

## THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

**Early Civilisations founded in Freedom.**

Wherever man has made any advancement in the arts and sciences, it is invariably found that progress results when social institutions afford approximate conditions of just and equal opportunity to citizens, and that retrogression takes place as the shortcomings of those institutions are magnified by the extended application of private and public enterprise, both of which grow in upon themselves and decay unless they are given more freedom by the readjustment of those institutions in the light of experience.

The ancient civilisations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and in later times the offshoots of China and India, had their beginnings in comparative freedom for private and public enterprise. The Egyptians were a highly civilised people hundreds of years before the pyramids were erected, and had made immense progress in agriculture and engineering before the time of the Pharaohs.

It is among the more ancient of the buried works of art that evidences of the highest skill and culture are to be found. The written records of the remoter period reflect the most humane and informal spirit.

The status of the woman, that sure index of civilisation, was higher preceding the period of the third dynasty of the Old Empire, seven thousand years ago, than at any subsequent time. She had equal rights before the law, served in the priesthood, was the equal and companion of her father, brothers and husband.

**The Yeomanry of Egypt.**

The right of the individual to the fruits of his labour upon the soil, for obvious reasons, is less fraught with the

possibility of confusion of ownership than where the community is nomadic and pastoral.

Security of tenure is necessary for the purposes of agriculture, and more especially when permanent improvements are needed in the shape of buildings. That security is not given by making a claim to the absolute ownership of the site occupied, but by the rendering to the community the equivalent of its social value, which value, being equally created, should be returned equally to citizens in common services such as roads, irrigation schemes and education.

It is probable that at the commencement the common services were provided by voluntary contributions of labour and materials, and that these were increased as the benefit from them was more and more felt. For long the condition of the husbandmen must have been one of peace and plenty for every homestead. In this environment of happiness a great civilisation was born. Many inventions were made not only in agriculture but in the hundreds of subsidiary activities.

#### **How they drifted into Error.**

At the time of which we write, although the law of rent would operate, its action would be obscure, and the husbandmen would be unaware of it. It was long in the history of the world before the rent of the land became recognised as a specific quantity, just as the exchange of goods was carried on by direct barter long before the labour-saving device of money-counters was used.

It would of course be apparent that with the same application of labour some lands raised a greater harvest than other lands, and that those in possession of the better lands would be expected to make proportionately larger voluntary contributions to the communal expenses, but the just measure not being recognised, the industrious and resourceful would tend to be penalised. Consequently, we may imagine that there were heartburnings and misunderstandings.

We may suppose that the husbandmen then appointed certain of their leaders or head-men to collect and to arbitrate, and deputed them to apportion the contributions.

Although dimly conscious that it was not quite fair, in ignorance of a better method, they would resort as an experiment to the amount of the harvest obtained as the basis of assessment for the "equality of sacrifice."

But ignorance of a natural law does not render immune the offenders to the consequences of nonconformity. Although possessing at first sight a semblance of justice, the incidence of an income tax or tax upon production, apart from its arbitrary nature, is fundamentally unjust. It places a premium upon indolence, and it is evaded as much as possible by "Ananias and Sapphira."

"Ability to pay" is the basis upon which the bandit assesses the prisoner's ransom, and the unlimited State, like the bandit, tends to increase demand to the limit of inability to pay more. With no just measure of what is due to the community, a false principle is established that the State is entitled to take by force what it chooses from each citizen, and without obligation to make equal return.

Experience teaches that the complete enslavement of the labourer of hand and brain is only a question of time when the doctrine is accepted of divine right of the State to rob the producer. In adopting the income tax the Egyptians had inserted the thin edge of the wedge of coercive communism.

#### **The Deterioration of the Credence of the Egyptians.**

It is remarkable that the economic condition of the community has its reflex in the changing of religious beliefs. When the ideas of a people become entangled in daily matters of production and exchange, religion breaks down into superstition, but as a state of equal rights and equal duties is approximated, so ignorance is dissolved by knowledge based upon truth.

