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THE FIFTH GOSPEL.

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Every revelation granted to man is at the outset denounced as atheistic and sacrilegious. The flash that follows the "Let there be light!" sadly changes the faces of the gods, whether they be the Dagon born of man's fancies or the Dogmas of his fancy, as they stand in their twilight shrines, thick with the smoke of incense or hazy with the "dim religious light" of mystic contemplation. Not only this, but the dazzling glare pains to the blinding-point the eye of faith, until the familiar features, nay, even the majestic outlines of the Divine Form seem utterly lost, and it is little wonder that the shuddering cry goes up, "Great Pan is dead!" The instant impulse, almost too strong to be resisted, is to turn the back upon the light which has wrought this havoc, declare it a bale-fire, an *ignis fatuus*, a lying illumination, and thus save both eyes and theology. There is plenty of darkness left to construct another shrine. And this is the course usually taken, in point of fact, but is it wisest, not to say bravest or manliest? Whoever follows it, proves himself to have been worshipping, *not* the Deity, but his own pet conception of Him; Light cannot alter Being, only its appearance. And yet "Thou that destroyest the law and the prophets" is the denunciation hurled at every new light-bringer.

A courageous few, however, turn and unshrinkingly face the dazzling rays of golden sunlight which has shot unbidden across the purple twilight of the sanctuary, proudly secure that whatever is true cannot be altered, whatever is untrue is unworthy of their homage. As ever the bravest course is the happiest, and although the shrine is seen shattered and empty, while the rich vestments, brain-woven and fancy-dyed, with which even unconscious irony divinity has been "adorned," lie folded upon the floor like the grave-clothes at the feet of Lazarus, yet the roof is found to have been but a veil of twilight and shadows, and heaven above is revealed. And as their glad eyes gaze up in the sapphire, star-sprinkled vault, they are again aware of a Presence of far lovelier, though vaguer outline, and, though more remote, of a grandeur never before conceived.

This is peculiarly true of that great burst of eternal truth which broke upon the world chiefly through the work and genius of Charles Darwin. The dawning was heralded by a shudder and a shriek from every pew and pulpit, and "Darwinism" became a synonym for blasphemy. Its truth was vehemently denied, its logic mercilessly ridiculed, its "debasing