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**Spirits.
And the Destruction of San Francisco**

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"The Fountain of Youth," "Dreams and Visions," "Heaven and Hell," "The
Foundations of Life," Etc., Etc.**

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The Individual Is Paramount.

Nature takes no account of numbers—it is the individual alone that counts. Napoleon was wrong if he ever said that God was on the side of big battalions. God is always on the side of the individual. An army, or a trades union, is no stronger than its leader—and one man alone is stronger than a million men, provided he is individually the strongest. The purpose of God is to make a strong and perfect individual, even if he has to destroy a million weak and imperfect ones in the doing of it. Until you know this to be true, you do not understand Nature, God, or yourself.

A Great Fallacy.

The belief that men become stronger by banding themselves together is untrue and unnatural. The desire to associate with others in order to get what we want is a confession of weakness and a sign that we are in our moral infancy, and lack self-confidence and self-reliance, without which we can never reach maturity. It is this lack of self-reliance which causes workingmen to rush blindly into unionism; and it is this constant leaning on others for support here which makes of them earth-bound spirits, or devils, after death.

The Devil, a Political Boss.

Now, it is immaterial whether you are a union man, or a church man, or a spirit, as long as you follow a leader or lean in any way upon others, you are in the hands of the devil. It is these weak spirits, who may be called spirit-unionists, who run our affairs for us, when we are too weak to run them ourselves. And, just as a union hates an independent workman who is strong enough to run his own business to suit-himself, so these spirits hate a self-reliant individual whom they cannot control.

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Spirit and Matter.

The old conflict of mind and matter is still on, and will remain as long as the earth produces life. Matter is a foreign body to us, over which we must triumph, and until we have detached the last atom of physical substance from us we shall not be really free nor truly happy. This is what constitutes the real struggle for existence.

The Struggle for Life.

Life is a conflict between matter and spirit, and spirit must triumph in the end. If we do not come into our own and overcome the physical world while we are in the body, we have to stay within the confines of the earth after death, and fight it out in hell—or the lower regions of the spirit-world. It is this law of nature which Shakespeare exemplifies in "Hamlet" where the ghost says he is doomed for a certain time to wander about the earth. The only power that doomed the spirit of Hamlet's father to roam about the earth was within himself—it was his undeveloped condition. It was not his business to punish either his wife or his brother. Revenge is the work of a devil, and until we have outgrown all such desires we shall likewise be doomed to wander about the earth.

Power—True and False.

To possess the power to gratify all our legitimate desires is our birthright and perfectly natural. But all true power must dwell within us, and manifest its influence in a magnetic form. All power that is based on scheming, deception, custom, or privilege, is false power, and such is all political and religious power. It is this false power which men and spirits strive for, cling to, and fight about. It is the glamor of this false power which causes political parties and religious sects. It is this false power which Jesus Christ successfully overcame personally when he recognized Satan's influence and

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refused to yield to it—but which his followers merely replaced with another form of power equally false.

The Power of Wealth.

The power of money is a false power, inasmuch as it is extraneous; and it is a form of power which has been recognized by all spiritual teachers as particularly degrading and pernicious. It made a moral coward and a miser of Paul Kruger, the Boer President, and it so fettered the soul of the late Russell Sage that it will probably take him several hundred years to work himself free from the entanglements which his love of money has involved him in. Charity is no expiation for wrong-doing. Charity—that is, almsgiving—is itself an evil. Jews have no monopoly of this money-loving evil, but they are the worst offenders. It has been a racial characteristic with them from the dawn of history, as is evidenced by the fact that Jesus drove them from the temple for their money-lending proclivities.

Death Does Not Change Our Characters.

Spirits cannot use money, but those in whom the love of money has been the dominant feature during earthlife cannot realize the nature of their new conditions, so they interest themselves in the business from which death has removed them, or in somebody else's business which they can run to suit themselves. If you have the right kind of spirits about you, and if you do as they want you to do, your business will go along swimmingly—for a time. You will be one of those whose touch turns everything to gold. But you will be like an office-holder who has been put in office by a political boss. You are a mere tool in the hands of another. As soon as you show the least sign of independence your friends, whether men or spirits, will jump on you. When you begin to assert your manhood you will be in the same fix as a union man

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is who refuses to quit his job when his union orders a strike. Has not a union man sold his soul to his union, and have you not sold yours to your familiar spirits, or, in other words, to the devil?

