

TELL US ABOUT GOD . . . WHO IS HE?

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Spec
Copies

Why the Knights of Columbus Advertise Catholic Faith

The reason is simple. We Catholics want our non-Catholic friends and neighbors to know us as we really are and not as we are some times mistakenly represented.

We are confident that when our religious Faith is better understood by those who do not share it, mutual understanding will promote the good-will which is so necessary in a predominantly Christian country whose government is designed to serve all the people—no matter how much their religious convictions may differ.

American Catholics are convinced that as the teachings of Christ widely and firmly take hold of the hearts and conduct of our people, we shall remain free in the sense that Christ promised (John VIII, 31-38), and in the manner planned by the Founding Fathers of this republic.

Despite the plainly stated will of the Good Shepherd that there be "one fold and one shepherd," the differences in the understanding of Christ's teaching are plainly evident. It has rightfully been called "the scandal of a divided Christianity."

If there is anything which will gather together the scattered flock of Christ, it is the nationwide understanding of the Savior, what He did and how He intended mankind to benefit by the Redemption.

To this end, we wish our fellow-Americans to become acquainted with the teachings of Christ as the Catholic Church has faithfully presented them, since the day the apostles invaded the nations of the world in willing and courageous obedience to Christ's command: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt. XXVIII, 19).

**SUPREME COUNCIL
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GOD — Fact or Phantom

It was just before Easter, 1942, and Moscow lay under snow. At night the city was dead, without light and without movement. The streets were totally deserted, for there was a curfew and the sentries were under orders to shoot at sight. The German Army was moving on Moscow. There might be paratroopers or enemy agents infiltrating into the city by night.

On the Thursday before Easter Sunday PRAVDA announced that on Saturday night there would be an Easter vigil religious service. No one believed the newspaper announcement. For over twenty years Russia had been officially an atheist state. Religious instruction in schools and public religious services were forbidden. The Cathedral in Moscow was a state building. All the modern methods of propaganda had been used on a vast and unceasing scale to prove to the people that there is no God. For over twenty years there had been no public religious service. No one believed the newspaper announcement.

On Friday the Press announced that late street cars would run to transport worshippers to and from the Easter Vigil, and that the curfew would be relaxed for that night.

Long before midnight on Saturday the Church was full; the doors were closed for there was no more room. It was a strange service. The Patriarch of Moscow was dressed in gorgeous vestments, as also were his ministers. But they had no vessels for the service. The communion plates and the chalices had long been melted down for the party funds. Clothed like Solomon in all his glory the ministers used jam jars and enamelled plates for their sacred vessels. It was a strange service. And the strangest thing of all was that those who were there had been taught, old and young, that there is no God, that religion is the opium of the people and that man's paradise is to be found on earth. People who had questioned these tenets were no longer to be found. Those who remained were too wise to ask questions. Yet there in the capital

of atheism, after twenty years of a police state, after twenty years of darkness, there was suddenly a ray of light (The London OBSERVER, Christmas, 1958).

Freedom Only Under God

Who were they worshipping on that Easter night? A fact or a phantom? The official party line had not changed. The serfs were worshipping a phantom. But if it helped to beat the Germans, who cared? And now that the war is over, if religion keeps them quiet, let them have their ikons, their incense, their rituals. In time, intellectual enlightenment will come from the indoctrination their children receive in school.

The fact is that these dictators who govern the destiny of Russia and her satellites have forced us to make a re-appraisal of the meaning of the statement that there is a God. The sharp differences between their view of life and ours are forcing us to re-examine our roots.

The main difference between them and us concerns our concept of personal liberties. To us the state is the servant of the community, and the primary community is the family. The state exists to safeguard and protect the rights of families and of individuals. The meaning of law is that it defines our freedom.

Those who framed our laws and our constitution proceeded from a concept of the dignity of the individual based on the conviction that man is made in the image and likeness of God. This is the basis of respect for man; its absence on the other side of the Iron Curtain strikes us like a slap in the face. There, man is the animal who walks on two legs instead of four. He is treated like one and driven to his state-determined destiny as cattle are driven to market.

It is in this sense that the Iron Curtain forces us to look at the reason why we treat men in the way we do. We do not say this proves the existence of God. But unless we recognize that there is a God in whose likeness man is made, the main motive for a democracy disappears. If we act towards man as if he were made in the image and likeness of a lower animal, we put him in a cage and take away his freedom.

The final refuge of the free world is that all men shall be equal under God and under the law.

When The World Knew God

But while the existence or non-existence of God may be the final issue between Eastern Communism and Western democracy it would be misleading to say on the one hand

that all Russians are atheists and on the other that all in the West believe in God. We have seen the little miracle that took place in war-time Moscow; and most of us know that in the Western world the sharp outlines of God have grown blurred.