The earliest records of the Old Empire afford evidence that the ancient Egyptians possessed religious beliefs which compare favourably with those of the best period of Judaism. "In their moral law the Egyptians followed the same precepts as the Decalogue (ascribed to Moses two thousand five hundred years later), and enumerated treason, murder, adultery, theft and the practice of magic as crimes of the deepest dye." (Birch.)

According to the Todtenbuch, or sacred book of the dead, God is "the only one Being, the sole Creator, unchangeable in His infinite perfection, present at all time, past and future, everywhere and yet nowhere."

But just as the accredited nature of Yahve or Jehovah advanced, following the economic progression of the Jews, from the status of one cruel war-god among many other tribal deities, until He became the Supreme God reigning alone in justice and mercy, so conversely the conception of the Egyptians fell from this high estate, and was shattered into powder as the Egyptians got their philosophy of ownership into a tangle.

The tax-gatherers, who were also teachers and servants of the public, in time and upon occasion became their priestly masters. Under the cloak of benevolence, which deceived good-nature, the priests, taking advantage of the grateful feelings of the citizens, sought to increase the income tax upon various pretexts. Gradually trusteeship was exalted into possession and then virtual ownership of the revenues.

Disastrous consequences are bound to follow when equity in politics is supplanted by charity. Starting from a period when life was simple and cheerful, and in which both religion and art were more or less unfettered by superstitions and conventions, war being unknown, we now begin to find traces of that growth of parasitism which finally smothered all progress.

It is true that for long progress in invention and culture persisted, but as economic enclosure crept round the life of the people, advancement in the arts became only one of quantity. Originality and quality disappeared because they were accounted heretical in the thickening atmosphere of despotic priestcraft. Religion, turned from its office of elevating man, was slowly decomposed into superstition for keeping him down.

Horssheshu, e.g. servants of Horus, were appointed to control the priesthood, and these chief priests ruled from each independent city and temple forming the centre of a nome or province of Egypt. It was to their interest to complicate theological beliefs and surround themselves with mysteries.

It was taught that, although one in essence, God was not one in person ; that He existed as Father, but reproduced Himself under another aspect as Mother, and under a third as Son. "This Trinity is three and yet one, and has all the attributes of the one—infinity, eternity and omnipotence. Thus far the Athanasian Creed might be a chapter of the Todtenbuch, and it is very evident where the Alexandrian saint got those subtle metaphysical ideas which are so opposed to the rigid monotheistic creeds of Judaism and Mohammedanism." (S. Laing.)

Just as in Christianity the Virgin, the saints, and even the images and relics became objects of adoration, so likewise the Egyptian trinity became infinitely extended. To the Father, Mother and Son were admitted a daughter and other descendants.

In the original Cosmogony the sun was described as having been called into existence by the word of the Supreme God, but it came to be taken as His visible representative, and finally worshipped as a god itself. Each different phase received a different designation, e.g. Horus when on the horizon, rising and setting, Ra in its midday splendour, Osiris during its journey in the night through the underground world of darkness. These were personified and worshipped separately, and it is significant that while Horus was at first the most popular, Osiris became at length the favourite, as the tomb and a future life increasingly occupied the thoughts of the unfortunate people.

The Egyptians extended the process of dissociation, and they soon filled a whole Pantheon with secondary gods, either personifications of different attributes of the Supreme God or separate portions of the One Divine Essence. The personifications came to be regarded as independent beings ; to have a female principle or wives added to them, and to be worshipped as the patron gods of the respective temples in precisely the same way as the patron saints of the kingdoms of Christendom thousands of years later.

Furthermore, fragments of the Divine Essence were supposed to be incarnated in the high-priest Pharaoh and his family, and even in bulls, cats and other sacred animals. Everything possible was done to create a web of hypnotism

for the enslavement of the Egyptians to a centralised hierarchy.

