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A NEW GOD FOR AMERICA

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WHAT this country needs—much more than a good five-cent cigar—is a new God.

Let me explain. By *new* I do not mean a God newly created. I mean a God newly apprehended. In the language of philosophy, *new* is here used subjectively, not objectively. In short, I mean a new *conception* of God.

A God, to be worth anything, must be very old. Very old, indeed. He must, in fact, be eternal. In the words of the Catholic Catechism, God always was, is, and ever shall be. There is a nice problem, that mystics love, about the relation of time to God. They conceive that there is no time for Him at all—that He simply is, and that our past, present and future are limitations that do not apply to Him. He is, in that sense, always new, new every morning. But we generally think of God as very old. Before the earth and the world were made, before the morning stars sang together, God was. Men have gone crazy trying to conceive how old He is. The guesses of philosophers and the dreams of poets fail here. Centuries before Christ the Hindus speculated about His age. They conceived of Brahm breathing out universes and breathing them in again. They held that this was His fifth long breath and that He had already begun to draw it in. There will be at least two more.

Be that as it may, the idea of a new God for America is imperative. Anyone can see that the old Gods of this country are entirely inadequate. They neither meet the needs of the time nor comport with the dignity of the nation. They are out of date, like the divinities in a Wagner music drama. The age has passed beyond them. Moreover, there are too many of them. Their number has become confusing. A great nation should have only one God—a God sufficiently great to swallow up all lesser deities. We need a truly national God. He should be of the sort that compels the respect, nay, the reverence, the adoration, the enthusiasm of the people. Learned and ignorant should bow down before Him. To fail to worship Him should spell death. He should be able to scatter the inadequate “gods many and lords many” that now divide the nation and bring it into contempt. He should absorb all inferior deities into His own splendid and universal Personality.

The idea of a new God in this sense entirely comports with the teaching of the schools. The theologues themselves can find no fault with it. The learned doctors of divinity are already committed to it. Catholics and Protestants, heretics and orthodox, rectors and curates, priests and preachers, bishops and archbishops, popes and prelates, ritualists and revivalists, all

the ecclesiastical brotherhood, endorse the idea. They strive for nothing else. It is what they want, what they are endeavoring to put across. Even the Holy Book itself, the Bible, is full of the conception of a new God, a God Who is a development, a growth.

II

Come with me for a little lesson. Take down from the shelf the old family Bible. Dust its venerable shiny covers. Open its pages: your grandfather read them. Learn that in the time of the Judges the God of the Jews was a fierce tribal Being named Yaveh. He was little better than a pirate, a yeggman, a peterman, a stick-up man. More ruthless than the modern bandit or robber, He murdered helpless women and children. His mouth was smeared with the blood of His victims. He spoke in the thunder and rode upon the wings of the wind. His nostrils breathed in the smell of burnt sacrifices and the smoke of flaming thuribles. He stirred up His votaries to make war upon their enemies. Whole cities were destroyed by His command. The Jews called Him jealous.

Later on, you will see that as the conquered country of the Jews became settled and civilized and began to put forth abundant harvests, the gentler Baal *motif* came in. A new God began to be worshipped. The old name, indeed, remained, but Yaveh was no longer the crude savage, the ogre of the earlier period. He became softened, more reasonable, more convivial. He was the God of commerce, of the harvest, of social life. The smiling fields, the rich foods, trade, prosperity, plenty, revealed a new God. The priests began to moderate the severity of their ritual. Soon there was danger that the new God would become a degenerate God. Pleasure, rioting, revels, drunkenness, sex, began to appear in the religion of the people. Always, in time of prosperity, a danger. It became necessary for the Prophets, stern ascetics from the mountains, lean preach-

ers of righteousness, to insist upon a limitation of the Baal concept.

God must include morality if the nation was to live. So the Law was devised. The Ten Commandments, attributed by the pious to a revelation given to Moses by God Himself on Mount Sinai, but actually worked out by Jewish statesmen from other national codes, fixed the morality of the Jewish God and of the Jewish people. It was a limited morality, to be sure, but it has been recognized ever since as a most effective device for national preservation. It kept the Hebrew people alive amid the softening and deteriorating influences of the Oriental tribes by which they were surrounded. It stamped the race with an enduring quality that remains even to this day.

