

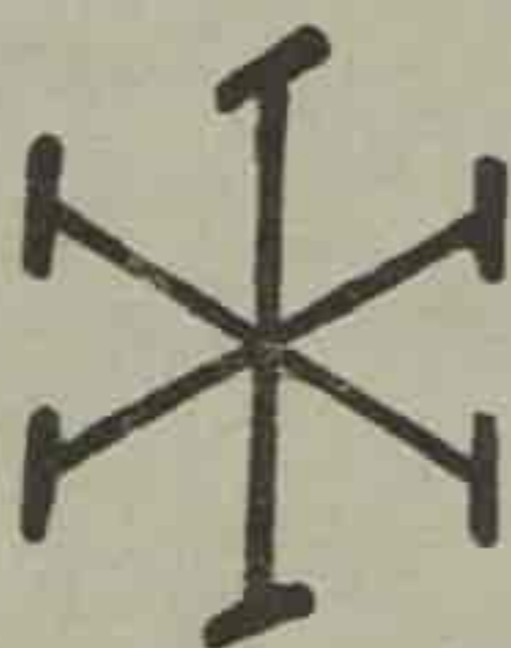
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EVELYN DERRY CAPEL

MAN'S DEVELOPMENT
FORESEEN
IN
GOETHE'S FAUST

FOURTEENTH
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The New Atlantis annual Foundation Lectures have been devoted to subjects which might be described as philosophic, scientific, religious and literary—a very wide field, approached by different speakers in different ways. Two themes might be seen to predominate throughout all the fourteen Foundation Lectures so far delivered, in all their variety of subject and approach. These are the significance of the conception of a threefold revelation to mankind, and the immense contribution of great minds and souls to the development of human consciousness.

Dimitrije Mitrinović, who used the name New Atlantis for his school, showed that the immemorial ancient wisdom, the Christian Gospel and doctrine, and the individual insights expressed in works of genius are all aspects of revelation, co-existing and interdependent. He also urged the importance of holding special commemorations dedicated to the life and work of men of genius, as had been proposed by Auguste Comte a century ago, and some of these lectures have in their way been dedicated to that purpose. More particularly Mitrinović proposed that these commemorations should be devoted to those men of genius whose work had been neglected or misunderstood.

It can hardly be said that the work of Goethe has been neglected, since he is universally acknowledged as one of the great figures of world literature, but nevertheless the latter part of his Faust has up to recently been both neglected and misunderstood.

The most significant exponent for modern times of the first of the three revelations, that revelation of Man and the Universe as an organic wholeness both in time and in space which was first given to mankind in the ancient wisdom, is Rudolf Steiner. Dimitrije Mitrinović always emphasised the great significance of his work, particularly in making the truth of the ancient wisdom

accessible to modern man by expressing it in the light of the centrality of the Christian revelation and in a spirit compatible with that of scientific thinking. Not only is Rudolf Steiner's work important in itself as knowledge, but the applications of it to medicine, agriculture and education are yielding important results. Two Foundation Lectures, the fifth and sixth, have already been devoted to aspects of his thought.

Rudolf Steiner himself made a very special study of Goethe's work. In the present lecture, Evelyn Capel, who is well known as an exponent of Steiner's thought, particularly in its implications for religion, calls attention to the relevance of Goethe's *Faust* to man's problems of today.

MAN'S DEVELOPMENT FORESEEN

IN

GOETHE'S FAUST

THE DRAMA of Faust represents the whole lifetime of its author. When Goethe was a boy in Frankfurt, he was fascinated by the busy life of its streets. This included outdoor forms of art, especially puppet shows which passers-by could watch. Among those which he saw was a representation of the medieval legend about the mysterious Dr. Faustus, with his master-mind, who sold his soul to the devil. The legend has reappeared in literature many times. The best-known version in English is that of Marlowe, the contemporary of Shakespeare. The boy Goethe became absorbed in this story. As a young man he started to write his own drama on this theme. He was dissatisfied and laid his version aside. In the course of his very active life, he returned to it again and again. Only as an old man nearing his end did he finish the drama. He left it divided into two parts containing so many speeches and so many scenes, that a full performance, without cutting, takes five days. Such performances on the stage are rare but it has become a special part of the work done at the Goetheanum in Dornach to hold such complete performances at regular intervals.