### **The Profiteer Priesthood.**

As the social environment of the Egyptians advanced in malignity, their pious hopes were more and more fixed upon a future life. They regarded their houses as merely temporary inns and their tombs as their true permanent homes. Every activity became subordinated to the preparation of the abode for the mummy and its Ka or second, shadowy self, against the time when the soul would have to appear before the supreme judge Osiris and the forty-two heavenly jurors.

It was believed that so long as the receptacle for the Ka and the occasional visits of the soul was preserved, conscious personal life was continued beyond the grave, otherwise the ghostly entities might perish also, or be left to flit through the world of shadows without a home or name. Hence the extraordinary care and expense lavished upon the provision of a fitting tomb and mummy.

Just as it is the ambition of the modern profiteer to accumulate a great fortune, to become a landowner, and "found a family," so the Egyptian prototype sought to determine labour to the construction of the most permanent tomb possible and so to ensure the preservation of his after-life existence.

In the Sacred Book of ancient Egypt there are evidences that the Egyptian prophets attempted to restrain the selfishness of privileged persons, as, for example, those in possession of irrigation works, a monopoly in such a country as potent as a railway in, say, America. The ideal prayer of the soul pleading on the day of judgment before Osiris and the Celestial Jury contains the following articles:

"I have told no lies; committed no frauds; been good to widows; not overtaken servants; not lazy or negligent; done nothing hateful to the gods; been kind to slaves; promoted no strife; caused no one to weep; committed no murder; stolen no offerings to the dead; made no fraudulent gains; seized no lands wrongfully; not tampered with weights and measures; not taken the

milk from sucklings; not molested sacred beasts and birds; not cut off or monopolised watercourses; have sown joy and not sorrow; have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothed the naked."

"I am pure, I am pure."

These counsels of moral perfection, like those of Buddha and Zoroaster, of Christianity and of Islam long afterwards, had a restraining effect upon exaggerated self-interest, but in common with modern religions, the Egyptian moral code, as the people succumbed to captivity, was also glossed and waxed over, until hypocrisy and perfunctory charity deadened the conscience of the wrongdoers, and brilliant success in wrongdoing dazzled the eyes of the victims.

Indeed, the worst offenders were the Chief Priests themselves, just as in more modern times, given the opportunity, Christian popes, cardinals and bishops practised themselves, and condoned in powerful rulers, the very vices which offend against Christian principles.

### **Centralised Government established to enforce Peace.**

Recent investigations go to show that the growth of the contemporaneous civilisation of Chaldæa in Mesopotamia was proceeding by similar steps to that of Egypt. The Horsheshu of Egypt and the Patesi of Chaldæa became hereditary castes, and while each hierarchy developed a different system, the Accadian being more astronomical, the political symptoms were identical.

The recently discovered statues of Sirgalla, corresponding to the same early period as that of Chephren and carved out of the same diorite, only to be found in the peninsula of Sinai, is an indication that commercial intercourse by sea existed between the ancient Accadians and Egyptians, which apparently disappeared as the engendered feelings of suspicion and hatred that always accompany enclosure brought about mutual exclusion and the closed door to peaceful trading.

Within each country the producers of the necessities of life had become heavily burdened to support the hordes of priests and slaves engaged in vain and useless pursuits. Stunted in the perpetual twilight of captivity, their minds

suffered that most terrible consequence of subjection, the awful dread of the future and the unknown which oppresses alike the miserable savage imprisoned in a web of superstition woven by the witch-doctor and the cultured laity bewitched by the monstrous doctrines of religious inversion.

Not seeing the true cause of their misfortunes, intent only in pursuing the shadow for the substance, the mentally darkened provincials blamed each other.

Centred round the people of each patron god and hereditary priest-king, there sprang up egoistical parties composed of contending time-servers and persons benefiting from conflicting vested interests. Civil commotions caused by the factions became frequent, and to obtain dynamic stability, the successful faction for the time being directed the attention of all to a struggle for supremacy with adjoining provinces.

One province became subject to another, and alliances were entered into for mutual security of the ruling priests. The fighting, which at first was not of a sanguinary nature, gradually became more serious as bitterness intensified and the Egyptians got familiar with and skilled in the taking of human life.