For the Law was the enunciation of principles without which it is impossible for a national life to be secure. It was a wonderful discovery. The Commandments are in the sphere of sociology what gravitation is in the sphere of physics. And the discovery that God was a God of Law made a new God for the Jewish people. The Commandments were the discovery of a natural law, an invention like the lever of Archimedes. But since the Being who made nature and its laws included them in His works, it became necessary to conceive of Him in a new way. This discovery was as important to history as the humanism of the Greeks or the jurisprudence of the Romans. Perhaps more important.

Some centuries later, in the time of the second Isaiah, the God of the Jews changed still further. He had been up to this time a God confined to a nation, to the land. His interest was only for one little country and one little tribe. Now His sovereignty was extended to the nations of the world—though He was still very partial to people with a certain kind of nose. "The isles shall wait on Him." The Book of Jonah is a little Jewish novelette written as propaganda for this idea. It was good for business. Thereafter, every three or four centuries, from 1000 B.C. to the Christian

era, the Jews got a new God. And why not? The whole world was progressing out of a state of savagery and barbarism into a higher and higher civilization. The God of the savage is one thing; the God of the civilized man quite another. What the one dotes upon the other simply cannot imagine.

This progress among the Jews was recorded in a series of little books which, when bound together and reëdited, we call the Old Testament. It is a superb record of human thought and experience, embroidered with poetry and legends, containing folk-lore and old traditions, worth little as history taken literally, but when studied intelligently, of supreme interest. No other nation of antiquity produced anything so good.

There was really nothing new in the God of Jesus. He took the best of the Jewish ideas about God and added a touch of genius. God became the Eternal Father, the Universal Spirit. "God is love." The savage Yavch was thus lost in the mists of the past and the Christian God arose to claim the allegiance of mankind.

It remained for the theologians, Greek and Latin, to attempt to clarify the Gospel conception. They defined the Trinity, the three Persons in the Godhead. This dogma they still insist upon.

III

Some years ago two women, immigrants from Europe, were overheard conversing in the steerage as their ship approached New York.

"What church you goin' to when you get to America?" asked one.

"Church!" exclaimed the other. "Why, there been't no God in America!"

The woman was wrong. There are a great many Gods in America. In fact, an actual count shows over two hundred of them. Probably there are a great many more. That is exactly our trouble. Here is a great nation, just entering upon its career as the chief power in the world, stupendously rich, highly inventive, emotional,

religious, imaginative, clever, which has no grand outstanding God, universally recognized and respected, but only a surplus of mediocre, middle-class divinities, many of them as absurd as the idols in a Chinese pagoda.

"In God we trust," says the legend on our coins. But the trouble is to know *which* God. It is true that all the different Gods are called by the same name. They are all "God." But in reality they vary greatly. We have, for instance, the Billy-Sunday-William-Jennings-Bryan God. This God, modelled upon the most ancient and worst aspect of the Jewish Yavch, is the God of Prohibition. His main characteristic is apparently to make people uncomfortable. He delights in little negative restrictions and petty taboos. His priests are not allowed to smoke or play cards. It is sacrilege for His votaries to drink a glass of beer. Wine stinks in His nostrils. Gin draws the lightnings of His wrath. A vast following of fanatical devotees of the Upshavian type pray daily to this strange antique God. His adherents advocate force as the corrective of character. They consider the laws of our legislative bodies to be of divine authority. Compulsion is as congenial to them as it was to the Moslem hordes who followed Allah. If they have not yet taken up the sword, they have been known to wield an axe. A queer, violent, uncomfortable, nagging, legalistic sort of God Who does not believe in evolution.

We have also certain medieval Gods, Gods Who inhabit great churches where they are approached through elaborate and spectacular forms and ceremonies, Gods Who can only be reached, apparently, through the intercession of saints like St. Louis of Gonzaga and the Little Flower. And then there are sickly, sentimental Gods living in dingy buildings where they are worshipped by elderly vestals arrayed in rusty black gowns which come to their ankles—vestals who sing through their noses and whose chief mark of piety is their lack of style. Also, there are fashion-

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able Gods, confined to and approached only in the most exclusive and select of ecclesiastical edifices, small and Gothic, where it is considered a desecration if you speak to a stranger who happens to come in. In the vestibules of the temples of these Gods you often see an inscription which reads, "The Lord is in His Holy Temple." They take care that He never gets out.