But before we consider what God is, we must first establish the fact that there is a God. Two things can be stated as a matter of fact. First, there is no language in the world which does not contain the name "god." In all the languages of the Western and Moslem world, there is the name "God," meaning one Supreme Being. We have, in other words, a verbal witness to the belief of the world in the existence of a Supreme Being.

Secondly, this belief has persisted among mankind at all times and everywhere and it affirms that a Supreme Being exists or that beings exist upon whom the world and men depend. But even this is not the whole of the fact.

At all times and everywhere there has been a small minority who have asserted that there is no God. In the records of history as we have them we find substantially the same arguments against God's existence as we find them today. Nevertheless the majority of mankind has persisted in its belief. We are dealing with a common belief of normal humanity.

Nor can it be established that

new discoveries of science and of knowledge have disproved the traditional belief. Science today in uncovering the mysteries of the universe only illustrates the skill and intelligence that underlies these mysteries. When a scientist achieves in his laboratory what nature has been doing for centuries it is hailed as a great achievement. We call penicillin a "wonder-drug," and so it is. But Alexander Fleming did not invent it; he discovered it. Jet propulsion is a wonderful invention, but squids have been using jet propulsion for millions of years.

If time allowed we could examine many of our wonderful present-day inventions and see them duplicated in nature. When a modern airliner lands, for example, it has to use the basic braking mechanism that bird's wings employ when a bird alights. The modern submarine has to be streamlined to reduce water resistance according to the pattern found in the shape of the barracuda and the shark.

The point is worth making because our education today is dominated by scientific skills and technologies. This has led us into a state of mind in which we become skeptical of the existence of things that we cannot weigh and measure and dissect. This is a short-sighted view. The human race managed to exist for a long time without much

science. But it would long ago have died out if fathers had not cared for and protected their wives and helpless offspring. How can you weigh human love? How would the human family have fared if there had not existed always a rudimentary sense of justice which respected, if it did not always observe, the distinction between mine and thine, between duties and rights? Can you dissect justice?

Traditional Idea of God

The modern notion of God is blurred and vague. Before we attempt to describe it, we can take as a point of reference the traditional conception of God.

When Columbus discovered America, the Europe from which he sailed knew exactly what it meant when it spoke of God. To them God was the Supreme Being, the author of His own existence and of the universe, of the world and of the men who lived on it. If you pressed them for more information on this Supreme Being, they replied that God's being was spirit. For them any being fell into one of three compartments. It could be material in composition like a stone, or a tree, or a cow. These beings were made of parts, they could be taken apart and they tended to fall apart or die. They could be weighed and measured and shaped — into build-

ings, furniture and steaks.

The next kind of being was man himself. In comparison with material beings, he too was made of parts, and when he died, he slowly fell apart through the process of bodily decay. But during life he gave evidence by his actions that he was something more than only matter. The main evidence was in his thinking and in his loving. If he were only living matter like the brute how could he express a thought in a word? How could he in the act of reflection make himself the object of his own thought? Material things cannot do that. The brush cannot paint itself and the eye cannot see itself. If he were only living matter how and why could he know and love what is good, recognize and spurn what is evil? How could he be a free agent and be responsible, if the only laws he obeyed were the laws of matter?

Man more than Matter

This thing in man that made him different from the animal they called his spirit or his soul. It depended upon his body, of course, in that his restless urge to know was limited by his brain; in that his urge to act was limited by his body and by his physical energy; in that the greatness of his love was limited by the kind of temperament that he had. At times he could act as if he

were only an animal. But he would feel guilt if he did, and others would accuse him, for the laws under which he lived with other men were based on the belief that he was not a blind victim of the laws of matter but capable of self control within the limits of his human estate. They made the common-sense distinction that while a very bad man might act like an animal, a very good animal never acted like a man.

The third kind of being was the being of God. In God, they said, was knowing and loving, as in man there is knowing and loving. But in God there is no matter to limit him. When God acts He is not limited by the size and strength of a body; when God knows He is not conditioned by the condition of a brain. The knowing and loving of God are the actions of a spirit.

But this Spirit that is God is supreme, perfect and without limitation. He depends on none but all things depend upon Him. So perfect is He that nothing can be added to Him, nor subtracted from Him. He is of Himself and not of another, and of Himself in such a way that He is all that He is at once. He is perfect within Himself, beyond shadow of change and subject to no limitation.

When He acts His power is so limitless that He makes things in our world using no material at all.