Jesus, a Type.

The life of Jesus is a record of spiritual unfoldment. We all have to pass through similar stages of development. Personally, he triumphed over the devil; but, as a consequence, the gates of hell were opened and evil spirits hounded him on every side, and never let up until they had him nailed to the cross. All true spiritual leaders have passed through similar experiences. I have been similarly hounded and harassed by them for the past twenty years, and although it is only recently that I have thoroughly understood what I was up against, so to speak, I have always had an innate conviction that I should finally triumph. It was the lack of this innate conviction and all-conquering faith in himself which caused Jesus to lose heart and pray for help in the final stage of his earthly career.

A Spiritual Triumph.

Evil spirits took advantage of the earthquake to destroy a good part of San Francisco. But it was merely the revenge of a defeated army sacking a city before evacuation. A few nights after the fire, when the human authorities had got control again, I had the most wonderful experience of my life. I had just put out the light and got into bed when the walls of the room seemed to recede, and through the window a great multitude of spirits floated, or rather swam, for they had bodies about the size and shape of sharks. Their heads were monstrosities; they were bleary-eyed and besotted creatures, like the camp-followers of an army left to gratify their

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degraded appetites and passions on the remnants of a destroyed and looted city.

And yet this riffraff of the spirit-world were not without a leader, for in their midst was one who, although he had the body of a shark, had a fine head. He was a Jew, but he had one of the finest and most intellectual heads I have ever seen. He had jet black hair and full beard, and it was altogether the head of a master mind. There was nothing sinister, degraded, or revengeful about him; he was simply one of those mistaken and misguided spirits who, like Dowie, must have a following of some kind to do their bidding. He did not speak, nor did he show any signs of malice toward me, although he knew I had been the instrument through whom he had been defeated. He brought his cohorts in to make a final attack, and my first impulse was to jump out of bed and strike a light. This is what he wanted me to do, for he then would have had another chance at me at some other time. But my former experiences brought me to my senses, and I knew that if I fought it out then I should never have to fight a similar fight again. They would swim away from me, then turn around, and, fixing their bleared and bloodshot eyes on me, dart straight at me as fast as they could come. My hair stood on end and

my flesh crawled, but I knew they could not hurt me physically, and that I only had to stand my ground and in time they would retire as they had come, and lose the power to attack me again in the same way.

The Advantages of Foreknowledge.

Spirits knew the water-mains would be broken by the earthquake, and they also knew there was only one man who had formulated plans to check a conflagration under such conditions. This man was Fire Chief Sullivan, whom they took good care to destroy before he could

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render any assistance, just when the city most needed his services. The city authorities were paralyzed and helpless. They had no plans for such an emergency, and they were too dazed to formulate plans to suit the occasion, or to carry them out effectively if they had any. Both the State and the United States authorities came to the rescue, but at first only added to the confusion. San Francisco was in the same fix as the Russian army was in the first stages of the late war—the want of concerted action in its attacks on the enemy resulted in defeat on every side. Not until the afternoon of the second day was any effective action taken.

Laws and Regulations.

It is unfortunate that we apply the name "law" to legal enactments. A natural law is the way God expresses himself; or, in other words, God is law. God does not and cannot express himself in any other manner. A legal document, at best, merely embodies the wisdom of our ancestors, who could not possibly be as wise as ourselves. A written constitution, in the natural course of events, must die, or become obsolete, in a generation, after which it becomes a source of oppression. For this reason, the native sense, or instinct, of a people in distress dispenses with legal red tape and gladly welcomes martial law. Now, the kind of law that is good in times of great distress must be still better in times of peace and prosperity. It follows, then, that martial law is the only good and sensible kind of law by which to be ruled. Turn the soldiers into policemen and give them the powers which our police judges now possess, and ninety-nine per cent of our criminal business would be abolished.

