

Superstition and Ignorance versus Courage and Self-reliance

Laurance Labadie

1934

Every well informed person knows, today, that man has evolved from lower forms of animal life. With this evolution in mind, we may imagine the progress he has made in ideas and social valuations. Primitive man worshipped the sun, which was natural because from it came both heat and light which are necessary to all forms of life. With the discovery of fire part of his worship was transferred to it. And if we skip many ages we may assume that by the time his creative faculties reached the stage whereby he was able to intelligently use the forces of nature, to make tools and weapons, his ideas as to the primary source of human well-being changed greatly. Probably about this time his perception and thought led him to believe that, as he was himself instrumental in controlling his well-being and seeing that many things both benevolent and malevolent occurred without his intervention, all these phenomena were caused by an anthropomorphic god. The bible gives evidence that this god had all the attributes of men, that is he was half demon and half benevolent and merciful. Naturally, men did all in their power to propitiate this powerful being and, in their fear, but under the pretext of loving him, catered to and gifted those who claimed to have special ability to win his favors. These original medicine men worked hand in hand with the powerful who managed by their physical prowess and cunning to gain control, subjugate, and exploit those not so aggressively constituted. So, at this time, what we now understand as the Church and State were so closely allied as to be almost indistinguishable. It is significant, at this point to note that predatory instincts,—robbery, murder, and afterward, subjugation,—were partially justifiable on the grounds of scarcity—there was not enough to go around. Observe, also, that the motive for such action was not hate or malice but self-preservation. This view is in direct contradiction to the teachings of the Church and the State. The former says that all men are “born in sin” and must be washed, preferably “in the blood of the lamb” (whatever that means) in order to be “saved”. The latter claims to be the guardian of “law and order”. So much for the total depravity theory. However, even up to comparatively modern times has the belief persisted that the king was divinely appointed and his coronation a religious ritual. Democracy succeeding Monarchy, it is natural to expect that this change carried with it many of the superstitions and customs of the preceding era.

Now all thru this evolution man has labored under superstitions which are in essence the same—the belief that something, whether it be a force, a personality, or mundane individuals,

external to himself, was or is going to do something for fun. This is the essence of both the god idea and, what is a transformation of the same thing,—the political myth. It is the wish-thought of incompetency. It is the belief in Santa Claus. And as long as this preposterous belief exists in the minds of men they will have no self-respect, no independence, no liberty. It is the belief that makes man craven, slavish, and hypocritical. It is this belief that destroys human dignity and self-reliance and makes of man a supine prayer to non-existent gods and a credulous believer in the wiles and promises of politicians. It is this belief that makes him a mumbler, a fool, and a dupe. Not until he realizes the importance of the maxim: God helps those who help themselves, (never was the god idea so gracefully and tactfully ejected), or: If you want anything done, do it yourself,—will he finally emerge from the disgraceful conditions which infest the world today.

DETROIT, 1934.

LAURANCE LABADIE

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