In the course of time a state of temporary equilibrium was attained, when the two divisions of Upper and Lower Egypt were united in an imperialistic league or coalition under Menes, the High Priest of Ra, i.e. Pi-ra or Pharaoh, pre-eminent above the priesthoods of Horus and Osiris, as is the sun most glorious at its meridian.

Now was established at Memphis a reign of centralised government to enforce peace throughout the whole land of Egypt, and it is noteworthy that almost contemporaneously the Semite Sargon the First founded a united monarchy at Agade, the capital of Accad, or Upper Mesopotamia, an Empire extending southwards over the alluvial deltas of the Euphrates, Tigris and other rivers which flow into the Persian Gulf.

### **The Collapse of the Old Empire.**

It is an eloquent testimony to the organised efficiency of the slave system built up on the credulity of the masses

that the Old Empire lasted almost fifteen hundred years. Power in the hands of the Pharaoh and the priests was successfully created for the repression of rebellion at a greater rate than the resistive or disruptive social forces mothered by the unquenchable desire for freedom.

It was during this epoch that the greatest monuments, including the pyramids, were constructed by the industrial conscription of the unemployed, great armies of disciplined slaves being fed and supported by heavy taxation of the husbandmen. But useful hydraulic engineering schemes of irrigation were also carried out, and Egypt became the granary of the surrounding countries. For some centuries the rigidity due to acquired momentum kept alive a hectic prosperity.

"They built like giants and finished like jewellers," but anything new and fresh was rarely attempted. In the industrial and fine arts a degree of skill in execution was reached which has never been surpassed. It was a barren culture, directed not to the service of the living, however, but to the dead. There have never been such lasting memorials to human folly.

The distribution of the good things of life was unbalanced at the source by monopoly power. The obliquity of the platform of thought and custom increased as the weight of privilege bore down upon the struggling masses, who were gravitating towards misery and squalor.

As the rich became richer and the poor became poorer, society stratified into hereditary castes. A perfection of refinement and the polish of learning were preoccupations of the leisured priests, who imagined themselves far removed from the common herd condemned to penal servitude for life.

Nevertheless, the dry rot of slavery was in the foundations.

In accordance with the law that freedom is an essential condition of permanence, governmental power at length became powerless to preserve the social order. There was a rapid decline, and a cataclysmic fall into utter impotence and anarchy. A period supervened in which all records were eclipsed.

**The Middle Empire.**

"When Egypt, with the eleventh dynasty, awoke from its long sleep, the ancient traditions were forgotten. The proper names of the kings and ancient nobility, the titles of the high functionaries, the style of the hieroglyphic writing, and even the religion, all seemed new. The monuments were rude, primitive, and sometimes even barbarous, and to see them one would be inclined to think that Egypt under the eleventh dynasty was beginning again the period of infancy which it had already passed through fifteen hundred years earlier under the third." (Mariette.)

Out of the chaos of coercive communism and indiscriminate anarchy there had grown up a new absolutism, now known as the Middle Empire, which was crudely held together by militarism and robbery. Surrounding nations were made tributary, and the frontiers were extended far to the south over Nubia, the Soudan and Southern Syria. The capital was no longer at Memphis, but at Thebes.

All cut-throat empires are short-lived, and the Middle Empire, which was one of the earliest attempts to enforce peace by methods of organised ruthlessness and frightfulness, was no exception to the rule.

Egoistic systems live dangerously, and, actuated by motives based upon fear, it is their habit to enter into fickle coercive alliances for protection. The continuance of the coalition depends upon the sustained prosecution of plundering conquests, and since a limit is reached at some time, beyond which the returns decrease at a greater rate than the sacrifices, there is a stage where the system loses stability.

At this point the allies proceed to quarrel over the division of the spoils, that always melt into disappointing compass when they are in their clutches. While they fight and prey upon each other, it frequently happens that some smaller outside or barbarian tribal egoism, probably smarting from the effects of punitive expeditions, watches its opportunity, reacts, and captures the control centres of the empire.

