

**THE LIFE STORY OF
ANER: AN
ALLEGORY**

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The Life Story of Aner: An Allegory by Frederic W. Farrar

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BY

FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

DEAN OF CANTERBURY

Author of "Darkness and Dawn," "Gathering Clouds," etc.

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THE LIFE STORY OF ANER

I

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.—WORDSWORTH.

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that great deep before our world begins,
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as He will—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Down yon dark sea thou comest, darling boy.
TENNYSON.

THE King Elyon was the greatest of all kings. Other lords and sovereigns claimed the sway over wide domains; but in these realms they were in reality his vassals, even

when they most daringly pretended to avow their independence, and strove in open rebellion to thwart his high designs.

There were many points in the government of this mighty King which his subjects could not understand. It was impossible for them to comprehend the necessity for royal dealings which had to bear on the interests of regions more wide by far than those of the little corners of his kingdom in which they dwelt. Just as it is not every village peasant who can tell why the treaties are concluded, or the laws passed, which may seem for the moment to injure his little prosperity, so there were millions of King Elyon's subjects who were sorely perplexed by plans which he in his wisdom knew to be for the best. Yet the vast majority of his subjects could not but admit, when closely questioned, that he was wise and merciful and good, and that, even when his dealings with them seemed to be severe, he pitied them as a father pities the sufferings of his children.

Now King Elyon had many sons, and among them was one who was specially dear to him. His name was Aner, though during the ear-

liest years of his life he was not called Aner, but Paedarion. Few could even guess why this particular son—who was not only the youngest of the family, but also among the least richly endowed—should be so specially the object of care and love to this great King. Others of his children were far more beautiful and strong, and looked quite radiant by the side of Aner. Indeed, there were some bad sons of King Elyon, who had long revolted from their father, who, from the first, not only despised Aner as a contemptible weakling—which, indeed, in himself, and apart from Elyon's love, he was—but even regarded him, though he had done them no harm, with burning hatred. Almost from his birth they plotted against him, and, under disguise of flattery and false friendship, endeavoured to ruin or degrade him. The name of the worst of these bad revolted sons of the great King was Ashmod, and legions of evil spirits owned his sway.

But the very frailty of Paedarion, combined with some nameless charm which clung about him, inspired a tender and sacred interest for him among all the noblest and most glorious