

**Advanced Core Concepts
Independent Study Module No. 34**

Faust

When the name Faust is mentioned, the majority of educated people at once think of Gounod's presentations upon the stage. Some admire the music, but the story itself does not seem to particularly impress them. As it appears there, it seems to be the unfortunately all too common story of a sensualist who betrays a young unsuspecting girl and then leaves her to expiate her folly and suffer for her trustfulness. The touch of magic and witchery which enters into the play is thought of by most people as only the fancies of an author who has used them to make the sordid, everyday conditions more interesting.

When Faust is taken by Mephistopheles to the underworld and Marguerite is borne to heaven upon angelic wings at the conclusion of the play, it appears to them to be just the ordinary moral to give the story a goody-goody ending.

A small minority know that Gounod's opera is based upon the drama written by Goethe. And those who have studied the two parts of his presentation of Faust, gain a very different idea

from that presented by the play. Only the few who are illuminated mystics, see in the play written by Goethe the unmistakable hand of an enlightened fellow Initiate, and realize fully the great cosmic significance contained therein.

Be it very clearly understood that the story of Faust is a myth as old as mankind. Goethe presented it clad in a proper mystic light, illuminating one of the greatest problems of the day, the relation and struggle between Freemasonry and Catholicism, which we have considered from another viewpoint in a former book.

We have often said in our literature, that a myth is a veiled symbol containing a great cosmic truth, a conception which differs radically from the generally accepted one. As we give picture books to our children to convey lessons beyond their intellectual grasp, so the great Teachers gave infant humanity these pictorial symbols, and thus, unconsciously to mankind, an appreciation of the ideals presented has been etched into our finer vehicles.

As a seed germinates unseen in the ground ere it can flower above the visible surface of the Earth, so these etchings traced by the myths upon our finer, invisible vestures have put us into a state of receptivity where we readily take to higher ideals and rise above the sordid conditions of the material world. These ideals would have been submerged by the lower nature, had it not been prepared for ages by the agency of just such myths as Faust, Parsifal, and kindred tales.

Like the story of Job the scene of the Faust myth has its beginning in heaven at a convocation of the Sons of Seth, Lucifer among them. The ending is also in heaven as presented by Goethe. As it is very different from that which is commonly presented upon the stage, we stand face to face with a gigantic problem. In fact, the Faust myth depicts the evolution of mankind during the present epoch. It also shows us how the Sons of Seth and the Sons of Cain each play their part in the work of the world.

It has always been the custom of the writer to stick as closely to his subject as possible, so that any phase of the philosophy under consideration might receive the full force of concentrated illumination so far as was possible to give it. But sometimes circumstances justify departure from the main trend of the argument, and our consideration of the Faust myth is one of them. Were we to discourse upon this subject only in so far as it has a bearing upon the problem of [Freemasonry and Catholicism](#), we should have to return to the subject later, in order to illuminate other points of vital interest in the unfoldment of soul as the work of the human race. We therefore trust that digressions may not be criticized.

In the opening scene, three of the Sons of God, Planetary Spirits, are represented as bowing before the Grand Architect of the Universe, singing songs of the spheres in their adoration of the Ineffable Being who is the source of life, the author of all manifestation. Goethe represents one of these supernal Spirits of the stars as saying:

"The sun intones its ancient song,
Mid rival chant of brother spheres,
Its predestined course it speeds along,
In thund'rous march throughout the years."

Modern scientific instruments have been invented, whereby in laboratory tests light waves are transmuted to sound, thus demonstrating in the Physical World the mystic maxim of the identity of these manifestations. That which was patent formerly only to the mystic who was able to raise his consciousness to [the Region of Concrete Thought](#), is now also sensed by the scientist. The song of the spheres, first publicly mentioned by Pythagoras, is not therefore, to be regarded as an empty idea originated in the too vivid imagination of poetical minds nor as the hallucination of a demented brain.

Goethe meant every word he said. The stars have each their own keynote, and they travel about the Sun at such varying rates of speed, that their position now cannot be duplicated until twenty-seven thousand years have passed. Thus the harmony of the heavens changes at every moment of life, and as it changes, so does the world alter its ideas and ideals. The circle dance of the marching orbs to the tune of the celestial symphony created by them marks man's progress along the path we call evolution.

