

minothustus the prophet

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youth arrogantly subjects some of the main tenets of religion to an acrid gaze

In the spring of the year, when nature had spread over all the lands of the earth her mantle of fresh loveliness, there came unto the land of the Peotians Minothustus the Prophet.

And all the race of the Peotians rejoiced exceedingly at the visit of this mighty prophet. For a long time had they been hearing of his great wisdom and of the miracles that he performed through the power of his speech.

Now when Minothustus came to Peotia, he appeared unto the assembly of the elders who ruled the land, and said to them—

“Ye men of Peotia, long have I hoped for this day when I could appear unto you and offer to you my humble services. Word has come to me that your people are a disgruntled lot who have grown weary of your teachings. I would speak to them, and reveal all that I have learned of life and death. Let them assemble on the hillside by the side of the lake to-morrow at dawn. It is then that human hearts are most correctly tuned to the Master-Heart. It is then that man and nature are in completest accord. Let the people gather at that time, and I shall reveal mysteries unto them.”

Saying this, he bowed his majestic head, and departed from their midst.

When the morrow had come, Minothustus appeared upon the summit of the hill and stretched his arms forth in benediction over the heads of the great multitude that had assembled there. He looked into their faces and saw that there were many who were sullen, many who were indifferent, and many who were enthusiastic to be in his presence.

“Unto you do I give my peace and purity. May you be strong and wholesome in body and mind. I covet for you the love of life.”

At the sound of his voice, the murmur of the crowd became subdued and silent. A youth reclining on the grass by the side of the lake whispered to his companion.

“Do you see how the rosy light of dawn plays upon his white garments and makes of him a living pillar of beneficence? He is like a tree, so tall and grand he seems.”

"Yes, and is not his face a wondrous sight to look upon? It is a blend, a composite of many faces that I have seen. It is like the face of a mother who leans over the sleeping body of her little one and regards it with the sweet, devoted look that makes the face of maternity a holy thing. And again, his face is like that of the sturdy tiller of the earth, who, after his day of toil, leans upon his plow and looks about him with a glance of satisfaction upon what he has accomplished that day. There is placid joy and calm contentment in that look. But see, Minothustus has concluded his benediction, and is about to speak to us. Let us be silent, that we may hear his every word."

To the people of Peotia, Minothustus, the Man of Life, now spoke.

"O ye people of Peotia, my most fervent wish is that you may be able to understand, and that in your understanding you may acquire that wisdom which is the sole goal of life and thought. I could give you no greater gift than understanding. Will you accept it?"

"Ye know that there came into the world many centuries ago a man greater than any who preceded Him and excelled by none who have followed Him. That man you have been taught to love as the Son of God, Jesus the Christ. It is of Him that I wish to speak to you first, for it is in Him that many things have their origin and their explanation. Know ye that if Jesus walked the earth today He would say to you many things which He did not say to the people of His own day? That many of the things that He said then he would not say to your generation? His doctrines and teachings would be enlarged to meet the advanced understanding of this day. Therefore, what He said to the world when He was upon it lacks many things, the want of which you who are of inquiring dispositions have felt the need. I would satisfy that need. The message that I have to impart to you is the one which I believe Jesus would say to you if He were here. But how much better would He utter this message! How your hearts would rejoice to hear the truth as revealed by Him! My tongue is feeble and limited. I cannot express all that wells up within my heart. The string is muted, the bow is weak.

"O ye inhabitants of Peotia, you have traveled away from your religion and from your God. You have not been able to understand the sayings of Jesus. Since they were uttered, the world has moved a tremendous distance. Every one of you know things that this Jesus did not know. You have gained this knowledge, but it has made you more discontented than happy. You have not been able to reconcile it with the things that Jesus said that you have been taught to believe implicitly. Strife has entered your life and you are unhappy.

"Behold! I say unto you that there is no Heaven, no Hell, and no Future

Life. You have been taught to think of these things as realities, because it was with these terms that Jesus delivered His message. He would not use these terms in speaking to you today. Your minds are so equipped and your imaginations are so much more greatly extended that you can understand things with ease that the most imaginative of persons of nineteen hundred years ago could not comprehend.

"I say to you that this life is all that there is. There is nothing beyond it, no conscious existence. You are creatures insignificant and of a moment only. The only immortality that you can achieve during the short years from birth to death is an earthly thing. And when the cool and comforting finger of death touches your brow, your life is thenceforth ended. I say to you that when you die that ineffable Something that you call the Soul, that which distinguishes you from the beasts of the field and the forest, rises from the dead body and is attracted to the great Stream of Energy that is God. It mingles there and is lost with the spirits that come from other dead mortals. It becomes a part of God and is of God.