When He knows He knows infinitely. His knowledge does not vanish into a past nor is there anything to know in a future. All things are known effortlessly at once, and loved in the same way in Himself for He is the source of all being. Unless He is, nothing can be.

This is a bare outline of the traditional concept of God. What has taken its place in the modern world?

A World In Confusion

What then are the modern attitudes to God in our English-speaking Western world? Roughly speaking, they fall into three categories. There are those who affirm that God exists, those who deny His existence, and those who are not sure. Let us begin with the last.

The unsure would never assent to an explicit statement that there is no God. But they have been confused by the great religious battles of the last four centuries; bewildered by the claims of faith and science; and so caught up by the vision of higher standards of living that they have little time for what must be the most important question in the world — is there a God?

The trouble is that religion in the West as a vital force is far less than it used to be. How often do we hear our statesmen in their councils calling on God? Not often, and far less frequently than in the old days of

Lincoln and Jefferson. There is less consciousness of God and His will than there was. But for the unsure, at any rate, bewildered as they are, there is a feeling that God might be round the corner. But that really is not enough. Once we assent to the proposition that God is, our lives will have to change; though they do not in fact change very much if we go no further than affirm there might be a God. But even here in times of great national or personal crisis such people pray — if it is no more than a prayer to Someone in the great Somewhere. And they show their gropings for the truth by sending their children to Sunday School, just in case.

There is no God?

The deniers claim to prove that God is not. They are always there throughout Christian history, and they use something of the same arguments. The point about them is that their arguments fail to convince the fairly high proportion of unsure. The reason why this is so is not only that the deniers are always a small and militant minority, but that people feel, albeit vaguely, that the god the deniers dispute is not the God Who really is. They disprove, in other words, the existence of a being who is not God.

Nearly always the deniers have arguments which proceed from the

premise that matter is all. They do not accept the existence of spiritual values, nor the existence of a spirit in man, and hence, they are incapable of thinking adequately about the Supreme Spirit Who is God.

Most of us would be hard put to define spiritual values or spirit. But we recognize them when we see them. When men died for America in the war, we recognized the spiritual quality of their patriotism. We have ourselves experienced the qualities of love — in our families, in the bonds that bind our children to us. We feel it is nonsense to say that this is entirely material. We know that we have to build up certain values in our homes. They do not come automatically as do the effects of the laws of matter. Matter does not allow for love which is essentially a thing of choice. Nothing compelled a soldier on the battlefield to risk his life to save another wounded soldier. It was heroism, and rightly we talk of the spirit of self-sacrifice behind it. There would be no point in honoring the fallen, saluting the gallant, if all of us were imprisoned in a world of matter.

It is just here that the deniers fail to convince even those who are most unsure. In denying the existence of that Supreme Spirit Who is God, they take from humanity that of which it is most justly proud,

namely the transcending qualities of some of its chosen ones in whom the beauty of selflessness is so luminous that we can proudly and justly talk of the spirit of man.

The believers fall into two classes — those who go part of the way and those who go the whole way. The partial believer asserts that there is a God, but when you ask him what that God is, you often find it is a limited deity whom he concedes.

The trouble is that the partial believer tries to come to terms with the denier. The denier says: If God is benevolent He wishes only good; if God is omnipotent He is the cause of evil. Very well, answers the partial believer: All the good in the world belongs to God. The physical evil that exists comes not from Him but from some other source. Thus He is powerful but not omnipotent. Hence the partial believer is not affirming the existence of a Supreme Spirit.

True Center of Existence

The total believer affirms the existence of a Supreme Spirit. In God there is no limitation, no change, no matter. His being is to *be* perfectly. He has no need of the universe, of the world, or of man, because He is self-sufficient. Evil in this world constitutes a problem but you will not solve the problem

by limiting the power of God. That is a secondary problem. The first one is to account for the existence of the world and of man.

This God is the center of existence. Deny Him and you make man the center of existence. Limit Him and you make God an adjunct of man and not man dependent upon God.

To the total believer God defines Himself in the words He used to Moses in the Book of Exodus: "I am Who am." This means that God's very essence is to exist, and not to exist in the limited way in which we do but in a total way. His very nature is to *be* most perfectly.

From this point of view God is an omnipotent being who makes the world and us out of nothing; we do not make anything out of nothing but only change pre-existing material, as a sculptor shapes his stone or the chemist makes new compounds out of existing elements. God's power however makes anything out of nothing. And not only that, for since a created thing came from nothing, God must sustain that thing in its being against the gravity which would pull it back into the nothingness from which it sprang. Thus to the believer God is the center to which all things and all his actions must be referred. This will not necessarily keep him from sinning, but at least it shows him

the folly of acting against the will of a Supreme Being upon Whom he is dependent not only for his life but also for his living.