Goethe carried the idea of Faust in his heart all through his working life. The drama, as he finally represented it, developed along with his development. Nevertheless, one could not fairly say that the play as we have it now is an autobiography. In a sense, Goethe was identified with the character of Faust, but he came to identify Faust, not with himself as a person, but with 'Mansoul' in

the sense in which this expression was used in medieval drama. Mansoul as he becomes through the distressful history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is portrayed in the character and fate of Faust. Marlowe in his drama produced a picture of the medieval experience of good and evil. Goethe entered into the soul-drama of modern man as he struggles with himself to develop into that at which he rightly aims. He transcended his own personal development to enter into the pattern of that which belongs to Mansoul in the modern sense.

Goethe achieved the portrait of modern man, which Faust truly is, by using the language of mythology. He had himself a strong personal interest in natural science but his most skilful work was done as a poet. He was not able to achieve the scientific representation of the pattern of man but he faced this undertaking as a poet. He created a myth, the myth of Faust. He called again and again in the scenes of the drama on the myths of the Middle Ages and of Ancient Greece, but his central character was his own modern creation. There are certain figures in the history of literature which have taken on a life of their own, have become the heroes of myths in their own right. Such a one is Hamlet, who lives in modern thought independently of Shakespeare. A more modern example would be Sherlock Holmes, who is far more real to most readers today than his author Conan Doyle. Goethe's Faust is of this company. As the long drama proceeds from scene to scene, Faust seems to be conducting his own destiny and one could imagine that Goethe as he grew older tended more and more to become his scribe. If one would ask how the figure of Faust has come to be so powerful in his own right, one could say that it is because, hero of a myth as he is, he is making in himself the history of modern man. In this sense his author, Goethe, became a seer in his own time. Very recently in an American publication, Rudolf Steiner has been entitled 'the scientific seer'. This is because he was able to create the spiritual scientific pattern of man in the modern sense. Goethe was not able to do this but he could be called by contrast 'the mythological seer' in relation to the drama of Faust.

Throughout the first and second parts of the play, the experiences of the remarkable individual called Faust are described.

The name is traditional, taken from the old legend which had become a public play. The name itself has a strange history, since it belonged in early Christian times to the Manichæan teacher of St. Augustine. He it was who imparted to the young Augustine the teaching about the world-drama of good and evil which was essential to the Manichæan theology. Augustine revolted against it when later on he became a Christian in Rome. It has ranked as one of the great heresies of history. Nevertheless its essential reality has come back into modern thought in literature through Goethe's *Faust*, but the world-drama has become that of the individual human soul.

The first appearance of Faust in Goethe's play represents a man left completely on his own but by his own will. This first scene is preceded by the prologue in Heaven in which a dialogue takes place between God and the devil about the soul of man on the lines of the Book of Job in the Old Testament. This must have been meant to indicate that the drama of himself which Faust experiences is played before an audience in the Divine World, whether or not the hero intends it. It would seem from the first scene that Faust indeed believes himself to be managing his affairs entirely on his own. He appears to be the most lonely of mortals. He is isolated from those around him by his master-mind. He is separated from God by the sense of his cleverness. He has the sum of modern knowledge in himself and has even begun to dabble in the arts of magic in order to find something still beyond his powers. But his great intellectual attainments have made him an onlooker. Intellectually the world is at his feet, but he has no living relationship to it. Intellectually, he can comprehend his own human nature, but he has ceased to live a human life. The modern human soul, alone with his self-consciousness, has never been more powerfully and thoroughly portrayed.

But what is such a person to do with himself? The more he understands intellectually, the less he can live and create. At the beginning of the play, the hero Faust finds that the logical conclusion of his condition is to seek death. He decides to destroy himself. He draws back of course at the last minute, otherwise the long drama would never have been written. But what holds him back from the logical step towards self-destruction?

