

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

' the treasures of knowledge which the Hellenic philosophy had gathered ; it gained the dominion of the world through the ignorance of the credulous masses. In time the Reformation broke the chains of this mental slavery, and assisted reason to secure its right once more. But in the new, as in the older, period the great struggle for existence went on in its eternal fluctuation, with no trace of a moral order.

And it is just as impossible for the impartial and critical observer to detect a "wise providence" in the fate of individual human beings as a moral order in the history of peoples. Both are determined with iron necessity by a mechanical causality which connects every single phenomenon with one or more antecedent causes. Even the ancient Greeks recognized *ananke*, the blind *heimarmene*, the fate "that rules gods and men," as the supreme principle of the universe. Christianity replaced it by a conscious Providence, which is not blind, but sees, and which governs the world in patriarchal fashion. The anthropomorphic character of this notion, generally closely connected with belief in a personal God, is quite obvious. Belief in a "loving Father," who unceasingly guides the destinies of one billion five hundred million men on our planet, and is attentive at all times to their millions of contradictory prayers and pious wishes, is absolutely impossible; that is at once perceived on laying aside the colored spectacles of "faith" and reflecting rationally on the subject.

As a rule, this belief in Providence and the tutelage of a "loving Father" is more intense in the modern civilized man—just as in the uncultured savage—when some good fortune has fallen him: an escape from peril of life, recovery from a severe illness, the winning