The civil wars and commotions which attended the fourteenth dynasty prepared the way for a great catastrophe to the Middle Empire.

**The Era of Wars upon a Grand Scale begins.**

A similar development had taken place in far away Mesopotamia, which was divided into antagonistic provinces.

About 2280 B.C. the Elamites, who lived on the eastern shore of the Persian Gulf in the country of Elam, descended with their new invention of regular troops upon their kinsmen of Chaldæa, conquering and ousting the existing Semitic dynastic rulers.

From this time a succession of wars of swaying conquests followed each other; it was the inauguration of the militarist age upon the grand scale.

The success of the Elamites in so easily overcoming their neighbours by the aid of picked trained men, skilled in killing, gave an impetus to invention in the "art of war." Each province in Western Asia adopted a standing army, and all important cities were walled for defence. The priest-kings struggled for supremacy with each other under the ægis of their patron god in the same way that Christian princes three thousand years later, in the age of chivalry, led their followers under the banners of their respective patron saints in wars with each other and in combination against Islam.

The pastoral clans of Arabia and Syria, hearing of the success of the Elamites, became infected with the new form of adventure, which seemed a cure for their own domestic troubles. They joined forces under shepherd-kings to prey upon the empires of the fertile deltas, rendered helpless by internal dissensions.

The Hyksos found the Middle Empire, which was demoralised by parasitic growth, an easy prey. After a short period of fire and sword, the empire fell into their hands like rotten fruit. The shepherds quickly adopted the manners and customs of the Egyptians, who became their hosts, to the vexation of the native parasites.

**The Two Varieties of Captivity.**

It is scarcely necessary to remind ourselves that slavery of the extreme chattel variety is not a state accomplished in one step, but is evolved by many gradations of control. Just as the capture of an animal can be effected quickly when he has only to be caught in an enclosure, so once a

community has become enclosed within a net of erroneous custom, the remaining shreds of its freedom may be easily divested and the yoke of bondage imposed.

Preserved in the Book of Genesis, the legendary story of Joseph exemplifies how the yeomanry of Egypt, believing that the earth could be bought and sold, were themselves sold to Pharaoh.

Joseph, it will be remembered, had been sold into slavery by his brothers, jealous of the patriarch's favour and enraged by the encouragement given to Joseph in his dreams of ascendancy over his brethren. He was fond of power, spoilt by an old father and accustomed to the idea of one man owning another. In his eyes the comparative liberty of the Egyptian husbandmen must have appeared incongruous, and this view was no doubt shared by the reigning Pharaoh, if, as is probable, he was a Hyksos or Shepherd-King.

From the story of Cain and Abel we gather that there was antipathy between the tillers of the ground, who built cities, and the keepers of sheep, who lived in tents. We also read, "Every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians."

The cause of this hostility probably had its origin in trading asperities due to profiteering. The husbandmen, in virtue of their false status as "owners" of the soil, were enabled to keep the market short by throwing land out of cultivation, and they were thus obtaining high prices for their niggardly production. Surrounding pastoral tribes would suffer for this, as well as their own countrymen.

#### **Joseph's "Corner."**

If the tillers of the soil had been assessed for the common services upon the rental value of the land held by them, whether used or unused, instead of being penally taxed according to production, they could not have kept land idle without ruining themselves. Consequently there would have been profuse production, in which case it would have been impossible for Joseph to have made his "corner." It thus happened that the institution of private property in land, which the peasant proprietors most likely imagined was their charter of liberty, was the cause of their undoing.

There were no newspapers for the purposes of propaganda in those days, but the priesthood were very influential in forming the "correct atmosphere." The thoughts of the superstitious Egyptians were conveniently guided by occult signs, such as the dreams of kings.

Pharaoh was understood to dream that seven fat kine preceded seven lean kine from the river, and that the latter cattle ate up the former. This was confirmed by a similar dream in which seven ears of good corn were consumed by seven ears of poor.