He hears the church bells ringing on Easter morning. Feelings rise in his heart, left over from his childhood, from the bright hope with which he had begun his life. Something right outside the intellect, that he can experience but not believe in, makes him throw away the cup of poison. He feels the stirrings of hope but returns to his first loneliness. He has nothing to go forward with, even though he seeks the company of his fellowmen on his Easter walk. He has to return disappointed to his gloomy study, where only the talk of his servant, Wagner, awaits him. Faust is weary of his own intellectual powers, but Wagner is full of respect and enthusiasm for them. He lives entirely for the intellectual achievements that Faust is prepared to throw away. Faust, left alone, turns to the Gospel of St. John, but before he can begin to find its wisdom, he is not left alone any more. A companion announces himself, the devil Mephistopheles. Since he cannot see another way out of his dilemma, Faust is persuaded to sign with the devil a pact which has to be written in his own blood. Mephistopheles agrees to put all his occult powers at the service of Faust to provide for him experiences in this world which will make him feel that life is worth living. In return for this, Faust agrees that he will offer his human powers to the service of Mephistopheles in the Life after death. The pact is in fact an arrangement for a mutual exchange of services.

Once the pact is signed, Faust and Mephistopheles become constant companions. Through the many scenes that follow, their relationship to each other changes. It is not only the character of Faust that is affected by having the devil always at hand, but the devil also acquires a new outlook. His rather primitive notions of pleasure have to undergo refinement. Having, for instance, taken Faust to a low-down pub as a first effort to entertain him, he has to go through the shock of seeing Faust march out in disgust, before he himself was weary of the jollification. Mephistopheles is obliged to develop other interests and becomes steadily more cultured as the play proceeds. Had he in fact ever been given the opportunity to say what he thought of his own experience of becoming the tempter of Faust, he might well have used the well-known expression borrowed from someone else and said 'To know him was a liberal education.' On the other hand, Faust,

from being a thorough intellectual, is led by Mephistopheles into the experience of the subconscious and subhuman forces that propel human nature, those of the kind so often treated sympathetically in modern literature.

To give Faust a new start in life, Mephistopheles takes him into the world of the witches, to fetch from them the brew which will renew the lusty forces of his youth. Goethe was a writer who entered with zest into every detail of the mythology which he composed around the figure of Faust. He had no taste for the economy which made Shakespeare introduce into the play of Macbeth the minimum number of witches to produce a proper prophecy. In the long scenes devoted to the festival of the witches on the mountain top of the Brocken on Walpurgis night, every imaginable kind of witch, warlock and elemental creature has a part. It is difficult to remember among the antics of this fascinating crowd what the main point can be of the visit of Faust and Mephistopheles. This is the more so because while Faust is inclined to complain that this is most unsuitable company for himself, Mephistopheles enjoys every encounter with his companions and enters heartily into their affairs. The ghoulish antics do not seem particularly evil; they appear to give honest pleasure. But the consequences for Faust of accepting the drink which they brew for him is to bring about his moral downfall. The creatures who handle the forces of Nature harm neither themselves nor Mephistopheles. But when their gifts are transformed into the instincts of human nature, they become uncontrolled influences of destruction.

It can be observed that the devilish character of Mephistopheles is not consistent from scene to scene and changes between the first and second halves of the drama. Goethe's imagination was such that having started to compose a myth, he could allow it to go on creating itself. Elements have appeared in the drama of Faust which are not the effect of Goethe's own comprehension. Rudolf Steiner, who looked with his spiritual scientific insight at Goethe's representation of Faust, pointed to an idea about the nature of evil as we encounter it today, which is foreshadowed in the behaviour of Mephistopheles. This idea shows evil to be not one-fold but two-fold in its nature. The human soul is accompanied,



not by one power of evil but by two. The one attempts to pull our feeling away from a sober sense of responsibility into wishful thinking, illusions and at the last into ecstasies. The other attempts to drag our experience into the sphere of cold calculation and materialistic thought. The human soul can only find itself in right thinking and feeling in the space between, but the very fact that this space exists is the opportunity to overcome the temptations of evil and create what is good. Mansoul can only hope to get upsides with the devilish powers because they pull from opposite directions and in opposite directions. Goethe presented in the Faust drama the old picture of Mansoul faced with the single devil. But in reality he has shown the behaviour of Mephistopheles to change back and forth from one extreme to the other in a way that reflects the double nature of evil.

