

lasting foundations has the greatest of Germans built his grandest structure.

The drama opens in a celestial atmosphere and with a chorus so definite and yet so sublime that it stands almost alone in the realm of poetry. It is sung by the Archangels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, and is descriptive of the scene before them with its impression upon their devout natures, and in it is sounded the key note of the whole poem.

From their station before the gate of Heaven the angels look forth and behold the sun accompanied by all his radiant planets. Rushing with unimaginable speed along his predestined path, the thunder of his sphere music resounding in concert with that of the circling world, all being as glorious as when in the morning of time they first sang together fresh from the hand of their creator. Then the earth they see, whirling thought-speeded on its axis; the widespread oceans and mighty continents alternately robed in the deepest night and bathed in the splendours of day, the storms on land and sea howling in emulation, while the flashing lightning advances as a herald in the path of the thunderbolt; and at these things the angels are strengthened in their reverence for the creation of such wondrous works.

At this point Mephistopheles appears before the Lord and in a cynically brutal speech sneers at the earth and its boastful possessor man. God replies that he may keep his sneers; since one good man is beyond all his powers to completely ruin; for though such might for a time fall into the deepest sin, yet there still remained in him a conception of the right way which would eventually lead him once more to virtue. And if Mephistopheles wanted to prove this he might take the aspiring Faust and do what he wished with him in life, only to find in the end how vain had been all his efforts. Mephistopheles accepts the offer and after making some sneering remarks departs from the Holy Presence.

We are next at midnight introduced to Faust in his study, where we find him disgusted with human learning and studying magic from a volume of Nostradamus. Turning the pages he comes upon the cabalistic sign of the Earth spirit and invokes its presence. It appears, and its words to Faust are overflowing with sublimity and almost unfathomable in the profundity of their universal meaning:

In the currents of life, in action's storm,  
I float and I wave,  
With billowy motion;  
Birth and the Grave  
A limitless ocean,  
A web ever growing  
A life ever glowing

Thus at the roaring loom of time I ply  
And weave the garment that thou see'st God by.

The spirit departs without alleviating Faust's distress; and he