visualized lost its human outline; it became more and more a spirit, and I realize now that as the outline disappeared the hold the spirit had on me became more powerful.

It was while I was seeking desperately to understand and square up this divinity from which I could not escape with what I met in life, that I made my first acquaintance with the doctrine of evolution. It was regarded as blasphemy, a denial of religion by many of those who surrounded me, but to me it was a revelation, - the divine method or process by which the beneficent spirit in the universe was to work out its intent. Evolution has never ceased to be a fundamental element in my religion.

The slowness of the process does not disturb me, for my religion emancipates me from time. It has come to be literally with me as the Psalmist puts it: "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night."

Of course this leaves me a tiny atom in the universe, but, as a matter of fact, that is what I am, my only business being to be a sound atom, one that works with and not against the beneficent spirit in things - there lies my immortality.

How keep in touch with the divine and let it work its way with me? That has always seemed to me my important business - also probably the one which I have most neglected. It has always seemed clear to me that it was only by some form of very personal communion - worship in its purest form - that I could have any

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hope of any for degree of understanding of the divine. But if you are to have worship there can be no outside interruption or distraction, real worship requires silence and solitude. The longer I live the more convinced I have become that when I first laid hold of the relation of silence to genuine communion with the divine, I struck a great spiritual truth.

Miss Best in her stimulating and illuminating stories of "Rebel Saints" as she characterizes certain early Quakers, quotes Thomas Lurting's comment that "as silence is the first word of command in martial discipline so it is in spiritual; for until that is come unto, the will and mind of God concerning us cannot be known, much less done."

Even primitive religions provided for silent meditation - solitary communion. It has not always been easy for would-be saints to command silence - freedom from disturbance; and so we have had monks, hermits, anchorites, withdrawing from the world even going for long periods without food, sleep, human presence. If there were to be a pure inner flame lit and spreading in their souls it could only be done by continued silent contemplation.

But this class has always been small. It came into conflict with one of the strongest instincts of man, also one of his necessities, if he was to live on the earth, and that was the need, the duty of remaining with his kind, sharing its

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experiences. Men had to do that in order to exist. But they could not get away from the instinct to worship, and a certain consciousness, however dim, that worship meant spiritual withdrawal, so they built temples and churches.

But, alas! the temples and churches sooner or later ceased to be places of meditation, even to give any opportunity for solitude. They became more or less bustling centres of song, ceremony and preaching. Men felt the need, too, to visualize the spirit. Feeling that there was something in himself akin to the divine spirit he gave the spirit a form like his own, a form with head, legs, arms - he made it talk - he gave it human qualities. Oftimes the gods he created became scandalous creatures that punished cruelly, that had to be bought off. They had to be entertained, flattered, sung to, talked to. The centre of religion was no longer the spirit, not the seeking understand and development in silence and humility. Man worked out a practical substitute for the agony of soul, for the mystical waiting on the Lord.

I cannot but feel that pure religion is frequently talked to death in the very houses of the Lord. I would not be taken as meaning that creeds, ceremonies, man's efforts to make more real to himself the divine nature and the divine method mean nothing to me. A church, a temple, a religious system is and always has been holy to me. It is only when the exponents of the various religions begin to fight over them, claiming some exclusive possession, that I

feel the need to withdraw. The debates over Fundamnetalism and Modernism affect me as having nothing to do with my religion - they are outside its province. They are forces of the intellect, not of the spirit, belong to that effort, always so strong among men, to formulate their thoughts and feelings into a creed, which those who do not know it or deny it are to be forced or persuaded to accept. Pure religion forces no man's spirit - its very essence requires that the spirit be free for contemplation, for learning what the divine has to teach it.

Men naturally accept the creed, the forms to which they are introduced as children as the truth and the only truth. If they are to have any real spiritual inner life they must find it themselves, groping out from where they stand. Personally I have no inclination to sneer at the Tennessee mountaineer who regards evolution which, as I have said, came to me as a revelation, as an impious idea. I do not think you are going to get it out of him by ridiculing and lecturing him. I think he is much more apt to grow away from it if he is left free, to believe or not to believe. After all, true religion does not come from believing this or that, however precious, essential, fundamental this or that may be to you as an individual. It is not in theologies, creeds, ceremonies that we find the most vital and profound expression of religion - it is in the kind of man the religion makes, his attitude toward all men, the struggles of their spirit to evolve into something more in harmony with the divine spirit. His tolerance, sympathy,

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charity - a man's relation to other human beings, reflects the depth and genuineness of his spiritual communion.

The Christian religion, inspite of the crimes which have been constantly committed in its name, emphasizes more clearly, beautifully and satisfactorily than any other what the relation of the truly religious should be to his fellows. According to the Christian system as it is laid out in the Bible, society should be a brotherhood of men, - not a brotherhood of white men only but of all men, of all colors. Moreover, it takes men as they are, pagan, Christian, idolator, scoffer, Catholic and Jew, and it lays down the set of principles which are essential for their living together in a just and peaceful society. These precepts, if they mean anything, mean mutual understanding, accommodation, sacrifice:

> "Judge not lest ye be judged"
>
> "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
>
> "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them"
>
> "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.'

Test these precepts by the inner light, the light which communion, worship gives, and they ring true. They satisfy the spirit more and more deeply as it develops. Moreover, they produce the only type of human being that can work out a brotherhood of man.

A few years ago, trying to get down what I really thou about the beneficent influence that the Bible had exercised i

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the world, I said of the man that it seeks to build up to work out Christianity's notion of a brotherhood of man, that he was the man of the Beatitudes - hungering and thirsting after righteousness; merciful, pure in heart, meek in spirit, a peace-maker, willing even to be persecuted and reviled for righteousness' sake. This is the "whole" pr perfect man in the Bible sense, and to produce him is its continuous concern. By personal histories, by parables, by contrasts of good and evil conduct, by maxims of the highest beauty of form and of the most penetrating moral quality, it warns against those things which would poison the heart and deform the conduct it seeks to establish. Pride, greed, hypocrisy, cruelty, irreverence, cowardliness are moral diseases which the Bible wars as a great physician wars on physical ailments which, uncorrected, would destroy the body's tissue."

This conception of men in their relations with one another was not the fruit of doctrinal struggle, church organizations, of theologies however sound and essential but rather of the travail of the spirit. They came from the striving in solitude and silence to enter into a fuller understanding of the divine.

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