One should sacrifice to a spirit as though the spirit were present."

…..as the statesman, "If you govern the people by regulations and keep order among them by chastisements, they will flee from you and lose all self-respect. Govern

them by moral force, keep order among them by ritual, and they will keep their self-respect and come to you of their own accord."

…..as the man of insight, "In old days men studied for the sake of self-improvement; nowadays men study in order to impress other people."

…..as the perfect sage, "Without goodness a man cannot for long endure adversity, nor can he for long enjoy prosperity."

You loved him for his sense of humor, "There is no need to think thrice before acting. Twice is quite enough."

You knew him as one who was ever sensitive of others. It is said that when, at a meal, he found himself seated next to someone who was in mourning, he did not eat his fill, and that when he wept at a funeral, during the rest of the day, he would not sing. It was told how he would fish only with a line but never with a net, and that when he went hunting he would never aim at a roosting bird.

You feel about Confucius as Yen Hui must have felt when he said, "The more I strain my gaze up towards the Master's moral character, the higher it soars. The deeper I bore down into it, the harder it becomes. If I see it in front of me, suddenly it is behind. Step by step the Master lures me on. He has broadened me with culture and restrained me with ritual. Even if I wanted to stop, I could not. Just when I think that I have exhausted every resource, something seems to rise up, standing out sharp and clear.

Yet though I long to pursue it, I can find no way of getting to it at all."

Confucius and your country continually merge in your mind. They are so intricately related, so equally loved that to lose one is to be deprived of both. Only if you *live* Confucianism, you tell yourself, can you pay your debt to Master K'ung and to the China he so dearly loved. You are embroiled in a great conflict, this battle between his China and your China, between freedom and force, between faith and fear. But where, better than in your land, should these lines be drawn and these issues decided? Could it be that Master K'ung had something like this in mind when he said, "New rulers never come to a land but by Heaven's decree?"

Could he have meant that rulers come not always to bless but sometimes to purge? Could he have known that in the purging, the man of true gentlemanliness might rediscover himself, amend his ways, and turn once more for strength and truth to God? And if man does do that, what then? Will Heaven rush to his aid, and somehow, in a way not known or seen by ordinary men, project its power in such a way that goodness itself will triumph though all has seemed as lost?

Such would be your thoughts—had you been born a Confucianist and were you living in the China of today.

Had You Been Born a Shintoist

Had you been born a Shintoist, you would find it impossible to separate your faith from your fatherland, Japan. Japan, for you, is Shinto, and Shinto is Japan. Almost all of the world's 60,000,000 members of your religion live on these islands. Here are its 20,000 Shinto priests and its more than 100,000 Shinto shrines.

Japan is the Land of the Rising Sun, a descriptive term which grew out of Shinto. Here, where you were born, Shinto was born, a religion without a holy book, without creeds, without sacraments, and, in the beginning, without a name. It was originally a way of thinking, a way of looking at life, and when a name was needed it was called Shinto, which means the Way of the Gods.

REMEMBER THE WORD: KAMI!

The Shinto liturgical year is built around many important festivals. There are also Sunday services in many temples and shrines, but the most important function of the shrine is the opportunity it affords for personal, private meditations. You go to a shrine whenever you feel the need for special spiritual help. Most of all, you go to pay your respect to the *kami*, the deities of Shinto. *But kami are more than deities or gods in the ordinary sense; they are the essence of life.* Some people may think of them as angels or celestial beings of one kind or

another, but while *kami* may mean all this, you always remember that *kami* is a life force, a power complete in itself and yet a manifestation of universal power. *Kami* is a spirit. It is also a principle or principles of all that constitutes love, justice, rightness and order among men and in the universe.

In olden times each class of people, each trade, each vocation, had its *kami.* There were the *kami* of carpenters, shopkeepers, farmers, politicians, and many more. It was believed that proper respect and worship of these *kami* assured good fortune, expert artistry, and successful achievement. But even so, people were also convinced that their own effort, as well as their devotion to the *kami,* influenced their destiny. In this way the *kami* were something like the Hindu Karma, the law of cause and effect. A Shinto teacher, trying to clarify this rather complex idea, once said, "*Kami* is an honorific term extolling the sacred authority and sublime virtue of spiritual things, and all things are spiritual."

Your mind dwells on the *kami* as you walk through the groves surrounding the shrines. The lovely landscaping, the exquisite flower gardens, the well-tended trees, especially the holy *sakaki,* a verdant evergreen, remind you that the *kami* have breathed life and beauty into everything on earth. The earth, says Shinto, is a reflection of heaven; and man is God externalized.

Had you been born a Shintoist, you would find a great lesson in these peaceful groves. Although your religion does not pretend to be philosophical, it does provide the answer to many puzzling questions. When you ask, "What is it that makes a tree put forth its branches, all different, yet all alike? Why does a tree reach a certain height and then grow no higher?" The answer is, "It is the *kami* within the tree fulfilling itself. It is the *kami* working out its destiny and its purpose."

THE SPIRIT OF SHINTO IS THE SPIRIT OF NATURE

Shinto began as a "nature religion" thousands of years ago, and it has always been closely interwoven with nature's world. Growing things prove to the Shintoist that life has purpose within itself and helps you to understand the problem of inequality, suffering, pain and pleasure. Nature is the great teacher. Just as some trees bear the full force of the streaming sun, knowing that they were made to shelter and protect, so some people have such a role to play in life. And as there are other trees which seem destined to struggle in order to subsist, so also it is with certain people. It is all a matter of the *kami* working out their specific wish and will. There are trees which give only shade, and those which give both shade and fruit, each according to its nature. All life is interrelated with the *kami* and with every other life as well. For the *kami* are like men, and men are like trees, fulfilling, self-creating, expressing

themselves. Such is the belief of Shinto (*Kami-No-Michi*), the Way of the Gods.

TORII-THE SYMBOL OF SHINTO

Near the entrance to the pathway leading to the shrine, you see the *torii* standing. This structure, consisting of two tall wooden uprights across which rests a straight or slightly curved crosspiece, is the emblem of Japan as well as the most famous symbol of Shinto. You remember how your father first pointed out a *torii* to you and explained how the huge pillars had once been massive trees which had given their lives so that they might serve the gods in a special way. Then he told you a Shinto story. "For a hundred years," he said, "the *torii* trees lived in the forest and then one day the woodsmen came with a white-robed priest. They went from one giant tree to another, judging each for height and size and for what the priest called 'uprightness.' Coming to the finest tree in the forest, the priest laid his hand on it and said, 'This is the chosen one.'

"Then the woodsmen counseled together on how and where it should fall and which other trees would have to be cleared to make way for its falling. Soon there was the sound of sawing and chopping which the priest said made a man think of his own passing. But neither the judgment of the ax nor the verdict of the saw nor the anguished crash

of the chosen tree drowned the whisper moving through the forest, a whisper that said, 'When the sky is clear, and the wind hums in the fir trees, it is the heart of God revealing Himself.'"

The *torii* always took you back to the heart of nature. Even when the *torii* is painted red, as it often is, it has symbolism for you. Red is a sign of life, and the red coloring tells you that the *torii* trees still live. Even when men of other lands and other religions refer to Shinto as a primitive, animistic faith, rooted in superstition, it does not disturb you. Does not every religion see an attribute of God in the sun and sky, and behold His greatness in a mountain, and feel His presence in the trees?

WHATEVER IS, IS KAMI, AND KAMI IS GOD

There is, of course, a difference between Shinto and other faiths. In Shinto the attributes of things themselves are gods, whole and complete. Some religions call this pantheism, the doctrine that the universe itself is God. To you pantheism is not an offensive term, for you conceive the universe as *kami.* There are millions of *kami,* and the aggregate of these is God, although each *kami* is a god, too. God is not a god seated on a throne. He is, as far as you are concerned, a co-ordinated creative substance. And though there are meanings within meanings and unfoldment upon unfoldment, when you reach the heart of anything, the heart is *kami.* Dissect the seed from which

the pine tree grows, you will not find *kami,* but *kami* is there. It is the seed's will-to-realize-itself. Give a rough stone to a sculptor and he will turn it into a thing of beauty; give an artist a crayon and a piece of paper and he will create an immortal scene; touch a poor, lonely person with love and he will be transformed into a happy individual. All is *kami,* and *kami* alone is truth.

So you pass beneath the *torii* and onward along the path; a wide, free path, meticulously clean, as is everything in and around a shrine. Huge stone lanterns which line your way are symbolical of the light of the *kami* guiding you. When you are in view of the shrine, which is actually a temple, a large, attractive structure built of wood and painted a soft red, you know you are approaching a holy place. You admire the gracefully sloping roofs and the customary *chigi,* crossed beams, sticking up at both ends of the gable boards and broad, inviting wooden steps are waiting to admit you to the quiet surroundings of this house of God. Nearby is the *shamusho,* a building provided for the priests as a place of special meditation. Here, too, are sacred trees, mostly the majestic cryptomeria, and many of them are encircled with a strand of rope called *shimenawa.* Colorful paper strips have been draped over the rope by worshipers as a sign of special gratitude to the gods.

THE WAY OF WORSHIP IS THE WAY OF THE GODS

You make your ablutions at a fountain in the shrine yard. By washing your hands and rinsing your mouth with clear, fresh water, you remind yourself that this purification symbolizes your desire to be clean in word and deed. Then you approach the temple as you would approach a beloved friend, for this house of the *kami* is, indeed, a living thing.

At the steps you pause to remove your shoes before entering the *haiden,* the spacious room for public worship. In front of you is the holy sanctuary with its cloth-covered altar. It is much like the household altar in your home before which you and your parents frequently worship. On it are a mirror—a symbol of the sun goddess—and a number of amulets or talismen, many of which have been brought here from other shrines where the same tutelary *kami* is worshiped. These wand-like talismen, called *gohei,* have jagged strips of paper protruding from their hollow tops. These are sacred, for it is believed that the spirits of the *kami* are particularly near the *gohei* and that their spirits may actually dwell in these tubes.

Fruit, rice and wine are also on the altar as offerings of respect to the activating *kami.* The *kami's* name, artistically written on rice paper or wood, is concealed behind a sacred curtain. You carry the same name as an

amulet on your person to remind you at all times of the deep affinity you enjoy with your god.

Now you make your *hairei,* or invocation, by advancing to the altar where you bow twice deeply and solemnly. Then you clap your hands twice and bow in silent prayer. Sometimes you may also ring a small bell or sound a gong, not to "call the god," as many non-Shintoists believe, but to tender a gesture of respect as an announcement to yourself that God and you are here together. Your prayer will not be a request for help or a petition to a god with whom you can bargain; prayer, for you, is an act of remembrance. In such moments of reverence, you remind yourself that the divine spirit is your spirit. Yours is a natural religion, which means that by the very nature of life you are in harmony with the *kami.*

RELIGION IS A WAY OF REMEMBERING

Here, to this temple, your mother brought you thirty-two days after you were born to introduce you to the deity. The clean-shaven priest, wearing a white silk *ikan* (a full-sleeved clerical garment), wooden sandals and a *kanmuri,* a high-backed cap, blessed you in the name of the god whom your family worshiped. Then when you were five years old, your mother took you there again, on November 15, which is the day when children pray for protection during their growing-up period. This was your "confirmation" in the Shinto faith and with it began your

frequent visits to various shrines where you learned that Shinto emphasizes cleanliness and beauty. You were taught that the *kami* delight in artistic, beautiful things, and you were shown how, even in the arrangement of flowers and in calligraphy, the spirit of the gods is revealed.

Later you came to the shrine to be married in a simple, impressive ceremony. Marriage, the priest explained, is arranged through the will and guidance of heaven. Shinto priests themselves are married and try to make their homes exemplary. Emphasizing the joy and blessedness which children bring to a home, the priest assured you that it is the *kami* that breathes life into a new-born child. He also reminded you that worship is a way of reinforcing your faith, and that in it you find the secret of true happiness. That is why Shinto temples stand open day and night for meditation and prayer.

The priest's counsel often returns to you as you stand with bowed head before the altar. Through silent contemplation you reflect on life and seek to come to terms with your *"kami-self."* Then you give thanks and conclude your period of meditation by pronouncing special words of blessing on your loved ones, your priest, yourself and others. Bowing twice in gratitude to the deity, you thank him for the privilege of worship and make an offering of money. This act is called *saimotsu* or *saisen,* and in many temples it is customary to toss the money through a grill into a submerged vault.

Shinto provides many instructions for spiritual improvement. There is, for example, the practice of *misogi,* intended to remove sin and pollution from the body and mind by the use of water, which is said to have originated with the god, Izanagi, who purified himself by bathing in sea water. The ceremony includes the use of special prayers, recited while standing near the sea, and splashing salt water over the body. Another ceremony, *saikai,* intended for anyone who wishes to go into deeper religious study, consists of remaining in seclusion for a certain period—from three days to seven days—while he devotes himself to fasting and prayer and continuous concentration on spiritual thoughts.

THE SHIFTING HISTORY OF SHINTO

But Shinto, like many ancient religions, is changing and had you been born a Shintoist, you would realize that during your lifetime the transition seems to have accelerated. You remember the cataclysmic years of the war, when Shinto nearly died. In the tragic aftermath, in defeat, your country was compelled to redefine its religious faith. For nearly 2000 years Shinto had been a state religion with taxes levied for the support of shrines, priests, and many extravagant festivals. *The high priest of Shinto was the emperor himself who, in a very real way, was a deity to be honored and worshiped.* Because emperor worship was rooted solidly in tradition and had come down to you along with your earliest religious and folk beliefs, you never questioned the emperor's motives or

actions. Whenever he passed near you, you stood with eyes closed and head bowed in reverence.

The history of emperor worship, dating back to the eighth century, was authoritatively recorded in the ancient chronicles of your faith, in books called the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki.* They made it clear that the ancestors of the emperors were the gods themselves. They told of a god and a goddess named Izanagi and Izanami who stood on the bridge of heaven when the earth was being formed. Gazing down upon the aimless, drifting land, Izanagi seized a jeweled spear and stirred a portion of the formless earth. He churned the brine until it became a thing of beauty unlike anything the gods had seen. Then he drew out the spear and the sparkling creations of land that fell from it became the islands of Japan. The tallest point, formed when the tip of Izanagi's spear was lifted out, became sacred Fujiyama, the majestic volcanic mountain which rises more than twelve thousand feet into the sky. The first ruler of this earthly paradise was the son of the sun goddess, Amaterasu O-Mi-Kami, and his loyal subjects were the people who descended from Izanagi and Izanami.

The emperor was not only considered divine, but he was believed to rule as co-regent with the sun goddess at his side. She was symbolized by a sacred mirror which the emperor always kept beside him on his throne. He ruled by a decree more holy than that of the royalty of other nations and more compelling than the heads of other

faiths. Who would ever have guessed that he could be shorn of his divinity?

But the years brought changes to your country. The attack on Pearl Harbor, precipitated by ambitious war lords, and the ensuing war wreaked suffering and defeat which all the Shinto *kami* could not withhold. *Under the treaty signed with the conqueror, the United States, the emperor was compelled to renounce his divinity.* When, on January 1, 1946, he disclaimed his godship, he became as much a mortal as his fellowmen. No longer were people compelled to address him as the "Divine Mikado" or "Son of the Most High" and, even though the mirror remained on his throne, the image of the sun goddess waned and threatened to disappear.

SHINTO OF THE STATE
AND SHINTO OF THE PEOPLE

Throughout the years of emperor worship, there had been only one officially recognized Shinto movement: State Shinto or *Kokka.* Governed by royal decree, it compelled the people to contribute to the upkeep of the Shinto shrines. It supported the priests. It trained the leaders and teachers of Shinto. It directed the festivals and holy days. It was a political, social and economic movement which loyal subjects had long suspected was being used to further governmental interests. There had been rumors that not only was the imperial family using Shinto for personal advantage, but that certain priests found it a source of personal prestige. Various schismatic

Shinto sects and independent shrines made their appearance under the name of Sectarian Shinto or *Kyoha,* but it was not until the signing of the treaty at the end of World War II that freedom of religion came to Japan and that these non-State Shinto groups were recognized.

You had mingled feelings about this rapid turn of events. You wondered whether this might be the end of Shinto, for the Americans who occupied Japan made little attempt to understand Shinto's teachings or appreciate their meaning. But you also hoped that now, perhaps for the first time, your people could explore the deeper meaning of the faith, unhampered by restrictions of the past. Now, at last, Shinto would have to depend on its own merit and prove its worth. What did it have to offer? Could it justify its existence over the other religions of Japan, particularly Buddhism and Christianity? And somehow you felt that even though a treaty had deprived the emperor of his religious rule, he would ever continue to be a symbol of the *kami* and the Shinto faith.

Many State Shintoists seemed to agree. They predicted that as Japan once more prospered and gained in world prestige, its future emperors would again assume the role of deity-kings. Such predictions were only partially founded in fact. As Japan again began to grow in power and importance, it dreamed, to be sure, of its history and its myths, and many Shintoists continued to ask, "What if the emperor truly is divine? What if the sun-goddess is reflected in the sacred mirror? Will it not be

necessary for the people to acknowledge this if it be true?" The major festivals, interrelated with the life of the country, also continued as an assurance that the partnership between Shinto and nationalism had never been dissolved in the minds of many people. Behind the mortality of the imperial family still looms the glory of the immortal gods, and devout State Shintoists never forget that the word for government and festival in the Japanese language is one and the same: *matsuri-goto,* or that the Land of the Rising Sun is still the land of the *kami* and that the *kami* are still the keepers of Japan.

But had you been born a Shintoist, you would realize that, though State Shinto continues to be important, the Shinto of the people, called Sectarian Shinto, is growing ever more important. It consists of thirteen groups, which developed strongly, though often unobtrusively, during the past century. These had support of great masses of people who had grown restless under the formalism of State Shinto. *Sectarian Shinto became the religion of the Japanese "reformation." It was destined to come despite war or treaties, but the de-deification of the emperor hastened its recognition as a movement of major importance in Japanese life.* Sectarian Shinto now has its own independent organizations, headquarters, shrines and priests. It is geared to the people's needs. It combines spiritual healing with the tradition of old Shinto, positive thinking with the creative power of the ancient *kami,* and a new, modern interpretation of nature and nature's God.

THE SHINTO REFORMATION

Had you been born a Shintoist, you could not escape the impact of these groups which make up this modern Shinto "revival" movement. You would be impressed with their vitality and growth, their leaders, their missionary zeal, their boldness, and their vision for the future. There is, for example, the movement called Tenrikyo, whose foundress, Miki Nakayama, believed that the great *Kami,* whom she identifies as "God the Parent," called her to be his "living temple." After this revelation she set out to help other people find "the good life" and true happiness by clearing their minds of the "dust of imperfection." Today Tenrikyo is designed to rid humanity of this "dust" through many dramatic rituals.

You would have heard of Konko-kyo, the religion which teaches that the universe is the Grand Shrine of the Parent-God, that there is no devil and no hell, and that the love of God is in and around every individual. You would know about Kurozumi-Kyo, named after its founder, Kurozumi Munetada. It affirms that Amaterasu-O-Mi-Kami is the creator of all things, and that every soul is in harmony with the divine source of light and life.

There are many others which, though they would not profess to be "pure Shinto," nonetheless, have great Shinto influence combined with a syncretism representative of other faiths and personal revelations.

Such groups are the famous and highly prominent Omoto, also Fusokyo, Izumo Taishakyo, Shinrikyo, Shinshukyo, Mitakekyo, Shinto Taikyo, Shinto Taiseikyo, Jikkokyo, Misogikyo and Shinto Shuseiha. These and other movements are challenging your people and continue to express the deep spiritual quest of the people of Japan.

FAITH MEANS FESTIVALS

Surrounded by so many new sects and confronted by a shrine in every *caza-mura* (the smallest subdivision of local government), you would feel yourself a part of a vital and meaningful faith. The Shinto year is dotted with festivals even as the land is marked by *toriis*. Most of these are village festivals which means that all of the people, even those who do not embrace Shinto, participate. In ancient days there were customarily four work days in succession followed by a fifth day designated as a day of rest sacred to a deity. The rest day was usually a festival day; the largest and most important one occurring at planting time and at the time of harvest.

Among the many spectacular festival days are such occasions as *Ennichi,* the "deity's day," on which your people go to the shrines en masse. It is believed that special guidance can be gained if this day is rightly observed. Because of the large crowds of worshipers,

vendors are on hand and booths are set up to sell fruits and flowers and incense which may be offered to the gods.

Other significant festivals are *On-Bashira-Sal,* a ceremony of tree planting which takes place every seven years in the four corners of the shrine or temple grounds; the *Naoi Ceremony* is designed to help rid oneself of bad luck. In this the participants jostle one another in an attempt to touch the scapegoat and thereby rub off their bad luck on him. *Jidai* festival, in which worshipers, dressed in costumes of a thousand years ago, bless the city of Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. There are also fire ceremonies which honor the fire *kami,* and cherry blossom festivals to praise the gods of beauty and the spring. There are *matsuris* (festivals) to praise the gods of the sea, the mountains, the villages and most important of all, the gods of the rice fields who help provide the "staff of life" for your people.

There are also special days when portable shrines or *mi-koshi* are used. These elaborate "floats" commemorate occasions when, it was believed, the ancient deities traveled from one temple to another. On the day of the *Minato* festival, the portable shrine is carried around Matsushima Bay in a boat to remind people that the gods also sanctified the water as well as the land. Another festival, the *Otariya,* is celebrated by parading small shrines through village streets as a ritual against the outbreak of fires. There are many other *matsuri* contrived to control floods, to avert typhoons, to protect against

political unrest, to honor the dead, and to celebrate all sorts of historical events.

Few non-Shintoists realize the importance of the *matsuri.* They do not know that many peasants would not begin their cultivation in the early spring without a festival, nor would they harvest their crops without a ritual in which the first fruits are dedicated to the *kami.* The palanquins of the deities are important and prized possessions in almost every village and the Shinto liturgical year is spun on the *matsuri,* a word which actually means that one should lift up his heart to the gods.

Devout Shintoists would not embark on a trip or board a plane or a ship without first going to a temple-shrine. All of the Shinto people are sentimental about their religion, but they are not fanatical, as some non-Shintoists believe them to be.

SHINTO AND THE KAMIKAZE

People who do not understand your faith often associate Shinto with many bizarre concepts. They believe, for example, that Shintoism was responsible for the conduct of airplane pilots who, during the war, resorted to suicidal bombings. You have often heard it said that these pilots, called *kamikaze,* were obeying Shinto laws. While some of these men may have been Shintoists, their acts were not Shinto-inspired. They were, rather, the result of an ancient nationalistic tradition which embodied the belief that it was honorable to die for

the fatherland. The *kamikaze* were the modern version of the ancient *samurai,* those feudal warriors of fierce and fearless skill who carried two swords as emblems of their profession. The *samurai* adhered to a code, called b*ushido,* which put valor and courage above life, and out of which grew a legend that those who died according to *bushido* received special blessings in the life to come. Out of *bushido* came the practice of *hara-kiri,* death by falling on one's own sword. But *bushido* also emphasized many good principles, such as purity in body, diligence in thought, and fidelity in action. But the things foreigners remembered most were sensational acts like *hara-kiri* and *kamikaze.*

You regret that people do not understand your faith, but you realize it is also difficult for you to understand the religions of other countries. You cannot grasp the meaning of "evangelism" or "missionary" activity in other faiths. It is quite impossible for you to appreciate religions which are highly institutionalized and exclusive, for Shinto is a liberal and all-inclusive faith. Because everything in Shinto is spirit, how, then, is it possible to have religious divisions and sects or how can one religion be higher or lower than another?

Of course, Shinto *does* have its sects and its divisions, but you believe that these are merely external differences, rising out of the personality and beliefs of the founders and the inability of minds to grasp the total truth. As far as you are concerned, there is no rivalry in Shinto, no

attempt to convert anyone, no effort to lure anyone away from any other faith. *All Shintoists believe that the essence of God is the essence of life and that the essence of life is the eternal substance of every individual. God is good; man is good; man, therefore, is God.* How, then, can there be any quarrel about basic principles?

SHINTO AND BUDDHISM

You believe that a person can be a Christian or a Jew or a Moslem or a Buddhist and still be a good Shintoist because of the universality of the divine spirit. In fact, many good Shintoists are good Buddhists. There was a time in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when people predicted that Buddhism would absorb Shinto, but they did not know how deeply Shinto had penetrated the Japanese mind. How could an imported religion like Buddhism, which reached Japan both from China and Korea in the sixteenth century, ever unseat the *kami*? Buddhism was pessimistic; Shinto was optimistic. Buddhism talked about Nirvana and future bliss; Shinto emphasized the now and present bliss. Buddhism was intellectual; Shinto was inspirational. Buddhism taught asceticism, subjugation of life, a philosophy of triumph over suffering; Shinto taught the fulness of life "unphilosophically," by urging an intuitive grasp of the presence of God in the universe and in a man's own heart. But Buddhism and Shinto also have much in common, so

have Confucianism and Shinto. All believe in spiritual universality; all have an affection for the genial temperament of Japan; and all have a deep respect for ancestor worship.

HONOR THE DEAD AND YOU HONOR THE LIVING

You do not expect everyone to understand your veneration for your ancestors because not everyone understands the Shinto concept which contends that every person is a divine spirit individualized. If this fact of personified divinity is true, then it follows that every man may also be a god; and if you wish to revere your departed loved ones as gods, you feel it is your privilege and, in a way, your duty to do so. Although your departed loved ones may be a bit lower than the great *kami* in spiritual perfection, they are, nonetheless, worthy of a shrine and deserving of devotion.

Near your home or in a sacred place in a grove, near a lake, or close to a shrine, you have your *tamaya,* a memorial altar enshrining the spirits of the dead. You put a mirror in the shrine on the back of which the ancestral names are etched, or you inscribe their names on a scroll. You often go to the shrine for meditation and let your mind dwell on the heritage left you by your loved ones. You are in their line of ascent to an ever-evolving noble life. Frequently you place a twig of a sacred tree on the

shrine or leave a *tamagushi,* a strip of paper which bears a greeting or a prayer.

Had you been born a Shintoist, you would have no fear of death, for death is a part of life and cannot be avoided, bypassed, or escaped. Life is self-creative because the *kami* is in every individual, and the *kami* never dies. So whether you are buried or cremated, whether your funeral is conducted by a Shinto priest, a Buddhist, or a Confucianist, you believe that your spirit is immortal.

In Shinto, heaven is a "high-up, sacred world," the dwelling place of the most superior *kami. Ame-tsuchi* is a word which has great meaning for you, for *Ame* is heaven and *tsuchi* is earth. A Shinto myth explains that, at the time of creation, the purest and most brilliant elements, more brilliant even than the beauty of Japan, branched off to become *ame,* while the other elements branched off to become *tsuchi.* Consequently, *ame* is where the sacred deities make their home; *tsuchi* is where the gods live when they come to earth. It is never quite clear to you whether all gods are incarnated as human beings, nor is "heaven" entirely clear to you, but you are confident that the *kami* within you has a destiny which is good and that some day *ame* will be yours to experience.

So you continue your worship, and as a devoted Shintoist you perform your worship at your household altar or god-shelf every morning and every night. Each time you take with you a small bowl of rice, a cup of *sake*

(rice whisky), and a bit of fruit as an offering of respect and loyalty. You place a twig of *sakaki* or a flower in a vase and light some incense or a lamp. You remain there in silent meditation while you worship the *kami.* Sometimes you journey to a major shrine (*jinja*) like Meiji or Izumo or Ise where you can attend dramatic ceremonies and watch the elaborately costumed temple dancers enact intricate rituals to the accompaniment of fifes and drums. Or you witness the famous *No* plays which are narrative and operatic dramas portraying some phase of Shinto life.

The beauty of these presentations, the inspiration of the priests, the propitiatory offering, and the prayers persuade you to live an even better life. Shinto has no commandments, no rules for conduct. Nor does it have a saviour or a messiah or someone comparable to Jesus, Buddha, or Mohammed. It has no scriptures and no sutras and, actually, no thrilling history to relate. Its holy book is the universe; its creed the good life; its gods the *kami.* These are enough to unite earth and heaven and to remind you of the symbolical *torii* upon which Izanagi and Izanami stood when first the world was made. They looked down on the lovely islands of Japan and called them good. And so would you, had you been born a Shintoist.

The Story of Abraham and Lot

In a country that was a long way from Canaan or Palestine, there lived a man named Abram. Abram did not believe in the worship of idols such as the other people worshipped and wanted to go to a land where he could worship the true God.

One day he thought he heard the voice of God saying, "Get thee out of the land of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee."

So Abram took his wife Sara and his nephew, Lot, and all his servants and flocks of sheep and cattle and camels, and they traveled many, many miles across a rocky and desert land where nothing grew that was green and there was almost no water for themselves or their cattle. You can hardly imagine what such a journey would be like, for in those days people had no carriages or cars in which to travel. They rode and carried all their possessions on the backs of camels or in rude wagons, and they had often to travel by night under the starry skies and rest by day because the days were so hot.

Abram's family, like all the people of that country, lived in tents even though they were a very rich family and might have been princes had they been willing to stay and worship idols with the others. So they carried their tents

upon the backs of the camels and pitched them wherever they halted to rest.

Abram was one of the good men who loved God and listened for His voice, and wherever he halted for a rest he built an altar of stones. Here he knelt and prayed to God to guide and care for them and to lead them to the promised land.

When they had traveled for many days through the hot and sandy desert they finally came upon a land, called the land of Canaan, where were green grass and trees for shade and rivers where their cattle and camels might drink. Here Abram built another altar and thanked God for having brought them safely, but this was not the end of their journey. They traveled through this pleasant land for many days more, going now by day because the days were cooler and resting by night, under the stars.

After awhile there came a famine to the land they were traveling through and Abram and all his caravan went down into Egypt where there was plenty to eat for both man and beast. While they were in Egypt, the king, who was called Pharaoh, gave Abram a great many oxen and sheep and bondservants, also gold and silver. When the famine was over Abram took all his many possessions and went back into Canaan.

Now, Lot, Abram's nephew, also had herds of sheep and oxen and camels and bondservants, and the land where they first halted was not able to bear both Abram's

and Lot's herds. There was much quarrelling between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen, because both wanted the best pasturage for their cattle and the best waters for them to drink from.

But Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, nor between thy herdsmen and my herdsmen for we are brethren." And he told Lot they had better divide the land between them and separate the herds and herdsmen.

"If thou wilt take the left hand," he said to Lot, "then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand then I will go to the left." For even though Abram was much older than Lot and should have had first choice he was quite willing that Lot should choose, hoping to satisfy and make him happy. This shows what a truly great man Abram was, for to be truly great is to be humble and unselfish and sweet.

But Lot was not a great man. He was selfish and grasping and wanted the best of everything that was to be had. So he chose all the beautiful plain of Jordan that lay beyond them, with its fertile pasturage and running rivers and he took his herds of cattle and sheep and camels and servants and went and dwelt upon it.

After Lot had gone away, Abram and his wife Sara, with all their servants and herds and flocks, traveled to the mountains of Canaan. Here God told him to lift up his eyes from where he stood on the mountain and look about

him northward and southward and eastward and westward. And God told Abram that He would give him all the land which he could see. He told Abram to rise and walk through it, the length and breadth of it, and that it was all his. For God was pleased with Abram.

"When Kings Go Forth to Battle"

There was much fighting amongst the different nations and tribes of people in this country where Abram had come to dwell, but in the midst of it all he lived with his family of servants and his herds, making war upon none and respected by all.

One day a messenger came running to Abram's tent in great excitement and told him there had been a terrible battle in the valley where Lot dwelt, and that four kings with their armies had taken Lot and a great many others captive and had killed many of the people who lived in the valley and taken all their goods.

When Abram heard this he armed all his servants with swords and bows and arrows and spears and led them at night against the army of four kings. While the kings and their army were asleep Abram and his servants surrounded them and fell upon them and killed many. In the midst of the army they found Abram's nephew, Lot, and they took him and all the goods that the kings had captured and the women and servants and brought them away from the army that had taken them prisoners. And

this shows again how great a man Abram was, to go into battle for the sake of Lot who had been selfish and unfair with him. After all this had happened the Lord came to Abram in a dream and spoke to him and said, "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

Abraham and the Angels

In spite of all his riches and all the good things God had given to them, both Abram and Sara were often very sad and lonely, for there were no little children to call them father and mother, or to love and help them. People who have no little children are often sad and lonely at times. So Sara prayed to God that they might have a little child. And God spoke to Abram when he was ninety and nine years old and told him that he should yet have children and that his name should be changed from Abram to Abraham which means "Father of Many Nations," and his wife's name should be changed to Sarah.

One time when Abraham was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day he looked up, and lo, three angels stood beside him; and when he saw them he ran to meet them and bowed his head upon the ground. He begged them to sit under a tree and rest while he had water brought to bathe their feet, which was a custom in that land.

So the three angels sat down to rest and Abraham ran into the tent and told Sarah to hurry and make some cakes. Then he ran out to where the cattle were feeding on the long, sweet grass under the shade of the trees, and he took from among them a young calf and gave it to a servant who killed and dressed it. And when the meat was cooked Abraham took butter and milk and the meat and cakes and set before the angels and they ate.

Then one of the angels asked Abraham where Sarah was and Abraham said, "In the tent." Then the angel told Abraham that Sarah should have a little son just as they had longed and prayed for.

Now Abraham and Sarah were both very old people and they could hardly believe that God really meant they should have a son, but the angel assured them and promised them again, and they believed and were glad. Then the angels went away, and Abraham walked a little way with them on their journey.

Abraham and Isaac

When Abraham was a hundred years old (for men lived to a great age in those days) there was a little son born to him and Sarah and they called him Isaac.

Abraham and Sarah loved this little son for whom they had prayed and waited so long, very, very much. Sarah was so glad that she said, "God hath made me to laugh so that

all who hear me shall laugh with me." She rejoiced because she had been able to give this wonderful gift of a little son to Abraham in his old age.

Now in these olden days some of the people believed that the way in which to show their love and devotion to God was to build a great fire on an altar of stones and burn on it some lamb or dove or cattle, something that had blood. They believed that the smoke from this offering went straight up to God and that when He saw it He would forgive them for their sins. They also believed that the more precious anything was to them the greater gift it would be to God and the more He would forgive them.

Nowadays people no longer believe in making offerings to God in this way, but in giving of their work and services and their love to God in doing things for other people. But in the olden days they knew no better and did what seemed right to them. Not until Jesus came and taught people how loving a Father God is and how much He needs us to help Him in His work, did they know how much more He cares for kindness and helpfulness to each other than for burnt offerings.

Abraham, fine, strong, good old man though he was, and loving God as he did, had not learned all these things. One time he thought God wanted him to make an offering to Him of something he loved very much; he even thought he heard the voice of God telling him to offer up his little son, Isaac, who was so very precious to Him.

Now you know, of course, that God, who loves all little children even more than their own fathers and mothers do, and who sent His own beloved son, Jesus, on earth to bless little children, would never ask any father to burn his little boy as an offering to Him. The Hebrews didn't believe it either, except, as they said, to try Abraham's faith and see if he would really be willing to do it. But Abraham believed God wanted him to do it and he was willing, for he thought that Isaac belonged to God more than he did to him.

I should not like you to imagine how very sad Abraham's heart was when he took little Isaac and two of his servants and an ass loaded with wood for the altar fire, and set out for the mountain where the altar was to be built. It must have been a very, very sad journey, but we will like to think that God was watching over them in love, just waiting to see what Abraham would be willing to do for love of Him.

When they came to the mountain Abraham told the servants to wait there while he and Isaac went on alone to the place where the offering was to be made. Perhaps Abraham did this because he did not want the servants to see how bitter this trial was to him, and very likely he wanted to be alone with his little son, Isaac.

Isaac had seen altar fires built and offerings made, so he understood it all; but when he saw the altar of stones and the wood ready for the fire and no lamb or sheep he

said, "My father," and Abraham answered, "Here am I, my son." Then little Isaac said, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

Abraham replied, and oh, how his sad heart must have ached when he thought God was requiring this great thing of him, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for the offering."

We do not know what little Isaac suffered when he knew that he was to be the offering, but we know that he must have been willing and obedient to his father, just as Abraham was obedient to God, and to what he thought was God's wish, for the Bible tells us that Abraham took little Isaac and laid him upon the altar. But just then there came a clear, quick voice out of heaven calling, "Abraham! Abraham!" Abraham said, "Here am I!" And the angel, whose voice it was, said, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad; neither do thou anything to him." Abraham looked up and there was a ram caught by the horns in the bushes. He went and took the ram and offered that instead of his little son because he believed God had put it there to show him that he need not offer up his son.

Then Abraham and Isaac went back to their home, and we will like to think how very happy they must have been going back together, and how happy Isaac's mother must have been to see them coming and how she would run out to meet them and hold little Isaac close to her heart. And I also like to think how obedient Abraham was

to what he believed to be God's will even though it was so terrible a thing; and best of all I like to think how God was watching over them in love.

Had You Been Born a Jew

Had you been born a Jew, your greatest heritage would be the spiritual history of your people. It is a heritage recorded in the Torah, the Hebrew scriptures; preserved in the Talmud and Midrash, which are rabbinical writings and commentaries on the law; and channeled through the lives of ancient prophets and modern scholars—a heritage as old as Canaan and as new as the state of Israel. It is linked together by holy days unerringly kept throughout the tides of time. It is epitomized in the centuries of captivity and persecution; it is the victory of a people. But, most of all, it is represented in a way of life challengingly designed for 12,000,000 Jews throughout the modern world.