In the absence of this vision man's yardstick of human behavior can only be himself. He begins to act, in other words, as if he himself were the center to which all things and all actions must be referred. Convenience becomes the touchstone and virtue ceases when it hurts. Absolute standards of right and of wrong no longer exist because they lack a final and supreme Guarantor. Truth becomes relative. A lie is always justified. Double-thinking is justifiable whenever convenient. Vice becomes acceptable when self-interest demands. All of these aspects of behavior bedevil the diplomats of the West when they try to negotiate with atheistic Communism,

because, despite the decay of religion, the West still retains its Christian residue: a spade is still a spade, and duty is still duty, no matter how difficult the carrying out of it may be.

This then is the total believer's notion of God. God is the truth from Whom all the truths that we discover draw their meaning. He is the final good from Whom all the lesser goods we seek derive their meaning. He is the final guarantee of duty; in Him our obligations become intelligible. What God wills is justice, and for this all free men hunger and thirst. What God loves is goodness, and this all men love, and for it some men have died. But once you take Him away, the firm foundations of a civilized world—love of justice, truth, and goodness—become as shifting sand.

The Universality of Religion

As the belief in God has existed among all the races of mankind from the earliest times down to the present, so the practice of religion has been likewise universal. This is as true today as it was at the dawn of history. Whether the race be comparatively primitive or highly civilized, religion will be found to play an important role. The practice of religion would seem to follow as a direct and immediate consequence of the recognition of the existence of a Supreme Being. Man expresses that acknowledgement through prayer, sacrifice, and ceremonial of various kinds. "Nature herself teaches us that God is to be venerated, and of her law in this matter no man is free." (Cicero)

John A. O'Brien, Ph.D. . . . "Truths Men Live By"

FAITH or Godless Science?

It must seem to an average American that he is being invited to be a citizen of two worlds, one of religious faith and the other of modern science. Here is an example.

In Dante's great poem—*The Divine Comedy*—the author makes a journey through the universe. He begins from earth, the center of the universe and he ascends through ten concentric spheres all revolving neatly about the earth. He finds hell in the center of the earth, purgatory at Jerusalem and heaven among the ascending spheres.

But in this cosmic union he finds that man is real and understandable. Man knows where he came from and where he is going, and during his span of life he is secure in the knowledge that God is His own explanation and that man has a meaning and purpose and value that carries over to eternity.

On the other hand, the scientist tells us factually that neither earth nor sun is the center of the universe. Our solar system is only one of an immense number. The most distant of the stars which our telescopes can see is so far away in space that the time taken for its light to arrive is five hundred million years. It is

things like this that make us wonder if Dante lived in the real world. If we were to tax him with our new knowledge, his answer might be very simple. He went on his journey not to discover space but to discover man.

Here now is the other side of the picture from the scientist—a statement of honesty and despair: It is Bertrand Russell in a **FREE MAN'S WORSHIP**—"That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end which they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and his fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them

can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built. Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way: for man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day."

It is statements like this that make us wonder if scientists live in the real world. For there is something that affronts our common sense in this beautifully written testament of despair. Having told us that our beliefs are "the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms," Russell assures us of the sure truth of the death of the solar system. But how can truth be sure, and knowledge other than illusion, if what happens within and without us is no more and no less than a dance of irresponsible atoms? When a child gathers flowers for its mother there is a simple beauty, innocence, and loving thought behind the gesture, and a direct meaning which common sense assures us demands more in the child than just flesh and blood to explain it.

We can write down three statements which Russell would take as self-evident truths:

1) The inanimate world is a self-acting, self-perpetuating sys-

tem, in which all changes conform to material laws.

- 2) The earth is not the center of the universe and man is not its purpose. Man is an accident, the sport of blind causes, and his thoughts and beliefs are illusions.
- 3) Man is no more than the matter of which he is made.

What View of Nature

Before we examine what these philosophical statements mean, it is important to realize how they ever came to be made. Why has science put on the mantle of philosophy?

Long before modern science was born in the eighteenth century, the human mind had, after some struggling, established the existence of a real world distinct from the knower, and the capacity of the human mind to know it adequately. This may not seem very much to have achieved, but in fact it was a victory won against men who questioned whether we could ever reach truth at all.

The main questions to which men sought the answers before the eighteenth century had to do with the origin of the world and of man, his purpose therein and his destiny. They believed that the answer to these questions was that man was created by God and destined for God. And in the light of these answers they interpreted whatever happened within their experience.