In the company of the witches, Mephistopheles himself attempts to lead Faust into the ecstasies of the Nature forces. Faust is not able to respond, but after accepting their brew, he is able to follow the devil's promptings. He develops wishes and seeks the happy dream of a love-affair with the village maiden, Gretchen. This time it is Mephistopheles who cannot follow Faust. His part in the affair takes him in the opposite direction. To bring about the satisfaction of the desires of Faust, he appeals to the greed for wealth of the girl and her neighbour and provides the intrigue in what, by Faust's intentions, is to be an innocent love-affair. The ecstasy of Faust and Gretchen is turned into a sordid story of murder, guilt and execution. Gretchen bears the brunt. Faust carries the guilt. But when he intends to rescue Gretchen, his moral strength fails him and he becomes completely dominated by Mephistopheles. Gretchen, refusing to be rescued by the devilish companion of her lover, saves her soul though not her life. Faust, helpless in the tragedy which he never intended, is ordered by Mephistopheles to leave her in a form of words that a master might use to a dog. At the end of the first part of the drama, Faust's soul has collapsed into the power of the devil. Had Goethe left the story at this point, he would have been faithful to the old tradition of the legend which he knew as a puppet play. All that would have been needed was a concluding scene like that which the dramatist Marlowe composed, in which

Faust's soul would have descended in fire, flames and uproar into the depths of Hell. But because Goethe lived all his active life with the theme of Faust in mind, he could not end with that conclusion. He could see the fall of Faust but he was not satisfied until he had found the way of his resurrection. So it is that the play does not end at the close of the first part, but there follows the much longer and more complicated second part. Mephistopheles accompanies Faust right through its many scenes, but is never again in the position to give him orders and dominate him completely.

How does it come about that in our modern age Mankind has not yet destroyed itself, although so many destructive influences have been let loose? Our environment has been polluted to a dangerous degree, and yet very little is done to prevent this from continuing. The human constitution is being damaged by absorbing many kinds of poison in the course of daily life. The picture of Faust in the first part of the play as a man who is destroying himself by guilt, reflects the modern dilemma remarkably well. Where are the forces that prevent the impulses to self-destruction reaching their conclusion? The second part of the drama of Faust begins with the scene showing the hero restored to life by a number of sprites or elemental beings who bestow on him some of their own natural vitality. They give because they have something to give, regardless of the worthiness of him who receives. Goethe has represented them as the source of the natural impulses to well-being which anyone can feel on a beautiful morning, or by breathing in fresh air, or taking a holiday in lovely surroundings. The modern person, whose job it may well be to handle some of the destructive forces now at work, often relies on a holiday to restore himself. Goethe has shown in the construction of the second half of the play that he did not mistake restoration for resurrection. Ariel and his companions give Faust a new start in life. They can do no more; and although this first scene is one of the few in which Mephistopheles is not present, Faust soon returns to his company.

■ Faust is no longer interested in the search for happiness in his personal affairs. From now on he takes the stage of history. His foremost wish is to play his part in moulding the world of his

time. He begins to overcome the impulse to self-destruction because a longing grows within him to construct a new world. He has been prepared to throw himself away until he has awoken to the larger human responsibilities. Is it possible to observe an impulse of this kind at work now? Is there a rising sense of responsibility for the world which it is within our human power to fashion from our ideas? Goethe has prophesied that this could be a saving grace in modern history. Faust nevertheless is represented as taking Mephistopheles with him into his new destiny. At first indeed the devil leads the way. The two go off together to the Court of the Emperor where they find that the decay of the old order has set in thoroughly. They arrive at the right moment to offer their help in improving the situation.

The old order is about to collapse for lack of money. Faust and Mephistopheles between them invent a new means of producing wealth. In other words, they introduce paper money. Useless in itself, it immediately becomes currency, universally accepted by means of the argument that there is hidden treasure in the Emperor's realm which rightly belongs to him. It is not found necessary to dig for the treasure because everyone is prepared to take the paper on trust. The modern system of finance is in fact based on just the same principle, in confidence in what is put on paper. Faust clearly depends on Mephistopheles for this invention and its success. Between them they give the old order a new existence. But then the problem arises of how to fill the life of the Emperor's Court with a new content. The answer is found in calling on magic to provide fresh interests.

Mephistopheles shows himself willing to play with the occult for everyone's satisfaction, but a different impulse arises in the heart of Faust. It is to change the relationship between them. He takes seriously an ideal. In the language of the myth, this is represented in the idea of Helen, the woman in the form of the goddess. The imagination of Faust reaches out beyond the earthly pattern, which had attracted him in Gretchen. For him the best that there is is no longer enough. The unfulfilled ideal fills his heart and awakens his active longing. This quality of spiritual imagination begins to lift him out of the power of Mephistopheles who is represented as knowledgeable in occult things and yet lacking in

imagination. Faust becomes quite dissatisfied with magical flourishes and asks where he can encounter a real experience of the spiritual Universe. This is dramatically represented as the search for a meeting with the fabulous Helen, who once caused the fall of Troy.