The king found Joseph more resourceful than the native wise men: possibly the dreams were suggested by him at an opportune moment. The interpretation, which was that seven years of good harvests should precede seven years of dearth, certainly seems an obvious one.

For his prescience in foretelling the future, Joseph was made prime minister of Egypt, with the power of a despotic Food Controller and President of the Board of Agriculture rolled into one. Officers were appointed over the land, and a fifth part of the produce was taken up in the seven plenteous years. "And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous."

Persuaded that it was necessary in the national interest to produce more, the Egyptian husbandmen brought land back into cultivation and exerted themselves to obtain good harvests. While in the Biblical sense seven years may simply mean a certain unascertained period, it is possible that, influenced by patriotic feelings based upon credulity kept alive by Pharaoh's officers, the period was as much as seven years.

Although the annual Nile floods do vary so as to effect the volume of harvest, they never do to the abnormal extent to be inferred from the narrative; nevertheless, it is reasonable to suppose that the transient feelings aroused would wear away, and, discouraged by the Government confiscation, the Egyptians would lose heart. They would begin restriction of output so soon as a partial failure of the inundation occurred to confirm the prophecy, apart from a desire to recoup themselves in higher prices.

The famine then began, "and the seven years of

plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said; but in the land of Egypt there was bread."

In the meantime Joseph had made his "corner," "and Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering, for it was without number."

#### **The Husbandmen overreach themselves.**

Joseph waited until the Egyptians, attracted by the rising prices, sold out to the surrounding pastoral tribes, who were the first to feel the pinch. To such an extent did the Egyptians profiteer that they left themselves with insufficient food to sustain their families and to sow the land for the next harvest.

When the Egyptians realised their plight they sent a deputation to Pharaoh, who told them in effect "to trust the Board of Agriculture." "And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, 'Go unto Joseph, and what he saith to you, do.'"

Joseph opened the storehouses and sold back to the people what had been taken from them with their consent, given in the belief that the State is entitled to tax what it likes. First of all he obtained all their money, which was soon used up. When money failed, he took their cattle in exchange, which were handed over to Pharaoh.

"They came unto him the second year, and said unto him: 'We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands.

"Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh; and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.'"

Joseph thereupon "nationalised" the land of Egypt by purchase. He also socialised the means of production. "Then Joseph said unto the people: 'Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here

is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase, that you shall give the fifth part unto the Pharaoh; and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.'"

The starvation manufactured by the tearful super-profitteer more effectually breaks the spirit of the freeman than the whip of the cruellest taskmaster. "And they said: 'Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.'"

There was ruthless and thorough conscription of productive labour and unsparing extirpation of the "idler." The Egyptians were organised for peace upon the same lines as for war. A process of "combing out" was put into operation, and all that could be spared from agriculture were compulsorily removed to swell the armies of city slaves, the remainder sinking into the condition of the Indian ryot of to-day. "And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof."

The "aristocracy of intellect" of Egypt, the priests, were rewarded for their loyalty to the State of Divine Right: "Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh and did eat their portion, which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their lands."

It was the inferior philosophy of the Egyptians which levered them into bondage and kept them there. They believed that land could be bought and sold, and that the State, being entitled to tax what it liked, had therefore an unassailable right to their person.

Man must either progress or retrogress. The happiness of communities not being determined by the possession of things that money can buy, but by the extent to which their conduct conforms with the Will of God, it follows that evil consequences increase in volume so long as communities continue to move in opposition to that will.

In proportion as the enslaved producers of Egypt resorted to restriction of wealth output, so the profiteers increased their rate of plunder. It is roughly estimated that one-third share of the communal slavery fell to Pharaoh

and his household, one-third to the priesthood throughout the land, and the remaining one-third to the masses.

### **The New Empire.**

It was then that a sudden great fury took possession of the nation, and this was directed against the Hyksos rulers. They were expelled about 1750 B.C. and their places were occupied by native tyrants.

