

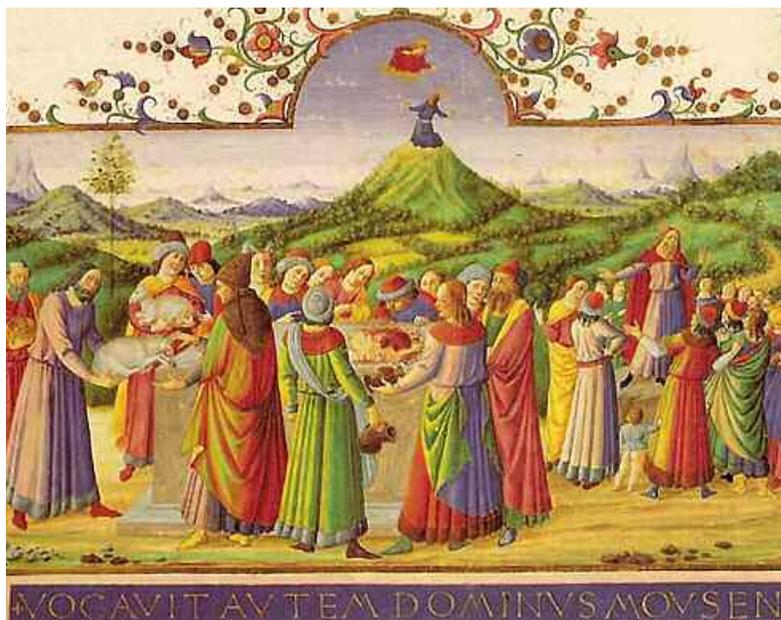
MAX HEINDEL'S MESSAGE

From Law to Faith

ONE FACT is very noticeable to the student of comparative religion; namely, that the further we go back in time, the more primitive the race and the more crude also is its religion. As man advances, so do his religious ideas. Materialistic investigators draw from these facts the conclusion that all religions are man-made—that all conceptions of God are rooted in human imagination. The fallacy of that idea readily is seen when we consider the tendency of all that lives toward self-preservation. Where only the law of the survival of the fittest governs, as it does among the animals where might is right, there is no religion.

Not until a higher extraneous power makes itself felt can that law be abrogated and the law of self-abnegation come into play as a factor of life, as it does in a small measure in even the most crude religion. Huxley recognized that fact in his last lecture, where he pointed out that while the law of the survival of the fittest marks the animals' line of progression, the law of sacrifice is the heart of human advancement, impelling the strong to care for the weak, giving gladly what they might easily withhold, yet growing by such giving.

The reason can be found by the materialist; from his viewpoint it must ever remain an insoluble riddle. Once we understand, however, that man is a composite being—Spirit, soul, and body—and that Spirit expresses itself in thought, soul in feeling, and body in action, and that this threefold man is an image of the triune God, we readily shall under-



Folio 43 recto, Latin manuscript 1, Urbino Collection, Vatican Library

The Lord Summoned Moses

Moses is given instructions on the mount of his higher consciousness and then imparts a moral code that teaches purity, self-control and sacrifice.

stand the seeming anomaly, for by his constitution such a composite being would be fitted to respond to both spiritual vibrations and physical impacts.

When we see how little the majority care for the higher life today, we may infer that there must have been a time when man was nearly entirely callous to the spiritual vibrations in the universe. He sensed vaguely a higher power in Nature and, being endowed with some clairvoyance, he recognized the existence of powers not now perceived, though working as potently as ever.

Man was to be led for his future good, so in order to guide him aright and aid the higher nature in obtaining mastery over the lower nature, the personality, the latter was at first worked upon by fear. To have given him a religion of Love, to have tried moral suasion, would have been useless when the human Ego was in its earliest infantile stage and the animal nature of the lower personality was paramount. The God who is to help such a humanity must be a strong God, who can wield the thunderbolt and strike with lightning.

When man had been brought a little farther along, he was taught to look to God also as the Giver of all. He was imbued with the idea that if he followed the Laws of this God, material prosperity would follow. Disobedience, on the other hand, resulted in famine, war, and pestilence. In order to lead man up higher, he must be taught the Law of Sacrifice, but at that stage man prized material possessions highly, and therefore he was prompted to sacrifice his sheep and oxen through faith in the promise that “the Lord will repay an hundredfold.”

There was then no promise of a heaven; that was yet beyond man’s capacity of appreciation. It was emphatically stated that, “Heaven, even the heavens are the Lord’s, but the Earth hath He given to the children of men. (Psalms 115:16)

Next, man is taught to sacrifice himself for a future reward in heaven. Instead of performing an occasional act of sacrificing a material possession, a bull or a sheep which the Lord quickly restores, it was now required that he should give up his evil desires and by “continuance in well-doing” “lay up treasure in heaven,” caring nothing for material possessions which thieves may steal or moth corrupt.

Almost anyone, for a short time, may work himself up to a pitch of exaltation where it is easy to lay down all in one supreme act of renunciation. It is comparatively easy to die for one’s faith, but that is not enough. The Christian religion requires of us the courage to live our faith from day to day all through life. Truly, the labors of Hercules seem small in comparison.

Faith is the force in man which opens up the channel of communication with God, and brings us into touch with His Life and Power. Doubt, on the other hand, has a most withering and blighting influence on the spiritual life. That such are the effects of faith and doubt can be seen by examining their influence in our daily life. We know how expressions of faith and trust buoy us up and how depressing is the effect on us when we are doubted by others.

The childlike attitude is particularly conducive to the acquisition of the knowledge which is symbolically spoken of as the Kingdom of God, in contradistinction to that ignorance which is the

O WORLD

O world, thou chooseth not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes.
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul’s invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

—George Santayana

estate of man. Let it be understood clearly that the faith which is required is not a blind faith, nor an unreasoning faith which clings to a creed or dogma contrary to reason, but an open and unbiased state of the mind which is ready to entertain any proposition until thorough investigation has proven it untenable.

Prayer is the opening up of a channel along which the divine Life and Light may flow into the Spirit, in the same way that the turning of a switch opens the way for the electric current to flow from the powerhouse into our house. Faith in prayer is like the energy which turns the switch. Without muscular force we cannot turn the switch to obtain physical light, and without faith we cannot pray in such a manner as to secure spiritual illumination. If we pray for worldly ends, for that which is contrary to the law of love and universal good, our prayers prove as unavailing as a glass switch in an electrical circuit. Glass is a non-conductor, a bar to the electric power, and selfish prayers are bars to divine purposes and therefore must remain unanswered. To pray to a purpose we must pray aright, and in the Lord’s Prayer we have a most wonderful pattern, for it caters to the needs of man as no other formula could do. Within a few short sentences it encompasses all the complexities of the relationship of God to man. □