But it is a mistaken idea to think that constant harmony is pleasing. Music thus expressed would become monotonous; we should weary of the continued harmony. In fact, music would lose its charm were not dissonance interspersed at frequent intervals. The closer a composer can come to discord without

actually entering it in the score, the more pleasing will be his composition when given life through musical instruments. Similarly in the song of the spheres, we could never reach individuality and the self-hood towards which all evolution trends, without the divine discord.

Therefore, the Book of Job designates Satan as being one of the Sons of God. And the Faust myth speaks of [Lucifer](#) as also present in the convocation, which takes place during the opening chapter of the story. From him comes the saving note of dissonance which forms a contrast to the celestial harmony; and as the brightest light throws the deepest shadow, Lucifer's voice enhances the beauty of the celestial song.

While the other [Planetary Spirits](#) bow down in adoration when they contemplate the works of the Master Architect as revealed in the universe, Lucifer sounds the note of criticism, of blame, in the following words directed against the masterpiece of God, the king of creatures, man:

"Of suns and worlds I nothing have to say,
I see alone man's self-inflicted pains;
That little world god still his stamp retains,
As wondrous now as on the primal day.
Better he might have fared, poor wight,
Had You withheld the heavenly light;
Reason he names it, but doth use it so,
That he more brutish than brutes doth grow."

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This from the viewpoint of former generations may sound sacrilegious, but in the greater light of modern times we can understand that even in so exalted a being as that designated by the name of God, there must be growth. We can sense the striving after still greater abilities, the contemplation of future universes offering improved facilities for those evolutions of other [Virgin Spirits](#), which are a result of the imperfections noted in the scheme of manifestation by its exalted Author. Furthermore, as "in Him we live and move and have our being," so the discordant note sounded by the Lucifer Spirits would also rise within Him. It would not be an outside agency which called attention to mistakes or took Him to task, but His own divine recognition of an imperfection to be transmuted into greater good.

In the Bible we read that Job was a perfect man, and in the Faust myth the bearer of the title role is designated a servant of God, for naturally the problem of unfoldment, of greater growth, must be solved by the most highly advanced. Ordinary individuals, or those who are lower in the scale of evolution, have still that part of the road to travel which has already been covered by such as Faust and Job, who are the vanguard of the human race, and who are looked upon by ordinary humanity in the same way that Lucifer describes them, namely as fools and freaks:

"Poor fool, his food and drink are not of earth,
An inward impulse hurries him afar;
Himself, half conscious of his frenzied mood;
From heaven claimeth he the fairest star,
And from the earth he craves the highest, best;

And all that's near and all that's far,
Can never still the cravings of his breast."

For such people a new and higher path must be opened to give them greater opportunities for growth; hence the answer of God:

"Though in perplexity he serves me now,
I soon will lead him where the light appears;
When buds the sapling doth the gardener know,
That flow'r and fruit shall grace its coming years."

Faust represents the seeking soul who is endeavoring to find the meaning of life and evolution. He is following the path of knowledge and positive action and work. Thus he is a true son of Cain. Marguerite, on the other hand, is a ward of the sons of Seth and is following the path of faith and devotion. Faust is tempted by Lucifer to gratify his lower passions and desires, and he succumbs for a time. But as he is basically good and working for the true ideals of life, he eventually triumphs over temptation and rises into Heaven. Lucifer, however, has been of real service to him by making him a stronger soul than he otherwise would have been had he not met and overcome the temptations presented by Lucifer. Marguerite is negative in character, but she is dominated by love, and the temptations to which she succumbs are those presented to her by the impulses of love. In the end love saves her from the effects of her sin, and she also rises into Heaven. The Rosicrucian teaching aims to combine the qualities of Faust and Marguerite in the aspirant, namely to blend the head and the heart.

[To Be Continued]

Questions:

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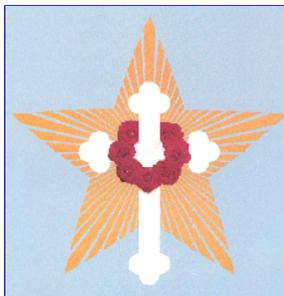
- 1.** Why did the great teachers give infant humanity these pictorial symbols?
- 2.** In time what effect does this have on humanity?
- 3.** What would have happened to the higher nature if this work had not been done in past ages?
- 4.** What two streams of humanity are represented in the opera Faust?
- 5.** Can the individuality become a fact if constant harmony prevails?
- 6.** Who does Satan represent in the opening scene of Faust?
- 7.** What is Lucifer's work as described in the opera Faust?
- 8.** Can this discordant note be outside of God, Himself?

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