The adherents of these various Gods, in the degree that they are devoted, hate each other with unrelenting antipathy. They divide the people. They inhibit any unity of spirit or action in the nation. Their differences are more separative than rank, color or race. What this country needs is one supreme God that shall unite its religious emotion and centralize its loyalty.

An obvious objection must be met here. It may be asked whether, since all these various Gods have the same name, They are not in reality one God, with only superficial differences. But it must be evident that the same question might be raised about the supreme Deities of all the pagan cults. Are not Brahm, Wotan, Jupiter and Zeus the same? They were all called God. Names, in fact, do not matter. What matters is the differences in attributes, in qualities. The various Gods in the American Pantheon are really quite different. It is for this reason that Their adherents express their devotion in such different ways. Their Gods produce quite different effects upon them.

Undoubtedly, there are certain common characteristics in the mass of American Gods. They all claim to be Biblical. And certainly They are all conspicuously anthropomorphic. They are Biblical because Scripture is used to enable Their missionaries to describe Them. And They are anthropomorphic because few people can escape the necessity of making God in their own image. Also, it is clear that most of these Gods rule a geocentric world and inhabit what Dean Inge calls a geographic heaven. Their earth was made in six literal days. Above it, in some remote place which

nobody has ever seen, They sit enthroned in glory. They have long white whiskers and, when people pray, They incline Their ears. They are very old men. Very far off. They never have any actual relation to life on this earth. On Sundays people talk to Them, or rather at Them, in churches, but during the week They are carefully locked up. It might be awkward if one of Them got out and turned up at the store. That *would* cause a row. And of course, while people pray to Them, they do not really expect that They will do anything about it. It is just one of those customs.

Thus, at the present time a veritable *Götterdämmerung* is taking place in America. The old out-worn, obsolete Gods are dying. Multitudes who formerly worshipped Them no longer believe in Them. Their churches in many instances are almost deserted. They cannot pay Their debts. Their priests and ministers starve. Nobody heeds their howling. Efforts are made from time to time to revive Them, but the revivals fail.

So the time is at hand for the creation of a new God for America. We should indubitably have One. But His creation will be no light task. Even genius of the highest order is scarcely sufficient for it. It will take, no doubt, a generation or two to build up an adequate God for this great people. The new Gods of history did not spring suddenly into being. It took years of labor and strife to devise and promulgate One.

IV

This new God for America must appeal to the imagination. A God, to be a God at all, must be believed in. You cannot believe in something that you cannot imagine. It used to be maintained that belief was a matter of will, but there is really no such thing as a will to believe. A lot of perfectly good people have been executed because they could not adjust their imaginations to the beliefs that the authorities of their age required of them. We are just coming to understand that imagination,

rather than will, is the important factor in life, and, if in life, then in religion.

It is just because people can no longer visualize the Gods of the past in their imaginations that the old Gods are dying. The modern world pictures the universe, not as a thing moving around this earth, but as an infinite spread of stars, with the solar system occupying only a remote and obscure corner—with the earth a midge, a speck, a little ball of mud and fire spinning through the spaces around the sun. Heaven is not above, for there is no above. What is over our heads now will be under our feet at midnight. God cannot sit in heaven, for there is nothing to sit on. The preposterous anthropomorphism of the Bible does not fit the facts of the world. The imagination is unequal to the task of visualizing the eternal Creative Energy, omnipotent, omniscient, that has brought the worlds into being. We can postulate that He must have certain qualities, however. He must have power. He must have beauty. He ought to have goodness. Certainly He is truth. The imagination may be incapable of visualizing such a Being, but it can work in that direction. It is at least not compelled to form a picture that it knows to be false.

The old Biblical conception of God did well enough for people who thought that the earth was a flat disc, that it was made in six days, that the sky was the floor of heaven. But the man who has some knowledge of geology and astronomy cannot accept the ideas of crude Hebrew barbarians of two thousand years ago. The Jews themselves found out what they did find out by their observation of the world about them as they knew it. The modern American will not confine his conception of God to the pictures of Him drawn in an age of defective knowledge. He will derive his Deity, not from any single book but from all books—not only from books written by the hands of men, but from the book of Nature as well. Here the pages are the rocks of the everlasting hills, the punctuation marks are the stars, the illuminations are the sunrise and the sunset, the printed

word is stamped on every field and flower. Thus the new God will be vaster than the old one in relation to time and space. His omnipotent sweep will be wider, His glory more resplendent.