Blind to the fact that their wretchedness had originated in an elementary injustice, which was within their power of righting, the Egyptians thought the lesson of experience lay in the subjugation of others as they had been dominated by the Hyksos.

Campaigns in Asia were proceeded with on a great scale, until the borders of the New Empire extended from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and tribute was received from Babylon and Nineveh.

The empire of the sword lives dangerously. Power becomes more unstable as it grows into greater dominion, because might is not right. A reactance of hostility builds up, and after a while increases at a greater rate than the acquisition of power by the reigning regime. The empire of the sword perishes by the sword, and the new militarist administration is overcome in turn or collapses upon itself.

There is no progress by violence, because it is not the Will of God.

### **The Decline and Fall of the New Empire.**

The Turanian Hittites, who founded an empire in Asia Minor, strove and wasted themselves against the Egyptians, but as their power declined that of Assyria arose. By merciless butchery, under the patronage of their cruel war-god Assur, the Assyrians hacked through Syria and Palestine to the Delta of the Nile.

The New Empire was not only stripped of the plunder of former conquests, but Egypt itself was invaded, and for some time became tributary to the victorious Nebuchadnezzar.

During the subsequent struggles of the imperialists for supremacy the Egyptians became in turn the slaves of

Persia under Cambyses, of the Greeks under Alexander and the Ptolemies, and at the time of Cleopatra entered the bondage of the Roman Empire.

### **Great Empires breed Little Men.**

It is difficult to realise at first that a denial of equal rights and equal duties, beginning almost imperceptibly, culminates at length in calamitous effects. It would appear that when we deviate from the path of Natural Discipline, the inexorable consequence is imprisonment or slavery, which is a hostile environment.

In this situation, instead of the State being for man, man becomes the property of the State; Governments, instead of being the servants of the people, become their masters; in place of Equality of Opportunity, there is Inequality of Sacrifice.

The Divinity of Man is destroyed when the State is endowed with Divine Right; Individuality is swallowed up by a soulless Egoism, and Principle is subjugated by Interest when the clay image of Superstition and Inhumanity is exalted in the place of the living vision of Humanity and Religion.

Great empires breed little<sup>1</sup> men.

### **The Origin of Evil.**

The neo-Malthusians and the teachers of hereditary taint have their counterpart in the Babylonian philosophers, whose theory was that as population increased "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

The myth of the Garden of Eden, the Temptation of the Serpent, the Trees of Knowledge and of Life, and the Fall of Adam, represented upon Babylonian cylinders and adapted in the Hebrew Bible, is an allegorical attempt to explain the mystery of evil in the world.

The imaginary conflicts between Good and Evil principles, between Ormuzd and Ahriman, or between God and Satan, are they not the hallucinations of captivity? In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments, there are consequences. Happiness and unhappiness are

alternative consequences, depending upon conformity or nonconformity with the discipline of God or Nature.

In the Book of Genesis, and elsewhere in the Bible, there are layers of opposing sentiments by two distinct schools of ancient writers. One school taught that the "earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof," while the other held that the earth is the landlord's, to whom the fullness thereof was due for graciously permitting his fellows to live upon it.

The injunction "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" cannot be reconciled with the doctrine that the presence of evil in the world was due to original sin manifested in the instinct of reproduction, which doomed mankind to a heritage of pain and misery. "Unto the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.'"

Failing to appreciate the relationship between man and his environment, the Patesi of Chaldæa, like the priests and presbyters of other ages, could not see that the earth had been reduced in dimensions by foolish institutions, and that in consequence its citizens had drifted into captivity. Deceived by the appearances of inherent evil in every direction, the priests fancied that God was hostile to His disobedient creation. "And unto Adam He said . . . 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field, in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.'"

The support of a host of militarist, political and priestly profiteers is the reason why the sons of Adam are born to sorrow. Labour in itself is not an evil, and the punishment of interminable servitude was not sent by a jealous, cruel God, but is a consequence of man's own social blunder.

The origin of all evil is superstition.