So long as Faust only felt wishes that could be satisfied in this world, he had a destructive influence on himself and on Gretchen. Once he has grasped an aim that could only be reached by spiritual powers he is a changed person, active, courageous and enthusiastic. Is this the idea which Goethe foresaw as the answer to the modern dilemma? Is it not that spiritual inspirations are the means by which, in the modern world, a history of new creation can come about in the midst of so many tendencies to self-destruction? Goethe has represented the turning point in the career of Faust, the beginning of his resurrection at that moment when he decides to rise into the consciousness of the spiritual. Again in the language of the myth, he must resolve to undertake the dangerous journey to the Mothers. These are the three goddesses known in the Ancient Greek Mysteries as the source of all human existence. Faust has to disappear into the darkness by himself that he may enter their presence. At this point, Mephistopheles cannot go with him. Nevertheless, he provides Faust with the magic key without which he cannot start his quest. Mephistopheles can find the key, he knows the way, but he believes that it leads into the great World-Nothing. Faust is filled with the conviction that it leads to the great World-All. They part, and Faust goes on his way alone. Mephistopheles refuses to leave the ordinary world, but is quite willing to offer his services and his magic to the Emperor's Court meanwhile.

Faust returns with new experience and power. The vision of Helen is conjured up before the Emperor and his Court, but Faust is filled with a mighty divine dissatisfaction. He is no longer in the grip of Mephistopheles. In their new relationship Faust behaves as the master, and the devil, who cannot leave him to his own devices because of the pact, has often to take orders. The next adventure in their history is decided upon by Faust, and Mephistopheles is almost left behind. Faust is no longer content to have seen Helen in a vision, he determines upon a real en-



counter with her in her lasting spiritual nature. Whereas in the first part Mephistopheles took Faust along to the gathering of the witches, now Faust drags Mephistopheles with him back into the living world of Ancient Greece. It is not the devil who can supply the means of getting there. Instead, a new character is introduced through a kind of human, scientific magic. The servant of Faust, Wagner, who stayed behind in the study when his master went off on his adventures with the devil, has meanwhile produced by his experiments a human embryo in a test-tube. He is called Homunculus. He cannot emerge from the test-tube into independent existence, but he can speak. He it is who shows the way to the living world of Greek mythology, to the classical festival of Walpurga. Wagner is quite unable to follow and tries to keep this little being to himself, but he for his part is eager to emerge from his test-tube. He longs to find the source of creation in the Universe, which is found at last among certain gods of the ocean known to the Greeks. Mephistopheles has just enough relationship to the real forces of magic to be able to accompany them. Faust and he, led by the little creature, arrive in the land where the Greek myths are real and true.

This portion of the drama is treated with the same zest for every possible detail as is to be found in the description of the witches. The experiences of Faust are at first lost sight of among the many beings and creatures who appear. Mephistopheles does not find himself at home in this world. It is some time before he can find a character in which to disguise himself, so that he can move about and take his share in what is happening. When he is able to do so, he makes the opportunity for Faust to attain his wish for a meeting with Helen. He it is who persuades Helen and her maidens, returning from Troy, to take refuge with Faust to save themselves from the wrath of Menelaus. It is a deception typical of Mephistopheles, who has quite found his old form again in spite of his classical surroundings.

Faust meets in Helen the ideal for which he has longed and striven. He is exalted to the heights of experience at which he has aimed. There is no disappointment. The tragedy that follows comes about because this condition cannot last. The human soul of Faust cannot continue in spiritual exaltation. The offspring of