What happened to them was what basically happens to us, except that

the happenings in nature were not interpreted then as they are now. We know physically what happens when a comet falls in the sky. They did not. An epidemic broke out. Nowadays we would track down the virus or the bacteria and isolate the carriers. But they knew nothing of processes in nature. But they did know the God of nature and the problem of moral evil in the world. They were interpreting the happenings in nature in terms of the questions of whence is man and where lies his destiny. For them what really mattered was God and salvation; the material world was interpreted as it came from the One and led to the other. Man was God's viceroy on earth, Christ was King Who led man to His Heavenly Father by way of the Church. And nothing else mattered at all. There were no things in themselves, only things in reference to God.

In the eighteenth century scientists began to study things in themselves and for themselves, and man in himself and for himself. The main question was not — what is the first origin and the last end of this object — but, how is this thing composed and how does its structure serve its function.

Up till that time water was not merely something to drink and wash with. It was God's creature by which Christians received the life of God. Now, quite suddenly, it became a liquid whose behavior could be observed in certain conditions. As a liquid it possessed certain qualities. It offered friction and the degree

of friction it offered to solids could be measured, and all of this new kind of knowledge could be classified.

This was really a new kind of experience! Whatever you now studied was by way of observation and experiment, by way of measurement and by way of weight. Things were looked at in a new way.

For the ancient, the moon was a creature of God, of significance as it helped or did not help man to achieve salvation. For the scientist the moon is significant insofar as you observe its phenomena.

Quantity an Attribute

The world of science is the world of quantity known precisely by observation, by observation refined where possible with experiment, and expressed in the language of mathematics. Before the seventeenth century shift, quantity was just one of the attributes of things...and the least important. After the shift, quantity became the only aspect of reality that science accepted. But there is reason to think that what it ignores is rather more significant than what it accepts.

During the last war Allied broadcasts to occupied Europe frequently began with the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which became a musical V for Victory sign, because it conveyed and still conveys what a critic called the knocking of Destiny on the door. All the scientist can say, however, about these opening bars is that they are a number of notes of different pitch. He can say they are a number because he can count them. He can

determine their pitch because the pitch of a note is determined by its frequency; and you can measure frequency. What he cannot measure is the relation of the notes to each other because that relation was conferred upon them by the genius of the composer who imposed that kind of order, and no other kind, upon them.

Yet in a way music is very mathematical — so many beats to the bar, so many intervals producing octaves, fifths and scales. All this is a matter of quantity. But who responds to quantity when he enjoys a symphony? It is the quality which attracts — not just the notes but the order in which the notes are arranged... which belongs not to mathematics but to genius. To say that it is only measurement would be like identifying a telephone subscriber with his number.

The universe of Beethoven is romantic. He shares it with Dante and Shakespeare, Michelangelo and Rubens. It is the world we live in, and these men remind us of its glories. It is a world of color and sound, love and beauty, idealized, perhaps, but recognizable because to it answer chords in our experience. This is the world of qualities. It is not the world of science.

What the shift in the seventeenth century has done to man is well summarized by Arthur Koestler in his *TRAIL OF THE DINOSAUR* (New York, 1955): "The old explanations, with all their arbitrari-

ness and patchiness, answered the question after 'the meaning of life,' whereas the new explanations, with all their precision, made the question of meaning meaningless. As man's science grew more abstract, his art became more esoteric, and his pleasures more chemical. In the end he was left with nothing but 'an abstract heaven over a naked rock.'

"Man entered upon a spiritual ice age: the established Churches could no longer provide more than Eskimo huts where their shivering flock huddled together, while the campfires of rival ideologies drew the masses in wild stampedes across the ice."

Is Koestler right? It does seem as if the disappearance of God has meant the disappearance of meaning from the world, because it has withdrawn Him Who guarantees that the appearances meant something. A thin red line has gone from history — the red line of God's plan for mankind — and we are left with peaks and troughs of human endeavor, with the homeless universe ever falling; with the firm foundation of unyielding despair; with all the limitations and no one to explain them; with our existence like a Sphinx which will not yield its secret and with ourselves as sheep that are leaderless on pastures made barren by science without God.

The Bridge From Faith To Science

The issue of the presence or absence of God, His existence or His

non-existence, is the most vital in the history of the human race. The fact is that the human species has now the power to annihilate itself atomically. The fact is that the modern withdrawal from God has produced a spiritual ebb-tide which has gone back much further than ever before. Never in the history of man has so much power been concentrated within the dedicated hands of the scientist and the technologist; and never has there been less moral strength to control that power. For, as we have said, He Who gives assurance has gone from our values.

So far we have described the shift from religion to science in the seventeenth century and onwards, and have described what its effects have been on man. It now remains to see whether or not there is any bridge between the divided houses of religious faith and science.