Moral Crutches.

The tendency of our educational methods, both secular and religious, is to make us moral invalids, unable to

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care for ourselves. On the other hand, nature (God) is trying to throw us on our own resources, and death breaks the anchor-chain and sets us adrift on the ocean of spirit-life for the sole purpose of making us self-dependent. No fire, earthquake, storm, or other catastrophe can do us any real harm—we must turn our misfortunes into benefits by learning to avoid similar misfortunes in the future.

The Lessons of the Fire.

No human forethought could have prevented the earthquake. Practically all large cities since the dawn of history have been subjected to destruction by fire. The San Francisco fire was much more unavoidable than were the fires of Chicago, Boston, or Baltimore. Public opinion is valueless at all times, and public actions are always crude and impulsive. Public initiative should, therefore never be relied on, and least of all in cases of emergency. And as, in the nature of things, the men who are popular with electors, and therefore get into office, are altogether wanting in the training and strength of character necessary to grapple with the conditions which arise in times of overwhelming disaster, it become necessary for the army or navy to immediately take charge whenever and wherever such occurrences take place.

Weak Government Is Misgovernment.

But, to be effective, this governmental control of things must be absolute. And as in a country of such varied territory as the United States some calamity or other is befalling some part of it every few months, the officers charged with these duties would soon become proficient. The Government should have at least a hundred million dollars available at a minute's notice for use in such an emergency as befell Chicago, Galveston, or San Francisco. To have to depend on charity at such a time is a national

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disgrace. To put the whole burden of the loss on the fire insurance companies is unjust, as well as being a bad business policy. A crippled insurance company is no good to anybody, and if they are to keep themselves prepared for such unforeseen calamities they must maintain such premiums as they are now charging, thereby greatly adding to legitimate business expenses. The right thing to do in such cases is for the Government to bear the entire loss, for it is a fundamental function of government to help the helpless and protect the weak. Two hundred and fifty millions is about three dollars per head of population of the United States—and the government which first assumes this attitude, and makes good, will be the world's first civilized government.

A City Held Up.

The evil of men banding together, like a flock of sheep, into a trades union was well exemplified in San Francisco during the last week of August, when the carmen's union held up the city in true highwayman fashion. The street-car company has done more for the upbuilding of San Francisco than any other set of men in it. They have done better by the city than the United States Government has done. During the first few weeks after the fire, when the pauper fared as well as the millionaire, and both fared badly, the street-car men fared better than any other class of men in the city. Their employers saved them from the dreary and thankless task of standing in the bread-line, which on an average took up from three to four hours a day of everybody's time. The workingmen, as a class, are the only people in San Francisco, except Mr. Hearst's "Examiner" and the evening newspapers, who have not sacrificed something to help San Francisco in her hour of need. The unions have gouged and squeezed the dear public out of every

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cent they can get, and the newspapers are too cowardly to say a word about it, for fear they would lose a few subscribers. The poor workingman has got to be a kind of fetish, before which the great American press falls down and debases itself.

W. R. Hearst, Mountebank.

But of all the people who have used San Francisco's misfortune for their own pecuniary profit, Mr. Hearst is the most despicable. Long before the fires were out Mr. Hearst had the ruins placarded in his own peculiar style. "Hearst Relief Camp," and other legendary mottoes of like character greeted the stricken wayfarer on every hand till he felt like a shipwrecked mariner on a raft in mid-ocean, with water everywhere, but not a drop to drink. Thousands of people were rendering relief to their more unfortunate neighbors without advertising the fact or claiming any merit therefor; so Mr. Hearst saw an opportunity to put in a claim as a wholesale reliever of distress. Mr. Hearst's relief was for advertising purposes only, but people were too much taken up with their own troubles to mind that, if he had not made himself too officious and meddlesome. But when he tried to distribute the entire relief fund and stores in his own name it was more than the real workers could stand, so they squelched him, sat on him, and ignored him. So Mr. Hearst left us, but we still have his "Examiner," which, in some respects, is a greater misfortune than the fire.