YOUR RELIGION AND YOU

The interplay between the history of your religion and the history of every individual Jew is also part of your heritage. You cannot separate your destiny from that of Judaism. Whatever affects your religion affects you, and whatever happens to you leaves its influence upon the nature of your faith. In no other religion is this relationship between faith's profession and faith's practice so clearly defined, or the connection between God and man so intimate. The long march of Judaism from the earliest recorded event to the present moment is relived

by every Jew. Your life is the spiritual history of Israel personified.

When Moses, the spokesman for God, said, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One," it was an event in history, but it was also a specific event in your life. The first prayer you learned, the first religious thought impressed upon your mind consisted of these very words, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One." This declaration of faith marked the beginning of your personal spiritual pilgrimage, just as it did the age-old pilgrimage of your people. Before you, too, lay a world unknown and uncharted. You were instructed to recall the words every morning and night, to remember them in sickness and in health, and to breathe them at the hour of death, just as your forefathers had done in the days when Judaism was young, when, throughout the vicissitudes of their nomadic roamings they prayed, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."

When these words were first spoken. Mount Sinai was the axis of monotheism. The God of Moses bore distinctive features which the gods of other religions had never portrayed; the gods of ancient civilizations had many names and many faces; their genealogies were fictionized with legends and myths. The God of Moses stood authoritatively alone. There were no other gods before Him; there were to be no other gods after Him. He was the beginning and the end; not a god motivated by human beings or molded into an image by the priest-craft,

but the living Creator of all things, the Judge of all men, the Lord of all the world.

I AM THAT I AM!

Who was this God? Where was His habitation and what was His name? You often asked these questions, just as they were asked by Moses who lived some 3500 years ago.

One day Moses said to the Lord, "When I come unto the children of Israel and say, 'The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you'; and they shall say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say unto them?"

And God said, "I Am That I Am! Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I Am hath sent me unto you.'"

Early in your life you learned, as did the Israelites, that God is the great I AM, with a name so sacred it was never spoken. When it was first written, it was YHWH, an unpronounceable term of reverence; then He was called Elohim and Adonay, even as He is today.

Your understanding of this God was deepened when you began your studies of the Torah, which means the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the love of God. *Torah, which means divine instruction, embraces the whole broad field of religious study, but the Torah is specifically a sacred parchment scroll containing the Pentateuch or the Law of Moses.* It is Judaism's most

revered devotional object, so sacred, in fact, that when it is worn out it is reverently buried in a grave. Men who copy the Torah, those who make these holy scrolls, are called Sofers (scribes) and seek to lead especially exemplary lives. The Torah resides in the ark in every synagogue, the Jewish place of worship. Synagogue, which means a bringing together of the people, was soon used to designate the place where the people met.

The ark in the synagogue is sacrosanct. In the wilderness wanderings of the early Israelites, the sacred ark, considered to be the dwelling place of Yahweh, was an oblong chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Called the "ark of the covenant," because it contained the stones upon which the Ten Commandments were written, it also bore the "mercy seat," a golden plate surrounded by cherubs, upon which the blood of sacrificial animals was sprinkled. Because the ark also represented the abiding presence of the Lord, a replica of the ark is found in every synagogue today, usually in the eastern wall. Perpetually burning before it is a votive light, a symbol of the light of God illuminating His children's way. It is a constant reminder to you, as well as to Israel, that you are in His presence and care.

At every Sabbath service, while the worshipers respectfully stand, the rabbi, who is the spiritual teacher, solemnly takes the Torah from the ark, unrolls it, and reads a portion of the familiar words:

"I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth...." (Exodus 20; 2-4)

Thoughtfully listening, you realize what a profound influence the Ten Commandments have had upon the world, how they have become the basis for civil laws; how they have been made the cardinal tenets of other great religions; and how they have been taught to many people. To no one, however, are they more meaningful than to the Jew, for the history of Judaism is his history. Always there is the inseparable link between this history, the people of Israel, and you.

BAR MITZVAH

When you began your study of the Torah, your teacher placed a drop of honey on the page to symbolize the joy and sweetness of religious wisdom. Through its thousands of years of history, Judaism refined what it found in other religions and created the greatest literary treasure of all time. Written almost exclusively in Hebrew, the Torah of the Law, the Nebiim or the Prophets, and the Kethubim or Sacred Writings (called by Christians the

Hagiographa) are the official documents of your religion and the basis of faith and morals for Israel and you.

When you were twelve, you were introduced to these sacred writings in the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah, and as a male child of the Jewish faith, you sensed the deep significance of the occasion. Bar Mitzvah means "son of duty" and the ceremony, a solemn and auspicious event, marks the end of childhood and the coming of age in spiritual responsibility. In liberal Judaism, such as the Reform and Conservative movements, girls also share the rite of Bar Mitzvah.

In this period of study, out of which grew the Christian practice of catechetical instruction and confirmation, you were reminded how the individual life is related to the spiritual life of your people. The solemnization of the ceremony was heightened by your participation in the public reading of the Torah in the Hebrew language. Your parents, to honor you on this important day, made it a special event by inviting your relatives and the rabbi to a memorable dinner. It was a day of great happiness for you and for your elders, who recalled the time they made their Bar Mitzvah and how the meaning of it had increased for them throughout the years. They explained that often when controversies arose as to how a deed should be done or how a decision should be made, the rabbi was questioned, "What does the Mitzvah dictate?" Because the doctrine of Mitzvah is a frame of reference for life and

conduct, it becomes the touchstone by which duties are imposed in accordance with its teaching.

Judaism is so rich in tradition that every religious act has its roots far back in history. For example, among the gifts you received at Bar Mitzvah was a lovely mezuzah, meaning "doorpost," which is a little box or tube containing verses from the Torah. It is often placed outside the door of Jewish homes to show that the family is loyal to the faith and the teaching of Judaism. Mezuzahs, much like the phylacteries which priests of old wore on the forehead or on the left arm, are still worn by traditional Jews who believe that God commanded such action for all time when He said, "It shall be for a sign upon thee, upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth." (Exodus 13:8,9)

THE LAW AND LOVE OF GOD

The Lord's law and the Lord's love seem to you to describe best the ancient mooring of your faith and to assure you that God is both just and merciful. The Prophet Isaiah said, "He is our Father, our Redeemer for everlasting." Over and over the sacred scriptures make clear that the God of Israel is a just God because He loves righteousness, and a jealous God because He loves His people with paternal compassion. This concept of the Fatherhood of God, immortalized through the history of Judaism, is at the very center of your personal faith.

The scribes and scholars of Judaism have probed into every line and letter of God's holy word. In no other religion have men mined so deeply and so earnestly into the secret depths of truth. There are books which only the adepts understand, books like the Zohar, a mystical study of the innermost nature of God and man; books relating to the cabala or hidden doctrines; books from the pre-exilic and post-exilic periods with the Babylonian captivity forming the break between the two; books with prophetic writings, prayers, poems, proverbs; and books which are part of the brilliant literature of the Moorish supremacy in Spain. But when all is said and done, the heart of Judaism comes back to God's love and God's law which comprise the divine teaching.

The details of the teaching of Yahweh were handed down by oral tradition until the end of the second century A.D. when, after having been systematically defined by rabbinical councils, they were incorporated in the Mishnah or writings of instruction. The Mishnah, which formed the basis for the Talmud, is the name for Judaism's civil and canonical rules of conduct. The text of the Talmud is called the Mishnah and the commentary is the Gemara.

MEN AND MOVEMENTS

The immortal figures in the history of your faith are as familiar to you as the members of your own household.

Abraham, first of the patriarchs and father of the Hebrews, seems not to be legendary, but real; a man who walked with the God whom Moses was later to reveal. His son, also a very real personage of flesh and blood, was Isaac who, as the husband of Rebekah and the father of Jacob and Esau, propounded significant truths and parables. It was Jacob, called Israel, who was the progenitor of your faith, for it is through his twelve sons that the history of your religion unfolds. Moses, the prophets, the men and women of Biblical history were people of destiny.

So were men like the Maccabees who, during the second century B.C., freed your people from the yoke of Syrian oppression; Hillel the Elder, (30 B.C.-9 A.D.) a sage of Judaism who told his followers, "What is hateful to thee, do not unto thy fellowman; this is the whole Law. The rest is but commentary." There were also men like Philo Judaeus (30 B.C.-50 A.D.) who is known as the Plato of Judaism; doctors of the law like Shammai and Gamaliel; Spanish-born Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), a pre-eminent philosopher; Polish-born Haym Salomon, patriot of the American Revolution; German-born Moses Mendelsohn, scholar and humanist; American-born Abraham Mordecai, famous pioneer; and many more. But when the philosophy of these men is winnowed, it is found to be the expression of God's will embodied in the holy teachings.

This is also true of the groups within Judaism. From Hasidism, a pietistical movement of the eighteenth

century, to Reconstructionism, a modern attempt to discover how man can best come to terms with life and his times, Judaism is a religion of many types with three major groups serving the majority of modern Jews in their spiritual needs: the Orthodox, the Conservative and the Reform, each of which claims well over a million members in the United States.

Orthodox Judaism is the continuation of ancient authority with all its traditional social, religious and dietary customs. Reform Judaism is the liberal or progressive movement which has sought to adjust itself to the shifting times without losing what it believes to be the basic spiritual, ethical and ceremonial aspects of the faith. Conservative Judaism is the middle-of-the-road Judaic expression, recognizing the authority of ritual Law and the need for preserving the unique characteristics of Judaism in the modern world.

Zionism, a movement attempting to return the Jew to Palestine, cuts across these "denominational" lines. That God wanted His people to have a homeland is believed by most Jews as well as by many gentiles who believe this to be a divine prophecy. Ever since their exile and the capture and destruction of their land by the Romans in A.D. 70, the Jews have longed to return to Jerusalem. This hope was continually incorporated in the prayers and dreams of the Jewish people, who considered such a restoration the fulfillment of a prophecy.

In this connection, early Zionism was strongly apocalyptic. Modern Zionism, as interpreted by Theodor Herzl of Vienna, was based upon the need for a homeland, a state which Judaism could call its own and where Jews could live together in harmony, adhering to their respective traditions. Another interpreter, Asher Ginsberg, insisted that the homeland should be more than a political or cultural habitat; it should above all represent a spiritual haven where the faith, customs and language of a people would be perpetuated. In every instance, the idea of Zion was always closely allied with the country which the Prophet Zechariah had designated as the "Holy Land." (Zechariah 2: 13).

Finally, after nearly twenty centuries of homelessness and wandering, centuries filled with captivity, exile, ghettos and attempts by anti-semites to totally annihilate the people and the religion that make up Judaism, the Jewish people began to see the culmination of their hopes and dreams. After having been dispersed across the world, having become citizens of almost every nation, yet rarely fully accepted in any country, Jews learned that the Zionist movement, vigorously led by Dr. Chaim Weizmann since 1917, had triumphed. The United Nations General Assembly voted on November 29, 1947, to partition Palestine into two independent states: Jewish Israel and Arab Jordan. On May 14, 1948, the proclamation was sealed. For Judaism it was the fifth day of the month of Iyar in the 5708 year of its history. In

Palestine, where God had first revealed Himself, a group of modern Jewish pioneers, statesmen and religionists, came to markoff the prescribed boundaries of their habitation. David Ben-Gurion, first prime minister of the new state, read the Jewish Declaration of Independence. This was followed by the Jewish National Anthem, the *Hatikvah*, which means "The Hope." Prayers were spoken. The land was blessed. Israel was established.

It was a small, almost captive country. On its west stretched the broad expanse of the Mediterranean, on the north lay Lebanon and Syria, on the south loomed Egypt, and on the east was Jordan. Designated as its capital was Jerusalem, the holy city, but as it was a disputed territory, sacred to Arab and Jew alike, only a portion belonged to the immigrants. Israel, which called its section the "New City," was confronted across a neutral corridor by the "Old City" ruled by Jordan. The United Nations, adopting a resolution to internationalize Jerusalem, was unable to get support from either Israel or Jordan. So the historic city remained divided, the uneasy homeland for both nations; a city mutually shared, but jealously cherished and guarded by each.

The state of Israel, with less than 10,000 square miles of land and a population of some 2,000,000 was prepared from the very start to provide a habitat for all those who revered the Star of David, the emblem which is emblazoned on its flag. With typical Jewish tenacity, its citizens have transformed the hills and valleys. With

characteristic foresight, spurred by traditional love for learning, they have established outstanding schools, colleges and universities. Demonstrating their truly democratic nature, they have proclaimed freedom of religion to Jew and gentile alike.

JUDAISM AND OTHER FAITHS

Had you been born a Jew, you would often feel as though you were standing in the center of a whirling world of faith. Around you, other great religions are ambitiously evangelizing, proselytizing and zealously exhorting men in their specific ways of salvation. They have adopted many of your customs and concepts: the thirty-nine books which comprise your sacred scriptures are the "Old Testament" of Christendom; the Apocrypha, which Catholicism and certain Protestant groups have accepted, came from the Maccabean era. The old synagogues of Israel have also served as patterns for Christianity both in architectural design and in their order of worship. Even as it has been traditional that the synagogue should face the east and be built on the highest location so that it should dominate all other buildings in dignity and prominence, many Christian churches have been designed in like fashion.

And the ritualistic rites of your people have infiltrated into the Christian church. The Jew, before entering the synagogue, purifies his hands; upon entering, he touches

his lips to the scriptures which are set near the entrance for this purpose. The reading of scripture lessons, the psalmody, the sermon, antiphonal singing, the giving of alms, the concept of confession—all have been incorporated into the Christian service. It has been said that the form of the Ante-Mass was taken over from the synagogue ritual, both in its structure and general function.

The Islamic people also borrowed heavily from your traditions and beliefs as reflected in the Koran, as seen in their monotheism, their veneration of prophets, their recognition of the Pentateuch and the Psalms, their ablutions, their facing toward Mecca—as your people faced toward Jerusalem during prayer—and in their dietary regulations. Circumcision is also practiced by the Islamic people, although not as a religious rite as it is among your people, in Judaism, it is a commandment (Genesis 17:10-14) signifying a covenant between God and Israel. It is an interesting fact that circumcision is commemorated in a holy day (the Circumcision of Jesus) in Catholic and Anglican churches even today. This "Feast of the Circumcision" is held on January first and confirms, for Christians, Jesus' respect for Jewish teaching in that He underwent the ceremony eight days after his birth.

There are divergent views among your people concerning this man Jesus whom Christians call the Christ. The name, Jesus, relating to the name Joshua and Isaiah and stemming from the same root, was common

among the Hebrew people. Your historians, with the exception of Josephus, make no mention of any special "Jesus" as being important in the history of religion. Josephus, who flourished during the first century of the Christian era, simply mentions that a certain Jesus took up the preaching and gospel of John the Baptist following John's imprisonment by Herod Antipas who was tetrarch of Galilee between 4 and 40 A.D.

The hope of a promised messiah, around which so many religions are built, was and still is the hope of you and your people. The Israelites believed that when he came he would restore their nation in a special way, perhaps in a militant way, conquering their Roman oppressors. Jesus was acclaimed by some, but He did not consummate, for the great majority, the true messianic anticipation or fulfill what was believed should be the phophetic nature of his coming. Nor has any other prophet met the standards of this high calling. To this day, Judaism still awaits the Promised One of whom Isaiah said, "Behold my servant, who I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall make the right to go forth to the nations. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set right in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his teaching." (Isaiah 42: 1-4)

You recognize the fact that some religions truly believe that Jesus was this Messiah. You are aware of the good these religions have achieved and you feel they all have something to offer, for there are as many religious views in the world as there are cultures and people. You have seen new religions expand and grow and have observed how, through the years, they have given evidence of change. You have seen Christianity in many of its areas of expression become more understanding of Judaism, but you have also seen evidences of intolerance and anti-semitism among many well-meaning people because of deep-seated misinformation and lack of information about your faith.

Many times your people have been made the object of proselytization and have been sought for "conversion" by various faiths. So deep-seated is Jewish teaching, that many Jews who became Christians in the days of the early Christian church sought to impose their rites and practices, such as dietary injunctions, fasting and circumcision upon their converters! These Jews were called "Judaizers."

Unlike Christianity or other mission-minded religions, modern Judaism has no desire to proselytize or persuade non-Jews to its point of view. As a Jew you are more concerned that the divine powers in man should be unfolded than that your religion should grow quantitatively. You feel that God-realization is the aim of humanity. You are convinced that the world is inherently

good, and that evil is a figment of the mind of man, not a creation of the mind of God.

God is not a capricious monarch who controls human beings like a puppeteer does his dancing figures; God is a gracious Father who has generously endowed His children with freedom of choice. You believe that man was created good, that he came into the world free from sin, and that he brings with him the image and likeness of his Creator. As man is born of a benevolent God, so he may rest assured that when he dies he will also attain everlasting life. Immortality is in the nature of all men because it is in the nature of God.

Although Judaism is not an evangelistic movement, there are occasional conversions to your religion. By example and precept, rather than by preaching and persuasion, Judaism influences others. By stimulating intellectual pursuits and suggesting an ethical approach to contemporary problems, it seems peculiarly designed for the modern day, even though it is centuries old. Judaism is a way of life for people who believe they have a special service to perform, namely, to testify to the presence of God in the continuing history of the world. It seems to you that this should be the spirit of all true religions, and that it was most perfectly stated by one of your prophets when he said,

> "He had shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to

love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Micah 6:8)

JUDAISM AND THE FAMILY

Idealistically, you are urged to walk and work with God in your daily vocation. In your home you endeavor to live as though God were the unseen Guest. Your home, fully as much as the synagogue, is a place of worship. Here the mother lights the Sabbath candles for the Friday evening meal and prayer. Here the father intones the ancient Hebrew Kiddush, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, King of the Universe, who created the fruit of the vine." Here the children and parents observe the holy days and festivals. In no religion are there closer family ties than in Judaism. It may be that this is why there is so little delinquency among Jewish youth and so much maturity of thought among young people of the Jewish faith.

As your family is united by the observances of various holy days, so Jewish people around the world are united by the traditional festivals of Judaism's liturgical year. These days, designated by the Jewish calendar, were once strange and anachronistic to the gentile world, but gradually their significance and their interrelation with both Christian and seasonal holidays have become increasingly clear.

There is, for example, Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, a moveable date occurring in September which, in

your 12-month calendar, is the month of Tishri, Judaism's historic years are reckoned from 3761 B.C., and since the very beginning of its observance, Rosh Hashana has been a day of thoughtful soul-searching and rededication of life.

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, occurring ten days after Rosh Hashana, is a period of solemn rest. This day, called a Sabbath of Sabbaths, is set aside for confession of sins, repentance and reconciliation with God. The Sabbath itself, which begins at dusk each Friday, although hallowed by all your people, is most rigorously observed by Orthodox Jews. Orthodoxy clearly states its commandments for the observance of this day: there shall be no working, no fighting, no traveling. The rites for Yom Kippur are prescribed in Leviticus 16 and the authority according to that Scripture is binding forever when it says, "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute forever."

There are other days which the faithful Jew will observe: Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, celebrated for eight days in late November or early December, honors the Maccabean victory over the Greeks who had sought to Grecianize the Jews in the second century B.C.; Purim, the festival of deliverance based on the story recorded in the Book of Esther and observed in February or March according to the lunisolar calendar of Judaism; Shabuoth, the Feast of Weeks, or feast of the first fruits of

the harvest, also called Pentecost, which means "fifty days" after Passover; and Sukkoth, Feast of the Tabernacles or Booths, which commemorates the ingathering of the harvest.

But of all festivals none is more meaningful than Passover. Taking its name from *pazah* (to pass or skip over), it memorializes the tradition that the "angel of death" passed over those houses of the Israelites in Egypt which had been marked with the blood of the paschal lamb. It was this divine seal which spared the firstborn in each house from being slain. This momentous event, recorded in Exodus 12, is a testimony that proclaims for you the faith of an individual and the faith of a collective people; it proclaims God's concern for every member of His family and His protection for His people as a race.

The majestic words that instituted the Passover are etched in your memory: "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come unto your houses to smite

you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever." (Exodus 12:21,24)

Christians, too, understand Passover; they observe it according to their own tradition, having made Jesus their "paschal lamb." Early Jewish Christians celebrated their belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus at Passover time. To this day the Jewish Passover and the Christian Easter share practically the same period, and the Passover tradition of your people has been preserved in the Christian celebration of their "Holy Week."

Passover, the holy time of *Pesach,* is a time when families gather in all Jewish homes; it is a sacred time when every Jew wishes to be at home with his people. Here on the first night (or the first and second nights), you gather for the significant and ever impressive seder service in which the suffering and deliverance of the Jews in Egypt are tenderly dramatized. Every Jewish child loves, honors and respects the seder. He knows its meaning. He is versed in the Haggadah, which is the text for this memorial and festive meal. No Jew ever forgets how he sat with his parents around the seder table and how, in the spell of tradition, he asked, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" And he recalls how his father answered, "We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Eternal our God led us from there with a mighty hand."

You find deep within each festival the insistent reminder that Judaism has endured much, has been

delivered often, and has been consistently saved from dissemination and absorption by the providence of God. And when you remember this, you realize that even as this is true for Judaism, it is true for you.

BASIC CONCEPTS OF JUDAISM

Had you been a born a Jew, you would realize that despite various types of Judaism and many speculations about Judaism by scholars and interpreters, there are certain beliefs that can be said to be fundamental to the nature of your faith. One statement of these beliefs was suggested by the scholar Hasdai Crescas, who, in the fifteenth century, listed fourteen points by which Judaism might better comprehend itself and through which others might better apprehend your faith:

1. God knows individually all things and all people.
2. His providence is over each individual.
3. He is omnipotent.
4. He revealed himself in a special way to the prophets.
5. He has given man freedom of the will.
6. He gave man the Torah.
7. He created the universe at a particular time.
8. Immortality is assured for those who observe his commandments.
9. There is punishment for the wicked.
10. The dead will be resurrected.
11. The Torah is eternal.

12. Moses is supreme.
13. The priest can foretell future events through the Urim and Thummim (objects mentioned in Exodus 28:30)
14. The Messiah will come.

These concepts are impressed upon you through the eternal beauty of the scripture. Your hear them everywhere in the teaching and in the interpretation of God's love and law. The rabbi speaks of them; the cantor, who sings the liturgical music in the synagogue, proclaims them; the festivals perpetuate them; and when the Promised One appears, He will eternalize them.

And so, as you review the history of Judaism as a religion, as a people, and as a nation, you are observing yourself in your own religious experiences. The qualities which made that history significant are those you need to comprehend in order to understand your destiny. Your fathers clung to their faith with marvelous tenacity and retained their racial characteristics with remarkable purity in the midst of alien peoples. Scattered among the nations of the world, they never admitted defeat nor lost their feeling of destiny. Instead, they learned the language of the nation in which they found themselves, adapted themselves to the culture, and asked no other privilege than a chance to prove their worthiness in the scheme of things.

If there is an occasional feeling of pride which helps to neutralize what could be qualms of despair, this, too, is part of your heritage. You are proud of your ancestry as you count the milestones along time's highway placed there by the many contributions Judaism has made in fields of philosophy, science, literature, and the arts; in modern technology, medicine, education, communication skills; in the expansion of cities, and the building of a nation. You are aware that your people have always remained true to their religion and that faithfully and realistically they have pursued the truth along a trail which has led from ancient Sinai, where the teaching was first received, to the newest synagogue, where it will continue to be taught. This trail, leading both ways, into the past and into the future, represents the adventurous journey of your people and you.

This is how you would feel, had you been born a Jew.

Mohammed

The Arabs are a dark skinned people that live near or on the great deserts of Arabia, one of the hottest and most desolate regions of the world. They have lived there for thousands of years in roving tribes and many of their traits and manners have come from their association with the desert, and the hardships that they have been obliged to undergo in making their journeys upon its fiery sands.

Thousands of years ago the Arabs had a religion that was not entirely different from that of the Jews. As the years passed, however, they began to turn away from the old beliefs and to worship stone idols. These idols were set up in their principal cities and villages, notably in the city of Mecca, where there also remained a temple, built in the time of the older religion, that the Arabs still held to be sacred.

As the Arabian tribes were very different from each other in many ways, it was only natural that their religion should grow different also. Some men worshipped the fire and some worshipped the stars. Some became Jews or Christians. For the most part, however, they worshipped stone images and many wise men preached and labored among them in vain to bring back the old religion of their fathers.

Such was the state of affairs when a child was born in the city of Mecca who was destined to become one of the

greatest prophets of the world, and draw all the Arabs into a single religion that would spread as far as Spain and India. This child was named Mohammed, and he was born five hundred and seventy years after the death of Christ. His father, Abdallah, died soon after he was born, and Mohammed's mother, according to custom, gave the baby into the charge of a nurse who might rear him in the free, open air of the desert where Arabs believed that children became strong and vigorous.

Mohammed was strong in many ways, but had one great physical failing: he was often seized with fits of a kind that nowadays would be ascribed to the disease called epilepsy. In those days, however, these fits were thought to be the work of devils who entered into and possessed the body. When he was six years old his mother died and he was brought up by his grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib, a poor man, but one who was greatly respected by everybody that knew him.

Abd al-Muttalib put him to work. When he grew old enough, he watched the flocks of the people of Mecca, and gained a meager livelihood by doing this. He had no schooling, but once or twice had the opportunity to travel, when he went with his uncle to southern Arabia and to Syria, where he saw people different from those of Mecca and learned of many different forms of religion.

When Mohammed was twenty-five years old there befel a change in his fortunes. In this year he entered the

service of a rich widow, whose name was Kadijah, and went with her to the great fairs and bazaars on which journeys, perhaps, he acted as her camel driver. Kadijah soon fell in love with the young man of bright, piercing eyes and thoughtful demeanor, and one day she drew Mohammed aside and told him that she loved him, offering to become his wife and to give him her hand in marriage. By marrying Kadijah Mohammed became rich. He managed his wife's affairs at Mecca with great success, and became greatly respected there as a man of business. He and Kadijah had six children, four girls and two boys, but both of the boys died in their infancy.

But Mohammed was soon marked as being different from other men. He spent a great deal of his time in religious contemplation and would go off by himself into the solitude of the mountains, to think and ponder without interruption.

When he was forty years old he went one day to a mountain called Hira which was not far from Mecca. And here a trance came upon him and in the night he believed that he saw the angel Gabriel. The angel was surrounded by a flaming aureole and in his hand he held a scroll of fire from which he commanded Mohammed to read. Now Mohammed knew not how to read or write, but to his amazement he found that the words on the scroll were quite plain to him, and he read a wonderful message that proclaimed the glory and the greatness of God, whom he called Allah.

Mohammed was frightened by what he had seen; he thought that perhaps the form of the angel had been taken by some evil spirit to lead him on to his undoing. But at last he had another vision in which Gabriel came to him again and called upon him to arise and preach the word of Allah throughout the land and bring back to the Arabs the faith of their fathers and the worship of a single god. And then for the first time Mohammed believed his visions and thought himself God's Prophet, and he called the new faith that he was to teach the faith of *Islam,* which means righteousness.

Mohammed went back to Kadijah and told her what he had seen. He said he was chosen by Allah to spread his faith over the land, and he himself was a prophet greater than any other in the world. Kadijah was a true and faithful wife and loved Mohammed better than herself. She believed that he spoke the truth, and looked upon him as some one who through God's means had become more than a man.

At first Mohammed did not try to preach his new faith to the people of Mecca, but contented himself with teaching the word of Allah to his nearest relatives. Most of them believed in him, but one of his uncles called him a fool and would have nothing to do with the new religion.

After four years of teaching Mohammed had only converted to the new belief forty people, who were mostly men of low degree or slaves. He then thought that Allah

called upon him to go forth publicly and preach his new belief to the entire world. And soon afterward Mohammed could have been seen in the market place preaching the word of Allah.

The faith that Mohammed taught was very much like the faith that we ourselves believe in. That is, it was much more like the religion of Christ than the worship of idols or the belief of the Romans and Greeks in gods and goddesses, or the worship of fire or the stars.

Mohammed preached that there was one God only, and that this God was greater than all things. If you died and had led a righteous life you went to Paradise; if you had been wicked you went to the lower regions to undergo eternal punishment. And there were a great many things in Mohammed's religion that any one would do well to follow, for he preached that God was merciful and his people on earth must be merciful also, that cleanliness was next to Godliness and that all his followers must wash themselves before they prayed.

In many ways, however, the Mohammedan faith was not so pure as the Christian faith, for the Heaven that Mohammed believed in was a place of feasting and merriment, but little else, and Mohammed also believed that it was right to teach his religion by the sword. In this, however, Mohammed's followers became more zealous than he had ever thought of being, and we must remember

also that Christians of those days did not hesitate to use the sword, themselves.

To spread the faith Mohammed set about preparing a great book which was to be the bible of those who believed in his religion. This book was called the Koran. Because Mohammed could not write and still produced this marvelous book, which contained the word of Allah, he claimed that he was divinely inspired. It is thought, however, that he was helped in preparing the Koran by one of his disciples who could read and write.

When Mohammed prepared the Koran there was no paper, and writing materials were far removed from the Arabs who made little use of them. So Mohammed was compelled, as we are told, to write the Koran on any material that came to hand. He wrote it on pieces of stone and strips of leather, and on dried palm leaves,—and some of the verses were even written on the bleached shoulder blades of sheep. Anything that could hold a mark was used by him as writing material, and the verses were later collected and made into a book by his disciples.

When Mohammed commenced to preach before the people, the citizens of Mecca looked on him as a madman. They did not molest him, however, because they held him to be a worthless dreamer who could do no harm to anybody. But as weeks went by, and the number of those who became converted to his faith grew larger, the wise

men who still believed in the great stone idols named Hubal and Uzza began to grow afraid.

They were too cowardly to molest Mohammed, because he was a rich man and was protected by his uncle who had much influence among them,—but they vented their spite on the humbler people who followed him and who were unable to protect themselves. So it came to pass that the poor men who were Mohammedans, particularly the slaves, were made to suffer dreadful tortures. They were scourged with whips and placed all day in the burning sunshine without a drop of water for their thirst. At last, however, the people of Mecca became bold enough to go to Mohammed's uncle and tell him that Mohammed must cease preaching against their idols. Mohammed, however, indignantly refused, and went on preaching, and his uncle continued to protect him.

At last Mohammed's enemies became so afraid of the success he was gaining that they decided they must have his life at all costs, and a plot was hatched against him. He was saved by being warned of this and hidden away, but at last he and all his relatives who believed in his teachings, as most of them did, were driven from Mecca and were made outlaws.

His uncle's influence was so strong, however, that after Mohammed had lived in the mountains for three years, he and his relatives were allowed to return to Mecca. But a great misfortune fell upon him, for his faithful wife

Kadijah, whom he had loved deeply, and who was the first person to believe in him as a prophet, died, and left him inconsolable. His uncle also died, and Mohammed lost his protection.

Without the influence of his uncle Mecca again became too dangerous for Mohammed to remain in. When he tried to preach he was pelted with stones and mud and mocked on every side. He was consoled, however, by a dream in which he thought that he was preaching to certain spirits whose bodies were made of fire and who were known to the Meccans as *Djinns*. And these spirits listened attentively to what Mohammed said and did him reverence.

Because he had converted a number of men from the nearby town of Yathrib, Mohammed decided that a better opportunity was given him to teach his faith there than in Mecca itself, and in the year 622 A. D., he and his followers fled to Yathrib and were made welcome. This flight was called the "Hegira," and the date of it is very important to the Mohammedans, for their calendar dates from it, and for them is practically the beginning of time.

In Yathrib the faith of Mohammed spread quickly and he received attention and reverence wherever he went. And when he had a large following he desired to put up a house of prayer, or a temple which he called a mosque. This was done, but the first Mohammedan mosque was a very simple affair indeed and the roof was supported by

trees that were not removed from the earth where they had been growing.

And then for the first time began to be heard the call that to-day rings through so large a part of Asia and Africa, when the muezin, or crier, summons Mohammed's followers to prayer five times a day. They must all face toward Mecca as they pray, for that is the sacred city; and Mohammed so considered it because of the mysterious temple or Kaabah that was in it, and because, before the days of the idolaters, this temple had been connected with the religion of Abraham. And every morning since that time up to the present day, Mohammedans have been summoned to prayer with the following words:

"God is great; there is no god but the Lord. Mohammed is the Apostle of God. Come unto prayer! Come unto salvation! God is great. There is no god but the Lord."

Another change was effected by Mohammed. Since Yathrib had been the first place to take him in and receive his religion, its name was changed to Medinat al Nahib, the city of the prophet, to do the place honor. And in Medinah, as it was later called, Mohammed spent the rest of his life.

It was not long before word came to Mecca that the man whom they had driven out had become powerful and mighty in a city not far off and that he was considered greater than a king among the disciples that followed him.

Then the Meccans were again afraid, for they feared that some day Mohammed would appear with an army before their walls and revenge himself for the injuries that they had worked upon him. So, when a frightened messenger brought word to the Meccans that a number of Mohammed's followers were plundering the Meccan caravans, the people of Mecca raised an army to raze Medinah to the ground and put an end for all time to the man that had so troubled their affairs.

Mohammed, however, had already designed to march against Mecca and had raised an army for that purpose. And he came upon the Meccan soldiers at a place called Badrh. There were a great many more Meccans than Mohammedans, and should have won the day, for the odds against Mohammed and his followers were huge, but Mohammed had the advantage that every one of his soldiers was glad to die for his leader and his army had the fierce, fanatical zeal which religion inspires in eastern people.

It was a wild fight, for the battle was fought in a furious storm of rain and wind that beat like whips upon the faces of the soldiers as they dashed against each other. It was desperate, too, and lasted nearly all day—and it was one of the important battles of the world, although the numbers engaged in it were not large. At first the fray went badly for the Mohammedans, for the enemy with their superior numbers forced them back. Everywhere Mohammed himself might have been seen, encouraging

his followers and urging them to greater efforts. Then, when it seemed as if his forces were breaking and that nothing could be done to hold them together any longer, he stooped to the ground and picking up a handful of gravel, hurled it against his foes.

"May confusion seize them," he cried loudly, and at that the Mohammedans in the vicinity who had seen the act, rushed so furiously upon the Meccans that they recoiled. That was all that was needed. The entire Mohammedan army charged, shouting the names of Allah and Mohammed, and the battle was won. Many horses and camels and much valuable plunder were captured, and word was sent back to Medinah that a great victory had been gained.

The Meccans swore vengeance and in due time another army was advancing against Mohammed. He was engaged in prayer when the word was brought to him that the Meccans were coming and at once he summoned his followers and exhorted them to do their utmost and to die in defense of the faith.

With his army at his heels Mohammed went forth from Medinah and pitched his camp near Mount Uhud, only a bowshot away from his enemies. As soon as it was dawn both sides were drawn up ready for battle—and then the Meccans saw a sight that had never before taken place on any battlefield—for at the call of the Muezin,

which took place as though the Mohammedans were at home, the entire army bowed down in prayer.

At first the fight went well for the Mohammedans, but when a group of archers left their post to engage in the pursuit of the defeated Meccans this gave some of the enemy's cavalry a chance to surround or outflank Mohammed's soldiers. The Meccans rallied and attacked him in front and the rear at the same time, and the day was lost. However, the Meccans were too exhausted to pursue his men for a time and they believed that Mohammed himself had been slain, which was the first of their desires. So they returned to Mecca.

For about two years there was little fighting, and then the Meccans planned an attack against Medinah, and advanced upon it with a large army. And now Mohammed showed great military skill, for he conceived a plan that had never been known to the Arabians and that is still employed in modern warfare,—namely that of fighting from the protection of trenches. With the hostile army almost upon them the Mohammedans worked furiously digging a deep ditch around the city, and so well did the ditch answer their purpose that the Meccans could accomplish nothing against them, but were obliged at last to turn tail and retreat to their own city.

In this siege there was a Jewish tribe in Medinah that had been treacherous to the Mohammedans, deserting them in their hour of need, and going over to the enemy.

This caused Mohammed great difficulty and might easily have brought about his defeat. So, when the fight was over, he took a large number of soldiers and advanced against this tribe which had taken refuge in a stronghold in the mountains. When they saw the numbers that were against them a great fear came upon them and they surrendered to the Prophet without a fight, throwing themselves upon his mercy. They found, however, that from that mercy they could expect nothing, for all the men were put to death, and the women and children were sold into slavery.

Warfare between the Mohammedans and the Meccans continued in scattered outbursts until at last when both sides were weary of the struggle a treaty was made, and the Mohammedans were to be allowed to make a three day pilgrimage to Mecca to worship at the Kaabah or holy temple which was a part of Mohammed's religion.

This was considered by Mohammed as a great triumph for his cause. Determined now to spread his faith to the uttermost ends of the earth, he sent messengers to the rulers of all the civilized kingdoms that he knew. One went to Heraclius, Emperor of the Romans, who was in Syria at the time; one to the Roman Governor of Egypt, one to the King of Abyssinia and one to each of the provinces of Gassan and Yamam that were also under Roman control.