The answer is that man must learn again to live according to his nature. Our nature is human—rational and animal; and our rational nature shows itself quite simply in our innate urge to ask questions. This urge is most characteristic when we are young. What is this made of, asks the child; what is it for, who made it? These questions are the beginning of wisdom.

“What is it made of” inquires about structure.

“What is it for” asks about function and purpose.

“Who made it” seeks the origin and cause.

When the child asks when and where was it made, he is trying to locate the object in space and time.

The first two questions are asked in part by the scientist. He wants precise sense information about structure. Sense information, however, will tell him little about the idea enshrined in the material thing—the grandeur which Michelangelo, for example, sought to convey in his statue of Moses.

The scientist wants precise information about the immediate purpose of a structure—the construction of a bone and how it is related to the supporting function of a bone, how the whole system of bones is related to the system of muscles which move them. All that is excellent as long as the scientist stays in the sphere of sense observation. The trouble is that he strays.

The questions of theologians were ultimate questions. They wanted the very first origin of things. Who created man in the beginning? What is his final end, his ultimate purpose? Their reasoned answer was that GOD answered both questions. If they could stand before the bar of history their defense would be a noble one. We ignored nature, they would reply, because God absorbed us. Not for us the electronic brain and nuclear power, but the Cathedral and the Crusade. For us is the wonder of the God Who became Man on earth, so that, though earth be an insignificant planet, at least a star danced at His birth, and the sun shone on Christmas Day as no star shines and God saw with eyes like ours in the first light of the morning.

GOD or MAN?

As the Emperor Hadrian lay dying, he composed a poem addressed to his soul—his “animacula,” or little soul. This had been with him, he pondered, in so many experiences during his lifetime. What now would happen to it when his clay grew cold and his soul became an exile without a home?

At some time, no doubt, the thought has occurred to us. Have we a soul and how do we recognize it? Will it survive us after death?

By a soul is commonly meant a spiritual principle within us which informs our bodies, renders us human and distinguishes us from animals. Being spiritual it is not composed of parts as our bodies are, and hence within it there is no tendency for the parts to fall apart. And as such we regard our spiritual and major component as beyond death and corruption. In this sense the soul is said to survive the body.

How is it to be recognized, and what does it do? If it is a spiritual reality then we must not expect to see and touch it. At times it has been suggested that bodies should be weighed before and after death, and the difference between weights (if any) would demonstrate the pres-

ence or absence of the soul. But that is a view of the soul that sees it as a sort of material vapor and not as a component simple in constitution because free from parts and above the laws of matter.

The best way to encounter the soul within us is, like the Emperor Hadrian, to seek its action within the experiences of our lifetime.

It is when we seek to evaluate our experience that we encounter the soul in action. Some of our experience cannot be understood if we are only higher animals.

Let us begin with man's capacity for love. Our instinct is to love what is good. If we were only material, then the goods we would seek would be those which satisfied our material needs. You would think then that if man had enough good food, money, prestige, recognition, a good wife, a good marriage relationship, a good family—that he would have achieved everything and should be unconditionally happy. But in fact we desire health and we experience sickness; we amass money and leave it all behind when we die. Death appears to end all the goods we have enjoyed. It is not only good things we want; we keep wanting better

things—more out of life than it ever quite gives. In brief we are never satisfied totally and continually.

The Soul's Restless Search

Now why is this? It can only be because our capacity for love is greater in its demands than the satisfaction things can offer us. We want life and want it more abundantly. We want happiness and we want it unconditionally. What is it in our make-up which makes us want the best and continually leaves us dissatisfied because the best is forever just out of reach? The Christian answer is that the Good we strive for, which things cannot give us, is the hunger of the soul for the Good we call God.

We all hate to be aimless. We want to have a purpose in our lives—something to aim for, a good, a goal, an end. On this material plane this is most easy to understand. A hungry man works for food; a starving man makes the acquisition of food his sole object; a man marooned in the desert looks for water.

These objects are felt as needs. Now there is an inner need of a special kind which belongs to the soul of man. This is our need to have a master purpose in life, a last goal, a final end, from which all our striving for lesser ends will derive its purpose. If you build a house you start from the foundations. To the unskilled the first brick and the second and third bricks you lay do not seem to have any purpose. But they have. The laying of each brick

derives its meaning from your final purpose, the construction of your house. That is the master purpose that creates order out of the chaos of all the building materials lying around.

In the construction of our lives the reality that gives purpose to our actions is the possession of some master end to which all our actions are subordinated. The end of any action that we do is either complete and final itself, or it leads us on to another end which is final or leads to still another end. Eventually we are driven to wanting something which is so worthwhile in itself that it can be subordinated to nothing higher. When we have reached this, we have found God.