"You ask me what is God, and I reply that God is nothing and everything. No man can conceive of this Thing that the most ancient and superstitious of peoples called God. You have no words, or group of words, of sufficient revealment to express adequately this idea of God. God is not a Force, nor a Spirit, not a Being, nor a Father. God is a Great Nothing. God is a Mighty Shadow, neither Body or Spirit. God is the Exquisite Whisper that motivates the universes. God is Control and Order and Law.

"God is a creation of man as an explanation of all that appears inexplicable to him. You know that there is a Something within you that clamors for and clings to the idea of a Greater One. You know that man is a creature of logic. His thoughts concerning God are a result of the exercise of this logic. You know that you are the result of a mighty course of evolutionary growth that has been taking place through millions of years. You are witnessing this eternal growth and change in all of Nature. You see out into this universe and you leap into hundreds of others greater than this one of ours, and you observe that everywhere there is a continuous birth and disintegration of matter. Everywhere is there indication of a settled order and regularity in the midst of disorder and irregularity. This very balance is proof that there is a Something beyond man.

"Your religion and the words of Christ teach you that God is a Father, a beneficent Father who will praise your good deeds and will condemn your evil actions in some future life. This I declare to you to be a complete falsehood. You think that God is a Being greater than man who knows your every thought and action. Too long has humankind deluded itself with this

fallacy. The church has fostered this false idea for many centuries, and has thus worked irreparable harm to the mass of people who have placidly accepted this teaching without scrutinizing it."

When these words were uttered, a low murmur arose from the crowd, a murmur which increased in intensity and became as a mighty wind sweeping in from the sea. Minothustus raised his right hand aloft and spoke in a voice so challenging that the murmur died away.

"O ye people of Peotia, ye mutter under the oppressive weight of the truth. The truth is not to be understood in a moment. Cease your vain sighing and attend further to the truth. I assert again that the church has worked harm to your thinking when it throws to you this sop—that you have a loving Father in Heaven who will forgive your mistakes. Do you not realize that this monstrous paradox has enmeshed the soul of man too long? God is a Gigantic Impersonality. You are cowards. You are afraid to face the truth when it is revealed to you. You delude yourself with this false philosophy and are content. In this manner you close your eyes and ears to the best things that life has to offer. When you do this, you become commonplace. You say to yourself that your life is all right, and in a future life your condition will be more happy and better. When you deceive yourself into thinking that this is the truth you commit the great crime of Complacency. You make no attempt to improve your life and say that all is preordained, that any effort of yours would be so feeble as to be completely ineffective. All these are lies. It is true that there is a great element of chance in your life, just as there is in nature and in every portion of the cosmic universes. But that need not deter you. You make a great mistake when you mistake Fatalism for Chance. Fatalism is a false doctrine when applied to so slight a thing as a human life. Fatalism is applicable only to great forces and movements in nature and in infinity.

"I tell you that there is no Heaven, no Hell, and no Future Life. These be vain imaginings of simple minds. What then, I hear you ask, is there? I answer you this—I beg of you to realize the great significance of your life. Ye have no need of God, and Hell, and Heaven. Ye need a greater belief and reliance upon yourself. Man is in himself all in all. Man is the great Three-In-One, the Trinity of Beast, Man, and the Soul. There is no other Trinity. Man's duty is to achieve the highest measure of self-cultivation. When this is combined with a proper regard for the welfare and advancement of others, you will have attained a life that is in complete harmony with the truth. This is the Way of Life, the Highway to Happiness, the Road of the Light.

"You have within yourself every capacity and potentiality. You are vast and mighty. You are a part of a colossal procession moving with ever in-

creasing strength across the fields of numberless centuries. Millions have died in that march. Millions more will fall from these ranks. When it becomes your lot to withdraw from this forward-moving mass, what will the measure of your earthly immortality be? Will the memories that you leave behind declare you great? Will your children bless you? Will you enrich the world of people about you with your life and thought? These are the only things of life. You need but to listen to the applause of your own soul to know if your life has been of any avail. If you made no contribution, you had better leave this life at once, for you burden the world with your presence.

"Your most important duty is to yourself. But do not be neglectful of others. Season your living with affection, with sympathy, and with pity. Above all these is a greater thing that we call Love—love of life, love of yourself, and love of others. Beware of making hasty opinions and false judgments. I consul you to Live, to be Happy, to be Worth-While. This is Life and this is Truth. And now I must leave you to journey to another land. I give you my blessing and my Love of Life. Will you take these gifts?"

There was a solemn silence as Minothustus walked down the gentle slope and through the crowd which parted in homage before his advance. When he had disappeared, every person turned to his neighbor and said either "We have heard the ravings of a foolish man" or "This, indeed, is the Way and the Truth." There were more who said the latter than the former.

In this wise, and with these words, did Minothustus, the Man of Life, appear unto the inhabitants of the land of Peotia.