The new American God will not be confined to buildings and to one day in the week. Religion, at bottom, is a philosophy of life. It deals with the how and why of things. A God Whose laws run all through the universe is not to be crowded out of the affairs of daily life. He must be reckoned with. If He is the God of Nature and of Nature's laws, then it is preposterous to think of Him only an hour on Sunday, or of worship as being anything less than the whole of life. The scientist, the man who builds a bridge, is quite as much a worshipper, so long as he follows the laws of his science, as the singer of psalms. The artist who paints in accordance with truth and beauty is a servant of the Living God quite as truly as the preacher in his pulpit. The philosopher and the statesman who proclaim His truth are quite as religious, even technically, as the prophet who of old declared, "Thus spake the Lord."

◀Thus it is evident that the new American God will not be derived exclusively from the Bible.▶ (The old American Gods have always been taken right out of its pages, at least the Protestant Gods. The Catholic God is philosophical, theological, ecclesiastical rather than Biblical. The Catholic God is defined by Authority.▶) But the Protestant God is purely Biblical. It is curious what a strange idea many Protestants have about the Bible. With them it comes first. First the Bible; then God. No God without the Bible. With such Protestants it is the Book that makes God, not God Who made the Book. Or rather, God *did* make the Book. He wrote it in the King James version and let it down out of Heaven by a string, that people should know something about Him and His doings. A wonderful revelation! Nobody could possibly know anything about God if it were not for the Bible.▶ That is the way in which some Protestants regard the Bible and God.

With them God is in the Book. He seldom gets out of it. Hence He is necessarily a Fundamentalist.

But the new American God will not be confined to the pages of a book, not even those of the Bible. He will rather be the God of the Universe, the Maker of all things, the First Cause, the Creative Energy, the Source of power, beauty, life, intelligence, personality. He will be the God of truth, of reality, of facts. He will make Himself known, not through authority, but through experience. For above everything else this new God will be the God of law. Not of human law, but of divine law. That is to say, He will be the God of things as they are. He will not be a person. He will, however, have personality. A person is an individual and therefore separable. But personality must be contained in the Deity, since personality is a feature of the Universe—is found in the Universe, in ourselves.

Whatever is found in the effect must be originally in the cause. And here we come to the difficult problem of Evil. People are always declaring that there cannot be a God since there is Evil—since their houses burn up, since they can't pay the mortgage, since they have the toothache, since the *Lusitania* sank, since there is such a thing as war. But this is to assume that we know all the purposes and ends of the universe from the slight observation we are able to make here and now. I'm not so sure about that. For one thing, we never would get anywhere if it were not for Evil. It has been the whip of civilization. We do what we do because of it.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!

But the problem of Evil makes a nice little essay by itself. You can regard it as negation, as a limitation of Good, as a condition of growth, as a disciplinary condition for improvement. But you cannot altogether be content with the Christian Science idea that it is an illusion. Not if you have the hives.

However, let us leave something to be worked out. A God Who lacked mystery would scarcely be worth His salt. And the new American God must have not only the vague shadows of the remote past of His being to shroud Him and the splendors of creation to veil Him, but ultimate purposes and an infinite variety of methods that we cannot expect to measure. If we get a glimpse of His glory, that is enough.

V

We must insist that our new God shall be a unity. To a large number of untheologically trained minds the Christian dogma of the Trinity has brought only confusion. It is not too much to say that a good many Christians are tritheists, or at least worship two Gods. But the most important truth that modern science has brought out is the unity of the universe and its laws. Things are the same here and in Calcutta. The same rules hold for the sun and for Sirius. There is one operative power throughout the great-whole. Therefore, the new God must be one. The Trinity confuses people. I do not say that there is not a Trinity; what I say is that a good many people have erroneous ideas about it and that they lose something valuable in failing to realize the unity of God.¹

But above all the new American God will be a God of law, of ascertained scientific law. Just as the ancient Jews, finding out certain truths that were of value in establishing their nation, made them articles of religion, so the modern world, find-