Then a ten year peace was agreed upon between the Meccans and the Mohammedans. This, however, was not

kept long, for the Meccans killed some of Mohammed's followers. In fear for what they had done, they sent a deputation to request that he overlook what had taken place and allow the peace to continue as before, but Mohammed would give them no promises, and told his followers that the death of those who were slain by the Meccans would be amply avenged. With great secrecy he prepared an army and went forth once more against the city with which he had been engaged in warfare for so many years.

So swift was Mohammed's advance and so secret had his plans been kept that the Meccans knew nothing of his approach until they saw the camp-fires of his mighty army shining about their walls. They had no way of resisting his force for they had been surprised, and even if they could have prepared against him, their numbers were now far inferior to his own. And then came the greatest triumph of Mohammed's entire life, for the Meccans surrendered without conditions and promised to embrace the Mohammedan faith.

With ropes and axes Mohammed's followers tore the stone idols of Mecca from their pedestals and hewed them to pieces, while the Meccans sorrowfully beheld the destruction. And from that day to the present there has resounded over the city of Mecca five times each day the cry of "Allah Hu Akbar"—God is great, and the rest of the ritual calling the people to prayer.

Soon after this one desert tribe after another came under Mohammed's power, and finally all of Arabia had acknowledged him as God's prophet. He was planning to extend his religion still farther when a misfortune fell upon him that probably caused his death. With one of his followers he had partaken of a dish that had been prepared for him by a Jewish girl who hated him and all of his sect. The food was poisoned, and while Mohammed discovered it at once and ate but a single mouthful, the poison remained in his body.

Feeling that he was about to die he summoned his followers and preached to them a last sermon in which he exhorted them to obey all the rules of his religion, to treat their slaves and animals kindly and to beware of the works of the devils that were leagued against them. Not a great while after this the Prophet fell ill of a fever, and at last died, to the great grief of those disciples who had known and loved him. Although he had always given his wealth to the poor so that he lived as meanly as the humblest of his followers—for this was one of the first things that he preached,—he was worshipped as being divine and had more than the homage of a mighty king. In the hands of his fanatical followers the scimitar became the symbol of the Mohammedan faith and hundreds of thousands were conquered and made to acknowledge its power. To-day Mohammedanism is still one of the great religions of the world, and the name of the Prophet still sounds from thousands of mosques, when the muezin calls the people

to prayer with the same words that were used while Mohammed was living.

Had You Been Born a Moslem

"In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful...." All over the world, five times each day, faithful worshipers kneel on prayer rugs, touch their foreheads to the ground, and fervently murmur the words, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful...."

Had you been born a Moslem, you would have learned the prayer long before you grasped its full meaning. You would have been told that it came from the Holy Koran, the most beloved book in your parental home. This sacred scripture, considered to be the most classical and perfect of all books in Arabic literature, was dictated by the Angel Gabriel to an uneducated but chosen man of God, the Prophet Mohammed.

This you would truly believe, had you been born a Moslem. Like the 450,000,000 fellow members of your faith who believe as you do, you kneel in prayer, facing toward the holy city of Mecca in Hejaz, Arabia, and chant the impressive words, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful."

THE MEANING OF MOSLEM

You were taught that Moslem means: surrender to the will of God. It also means: one who accepts God and the Islamic faith. The word Islam refers to the religion itself, while Moslem (or Muslim) signifies the individual

member. Sometimes non-Moslems refer to you as a Mohammedan. They mean that you are a follower of the Prophet Mohammed, which is true, but you and your people prefer to be called Moslem, a term sanctioned by Mohammed.

Had you been born a Moslem, you would consider yourself a link in an unbroken chain of tradition, the tradition of a people who were divided until Mohammed united them, a people who had no consolidating belief until Islam and its teachings welded them together. Through the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Koran, the warring tribes of Arabia became the "People of the Book" joined by the universal prayer:

"In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful,
Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds,
The Beneficent, the Merciful,
Master of the day of requital.
Thee do we serve and thee do we beseech for help;
Guide us on the right path,
The path of those upon whom thou hast bestowed favors,
Not those upon whom wrath is brought down,
Nor those who go astray."

MOSQUES, MINARETS, AND THE CALL OF THE MUEZZIN

In the village where you lived there were places associated with the prayer in a special way. These houses

of God, which were the most beautiful and respected buildings in your community, were the mosques, a type of architecture introduced by Islam. These domed edifies expressed the highest artistry and workmanship of which your people were capable. Adjoining each house of worship is the minaret, a high tower with a circular platform near its very top. Onto this platform a man climbs five times daily. Silhouetted against the sky, he stands like a bearded prophet calling his people to worship. He is the muezzin, appointed to summon the faithful to prayer. Wearing a loose-fitting black robe and a green turban, he cups his hands and chants in a loud voice the unforgettable call:

"God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest,
I bear witness that there is only one God,
I bear witness that there is only one God;
I bear witness that Mohammed is the Prophet of God,
I bear witness that Mohammed is the Prophet of God,
Hasten to prayer, hasten to prayer;
Hasten to prosperity, hasten to prosperity;
God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest,
There is only one God."

Often when you heard the muezzin call out these words, you saw in your mind's eye your brother Moslems throughout the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America, listening to their muezzins and believing, as you believed, that God is very near and very personal. You saw them walking to their mosques to join in a

fraternity of prayer to the God whose name is Allah. Allah is the Arabic word for the God who is worshiped by people of other religions as well as by Islam; the God who is the highest concept of all that is good, the Creator of all things and the Father who fills the earth with His love and His presence. Even though you knew this, how could you describe Him or explain His greatness? Islam tried to define Him when it said:

"God is one and has no partner;
Singular, without any like Him;
Uniform, having no contrary;
Separate, having no equal;
Ancient, having no first;
Eternal, having no beginning;
Everlasting, having no end;
Ever-existing, without termination;
Perpetual and constant, with neither interruption nor termination;
Ever qualified with the attributes of supreme greatness;
Unbound and undetermined by lapse of ages or times;
The Alpha and Omega, the Evident and the Hidden."

Whenever you were asked to define or describe God or Allah, your mind filled with visions of worship; you saw the mosque and the minarets; you heard the call of the muezzin; you recalled the prayer out of the Holy Koran and you said, "Allah simply is, and everything that is, is Allah. Allah is God and God is one."

GOD ALONE IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

One of your most thrilling memories is the time your father first took you to the mosque. He said, "Come, son, we are going to the house of God." He took your hand and together you walked to the center of the city where the great mosque stood and where people were reverently gathering. It was Friday, the Islamic Sabbath, which for your people is the "day of gathering." High on the minaret the muezzin was calling, *"La illah illa'llah! Mohammed rasulu'llah!"* (There is no God but Allah. Mohammed is His Prophet.) When you heard the words, "Hasten to prayer! Hasten to prayer!" spoken by the muezzin, you and your father hurried to join the others who were hastening to the square.

In an outer room you paused and removed your shoes. Your father explained, "This is a mark of respect to the house of God and to the worshipers who follow you in prayer. Shoes soil the lovely prayer rugs with which the floor of the mosque is covered, and it is on these rugs that the worshipers touch their foreheads when they pray."

Then you entered a room equipped with basins and water for your ablutions. You were told that no one ever goes into a mosque or says his prayers unless he is scrupulously clean. You washed your hands and your face, then your feet, and any other part of your body which you believed to be unclean. So it had been done in the days of

Mohammed when the people washed themselves before worshiping, even while they were still wanderers in the desert and had no water. With nothing but the sparkling sand with which to cleanse themselves, they had complied with this ritual.

As you started toward the open doors which admitted you to the large, carpeted assembly room of the mosque, your father said, "Better than clean hands, my son, is a clean heart," which was his way of emphasizing that whoever comes to prayer should think clean thoughts and put every dishonest intention from his mind.

When you entered the prayer room, it was as though you stepped from the world of things into the presence of God. Beneath the great dome of the mosque your brother Moslems were gathering, but this day there were no women present. Sometimes there were services especially for women, but the Prophet had said, "It is more meritorious for a woman to say her prayers in her own house or in the courtyard of her house." You felt that in a very real way Islam was a man's religion, and as you knelt down, facing in the direction of Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammed, you were glad that you were a boy. When the murmur of the prayers rose around you like an enchanted chorus, filling you with a nearness to God, your heart was lifted up as if the prayers had wings. "O, you who believe!" said the Holy Koran, "when the call is made for prayer, endeavor to the remembrance of God!"

The words lingered in your mind as you knelt, lost among the rows upon rows of worshipers, and you bowed your forehead to the ground. As the men bent down in unison and raised themselves and bent down again, the rhythm seemed to you like the waves of the ocean, flooding your heart with Allah's love. Afterwards, as you listened to a sermon preached by the imam (minister) you realized that Islam is a religion of simple beauty which seeks to absorb the worshiper in the presence of God. There are no icons or statues or signs or symbols in this great room which is your church; there are no pews or chairs or musical instruments. The designs on the walls are geometric or floral which lead your thoughts ever more to Allah, making you want to say no more than can be said in the Koran's immortal words, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!"

THE KORAN SPEAKS OF JESUS

As far as you are concerned, Mohammed was the greatest prophet of God, but you were taught and you accepted the fact that Jesus, as well as all other true prophets such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, should be equally revered. The Holy Koran says, "We believe in God, and that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes; and that which

was given to Moses and to Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them; and to God are we resigned."

Again the Koran says, "Some of the apostles we have endowed more highly than others; to some God hath spoken, and he hath raised others of them to the loftiest grade; and to Jesus, the son of Mary, we gave manifest proofs of his mission, and we strengthened him with the Holy Spirit."

But it also adds, "The Messiah (Jesus), son of Mary, is but an apostle; other apostles have flourished before him; and his mother was a just person; they both are good."

The Christian belief that Jesus was actually "God" walking on earth is difficult for you to understand. Equally difficult for you is the Christian concept that a loving God would demand the death of His son. Nor could you agree with the Christian view that man was "conceived and born in sin." Inherent in your faith is the belief that all men are born innocent and free. Sin is not inherited. It is acquired. Most of all, you often wonder why, if Jesus was really God, there should be so many divisions in Christendom. Some Christians insisted that the soul died with the body and would be raised when the physical body was restored; others claimed that the soul was immortal and went immediately to heaven or hell; some worshiped the Virgin Mary and were called Mariamites; still others said that Jesus had not actually died on the cross at all but had been

whisked away by faithful followers before death came to him.

But there are also divisions among the people of Islam. There are Shiites, who believe that the successors to Mohammed must come directly from among the members of the Prophet's immediate family. They consider Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law, as the first rightful successor to the prophetship. Within the Shiite branch are the Ismailians, who follow an 8th century imam named Ismail. And there are Sunnites, representing the more orthodox wing of Islam, who recognize the first four caliphs as the Prophet's true successors. These two divisions, the Shiites and the Sunnites, together with the mystical Sufis and other schools of thought, developed for the most part over the question of who should rule in Mohammed's place, and over differences in emphasis on pietistic practices.

These divisions never bothered you because you knew that all Moslems are united by the Holy Koran, which says, "There is no God but Allah. To Him shall be the final gathering." And all Moslems are united in their conviction that God divinely revealed Himself through Mohammed who taught his people the prayer, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful...."

A PROPHET IS BORN

Who was Mohammed and what was he like? He was born in 570 A.D. of poor parents and named, it is said, Ubu'l Kassim, although some authorities claim he was named Mohammed from birth. His father, who belonged to the Meccan tribe of Koraish, died two months before his son's birth. Six years later his mother also passed away, leaving the boy to be brought up by a grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, and later by an uncle, Abu Talib, who often took Ubu'l Kassim on caravan journeys to distant trading posts. Mecca, at this time (toward the close of the 6th century), was the commercial crossroads of the world, the thoroughfare between India and Persia, Syria and Greece, a place where travelers rested and merchants engaged in "international" trade. It was here, too, that Bedouins and other desert tribes came to sell their wares and satisfy their religious longings.

Religion was big business in Mecca. Here were shrines to 360 Arabian gods and goddesses. Here was Zemzem, the holy well, at which the followers of many gods drank of the water which was said to contain miraculous healing powers. Here in Mecca was the famous Black Stone. About the size of a pomegranate, it was oval in shape and approximately seven inches in diameter, very mysterious and, it was said, full of unexplained wonder. Long before the days of Mohammed, the Black Stone was an object of superstitious worship. Legend said that it had once been

so purely white and so brilliant that pilgrims who came to the city were guided by its radiance.

Enshrined in a cube-like building called the Kaaba, the stone was watched over by relays of pagan priests. In those early days, fees were collected for prayers and promises of good luck, and there was so much commercialization of religion that, so it was said, the beautiful white stone turned black because of its displeasure over the sins of men. Though this was a myth, most people were convinced that the fabulous stone was the one which the Angel Gabriel had presented to the patriarch Abraham long ago.

The Kaaba is enclosed by a huge wall and is watched over by seven minarets. It is said that in the days of Mohammed there were temples dedicated to the seven planets and that various Arabian tribes had specified certain planets as their guardian deities. Many households also had their sacred images, either in the form of a planet-god or a nature-spirit, representing certain cosmic forces. Judaism and early Christianity sought to make an inroad into this idolatry and had converted several tribes to their faiths.

Christian and Jewish thought, as well as the mystery and magic of Zoroastrianism and the philosophy and practices of Hinduism were all part of the confused religious scene in Mecca. The cries of vendors of religious articles, the chanted prayers of Arabian priests, and the

incessant voices of beggars seeking alms in the name of numerous gods shocked Ubu'l Kassim whenever he returned to the city of his birth. He had an affection for the Kaaba as most people had, for there was a belief that before the creation of the world, a prototype of the Kaaba had been built in heaven and that Abraham and his son, Ishmael, erected this one in Mecca, directly under the heavenly spot where the eternal Kaaba is supposed to stand.

A legend tells how once when the sacred temple of the Kaaba was to be rebuilt, the question arose as to who should have the honor of replacing the Black Stone in its sacred niche. Because each tribe argued that it should have this great privilege, a priest advised the disputants to choose as their judge the first man who entered through a certain gate. The tribes agreed and, after several moments, a man appeared. It was Ubu'l Kassim, who later became the Prophet Mohammed. After he had considered the problem, he suggested that the stone be placed on a piece of cloth so that each tribe could share the honor of bearing the stone to its holy place.

It is possible that Ubu'l Kassim often thoughtfully placed his own offerings around the sacred stone just as did other worshipers. But more than any other seeker after truth, he hoped and prayed that the true God would reveal Himself. For this reason he frequently retired to the desert or to a cave in a mount outside the city of Mecca for meditation and prayer.

At the age of twenty-five he was described as being a serious-minded, generous and competent man, although he had never learned to read or write. He was handsome and commanding in appearance, a red-bearded man with fair skin and piercing black eyes, whose luxurious hair was usually hidden inside a large green turban. To this day the green turban is worn by the descendants of Mohammed, while black, red, and yellow turbans represent Dervish sects which are dedicated to a life of poverty and strict adherence to Islam.

At twenty-five, Ubu'l Kassim married a wealthy widow named Khadijah, a member of the Koreishite clan. Though she was twelve years his senior, the marriage proved singularly happy and their home life was an example of harmony and peace. Khadijah was blessed with seven children, among them Ali, the prophet's favorite son, and Fatimah, believed by the Shiites to represent the highest ideal of womanhood.

GOD CALLS HIS PROPHET

One evening as Ubu'l Kassim went up to the sandy cave on Mount Hira and looked out over the city of Mecca, his heart filled with compassion and grief for his people. He was now nearly forty years old. The Arab world was still hopelessly divided into warring tribes and separated by many religions and superstitions. Utterly alone, he resorted to prayer, as he had many times before,

longing for a vision of the true God. There were no statues in the cave as there were around the Kaaba, no priests, no famous stone. There was only this seeker of Truth who, kneeling with his forehead to the damp earth, said, "O God, fill me with thy Presence and teach me who and what You truly are."

He remained there for a long time, wrapped in his cloak, as he had done throughout other nights. But suddenly a great light surrounded him, bursting upon the mountain with a brightness that spread across the sky. When he saw it, he cried out, "Allah—God!"

A voice said to him, "Read!"

"I cannot read," he said.

A second and a third time the voice ordered, "Read!"

"What shall I read?" he asked, and then it seemed to him that there were words all around him, living words written on the overhanging walls of the cave.

"Read," the voice insisted, and then as if to assist him, said, "In the name of Allah who created man from a clot, and thy Lord the Most Bounteous who teacheth by the pen, teacheth man that which he knew not. Read: Verily is man rebellious. He thinketh himself independent. Lo! Unto thy Lord is the return!"

"Who are you? Let me see your face!" he cried.

"I am Gabriel," said the voice.

In a vision, the Angel appeared before him, standing in space and holding in his hands a silken shawl covered with words of gold. Mohammed recognized them as the words he earlier had been asked to read. No matter which way he turned, the Angel was there before him, and the voice said, "O, Mohammed! Thou art the Prophet of Allah, the most high God!" Then the vision ended and the voice was stilled.

THE TEST OF FAITH

Mohammed rushed from the cave. Could it have been a dream, he wondered? Had someone tricked him? God had been a mystery for so long that now the thought that He might be understood was greatly disturbing. He hurried home following old familiar paths which now seemed strangely new.

When he saw Khadijah, he cried out, "Wrap me up, wrap me up!" His wife, alarmed by his great agitation, brought him a garment and made him sit before the fire. When he had told her his story, she said, "Rejoice and be cheerful, for God has chosen you to be His prophet to His people."

Khadijah then told her cousin, Waraqa, a blind, aged scholar of both Christianity and Judaism. Waraqa said, "Verily, this is the Holy Spirit that revealed Himself to Moses." Then the blind man spoke to Mohammed

directly, "They will persecute you, they will banish you, and seek to kill you. Oh, that I could live to fight for you!"

Khadijah and Waraqa, the first converts to Islam, never doubted that God had revealed Himself to Mohammed. But as the days went by and the Angel Gabriel failed to reappear, Mohammed often despaired. People who watched the strongly-built, red-bearded man walk out beyond the city said, "He still goes to the cave in Mount Hira. What does he hope to find?"

One day, however, he did not go to the cave, but went instead to a towering cliff. He stood there looking for a long time into the sky. When he tried to pray, tears filled his eyes. He gazed down into the deep valley. Surely, he told himself, the vision in the cave must have been the sorcery of the evil one. How could God be found? How was it possible for a man ever to break through the veil that separated truth from illusion? Despair swept over him. Something told him to end it all by throwing himself over the cliff. Just as he started forward, a blinding light burst over him and before him stood the Angel Gabriel with upraised hand. Mohammed bowed his forehead to the ground. Then a voice from heaven commanded, "O thou, wrapped in thy mantle, rise up and glorify thy God!"

After this experience the Prophet never doubted God again, even though his faith was tested time after time. Again and again the Angel Gabriel appeared to him in heavenly visitations, dictating to Mohammed by way of

inspiration the treasured suras (chapters) which were to make up the Holy Koran.

HOW THE HOLY KORAN WAS WRITTEN

On the coldest days and the darkest nights, Mohammed, wrapped in his cloak, sat with his eyes closed, an instrument of Allah, making known Allah's will to men. While beads of sweat covered his face and dropped from his beard, he repeated aloud the words which Gabriel put into his heart. A hundred and fourteen suras, containing nearly 80,000 words, were dictated by him as the mouthpiece of God. These were copied down by friends and relatives either at the exact moment or later, because often the spirit of inspiration would come upon the Prophet when he was walking about or engaged in his work. Through the years, fragments were copied down upon stones or pieces of leather or upon palm leaves and then faithfully compiled. Chief among the recorders of Mohammed's words were his cousin Ali, his close friend Abu Bekr, and an amanuensis named Zaid Ibn Thabit. Skeptics also came to hear the Prophet's words, and often they went away convinced that Allah was indeed speaking through His chosen one.

These early converts saw what many non-believers did not see. They saw that God had called an unschooled messenger to be an instrument of His will. They saw in Mohammed not the fanatical, demented man many

accused him of being, but a man destined for a great mission. They realized that Allah had no need of images or priests; Allah had need only of the trance-like figure of the bearded Prophet, through whom He could reveal His word.

The Holy Koran became that word, the very heart of Islam. Because its recitation was considered one of the most distinguished marks of faith and learning, many early converts memorized the entire book. He who was best versed in the Koran was usually called upon to conduct public prayers and to speak on the meaning of Islam. To this very day, he who knows the Koran is held in the highest possible esteem among Moslems throughout the world. For it is believed that no one can memorize the Holy Koran without having his life affected and changed.

This inspired scripture speaks of many things. It tells its people that no one can atone for sins excepting the sinner himself. It assures its readers that God will not burden any man beyond his ability to carry the burden. It insists that no individual is held responsible for evil thoughts which pass through his mind, nor is he condemned for mistakes that he does not honestly know to be wrong.

It sets forth Six Principles of Faith:

1. God is one, and this one is Allah.

2. God's angels are God's messengers and aids, and there are evil spirits to oppose them.

3. God sent his prophets to earth at stated times and for stated purposes. The last and greatest of these is Mohammed.

4. The Holy Koran is Allah's truly inspired book, and all the books of God—Jewish and Christian scriptures—are also holy.

5. The Day of Judgment will find good and evil deeds weighed in the balance and all souls will pass to heaven or to hell on a bridge finer than a hair and sharper than a sword.

6. The lives and acts of men are foreordained by an all-knowing God.

Because of the Koran and its holy Prophet, you try to live according to the Five Pillars of the Faith which say,

1. Recite the *shahadah* daily which says, "There is no God but Allah; Mohammed is the messenger of Allah."

2. Pray the *salat* or daily prayer five times daily, facing Mecca.

3. Give the *zakat* or tithe toward the expansion of Islam and the support of the poor.

4. Observe Ramadan, the ninth month of the Moslem calendar, during which a fast is kept during the daylight hours as a commemoration of the first revelation of the Koran.

5. Make a pilgrimage to Mecca if your finances and your health allow, and pay your homage to Allah at the Holy Kaaba.

And you seek to obey the warnings and admonitions of the Holy Koran which implore you not to steal, not to lie, not to speak evil of anyone, not to indulge in intoxication or other bodily sin, and not to worship idols of any kind.

THE PROPHETS MISSION

Mohammed's mission was to proclaim the unity of God to a people who were worshiping many gods, to emphasize personal responsibility in the matter of faith, and to warn men that judgment awaited them in the life to come. Any one of these pronouncements would have set the priests of Mecca against him; together they called forth ridicule and threats from both pagan priests and pagan people. Opposition to Mohammed was fanned by the keepers of the Kaaba, but despite this, or perhaps because of it, the Prophet's converts increased.

Often he stood at the very entrance of the Kaaba and preached his gospel of the One God and the Holy Book. When Abu Talib warned him of his danger and of the growing hatred, Mohammed said, "O, my uncle, if they placed the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, to cause me to renounce my task, verily I would not desist

until God made manifest His cause or I perished in the attempt."

So his converts grew and the Meccan priests said, "What will happen to us if people forsake our gods and follow the One God of Mohammed? Surely the whole business world of Mecca will be destroyed." They watched his popularity increase. They heard his pronouncements grow more bold. They realized that the secular kingdom was being threatened by the kingdom of Allah, so they laid a plot to kill this fanatical Prophet of the Lord. Throughout Mecca the pagan hierarchy appointed numerous men bound by oath to take Mohammed's life.

Appearing in a vision, the Angel Gabriel warned Mohammed of his danger, advising him to urge his followers to leave the city and to seek refuge wherever they could. Then, on the night appointed for his death, Mohammed, together with Ali and Abu Bekr, remained in the city after all other Moslems had fled. The assassins came at midnight. They surrounded the house, never suspecting that the power of Allah might be greater than the force and terror of their swords. They saw the door open but, according to one legend, that was all they saw, for when Mohammed appeared, Allah struck the would-be murderers with blindness. Numb with fright, they begged for mercy, and Mohammed walked through their ranks scattering dust upon their heads as he passed by. Seemingly as God willed, their blindness was only

temporary, a protective shield by which Allah saved his messenger.

Another account describes how the murderous mob watched through a hole in the door while the Prophet slept. Their instructions had been to kill him the moment he left the house. The Prophet, however, had directed Ali to lie down in his place, wrapped in the Prophet's cloak, while Mohammed had already escaped unseen through a window.

However the miraculous escape may have been made, it was Allah who arranged the deliverance. It was Allah who guided Mohammed unharmed to the home of Abu Bekr and then to a cave in Mount Thor, southeast of Mecca. It was Allah who protected His Prophet for three days in the refuge of a cave. Some insist that Abu Bekr was with him, while others say that he was accompanied only by a servant. It is related that after Mohammed took refuge in the cave, two doves laid their eggs at the entrance and a spider covered the mouth of the cave with its web, which prevented the enemies of the Prophet of God from detecting Mohammed's hiding place.

Once when a band of murderers came so near that the servant began to despair, Mohammed said, "Fear not. Allah is with us."

"And," says an inclusion in the Holy Koran, "Allah caused His peace of reassurance to descend upon him and supported him with hosts ye cannot see and made the

word of those who disbelieved the nethermost, while Allah's word became the uppermost. Allah is Mighty, Wise!"

On the night that Mohammed fled from Mecca, July 2, 622 A.D., a new religious era dawned upon the world. Islam reckons time from the period of this flight, just as Christians begin their era from the year of Christ's birth. Christians speak of contemporary events as occurring in A.D. (Anno Domini), the year of the Lord; Moslems refer to them as occurring in A.H. (Anno Hegira), the year of the Prophet's flight.

TRIUMPH OF ISLAM

The Prophet fled to Medina, where the people welcomed him and great crowds flocked to learn from him. For seven years he was looked upon as an inspired religious and political leader. Two rival tribes which had long been engaged in bitter warfare found him to be their mediator. Mohammed united them, and under his influence Medina was so transformed in its faith and morals that even today it is called "the city of the Prophet."

His first official act was to build and dedicate a mosque; his first important program was to teach the people the Holy Koran. His first document which united the people began, "In the name of the Most Merciful and Compassionate God, this charter is given by Mohammed, the Apostle of God, to all believers...."

With Medina as the base of operations, Mohammed tried many times to conquer Mecca. Great campaigns were lodged against the city and there was extensive loss of life, but even with failure the Prophet's following grew and his leadership became more established. On January 1, 630 A.D., he surrounded himself with 10,000 men and once more marched against the "idolatrous city." This time he was met by a Meccan delegation which had been dispatched to negotiate terms of peace or persuade him to give up his campaign. When the leader of the delegation, Abu Sofian, confronted Mohammed, the latter said, "You ask me to abandon my plans. Has not the time come, O Abu Sofian, for you to acknowledge that there is no God but Allah, and that I am His Prophet?" At this Abu Sofian knelt down, touched his forehead to the ground, and embraced the faith of Islam.

Almost unopposed, the Prophet entered the city of his birth. Seated on his favorite camel, Al Kaswa, and with Abu Bekr riding next to him, he proclaimed Mecca henceforth to be the holiest city of Islam and dedicated it to the glory of God.

Critics of Islam say that Mohammed changed from a spiritual leader to a military dictator whose armies were to sweep across Egypt, Persia, and Greece, converting nations by means of the sword. You, however, see him as a man sent by God to crush evil and immorality and to destroy idolatry at any cost. You believe he entered Mecca with a prayer on his lips, and that the first thing he did was

to give thanks to God for victory. You believe he circled the Kaaba seven times, that he destroyed the 360 images, and that with each shattering blow he cried, "God is great! Truth has come and falsehood is destroyed!" All that followed was part of destiny and the fulfillment of God's immortal plan.

Each year following the conquest, Mohammed came to Mecca from Medina to lead his people in a pilgrimage to the holy Kaaba where they bowed before the only symbol of Islam: the Sacred Stone. In 632 A.D. at the age of sixty-two, when he said that this would be his farewell pilgrimage, more than 100,000 of the faithful walked with him in one of the most solemn marches ever made. At the Kaaba they worshiped together. Then Mohammed preached to them, predicting his death. He concluded his sermon by saying, "O God, I have fulfilled my message and accomplished my work!" To which the great multitude replied, "Yea, verily thou hast!" He returned to Medina and there are many tender recollections which Moslems have handed down from generation to generation concerning the Prophet's final days. The last time he appeared in the mosque, he said to the people, "O Moslems, if I have wronged any one of you, here I am to answer for it. If I owe aught to anyone, all I may happen to possess belongs to you." At this an old man arose and claimed that he once had given three coins to a poor man at the request of the Prophet. Mohammed immediately

paid him the coins and said, "It is better to blush in this world than in the next."

On the day that word spread throughout Medina that the Prophet had died, faithful Moslems refused to believe it. Some insisted that Allah's chosen ones could never die. Mohammed's beloved wife, Khadijah, had passed away, to be sure, and he had mourned for her. Later, in keeping with Arabic custom, he had remarried—had married several women, as was permitted—and his favorite wife was young Aisha. Now Aisha herself confirmed the Prophet's death. She described how she had held his aged head in her arms as he lay on his sick bed. She reported how she saw him suddenly rise up and stare into the distance. She said she heard him whisper three times, "Gabriel, come close to me!" She was convinced that the Angel himself had come to escort him into the life beyond.

Listening to Aisha's account, the people were deeply affected. But the fact of Mohammed's passing was accepted only after the faithful Abu Bekr went into the room where the Prophet lay, kissed the dead man's forehead, and came out to address the huge, excited throngs.

"O people!" Abu Bekr cried, "as for you who used to worship Mohammed, Mohammed is dead. But as for you who used to worship Allah, Allah is alive and dieth not. Does not the Holy Koran say, 'Mohammed is but a messenger, messengers the like of whom have passed

away before him'? Will it be that, when he dieth, ye will turn back on your heels? He who turneth back doth not hurt Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful!"

There was some dispute between the various tribes as to where the Prophet should be buried, but Abu Bekr affirmed that Mohammed himself had once said that a prophet should be buried at the very spot on which he passed away. Accordingly, a grave was dug beneath the room in the house where Mohammed had died. Here his body was washed, perfumed, wrapped in a white shroud and lovingly laid to rest.

RELIGION DICTATES SOCIAL CUSTOMS

Though Mohammed died, the faith of Islam was never to die, and the customs established by the religion were to change slowly if at all. The Holy Koran had dictated precepts for the individual and social life of its people and had enumerated many instructions in the matter of worship and prayer. It prohibited the use of intoxicating liquor, the eating of pork and the practice of gambling, and enjoined upon its followers the absolute keeping of one's word. It forbade adultery and commanded complete obedience to Allah's precepts.

These precepts Mohammed himself faithfully observed and from his life you and the people of Islam take inspiration. You picture him as a frugal, hard-working man who wove his own cloth, made his own garments and

cobbled his own shoes. You cite many minute details of his life and habits: whenever he spoke to someone he faced the person fully and uprightly; whenever he shook hands, he was never the first to withdraw his hand, nor the first to break off a conversation. He hated nothing more than lying, and loved nothing better than kindliness. He had a temper that flared easily, but he learned to discipline it and keep himself in hand, believing that a man must first master himself before he can presume to master others.

Had you been born a Moslem, you would understand the polygamous life of the Prophet and interpret it differently than most non-Moslems are wont to do. You would point out that for nearly thirty years he remained married to one wife, Khadijah, even though Arabian custom would have permitted him many waves. It was only after the death of Khadijah that he created his harem of nine wives, and, as everyone knew, his household was considered an example of virtuous living. The records of Islam show that his relationship with his wives was above suspicion of sensuality. He lived with them in a row of humble cottages, adobe huts, the doors of which were strips of leather. His attitude toward the women of his seraglio was quiet and subdued, for the Holy Koran had ordered that family life should be the embodiment of justice and love.

The Koran had put a sanction upon the Prophet's household when it said, "We have made lawful unto thee thy wives unto whom thou hast paid their dowries, and

those whom thy right hand possesseth of those whom Allah hath given thee as spoils of war."

Non-Moslems might read into these words whatever they wished. You are convinced of the rightness of the Prophet's views and the infallible statutes of the Holy Koran. You remember how Aisha described Mohammed's personal habits: "He divides each day into three portions. The first portion of each day is given to God, the second to his family, and the third to his people." Because he loved freedom, he freed his slaves. Because he wished to be no better than other men, he put away the rings and jewels which devotees had given him.

The life and the pronouncements of the Prophet became customs for Islam and for you. Once Mohammed said, "There are four things which, if a person is endowed with any of them, bless the individual and the world. *First, a heart that is grateful; second, a tongue that utters constantly the name of God; third, a mind that is patient and calm amid troubles; fourth, a wife that is never guilty of a breach of trust, either in respect of her own person or in respect of her husband's property.*"

MOSLEM MARRIAGES

In some Islamic countries even today, Moslem men have several wives. Occasionally the wives are heavily veiled, as was the custom also among early Syrian Christians. Sometimes wives are in *purdah*, which means

they appear in public completely covered from head to foot in a tentlike garment which has only a narrow aperture for the eyes. The Holy Koran does not order such extreme veiling, but it is believed by some that the custom originated from instructions concerning the behavior of men who wished to speak to the wives of the Prophet. They were ordered to do this only through a curtain. "That," observes the Koran, "is purer for your hearts and for their hearts." But whether the practice of *purdah* came from the Islamic faith or from some more ancient source, it has long been a part of Moslem tradition and is only now slowly giving way to change.

Marriage in Islam is both a civil contract and a sacrament. At the time of your marriage you and your partner would be asked to make a public declaration and have two witnesses attest that the marriage is of your own free will and that the contract has been concluded. Then following this simple form, the religious or sacred contract would take place, also in a simple ceremony with or without an imam officiating. Festivities are added to the wedding plans in accordance with the wishes and social status of the parties. These observances vary all the way from the elaborate weddings of the late Aly Khan, who was head of the Ismaili sect, to the lowly marriage of a humble Saudi Bedouin who served each of his guests one date and one small cup of black coffee.

At your wedding, parents, relatives, and friends would be invited to the house of the bride. Here the imam opens

the service by reading from the Holy Koran. Then he delivers a brief sermon embellished with many wise admonitions.

"Among my followers," Mohammed once said, "the best of men are they who are best to their wives, and the best of women are they who are best to their husbands....

"Verily, God exalts the position of a man in heaven, because his wife was pleased with him and prayed for him.

"Paradise lies at the feet of mothers....

"Fear God in regard to the treatment of your wives, for verily they are your helpers. You have taken them on the security of God, and made them lawful by the words of God.

"She is the ideal wife who pleases thee when thou lookest at her, obeys thee when thou givest her direction; and protects her honor and thy property when thou art away.

"Verily, of all believers he has the most perfect faith who has the best manners, and shows the greatest kindness to his wife and children."

The imam then inquires whether anyone has any objection to the marriage. There being none, he appoints four men to approach the bride and ask if it is her wish and will to marry the groom. The groom makes his own statement publicly. Satisfied that the couple wish to be married of their own free will, by having consulted the four

interrogators on this point, the imam stands for a moment solemnly in prayer. Then he says to the assembled people, "Did you hear what the witnesses and the groom have said?" And the people answer, "Yes."

Then the bride is "given away" by her father or a relative, and the marriage vows are repeated. Sometimes a ring is used, particularly in western countries. In most Islamic countries, the matter of a dowry still pertains and the father or guardian of the bride, as well as the groom, are called to the imam's side to sign the dowry contract. When this is done the imam says, "Al-Fatihah," (let us pray) and once again you hear the impressive words, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful," following which the imam pronounces the couple man and wife.

Generally speaking a Moslem wife retains her distinct individuality after her marriage and need never assume her husband's name. This is a custom followed by Christians also in certain countries of the Middle East.

In the event of a divorce, the Islamic laws are very clear in providing for the protection of the wife's property against any avarice on the part of the husband. Islam says, "If the divorce is due to a cause imputable to the husband, he has to make over to her all her property, and pay off the dowry that had been settled upon her. If, however, the divorce has been resorted to at the instance of the wife, without any justifiable cause, she has simply to abandon her claim to the dowry."

A divorce may be granted for: 1) habitual ill-treatment of a marriage partner; 2) non-fulfillment of the terms of the marriage contract; 3) insanity; 4) incurable incompetency; 5) desertion; 6) other causes which in the opinion of a court of law justify a separation.

Occasionally the imam is consulted in the matter of marital difficulties, but his position is not as important in Islam as is the place of the priest in Catholicism or the rabbi in Judaism. In some Moslem villages problems are solved by the imam, but his capacity is mainly that of a teacher and a leader of the services in the mosque.

Children may be blessed by the imam if the parents so desire, but this is not considered a sacramental act as it is in the Christian faith. Circumcision is practiced among Moslems for reasons that vary all the way from hygienic justification to an early mark of tribal affiliation. The rite is often performed by professional men who make this their business, by a physician or, in rare cases, by the imam himself.

But there is one circumstance when a Moslem, at whatever time, and wherever he may be, calls upon the imam for special comfort and wisdom. This is at the time of a death in the family.

DEATH IS A TIME APPOINTED

Had you been born a Moslem, you would have a deep conviction that every individual's time on earth is

foreordained. You believe with all your heart the words of the Holy Koran which say, "No one can die except by God's purpose, according to the Book that fixeth the term of life." You have been taught that, "Nothing can befall us, but what God hath ordained." These thoughts flood your mind when a loved one passes away, and if you are with someone at the time of his death, you say, "May God grant that we meet in the garden of Allah! God grant that you and I eat together from the fruits of Paradise." It is something of a custom for Moslems to believe that the dying one, if he can speak, will say something like this, "Forgive me in whatever I have failed."

