

Having the Eyes of Their Understanding Darkened

CLASSICAL GREEK tragedy dramatizes the career of the protagonist who falls from his high estate as the result of a major flaw or blind spot in his character. Most commonly, the flaw is pride or hubris, as in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, or in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. This pattern gives rise to the saying that pride cometh before the fall, whose prototype is the heavenly fall of the Lucifers, followed by the biblical "fall" (into material consciousness) of early mankind.

A proud man acts out of the blindness that is ignorance, in contravention of some universal law. When, having violated his own humanity, Oedipus stabs out his eyes and plunges his life into darkness, he but objectifies his pre-existing moral blindness. Collective or group pride is also possible. It can take many forms, including an excessive estimation of one's ethnicity (racism), country (jingoism), or gender (sexism).

Max Heindel reminds us that the besetting sins of the Sons of Cain—among whom are the makers and shakers, the world's executives and executors, the industrialists and scientists, the craftsmen and capitalists—are pride of intellect and impatience of restraint. True to form, and continuing the tradition inaugurated by their semi-divine progenitor (according to the Masonic teaching), the Sons of Cain are raising Cain, most notably in the field of science. Premodern scientists sought to discover *what* things are. They were more concerned with essences, with gaining knowledge for its own sake. Modern scientists want to know *how* things work in order to change them. They are instrumentalists and manipulators. What is most problematic, they are hellbent on manipulating the manipulator—

man himself—with the idea of improving on nature. Welcome brave new world!

The arrogance is stunning. Proponents of esoteric Christianity have a sacramental regard for nature, knowing it to be the emanation of divine creative Hierarchies. Not so the materialist scientist, for whom nature, including man, is but a mechanism, at most, a cosmic clock, with which he can tinker to make it more efficient.

Our besetting sin is not wanting to know, for ultimately, "ignorance is the only sin, and applied knowledge is the only salvation." We are called to know, but crucial is how we go about acquiring knowledge, and what we do with it. First and foremost we are called to know Him who says, "I am the Lord your God, and you shall have no gods but me," for there are none other—certainly not present-day humans. Without this guiding and humbling *a priori* certainty of a living, unerring Creator, pursuit of knowledge is as vain and dangerous as driving a car with one's eyes closed. Nature should inspire and teach us, not be subject to our invasive, prurient dissections. Currently, human nature "lies on the operating table, ready for to be altered for eugenic and neuropsychic 'enhancement,' for wholesale redesign." This is a diabolical project.

It is not nature that needs improving, but ourselves; and not from without, by genetic manipulation, but from within, by self-restraint, love, and doing all things as unto God. The knowledge that saves will ever hide from the intellectual vivisector. When we approach nature with the deference and honor due any of God's creations, even as we would an altar, then may we rightly expect to be found worthy to know the mysteries of life, and to know to our heart's content. □