¹ If the Protestant churches would use the Athanasian Creed to correct the misapprehensions that are derived from the constant use of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, they would avoid this difficulty. The Athanasian Creed was the final fruit of the religious controversies on the Trinity and the Incarnation in the Early Church. It makes clear the fact that there is but one God and it also distinguishes between the human and the divine natures in Jesus, as the other creeds do not. But the churches are afraid of offending people with the "damnatory clauses." Modern Protestantism lacks the courage of its convictions. This Creed is used in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Church of England. It has made impossible in those churches the kind of controversies that rage among American Protestants.

ing out certain truths of the Universe and of life, will include them in the list of things ordained by its new Deity. As the prophets of old proclaimed, "Thus saith the Lord," so now the tested experience of our men of science will say with equal or more certain validity, "This is the law; this is God's law." The creative process, therefore, will not be presented to us under the old literally interpreted guise of a creation in six days. It will be a matter of geologic ages, of vast reams of time, of growth, of evolution. Most intelligent people have already accepted this idea. Man will not be conceived of as having been made from the dust of the earth, and woman from Adam's rib. Man will be the ultimate product of that marvelous creative energy which can endow a minute speck of protoplasm with such emotional instinctive wisdom that it can develop into human form and human brain. The Fall of Man will not be considered as an act of disobedience to an arbitrary command not to eat apples in a garden with a woman. It will be thought of as a gradual rise of human life out of lower forms, through savagery and barbarism into civilized society. Sin will not be condemned as the deliberate choice of wicked courses on the part of the bad. It will be studied under the forms of race inheritance. The mercy and forgiveness of the new American God will not be the arbitrary acts of a capricious Deity. They will be the deliberate operations of inevitable laws working in relation to the human will. We shall not be saved from a hot hell, alive with worms and roaring with flames. We shall emerge rather into a consciousness of our heritage in the Great Whole, which is the Kingdom of God.

It is worth consideration whether this idea, after all, was not very much what Jesus taught about God. The work of Jesus has been enormously perverted. He has been presented to mankind as a sort of spectacle, a dramatic protagonist, Who came out of the Beyond to perform on this earth a miracle play by the contemplation of which men would be saved. The churches

have stressed the teaching *about* Him, the teaching of St. Paul and the Creeds and the theologians. They have overlooked almost entirely the teaching *of* Him. The teaching *of* Jesus is far more important than the teaching *about* Jesus. The teaching *of* Jesus presents, under the term Kingdom of God, certain possibilities for human consciousness that are entirely suitable for an apprehension of the new American God. He had a consciousness of His relation to the Creative Energy of the Universe, which He called the Father, combined with a perception of certain psychological and sociological laws, which He regarded as important for people to grasp. They constitute a veritable rule of divine procedure, the Kingdom which was His Good News. It was too good for the Jews and it is too good for many Christians. This conscious *rapport* with the Divine made Him the Son of God. The Jews regarded His claim, not understanding it, as blasphemy. They crucified Him. But His value to us at the present time is exactly this. His human soul had attained the fifth octave in the scale of existence. It was joined to and illuminated by the Eternal Word.

Something of the same sort of thing takes place in the mind of every man who thinks. And it gives a hint in regard to the possibility of the modern world obtaining a realization of the new God. That God is not to be merely transcendent. He is to be immanent. If you will consider the nature of ideas, you will perceive that every discovery, every invention, every new idea, is in reality a miracle of inspiration. Out of the remote and obscure past, out of the ages of antiquity, out of the race consciousness, our ideas pour in a stream. Then comes a new thought, a new idea, an invention, a discovery. Edisons arise. Lincolns take the lead. Columbus, Newton, the great brotherhood of those who have moved and advanced the world in its history. They are all revealing God to man. The prophets did the same in their way perhaps. But the new American God will have a wider range of prophets.