devil is still at hand, but he has to work as he never did before to keep up with Faust. Though he started by being the tempter, he is now taking orders. He is kept hard at work supplying Faust with the means of carrying out his ideas. He works with a will, but being after all the devil, there is always a nasty streak in what he performs. It turns out that the last bit of land required for the new scheme has on it already a modest cottage in which an old couple live who do not wish to move. Faust provides an excellent old people's home elsewhere but somehow, before they can be taken there against their will, the cottage goes up in flames and they are destroyed with it. Mephistopheles has had a hand in the matter. Faust, burdened with care, grows old and blind working away at his scheme. Mephistopheles of course neither ages nor wearies. Faust is so filled with inspiration that he lives from its light and takes little account of age or infirmity, but a new idea enters his plans. He has begun by wishing to establish an ideal order of society. Then he realises that the citizens will be human and that it is human nature to become corrupt in a state of constant well-being. People cannot live rightly when they are provided from outside with all that is good. It is essential that they should have the opportunity to use their creative powers. It is therefore decided that the citizens of the new society shall make for themselves the conditions under which they will live. The very fact that the new country is to consist of reclaimed land, which will be flooded if the dyke is not kept in order, is now seen by Faust to be an advantage. Under the threat of danger, the citizens will be constantly aware of the need to remain awake and active.

At this point, very near the end of the drama, when Faust is about to die, the meaning of his pact with the devil is resolved. Goethe started to compose his drama from the old legend in which a simple bargain was made for the soul of Faust, but he introduced into the scene in which the pact was signed a new concept of his own. Faust was allowed to add a condition. That is to say, he promised to the devil his soul at death, provided that Mephistopheles could bring him to the point of satisfaction, when he would say of one moment of time 'Stop! you are too beautiful to let go.' Through all the many scenes in which Goethe showed Faust and Mephistopheles as companions, such a moment was not

in fact reached. But just before his death, his mind filled with the great ideas from which the new human society could be built, Faust comes within sight of this experience. Looking ahead at the fulfilment of his aims, he says 'Now, if I would, I could see the time coming when I could say to a moment of time "Stop!".' He uses the subjunctive mood, not the indicative, and thereby in fact the condition is not fulfilled.

Quite recently a contrasting motto has been produced: 'Stop the world I want to get off'. The temptation to give up instead of going on is helped today by all those who wish to opt out, in whatever manner they try to do so. If the history of mankind were in fact to stop in the condition in which it now is, man would be a failure. Our true purpose of the present time is hidden in that which we should become if we strive onwards. Such unremitting courage is the quality in the life of Faust which in the end could let him be led by the angels away from Mephistopheles. This hard-working devil is deprived of his reward because Faust has refused to stop, and through his own effort has developed beyond himself. What is the source of Faust's courage to go on? Near the beginning of the second part of the drama, Faust was shown taking the journey through the Unknown to the Realm of the Great Mothers. Just for once in their history together, he left Mephistopheles behind. From that time on, he was connected with the source of spiritual inspiration, the sphere of the World-Ideas. He could receive the inflow of thought from the sphere of their existence. Nothing that he achieved could ever be enough. Every plan would be followed by a new idea for further action. Mephistopheles, bound to the pact, was condemned to continually find means of realising aim after aim. He was unable to foresee that his job would never be finished, because the realm which Faust had entered alone seemed to him only the great Nothing.

Another drive from within had also kept Faust striving onwards until his end. He is represented throughout the play as the one who knows himself, who has reached a higher degree of self-consciousness than those around him. In the first scenes he had become an onlooker. This attitude is transformed in the course of events into its opposite. He becomes very eager to experience himself

in what he undertakes. From one who can describe himself intelligently he becomes someone who intends to know himself in action. In attempting to build a human community for the sake of making a new epoch in history, he becomes less self-centred and more world-centred, but never for a moment does he lose his self-awareness in what he is doing. As he goes blind, he relies more and more on his inner power of vision. But he is still the single person putting all his individual powers into a project that he has designed himself. The character of Faust, as he has become by the play's end, is a remarkable portrait of the state of consciousness which is experienced today. In this century, each person feels himself to be on his own, whatever his surroundings may be. He learns by his own experience, he longs to see himself through what he can do. Rudolf Steiner, with his spiritual insight into the history of the human mind, has described how this type of consciousness has arisen in the present out of the development of the past. It is, historically speaking, an inevitable transition from which the human mind should pass on to a future stage.