It is here, too, that we encounter the soul of man in action. Its needs, unlike those of the body, are never satisfied. For our will that loves, even the best is not good enough; for our mind that knows, there is an irresistible search for truth. Our common experience of these needs is felt in our search for happiness—to love and be loved, to know and be known, onwards towards ecstasy.

No Substitutes for God

Now it is just here that substitutes for God let man down. First, he takes some object or person, investing it with a magic it does not possess—the millenium, for example, that a Marxist works for; the achievement of social prestige; the amassing of a fortune. These substitutes, however, are relative things.

The let down comes when he starts treating them as if they were absolute things.

Secondly, he maintains the fraud; and here he is his own propagandist agent and perhaps his own executioner. What he has chosen as the main purpose of life may indeed be a good thing in itself, but our experience teaches us that even the best is not good enough. Yet he has to convince himself that the good thing is the best thing; and, of course, things promise us nothing. Finally he goes in one of two directions. If he is resilient when his object or person has let him down, then there are plenty of fish in the sea and he goes off fishing for something else to keep him busy. If he is not, however, and the market has crashed, or the perfect woman let him down, or he has failed in the public eye—well, the weekly newspapers are full of accounts of suicide stories.

Modern Idolatry — The Godless State

In poor humanity's search for happiness all the substitutes have been tried and in the end found wanting. Nothing outside us is really good enough. If we are to be perfectly happy then we must be possessed in our souls of all good, and only the Supreme Spirit Who is all goodness, all truth, and all beauty can do it. Our hearts are restless, said a great Saint, and they will not rest until they rest in Him.

The weakness of some of us to deify objects or persons is the weak-

ness of some countries too. It is strange that the political theories which have the strongest hold on their peoples are those which have a pseudo-religious character. Take Communism, for example.

Throughout its history the human race has always dreamed of a society in which there is full and perfect happiness because there is perfect justice and equality. Despite the dream and the wish, the sad fact is that in any society there is some injustice, discord, and rivalry. But man's soul knows that there is a certain ideal pattern of justice in which wrongs are righted, responsibilities accepted and discharged, and the rights of men respected. Angered with the injustices that they see, some men turn to Communism as supplying the answer.

As Marx saw the problem it was this. The fact of Capitalism must beget its contrary; that is to say, the oppression of the many workers by the few rich would cause in the end a revolution by which inevitably and automatically power would pass to the workers. They in turn would establish a dictatorship and this dictatorship would be vested in the state. The state, however, was to be only a temporary establishment and of its own accord it would wither away. Why? Because the revolution would have destroyed private ownership and thus there would no longer be any reason for class struggle. In the absence of class struggle there would be no need for a state to defend the interests of the proletariat.

There is, of course, more to it

than that. Marx was an out and out materialist. He did not believe in free will, in the right to ownership, or in God. For him history was the product of the inexorable laws of profit and loss. What a man was, what he could be and would be were all molded by the laws of exchange. As a result there would always be a class war between the "have's" and the "have-not's," the owners and the workers, the former protected by the state.

Since he published *Das Kapital*, the history of the trade union movement and of social legislation has made nonsense of some of what he said. Western democracies since the end of the last century have been correcting their most glaring abuses; and something like a balance has been struck between capital and labor.

Communism vs Christianity

However, much of what Karl Marx taught has been modified by the Russian Communists. The main architect was Lenin. He had doubts whether the process outlined above (sometimes called the Marxian dialectic) would really work. He said that the proletariat needed guidance from without and that this leadership should be vested in a revolutionary vanguard called the Communist Party. Marx had said that the state would wither away because in the absence of private ownership class struggle would disappear. Lenin said that Marx was right, but the process would be a protracted one. In this way the Party was ensured power and permanence.

The question remains, however, why is Communism successful?

Part of the answer is that Communism gives a faith to men who have none. It appears to give a master purpose to life—the restoration of justice in society. It gives a sense of belonging to bewildered sheep who are starving spiritually on pastures made barren by science without God. "Are you hungry, dispossessed, unhappy," it asks of the three-fifths of the world who are underprivileged. "We will redress your wrongs, feed you, and make you happy by giving you Paradise upon earth."

In this latter role, it assumes a pseudo-religious character. This can be seen if we tabulate its answers as against the Christian answers to the questions that most deeply concern us.

What is man's origin? Communism answers, "You are the product of a blind process in matter called evolution." Christianity answers, "You were made by God as a result of His infinite love."

What is man's pattern and purpose? Communism answers, "To achieve revolution, and to know, love, and serve the state. There is nothing else." Christianity answers, "To revolutionize your thought and behavior in the knowledge, love, and service of God in this world and to enjoy eternal happiness in the next."