A burial rite in the Moslem faith is marked by dignified simplicity. The body is washed, perfumed, and wrapped in a new white cloth. This shroud must be seamless and must cover the body from head to feet. The funeral service usually takes place in the home or in a mortuary, although sometimes the ceremony is observed in the mosque. The departed one is placed on a bier and carried on the shoulders of loved ones to his final resting place. Many Moslems believe that bands of angels follow the procession to the grave. Although today in Islam, as in most faiths, there is frequently a motorized funeral cortege, Moslems remember that the Prophet Mohammed always walked when he was among the mourners in a funeral procession. He was lost in thought whenever he attended the burial of a loved one, as though he were himself communing with the angels. And because

angels were very real to him, they are to most Moslems. Some believe that four mighty archangels are near to earth at the time a loved one dies. It is then that Gabriel, the angel of revelations, and Michael, the angel of rain, and Azrail, the angel of death, and Israfil, the angel of resurrection, walk with those who mourn.

When the body is laid to rest and the grave is sealed, the imam sits near the head of the grave and recites the *talqueen* which consists of questions and answers which, it is believed, the deceased is asking as he rests in his tomb. According to Mohammed, when an adult is placed in the grave, he encounters two angels, Nakir and Munkir, who come to hear the dead person's report. These angels question the deceased on the status of his faith and demand to know whether he believes in the unity of Allah and the mission of the Prophet. But actually this ritual has a deeper meaning than this, for the imam's *talqueen* is a reminder to those present that their souls will one day also be interrogated and that it is not only knowledge of Islamic truths, but also the deeds of the Islamic life which will judge a person on that final day. The *talqueen* is a warning to the living that all mortal men must one day face their encounter with Allah. It is also a warning to people that no one has perfectly fulfilled either the love of God or the love for man, and that mercy is a factor in all man's dealings. Therefore, the imam recites a prayer to the soul of the dead and then everyone says, "I forgive the beloved

dead and ask him to forgive me. May the mercy of Allah be on him and on us."

The final hope is in the resurrection. You believe that both body and soul will some day be miraculously raised up and renewed. Just how and when this will happen is a mystery known only to God, but on the day of resurrection all mankind and all animals will be summoned to give an account of their actions. The Holy Koran is very clear and eloquent on the subject of life after death, and though Moslems may be divided politically and culturally, and though they may dispute about which sect is the true successor to the undefiled teachings of the Prophet, they are all united in the teachings of the holy book.

ISLAM AND YOU

To you, Islam is a great and beautiful religion and you would not change it for any other. You believe it is a world faith which draws no color lines and makes no distinctions between rich and poor. Whenever you meet a fellow Moslem you say, *"Salaam Alikum,"* which means "Peace be upon you." You are continually challenged by the faith of your fathers and by your love of God to recite your daily prayers, to attend the services in the mosque, and to teach the rules and principles of Islam to your children.

You look forward to the day when you will be able to make your pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. Should

your circumstances permit such a journey, or *hadj*, you would reverently enter the sacred portals of Mecca, put on a seamless gown, and walk in prayer seven times around the Kaaba as Mohammed did during his moment of conquest. You would stand where the Prophet stood and bow in prayer where once he prayed, and perhaps kiss the sacred Stone in his memory. When you returned to your home, many people would call you a *hadji*, that is, one who has made the great pilgrimage and who has rededicated his life to Allah and Islam.

Yours is a religion of joy and submission, a vital, moving, logical faith which throughout its history of triumph and tears has never doubted or criticized the will of God. Your greatest wish is to be worthy of the teaching of the Holy Koran; your greatest delight is when you gather your children around you and say, "Come, I will teach you the prayer my father taught me when he said, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of Requital.'"

This, to you, would be the Lord's Prayer of Islam, and the fulfillment of your faith, had you been born a Moslem.

The King is Come

To a plain little house in the country village of Nazareth there came an angel. A young woman, Mary, lived there. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, whose family could be traced back to King David and through his ancestors to Abraham. So though it was poor, it was a noble, even kingly family that the angel came to visit. For Mary, who was his cousin, lived in Joseph's house.

The angel stood before her and greeted her, "Hail, highly-favored one!"

Then Gabriel, for this was God's messenger Gabriel, went on to explain to her,

"You should be the happiest one of all women! For God is with you. You are going to have a child, and will call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. He will not be Joseph, your husband's, son, but God Himself by a miracle has sent His own Son to earth. In order that He may have a human body like the people on earth, you are to be His mother, Mary."

"I am ready for anything that God wants me to do," answered Mary, trusting God entirely.

When the angel was gone Mary went up to the hill country to see her cousin Elisabeth, who had been told by an angel that she was to be the mother of John the Baptist, the prophet who came to help point the people to Jesus

Christ. Mary and Elisabeth were both very happy at the angels' messages. Mary sang a beautiful song of the coming Messiah, for whom all Israel had been waiting since Isaiah's time, seven hundred and fifty years before.

In a country many miles away from Israel there lived a very rich man, who spent all his time studying the movements of the stars. He had studied so long and carefully that he had been able to know when a comet or any strange star would appear in the sky. Now he knew of the coming of a star which was quite different from any that he had ever seen or read about. Its course would not be above his country, and according to his knowledge this star meant that a king was to be born in the spot over which it shone. So he packed his camel for a long journey into the west, and took with him a present of gold for the king whom he was going to find.

At the same time two other men, also students of the stars, started out toward the same place, each of them with rare and costly gifts. Together the three journeyed, watching always for the star to shine, and show them the exact house where the king should be born.

When they came to Jerusalem they went to the palace of Herod the king, and asked him about it, thinking, of course, that he would know of a new king. Herod was angry to hear of such a thing and called in all his wise men to have them find out about this star.

In the meantime the three men saw the star shining clear above them like a great drop of silver fire, and followed it until they came to Bethlehem, a tiny town outside of Jerusalem. The star appeared to be standing over an inn where there were many guests who had come up to Jerusalem for the taxing which took place once a year.

But the innkeeper said that there was no baby born there that night. Then suddenly he remembered the party of people from Nazareth who had come too late to secure rooms.

"I had to make a place for them in the stables," he told the wise men, "but you could not be looking for these people! They were poor and common, although I noticed the woman's face. It was very sweet and good"—he finished his sentence half to himself.

The wise men, seeing that the star swung just over the rough buildings below the inn, hurried down there eagerly. As they came to the door the circle of lantern light showed the stable rooms half-full of coarsely dressed men with heavy beards, carrying long staves in their hands. They looked like shepherds, and yet they were all kneeling as though they were in church. As the three strangers came nearer to the door they saw lying in one of the wooden troughs where the cows were usually fed a baby around whose head the dim light lay in a soft halo.

Strange things the shepherds were saying half aloud as they knelt there:

"Glory to God in the highest!" said one as if he were repeating a hymn he had heard.

And another one kept saying over and over, "Peace on earth! Peace on earth!"

As the wise men caught the words "Good tidings—fear not!" they slipped quietly into the bare room and knelt too on the dusty floor.

One of the shepherds told the story of the cool night on the hills under the stars. Suddenly the skies had opened and there had come from heaven such a company of beautiful bright beings that the shepherds were frightened. Then one of them told the shepherds that for them and for all people was born a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord. So they had hurried to the place where the angel had told them to find Him.

They all worshiped there for a time the Christ who had come to earth to save them. Then the wise men opened their boxes of gifts. One had brought gold and one a box of myrrh, a rich perfume, and the third frankincense, which is a perfume used only in the temple services.

Then they went quietly out to go to their homes again. But the wise men did not go back to Jerusalem to tell Herod the king what they had seen, for God warned them not to.

Meantime Herod had been hearing from the old books of the prophets the story of how a king of the family of David should one day come to rule over the earth, and of His kingdom there should be no end. It made Herod so angry to think of anyone coming to take his place that he sent his soldiers at once into every home in Bethlehem and all the country round. They had orders to kill every baby less than two years old, so that Herod might surely make way with the child Jesus, of whom he was afraid.

But while he was still only planning this the angel of the Lord came with a message to Joseph, saying to him:

"Get ready quickly and take the baby and Mary His mother and hurry down into Egypt. Stay there until I bring you word to come back, for Herod wants to kill the child."

So Joseph got up and wakened Mary, telling her the angel's message. They took only the necessary things that they could easily carry with them. It was the middle of the night when they went quietly out into the darkness, and slipped down the rough cobblestone street, leaving behind their home country Judea for they knew not how long. Only the stars could see them as they started for the strange new land.

Jesus Christ as a Man

The child Jesus grew in mind and body and everyone loved Him. When he became a man, and was ready to begin the work He had come to do on earth, John the

Baptist began to preach in the wild places outside the cities. He told of Jesus' coming and tried to prepare the people to receive Him. Many people came out to hear him, and a few of them were sorry for their sins and were baptized. But John told of the coming of One who was so much greater that John was not worthy even to be His servant.

One day, as John was preaching, Jesus himself stepped out from the crowd to be baptized. As He came into the water, heaven was opened above Him, and the Spirit of God, taking the form of a dove, came down from the bright clouds above upon His head. A voice sounded, saying:

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus had lived and worked among these people for thirty years, and they knew that He had never done any wrong thing. But now for the first time they heard of Him as God's Son, instead of the carpenter, a son of the poor man Joseph, as they had always supposed.

When Jesus went out into the desert to be by Himself for a time Satan came to Him, and tried with all the power he had to make Jesus do wrong. Of course God cannot sin. But when He put on this body of ours He put on all the possibility of sinning that we have, just as one puts on a borrowed coat, and finds it can be torn or may wear out, no matter who has it on. But the strength of God was greater than Satan's, though he had brought before Jesus

all the things that could tempt a human body. Jesus turned aside his words easily and did not think of doing what Satan suggested.

So it was through all the years of Jesus' life. He was tempted to do every kind of wrong that we are, and yet He never sinned.

The next three years of His life were busy ones, full of helping all the poor, sick and lame and blind people who came to Him, making them quite well again. He always made their hearts clean too when He cured them. He forgave all the sins that had grown up like weeds there, and if they believed He could do it, He gave them the power to keep their hearts free from these weeds afterward.

A great many people began to follow Him about to see His miracles of sick people made well, and of feeding thousands of people with five loaves of bread and two fishes, which He blessed and made into enough for all.

They liked to listen to His preaching, for He spoke of things they had never heard before. He showed them how all the words of the prophets had come true about His coming, and He told them what should come to Him—His death and rising again, and how He should return some day to the earth after He had gone to Heaven this time. He told them how to live—loving each other instead of each man for himself, and laying up their riches in Heaven instead of getting rich on earth. He told them many stories of which some people could hardly

understand the meaning, only the few who were closest to Him.

Twelve men He had chosen as His little band of followers. Poor, despised, common people they were, two or three fishermen, a tax collector, and a young boy—yet He told them all His secrets, and these were the missionaries He left on the earth to tell people about Him. Only one of them failed Him—Judas, who thought so much of a few pieces of money that he became a traitor to Jesus and sold Him to those who hated Him.

For there were many men in authority in the church and in the city who hated Jesus because He said He was the Son of God, and they could not or did not want to believe Him. Also He taught the people many things about the Bible and their laws that they did not themselves know or understand, so that they were afraid of Him. They wanted to kill Him, but they were afraid to do it openly in fear of what the people might do, for the people loved Him.

One day Jesus rode into Jerusalem, and when the people saw Him they took down palm branches and threw them in the streets to make a pathway for Him as for a king. Then they all shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

As He came up to the temple all the people followed Him. The children—for they all loved Him dearly—came

with Him into the temple, shouting "Hosanna!" which means "Save us, we pray!"

When the priests of the temple saw this and heard the joyful noise of the children they were very angry, although these same priests had been allowing men to make a great deal of noise in the temple every day buying and selling things, so that Jesus had had to come in and send the merchants outside, saying, "In the Bible it is written, God's house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves!" Still the priests were much displeased at the children and said to Jesus:

"Do you hear what these children are saying?"

Jesus said, "Yes, have you never read in the Psalms 'Out of the mouths of babes Thou hast made praise to come'?"

For Jesus loved the children and said one day to the people who wished to send them away from Him:

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for the kingdom of heaven is made of people like that."

And He took them in His arms and blessed them.

Death

The priests of the church and the high officers of the city made a plot to take Jesus and try Him and have Him put to death. Jesus knew beforehand of course exactly what was going to happen, but He did not go away.

Instead, He made it quite easy for them to find Him, for He was making the words come true which had been spoken of Him by the prophets, and He was carrying out the plan God had made in sending Him down to earth.

So that night, when He knew they would come and take Him, He prepared to eat the Passover feast alone with His disciples. This Passover supper was still solemnly held once a year. It reminded the Israelites of the time, hundreds of years before, when the Death Angel had passed over their houses. Tonight they should have known that God was doing the same thing for them again. "The Lamb"—as Isaiah had called Jesus—was about to be killed to take upon Him the sins of all the people who would have it so. Everyone who would take the sign of His blood for their households should be passed over in the death that must come to everyone who breaks God's laws.

As Jesus broke the bread and passed the wine to His disciples, He said:

"This is like the breaking of My body and the shedding of My blood for you. Take them, eat and drink them as the sign that you accept the gift of My life given for your sins. This is the new promise between us."

During the supper Jesus said, "One of you is going to be false to me."

They were all troubled, and said, "Lord, is it I?"

Jesus dipped some bread in the sauce of the bitter herbs that was used in the Passover supper and gave it to

Judas, who got up and went out, so they knew that he was the one.

Then Jesus told the disciples just what would come; that He would be taken and tried and be put to death; that after He left them the disciples would have a hard time. They would be laughed at and imprisoned and put to death if they would not give Him up. Peter spoke out and said that he would never give up Jesus. Jesus answered him sadly:

"Before the cock crows for the morning tomorrow you will say three times that you do not know me, Peter."

Then He spoke comforting words to them, telling them that He was going on to His Father's house, but would come again and bring them there. He gave them His last commandments, "Love one another, as I have loved you" and "Live in Me and I will live in you."

After Jesus' wonderful prayer they sang a hymn and went out into a garden, where they often sat together.

Soon the quiet there among the olive trees was broken by the sound of tramping soldiers. They carried lanterns and swords and sticks.

As they came to Jesus, Judas, leading the way, came up and kissed Jesus to show the soldiers which He was.

Peter wanted to fight and raised his sword, cutting off the ear of one man. But Jesus made the ear well again, and

told Peter to put up his sword, for He had explained to them at supper that this was going to be done now.

The soldiers led Jesus away to be judged by the high priests, Annas and Caiaphas. Two of the disciples followed Him, one going into the palace with Him.

But Peter stayed at the doorway in a kind of court. A serving girl came up to him and said with a sneer:

"Are you one of the followers of that man in there?"

"No," answered Peter.

"I saw you in the garden with Him," said one of the soldiers as they stood around the fire.

"No, you did not. I am not his disciple!" said Peter again.

"But you came with Him surely," they said.

"No, I do not know Him," denied Peter. Then he heard the cock crowing for the early morning.

Peter went out and cried bitterly for what he had done.

In the meantime Jesus was taken before first one high priest and then another, then to Pilate the Roman governor. Each time the ones who hated Him had brought lying men, who stood up and told evil stories about Jesus, but none of the judges could find reason enough for Him to be killed.

The soldiers were cruel to Him and dishonored Him, making fun of the word that was told of Him that He was

a King. They made a crown of thorns and pressed it upon His head.

Then the priests and others who saw Him cried out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

To be nailed upon a cross to die was the Roman form of punishing the wickedest men, and they wanted to crucify Jesus.

Twice Pilate refused to do this, saying that he found no fault in Jesus. But at last, afraid of the Jews, he allowed them to take Him away to the hill called the Place of a Skull.

In the morning the soldiers nailed Him to one of the wooden crosses, and set it up between two thieves who were to be killed the same morning.

The sky was dark that morning as though night were coming. Many people of the city had come out, curious to see the death of the "King of the Jews"—as Pilate had called Him on a placard placed above His head. They surged excitedly this way and that.

Near the cross were Jesus' disciples and a few women crying. One of Jesus' last words was to speak to His mother, and to ask John, His beloved disciple, to take care of her.

At the foot of the cross the soldiers were throwing dice to see which one should have the beautiful robe they had taken from Jesus. Everything in the picture was just as the

prophets had seen it, for even David in the twenty-second Psalm told of how they would part Jesus' clothes among them, and cast lots for them.

The skies grew darker toward noon and there was a sound of thunder. As Jesus bowed His head and said "It is finished!" His spirit went home.

The darkness was like midnight, and the people, frightened, rushed to their homes. The curtain in the temple, which separated God's Holy of Holies from the room of the people, was torn in two from top to bottom, as though to say that the people might now come near to God by Jesus Christ who had just died, and no longer by the priests.

Life

The third day after this, very early in the morning, Mary, and other women who loved Him came to the stone tomb where Jesus' body had been laid, bringing spices and perfumes.

As they came slowly through the garden, one said to the others:

"How shall we roll away the great stone that Pilate had placed before the doorway of the tomb? I heard the soldiers say that he had it sealed there so that no one could steal the body and say that He had come to life again."

But when they reached the tomb they found the stone gone. As they looked they saw that no body lay there. They looked about, much troubled. Suddenly two men stood by them in bright, shining clothes and said to them:

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? The Lord Jesus is not here, but is risen, as He promised. Do you not remember His words?"

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was there. She did not find it hard to believe, for she had seen her brother's body, which had been lying in the grave, rise up in full life and strength when Jesus spoke to him. So the women hurried back to the city to tell the disciples what they had seen. Some of them could not believe that Jesus lived again, although they knew He had promised to come back to them. Peter went out to see, and not finding Jesus' body, came back wondering. Mary Magdalene, too, told the disciples that she had seen Jesus himself that morning in His risen body in the garden. But the eleven disciples did not yet believe such wonderful news.

There was a little girl, however, among the company of Jesus' followers who did not find this at all hard to believe. For she herself had been very sick and had felt her spirit go away from her body. Her father and mother—as she had heard afterward—had known that she was dead and had felt very sad that they would never see her again on earth. Then she had heard a voice, and Jesus took her by the hand and called to her, "Daughter, awake!" Her

spirit flew back to the body it had left—only now it was strong and well—and she opened her eyes and saw her mother and father standing by her bed. At her side was the dear kind face of Jesus, this One whom the disciples were now saying could not have come back to life again. Why could not He rise again, the little girl wondered, if He had so easily given her life back to her? And surely she herself had heard Him say, "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." And the day when He cured the blind man He told the people that some day He would lay down His life that He might take it up again.

That same evening Cleopas and another of Jesus' followers were walking home from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a little town nearby. They talked sadly and wonderingly of the strange stories they had heard that day. Someone came along their way and joined with them in their talk.

"What have you two been talking about so earnestly?" inquired the stranger.

"Have you not been in Jerusalem for the past three days, and heard of the strange things which have happened there? That Jesus Christ, the strong Prophet of God, has been put to death there?" said Cleopas.

"We had hoped," he went on, "that He was to be the One who should save Israel. But this is the third day since He died. Some of our women did say that they saw angels at His tomb this morning, who said that He was still alive."

Then the stranger said, "Why are you so slow to believe what you have read in the prophets—that the coming Messiah would suffer these things, and rise again?" Then He began with the writings of Moses and explained to them God's plan for saving Israel and all people from their sins.

When they came to their homes they urged the stranger to come in to supper with them. As He asked the blessing upon the food, suddenly they recognized His voice, and knew that this was truly Jesus himself. When they would have spoken more with Him, He had vanished from their sight.

They hurried into Jerusalem, to a little upstairs room, where all the disciples and others of Jesus' followers were gathered. They told them their glad news, and as they were speaking Jesus stood among them and said, "Peace be unto you."

Then they knew that He had really risen, and at last all of them now believed, even the doubting Thomas, that this, their dear Master, was the Son of God.

He told them in a few parting words just what He wanted of all His followers forever, until He shall come again. He said:

"So it was worth while for Christ to suffer, and to rise again, if My children will tell this story to all the people in every nation, teaching them to be sorry for their sins, and to come to Me to be made clean. Only wait now at

Jerusalem until I send the Holy Spirit to you from heaven. Behold, I will be with you always even to the end of the world."

Then they walked out together to a place called Olivet. When Jesus had come to the top of the mountain, as He was talking with them suddenly a bright cloud came down from the sky and surrounded Him, and lifted Him up into Heaven. The disciples stood below gazing up into Heaven, as one watches a loved friend who is going away.

Two angels came down out of the brightness, and said to them:

"You men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up unto heaven? This same Jesus, whom you have seen going up into heaven, shall come back again, in the same manner you have seen Him go."

After Jesus had ascended to heaven from among his followers, they waited at Jerusalem for the power He had promised them.

One day as they gathered in their usual quiet prayer-meeting, a rushing sound like a great wind came through the room, and little tongues of flame were seen upon the head of each one there. They then knew that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter Jesus had promised, had come to the earth. They felt His power in themselves, for they could speak of and understand more easily the things of God, as the prophets had done in the olden days.

Not only to these people did the Holy Spirit come. There was Stephen, the young man who, while he was being stoned to death for believing in Jesus, saw God in the heavens and Jesus at His right hand. There was Paul, at one time the man who did more to hurt the young Christians than any other Jew, who now, after he was blinded for a time by a vision of Christ on the Damascus road, turned about from his evil ways, and became the greatest missionary that ever lived. This Paul wrote in his letter to Corinth:

"The things that we teach are deep things, which are not in man's knowledge at all, but the Holy Spirit teaches them to us, and it is only by this Spirit that we can understand them."

The Holy Spirit is the great strong power of God in the world now, until Christ shall come back again, for it is the Spirit who prays for us and teaches us to pray, and the Spirit who teaches us to understand God's word.

Sometimes God sends a special message to his people by speaking through His Spirit to a certain man.

So it was with John, who when he was young had been Jesus' beloved disciple. Now he was an old man, having followed Jesus' last command all his life.

Before he died God showed him, as the last of the prophets, the awful and beautiful picture of His plan for the end of the world. That the Beast—Satan who has troubled the world since the days of Adam—shall be

thrown forever into a burning lake of fire, together with those who chose not to follow Jesus.

Then there is Heaven, the city built all of precious stones, whose gates are twelve pearls. The waters of the River of Life flow out clear as crystal from the throne of God and of the Lamb, Jesus. There is no need of the sun or moon, for the Lord God is the Light of it.

"And God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, for all such things have passed away. Behold, I make all things new!" says the Lord.

"And those who love Him shall see His face, and His Name shall be on their foreheads."

"And the Spirit and the bride, His church, say come!
And let him that hears say come!
Let him that is thirsty for it come!
And whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely!"

Had You Been Born a Roman Catholic

The Catholic Church is many things. It is a mystical body of believers in Jesus Christ. It is an extension of the spiritual fellowship which Christ founded upon St. Peter. It is a channel of grace for all who believe. It is a visible organization whose headquarters are in the Vatican and whose leader, the Holy Father, represents the Vicar of Christ on earth. It is the Holy Ghost at work in the world; renewing, redeeming, restoring mankind to its rightful place in the community of God. It is the church universal, but, most of all, it is your spiritual home, had you been born a Roman Catholic.

CATHOLICISM IS THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

All over the world Catholicism has built its churches and surmounted them with its most precious symbol: the cross of Christ. With few exceptions, every church edifice bears this emblem, usually on its tallest spires, the steeple or dome or campanile, reaching toward the sky. In many lands where your faith has conquered pagan cultures, churches were built where heathen shrines once stood, and the cross now looms where non-Christian religions once held sway.

You are at home whenever and wherever you step inside a Catholic church. Whether it is a city cathedral or a jungle chapel, there is a feeling about it that assures you

of a Presence. You hear it in the silence, you sense it in the reverence with which worshipers come and go, you recognize it in the customs universally observed and, most of all, you find it in the awareness that here the spirit of the Lord has been enshrined through acts of worship, love, and faith.

Near you, as you enter, is the holy water fount. Whether it is a marble basin resting in the sculptured arms of an angelic image or a tiny porcelain container tacked beside a chapel door, the meaning is the same. You dip your fingers in the water and make the sign of the cross, touching your forehead, chest, left shoulder and then right shoulder. As you make this sign you are assured that there is a community of more than 500,000,000 people throughout the world who understand this salutary act. Regardless of color, station in life, virtues or sins, those who make this blessing know its deep significance. It is a reminder that Christ died upon the cross to redeem your soul. The holy water—water which the priest has blessed and to which a bit of salt has been added as a symbol of everlasting life—reminds you that before you enter into the presence of God you must cleanse your heart of evil and become purified in word and deed.

When you see the altar which dominates each Catholic church, you genuflect because of the Presence which you sense is localized here. Even when there is no service being observed and when you have just stepped into the church for a moment of meditation and prayer,

you know the altar is a holy place. It contains the relic of a saint and conceals the consecrated Host which is exposed to view during Benediction, a brief ceremony of praise to this Blessed Sacrament. You believe that the Host represents the actual presence of God and it is small wonder, therefore, that you and all Catholics regard these surroundings as especially holy.

Here in the sacred precincts of your church you enter a pew and kneel to pray. Everything around you is conducive to worship: statues remind you of the presence of the saints, and a perpetually burning light near the altar assures you that God is the votive flame persisting in your faith.

On the walls around you are fourteen "stations of the cross," art works representing fourteen phases of the experiences through which Jesus passed on the *via dolorosa,* the way of sorrow, when He walked to Golgotha. Near the communion rail, which encloses the altar, candles have been lighted by faithful worshipers who have remembered a loved one or who, out of reverence, have left a burning candle as a lingering presence of themselves here in the church.

The worshipers around you also contribute to the sanctity of worship, for they have come seeking the same Presence which has drawn you here. Customarily, women enter with covered heads, and men, of course, remove their hats. In all the world, no surroundings are endowed

with the reverence which your people show to the church, and in most localities, churches are open day and night for those who seek the solemn quiet of this house of prayer.

THE ROSARY

To assist you in your devotion and to help you meditate upon the mysteries of redemption, you frequently use a string of beads popularly called the Rosary. The use of beads as an aid to concentration is an ancient practice in many religions. In your faith their employment goes back to about the tenth century. Rosaries have fifty-five (sometimes fifty-nine) beads, with a small crucifix affixed.

It is customary for you, when you feel the need for worship, to take the beads in your hand and meditate upon the fifteen mysteries or events in the life of Mary and Jesus: *the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the Discovery of Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve, the Agony, the Scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Assumption, and the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin.* You recite the "Hail Marys," repeating an "Our Father" between each set of ten as you meditate upon these mysteries and seek to mingle your life with the life of the Blessed Virgin and the Christ.

The real meaning of the Rosary, as far as you are concerned, is inherent in the experience of the recitation.

You treasure it because of its sentimental symbology, but its purpose could be fulfilled without the actual Rosary itself. Yet, as you think about it, the beads themselves are very much a part of your life. When you were a child your mother used to give you a Rosary to play with long before you realized its meaning. Sometimes the thought comes to you that as a little child reaches out for its mother's hand and begs for support, so you reach for your Rosary and hold fast to it. The symbolic joy of divine affection, like the warmth of a mother's love, glows in your heart as you "count" the beads. You address the Blessed Virgin familiarly as one who loves her when you say, "Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." Boldly and confidently, you mention her exalted station, "Holy Mary, Mother of God." You beg her intercession for the life of your soul and the souls of all her other children when you recite the words, "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

The Rosary is repeated in your home as part of your family worship. It is often recited at special services in the church, at wakes when someone has died, and even on special radio programs when a priest repeats the meaningful prayers and the faithful followers chant them with him. The Rosary, as a string of beads and as a prayer, would be a most precious part of your faith, had you been born a Roman Catholic.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

Often as you kneel in prayer or as you meditate upon your relationship with God, your heart fills with a sense of supreme assurance that among the world's many and often conflicting religions, your Church is founded upon infallible truth and endowed by God with divine authority. *You believe that to your Church has been entrusted the obligation of bringing to men the true doctrine of Christ through the Holy Spirit which works through the Catholic Church.* If this function seems to take on a legalistic tone, it is because Christ empowered His Church with truth, decreed how this truth should be expounded and directed how it should be administered throughout the world.

From earliest childhood you were taught in your home, in your parochial school and in your Church that Jesus Christ was the divine Son of God, miraculously born of the Blessed Virgin Mary and manifesting in His life, death, and resurrection the will and wish of God for the salvation of men. Among His disciples, who were chosen to perpetuate His teaching and commissioned to preach His gospel, was one upon whom primacy was bestowed. This was St. Peter, to whom Jesus said, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matthew 16: 18,19)

This promise was not to end with the death of St. Peter, but was ordained to continue to the end of time through his legitimate successors. Peter was the first pope, and all others of them, through the changing years up to the present pope and all who come after him, are vested with this primacy. The very fact that the Church exists today in this unbroken continuity, despite all the vicissitudes through which it has passed, is proof to you of its divinity and a testimony to its divine mission in the world.

The supernatural authority attending this apostolic succession is evidenced in many ways. For example, the pope is infallible when he defines a doctrine on faith and morals *ex cathedra.* This means that he must speak as the Holy Ghost gives him utterance. It also means that there are four conditions involved: 1) the pronouncement must be made by him as the supreme teacher; 2) the subject matter must concern faith and morals; 3) the judgment which he hands down must command intellectual assent; 4) the definition must be impartially imparted to the whole body of the faithful. Such is papal infallibility. There is also Church infallibility, which extends beyond faith and morals to include the whole body of revealed truth, most impressively represented in religious rites called sacraments.

THE SACRAMENTS

A sacrament is a channel of divine grace imperative in effecting conformity with Christ. It is also the means through which certain profound truths are articulated and by the use of which the power of Christ is perpetuated in the lives of individuals and the world. The sacraments are so supernaturally endowed that even the human frailty of a priest administering this divine service cannot disavow or despoil their effectiveness. In fact, the Church has a term, *ex opere operato*, which is to say that the sacraments do not depend for their function upon the character of the priest, but that they confer grace and blessing by reasons of themselves, and by virtue of their work.

There are seven sacraments and, had you been born a Catholic, you would look upon them as divine mileposts along the true Christian path. The sacraments are: *Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony,* and *Extreme Unction.* You recognize that your life is inter-related "sacramentally" from birth to death, and that in each sacrament there is matter and form as well as grace and benefit.

BAPTISM

Baptism is administered by the priest as soon as possible after the birth of a child. It is a symbol of adoption and, more than a symbol, it is the very act of adoption of

the child by God, making him an heir to God's riches and blessings.

Another significant aspect of this sacrament, in which the infant is lightly sprinkled with water, is the conviction that baptism is a necessary means of salvation. It is so important that should no priest be available, another baptized person may perform the act. Your Church believes that children who die unbaptized are deprived of seeing God in heaven. This does not mean that they are "lost" or that they are condemned to hell, but they do not receive the great glory and blessing of the "Beatific Vision." The authority is clear. Jesus said, "Unless a man is born again of water and the Holy Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John 2:5). Your Church teaches that the "baptism of intention" can save a soul, by which is meant that a dying person's sincere and heartfelt longing for baptism may suffice when there is no one around to perform the actual ceremony. The Church also believes that adults who die without baptism or a knowledge of Christ can be saved by the merits of Christ if they truly repent for their sins before death.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation played an important role in your life and left such an impression that it can rarely, if ever, be erased. This sacrament is the extension of baptism by the laying on of hands, an initiatory rite by which, at the age of twelve

or thirteen, you entered through faith and intellectual understanding into the holiness of the Church. To you it seems that your Church has wisely devised a plan for the individual's spiritual development. It is sequential in form: from infancy until you are about six years old, your parents guide you in your religious beliefs; from six or seven until twelve or thirteen, your teachers train you in the way you should go; at confirmation, the priest brings you to the threshold of personal responsibility.

The ceremony of confirmation is so sacred and impressive that, as you kneel with the other confirmants in front of the altar, you are convinced that God's will is being fulfilled in your life. As the early apostles imparted the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands, so the bishop of your Church imparts the Holy Spirit to you by a similar anointing. First he touches your head with chrism, a mixture of olive oil and balsam, and then he lays his hands upon you, saying, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Confirmation is your Pentecostal experience, by which is meant that as the early Christians received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, so you now receive it at the hands of the bishop.

PENANCE

The steps in the sacrament of Penance are: *confession, contrition, penance,* and *absolution.* This sacrament was impressed upon you at an early age. When you were six or seven you were instructed that Christianity meant living the good life; the kind of life Jesus would want you to live. Sin, to which all human beings are subject, was explained to you as *any act, word, or thought contrary to right reason and the law of God.* The Ten Commandments were a criteria by which your conduct could be measured. You were also told about an inner monitor, conscience, which warned you when you did wrong and endorsed your actions when you did right. You were taught the value of obedience to God's law, the extent of God's love, and the boundlessness of God's grace.

You were advised of the Church's method for helping you live the good life through the sacrament of Penance, and informed that whenever you fell into sin, God would be able and willing to forgive you and to cleanse you of sin, and to start you forward again on the right path if you were willing to do your part.

The sacrament of Penance was graphically demonstrated to you when, as a child, you made your first confession. You stepped into a confessional booth, found in every Catholic church, closed the door and knelt in front of a small grill above which hung a crucifix. You made the sign of the cross, remained silent for a moment

and then said aloud, "Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned."

On the opposite side of the grill, in his own cubicle, the priest, unseen by you—as you by him—sat with his stole around his shoulders, ready to hear your confession. You did not give him your name, nor did he ask for it. You did not feel that you were confessing your sins to a man. Because going to confession was a part of your early religious training, it became your conviction that the confessional booth is a mystical corner in which the confrontation with Christ is no longer a mystery but becomes instead a reality.

The need for confessing your sins is impressed upon you every time you transgress one of the holy commandments. These Ten Commandments are an important guideline for your Christian life. You confess the grave sins of commission, remembering those thoughts and deeds which were done with the full consent of your will. You recognize the gravity of your sinning, but you remember that God sent Jesus into the world to save sinners by pardoning their sins.

The Church makes a distinction between two kinds of sins: mortal and venial. The first include those which cause the offender to forfeit the blessing of God's grace; namely, a deliberate sin of murder, the inflicting of great injury, or the sin of adultery. The second, venial sins, are violations of God's laws which do not alienate the sinner

from God, but which, nonetheless, require penance; such sins as petty thievery, outburst of temper, lying, character defamation, and the like. The first, being the more severe, demand the fulfillment of certain requirements which will restore the sinner to a state of grace.

Having confessed your sins to God through the priest, you now hear the inspiring words in which he pronounces the absolution: "I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Through this pronouncement he has done his part as God's representative on earth, but it still remains for you to do your part before your sins are truly forgiven. You must be sure of two things: 1) contrition, which means heartfelt sorrow for sins committed and the determination to abstain from them in days to come; 2) satisfaction, by which is meant restitution. To replace what you have stolen, to ask forgiveness from those you have injured, to pray for those you have secretly offended—these are virtuous acts connected with satisfaction.

Since the Church believes there is a temporal as well as an eternal punishment connected with sin, it also believes it has the divine power to prescribe certain acts whereby the temporal punishment can be removed. These acts are of many kinds and are granted only where contrition is sincere. They include such recommendations as prayer, fasting, novenas, almsgiving, pilgrimages, and many other penitential practices.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The sacrament of Penance prepares you spiritually for the sacrament of Holy Eucharist, which is why you go to confession before partaking of Communion. Your first Communion, taken when you were six or seven after necessary counsel and instruction, was a thrilling and soul-lifting experience, an experience which, if your heart and soul are truly grateful, can be repeated every time you partake of this most significant of all the Church's rites. You prepare yourself for the Holy Eucharist by eating and drinking nothing for at least two hours before partaking of this sacrament. Perhaps you are one of those who comply with a former requirement of fasting from midnight until the sacrament is taken, for many of the faithful still adhere to this custom.

To participate in this sacred and mystical sacrament, you walk with folded hands to the communion rail which is near the altar. There you kneel to receive from the priest a sanctified wafer which his own hands place upon your tongue. Only it is not a wafer, so far as you are concerned. It is, in substance, the actual body of Christ.

This act of transubstantiation is a mystery which even Catholics themselves do not understand and which many non-Catholics openly deny and refuse to accept. Others call it superstition and magic and even "cannibalism," but this is because they do not comprehend the miracle of

faith which places the communicant in a state of grace. You are convinced that Jesus himself instituted this Holy Eucharist when, at the last Supper, He took the bread and said, "This is My Body," and, taking the cup of wine, declared, "This is My Blood."

You accept these words literally, confident that when the wafer and the wine have been consecrated by the priest, "transubstantiation" takes place, which means that "His Body" has been actually converted into the "bread." Had you been born a Catholic, you would not only accept this as a fact, you would approach Communion with humble reverence, realizing that it is here that the spiritual union of your soul and Christ becomes a living reality.

The wine is not offered to you. The consuming of it is an act reserved for the priest. In the partaking of the consecrated bread, however, you have shared in the blood as well as in the flesh of Christ. This you truly believe and, as the sacrament of Penance cleanses your soul, so the Holy Eucharist leaves you feeling restored in body, mind, and spirit.