So far as the worship of Him is concerned, it will be felt and expressed not only in the great symbols of historic liturgies but in daily life, in the walks and ways of men. We do not say that it will be perfect. But it will be an advance. Faith, as it is called in religion, is, in secular terminology, Speculative Desire. Speculative Desire is the essential condition of human activity. The business man and the lover, the politician and the statesman, the scientist and the farmer, the inventor and the discoverer, the gambler and the moonshiner, the man about to be married and the man about to be divorced, the actor and the artist, the bandit and the prize-fighter, the banker and the gold-brick man, the bull and the bear, the saint and the sinner, all alike are actuated by Speculative Desire, by Faith. In the language of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, a very ancient book, "Faith means we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see." In short we take a chance. People who do not take a chance never get anywhere. People who succeed want something. Their imagination works on it. They make a trial. It is the same in religion.

VI

The new God must be believed in. That is to say, there must be Speculative Desire for a knowledge of Him by everybody who expects to establish any relationship with Him. The chemist desires to produce a certain new and valuable compound. He speculates, illuminated by what knowledge he already possesses, about the reactions that will produce what he desires to make. He dreams about it nights. Then he makes a trial. He puts his speculative theories to the test. If they work out, he has proved them. His test-tubes and solutions show the actual result. If he fails, he either tries again or gives up the attempt. In short, his test is pragmatic.

It is the same way with Faith. You conceive that there would be a value in making contact with the Source of all being

and of all power. You would like to find yourself *en rapport* with Him. Very well. You speculate about His character and His laws. You realize that you must conform to them if you are to know Him as a reality. The result is a certain satisfaction, a peace, an assurance, an increased sense of illumination, a knowledge, an added power. You find that you are saved from your hells. You attain freedom from fear. There arises a definite experience of joy. You think in a new way. Brighter. There is contentment. You become permanently gay without the aid of a cocktail. It is really quite wonderful.

To be specific, suppose we consider one aspect of the new God, one of His essential attributes, one of the qualities that define and describe Him—Justice. Now, all jurists are agreed that Justice is an equilibrium of forces. Every shyster knows that this is true. The rich criminal can hold off the dogs of the law; the poor man has only a small chance. Might makes right. The big cannons always win. Perfectly true. Good philosophy. You do not find any balance between right and wrong in this world that even the least cynical can respect. But here comes in the Speculative Desire for a God of Justice, Who will weight the balance and give support to the weak but righteous cause. You have Faith that there is such a God. You speculate about the matter. You take into account the eternities. You scan the horizons of history. You study the sociological effect of intolerance, bigotry, dishonesty, crime, chicanery. You make a diagnosis of the psychology of the just and the unjust. You believe. You will make a trial, take a chance. *Fiat justitia ruat cælum*. You take your stand in the thin red line. You stick your hand into the slipping pulley. You are crushed. *Soit*. At the very moment you hear the chants of the choirs of heaven and the Voice of God:

When sudden—how think ye, the end?
Did I say "without friend"?
Say rather, from marge to blue marge
The whole sky grew his targe
With the sun's self for visible boss,
While an arm ran across
Which the earth heaved beneath like a breast

Where the wretch was safe pressed!
Do you see? Just my vengeance complete,
The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed!
—So, I was afraid!

And the new American God will be the God of Truth. Justice merges into Truth. If your Speculative Desire conceives of Truth as something to be realized, something to be expressed, something to be coöperated with, you are already an initiate in the true religion. You have joined the Church Militant. You have entered the real Salvation Army. In spite of the flapdoodle of fools, the lies of lawyers, the phantasies of philosophers, the tangled trickery of theologians, the ugly untruths of uplifters, the falsehoods of Fundamentalists, the preposterous prevarications of Prohibitionists, the silly solecisms of Socialists, the conspiracies of corporations and capitalists, the hypocrisies of holier-than-thou hierophants, the fictions of fanatics, the elusive, eclectic, empirical exaggerations of ecclesiastics, the arrogant and artful arguments of Authority, you still believe. Your desire for Truth and your speculative enthusiasm compel you to feel that you can clean up the nasty mess. You become an Apostle of the new God, the God of Truth. *Magna est veritas et prævalēbit.* (A little jaded Latin comports with your theological mind.) You take up the Cross, and if you see a head, you hit it. Good for you! That is the true crusade for the votaries of the new American God. The congregation will now sing three stanzas of the wonderful old hymn, "We march, we march to victory," to the honor and glory of that God. You have disentangled the Truth. You have seen Him face to face. You lift up your heart. *Sursum corda.* You are now a worshipper. *Hosanna!*