Each time that a new stage is reached in human consciousness, there is the danger that it will turn decadent instead of developing further. Each time there is the danger that the powers of evil will seize upon it, instead of the Christian forces that could transform it. Goethe out of his poetic sense of reality, put Faust, the man with the modern mind, into the company of Mephistopheles. He then set Faust the task of rescuing himself by means of his courage to seek the Spirit. Rudolf Steiner grasped the spiritual facts of history in the forms of thought. Goethe painted the portrait of modern man, in his dilemma, as a poet. Both the scientific thinker and the poet have agreed that the modern form of consciousness gives to a man a great opportunity to find himself in himself.

The final scene of the drama is often spoken of as the Ascension of Faust. It stands by itself in relation to all the other scenes. It contains a set of quite new characters who can only in imagination be related to those seen before. It would not be unfair to suggest that Goethe found it an artistic problem to find the way for Faust to be taken at the end to Heaven. Faust being mortal has to die, a fact foreseen by Mephistopheles as something from which he

stands apart. For him, it is only the conclusion of the pact. Faust, looking inwardly at his visions for the future, does not grasp the fact of death as the end of everything. It is another step onwards. But it also brings him an unimaginable change. He who has learnt to depend on his own striving is now dependent on Grace. In life he strove forward. In death he is drawn upwards by all those who come to meet him. Here again it would seem that Goethe, by his poetic insight, has shown a reality of existence.

The first of those who come to meet Faust at his death are the angels who take his eternal soul away from Mephistopheles. He is represented as having never realised that the pact had not been fulfilled. The angels encounter him with the saying which is one of those most often quoted from the text of the drama: 'Whoever continually strives onwards, him we can redeem.' Mephistopheles has had his eye on achievement but Faust is drawn to the angels by his inspired dissatisfaction. After the angels, there comes to fetch the soul of Faust a figure, who is Gretchen as she has become in the Life after death. She whose life was ruined by him on earth can draw him on by her power to forgive in the world beyond death. She draws him towards the heights in which is revealed the figure of the Madonna. How it is that the woman-goddess, Helen, whom Faust has sought before, is now transformed into the Madonna, is a matter for the imagination of the reader. The world of Helen was peopled with the gods and figures of Greek mythology. The Madonna of the Heavens is introduced by figures representing early Church Fathers. Goethe has, one might say, let them talk about Heaven rather than try to represent it directly on the stage. The last scene could be called a kind of theological romance, yet who could say that he knows a better way to put Heaven before an audience? Mephistopheles is seen active in earthly surroundings. Angels, the souls of the dead boys, the soul of Gretchen and the Madonna herself, all belong to the surroundings of Heaven. They draw the soul of Faust away from the earth into their company.

It is a feature of this last scene that the descriptions of the heavenly world are given by masculine theologians and the soul of Faust is led into Heaven by feminine figures. Gretchen takes him to meet the Madonna. That Goethe intended this contrast is

stressed in one of the final speeches, which speaks of the Eternal Feminine as the power lifting the human soul upwards. What did Goethe mean by these words? Perhaps he was thinking of a picture which lived powerfully in the hearts of the earliest Fathers of the Christian Church. They lived in a period of human consciousness when they thought, not in the abstract principles common today, but in terms of living beings, of gods and goddesses. Wisdom was not for them a vague idea, but a Great Being in the universe, the 'Sophia'. The wisdom of God appeared to them in the form of a goddess just as the wisdom in Nature was seen as the Being 'Natura'. In the sphere of the soul, they felt themselves standing between two feminine influences, both divine, Sophia from above and Natura from below. It is part of the Christian mystery of the Madonna that both of these divine influences are represented in herself. Goethe was sensitive to such realities and they can be seen reflected in the two characters of Gretchen and Helen reconciled at the end in the Madonna who appears at the Gateway to Heaven.

Faust within Goethe's drama can fairly be described as a picture of Mansoul, as he has become today, because the dangers he encounters can be recognised as rightly represented. Have we then to accept the solution to the dilemma of Faust as also true for our time? Such a question can only be left for each one to answer for himself. If Goethe, when he created the figure of Faust, was in fact inspired by a wisdom beyond his own comprehension as one might well believe, then he has sent the most important message to our later generation. He has said: 'Your greatest temptation is to stop where you are. If you refuse to stop, if you continually receive the inspiration of new spiritual ideas, if you are determined to put them into action, if you refuse to be weary or to be satisfied, then you will transcend your dilemma. Like Faust, when the darkness presses on you from outside, you will see the light of the Spirit from within and you will know that you cannot stop'.



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