HOLY ORDERS

The sacrament of Holy Orders refers to the ordination of priests, extends through the entire structure of the Church, and is another distinctive sacrament in your faith. By means of it, the priest is endowed with a specific vocation; namely, the right to be Christ's representative in the work of redemption. At the Last Supper, when Jesus

Christ, as the High Priest, instituted the Holy Eucharist, He also conferred upon the apostles the power to offer this sacrifice in His name. This bestowal, your Church teaches, was later followed by a ceremonial act in which the apostles took vows, declaring in the sight of God that they would live the religious life in a special way, and received a blessing by the laying on of hands.

You grew up with the utmost respect for your spiritual teachers, both priests and nuns, because you were convinced of their sincerity and their reverence for their holy calling. Rarely is there a Catholic boy who, at some period in his life, does not thoughtfully consider the priesthood as his vocation. Many Catholic girls somewhere along the way of life seriously contemplate entering convents to become teachers or nurses or members of one of the many orders of religious nuns. So great is the power of these people who have dedicated their lives to Christ and His Church that you often feel that they are the very life-blood of Catholicism.

In your youth your spiritual life took nourishment and direction from these holy priests and teachers. Sometimes you served as an altar boy and were privileged to assist the priest at Holy Mass. You learned a great deal about this service, for the Mass is the immortal setting that holds the precious gem of the Holy Eucharist. The Mass is the re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice in which He is continually lifted up for the sins of men and by means of which he is constantly glorified before His Father in heaven. The

ceaseless vigilance and vitality of Roman Catholicism can be seen in the many observances of the Mass to which the Church is dedicated. The services are so arranged that everyone, no matter what his work or his station in life may be, can find an observance of the Mass in which he can participate. And whenever this happens, the priest is the intermediary between God and man. He is your spiritual parent and you reverently call him "Father."

Long years of training have gone into his preparation. Sacred vows have set him apart from other men. He dresses differently because of his position in the world. He does not marry because he has taken the vow of chastity so that his entire loyalty—body, mind, and spirit—may be dedicated to his calling. He observes special disciplines, reads special offices, and obeys the command of the Church set forth by the bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and the pope himself. He is a man under Holy Orders, your spiritual advisor, director, and friend.

HOLY MATRIMONY

It may seem paradoxical and even contradictory to non-Catholics, but to you it is clear that a celibate clergy can best advise you on the blessings and pitfalls of marriage. Matrimony is a sacrament, deeply spiritual in nature; and why, then, should not a man of God be best informed about its meaning?

You are convinced that idealistically no other religion puts the high credential upon married life or is so earnest about the sacredness of conjugal love as is Catholicism. Marriage is such a solemn undertaking that in the ceremony you and your marriage partner are actually administering this sacrament yourselves. The priest is merely the Church's witness, as other witnesses represent the families concerned.

The true Catholic could never enter marriage lightly or sensually, for he knows that the partner he takes is bound to him in an indissoluble union until death. It is like the marriage of Christ and His Church; sacred, inviolable, eternal. Divorce is absolutely forbidden in Roman Catholicism excepting in extremely rare cases involving adultery, insanity, or continual drunkenness.

Even then the Church requests that no other marriage take place until the death of the mate has dissolved the first marriage.

Marriage, you have been taught, has as its major function the propagation of the family of God. Because this is a sacred act, your Church opposes artificial methods of birth control in the belief that it leads to unnatural vice. The limitation of a family or a form of so-called "planned parenthood" is in accordance with Catholic doctrine only if the method is controlled by abstinence or the observance of the law of nature as evidenced in the so-called rhythm cycle.

Idealistically the Catholic home is a symbol of what the true Christian family should be like. It is built upon the foundation of faith and patterned after the glorification of God. Toward this end, *every home should be a shrine, every festive table an altar, every participant a worshiper.* Your home, like your Church, has many holy symbols: statues, candles, rosaries, sacred pictures, a Holy Bible, prayer books, and missals. In accordance with tradition, your family would recite certain prayers, fast on special days, attend church regularly, abstain from forbidden acts, and consult the priest on serious or perplexing matters.

Because of the sanctity of marriage and childbirth, the Catholic mother, after having brought a child into the world, often goes to the Church and gives thanks to God. Here she may also receive the special blessing of the priest who, sprinkling her with holy water, recites the 23rd Psalm and speaks a special prayer. This ceremony is called the "churching of women," and is said to have its roots in the Jewish rite of purification.

Because Holy Matrimony is the sacrament upon which the perpetuation of the Church in the world actually depends, it is understandable that Roman Catholicism should frown upon "mixed marriages." It is believed that it is far better for a Catholic to marry a Catholic and a non-Catholic to marry a non-Catholic than it is to cross denominational lines. The Church, which has systematically studied the course of mixed marriages, has decreed that varying religious beliefs in the home cause

discord, resentment, and spiritual apathy. Often both parties are in danger of losing their faith.

Canon law, a law enacted by a church council and confirmed by the pope, forbids a Catholic or Catholics to be married by a non-Catholic minister. It also opposes mixed marriages being performed by a priest in the church, although a priest may solemnize such a ceremony in the sacristy or in the priest's home. Even then, the blessing of the ring or rings must be omitted and no nuptial Mass may be held. It is also necessary for both parties to sign the "marriage promises" in which it is agreed that children born of this union will be brought up in the Roman Catholic faith.

EXTREME UNCTION

As your life began with the sacrament of Baptism, so it is concluded with the sacrament of Extreme Unction. Meditating on this fact, you often feel that your religion is as compact as a holy book and that each chapter heading is sacramental. Life is, indeed, a story lived in Christ. Thus when the final pages are to be written, you look forward in faith to the continuation of life beyond this life.

The final sacrament of Extreme Unction is, actually, a seal of salvation. But it is not only a preparation for death; it may also be a means of healing so that life in this world may be extended. It consists of anointing the seriously ill with olive oil blessed by a bishop. As the priest touches the

forehead of the afflicted with the oil, he says, "By this holy unction may the Lord pardon thee whatever faults thou hast committed."

Sometimes the priest anoints the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and feet, each time speaking a prayer. The comfort of this sacrament to the dying as well as to the loved ones who are bereaved is unspeakably great, for it brings the focus of faith upon the area of need. It consoles both the one who departs and those who remain. God, you sincerely believe, is pleased when His children do His will, and His will is best performed through the Holy Sacraments instituted by Christ, perpetuated by His Church, and performed by His chosen priests.

THE POWER AND GLORY OF THE CHURCH

Had you been born a Catholic, it would be difficult for you to express fully and completely the power and glory of your faith. It is too vast for words and too complex to be grasped in all its deepest meaning.

Its contrasts extend all the way from monks who live in monasteries secluded *from* the world to parish priests who live as comfortably as men of the world. It includes women who have entered cloisters to spend their entire lives in unseen meditation and prayer to parish women who are very much a part of teeming social life. It embraces miracles of healing like those which take place at Lourdes in France or Ste. Anne de Beaupré in Canada,

but it does not deny the use of medical science and human healing skills. It approves of visions like those experienced by a Joan of Arc or a Saint Bernadette, but is extremely cautious of making claims for wholesale apparitions. It views with interest and understanding the stigmata of a St. Francis or a Theresa Neumann, but it allows hundreds of years to pass before it gives an estimate of their validity.

It believes in the outreach of science and accepts the efficacy of relics of the saints. It is supremely intellectual in its scholarship but almost childlike in its affection for the saints. It is a religion of joy and festivity, as seen in parish programs, while at the same time, it is a religion of sombre reflection, attested to by many austere devotional practices. Its liturgical calendar is so filled with holy days and sacred observances that there is hardly a period of the year in which the reminder of God's presence is not made known. It believes in the intercession of saints, in a personal devil, in purgatory, hell, heaven, the resurrection of the body, and a life to come.

It orders its adherents to be loyal to the Church and faithful to its teachings, to go to confession and communion at least once a year, and, whenever necessary, to sacrifice in the Church's behalf. It requires meatless days, particularly on Fridays, in remembrance of Christ's crucifixion. It stresses strict Lenten observances during the forty days preceding Easter. It believes in masses for the souls in purgatory, in the dogma of the Assumption (that the Blessed Virgin ascended bodily into heaven),

allows the use of medals to honor God and the saints, and, in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, deletes the words, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever," because it is convinced that this was not a part of the original prayer as Jesus prayed it. It encourages its people to read the Bible, but advises them to use the Douay version which was translated from the Latin Vulgate, the Old Testament of which was published first in Douay, France, in 1610.

Your reverence for all these beliefs and practices synthesizes your religious and secular life into one spiritual unity. You are confident that the Church is ever with you and that you are ever with the Church. On special occasions, like the ordination of a priest who may be known to you, or at the consecration of a bishop or an archbishop of your diocese, you feel a great pride, for these are events in which you personally share.

THE DRAMA OF THE CHURCH

Within your lifetime you experienced the elevation of cardinals, those men who, appointed by the Holy Father, constitute the pope's council and are called the princes of the Church. The ceremony, held in St. Peter's in Rome, recalled the ancient rituals of your faith. At the appointed moment in this largest church in the world, a church designed by Michelangelo, the huge bronze doors swung open. Up the steps and through the doors marched

towering Swiss guards wearing plumed hats, colorfully striped breeches and vests of yellow and red, looking as if they had emerged from a legend. Boots clopping sharply on the shining marble floors, heads up and their halberds flashing, they advanced down the roped-off aisles.

Behind them, against a pageantry of soldiers, archbishops, procurators, chaplains, monks, and priests, was the Holy Father borne on a throne carried on the shoulders of twelve stalwart men. *"Viva il Papa!"* cried the throng of worshiping spectators. As some threw kisses or wept for joy and fell to their knees in prayer, while many lifted up their rosaries and cheered, the spectacular procession moved by. The pope is a monarch, the emperor of Vatican State, as well as the Vicar of Christ over a spiritual kingdom that knows no bounds. As he sat in the gestatorial chair like a king, his court surrounded him; and in his holy train came the cardinals, resplendent in their scarlet robes and ermine capes. *"Viva il Papa!"* Though he is a king, he is one with his subjects—one in Christ. Making the sign of the cross over and over, he blessed the people as he was borne toward the high altar which rises over the tomb of St. Peter. Here, where the ninety-five lamps burn day and night, he stepped from his throne into the papal chair which stands immovable seven steps above the hallowed spot where the first pope, St. Peter, lies interred.

Against a background of pomp and ceremony, you heard the age-old chanted ritual and the sublime singing

of the Sistine choir, out of the ceremonial Latin. You witnessed the elevation of the "princes of the faith" as one by one the incumbent cardinals brought the scarlet-clad candidates from the chapel. One by one they climbed the seven steps and kissed the Holy Father's ring, the "Fisherman's Ring," a symbol of the office of St. Peter. Then the Pontifical Master of Ceremonies dramatically raised the *galero,* the broad-brimmed red hat, over the head of each kneeling dignitary and intoned the blessing, "In praise of Almighty God and as an ornament of the Holy Apostolic See, receive now the red hat, distinctive of the Cardinal's dignity; it signifies that you must show yourself intrepid even unto shedding your blood for the exaltation of the Holy Faith, for the peace of the Christian people, and for the growth and glory of the Roman Church. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH

These are your leaders, pledged to martyrdom, if need be, for the sake of the religion in which your life is rooted. And many in the past have given their lives. Many priests have been executed, as they were in the days of the Russian revolution, because they remained true to their vows and true to the Church. But neither death nor oppression has halted the growth of the faith. Not even the passing of the Holy Father retards what you believe to

be the steady forward march of the true Christian Church. In fact, during your lifetime you experienced the momentary shock and sadness of the death of Pope Pius XII, a much beloved prelate who was called the Pope of Peace. You mourned with the Church because of your love for him, and you rejoiced with your fellow Catholics when a new Sovereign was elected.

On that day, too, you felt yourself standing among the hundreds of thousands of faithful who crowded St. Peter's Square. You heard the bells toll out their ancient tones, broadcasting to the world that three days of secret balloting by the fifty-one cardinals of the Church had decreed God's will. For three days the multitudes had waited and watched, keeping eyes fixed on a slender chimney above the Vatican roof. In keeping with an old custom, a puff of white smoke would be the signal that the election had taken place. After each period of balloting the smoke had been black, however, but on October 17, 1958, it was suddenly white. The thrill that ran through the waiting crowd spread around the world as the news was flashed that Angelo Cardinal Roncalli had been chosen to fill the throne of St. Peter as the Bishop of Rome and the Vicar of Christ and had taken as his spiritual name Pope John XXIII in honor of the patron saint of his home parish in Venice.

A deafening cheer rose from St. Peter's Square as a fatherly figure appeared on the papal balcony. Dressed in the elaborate robes of his office, flanked by a group of

church dignitaries, he raised his hands and spoke in a loud voice, *"Urbi et orbi!"*—"To the city and the world"; it was a benediction on the city and the world wherever the world extended. It blessed those behind the Iron Curtain and beyond the Bamboo Curtain; it went straight into the hearts of the Roman Catholic people—a half billion of them, with some 50,000,000 in the United States.

This is your Church and your faith which have come down to you through twenty ecumenical councils, the first of which was held in Nicea in 325 A.D. and the most recent of which was called by Pope John XXIII. This is your faith which has emerged out of apostolic times, is built upon great creeds, perpetuated by divine direction, and inspired by the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each distinct, yet united and equal in essence.

Often, as the Holy Father himself has visualized, you, too, catch a glimpse of a world united, in which all people will live together as one family, each person distinct yet all united in the love and mercy of God, a people of whom it will be said that there is but one sheepfold and one Shepherd. "True peace," said Pope John XXIII in his first public utterance, "will not be given to citizens, to the peoples, to the nations if it is not first granted to their souls; because there can be no exterior peace if it is not the reflected image of interior peace."

Such would be your faith for yourself and your hope for the world, had you been born a Roman Catholic.

Saint Patrick

[Publisher's Note: Saint Patrick has been included merely as an example of the work and influence of a Catholic priest.]

No saint's name is more familiar than holy Saint Patrick's. Legends have sprung up around it as thick as the grass of Ireland from which he is believed to have chased the serpents into the sea—but in all the calendar hardly a saint is known less about than this marvelous man, who carried the Christian religion to every corner of the emerald island.

Saint Patrick was not a native of Ireland—he was born, perhaps in 373 A.D., in the little town of Banavem Taberniæ, a Roman town in ancient Scotland not far from the modern city of Glasgow. Rome had ruled the world for hundreds of years and the swords of her soldiers had been uplifted in every known land. Hence it was that Saint Patrick came into the world as a future citizen of Rome and the son of a wealthy and respected Roman colonist. His father was named Calpornius and was a deacon of the Christian church in the town where he lived, and the mother of the future saint was also a devout Christian, the niece of the renowned Bishop Martin of the city of Tours in France.

Calpornius and his wife were so ardent in religion that they spent day and night in teaching their son the story of the gospel and the psalms. They desired first of all that he

should be a good Christian and a bearer of the faith—but they wearied the growing boy with long hours of study and monotonous recitals of religious hymns and proverbs when he was eager to be ranging the hills or playing with his fellows. At that time he had no particular desire to be a priest, and, like most boys, was far more interested in the stories of heroes than the stories of saints, preferring to hear of the wild Scottish chiefs and the Roman Generals with whom they had engaged in bitter warfare.

He thirsted for adventure, and adventure was to come to him. Those were wild days, and law only reached as far as it could be upheld by the sword and the arrow. Pirates harried the seas, and from the north the galleys of the sea robbers were soon to range southward in search of lands where plunder was to be found and men and women to be carried into slavery.

One night, when a gale was blowing from the northeast, St. Patrick, we are told, sat with some friends in the glowing light of a great peat fire, where they warmed themselves at the same time that they told stories of adventure and sang Scottish songs as wild and melancholy as the wind that was scouring the hills. Saint Patrick was now a lad of sixteen, with well knit limbs and a powerful body that made him appear older than he really was, and at the same time gave promise of greater strength to come. He listened keenly to the singing, but at the same time gave ear to sounds that he heard without the hut, for the rough voices of men speaking an unknown tongue seemed

to be mingling with the noise of the storm. At last he sprang up with a shout of warning, a shout that was answered by a battle cry from without. A pirate galley had made its way to the shore and the crew were engaged on a raid to capture slaves. Some of Saint Patrick's companions were clubbed or cut down where they sat, but he was thrown and strongly bound, dragged roughly to the shore and tossed on board the robber craft that quickly made its way to sea in spite of the tremendous surf that broke over the backs of the oarsmen.

For several days they fought the sea and at last came to the coast of northern Ireland, where Saint Patrick was sold as a slave to an Irish chief named Miliuc. It is probable that the pirates gained a rich reward for the clean-limbed boy, whose strength and ability were evident to all who saw him. When the bargain was finished they boarded their vessel and sailed away, leaving the luckless boy in the hands of his new master.

And straightway there commenced for Saint Patrick a bitterly hard life, for little kindness was wasted on those who were sold into bondage, and slaves were compelled to labor terribly with aching muscles and empty bellies, beaten and cuffed at the whim of their master—who had a perfect right to slay them if he so desired. Hunger, blows and fatigue were Saint Patrick's portion and were added to the homesickness of a young man torn from affectionate parents.

And then Saint Patrick found consolation in the religious teachings that had been drummed into his unwilling ears, and in the midst of his suffering he turned to his faith for comfort. He remembered the psalms that had been taught by his father and mother and said them repeatedly, and he even forbore at times to eat his meagre rations, thinking that by fasting he might prove worthy in the eyes of the Lord.

And one night he had a dream in which he heard a voice, which said to him: "Fast no more, but fly, for a vessel now awaits you to carry you away from your bondage. Truly you shall behold your parents again and once more be free and happy."

Saint Patrick woke in amazement after this dream, but he was so certain that the voice which spoke to him was real that he did not hesitate to obey it. Watching his opportunity he slipped away from the chief who had held him for six years in bitter servitude, and walking and running by turns he made his way southward in search of the vessel that he knew must be awaiting him.

He did not concern himself about the path, for he felt that Heaven would guide him; and indeed after he had marched for two hundred miles, he came to the coast, and just as he had dreamed a vessel lay at anchor near the shore and some of the sailors were standing on the beach.

Saint Patrick ran up to them and implored the captain to carry him away from Ireland back to his own country.

His wild appearance startled the master of the vessel, but after considerable doubt the captain consented, and Saint Patrick boarded the ship where he was to work his passage across the channel.

They set sail at once and bent their backs to the oars, for in those days ships were moved over the water by rowers as well as by sails; and after three days they came not to Scotland, but the shore of France, landing in a wild and desolate region where no human habitation was to be seen. Their provision had run low and they were in danger of dying of hunger, when the captain, who had closely watched Saint Patrick during the voyage and observed his piety, asked him to pray to the Christian god to bring them food, for the captain himself was not a Christian and believed that his own prayers would be worthless on this account. And Saint Patrick knelt and prayed, and before he had risen to his feet again a wild boar ran from the thicket and then another and still a third, all of which were promptly slain and the meat roasted on sticks.

Then Saint Patrick bade farewell to his shipmates, and made his way to the city of Tours, where to his joy he met Bishop Martin, who was his own great uncle. And he stayed at the home of the Bishop for four years.

After this time he tried again to reach Scotland, to which he was drawn every hour by ties of blood and affection; and at last he embarked on a vessel bound to a port very near his own native town. He found his father

and mother still living and they rejoiced mightily to see him, for to them he was as one who had returned from the dead. In place of the boy they had lost there appeared a tall and finely built man with a face hardened by toil but made noble by thought and suffering. And they had a feast to celebrate his return and wept for joy because they had their son again.

But the dreams that Saint Patrick had experienced in Ireland once more came to him, and in his sleep he heard the Heavenly voice telling him that he had been rescued from slavery for no mean or ordinary purpose, but must go again into Ireland as a priest, and teach the Christian religion to the savage Irish clans. So Saint Patrick knew that he must return to Ireland, and, bidding his parents farewell, he departed to become a priest in preparation for the labor that lay before him.

He studied to such purpose that he became a Bishop, celebrated for his learning and famous among the clergymen; and when this was accomplished he set sail once more for Ireland with a retinue of priests and clergymen accompanying him. But although he was going to a savage land where he had already experienced much bitterness and sorrow, he went unarmed, and among his entire company there was not so much as a single sword or lance.

He came to a place called Strangford Lough and there landed with his band of missionaries. The Irish fled at his

approach, for they feared that the tall man who bore the cross was the leader of an invading army, and also that he possessed the arts of magic by which he would do injury to them.

Many of the Irish believed in the religion of the Druids—a strange faith that brought in the magic arts and endeavored to teach above all other things that a man's soul when he dies enters another human body. This belief was widely established throughout the world, and it is true that many persons beside the Druids believed in it; but the Druids had other beliefs that were cruel and dangerous. They were said to perform human sacrifices and their priests to practise black magic. These priests wore about their necks the "serpent's egg," a ball formed of the spittle of many poisonous snakes; they knew many strange things about animals and plants and held the oak tree to be sacred. For this reason they worshipped in oaken groves, and considered the mistletoe that grew around oak trees to have divine powers. It was cut by white-robed priests with golden knives in an impressive ceremony.

It can readily be seen that such people, who believed in such a faith, would not easily become Christians. Their priests were clever and knew how to place the stamp of fear and wonder on their minds. And—in company with all other people in those days—the Irish distrusted outsiders and were far more ready to believe them coming in treachery than in friendship.

When Saint Patrick and his followers set foot in Ireland it was the time of a great religious festival in which no lights were allowed to be lit or fires to be kindled for several days. Saint Patrick knew this, for he was well versed in the religious customs of the Irish, and he knew, too, that the penalty for disobeying the priestly order was a terrible death.

None the less, and in spite of being unarmed, he ordered his followers to build an enormous fire that could be seen for miles. When the great logs and the faggots were piled together Saint Patrick kindled the pile with his own hands and the flames shot high in the air, throwing strange shadows on the trees and causing the Irish to cry out in fear and astonishment. The Druid priests were greatly angered and perturbed at what Saint Patrick had done, and they went at once to the King, who was named Laoghaire MacNeill, telling him that the foreign band had desecrated the Druid faith and must be punished with death. Then the King told the priests to go and fetch Saint Patrick and bring him to judgment, but the priests feared the fire that had been kindled, thinking that it had magic powers. So they went as far as they dared and called out to Saint Patrick, summoning him to appear before the judges of the land.

Promptly and with fearless demeanor, Saint Patrick joined the priests and was taken before the King. And when the King demanded of him how he had dared to disobey the laws of the country and profane its religion,

Saint Patrick answered that he did so because the light of the Christian faith was infinitely brighter than the light of any fire that he or any one else had power to kindle; and that the fire he had built was merely a sign to call the Irish to the worship of the true God. Then he preached, and his words were so wise and spoken with such weight of eloquence that many that heard him became Christians on the spot, and the work of converting Ireland was soon well under way.

There were many of the Irish that loved Saint Patrick, but he had many bitter enemies. On one occasion a powerful Irishman, who was enraged at the Saint for having taken a stone sacred to the Druids for a Christian altar, vowed that he must die. So he lay in wait in a patch of woods near a road over which he knew Saint Patrick would pass, with a sharp javelin to pierce his heart.

Saint Patrick had an Irish boy for his servant and this boy knew of the threat and the place and was greatly afraid for the life of his beloved master. But he knew, too, that it would be useless to ask Saint Patrick to go by another road, for fear was unknown to him. So the boy pretended to be weary and asked Saint Patrick to take the reins of the horse that they were driving; and the brave lad seated himself in his master's place. They came to the wood; there was a sudden stirring of the bushes and the hiss of a javelin which imbedded itself in the boy's heart, killing him instantly. The assassin had taken his master for the ordinary driver and Saint Patrick's life was saved.

Ardently the Saint set to work to bring about the conversion of the Irish, and he did his work so well that when he became an old man there were no heathen left in Ireland, and his name was loved and venerated from one end of the island to the other. And the legends grew up so quickly about him that it is hard to separate the true from the false.

He had written a famous hymn which was called "the breastplate," being as he said the best and strongest armor he or any other Christian could bear, since it was a confession of his faith in the Christian religion. On many occasions, when men sought his life, it is said he chanted this hymn and they let him pass.

Saint Patrick is said to have driven all the snakes out of Ireland into the sea—and it is notable that there are no snakes there to-day. And the other marvelous things he is believed to have accomplished are manifold. He died at a ripe old age and from the day of his death to the present one no man has been more revered in the land where he labored,—for the name of Saint Patrick is in every Irish heart and Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated by Irishmen in every part of the world.

The Monk that Shook the World

In the year 1497 two boys were seen passing through a small city in Germany. They walked slowly, and at times stopped before the doors of the houses, and sung carols about the infant Jesus. It was Christmas time, and the weather was cold and frosty. The evening was drawing on; and the bright glare of the fires within the houses of that old city of Eisenach shone forth through the small windows on the hoar frost without.

These poor lads belonged to a school kept by some monks, who gave their pupils quite as many blows and angry words as lessons of learning. As was the custom of the times, they had been sent to beg their bread from street to street, singing as they went along. The better to move the heart to charity they sang of Him whose lowly birth was at that season of the year called to mind.

That day these minstrel boys had met with only frowns and repulses; and they thought of returning, cold and hungry as they were to their home. But there was the house of Conrad Cotta nigh at hand. He was the burgomaster, or chief magistrate, of the city: perhaps, if they sang before his door they might get some help, for his wife Ursula was well known for deeds of kindness. It was their last hope, and so they sang their carol in their sweetest style.

Ursula was very fond of music; and, hearing the sounds, she stood at the window till the song was finished. The singing of one boy was more musical than the other. It was the voice of young Martin Luther which fixed her attention. She had often listened to it with delight before in the great church of the city, and now, as she gazed on his pale, intelligent face, she felt the deepest pity. A gentle, loving heart had Ursula Cotta. She had seen the boys driven from three doors, but there awaited them kind words and charity at her dwelling. When the carol was ended, she made signs for them to approach. It was not often that they were spoken to in such a gentle manner; and when she asked Martin from whence he came, and what was his father's name, how great was her delight to find that he was a kinsman of her husband!

The boys were soon placed before a cheerful fire; and after a good supper they were ready to sing to good Ursula their most favorite carol. When that was ended, young Martin sang the forty-sixth Psalm. From that day, Martin became a frequent visitor at her house. She was as a second mother to him; and often did he seek to repay her kindness by one of his sweetest songs, or by a few strains on his flute.

Five years had passed away, and Martin had become a student in a college. He had met with many kind friends; and his father too (who had been a poor woodcutter) by this time was able to assist him with money. This was a great comfort to the young man; he could now pursue his

studies with better hope of success. In the college there was a large room, where he spent every moment he could spare. This room was the library, from the shelves of which he took down book after book, and read them with profit and delight. But there was one large heavy volume he had never yet opened. At length he took it from its place, and found it was a Bible printed in the Latin language. He was now nearly twenty years of age, and had been brought up almost all his life in schools and colleges, and this was the first time he had met with the Holy Scriptures. It is true, he had been told there was a book called the Bible, but he had never seen a copy of it. With feelings of surprise and interest he turned over the leaves. He had not expected to find it so large a volume; and there were writers in it whose names or works he had never heard of. Beginning at the first page, he read on till he came to the history of Hannah and the child-prophet Samuel. It was to him all new and beautiful, and full of instruction. As he left the library that night, he said to himself, "Oh that God would give me such a book for my own!" That old Bible became to him more precious than gold, and sweeter than honey to his taste. He turned over its pages with constant pleasure, as often as he could run into the library for a few hours. Little did he then think that his hands would give that holy volume, translated by himself into German, to millions of his countrymen, and to be a blessing for hundreds of years after he was laid in the grave.

Three more years passed, and Martin Luther became a monk in another convent. The Bible he had read in the college library had aroused serious thoughts in his mind; but like the Ethiopian treasurer, in the eighth chapter of the Acts, he needed that "some man should guide" him to understand the Scriptures. He was looking to his prayers and fastings as the sure way of gaining heaven. He saw not that a sinner can only be saved through faith in Christ Jesus. He knew not clearly of the love of God. Every time he heard his holy name, he was pale with terror. The knowledge of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and of the grace of the Saviour, were to him hidden truths. His trust was more in saints and angels, in human merits and tears of penitence, than in the glorious work of the one Mediator.

The monks with whom Martin lived were more ignorant than himself; he could not therefore be taught by them; besides, they cared more about his doing the work of a servant, that they might live at ease. They made him attend the gates, sweep the church, and clean the rooms. And, as soon as the young monk had finished this labor, they would say to him, "Go with your bag through the town:" that is, in search of food for the convent. When they found him at his books, they cried aloud, "Come, come; it is not by study, but by begging corn, eggs, fish, and money, that you benefit the cloister." Poor Martin found that by entering a convent he had changed his garments, but not his heart. He found no peace there.

"Oh," he said, "what will deliver me from my sins, and make me holy! How shall I satisfy the justice of God? How shall I appear before him?" He almost pined away from sorrow of heart. God was thus trying him with small trials that he might the better hereafter bear great ones.

After Martin had been some time in this convent he again met with a copy of that precious book which formerly so astonished and delighted him when a student, but it was chained. He could not take it to his sleeping cell to read, nor remove it from its place, so he sat by it every time he could secretly get to the room where it was fixed. Sometimes he learned by heart long passages from that chained Bible, to repeat to himself when in his cell at night. The more he read, the more light came into his mind. He began to see the evil of sin, the wickedness of his own heart, and more than all, the rich grace and love of Jesus. He also began to detect the follies and corruptions of the church of Rome.

Two events, at this time, led his mind in the further search after the truth. As he sat in the company of some friends, one of them was suddenly killed. He then said to himself, "What would become of me, if I were thus suddenly called away?" On his return from a visit to his father, the clouds covered the sky with blackness, and a violent thunderstorm broke over his head. As he hastened along the road to find a shelter, the lightning struck the ground near to his feet. He was startled and alarmed, but was unhurt. Stopping on his journey, he fell on his knees,

and prayed to God to save him. When he arose, he said, "I must become holy." But he knew not of the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, leading to a life of faith and holiness.

Whatever Martin Luther did to find peace was still in vain. Those who saw his conduct said he was a devout man; but he replied, "I am a great sinner: how is it possible for me to satisfy Divine justice?" Salvation could not be in himself; "how then," he thought, "can I obtain it!" But the light of day was now dawning on the darkness of his mind. The Holy Spirit was convincing him of sin, and bringing him to feel his need of a Saviour.

About this time there came to the convent an old man named Staupitz. He saw how ill the poor young man looked; and he asked, "Why are you so sad, brother Martin?"

"Ah," said Luther, "I do not know what will become of me; it is in vain I make promises to God—sin is ever the strongest."

"Oh, my friend," said Staupitz, calling to mind how he had felt, "instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, cast yourself by faith into the Reedemer's arms—look at the wounds of Jesus Christ,—to the blood that he has shed for you. God is not angry with you, it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God; he became man to give you the promise of Divine favor. By his stripes are you healed; by his blood are your sins cleansed away.

Love him who first loved you; and in order that you may be filled with the love of what is good, you must first be filled with love for God." What good words—what light and peace did they afford! Luther listened for his life.

There was one part of the Bible he now studied with great diligence and interest. It was the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. And in that he saw clearly the way in which God could be just and the justifier of the ungodly. From that time he found "peace in believing." Then he was filled with love, and sought to obey God, not from fear, nor with the hope of getting to heaven through his own merits, but from the love which he felt as a child of God to his heavenly Father.

Years rolled on, and Luther became a preacher, the head of a college, and a doctor of divinity. As his influence became great, and still more great, he made known to others the truths he had found so precious to his own soul. He boldly exposed the vain teachings of the priests, their craft and evil conduct. The fame of his labors soon spread in the land, and many came to hear the gospel from his lips. In the churches, the college halls, and the open air, he set forth the only way in which a sinner can be saved.

In one of his preaching tours, Luther came to a city in which his early friends Conrad and Ursula Cotta had found a home. They had by this time lost nearly all their property; the once rich burgomaster was now a poor man, and the troubles of life had filled his heart with sorrow. He

had been told that a great preacher was on his way to the city. "They tell me," said Conrad to his wife, "that he talks bravely of free grace—that pardon for sin is to be had without money and without price." "That would just do for us," replied Ursula; "let us go to the church and hear him."

The old church that day was well filled, for nobles and merchants, working men and maidens, had come to listen to the bold preacher. Among them sat Conrad and Ursula. Strange thoughts and feelings must have moved them as they listened to the powerful voice of the monk. But when they heard him give out a psalm to be sung—his favorite forty-sixth psalm—

"God is our refuge,"

they called to mind that Christmas evening when the minstrel boy of Eisenach sang it by their own fireside.

The words that were preached sank deep into the heart of Ursula, and from that hour she was brought to know the only way in which she could be saved. Nor was this all; for Martin Luther was now in a condition to show his gratitude, and repay the kindness of those who, in the days of his youth, took into their house a poor friendless boy.

The time at last came when Luther was called forth openly to enter on the blessed Reformation. The occasion was the opening of a great market by the church of Rome. Crowds of anxious buyers: men and women, rich and

poor, old and young, flocked there to spend their money. The dealers were monks, who smiled and joked as they offered to sell their goods at the cheapest rate. But what was it they had to sell? It was, they said, *the salvation of the soul!* These dealers passed through the country in a gay carriage; three horsemen rode by their side, and servants went before them to make known their approach. As they came near to a town, the magistrates, priests, nuns, and the trades, went forth to welcome them with music, flags, and lighted tapers, amidst the ringing of bells and the shoutings of the people. We may suppose we see them as they reach the market-place. The three monks seat themselves at a table, and raise a red flag, having on it the pope's coat of arms. Before them is a money-chest; and now one of them named Tetzel, begins the sale. "Come near," he cries aloud, "and I will give you indulgences—letters duly sealed, by which even the sins you hereafter commit shall be all forgiven you: even repentance is not necessary. But more than this; these letters will not only save the living, but also the dead. The very moment the money chinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies to heaven. Bring your money; bring money; bring money." The whole account of this shameful and wicked imposture is almost too shocking for belief.

There was one whose spirit was roused, and who preached and wrote against Tetzel and his traffic. It was Martin Luther, the monk, who was now prepared for the

contest which he saw before him. Though he almost stood alone, he resolved, with God's help, to witness to the truth and expose falsehood. He more than ever attacked the errors of the church of Rome. And what was better still, he clearly and boldly declared the two great Protestant doctrines—that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, is the rule of our faith; and that a man can be justified—pardoned and accepted of God—only by believing in and trusting in the atonement and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. His success among the people filled his enemies with rage.

Tetzel sought to frighten the people by ordering a large fire to be lighted in the principal square of the city, declaring that he had orders from the pope to imprison or burn all those who dared to oppose the sale of indulgences. "Only wait," said the priests, "a fortnight, or at most a month, and that heretic, Luther, will be burned alive." But God did not let him fall into their power.

The preaching of Luther soon found favor with princes, nobles, learned doctors, and students, as well as large numbers of the common people. As the priests could not put him down, the pope wrote against him "a bull"—or a decree by which he was given over to persecution in this world and eternal death in the next. Officers were sent to burn his writings, and to publish the bull in the town where Luther lived. But the reformer was not less bold than the pope. Placing himself at the head of a crowd of doctors, students, and friends, he went to the market-

place. A fire was lighted, and, as the flames arose, he cast into them a copy of the laws of the Romish church, and the pope's bull. The spectators were filled with joy, for they had long felt the harsh and cruel power of these laws. When all was burned to ashes, Luther quietly walked to his home. By this act he made known to the world that he had for ever separated from the pope.

Luther was now summoned to appear before a diet, an assembly of princes, nobles, cardinals and bishops, in the city of Worms, to answer all charges that might be brought against him. "Do not go," said his friends; "your enemies will seize your person, and cast you into prison." "Christ liveth," replied Luther; "and I will go to Worms, in spite of all the powers of darkness. Besides, a safe conduct is provided me." "But," urged his friends, "was not a royal letter, with a promise of safe conduct given to John Huss, and yet he was betrayed and burned." Luther then concluded the debate by saying, "I must make a confession of the truth before the diet. I will go, trusting in Christ. I am bound to stand up in defence of his gospel." And he went, and before the princes and priests made a bold and brave confession of the truth.

Finding they could not prevail, they commanded him to depart at once from the town; but his friends learned that there was a plot laid to arrest him on the road, though a safe conduct had been given to him. Luther obeyed, and went forth; but as he came near to a forest, five armed men suddenly opened the door of the carriage in which he

rode, pulled him out, placed him on a horse, and riding through the forest, came at length to the castle of Wartburg. But this was a friendly capture. It was a plan to save him from the craft and cruelty of his ever-watchful foes. In the castle of Wartburg, which he called his Patmos—his place of exile—he lived for ten months. He, however, though alone, was not idle here. He spent his time in writing books and tracts, and translating the New Testament into German.

Once more Luther came forth to carry on the work of God in public; and in spite of the rage of his enemies, and the threats of the pope, the emperor, and the diet, he openly exposed the errors of the church of Rome and called on all men to come out from her, that they might not partake of her sins.