Imaginary Terrors.

Most of the terrors of an earthquake are purely imaginary. Probably more people are killed or injured by the railroads in one year than by earthquakes in a hundred years. The first reports of any catastrophe are grossly exaggerated. And it is these reports which have come down to us concerning earthquakes of early historic

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times. The Review of Reviews, in its first report of the San Francisco earthquake, said the Call building went down with the first shock. Neither the Call building nor any other well-constructed building was injured by the earthquake except the chimney-tops and plate-glass windows. Members of my family were in four different sections of the city, all in wooden buildings, twenty or more years old, and the entire damage by the earthquake was two lamp-chimneys and half a dozen bottles broken and a window-pane cracked. Brick chimney-tops went down like nine-pins, and all poor brick-work suffered more or less damage; and practically every plate-glass window in the city was shaken to pieces.

A Common Heritage.

In spite of all precautions fire sometimes gets beyond all human control and destroys everything in its path. This is a common heritage of all large cities. Constantinople has been destroyed by fire probably a score of times, but it still lives and flourishes. Bricks and mortar do not constitute a city—it's the people who inhabit it. And so long as its people are not destroyed any city will be rebuilt, no matter how complete its destruction has been. San Francisco will be rebuilt; but it is no more enterprising in this respect than were Valparaiso, Galveston, or Constantinople. Valparaiso has been as badly stricken as San Francisco, but it is not attracting as much attention nor receiving the same kind of relief as we got. Perhaps it ought to be thankful for this. Its Government did much better by it than the United States Government did for San Francisco. Our Government made a large appropriation, but used a good part of it in defraying the expenses of the soldiers. It is hard to see just where the relief came in. The soldiers ought to have erected the temporary buildings to house the homeless, instead of

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leaving this matter to the relief committee, who have to pay about four times as much as the work is worth.

The Builders of Cities.

We hear a great deal nowadays about the nobility of the workingman and the dignity of labor. It is no disgrace for a man to work, provided he does his best; but there is no more dignity in a man's work than there is in a mule's. The fact is, the laborer is the mud-sill of human society, and he will never be anything else until he lifts himself above it. And it is the men who have developed their individuality and lifted themselves above the common herd of human beings who build cities and states and nations. Every animal works for its living—that is, it goes out and gets it in the best way it knows how. It is no more honorable for a man than it is for a monkey to do the same thing—each in its own way. A man does not get superior to an animal until he takes charge of himself and orders his life just as he wants it. Before any man can do this he must assume entire responsibility for his actions. The workingman's aim is to shirk responsibility and put it on a "boss." This is where he retards his own growth, for responsibility is life's invigorant.

Business Men Are the Salt of the Earth.

The people who are restoring San Francisco to her proper place in the list of great cities are her railroad corporations and her business men—these are the essentials. The non-essentials are her workingmen, because if they don't do the work we can get Chinese or Japanese or machinery to do it, and do it better than it is being

done now. The time is fast coming when the man who wants a new house will send his order to the mill and have it delivered with every piece numbered so that he

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can put it together himself with a screw-driver in a few hours of his spare time.

Corporations with Souls.

During the darkest hours of our calamity, barring a few cases of individual heroism, the only people who rose superior to the meanest kind of selfishness were the corporations and large employers of labor. While the man who owned a horse and wagon would charge a fellow-workman twenty-five, or even fifty, dollars to take him and his trunk a mile or so to the ferry, the Southern Pacific placed its vast resources of boats and trains at the free service of the people. As soon as they could clear a passage-way through the debris of the ruins the street railroad placed all its resources at the service of the people and gave its receipts to the relief fund. It was the street-car service which made the resumption of business possible in so short a time and saved business men from utter ruin. And if the senseless and unjust strike inaugurated by the carmen's union had lasted another month it would have been almost as great a calamity to the business interests of the city as the fire was. San Francisco's disaster proved that corporations have souls and that unions have not.

The Insurance Companies.