And Beauty. Beauty, perhaps more than any other attribute, needs to be stressed. For the old Gods of this country are notoriously ugly. Their hideous temples deface the landscape on every hand. The Puritanical idolators have constructed a God who hates color, grace and taste. They worship

Him in their drab tabernacles with hideous sounds, roaring organs, and psalms sung through their noses. They think of beauty as the creation of the Devil. Vestments, lights, colors, incense, the splendor of ceremonial, the delicacy of storied windows, the mystery of vast naves, such things they abhor. Their chief act of worship consists of listening to a stupid man deliver a dull address. Their priests wear frock coats and look like undertakers. If one has any Speculative Desire in relation to the God of Beauty, one goes out into the great cathedral of Nature and worships Him in the stars, in the splendor of the sunset, in the pale blue of distant mountain ranges, in the restless turmoil of the green sea; one finds Him in the delicate beauty of flowers, in the shimmer and flash of gems, in the exquisite grace of the human form, in the divine perfection of the human face; or it may be that He speaks to one out of the sonorous cadencies of the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven, or looks out from a canvas by Botticelli. Nature is the Great Artist's own building, His church. Art is His *métier*. The man who has any Speculative Desire about Beauty, either as it is found in nature or reproduced by genius, will believe in the new God. And the person who works in the element of Beauty, whether professionally or not, knows something of the Eternal Creative Spirit in a very close and intimate companionship indeed.

These are a few of the features of the new American God. They have not lacked recognition, at times, in the past. God has not left Himself altogether without witness in any age or in any place. What America needs is simply a more perfect realization of the possibilities of a determined faith in the One True God.

If you ask me about the name for this new American God, my idea is that it is probably better just to keep the old word for Him, and call Him simply God. Honestly, I think it would scarcely be worth while to change the name.

DRUGS

BY LOGAN CLENDENING

THE idea seems to be prevalent today that belief in the action of drugs is a kind of superstition. Dicta to support that view emanate regularly from various sources. Sometimes they come from practitioners of the new healing cults, osteopathy, chiropractic and Christian Science, and from such faddists as the physical culture and the "nature cure" enthusiasts. Other attacks upon drugs come from laymen who are not so obviously biased: Henry Ford, for instance, was recently quoted to the effect that he felt that they were worthless and had urged the physicians at his hospital in Detroit to discontinue their use. Still other such onslaughts issue from the most conventional of medical sources—in popular explanations of medical mysteries by orthodox practitioners, in verbal expositions to patients, or in pronouncements to classes of medical students.

The forms which the dogma takes are equally varied, but the underlying arguments may be reduced to three general propositions: (1) that the use of drugs is not nature's method of healing; (2) that drugs are either actually poisonous or contain by-products which injure the patient, or, as a corollary, that they dope or benumb him, disguising his real symptoms; (3) that the physicians' use of drugs is largely guess-work; that he puts a substance, the action of which he does not know, into a patient the cause of whose distress he does not understand. The orthodox members of the medical profession, of course, are guilty of no such nonsense; nevertheless, some of them like to say that there are only a few drugs that are of any value, and that a practitioner could limit

himself to a very small number, some giving that number as five, some as ten, some as twenty.

It is not surprising, therefore, that many intelligent people should believe that drugs have been relegated to an unimportant place in medical practice, that what knowledge of them the physician has is largely old-fashioned and traditional, that scientific medical men neither have any faith in them nor take any pains to investigate them, and that when they are prescribed at all it is somewhat apologetically. But this notion, despite its wide acceptance, is quite untrue; it is, indeed, almost exactly contrary to the facts. The administration of drugs, despite the addition of a score of therapeutic procedures of amazing efficiency to the aramentarium of medicine since the days when herbs and blood-letting were its only weapons, is still the mainstay of sound practice. Their action is being intensively investigated, day in and day out, by some of the most astute technical intelligences of our time. And, these investigations, far from undermining the practitioner's faith in their value, have uncovered a number of highly important new uses for them, and have so tended to support and augment that value.

The steps by which drugs came into disrepute are not difficult to trace if we recall the history of clinical medicine. During the Sixteenth Century, due to the discovery of a new world and concomitantly of quinine, ipecac, etc., and during the two centuries following the number of drugs with which every physician had to be familiar was prodigiously increased. Most of them, unluckily, were inert, but many