The writings of Luther were now spread far and wide. Three presses were fully at work in printing them. His books passed from hand to hand; they were carried into quiet valleys, and over some of the highest mountains. They were read in the palaces of princes, in places of learning, and in the homes of the poor. Ships carried them over wide seas, and they were reprinted in Switzerland, France, England, and other lands, until thousands of people were made to rejoice in the good news of salvation. It is said that within the space of little more than four years after publication a traveller purchased some of his works in the far-distant city of Jerusalem!

Even little children shared his love and labors. For them he wrote many sweet little hymns, which are still sung, like the Divine Songs of the good Dr. Watts, in our land, by thousands of the young in Germany. Popery then received a check which it has never recovered, and a wound from the sword of God's word of which it must die. Who can tell the full results of the labors of that bold and earnest man—

> *"The solitary monk that shook the world*
> *From Pagan slumber, when the gospel trump,*
> *Thundered its challenge from a dauntless lip*
> *In peals of truth?"*

There is a lesson, among many others, we may learn from the history of Luther. It is, that we may have much religious knowledge, and yet not know Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Even those in our days who have had the Bible from their earliest youth, may yet be strangers to its blessed truths. They may "go about to establish their own righteousness," thinking that they can become entitled to heaven by their own worthiness. They understand not the great doctrine which Luther after a long struggle was led to receive, and which is revealed in the word of God: *Salvation—Salvation by Christ—and Salvation by Christ alone;* for, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12.

Had You Been Born a Protestant

Had you been born a Protestant, you would have discovered that although there are many Protestant groups, there is one quality they all hold in common. They all believe that man's quest for God is a matter of love and will, and that it must be free. Protestantism, you would have realized, is much like democracy. As there are fifty states in the union, all different, but comprising America, so there are nearly two hundred distinctive denominations comprising Protestantism.

THE "DEMOCRACY" OF PROTESTANTISM

Just as people in certain states believe their states are best, so some Protestant worshipers believe their denominations are best. You would never persuade certain New Englanders to live in the Midwest, nor could you lure certain Midwesterners to New England. To live where they wish to live is the American privilege. You would never persuade some liberal Protestants ever to become fundamentalists, or some fundamentalists ever to become liberals. To believe what they wish to believe is the Protestant privilege.

Protestantism has many privileges and that is why a great responsibility rests upon its followers, just as a democracy puts a responsibility upon its adherents. For example, Protestantism knows no authority other than

that of the Scriptures, and this authority is often interpreted in various ways. *Protestantism knows no law other than divine love, and no truer spiritual credential than the awareness of serving God in thought, word, and deed.* These things are often interpreted differently by different groups, but every Protestant believes that the indwelling Christ is the door of perception to all that God is and all that He has devised for mankind in this life and in the life to come. Such convictions would be part of the heritage passed on to you, had you been born a Protestant.

Somewhere along the way you would also have your doubts and misgivings about Protestantism. The word itself would bother you. You would ask yourself, "What are we Protestants protesting?" A bit of research, however, would tell you that the word "Protestant" was first used in 1529. At the Diet of Spires in Germany, Charles V declared that expansion of the new evangelical religion should be suppressed. Democratic Christians protested. They issued their own ultimatum. They said, "In matters concerning God's honor and the salvation of souls, each man must for himself stand before God and give account!" From this declaration Protestantism took its name and to this day those who sincerely subscribe to the spirit of this statement are participants in the Protestant tradition.

Despite such historical justification. Protestantism is, for most Protestants, a misnomer, but no one has ever come up with a better word to describe those Christians

who are not of the Roman Catholic or Eastern Catholic persuasion.

THE ROOTS OF PROTESTANTISM

Historically, the organized Protestant groups go back to the Reformation, which was spearheaded by Martin Luther in 1517, but there were other important reform movements before the time of Luther. Groups like the Moravian Brethren, the Waldenses, and the Anabaptists were of the opinion that Catholicism as expressed in the early creeds and councils had digressed far from the apostolic church. Individuals of deep commitment like John Huss, John Wycliffe, William Occam, Girolamo Savonarola, Gerhard Groot, and others were convinced that God had given them revelations, too, and that they were called upon to correct what they believed to be corrupt conditions.

This is what Luther felt called to do. Educated and disciplined as a priest in the Augustinian order, he was led to rediscover the New Testament doctrine of salvation which persuaded him that "man is justified by faith and not by works," that there is a "priesthood of all believers," that the Bible is the only infallible rule for "faith and conduct," and that the "Holy Spirit alone can aid in the true interpretation of the Word of God."

These four fundamental principles, Protestants believe, are rooted in the Apostolic Church, the Church

inspired by Christ which developed in the days of the apostles. Protestants are convinced that they belong in the spiritual succession of the universal church. Luther, contending that Catholicism had deserted these basic principles, challenged Rome to debate and clarify 95 inconsistencies and inaccuracies which he enumerated and boldly posted on the door of his church in Wittenberg, Germany.

These "95 theses" became the groundwork for a mighty religion which was to take the name "Lutheranism" and which rapidly became a popular Christian movement. It spread through Germany and Scandinavian countries at a time when Europe was on the threshold of an intellectual, artistic, and spiritual renaissance. It was a new religious planet, or the old apostolic light returned. In its orbit were other movements and other leaders: John Calvin and John Knox, who instituted Presbyterianism; Huldreich Zwingli, who influenced the rise of Reformed groups; Thomas Munzer, who sparked a form of mysticism among the Anabaptists; and Menno Simons, who gave rise to the Mennonites.

There were groups like the Baptists, who felt that they, too, had always perpetuated the church of the early apostles. And, later, there were movements like Methodism, the Disciples of Christ, Churches of Christ, United Brethren, Congregationalism, and many more

which arose as a re-emphasis of the life and beliefs of the "apostolic tradition."

PROTESTANT BAPTISM

The differences among these various groups would be revealed to you in many ways. For example, at an early age you would very likely have been baptized in your particular parental faith. You would learn that some Protestant groups baptize infants, others baptize only adults. Some use the mode of sprinkling—the minister dipping his fingers into water and moistening the candidate's head and imparting a blessing. Some churches prescribe that the minister "pour" the water out of his cupped hands. Others employ immersion, insisting this was the practice in the early church. Some immerse once, others three times. Some immerse face forward into the water, others backward.

Certain Protestant faiths consider baptism a mystical rite, a means of grace, forgiveness, purification, regeneration. In other groups, baptism is a christening ceremony during which the child is named. But whenever and wherever Protestants are baptized, it is believed that baptism unites the believer with Christ. It is an act of holiness, and in this respect it adheres to the best in Protestant tradition which insists that, despite all ceremonialism, religion must first be an affair of the heart.

Idealistically, religion is a matter of personal commitment and freedom of will.

CONFIRMATION

Had you been born a Protestant, you would never be stampeded into holiness. You would take the baptismal vows upon yourself only when you had reached an age of accountability. Then you would become a catechumen, ready for instruction in the Bible and the catechism of your particular denomination. Here, too, the great latitude among the many Protestant groups defies generalization. Some denominations require a prescribed course of study prepared by their headquarters, some use historic catechisms, some introduce modern interpretations of the Bible, others emphasize dogma, church history, meditative techniques; but the basis of study is always designed to allow freedom in the search for truth.

Your first step on the highway of faith would be taken on the day of your confirmation, and you would learn that Protestantism is never, in any sense, a dead-end street. Confirmation, like baptism, varies as much as the denominations themselves vary, but in almost all groups confirmation means that you have reached spiritual responsibility. You are now admitted into church membership, with all its privileges and responsibilities,

and you become a member of the congregational family which is the heart of Protestant life.

Confirmation is a constant reminder that it is up to you what you will do with your Christian profession, the essence of which is poignantly phrased, "The kingdom of God is within you." This is the dynamic behind the "priesthood of believers" and the power inherent within the infallible Book. Protestantism continually assures you that it has always specialized in the individual's right to discover this kingdom of God in his own way.

Because of this you find nothing incongruous about the many divisions in Protestantism. Its democratic nature, which allows the seeker freedom of the quest, gradually impresses you with a kind of sacred idealism. You realize that it is as right for others to be loyal to their faith as it is for you to be true to yours. To admit diversity in religion is not to say that there is more than one absolute faith, but it does imply that there can be various expressions of the one.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

But you would often wonder just where Protestantism begins and where it ends. Going into an Episcopalian church, you would find it quite "Catholic" in its "setting" and its service. You would discover that most Anglicans object to being classified as Protestants. They would remind you that the Church of England had broken with

Rome before Protestant doctrines were ever accepted by the English people and that Anglicanism represents the unbroken line of apostolic tradition. You would be told by some Anglicans that their religion is half way between evangelical Protestantism and Roman Catholicism and that it embodies the most essential elements in each.

Anglicanism was, originally, a national church. Lutheran, Reformed, and Presbyterian churches were international. Lutheranism was and still is more formalistic and more liturgical than most Protestant bodies and some Lutherans, too, would resist the term "Protestant" as an identification of their Christian status. You would discover that some Protestant denominations (like the Methodist Church) are Arminian; that is, they believe in free will. Others are Calvinistic (like the Presbyterians and the Dutch Reformed) believing in a form of predestination or limited atonement. Still others, notably the Pentecostals, believe in a mystical experience, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and are quite emotional about their religion. Some Protestants (as for example, certain Adventists) insist on observing the seventh day as the Sabbath. Several (like certain Holiness groups) do not allow instrumental music, and there are those which, like certain Quaker groups, insist on complete quietude. Some Protestants are Unitarians, some Trinitarians; some are humanists, deists, theists, pantheists, spiritualists, dualists, monists; some are orthodox, neo-orthodox and some quite heterodox! There are even Protestant agnostics and

Protestant monks. Heterogeneous, complex, and amazing is the globe-circling spiritual community called by the paradoxical term: Protestantism.

If you were to ask a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints whether Mormons are Protestants, his answer would very likely be, "Mormonism is neither Protestant nor Catholic nor anything else excepting Christianity *plus*." He would mean plus the teachings of Joseph Smith and the revelations of the Book of Mormon and doctrines not commonly found in Protestantism. Yet, in the public mind, Mormons are commonly classified as Protestants. So, too, are the members of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints; the members of the Pentecostal groups, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, members of the Unity School of Christianity, the healing and preaching evangelists, the non-Catholic radio ministers and, in short, every Christian who is not a Roman Catholic or an Eastern Catholic or an Anglo-Catholic is looked upon by the "public" as a Protestant.

If you went among the snake handlers in Tennessee and asked one of their preachers what denomination he belonged to, he would very likely exclaim, "Praise the Lord, I'm a Protestant holiness man!"

Again and again you would encounter Protestant groups whose way of life is unique, distinctive, and, occasionally, tremendously austere. Such people are

found among the Mennonites and the Amish and other followers of what is historically called the Anabaptist tradition. They urge their members to live the simple life, to assert their belief in pacifism, to accept the literal interpretation of the Bible, and insofar as is humanly possible to be "in the world and not of it."

Certain Mennonite, Amish, and Hutterite people often wear distinctive attire, such as hook-and-eye jackets, broad-brimmed "preachers'" hats for the men and prayer caps for the women. Married men let their beards grow. Young people are ordered not to go to colleges or universities for fear secular education might lure them away from God. Some groups use horses and buggies instead of automobiles. Amish people refuse to take oaths, refuse to vote, refuse to become embroiled in the affairs of the community or the world. These, too, are part of Protestantism's fabulous family which under a variety of denominational labels encircles the world.

GLOBAL PROTESTANTISM

Wherever Protestantism goes it establishes religious beach-heads by starting missions, schools, and hospitals; and by developing a program of lay activities through the solemn dedication of the Christian life. Today there are approximately 300,000,000 Protestants in the world out of a total Christian population of about 1,000,000,000. Of

the nearly 120,000,000 members of Christian churches in the United States, 80,000,000 are Protestants.

The essential unity in Protestantism is centralized in a major organization known as the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Here the growing evidence of ecumenicity is graphically portrayed. The Council is a spiritual union of some thirty constituent bodies representing nearly 50,000,000 persons. It is closely related to the World Council of Churches whose headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland. Generally speaking, it advocates a liberal Protestant expression, which means that it allows for great latitude of thought on such important matters as the person and mission of Christ, Biblical scholarship, and faith and morals.

Its fundamentalist counterpart is the well-established American Council of Christian Churches which is opposed to modernism and the liberal trend. Other great national and international organizations are the World Methodist Council, the World Conference of International Pentecostal Churches, Lutheran World Federation, and many more; while Protestant missionary activity runs the gamut from home missionaries on Indian reservations in America to the impressive work of the lonely figure, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, laboring in the heart of Africa. The vastness of this picture would unfold for you as you took your place in one of the 400,000 churches which Protestants have built around the world.

THE BONDS OF MATRIMONY

If and when you contemplated marriage, your wedding would very likely be solemnized by a Protestant minister—eighty percent of Protestant weddings are. Others are "civil ceremonies" performed by a judge, justice of the peace, or, in some states, by other city officials.

Perhaps yours would be a church wedding, for marriages in Protestant sanctuaries are impressive ceremonies. They are performed "in the sight of God and His holy angels," and the bride and groom pledge their troth, "for better or worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness or in health, till death us do part." Frequently marriages are performed in a small chapel connected with the church, in the pastor's study or in the parsonage or manse.

Christian love, the ceremony makes clear, should be the dominant factor in family life. In the Protestant perspective on marriage, the love of Christ should rule the heart and direct the mind. "The bonds of matrimony," says a Protestant Book of Worship, "is an honorable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, confirmed by the teaching of our blessed Saviour, and compared by Saint Paul to the mystical union which subsists between Christ and His Church."

A Protestant service may be as elaborate or as simple as the marrying parties wish, but all Protestant weddings

consistently close with a spiritual benediction upon the solemnization of the vow. Some ministers pronounce a blessing which says, "... so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have everlasting life."

PROTESTANTISM IS A RELIGION OF THE LAITY

Your devotion to your church would deepen when your own children were baptized and when you started taking them to Sunday School and the church's services. Protestantism has nearly 300,000 Sunday Schools serving 40,000,000 Sunday School members in the United States. You would also enroll your children in vacation Bible Schools and summer camps, in young people's fellowships and spiritual brigades, for which Protestantism is famous. Protestantism is becoming more and more a religion in which the laity plays an important role. Laymen's organizations, women's associations, and youth movements represent a new dynamism in the work of the church. *Religion, the Protestant believes, must be activated by the people in the parish and demonstrated at the congregational level.* This is done by the laity who comprise the church boards, who teach in the Sunday Schools, conduct Daily Vacation Bible Schools, carry on missionary programs, and engage in countless activities that integrate religion and the church into community life.

Had you been born a Protestant, you would probably observe prayer before meals, and religion would often be

a subject of discussion and debate in the family circle. You would subscribe to at least one religious publication. You would own at least two Bibles. You would buy and read at least three religious books a year.

True to statistics and true to yourself, the older you became, the more you would love and support your church. This is not to say you would attend every worship service or contribute as much as you should to the church's program. Only some 40% of the Protestants who belong to a church attend the services regularly. Total financial contribution per member is in the neighborhood of $50 per year, but Protestant tithing and Protestant church attendance are on the increase, and love for the church is a vital, abiding reality in Protestant life.

HOLY COMMUNION

This reality, as far as a Protestant's relation to his church is concerned, is best expressed in the sacraments. While Roman Catholicism has seven sacraments—baptism, the Eucharist, confirmation, marriage, ordination, penance, and extreme unction—Protestantism generally observes two: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Had you been born a Protestant, you would find a mystical meaning in both of these sacred observances. Baptism, enjoined in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20), symbolizes the union of the believer

with Christ. Communion is symbolical of the redemption affected by Christ's death.

Some denominations, like the Disciples of Christ, observe communion each Sunday. Others administer it at stated times during the year. It generally consists of a ritual in which the member partakes of a bit of bread and drinks a sip of wine (usually unfermented grape juice) in memory of Christ's suffering and death. Whether your church invites you to come forward to the communion rail or whether you receive the bread and wine in the pew, whether your church believes that the elements are the Real Presence or merely symbolical, the Lord's Supper is so intimately associated with the heart of faith that every communion service represents a holy pilgrimage for the true worshiper.

Often during times of sickness, holy communion is administered as a special act of worship and faith. And frequently, when death is impending, the sacrament is requested by faithful Protestants.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

What does Protestantism believe about life after death? Here, again, you would find great diversity of interpretation yet surprising unity of belief. Generally speaking, Protestantism agrees that the soul of man is eternal. It believes that those who love God, who are "saved" through the redemptive work of Christ, will live

forever in fellowship with God. Personal immortality is almost universally accepted by Protestantism. It finds its proof not in pure reason or pragmatic arguments, but in God's Word. It believes in the resurrection of Christ and in His promise that those who "die in Him" shall inherit life beyond the grave.

Protestantism trusts in the goodness of God and believes that since God is good, He will not annihilate what He has made in His own image. This argument, based on the ethical in God's plan and the ethical in human life, is one of Protestantism's most impressive justifications for life after death. *Belief in Jesus, who perfectly portrayed God's love, and belief in immortality are so closely bound together that one without the other is incomplete in Protestant thought.*

Heaven and hell are actual "places" according to some Protestants, and actual "conditions" according to others. Some believe there is a "second chance" in the life to come, others do not. Some believe in an intermediary realm between heaven and hell. Some teach a "resurrection of the body"; others reject such a literal interpretation. Some groups strongly oppose cremation; others permit it. But all agree that on the matter of life after death, no greater and more explicit word was ever spoken than that of Jesus when He said, "I am the resurrection and the life...he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall be live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die." (John 11:25).

All Protestant groups agree that man is possessed of a soul or, better stated, man is a soul which, for this earthly life, has been given a physical body. For an allotted time the body is the temple of the soul (or spirit) and it is the duty of the individual to care for both body and soul as a Christian obligation. The Protestant ideal, the ultimate ideal as far as spiritual attainment is concerned, is found in the injunction, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48).

THE PROTESTANT WAY OF LIFE

Most Protestants believe perfection to be a conceivable but unattainable goal. The challenge to perfection has added the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love to the four older cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. Schleiermacher, a Protestant theologian, maintained that true religion consists of recognizing all of our duties as divine commandments. German Pietists of the 17th and 18th centuries stressed the belief that faith is "dead" unless it is demonstrated in upright living. Protestantism is more a way of life than an intellectual attitude. The Protestant may not always live the good life. He may, as has been said, despair of attaining perfection, but the ideal is ever before him and spurs him on to realize his highest self.

If the Protestant's assignment is to be "perfect" even as "God is perfect," his social obligation is no less idealistic.

He is urged to love his neighbor as himself. To gain his life he must lose it. To be greatest he must be least of all. To reign, he must serve. To receive, he must be willing to give. To demonstrate the highest love, he is challenged to lay down his life for his friends.

A PERSONALIZED FAITH

Had you been born a Protestant, the term "social gospel" would be more than a phrase. It would represent an active force for social betterment in the form of schools, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, urban and rural improvement and, most of all, active participation in contributing to the over-all concept of the "Kingdom of God." Protestantism's social consciousness is so real and vital that its pursuit has often created unity among divergent Protestant groups. Liberals, conservatives, fundamentalists, agnostics, deists, and theists, new groups as well as old within the framework of Protestantism share a common concern for the improvement of mankind around the world. They are, or seek to be, Good Samaritans, who accept responsibility for the conditions of human life as well as for the improvement of those conditions.

Peace of mind, peace of soul, positive thinking, healthful living, the will to believe are all a part of Protestantism's contemporary storehouse of faith. "Ask and you shall receive," "Seek and ye shall find," "Greater

things than these shall you do," "Bring your tithes into the storehouse and prove me now, saith the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you,"— these and many more are Protestantism's words to live by. In an age full of frustrations, tensions, anxiety, and insecurity, a wave of "do-the-possible-and-God-will-do-the-impossible" has become a Protestant conviction. From the most ardent fundamentalists to the ultraliberals, some form of "power through God-power" has been introduced to meet a people's need.

Had you been born a Protestant, you would be urged to use your faith for the solution of your needs. You would find Protestant healing services, pastoral clinics, suggested affirmations, daily meditations, and all sorts of books and aids ready to help you. You would find ministers appealing to you as if you had the capacity within yourself— "the God-presence"— to meet any problem and to triumph over any impending defeat.

Because of the variegated pattern of Protestantism there are, of course, many shades of emphasis in this gospel of abundance. Theologians, though affected by it and even inclined to practice its techniques, argue against it because it lacks theological depth and intellectual content. They look with scholarly dissent upon the theological emptiness of modern personalized faith. But the practicers of these "spiritual techniques" look with equal dissent upon the theological and academic passion of their accusers.

PROTESTANTISM AND APPLIED CHRISTIANITY

The average Protestant affirms that neither creed nor theology can ever take primacy over the Scriptures. If Jesus and the disciples healed the sick, there is no reason not to look for healing miracles today. If the Master promised that those who follow Him should do works as great or greater than His own, why not expect great things from those who live the Christ-life in the modern world?

This is not to say that the theologian has no voice in Protestantism. He surely has, but his voice is rarely understood by the people in the pews. Few Protestant lay members could tell you anything about the theological or philosophical concepts of such men as Kierkegaard, Barth, the Niebuhrs, Brunner, Tillich, or Bultmann. The work of these men is far beyond the normal interest of the Protestant laity. Right or wrong, for better or worse, today's Protestant is primarily concerned with the application of the precepts and practices of Christ in the workaday life of the individual.

An interpreter for the people, such as a Harry Emerson Fosdick; a preacher to the people, such as a Ralph Sockman; a mystic among the people, such as a Rufus Jones; a spiritual technician, such as a Norman Vincent Peale; a zealous evangelist such as a Billy Graham; and most of all, someone who demonstrates the Christian life in selfless service like a Frank Laubach in his exhaustless

work among the world's illiterates or the selfless service of a Dr. Larimer Mellon in Haiti; these are the men who would influence you most, had you been born a Protestant.

The term "Protestantism" as a mark of Christian identification would not seem overly important to you. Unlike the Catholic, you would believe that even if your church should pass away, your faith will never pass away. Unlike the Jew, you are not intent on perpetuating a tradition, excepting the tradition of democratic Christian thought. Unlike the Moslem, you have no prescribed acts of worship, unless it is the act of faith. *Unlike the followers of other great religions, you believe in the daring—some say dangerous—practice of exercising private judgment in interpreting the Bible, believing that the Holy Spirit will aid you in your interpretation if your search is sincere.*

Had you been born a Protestant, you would feel sure that your religion is rich in hope and peace. You would believe that its God is a God of joy. Aware of your sins, you would seek God for forgiveness; grateful for the promise of salvation, you would praise Him for His grace.

PROTESTANT UNITY IS A REALITY

You would join with Protestants throughout the world in a universal creed, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty...." You would unite with Christians everywhere in praying, "Our Father, which art in heaven...." You

would be sensitive to the beliefs of all men because of your conviction that "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." You would observe the great holy seasons and holy days of the liturgical year: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost. You would express your faith in such observances as World Day of Prayer, Laymen's Sunday, Mission Festivals, Harvest Home observances. Mother's Day, and others.

Protestant hymns reflect your deepest faith in special ways. "A Mighty Fortress is our God," "The Church's One Foundation," "Joy to the World," "Up From the Grave He Arose," "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy," "This is My Father's World." Had you been born a Protestant, you would know and love these hymns. You would also be acquainted with gospel songs and Negro spirituals.

Wherever you went in the world you would hear Protestantism singing, in city churches and country chapels, in distant mission fields and in denominational schools, singing songs of faith which tell the gospel story. One song has been translated into more than sixty languages. It is Protestantism's marching song and, as you sang it, you would realize that most non-Protestants have a hard time believing it, for this song, "Onward Christian Soldiers," proclaims in splendidly spirited style, *"We are not divided, all one body we! One in hope and doctrine, one in charity!"*

Protestantism's amazing diversity makes it difficult for these words to sound convincing. Yet, they express the Protestant ideal, not fully realized, not wholly demonstrated, but apparent and real in the heart of the true Protestant believer.

"Protestantism," said an old medical doctor, "ought to remind a man of spring. Or spring of Protestantism. It is new life beginning to move. New cells splitting up. It is like the process of mitosis—cell division, cell growth. The multiplication of cells is one of the manifestations of an inherent vital force. You say there are some two hundred Protestant denominations? There are more than two hundred chromosomes in primitive germ cells. I say that's good. It is not unification that makes life move. It's diversity. It is not somebody saying, 'I speak for 300,000,000 Christians!' It is rather every Protestant in the world testifying to what religion has done for him and letting us decide what it can do for us. That is what faith is, whether you like it or not. That is what I call unity in diversity. And that, my friend, is exactly why and how Protestantism came into the world."

To all of which you would no doubt say, "Amen!" had you been born a Protestant.

From Plowboy to Prophet

The story I am going to tell you had its beginning in a small, frame house, which once stood in the little town of Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont. It was surrounded by a number of beautiful shade trees, and in it there lived a poor, but happy family by the name of Smith. The family consisted of Joseph Smith, the father, Lucy Smith, the mother, five sons and three daughters.

If you had lived in Sharon at the time of which I speak, and had taken a peep into that humble home on the 23rd of December—just two days before Christmas—1805, you would have seen a good, kind mother lying upon a soft, warm bed, and a little, new-born babe sleeping peacefully on her bosom. The woman was Mrs. Lucy Smith, and the child which nestled in her loving arms was the baby Joseph, God's precious Christmas gift to her, and also to the whole world.

Day after day friends and neighbors called to see Mrs. Smith and her baby. They took the little one gently in their arms and kissed his dear, sweet, innocent lips, but not one of them knew that they were looking upon the great Prophet of the last days.

At the proper time the baby was christened. He was given the name of Joseph Smith. That, you know, was also the name of his father.

Light from the Scriptures

The Smith family was poor. Their farm was not a very good one, and the father and mother had to work hard for the support of themselves and their children.

As soon as the girls were able to help in the home, and the boys on the farm, they willingly did so.

In the picture you see the boy Joseph ploughing with a yoke of oxen. He had very little time for school, but in the evenings, when his work was done, he studied at home, and learned to read and write, and to work simple examples in arithmetic. I am sure he often felt sorry that he was not able to go to school as much as the other boys. But, then, he must have felt happy in the thought that he was helping to lighten the burdens of his parents.

When Joseph was ten years of age his father left his place in Sharon and moved the family to Palmyra, in the State of New York. Four years later they left Palmyra and went to live in the town of Manchester, in the same State.

At that time the people in that part of the country became very much excited over religious matters. Almost every evening meetings were held in the churches. Joseph's mother and two of his brothers and a sister joined the Presbyterian Church. But Joseph did not unite himself with any church. I suppose you would like to know the reason why. Well, the reason was because they all taught

different doctrines, and he did not know which one taught the true Gospel, or which was the true Church.

I think I know, to a certain extent, how he felt. One day I went to a railway depot in England to take a train for London. There were six or seven trains standing on different tracks, all waiting the signal to start. I did not know which train to take, and for a little while I stood puzzled. Just then I caught sight of a sign-board, on which was printed in large letters,

"Train for London on track 7."

Then I knew what to do. I boarded the train on the seventh track, and in due time arrived in London.

In the same way Joseph Smith was puzzled concerning the churches. How was he to know which of them was the true Church? Well, the Lord had prepared means, just as the railway company in England had prepared signs to direct people to the trains they wished to take. The way in which Joseph found the truth is told in the next chapter.

Joseph's First Prayer. The Answer.

One evening Joseph took down the large, family Bible, and began to read its sacred pages. The Lord was guiding him at that time, but the boy did not know it. As he read, he came to the fifth verse of the first chapter of the Epistle of James, which reads as follows, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

This scripture caused Joseph to stop and think. It made a great impression upon his mind. It seemed to say to him, "You wish to know which of the churches is the true Church. Well, if you will ask God He will tell you."

Joseph decided to do that. But he did not tell any member of the family what was in his heart. He closed the Bible, put it back in its place, and then went to his bed, little dreaming that the next day he would have news which in the course of time would startle the whole world.

He awoke early the next morning, arose and dressed himself. The rest of the family were fast asleep, so, slipping quietly out of the house, Joseph made his way to a small grove not far from his father's home. It was a beautiful spring morning. The sun was gilding the hill tops, the birds were singing their songs in the trees, and the air was scented with the fragrance of wild flowers. All nature seemed to say, "God lives. God is good. He loves His children and delights to bless them."

Selecting a suitable spot in the grove, Joseph knelt down and began to call upon God in earnest prayer. While he was praying he saw an exceedingly bright light coming down out of heaven. He gazed in astonishment on this strange sight, while a peaceful influence filled his soul. As the light reached the tops of the trees, Joseph beheld in the midst of it two heavenly Beings. They were in the form of men, but far more glorious and beautiful. They were God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. Pointing to the Son,

the Father said, "Joseph, this is my beloved Son, hear Him."

As soon as Joseph was able to speak he asked the Lord which of the churches was the true Church. He was surprised when the Lord told him that all the churches had departed from the right way, that they had been established by men and not by God, that none of them taught the true Gospel, and that he was not to join any of them.

Then the Lord told Joseph that in due time the true Church would be set up again on earth, and that if he were true and faithful he would be chosen to be its leader and Prophet.

Filled with wonder and surprise, Joseph arose and returned to his home.

How Joseph's Story was Received.

Joseph felt very strange all the rest of the day. He could think of nothing but the wonderful vision he had had, and the things which the Lord had told him. But these things had not been revealed to him just for his own benefit. Others should know of them as well as he. Yes, he would tell the people the glad tidings, so that they might rejoice with him, and look forward with joy to the time when the true Church would be again established in the earth.

Who should he tell first? Why, who but one of the ministers, and he in turn could tell all the members of his

church. So, with a glad heart, Joseph went to the minister of one of the churches and told him about the glorious vision he had had in the grove, and also the things which the Lord had told him.

You can imagine how the boy felt when the minister turned to him and said, "I do not believe one word of what you have told me. It is all of the wicked one. There are no such things as visions and revelations in these days." But Joseph knew better. He knew that he had had a vision. He knew that he had seen the Father and the Son, and that the Lord had talked with him. People might mock his testimony and refuse to believe it, but that would not rob him of the knowledge he had received from God.

In a short time the news concerning Joseph's vision reached the ears of the ministers of the different churches in the neighborhood. What effect did it have upon them? I am sorry to tell you that it had much the same effect that the telling of Joseph's dreams had upon his brethren, that the news of the Savior's birth had upon Herod, and the testimony of Stephen had upon the people who heard it—it made them very angry, and aroused in their hearts a deadly hatred against him.

At that time Joseph was only a boy. His tender age alone ought to have protected him, but it did not. He was treated as if he were a full-grown man, and also as one of the greatest impostors the world had ever seen.

The courage which the boy displayed was truly marvelous. From every quarter he received bitter persecution, but as the Prophet Daniel stood undaunted in the midst of the lions, so Joseph Smith stood in the midst of his enemies. He never flinched from his position. Who gave him such courage? Who enabled him to stand alone? Who gave courage to Joseph, the son of Jacob, to defend the truth which had been revealed to him? Who gave courage to David to enable him to fight the giant Goliath? Who gave courage to Daniel to enter the den of lions? Who gave courage to the three Hebrews to face the fiery furnace? Who gave courage to Stephen to die for the truth? It was the God of Heaven. It was He, also, who sustained the boy Joseph Smith in the midst of all his trials and persecutions.

Joseph Visited by the Angel Moroni.

I am now going to tell you about another wonderful thing. It took place one night in September, three years from the time Joseph had seen the glorious vision in the grove.

Joseph had just gone to bed. As he lay there his thoughts wandered back to the morning when, in answer to prayer, the Father and Son had appeared to him. He felt that he would like to know if the Lord was still pleased with him. He began to pray, believing firmly that his prayer would be answered. And so it was.

While Joseph was praying, a bright, heavenly light entered the room. The light increased, and in a few minutes the little bed-chamber was filled with it. On looking up, Joseph was greatly startled.

Close beside his bed stood a heavenly messenger, his feet a short distance from the floor. This holy being was the Angel Moroni. He had come with a very important message from the Lord.

The angel was clothed in a robe of spotless white. His head, hands and feet were bare. His face was as bright as the sun at noonday. He called Joseph by name, and then began to tell him about a great work which the Lord had marked out for him.

Joseph listened with the greatest interest while the angel talked to him. He told him about a wonderful record, or history, which had been hidden from the world for hundreds of years. It was written in a strange language, upon gold plates, and was buried in the Hill Cumorah, not far from Joseph's home. It was a history of the people who lived in this land long before and after the time of the Savior.

It also told about Jesus appearing to them, after His resurrection, and of the glorious gospel which He had taught them.

The angel said that in the course of time the Lord would permit Joseph to take the plates from their hiding place. He would also help him to translate the writing

upon them into the English language. After that the book would go into all the world, and the people would learn of the wonderful things which the Lord had done among the early inhabitants of this land.

Moroni told Joseph many other important things. When he had delivered his message, the angel departed.

As Joseph lay thinking over what had taken place, the light again entered his room. Then the angel appeared the second time, and repeated all that he had said before, adding some things. He then took his departure, but in a short time re-appeared, and delivered the same message. He told Joseph that when he received the plates he would have to take great care of them, and hold them as a sacred gift from God.

The vision closed, and the angel disappeared.

Joseph Visits Cumorah and Views the Plates.

Joseph's interview with the angel lasted the whole night. When the morning came he arose and attended to his chores as usual. He did not tell anyone what had happened during the night.

After breakfast, he went with his father to the field, but he was so weak that he could not work. His father, seeing that he was not feeling well, told him to go home.

Joseph started for the house, but in trying to climb a fence his strength failed him, and he fell helpless to the

ground. He lay unconscious for some time. When he recovered he looked up and saw the Angel Moroni.

The heavenly messenger repeated what he had told him the previous night. He then told Joseph to go back to his father and tell him all that had taken place.

Mr. Smith listened to his son's story with interest and astonishment. It was, indeed, a wonderful thing. But he knew that Joseph had told the truth, for he was a good, honest, truthful boy. Indeed, Joseph could not have told such a story if it had not been true. What boy ever thought of such things? Not one in all the world.

Joseph's father told him that what he had seen and heard was of God, and that he must do all that the angel told him. By this time Joseph felt better, and he started for the Hill Cumorah.

On arriving at the hill, he went straight to the place where the plates were buried. It had been shown to him in vision the night before. He saw a stone just a little above the ground. With the aid of a lever he raised it, and there, in a box made of four flat stones, lay the gold plates.

Beside the plates was a curious instrument, called the Urim and Thummim. It was like a pair of large spectacles. It had been put there to aid Joseph in translating the writing upon the plates.

Joseph put forth his hands to take the plates from their hiding place. At that moment the Angel Moroni appeared and stopped him. He said the time had not come for

Joseph to get the sacred history. He told Joseph to come to the hill on the same day each year for four years. At the end of that time, if he should prove faithful, the Lord would let him take the plates.

Joseph put the stone lid back on the box, covered it over as before, and returned to his home to begin the work of preparing himself for his great mission.

Joseph Receives the Plates.

During the next two years Joseph helped his father on the farm. He also worked for neighboring farmers. He did his work well, and his employers were pleased with him.

Then he went to work in an old silver mine. It was owned by a man named Josiah Stoal. At the end of a month Joseph got Mr. Stoal to stop working the mine, as there was no sign that it would pay. But Mr. Stoal did not want to part with Joseph, so he kept him to do other work.

While working for this man, Joseph boarded with a family by the name of Hale. Mr. Hale had a daughter named Emma. Joseph and Emma grew to love each other, and in the course of time they were married. After his marriage, Joseph went to work again for his father.

Finally the time came for Joseph to get the plates. It was the 22nd of September, 1827. With feelings of joy and fear Joseph started for Cumorah. At the hill he was met by the Angel Moroni. The cover was taken off the stone box,

the sacred record was lifted from its hiding place and placed in the hands of Joseph.

The heavenly messenger then told him to take the greatest care of the plates, and not to let them pass out of his hands. The plates were about eight inches long, and each one was almost as thick as common tin. They were bound together with three rings. They made a book about six inches thick. Part of the record was sealed. The angel told Joseph that when he had translated the unsealed part he would come and take charge of the plates again.

When it became known that Joseph had the plates, wicked men did all in their power to get them. But they did not succeed, for Joseph remembered the instruction of the angel, and kept them hid.

Persecution became so strong in Manchester that Joseph and his wife decided to go to Pennsylvania, to the home of Mr. Hale, Emma's father. But how to get there they did not know. It was nearly one hundred and fifty miles, and Joseph had no money.

But the Lord sent help to His servant. He put it into the heart of a man names Martin Harris to give Joseph fifty dollars to help him on his journey. Joseph felt very grateful for this kindness, and from that time Martin Harris became one of his best friends.

With his wife and the sacred record Joseph started in a wagon for Pennsylvania. One day wicked men stopped

him. They searched the wagon for the plates but failed to find them. Joseph had hidden them in a barrel of beans.

At the home of Mr. Hale, Joseph began to copy the characters which were upon the plates, and to translate them into the English language.

Professor Anthon's Testimony.

Joseph spent about two months copying and translating the characters which were upon the plates. That kind of writing looks very strange to us. How hard it would be for a person to translate this writing into English. Joseph could not have done such a thing without the help of the Lord.