The insurance companies, like the large corporations, did nobly. In spite of the carpings of the press and the mouthings of the blatherskites, the insurance companies furnished the money which has made the San Francisco workman more independent than any bloated bondholder in the country. From a just and equitable standpoint, the insurance companies would have been perfectly justified in making a horizontal cut of from twenty to thirty per cent in all cases above \$500. And I firmly believe it would have been a better business policy for the Government

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to have relieved them of at least one-half their losses. If the insurance companies are to be prepared to meet these natural catastrophes, they must largely increase their premiums and reserve funds; for New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia are just as liable to suffer from an earthquake and its consequences as were Charleston and San Francisco.

The Effects of the Disaster.

The loss of life was comparatively small, as was also the number of seriously injured. The most serious consequence was the nervous depression from which nearly everybody suffered, more or less, and, indirectly, has caused many more deaths than did the fire and earthquake combined. The succession of shocks which occurred for eight or ten weeks after the fire, kept most people in a state of nervous dread which was very trying, even to the strong, and was most disastrous to the health of the weak. I felt this depressing influence myself, and I am quite sure the earthquake meant more to me than it did to anybody else on earth. For twenty-five to thirty years I had been fighting unseen foes, which on the 18th of April last I knew were defeated and dispersed. It was the most glorious day of my life, for I fully realized then that I was stronger than my enemies.

Some Incidents and Lessons.

On the morning of the second day, when the fire was fiercer and more widespread than ever, and when all the food supplies had been destroyed, the helplessness of the average "civilized" human being became apparent. The average family gets up in the morning, takes its daily supply of milk from the doorstep, sends out for a

loaf of bread, and some meat or eggs, and gets its breakfast. It gets its dinner and supper after the same fashion. Here were three hundred thousand of these practically helpless

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people without food or water. The first few days were the worst because we knew that food supplies would be sent as soon as possible, but it did not take long for a hundred thousand children to get hungry, to say nothing of the grown folks. Although the neighboring towns were suffering like ourselves, they came nobly to our aid in spite of their own misfortunes, and we all got something to eat and drink.

Some More Lessons.

The country supplied us bountifully with many things we needed badly; but, like everything else the public does, it acted from impulse and without judgment. Doctors and nurses were sent here from all over the country, while there were several hundred walking about the streets with nothing to do. Nearly five hundred doctors, and a proportionate number of nurses, were burnt out and lost everything; and if the instruments and supplies had been sent, and the money which was spent in transporting doctors and nurses here had been paid to those already here, it would have relieved much of their distress. Here again the laborer was ahead of the professional man, for while the relief committee would pay for all kinds of manual labor, and justly keep the laborer self-supporting, it would not pay doctors, because caring for the injured and sick was supposed to be a work of charity. This is another reason why the General Government should take charge of all such work and employ such doctors and nurses as are necessary and pay them for their services. The doctors, as a class, were the worst sufferers in San Francisco. Nearly five hundred were burnt out and their business destroyed. It will take several years for them to build a business up again. During the recent street-car strike the railroad company could have got several hundred doctors to act as conductors, if it had made them an offer.

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Rejuvenescent.

San Francisco will rise, phoenix-like, from her ashes. Her builders are her business men, including her banks and corporations. The material for her upbuilding is furnished by the insurance companies, who have poured gold from their coffers in New York, London, and Berlin into the lap of San Francisco. The United States Government has helped some, but it might have done, and ought to have done, a great deal more. The workingmen, as a class, have retarded her progress; but they will be brushed aside, and the Chinese and Japanese will take their places alongside the white man, whose equal they are in every respect. The white man's conceit in the color of his skin degrades him. If the black man, or the brown man, or the yellow man, can teach us anything, we owe it to ourselves to find out what it is and profit by the knowledge thus obtained. To complacently assume that the Orientals are inferior to ourselves is mere prejudice, and we shall awake some day to the fact that they are as clever in the arts of peace as we recently discovered them to be in the arts of war. San Francisco is neither dead nor sleeping, but, like a young prize-fighter who has been knocked out, she is gradually recovering from her little scrap with Nature, and will soon be wiser and stronger than ever before.