

THE ENEMIES TO EACH OTHER 5

with burning drops, and at issue with itself before there was (cause of) strife.

This, then, lay out to dry for forty years between Tayif and Mecca and, through all that time, the Beneficence of the Almighty leavened it and rained upon it the Mercy and the Blessing, and the properties necessary to the adornment of the Successorship. In that period, too, it is narrated that the Angels passed to and fro above it, and among them Eblis the Accursed, who smote the predestined Creation while it was drying, and it rang hollow. Eblis then looked more closely and observing that of which it was composed to be diverse and ill-assorted and impregnated with bitter tears, he said: 'Doubt not I shall soon attain authority over this; and his ruin shall be easy.' (This, too, lay in the foreknowledge of The Endless.)

When time was that the chain of cause and effect should be surrendered to Man's will, and the vessels of desire and intention entrusted to his intelligence, and the tent of his body illuminated by the lamp of vitality, the Soul was despatched, by Command of the Almighty, with the Archangel Jibrail, towards that body. But the Soul being thin and subtle refused, at first, to enter the thick and diverse clays, saying: 'I have fear of that (which is) to be.' This it cried twice, till it received the Word: '*Enter unwillingly, and unwillingly depart.*' Then only it entered. And when that agony was accomplished, the Word came: '*My Compassion exceedeth My Wrath.*' It is narrated that these