One day Martin Harris went to Mr. Hale's home to visit the Prophet. He asked Joseph if he would let him take some of the characters he had copied and translated, to New York, to show to a learned man there.

Joseph said he could do so. On arriving in New York, Mr. Harris went to Professor Charles Anthon. This man was able to speak several languages. Mr. Harris showed him the work Joseph had done, and asked him to give his opinion about it.

Professor Anthon looked at the characters which Joseph had copied, also the translation. He said the characters were true, and that the translation was correct. He gave Mr. Harris a letter to this effect.

Just as Mr. Harris was about to leave, Professor Anthon said to him, "How did the young man find out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them?" Mr. Harris said an angel of God had revealed it to him.

On hearing that, the professor said, "Let me see that letter." Mr. Harris took it out of his pocket and handed it to him. The learned man tore it into pieces, saying there were no such things now as the ministering of angels.

Professor Anthon told Martin Harris that if he would bring the record to him he would translate it. Mr. Harris said he could not do so, as Joseph would not let anyone take the plates. He also told the professor that part of the plates was sealed. On hearing that, the learned man said, "I cannot read a sealed book." Martin Harris went back to Joseph and told him all that Professor Anthon had said.

I am now going to show you how a prophecy was fulfilled at that time. You have all heard of the Prophet Isaiah. He lived before the time of the Savior. He wrote a book; it is one of the books of the Bible. If you will turn to the twenty-ninth chapter of the book of Isaiah, you will find these words, beginning at the 11th verse:

"And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed."

That prophecy was fulfilled when Martin Harris took the copy of the characters and the translation to Professor

Anthon. When told that a part of the record was sealed, the learned man said, "I cannot read a sealed book."

The book was given to Joseph Smith, who was not learned, and he, by the gift and power of God, translated it into the English language. That precious record is the Book of Mormon.

What Happened through the Breaking of a Promise.

Martin Harris was greatly interested in the Prophet Joseph and in the work which he was doing. Soon after his visit to Professor Anthon, he went to Joseph and told him he would like to write for him while he translated the engravings upon the plates. Joseph accepted this kind offer and Mr. Harris became his scribe.

The work of translation was very slow and also very difficult. But it gave Joseph and Martin great joy. They were in the service of the Lord. What a wonderful history they were preparing! Tens of thousands of people would rejoice when they read of the great things which the Lord had done among the early inhabitants of this land.

At the end of two months Martin Marris had written 116 large pages of the translation. His wife had asked him a number of times for permission to see what he had written.

One day Martin asked Joseph to let him take the papers away, to show to a few friends. Joseph refused to do so. Then Martin wanted Joseph to ask the Lord about

the matter. The Prophet did so, and received an answer, through the Urim and Thummim, telling him not to let Martin have the papers.

But Martin was not satisfied. He asked Joseph to enquire of the Lord again. The answer was the same as before. A third time Martin asked for the same thing. Then the word of the Lord came to Joseph saying he might allow Martin Harris to take the papers, but that he, Joseph, would be held responsible for them.

Martin promised Joseph that he would let only five persons see the papers. These were his wife, his father and mother, his brother, and his wife's sister. I am sorry to say that Martin Harris failed to keep his promise. He let wicked men have the sacred writings. They kept them, and neither Martin nor Joseph ever saw them again.

Joseph was punished for doing as Martin asked him. The Urim and Thummim was taken from him, so that he could not translate. The Prophet had great sorrow because of this. He humbled himself before the Lord and prayed for forgiveness. At length his prayer was answered, his sin was pardoned, and the Urim and Thummim given back to him.

Martin Harris was more severely punished. He lost his place as scribe, and was never allowed to write again for the Prophet. What a serious thing it is for a person to break a promise made to the Lord, or even to one of His servants!

The Aaronic Priesthood Restored.

Joseph felt sorry at losing the help of Martin Harris. He had now no one to write for him. He prayed to the Lord to send some one to assist him. His prayer was answered; the help came.

One Sabbath evening a young man named Oliver Cowdery called at the home of Mr. Hale, and enquired for Joseph. He was introduced to the Prophet. He told Joseph he had just come from Manchester, where he had been teaching school. He had heard that Joseph had been visited by heavenly Beings, and had prayed to the Lord to know if the report were true. He received a testimony that Joseph had been called of God to do a great work, and was also told that he had been chosen to assist the Prophet.

Oliver said he would be glad to write for Joseph. His offer was accepted, and two days later Joseph again began the work of translating, Oliver writing for him.

One day in May, 1829, they came to a passage in the sacred record which caused them to stop and think seriously. It spoke of baptism for the remission of sins. Joseph and Oliver had not been baptized. What were they to do?

After talking the matter over for some time, they decided to pray to the Lord about it. They went to the woods, and there they asked the Lord to make plain to them the meaning of baptism for the remission of sins.

In answer to their prayer, a heavenly messenger appeared before them. He told them he was John the Baptist, the same who had baptized the Savior, and that he had been sent by the Apostles Peter, James and John to them. Placing his hands upon the heads of Joseph and Oliver, he uttered these words:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."

He then told Joseph and Oliver to go down to the water and baptize each other. After giving them other instructions, he was taken up in the midst of a pillar of light.

Joseph and Oliver then went to the river and were baptized. Joseph baptized Oliver and then Oliver baptized Joseph. The power of God rested upon them, and by the gift of prophecy Joseph foretold of the establishment of the Church of Christ upon the earth in these last days.

With hearts filled with thanksgiving and gladness they returned to their work of translation.

The Gold Plates are Shown to Three Witnesses.

At this time two of Joseph's brothers, Samuel H. and Hyrum, came to visit him. He was very glad to see them. He talked with them a long time. He told them about the visit of John the Baptist. This heavenly messenger had given him and Oliver Cowdery authority to baptize people for the remission of their sins. He and Oliver had been baptized.

Joseph told his brothers to pray to the Lord about this matter. They did so. The Lord gave them a testimony that what Joseph had told them was true. Then Joseph's brothers were baptized.

Joseph was very poor at that time. He had no money to buy food for his family. He was thinking about going out to work. Just then help was sent him. A kind-hearted man named Joseph Knight, who lived in New York, had heard of the Prophet. He came to see him, and brought him a supply of food.

Soon after that, Joseph was visited by a young man named David Whitmer. He came with a message from his father, Peter Whitmer. Mr. Whitmer lived in Fayette, Seneca county, New York. He also had heard of the Prophet, and of the wonderful book he was translating. He invited Joseph and Oliver to come to his home and do the work there. He would keep them, free of charge, and would see that no harm came to them.

Joseph felt thankful for this kind offer. He said he would go. He and Oliver got ready to move to Fayette. But Joseph was troubled about the gold plates. He might be robbed of them on the way. Just then the Angel Moroni appeared and told Joseph that he would take charge of the plates.

After Joseph had been at Mr. Whitmer's home a short time he went out into the garden. He there met the Angel Moroni and received from him the sacred record.

The Whitmer family were very kind to Joseph and Oliver. They told some of their neighbors about the Prophet, and invited them to come and see him. Joseph told them about the great things which the Lord had done. Some of them believed his words and were baptized.

One day the Lord made known to Joseph that three witnesses were to see the gold plates. These men were Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. They felt very happy when they heard the news.

Joseph went to the woods with these three brethren. They all prayed to the Lord. But their prayer was not answered. They prayed again. Still no answer came. Then Martin Harris said he was the cause of their prayers not being answered. The Lord was not well pleased with him, because he had broken his promise to Joseph.

Martin Harris left the brethren. He felt very sorry. He went off: by himself, to ask the Lord to forgive him. After he had gone, Joseph, Oliver and David began to pray.

While they were doing so a bright light shone down upon them. Then the Angel Moroni appeared before them. He had with him the gold plates, also the Urim and Thummim.

The heavenly messenger turned over, one by one, the leaves of the part that was not sealed. The brethren saw the characters which were upon them. While they were looking upon the plates they heard a voice from heaven. It was the voice of the Lord. He said the record was true, and that it had been translated correctly. They were told to bear testimony to the world of the things they had seen and heard.

Then Joseph went to Martin Harris and they prayed together. Their prayer was answered. The angel came and showed the plates to Martin. He also heard the voice from heaven. He fell on his face, crying, "It is enough! Mine eyes have beheld! Mine eyes have beheld!"

The three witnesses then returned with the Prophet to the home of Peter Whitmer. You can find their testimony, also the testimony of eight other witnesses, in the front of the Book of Mormon.

The Melchizedek Priesthood Restored.

At last the work of translating was done. Then the Angel Moroni called for the plates. He still has charge of them. Part of them, you know, was sealed. Some time the

sealed part will be translated. Then we will learn more about the great things which the Lord has done.

The book was now ready to be printed. Mr. Grandin, a printer in New York, said he would print and bind five thousand copies for three thousand dollars. He was given the work. Martin Harris gave security for the payment of the printing.

Then Joseph went back to Pennsylvania to visit his wife Emma. He told her how the Lord had blessed him in his work. It made her feel very happy.

Soon after that another wonderful thing took place. One day in June, 1829, Joseph and Oliver were in the State of New York. They were out in a quiet part of the country. They were talking about the Lord and about the great work He was helping them to do.

Just then three angels came down and stood before them. These heavenly visitors were three of the Lord's apostles. They were Peter, James and John. They told Joseph and Oliver that they had come to confer upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood. That would give them authority to lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. They could also organize the true Church of Christ again on the earth.

Then Peter, James and John placed their hands upon Joseph's head and ordained him the first Elder in the Church. They then ordained Oliver the second Elder.

In the year 1830, the Book of Mormon was published. On the 6th day of April, in the same year, a meeting was held at the house of Peter Whitmer. A number of people were present who had been baptized. Joseph asked them if they would like him and Oliver to be their leaders and teachers. They all said they would. The Sacrament was administered. Joseph and Oliver then laid their hands upon the heads of those who had been baptized, and confirmed them. On that day the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized.

The Mormon

Ted Logan's interest in the Mormon faith was spiritual; mine, geographic. He was following a religious trail; I, road maps.

Our Protestant backgrounds were much alike. We had been indoctrinated with the same catechism, studied the same church histories and subscribed to the same creeds. As we grew older we both felt that there should be more to religion than we had found in books, and I think we were both looking for whatever it is that helps men give a better account of themselves right here and now. Our quests had followed similar lines until the day Ted found his answer in the Mormon faith. Then he said, "Someday when you, too, find the truth, those lines will converge."

About the time he joined the Mormon Church I was sightseeing, standing on a lonely wind-swept hill in the Green Mountains near Sharon, Vermont. The Mormons had sanctified this verdant spot with landscaping and an obelisk that looked like the Washington Monument in miniature. I was told that it weighed a hundred tons and that it was thirty-eight and a half feet high, a foot for every year of the life of the man to whom it was dedicated. On the dark gray granite shaft was the inscription: "Sacred to the memory of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, born here 23rd December, 1805, martyred at Carthage, Illinois, 27th June, 1844."

Near by stood "Memorial Cottage," a modest white frame house honoring the boyhood years of the Prophet's life. I went in and found in the visitors' register a cross section of what America thinks about Mormonism. There before me were the comments in various languages, in many styles of handwriting:

Deep respect for the Mormon faith.
I found God through Joseph Smith.
Baptized here today. Wonderful faith!
Joseph Smith, a man who has deluded millions.
Who can believe all this?
Judge not for ye know not.
I helped draw this monument up here with my team.
Joseph Smith, a false prophet.
Joseph Smith, a true prophet
The Spirit of the Prophet is upon me.

I went to the farm near Palmyra, New York, where the boy Joseph came with his parents. Here at the age of fourteen he saw a vision and heard a voice. To my convert friend this was Joseph's first revelation; to me it was a legend. I walked the short quarter-mile of farm lane to the remnant of an old rail fence where a sign read: "Sacred Grove...Silence please." I pushed open the rustic iron gate.

Enchanted elms and maples which sheltered the place from the world let in the soft glow of late afternoon and wove patterns on the grass-covered ground. Above me transparent clouds lined with the mystic blue of the sky

might have been spirit forms brushing against the topmost leaves. Mormons believed that Joseph Smith saw much more than this. He came here one day confused by the multiplicity of Christian sects which during the days of his youth were beating revival drums in opposing camps. He knelt down in this grove. Here where I was standing he prayed aloud and asked God to show him the true faith. His answer was a shaft of light breaking through the trees and stretching into heaven like a marble tower. Dazed, he looked at it and saw within it two personages. He heard a voice: "This is my beloved Son. Hear Him!" He was almost overcome as the voice continued, telling him to join none of the existing faiths. "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They teach false doctrines and the commandments of men. They have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. Soon the fullness of the gospel will be revealed to you."

This, then, was hallowed ground. This was the site of the first great Mormon miracle. But I saw only drifting clouds. The voices I heard were chirping birds. Silently the mystery of religion held me in thought; not only Mormon religion; every religion with its claims of miracles and voices and visions.

There was the sound of someone approaching. Into the clearing came an elderly man who nodded a greeting and made his way slowly to a weathered bench at the edge of the grove. He sat down, carefully putting his hat beside him. Soon he leaned back and closed his eyes.

I moved about in the grove interesting myself in some of the initials which thoughtless worldlings had carved into the trees. After a moment the stranger spoke. "Your first visit here?" he asked.

"Yes. And yours?"

"I come here often," he said. "It is very peaceful."

"Are you a Mormon?"

"I am."

"Have you always been one?"

"No."

"Didn't you find it hard to believe some of these Mormon miracles, such as the one that is supposed to have happened here?"

"Very hard," he confessed.

"I should think so," I said.

"Very hard," he repeated as if recalling obstacles which had seemed insurmountable in the path of his quest. "But then I remembered that what took place here is not so unusual in religion."

"What do you mean?"

"A voice came to Samuel," he reflected. "Angels stood at the tent of Abraham. Shepherds heard a song in the night and saw a heavenly host. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. These and many other happenings are like the Prophet's experiences. The day of revelation is

not past. Religion is a matter of belief. There is always something that we must accept on faith."

The wind stirred through the trees. The clouds went on their mysterious unobstructed way. Perhaps the old man was right. But there was something about miracles in the State of New York that seemed a good deal less genuine than miracles in Bible lands. Why that should be, I did not know. I suppose I had been thoroughly indoctrinated with such things as the "song in the night" and with the heavenly visitations recorded in Holy Writ. The element of time also played its part. It was much easier to accept the accounts of a few thousand years ago than to believe those that had happened during the past century. After all, the boy Joseph was not the boy Samuel, though for a moment I wondered why he should not have had a right to hear voices if heaven wanted it so. "The day of revelation is not past" was a basic Mormon concept, and I could not say that I did not agree. But there was no converging of the lines of Ted Logan's quest and mine when I left the Sacred Grove. He, like the stranger, had the will to believe; I, the urge to investigate.

Not far from the entrance to the lane, just across a country road, stood the Smith farmhouse. This was also historically important, and the guide led me reverently up the spindled stairway to Joseph's bedroom.

"Is this where he had his other vision?" I asked.

"The Angel Moroni appeared to Joseph several times" came the answer. "But the house where the first visitations occurred was a log cabin which stood on the other side of the road. Unfortunately that has been torn down."

"How old was Joseph when Moroni first appeared to him?"

"He was eighteen."

"And he was told where the book of gold was hidden?"

'"Yes, the book and the Urim and Thummim. Those are the crystals which were to help in the translation. Some call them magic spectacles. There was also a breastplate into which these fit, and it must have resembled the breastplate of the ancient high priests."

"So Joseph went out and dug up the treasure?"

"No," corrected the guide. "The Angel Moroni appeared to him three times during that first period of visitation. He took Joseph to the Hill Cumorah and showed him the hiding place. He showed him the book and the breastplate. But there was a long period of testing before Joseph was allowed to receive them. He had to wait four years."

"Did his parents know about all of this?"

"They did."

"What did they say?"

"They knew it was of the Lord, but they kept the secret to themselves as much as they could. They knew that Joseph had been set aside for a special mission."

"No one else knew about it?"

"Joseph married Emma Hale during this time and she, of course, knew the story. It is said that she waited at the bottom of the Hill Cumorah on the day that the book was delivered to Joseph. She waited in the wagon knowing that the miracle was being enacted. You must visit the Hill Cumorah. It is very beautiful, but I think perhaps it was even more beautiful when Joseph stood there with the angel."

A short time later I, too, saw Moroni brilliant and compelling against the distant sky. Standing with his right hand pointed to the heavens, he ruled the countryside from the highest point on Cumorah Hill. He did not come to me. I climbed the long stretch of grassy slope and went to him. To Joseph he was substance and spirit. To me he was only a sculptured figure atop a towering shaft. Yet from his exalted station he seemed to be saying, "Here on this spot plates of gold were actually buried for fourteen hundred years. Here I revealed these plates to Joseph Smith. Here I said to him, 'God has work for you to do and your name shall be held for good and evil among all nations.'"

It was only the echo of my thoughts. Fragments of Mormon history were crystallizing in my mind in this

locale where the Mormon story was born. Here at the end of the fourth year of his time of testing when Joseph was twenty-one, he was ordered by Moroni to grub away the earth from the surface of a stone. Then he fixed a lever under it and pried it up. Before him lay the religious treasure. The plates of gold were about seven inches wide and eight inches long, paper-thin and fastened together by three rings near the edge. In thickness the book measured about six inches. Part of it was sealed, which meant that it contained prophecy for a still later revelation. Near the plates lay the breastplate together with the crystal spectacles. Joseph touched these things and handled them.

Moroni gave him strength to carry them, hidden beneath his coat, down to where his wife was waiting. Excitedly they drove home, and Joseph told the story first to his father and mother and then to his two brothers and his sister. Carefully he concealed the precious apports, thereby keeping Moroni's command to show them to no one for the time being. The members of the family kept his sayings in their hearts. Soon the work of translation would begin. Soon Joseph would be directed how this was to be done. "Truly," said the father, "this thing is of the Lord."

To me it was a story; to Ted Logan, a miracle.

Skeptics there must have been among those who made the pilgrimage to Mormon hill the day I stood near

the Moroni monument. Some looked at the sculptured panels at the base of the shaft and turned away smiling wisely. One man remarked, "Doggonedest story I ever heard." Another: "Well, who's to say?" And still a third: "You should see this at night when the lights are on. You'd swear the angel was real." Silently Moroni stood with his right hand raised to heaven and his left hand over the book of gold, and no one looked up at him without going away in a more thoughtful mood than he had come.

A young couple in their early twenties lingered beside the monument until everyone else had gone. I said to them, "What do you think?"

"It's wonderful!" exclaimed the girl.

"What do you think about the miracle?" I asked.

"That's what it was," proclaimed the boy. "A miracle."

"What makes you so sure?"

"If it isn't true," said the boy confidently, "where did the Book of Mormon come from?"

"It could have been made up," I told him.

"By whom?"

"By anyone. By Joseph Smith himself."

"That would have been even more of a miracle. He had no education."

"There's the story of the Spaulding manuscript," I suggested. "It's said that a Presbyterian minister by the name of Solomon Spaulding wrote a story very much like

the Book of Mormon. The manuscript fell into the hands of a Baptist named Sidney Rigdon who, in turn, was accused of giving it to Joseph Smith. Now that *might* be where the Book of Mormon came from."

Instantly the young man spoke up. "That story has been conclusively refuted by the church."

"You are a member?" I asked.

"We both are."

"Oh, I see. Well, I—well, anyway, that's the Spaulding story. By the way, have you been on a mission?"

"No, I haven't," he replied. "But I may go on one. Perhaps soon."

"For two years?" I asked.

"That's usually the time."

"Well, I didn't mean to accuse your leader of plagiarism," I apologized.

"That's all right," acknowledged the boy amiably. "People have many mistaken ideas about our church and our leaders. That's why I feel I ought to go on a mission."

"Well, good luck!" I said, feeling again that in the realm of faith he who lives the life of it, however little, has a stronger argument than he who has only the knowledge of it, however much.

Some days later I followed the trail of Joseph Smith to a farm south of Fayette, New York. Religious adventure

was the spoor that led me over paths where Ted Logan had never been, but I knew from letters that he was accompanying me vicariously from behind the grocery-store counter in the Midwestern town where he was employed. He told me that he was now taking an active part in the work of the small group which constituted the Mormon Church of his home town. The opposition of some of his friends only strengthened his loyalty. "Persecution and the Mormon faith have always gone hand in hand," he wrote. As for me and my wanderlusting, he had this to say, "The miracles of Mormonism are intended to be a challenge to a man's life, not a test of his credulity."

He must have known I would need such an injunction when I drove into the isolated yard of the Whitmer farm. Here the Mormon Church was founded on April 6, 1830, in circumstances as dramatic as a movie thriller. I had read the details, I had talked about them with Ted; now I was to hear the story on location. My narrators, the young caretaker and his wife, were zealots of a truly apostolic order, disciples through whom the past was brought convincingly to seekers like me. They were defenders of the faith, volunteers in the legion of the Prophet of Palmyra, and they had the intense confidence that the cause of the church was not only right but also divine.

"Here the Prophet sat," I was told as we entered a small room in the sturdily built log cabin. "Here is where the last of the plates was translated. Joseph Smith sat here behind

a curtain. He wore the breastplate and looked through crystal spectacles to interpret the characters. The language was reformed Egyptian. As he read the translation aloud, Oliver Cowdery sat here outside the curtain and wrote it all down."

I was shown through the cabin while the young man and his wife recounted the saga of this native faith. Behind us came their two children, already catching the fervor of their parents' love for the Seer of Cumorah.

The young wife said, "The first three witnesses to the plates of gold were Oliver Cowdery the schoolmaster, and two farmers, Martin Harris and David Whitmer."

The husband added, "Once a visitor asked me, 'Why should we believe common everyday men like that? How do we know they were honest?' I said, 'The disciples of Jesus were common everyday men, too, and we believe them.'"

"Well," I commented, "it's the amazing story about the plates of gold that causes people to be skeptical."

"I know," came the reply. "It was that way from the beginning. Martin Harris even went to New York City to see a noted scholar, Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia College. Mr. Harris took with him transcriptions of actual writings on the plates; also parts of the translation. Professor Anthon said that the work was remarkable and that the translations were entirely correct. He gave Mr. Harris a certificate to that effect. Then he

asked, 'By the way, Mr. Harris, where did the plates come from?' 'From an angel of God,' said Mr. Harris. The professor said, 'Let me see that certificate I gave you once more.' Martin Harris handed it to him and Professor Anthon tore it into shreds."

"But where are the plates now?" I asked. "Is it possible for anyone to see them?"

"Hardly," said the wife.

"No," added the husband seriously, "it is not possible to see them because the Prophet returned them to the angel."

"I see."

"I know what you mean" was the earnest response. "Whenever I tell people that, they look at me as if to say, 'Quite a story!' It is quite a story, but it is true. I say to them, 'You believe in the Bible, don't you?' 'Oh, yes,' they admit, 'we believe in the Bible.' So do I. So do you, I am sure. But have you ever seen *those* original manuscripts?"

"No," I admitted. "I suppose I trust to the scholarship and the integrity of the men who helped us get our translations."

"Exactly," he concluded. "And furthermore the Bible stands on its influence and power over the lives of men. That is the real test."

"I guess I would agree with that."

"And so it is with the Book of Mormon. It stands on its influence, too, and the influence is growing all the time. The Book of Mormon doesn't displace the Bible; it complements it. While the Old Testament is a history of the Jewish people, the Book of Mormon is the history of ancient American civilization as well as prophecy and fulfillment. The New Testament is the story of Jesus and the plan of redemption, and the Book of Mormon is its confirmation. It also tells us that Jesus appeared on this Western continent after His resurrection."

"You mean," I interrupted, "Mormons actually believe that Jesus was here in America?"

"Why, yes," he replied. "We have the record."

"Why not?" his wife chimed in. "Why should He have been limited to any one continent or country?"

I was almost ready to share her enthusiasm.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone in America believed that He had really been here? I think it would change everyone's life," she went on, highly confident.

"It would change everyone's life just to read and study the Book of Mormon," her husband added.

"Of course it would," she agreed.

"For then," he said, "the hidden things in Scripture would be revealed to everyone. Then people would see that the restoration of the church was foreordained."

"You believe that the Mormon Church was foreordained?" I asked, and the unpretentious surroundings spoke a thousand contradictions.

"Surely!" was my guide's emphatic answer. "It is the one church in which God still speaks and reveals Himself to men. It is the one church patterned after the original church of the time of Christ. You'll believe this someday," he predicted confidently, "because I think you are looking for truth. More and more people are believing it all the time. There are almost a million Mormons, you know."

If those were the figures, they also constituted something of a miracle, for they represented more members than we had in our denomination, the Evangelical and Reformed, and we went back to 1517! Where did all these Ted Logans come from? What was the secret of the growth of Mormonism? Why were the followers of this faith so enthusiastic and so unquestionably committed to their beliefs?

I left the Whitmer farm chiding myself for my naïveté, for the last remark I made to the couple was "If Christianity was born in an upper room, I don't see why Mormonism couldn't have been born in a log cabin." The guide should have said that, not I. Or perhaps it should not have been said at all. I was angry with myself for ceasing to be objective. I felt that a web of credulity was being woven around me both by the advocates of this strange gospel

and by my own romanticizing. I even discovered that I had bought a copy of the Book of Mormon.

That night I opened it. Printed on the flyleaf was the sworn testimony of the three witnesses, Cowdery, Whitmer and Harris. Beneath it was the testimony of eight additional men who affirmed that they, too, had "seen and hefted and knew of a surety" that the plates of gold were real.

So I paged through this American Bible wondering how many Protestants had ever seen a copy or read a verse out of any of the fifteen books. Wherever these auxiliary scriptures came from, whatever they were, they surpassed in magnitude and content my most extravagant expectations. The style was Biblical, the references to Holy Writ were voluminous, the ancient story was tremendously involved. It was not the kind of book a man would read for pastime or write for profit. It was solemn and ponderous and heavy as the plates on which it was inscribed. No Vermont schoolboy wrote this, and no Presbyterian preacher tinkered with these pages.

After wading through the First Book of Nephi, I was ready to settle for the miracle of Cumorah and let it go at that. It would surely be convenient to say, "The plates for this religious tome were hidden by an angel, discovered by a young man whom the Lord had chosen and translated by means of magic spectacles." That, of course, was exactly what the Book of Mormon itself implied.

Mormon, one of God's elect, was the father of Moroni, and together they were the engravers and concealers of the ancient manuscript. As for the rest of the Mormon gospel, the battles of the Nephites and the Lamanites and the irreducible genealogies all this could wait until I sat down with my convert friend, Ted Logan. To him the book was a divine document; to me, an enigma.

But it was no more enigmatical than the church which rose out of its pages. The six charter members who organized the new denomination in the Whitmer cabin grew to sixty, then to six hundred within a matter of months. Converts carried the gospel of the "latter days" throughout New England and Pennsylvania. In Kirtland, Ohio, they built their first temple.

One summer morning I stood in the well-kept temple yard and when I saw the massive, strong-beamed structure, I knew that the builders had in mind time and eternity. This was the Prophet's answer to his enemies. Here he set a defiant landmark against the traditional religions and the society of his day. The churches said he was heretical; the people said he was mad. They put a label on him, "Fraud and Fake and Anti-Christ!" He said, "We will build more temples." They organized against him and he retorted, "We will build a perfect city for the Lord!"

A trek was started westward to Missouri. Joseph claimed it had been revealed to him that somewhere in the heart of the nation God would direct them to a promised

land. The converts grew to a thousand, two thousand, three. They came from the Eastern states, from Canada and from Great Britain where volunteer missionaries had gone with the story of the Book of Gold. They were proselytized from American farms and villages with the prophecy that the fullness of the gospel was being restored. That gospel spread with incredible speed all the way to the Missouri River. Mormon camps grew into towns in Clay, Davies and Jackson counties in Missouri.

The tall, bold, broad-shouldered Prophet led the pioneer believers. Men said that his clear blue eyes still saw visions and that his heart communed with the Son of God. They called him a modern Moses and a Joshua. His rallying cry ran through the diverse Christian sects: "The day of revelation is not past!" His influence swept across the frontiers and outran the gospel of the circuit riders. When people followed him, they left their farms and families and surrendered all their worldly goods to help his cause. Homes were divided. Villages were thrown into confusion. The tempo of life was disrupted. It was a revival of consecration and power without the usual "Hallelujah" and "Praise the Lord." There was no rolling in the dirt on camp-meeting grounds, no altar call, no fanatical exhibition, no talk of hell and lakes of fire.

The "Saints" Became a peculiar people, the chosen ones, and they made a clear-cut distinction between themselves and the "Gentile" world. They were Israel restored. They were Joseph's people. Their challenge was

"If a man is a Mormon, let him live the Mormon life." And what was that? Something strange and revolutionary. For the first time in the history of American religions, spiritual commitment penetrated the entire life of man, suggesting what he should eat, what he should drink and what he should expect in this life and in the life to come.

"This is not Protestantism!" said the preachers.

"This is not Catholicism!" said the priests.

The followers of the Prophet agreed. To them it was the gospel of restoration. Theirs was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints preparing the nation for the Lord's return. It was too exalted a tide for the masses; Mormonism was the nickname that stuck.

The names of many Missouri towns founded by the early Saints also stuck: Smithville, Paradise, Far West, Bethany, Mt. Moriah. Traveling through them, I met modern Mormons who were always willing to talk about their ancestors. There were a few Jack-Mormons, sympathizers with Mormon ideals. There were non-Mormons who knew and cared nothing about the romance of the past.

In the late 1830's the Saints were driven out of Missouri with bayonets, their homes were burned and their properties destroyed. Their lives were controlled too much by the church, said the Gentiles, and their conduct governed too much by "revelations." Their leader's word was law above the law of the land. Many of the Gentiles

held slaves, the Mormons did not. They claimed that slavery was forbidden by the Prophet and the Book. They lived an almost communal life, sheltering their poor through tithes and sacrifices from the rich.

Gentile family life was disrupted whenever one of its members joined the new and hated sect. Local governments were thrown into disorder, churches were split, farmers said the Mormons were out to get control of the land. Fanatical antagonists contended there would be no peace until the Saints were exterminated. This was the beginning of bloodshed in the Mormon story.

One of the first martyrs was a boy of nine, Sardius Smith. He was shot in the face as he gripped the muzzle of a Missourian's gun while his mother pleaded that his life be spared. With the cry, "Kill the young wolves and there will be no old ones," the assassin pulled the trigger, Sardius Smith fell dead and his mother's clothing was splashed with his blood.

At gunpoint the Mormons were forced out of the counties which they had peacefully invaded. They fought back, but the Missourians retaliated by seizing Joseph and Hyrum Smith and locking them in a dungeon in the jail at Liberty in Clay County. Charges against them grew. They were accused of stirring up the people and inciting riot and bloodshed. Out of the whirlwinds of hate came the clamor that they be put to death. Out of a hasty militia court-martial came the penalty; death by hanging.

Before the sentence could be carried out, a new leader crossed the Mormon stage with startling suddenness. He was thirty-seven and he sprang from the ranks of the dispersed and terrorized Saints to hold them together with his iron will. They knew him well. Not long ago he had given his fortune and pledged his life to the Mormon cause. Powerfully built, resolute in carrying out what he believed was the Prophet's design, he now led the homeless and impoverished children of Cumorah eastward to the Mississippi. Whenever they lost faith, this unconquerable apostle had faith to spare. His name was Brigham Young.

Meanwhile in his dungeon cell the Mormon Prophet was waiting the day of execution. Always he said, "It will not come to pass. You cannot take my life until my ministry is fulfilled. That is not yet. But it *is* the will of God that I should not live to see my fortieth year." He was now thirty-two.

Hostile crowds kept their angry, impatient vigil outside the Liberty jail. Word had spread that Mormon forces under Brigham Young were being mobilized to rescue their leader. The state militia had again been alerted. Days passed. The counties of Clay and Davies were overrun with conflicting stories. It was rumored that the executioner had refused to put the Prophet to death though he himself had been threatened with imprisonment. Some said that the judge, in the role of a modern Pilate, had repented of the injustice of a sentence

so severe. And others spread the word that the Prophet's escape was being planned by a citizens' group in the town of Liberty.

Weeks went by. Then, when the life of the villages had quieted, the report of an escape from jail sent the enemies of Mormonism back to their guns. There was talk of a miracle. The Saints told it with rejoicing, comparing it to the release of Peter from his cell at Philippi. Free in circumstances that no one seemed able to explain, Joseph and Hyrum Smith returned to the wretched Mormon camps strung out along the west bank of the Mississippi in Iowa and on the eastern shores in Illinois, Brigham Young went forth to meet the Prophet. Humbly and in willing submission he gave the leadership back to Joseph Smith. Had he wished he could have said, "Here are those whom thou hast entrusted to me. Not one has been lost."

That was true. Persecution had only increased the ranks of the Saints and strengthened their faith. Ten thousand ragged but dauntless heirs of the new Israel waited their Prophet's word. They gave him a title, "Seer and Revelator." He led them to a marshy, abandoned village on the Illinois side of the Mississippi where six river shacks stood in brushwood and muddy flats. The land was cheap. The houses were deserted. Standing on the hard crust of a knoll, surrounded by a stagnant swamp, Joseph Smith proclaimed to his people, "It is the will of God that we build our city here."

He spoke and a village began to rise out of Mormon resourcefulness and Mormon zeal. Once the place had been called Venus, then Commerce, but when the first well-constructed red-brick Mormon home was dedicated on June 11, 1839, the Prophet declared, "It is the will of God that we name this place Nauvoo, that is, the Beautiful."

Here in this once sovereign city of Mormondom I met by arrangement my friend Ted Logan. We had not seen each other for a number of years. During this time his letters had kept me informed of his ever-increasing activity in the Mormon cause. I, in turn, had kept him advised of my religious explorations. When he greeted me in the lobby of the Hotel Nauvoo, I knew that he had changed. Almost at once I discovered that he was conscientiously putting Mormon teachings into practice. Not that Ted Logan had become sanctimonious, but he was taking seriously the Word of Wisdom. For one thing he had given up smoking. For another he had given up coffee and tea. But the thing that impressed me most was a new sense of confidence and an evidence of self-respect.

"I've turned things over to the Lord," he told me eagerly.

"Life used to be a struggle, but now it's a game. I never took seriously the words of Scripture. I never took any stock in all the promises they contain. But the moment I

accepted them and supported them by living the life, they worked."

Familiar words. I had heard them many times. I had seen them demonstrated. I was meeting them everywhere along the way.

"Everything looks different to me now," Ted was saying. "Remember how I used to envy people? Remember how I wanted this thing and that? How I griped because I messed up my life and had to work in the store when I really had my heart set on law? I used to measure everything in material advantages. Now I see myself as part of a plan that had its beginning long before this existence and that will go on long after this little time of life is past. There's a wonderful saying in the Book of Mormon: 'Men are that they might have joy.' That means joy in everything, and it is really one of the great secrets I have learned in the Mormon faith."

Ted Logan had changed. Somewhere on his Hill Cumorah he, too, had found his magic spectacles.

As we stood together on a promontory near Mulholland Street, I saw a town of some thousand inhabitants with a Roman Catholic Church dominating a sprawling fertile valley. But Ted was seeing a city of more than twenty thousand with the Saints busily working on a nearly completed million-dollar temple. He was seeing Nauvoo in its golden era during the years from 1839 to 1846.

"Here was the temple site—" he pointed it out as we walked to an old well near the edge of the business district "and the limestone blocks out of which the temple was constructed were cut by hand. There, you can see some of the blocks in the walls of that old school. In the days of the real Nauvoo they were here, one on top of the other, rising to a height of sixty feet and nearly two hundred feet to the dome of the tower, a dome that was covered over with gold leaf. There were thirty hand-hewn pilasters. The cost was over a million dollars and it was greater than any building in the whole Midwest."

We drove through the streets below the hill where old homes mingle with modern buildings, and for Ted the charm of an earlier day was always coming through.

"In the days of Joseph Smith," he said, "Nauvoo was the largest city in Illinois, bigger than Chicago. The houses were of red brick, New England style, like those you see down there on the flats. Each house was surrounded by a garden. Here was the road leading down to the dock where the old paddle-wheelers brought Mormon converts and immigrants by the thousands."

Everywhere Ted found telltale signs of the perseverance of the Saints and evidences of their vision and character. Possessively he stood before Old Homestead, the half-log, half-frame dwelling on the bank of the Mississippi. "Here the Prophet and his wife Emma lived." Reverently we walked through the restored

Mansion House. "Here the Smith family lived later on. They had two sons."

He showed me the restored Nauvoo House which had served as a hostelry and took me to the site where the large printing establishment had stood. When I called his attention to points of present interest such as the Catholic school and academy and the large convent of the Benedictine Sisters, his mind was always back a hundred years.

"The Mormons had started a municipal university," he explained, "the first one in the Midwest."

I inquired about a group known as the Icarians who lived in Nauvoo after Mormon times and who had tried a communal experiment.

Ted answered by saying, "The only thing the Icarians did was to start the wine industry. The Mormons had a co-operative plan long before the Icarians ever came. They saw to it that there were no rich and no poor. The days began and ended with prayers and singing. Everybody worked for the common good, everybody tithed, everybody had plenty of work and plenty of leisure."

"I suppose you wish you had lived here in those days," I suggested.

"Maybe," he replied. "But I didn't. So I live the principles of the church today."

"But if everything was so perfect," I challenged, "why didn't it last? Why are the houses only museum pieces and why is Nauvoo just another broken altar along the Mormon trail?"

"Prejudice and hate!" he answered decisively. "From within by traitors who wanted to see Joseph Smith's downfall. From without by non-Mormons who were jealous of him."

"As simple as that?" I asked.

"No, it wasn't simple. The bad Mormons and the non-Mormons got together in their criticism of the Prophet and his tactics."

"On what grounds?"

"His claim to revelations. His idea of the union of church and state or church and city. His progressive program."

"His ideas on polygamy?"

"That, too," Ted agreed.

"How about that?" I asked. "Do you really believe that Joseph Smith had a revelation about plural marriage?"

"I do," said Ted promptly. "But it was misunderstood. It was bound to be. Men who were immoral immediately interpreted it in immoral terms. And, after all, throughout the whole church only about three per cent of the men ever practiced polygamy. I think the Prophet even foresaw that polygamy was necessary for the church."

"Did Joseph Smith himself practice polygamy?"

"We know that he taught and advocated it. We also know that he was criticized for it. But don't you suppose people in Old Testament times criticized Abraham and others who had more than one wife?"

"Well, Joseph wasn't living in Old Testament times," I cautioned. "He was living in America in the nineteenth century."

"That's right, and his thinking was far ahead of his day," Ted said with pride. "He was even planning to run for President."

"Which wasn't such a good idea."

"Why not?" Ted shot back at me. "He surely had the qualifications. And he certainly lived close to God. But there are always some who will not accept the teachings of a new morality. That's what the Mormon faith is. You look at the teachings and you'll have to admit it. Why don't you look at them? They've got everything tradition, miracles, a moral code, a new Scripture, the plan of salvation. Look at the church and you'll find that it's unselfish, honest, Christian, co-operative. Its record is the most amazing of any group in the country. How did it get that way? God speaking through a man, and people believing it and living the life."

"But," I argued, "had he been a true Prophet, God would have helped him and saved Nauvoo. God didn't. Why?"

"For the answer to that," Ted said, "we'd have to go back to another Prophet. But I don't think we'd find the answer even though we went all the way to Galilee."

We didn't go to Galilee. We went to Carthage, Illinois, to a spot which meant as much to Ted Logan as Galilean scenes. Here a yellowing two-story building of quarried limestone stood in the northwest part of town. The patriarchal, white-haired caretaker, whom Ted introduced to me as Elder McRae, courteously took us into a somber hallway and up a steep flight of creaking wooden stairs. With quiet intensity Elder McRae spoke of the Mormon faith. He admitted us into a medium-sized rectangular room which the narrow second-story window left dark with dusk. Aging gray walls, massive and thick, bore down upon this empty interior. The air was heavy and damp.

The departing footsteps of the custodian faded out on the stairs and somewhere below us a door closed with a thud. We were where Ted wanted to be, in old Carthage jail. To him this room was one of the truly great settings in the Mormon drama. It was a focal point in his adopted faith. He knew its history and its romance. To him historic Carthage jail was an American Calvary.

My attention was drawn to a faded reddish stain protected by a slab of glass on one of the wide, worn floorboards.

"Blood," Ted explained.

"...of the Prophet?"

"Probably of his brother Hyrum" was the reply. "Hyrum was killed here. Three men were imprisoned with the Prophet in this room: Hyrum, John Taylor and Willard Richards. Taylor was wounded. Richards escaped without being hurt."

Ted walked to the window in the east wall. "The Prophet was able to get out here. Badly wounded, he jumped and died in the yard below. His last words were 'O Lord, my God.'"

Ted stood looking down while he recounted the story simply and sincerely. "During the rioting and uprising in Nauvoo, Governor Ford had asked Joseph Smith and several other Mormon leaders to come to Carthage pending the settlement of disturbances. He promised them complete protection. The first night they stayed at a hotel, the second night here. The governor said they would have a guard. He appointed one all right, a gang of men who just a short time before had plotted against the Prophet's life. Now they had him trapped. On that second evening, June 27, 1844, these men were joined outside this door by other anti-Mormons. Some had painted their faces so they wouldn't be recognized. They started shooting. Look, you can see the bullet holes in the door. You can see the panel where they shot away the lock. Then they broke into the room."

If for a moment Ted was reliving the experiences of Joseph Smith during his last moments on earth, I was probably Willard Richards, the unharmed member of the imprisoned party. I was a spectator asking the mob about their charges against the Prophet of Nauvoo. The only answer I got was a well-known charge: "He stirreth up the people."

I walked to the window while Ted recreated century-old scenes: the mob with painted faces, shocked into silence by the sight of the dead man, wondering why they had hated him so much, remembering how often he had been beaten and cursed and tarred and feathered; seeing him now in death and not at all sure what kind of a Prophet he had been.

Ted was saying, "One of the mob threw away his gun and cried, 'We have killed a man of God!' Another wiped the muzzle of his gun and said, 'We're rid of him. That means we're rid of the whole Mormon pack.' Armed guards sought to restore order. People of Carthage rushed to the scene of the killing. An old man who had followed the Prophet from Nauvoo raised his hands crying hysterically, 'He was a child of God! He told us clearly, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter. I shall die innocent and it shall be said of me that I was murdered in cold blood!"'"

Ted's voice continued the narration. "A man named Ebenezer Rand, a farmer, came like an Arimathean of old.

He had an oxcart and said that he would take the bodies to Nauvoo. The dead men were loaded into the cart and covered with blankets."

In thought I walked with Ebenezer Rand beside the plodding animals. I heard the voices of the people fade into the dull rumble of the heavy wheels. Thoughtfully the crowd followed the makeshift hearse. Dust drifted overhead like a cloud following the Seer and Revelator, but in the cloud there was no vision and no voice.

"From this jail," Ted was saying, "a man looks back over the Mormons' path of persecution and forward across the long trail that led them to their promised land."

Ted was determined to lead me to it, too; not geographically, but spiritually to the place where the teachings of the church had taken him. It was here at Carthage that Ted Logan tried earnestly to convert me to the Mormon faith.

"When a man has found something good, he should share it with his friends" was his opinion.

He had shared it with me before, but, no doubt, he felt that since I had gone all the way from Sharon, Vermont, to Carthage, I ought to be ready for his kind of traveling.

"You know what the Mormon religion is?" he asked earnestly. "It's Christianity *plus*. It takes the basic teaching such as the redemptive work of Christ and adds to it the obligation on the part of every man to help in that redemption. It takes the idea of the future life and adds to

it a belief in pre-existence. It accepts the ideas of the millennium and the Second Coming of Christ and adds to them the belief that Christ will return and set up His kingdom here on the American continent. It takes the theory of an unchanging God and substitutes for it the truth that God is progressive. Yes, it's Christianity plus, and when you realize it you realize also what you have missed in the usual run of denominationalism."

Defensively I said, "I'm afraid that I can never make the intellectual hurdle necessary to accept some of your doctrines."

"What bothers you?"

"The progressiveness of God, for example. You used to quote a Mormon saying, 'As man is, God once was, and as God is, man too may become.'"

"Catch phrases you always remember!"

"Well, it is a Mormon belief, isn't it?"

"Yes," he agreed, "if you interpret it in the right way. My Protestantism used to be vague about what happens after death. Mormon teaching is clear. The soul of man continues to evolve and progress. If that is true, then it is equally true that God Himself progresses."

"So God always stays a jump ahead?"

"You can put it that way," Ted answered seriously. "And why not? Does the boy ever catch up with his parent? Does one day ever catch up with the next?

Everything is progressive, and that's the way it is with God and man."

"And that," I contended, "is what I mean by an intellectual hurdle."

"Oh, well," Ted said with complete assurance, "anyone who is really seeking is going to end up in the Mormon Church." To which he added with conviction, "Especially you."

I called this his Mormon mellowing process. I had observed it in many members of the faith. Instinctively building up confidence in themselves, they softened the resistance of their prospective converts. Perhaps this was nothing plotted or planned; it was very likely the natural consequence of their missionary zeal. Like the importunate widow who in the parable broke down the opposition of the judge, so Ted was taking every opportunity to break down mine. He had come to terms with himself and now had convictions to live by. It was, therefore, a matter of religious patriotism for him to bring me into the union of believers in this American faith.

So he talked with unquestioning confidence about the principles in which Mormons believe and which Protestants refuse to accept. The doctrine of celestial marriage was a case in point. To me, this teaching was a purely speculative theory about the relationship of the sexes in the life to come. To Ted, it was a moral concept, the result of divine revelation. Marriage, he claimed, had

been sanctioned by Jesus; celestial marriage by Joseph Smith.

"If and when I get married," he confided, "I want it to be a temple marriage. The vows my wife and I take will unite us for time and eternity."

"How do you know?"

"Because it has been revealed."

"The relationships begun in this world naturally continue in the world to come. Death is really just another birth. We are already living in eternity now just as we lived in eternity before we were put on this earth. Take the case of a man who commits suicide. He thinks he is escaping from certain conditions or situations but he isn't. He'll find that he has the same problems and thoughts in the next life that he had here. Only his sense of values will be different and he will have to readjust his thinking."

There was never any breaking through Ted's line of defense. Never belligerent but certainly stubborn, he held to his position supported by the unconquerable forces that had proved themselves so decisively in the rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Neither my reasoning nor subterfuge could dislodge him from doctrines which to me were loaded with a thousand "ifs."

There was the hard-to-comprehend Mormon belief in baptism for the dead. Here was an elaborate and complex system in which temple workers were immersed vicariously for people who had died outside the Mormon

faith. This rite was conducted in magnificent temples, million-dollar temples in Utah at Salt Lake City, Logan, St. George and Manti; in Arizona at Mesa; in Idaho at Idaho Falls; in Hawaii at Laie; and in Canada at Cardston, Alberta.

"Baptism for the dead," I murmured. "Do you think it would do my great-grandmother any good to be baptized by proxy?"

"Of course I do."

"How?"

"Because a requirement of the church would be fulfilled, a divine requirement instituted by revelation."

"I can't imagine God going in for that kind of bookkeeping."

"That," he replied pointedly, "is because you don't believe that you will really meet your loved ones in the life hereafter. You may say you believe it, but I know how I felt about these things when I was still a Protestant. You do believe that a record of our lives is kept somewhere, don't you?"

"I think that is all locked up within ourselves, in our subconscious mind or in our soul or in neural patterns in our brain or some such place. Whatever the Bible says about a book of life is all symbolic."

"I don't think so," Ted averred. "That was a Protestant fault with me, too. I hesitated to take the Bible literally. I

thought that the 'hands of God,' the 'eye of God,' 'God passing by,' were just figures of speech. They aren't. They are true. Wasn't man made in the image of God?"

"But doesn't that mean only a spiritual image?" I asked.

"No," Ted answered confidently, "it also means a physical likeness. The Bible was not written to confuse people. It means literally just what it says. Of course there is a spiritual meaning in everything, if that's what you mean by symbolic. But we are physical and we must perform physical acts. That's the way it is with baptism for the dead. A temple worker goes down into the water of the baptistry and by this act becomes a proxy for the person for whom baptism is being administered. When he does so, somewhere in the life beyond that person has the privilege to accept or to reject the baptism. If he accepts it, he is drawn into the circle of the church of the restoration. If he rejects it, then he stays outside the chosen group and does not share in the real glory."

"How far," I asked, "does the church intend to go in this ritual? Does it expect to baptize someone for each of the early Americans and the early Protestants and even farther back than that?"

"As far back as Adam!" Ted exclaimed. "That is part of the great Mormon commission. I intend to have baptism made for my ancestors as far back as I can. So does every active Mormon. The church has the most complete and

efficient genealogical system in the world. It has on file nearly ten million names already. Missionaries work on these genealogies wherever they go. Everyone helps. Everyone *should* help to bring together into one family all who have ever lived, and all who are yet to be born for the number of those who are to be born is predetermined. Their souls already exist in the realms of God. Isn't it a wonderful thought? We come from God and we return to God to be like Him. I expect someday to sit down with those I have known in a pre-existence and in this existence. I expect to talk with Joseph Smith and Brigham Young and all the other prophets. And I fully expect to talk with God."

What was I to say in the light of such conviction? Who could break through such unyielding indoctrination?

"And remember," Ted warned, "baptism for the dead is Scriptural. Paul mentions it in First Corinthians, 15:29, 'Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?' If a person is to believe in the gospel, why not believe in all of it?"

The "whole gospel" was more than just a phrase with the followers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was a divine command. That is why they held to dogmas which were considered completely anachronistic and untenable by orthodox believers. That is why they were content to keep their requirements for membership difficult for acceptance and unpopular with those who had

traditional Christianity as their heritage. But to those who could accept them, to those who could make the necessary hurdles with a conclusive "I believe," to them seemed to come a reward of genuine peace. There was only one answer. The old man whom I had met in the Palmyra grove had the right idea, "Religion is a matter of belief." By the magic of believing Mormons were conquering the field while I still wrestled with reason.

Then came a day when I was to go ahead of Ted Logan in my Mormon adventure; far ahead of him geographically. He stayed with his books the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the *Pearl of Great Price*, the *Doctrine and Covenants* while I went back to Nauvoo to follow the Mormon trek to the Mormon land of promise near the Great Salt Lake. A century ago the first of a band of 143 men, 3 women and 2 boys, under the leadership of Brigham Young, reached that region on July 22, 1847. Now, as a commemoration of the most spectacular pilgrimage in American history, the same number of sojourners, all descendants of Mormon pioneers, were ready to make the trip once more, in seventy-two covered wagons, the original number. Only this time the wagons were shining cars with covered canvas tops. The first wagons had been drawn by oxen; these modern vehicles had oxen, too, but they were plywood cutouts bolted to a rigging on the front fenders.

By special permission I joined the trekkers on the morning of July 15, 1947, as they prepared to leave

Nauvoo. The group was dressed in period costumes. Bearded men played the role of the early leaders; the women represented the wives of three men: Brigham Young, Lorenzo Young and H. C. Kimball. The canvas-topped cars were drawn around in a semicircle in Nauvoo Square as the sun rose over the hallowed ground.

I wondered whether the spirits of the Mormon dead were hovering over those 20th-century "covered wagons." I wondered whether they were holding a mystical council above the scene: Joseph Smith and Hyrum, the early witnesses to the Book, the martyrs and the other faithful ones, the children who, like Sardius Smith, had died; and whether Moroni and his father Mormon were also somewhere near. Most of all I wondered about the man on whom the mantle of the Prophet had fallen, the controversial, many-sided figure who was fated to lead the children of a native Israel over fourteen hundred miles of mountain and desert and unexplored frontier. Was the spirit of Brigham Young walking in this encampment and moving among the men as they lined up for breakfast before the flames of an open fire?

Movie cameras bore down on the scene from panel trucks. Loud-speakers told the story to a crowd of silent spectators. "This caravan will follow the original Mormon trail insofar as that is possible. It will arrive at Salt Lake on the very day, July 22, when the first noble pilgrims entered the Salt Lake Valley exactly one hundred years ago."

Bystanders saw in all of this a dramatic extravaganza, good publicity for the Latter-day Saints Church, human interest copy for feature writers. The unmarked trail which had kept the original vanguard on a continual hazardous march for one hundred and twenty days could now be crossed comfortably on marked highways in less than a week. A P-80 could cover the same distance in air-line miles in one hundred and twenty minutes. There would be Chamber of Commerce welcomes along the route. Dramatizations would be staged every night. Mayors of towns which had once driven out the hated Smithites would hand to the Sons of the Utah Pioneers the key to their cities. Bands would meet us playing Mormon songs, and where the Mormon dead lay buried in nameless graves, markers would be set up to show that as far as local feeling was concerned, all had been forgiven. To the nation it was a pageant on wheels.

However, when I met the man in charge of the caravan, I knew that, for him at least, there was a deeper motive behind this pilgrimage. To Wendell J. Ashton it seemed right that the project should have one main objective: a deepening of faith by uniting the sacrifices of the past with the blessings Mormon people now enjoy. To reproduce as faithfully as possible the original exodus from Nauvoo, the trekkers had been organized on the plan of the original pioneers with captains of hundreds, captains of fifties and captains of tens.

So far it was a graphic portrayal and our seventy-two-car caravan bore some resemblance to the covered wagons of old as we circled the sacred grounds. There the similarity ended. When the first Mormons fled from Nauvoo during the winter of 1845-1846, their suffering was intense. They carried their belongings to the river flats. Man power ferried the ox teams and wagons across the Mississippi on crudely fashioned rafts. For two days the rafts shuttled back and forth bringing their cargoes of the homeless and displaced. Two days and then the river froze thick and solid. Thus had God come to the Mormons' aid. It was this same God whom the trekkers recognized in the reenactment of the Mormon saga. When things went well, it was always God who got the credit. When things went wrong, it was always a test of faith. That was Mormon belief. That was Mormon philosophy.

Brigham Young was like that. His moods changed with the change of the Divine Countenance. When he beheld the river frozen over as if by a miracle, he commanded the people to fall to their knees and give God the praise. They sang and prayed and rejoiced though Nauvoo, the beautiful, was being abandoned and though their temple stood bare and lonely on its highest hill.

"Where to, Brother Young?" they asked. "Where shall we go?"

The man of iron and invincible trust in heaven and in himself replied, "Where God shall lead."

We crossed the Mississippi on the Keokuk bridge and were met by a welcoming committee. Our Illinois police escort turned their duties over to an Iowa highway patrol. Our caravan paraded through Main Street. Cameramen caught the covered wagons with their spotless white tops and with the cutout oxen looking real. The captains had cowbells on their cars. Drivers waved their Western hats to the welcoming throngs. The Mormon trek, modern version, had begun.

For me it meant the completion of a tour that had started at Sharon, Vermont, long ago. It was still geographic, but I was sure it would lead me deeper into the religion and life of those who, like Ted Logan, believed they were following trails of absolute truth.

For seven days the camouflaged covered wagons retraced the route of the pioneers. For seven days I traveled with them, drawing ever nearer to the Mormon empire, getting ever closer to the heart of the Mormon people. In every experience *faith* was the word that helped me understand what had sustained the first Mormons.

The fourteen hundred miles on which I accompanied these "modern pioneers" convinced me that Brigham Young wrote his own eleventh chapter of Hebrews. By faith he accepted the leadership of the church when the pilgrims were encamped at Winter Quarters near what is

now Omaha, Nebraska. By faith he left the promising and friendly prairies to set his heart toward a country which he had never seen. By faith he crossed the ranges of Wyoming and pressed onward into the forbidding mountains to a distant horizon foreseen by the Prophet, Seer and Revelator. He trusted more in the "guidance of the Everlasting God" which urged him on than he did in the counsel of trappers and frontiersmen who tried to dissuade him. The Prophet himself had called Brigham Young "the Lion of the Lord."

Faith was written everywhere along the trail. I felt it in the morning prayers and in the evening services of the Sons of the Utah Pioneers. They made it clear in their dramatizations and in their historic references that Brigham Young's company was merely the advance guard, the spies who had gone to scout out Canaanland.

The real triumph, the colossal achievement, lay in the nearly eighty thousand religious nomads who trusted Brigham Young as much as any had ever trusted Joseph Smith. These converts, the fruit of missionary labors, came from Europe and England at the rate of nearly two thousand a year between 1848 and 1856. The church had set up a perpetual emigration fund. The church brought them as far as Coralville, Iowa, the handcart center of Mormonism. Here a believer's faith was put to the ultimate test. Here he could procure a wooden handcart with iron wheels some five feet in diameter. Hickory shafts

served as handles and the six-foot-wide box was made as light and durable as possible.

If the convert still wished to follow the promise of the Prophet and trust the vision of President Young, he could push or pull this torturous conveyance fourteen hundred miles to a valley beyond the Rocky Mountains. Thousands chose to do so. Westward on the road to the place of promise they set up Mormon camps and called them Camps of Israel. With pioneer resourcefulness, one group planted, another cultivated and a third harvested the meager crops. Ever they kept moving on. Six thousand died along the way.

Orson Pratt, who kept a diary at the time, tried to describe the scene:

The spring rains have come. They pour down in torrents. With great exertion a part of the camp is enabled to get six miles, while other wagons stick fast in the deep mud. We are obliged to cut brush and limbs and throw them in our tents to keep our beds from sinking in the mud. Our food is the bark of trees.

They fought the weather in every season, battled hostile Indians in every territory and conquered fear of defeat in every company. Sometimes they were saved by ready wit and by the valiant spirit of a George A. Smith who said, "If there is no God in Israel we are a poor sucked-in set of fellows. But I am going forward with my

family and the Lord will open the way!" Sometimes there was the remedy of a good song:

Our faith is with the handcarts,
They have our hearts' best love;
'Tis a novel mode of traveling,
Devised by the God above.

Hurrah for the camp of Israel,
Hurrah for the handcart scheme!
Hurrah! Hurrah! 'tis better far
Than the wagon and ox-team!

Always it was faith. For years the wagons and handcarts came resolutely into the wayside camps with half-frozen children and half-starved children or happy children, depending on the weather and God's munificence. For years the pioneers kept pushing toward the setting sun, drawn by the spell of a slogan that was characteristically American: freedom to worship and freedom to work. Death and burial, birth and pain, tragedy and terror could not hold them back.

Always it was faith. The Sons of the Utah Pioneers paused at more than fifty sacred spots along their centennial trek. The "covered wagons" were drawn up respectfully, the caravan leaders conducted a service and prayed, and once more the stories of the Mormon past were told:

Here at Winter Quarters in the fall of 1846 nearly a thousand homes were built by the Saints. Some were of dirt,

some of logs. Chimneys were made of sod cut in the form of bricks. Some roofs were covered with mud. The snows were heavy and the winds were cold. Sickness yielded to death. About three hundred Mormon refugees died here that first winter.

Here at Independence Rock, Wyoming, Wilford Woodruff climbed the highest point on the north end of the rock and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God. As he stood there, he noticed the Missourians burying a woman. He learned she was the third of her family to die on the trail.

This is Martin's Hollow, Wyoming. Early snows overtook the group numbering 575 persons with 146 handcarts. There was no shelter. Wolves howled with the frigid winds. Pilgrims perished. Corpses were buried in the snowdrifts, because the survivors were too weak to scoop out shallow graves in the frozen ground. Word reached Brigham Young and he sent out relief wagons. They reached the group here and found that fifty-six of the travelers had died. Among the survivors was Nellie Pucell about ten years old. Her parents had died on the journey. Her limbs were frozen and with crude instruments both her legs were amputated near the knees, and for the rest of her days Nellie Pucell waddled about on her stubs. Yet she was married and brought six fine children into the world.

We are gathered at Rock Creek! This is the scene of the tragedy of the James G. Willie handcart company, overtaken by early snows. It lost sixty-six of its some five hundred

emigrants. We stand where they are buried in a common grave.

Then came the day when we touched the Utah border thirty miles west of old Fort Bridger. It was here that the men of the early Mormon vanguard were told that they could never cross the mountains. Or, if they could, they would find only desert wastes, a dead sea and death.

Brigham Young said, "We will go forward." Coyote Creek, Echo Canyon, Henefer, Big Mountain....For sixteen agonizing days the pioneers struggled across the remaining ninety miles, then, finally on July 21, 1847, Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow entered the valley.

Here they waited for Brigham Young, who had been kept behind by an attack of mountain fever. He came three days later in Wilford Woodruff's wagon and was greeted by the question, "Have we come all this way out of the bondage of our oppressors only to find ourselves caught in the slavery of the desert?"

Brigham Young said, "This is the place."

Through Emigration Canyon rolled our luxurious caravan to the exultant shouts of thousands of welcomers. The wagon tops had been swept clean for this homecoming, the oxen had been scrubbed, batteries of cameras were set on every knoll, bands were playing and flags and banners flying.

The venerable president of the church, George Albert Smith, and Utah's governor, Herbert B. Maw, now joined

the procession. Police held back the crowds. Police escorts led the way with sirens shrieking. In the distance the spires of the great temple rose over the mountain-rimmed miracle city, Salt Lake; around it the promised valley lay like the garden of God under a cloudless sky.

A solemn hush moved through the throng of fifty thousand when we stopped in front of a gigantic statue ready for its unveiling. In a series of impressive ceremonies the panels at the base of the $300,000 "THIS IS THE PLACE" monument were dedicated. Surmounting the central shaft were the figures of Wilford Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young. This was the monument of which a Catholic prelate said, "You will note that here in the wings of this monument representatives of all religions are united. There they will remain for all time to come. Is it too much to hope that the physical unity in this monument may become a symbol of a spiritual unity in our lives?"

It did seem as if the world and representatives of all faiths had come to the Mormon industrial empire to welcome the trekkers. A five-mile-long parade and a speech by President Smith transformed Salt Lake City into a religious festival. There were concerts in the acoustically perfect Mormon tabernacle, pageants and plays and parties. A cycle of Gentile distrust and suspicion had ended, and there was being ushered in an era of thoughtful consideration of what this church of the once disinherited had to offer.

What did it have to offer me? Now that I stood in the holy city, how close was I to the fulfillment of Ted Logan's prediction? Out of my close association with the travelers along the trail had come a number of thought-provoking impressions. That the men lived by the *Word of Wisdom* was commendatory but not spectacular. They took it as a matter of course that hot chocolate was as good as coffee and cocoa as tasty as tea. It was probably the only modern caravan that ever crossed half a continent without lighting a cigarette. The church code had taught them how to get along without cursing, and tempers were kept in check even when the going was difficult. As a "hitchhiker" and critical observer, I reached Salt Lake City with the opinion that, to the true Mormon, a religion is no religion unless it is lived, and faith is not faith unless it covers all vicissitudes. Their lives bore testimony to their creeds. I had gone on the trek to learn about Mormon history, but I found that it was Mormon life which was written in the trail from Nauvoo to Utah, a state where three fifths of the population belongs to the Latter-day Saints organization. In a hundred years this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had taken its place importantly among the major and influential denominations of our nation and the world.

That I had come to these realizations pleased my convert friend when next I saw him. Ted Logan was glad that Salt Lake City had taught me some salient features about Mormondom: the church represents the greatest

religious co-operative in the world; operates more industries than any other spiritual organization; has an efficient relief society, promotes a model welfare plan, rightly boasts a record for tithing that remains unsurpassed by any major denomination anywhere; has given Utah more students registered in high schools and universities than any other denomination in any other state in ratio to population; has the highest moral code of any denomination of its size; claims to be the most democratic church in its administration and spiritual policies. Patterned closely after the apostolic tradition, the church consists of a President, the Council of Twelve Apostles, Patriarch to the Church, Assistants to the Council of the Twelve, the First Council of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric. This highly supervised organization includes the local parish or ward, the stake of Zion, composed of a number of wards, and the mission, which generally consists of a group of states.

Ted was gratified that I had learned these general details, but he was rather disinterested in the fanfare that had attended the end of the trek.

"Did you look into the merits of the priesthood?" Ted wanted to know.

"I was in a Mormon temple," I parried.

"You couldn't have been. No non-Mormon is permitted to go inside. Only Mormons in good standing are allowed to enter."

"Nevertheless, I *was* in a Mormon temple," I insisted. "I was shown through the one at Idaho Falls."

"Oh, I see," he agreed. "That was before its dedication. Yes, then you would have been permitted to go in. What did you find?"

"Rooms," I said. "Some reminded me of a Masonic lodge, others were like lovely chapels. Murals on the walls depicted scenes of the Creation, the Flood, the Millennium and so on. I understand these are used for initiatory and dedicatory ceremonies."

"Temple ordinances," Ted explained, "such as marriage for eternity and bestowal of endowments."

"The entire lower floor was given over to dressing rooms for the temple workers. I was shown the huge baptistry set on twelve bronze oxen. Above the baptistry were places for the officials who keep the records as the workers are baptized for the dead."

"Aren't you ready now to begin studying the eternal truths," Ted asked, "instead of observing Mormon externalities?"

"It's a long road," I had to say.

He nodded in agreement. "Longer than the trek, but it's worth it. It endows a man with the priesthood, the only valid priesthood on earth. Other priests and ministers treat religion as a business. Take their salaries away from them and see how many will stay in the profession! In the

Mormon faith the priesthood is not a profession; it is a sacred trust. No one is paid. Actually we have no ministers in the strictest sense. Men are ordained by priestly powers handed down through spiritual visitations. In 1829 Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were praying together and John the Baptist appeared to them—"

"The intellectual hurdle," I interrupted.

"The hurdle of faith," Ted corrected and continued with as much conviction as if he were reciting Scripture. To him it was Scripture and he said, "John the Baptist laid his hands on the two men and conferred on them the authority of what we call the Aaronic priesthood."

"But what does it mean?" I implored.

"It means that a link with the past has been re-established."

"All the way back to Aaron?"

"The spokesman for Moses," said Ted with complete assurance. "Someday it may be possible for us to trace someone's ancestry back to Aaron, but until that time we are the spiritual inheritors of Aaron's priesthood. And there is a higher priesthood than this. You see, later in 1829 Prophet Joseph and Oliver Cowdery were visited again. This time by Peter, James and John."

"Ted," I interrupted desperately, "it's unnecessary for me to ask whether you believe these things. You do. But how did you come to believe them? How do you think I can ever be convinced that they are true?"

"By the inner witness" was the prompt reply. "You come to feel it and to feel it is to know it is true. Peter, James and John *did* appear to these men and they were given the keys of heaven and earth."

"Which means?"

"The complete unveiling and knowledge of the life of men and the truths of God. We call this the Melchizedek priesthood because it was conferred after the manner in which the high priest of Salem conferred the order on Abraham. Jesus was that kind of high priest, and true Mormons after the age of nineteen also may be priests of that order, actually officiating in the name of Christ as His representative."

"And you," I asked, "are you working your way up through these stages? Is that the idea?"

"My present plan," he said smiling, "is to go on a mission. Even though I haven't yet converted you."

"You mean, two years of your life? Give up your job? Take care of your own expenses?"

"Why, yes," he said, "I guess that's the usual arrangement."

His words took me back to the Hill Cumorah. I was standing again with a young man to whom I had just made the great "expose" of the Book of Mormon. I was sitting once more with a gentleman on a hotel veranda and hearing him say, "Two of those fellows stopped down at

my place once." I was passing solemnly across the scenes where markers had been set "in memory of those who followed the Prophet's vision and the leadership of Brigham Young." I was standing with fifty thousand people before a monument on which were inscribed four simple words: "THIS IS THE PLACE."

I did not know what most Mormons considered the heart of their faith; perhaps they, too, would say it was the priesthood, but to Ted Logan it was more than that. Mormonism had made his life a game—a game of faith, glorious and compelling. It had overtaken and absorbed his life. Heaven was as real to him as his grocery-store counter. Something of the essence of God was hidden somewhere in those he served. His little black tithing book, his daily meditations, his moral code, his Mormon literature were the treasures of great worth which he had dug up, his plates of gold. There was no other motive behind his call to go on a mission than his wanting to share these treasures with others.

"And where do you plan to go?" I asked.

"Wherever they send me," he replied. Speculatively he looked at me. "And if the territory includes your home –

"Come and see me!" I invited.

"I will," he promised. "Maybe by that time it will do some good."

To which I had no reply. But I was thinking about the power of the Mormon Church in enlisting the loyalties

and potentials of Ted Logan and two hundred thousand others like him. To me a mission was unspeakable sacrifice; to them, a privilege.

The Articles of Faith

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

Conclusion
And So It Seems to Me

Now that you have put yourself in the other person's place, what have you learned?

Where do you go from here?

Perhaps you, too, will agree with me as I agreed with Vinoba Bhave, the "walking saint of India" to whom I referred in the chapter on Hinduism. I walked with him one morning at four o'clock. Along with a group of his followers, I set out upon the shadowy Indian road. As the sun spread its first warming light over the countryside, I realized that my several hundred companions—farmers, businessmen, monks, and even mothers with children—represented many cultures and creeds. As the light became brighter I saw that the man with whom I had been walking silently through the dark was thin and emaciated, wearing a white homespun *dhoti* and thick-lensed spectacles. He shuffled along so rapidly in his worn sandals that I had difficulty keeping up. Suddenly he glanced my way. A smile lit up his bearded face and he said in English, "I think if Jesus were on earth He would be walking with us this morning." Then he added, "I am sure He is."

This was Vinoba Bhave graphically expressing a Gandhian phrase: "If a man reaches the heart of his own religion, he has reached the heart of others, too."

And it seemed to me that here I found one answer: *the spirit inherent in religions is found to be one spirit when we truly put ourselves in the other person's place.*

I found another hint of what this spiritual interchange can mean when I met Dr. Albert Schweitzer in Africa. I will long remember how he stood on the improvised dock on the edge of the rusty Ogooue river. Dressed in white, wearing a white pith helmet, he extended both hands in greeting as I stepped from the dugout canoe. But I will remember even longer the Schweitzer spirit. It is a synthesis of many faiths.

Few of our contemporaries—in fact, few men in history—are so unidentifiable denominationally as is Dr. Schweitzer. Lutherans insist he belongs to them "parentally"; Unitarians are convinced he is in their camp theologically; Presbyterians claim him traditionally; Evangelicals, historically; and liberal Baptists, spiritually. To the Quakers, he is a symbol of pacifism; to the Congregationalists, a sign of healthy humanism; and, if he were a Catholic, to them he would be a saint, someone to be canonized. He believes in the Hindu concept of non-violence, but he has Christianized it; he is so close to the Jain teaching of *ahimsa* that he practices it. He sees similarities between Buddha and Luther, and he notes that passive resistance passed on from Jesus into the life of Gandhi.

As I walked with Schweitzer through the aisles of his jungle hospital, a hospital pitifully over-crowded with native patients who have found in this Alsatian a man of exceptional mercy, and as I accompanied him in a visit to the nearby leper village, it seemed to me that his reverence for life is undergirded by his reverence for man's everlasting quest for truth. He is unconcerned whether the quest be by the way of suffering or service, or whether the man is white or black or what his faith may be. Reverence, to Schweitzer, is not a creed, but an act; it is not a matter of profession, but a matter of deed.

His views on inter-religious relations were stated clearly when he said, *"Impart as much of your faith as you can to those who walk the road of life with you, and accept as something precious that which comes back to you from them."*

And then later, it seemed to me, I found something else, something that was impressed upon me by another man in another part of the world, but in a similar arc in the circle of faith. It was Dr. Daisetz T. Suzuki, the Zen scholar, who reminded me that as we enter into the beliefs of others, we may find some of our own beliefs personified.

One day in Dr. Suzuki's home in Atami, Japan, I told him about a pet theory of mine that we believe what we will to believe. First comes the wish, and then the will, then the rationale, and then our insistence that what we have found is truth. I cited as an example the dogma of the

Assumption, which affirms that Mary the Mother of Jesus ascended bodily into heaven.

"Who saw her ascend?" I asked and answered my own question by saying, "No one. Yet people have the will to believe it. Who saw her?"

Suzuki was silent for a long moment. Then he said softly and with reverence, "I saw her."

It seemed to me just then, in the silence of the room, that the simple and gracious *hina dan,* the little altar so typical of Japanese homes, was neither Shinto nor Buddhist nor Confucianist nor Christian, but rather a symbol of universal faith. Quietly I found myself saying, "I saw her, too." And I knew that *feeling, no less than experience, can be a source of spiritual knowledge just as intuition can at times be stronger and stranger than the stubborn conclusions of the intellect.*

So this, too, was another answer.

It seemed to me then, as it had often in the past, that if you are a Protestant and you wish to understand and enter into the experience of the Roman Catholic, you can do it neither by standing outside the church nor by arguing against the church's claims. You must go inside.

And if you are a Catholic and you would understand Protestantism, you will never do it unless you stand where the Protestant stands. You cannot look over the wall of preconceived ideas and get an honest impression. You

must, for a little while, enter into the spirit and the tradition of all the Protestant cherishes and believes.

This must be done by the interrelation of all sincere believers all around the great mandala of faith in which, all too long, each group has lived in its own restricted sphere, unaware of its close kinship with other groups. With hatred and suspicion increasing in the world, the warning has become all too real: we must learn to live together or none of us will live.

The great hope for a new order and a new era lies in the new spiritual exchange which is growing in the hearts of people in every living faith. A vision of the universality of religion is moving among free people everywhere because they have common concerns, common needs, and common causes. These problems themselves will bring about the realization that whenever we investigate the other person's way of life, we reinvestigate our own. And whoever approaches religion in this way is not going to condemn anything, but is going to discover that religion's likenesses are greater than its differences.

This new dimension in religion already exists, and a spiritual unity is seen beyond and above sectarian disunity. It includes the physicist whose thoughts have penetrated outer space, the historian whose study has followed the footprints of God through the rise and fall of civilizations, the scientist who has opened the secret doors of the inner mind, the philosopher who has revealed a

harmony in the once inharmonious schools of thought, the educator who perceives a divine power beyond as well as within the intellectual process, the healer of bodies who knows that resources of health reside within the God-nature of every man, the industrialist and the laborer who have caught on to a workable ethic in their business dealings, the theologian who recognizes a divine power as the common ground of all beings—in short, men and women of every walk of life who look upon religion as a quest and an adventure in search and discovery.

The full circle of spiritual truth will be completed only when we realize that, but for a destiny not fully understood, we might actually have been born in the other person's faith.