Who shall guide us? Communism answers, "The state shall guide you. It is omniscient. If you are blind to teaching, you will go to Siberia or be liquidated. The state is the in-

terpreter of Marx." Christianity answers, "God Himself will guide you through His revelation. If you are blind to it, you must answer to God."

What is death? Communism answers, "The end of everything." Christianity answers, "The beginning of eternal life."

What is life? Communism answers, "A search for Paradise on earth." Christianity answers, "A preparation for everlasting happiness with God."

Not long ago Communism was wrapped in a death struggle with Nazism, a war of ideologies, as it were, within the canvas of the Second World War. To the young Nazi, Hitler had said "I will make you a hero"; to the young Communist Stalin had said "I will give you Paradise upon earth." To each the struggle had become a crusade. The Nazi had lavished upon Hitler and the German race the honor that Christians reserve for God. But this kind of love bred hate. The ideals of young Germans—patriotism and self-sacrifice—were directed to false

ends, and all of us know the corruption that came upon Germany and the appalling disaster that overtook it.

At the same time we remember what happened in Russia. If a million Ukrainians refused to be collectivized they were starved to death. In the Soviet satellites, slave labor, the concentration camp, brain-washing—all of these await the slightest disobedience. The Communist search for justice has been as corrupting as the Nazi search for power. The erstwhile idealists have become fanatical tyrants. They dictate what their people must think and rob them of their fundamental rights. In a Godless world, the striving for justice has defeated itself.

In the last analysis, men can only be made "good" according to the brand of Russian goodness, by fear and threats. But men can make themselves good if they know that God speaks to them in conscience, that they will have to answer to Him one day, and in Him they will find the goodness, the truth, the justice and the happiness for which they sought during their days.

"Man is fearfully and wonderfully made. We never fail to be impressed with an intricate mechanical device, such as a linotype printing machine, a loom, a calculator machine; and we praise the maker. Why are we not more generous in our adoration of a living creature, which is more than any machine? Why are we not more inclined to do homage to the Prime Mover, who made things make themselves?"

J. A. Thompson
"Science and Religion"

WE KNOW GOD EXISTS

There are two kinds of arguments for God's existence. The first affirms His existence from the use of reason; and the second grows out of the historical existence of Christ.

The arguments from reason begin with the premise that this world does not contain its own explanation. As we know our world, it is a planet revolving about the sun, ninety-three million miles away. The sun itself is not the center of the universe.

At the same time there are man-made satellites revolving about the sun. If we ask who put them there and how did they get there, the answer is that scientists put them there using rocket-stages to get them into orbit. If another satellite went into orbit again we would ask how it got there. We would remain unsatisfied until we discovered that the agents were the Russians or the Americans or the British.

The same mental instinct which demands to know who has put a rocket into orbit around the earth, also demands to know who has put the earth into orbit around the sun. To answer that the earth is just there and so is the sun leaves us dissatisfied because it offers no explanation.

This is another way of stating that there is no effect without a cause.

Common sense is always looking for causes to explain events. Police find a dead man on the road. How did it happen; was it a hit-and-run driver? Did the man fall out of the car? Who is he? Who did it?

We know when we are causing something. I drive a golf ball from the first tee. Something happens because I make it happen. Nothing happens without a cause. A plane crashes and there is an investigation called because common sense assures us that nothing happens without a cause. The cause is there, even if we cannot discover it.

What or who caused the earth? Whatever, whoever brought this vast immense universe into being cannot be less than the universe. No cause can be less than its effect. A man with strength to lift only half a ton cannot lift a whole ton. If he lifts a ton he must have that much muscular strength.

We are then dealing with a Power of some sort of immensity to explain the immensity of that universe we observe. What sort of Power can it be? Day follows night with regularity; season follows season; trees,

flowers, animals all follow a certain and predictable course of behavior. What happens is so well-defined that we can say they happen according to laws in nature. The Power is a law-giver, a law-maker Who gives testimony of intelligence.

This immense Power of terrifying Intelligence (we are still making fresh discoveries of design in nature) is subject to the same question. Who caused it or Him? If it or He is the effect of another Cause, there must be behind Him another Cause, of which He is the effect; or He must be without a Cause because He IS of Himself and not of another. Ultimately there must be a Being That Is, a Supreme Cause Who depends upon no other for His existence.

The Reflection of God In The World

We are not content with the statement that God made the universe. We ask further what is His relation to it? How is He present in the universe He has made? There are some who think that He is infinitely removed from it; and others who say that He is so much in it as to be identified with it. The first set of thinkers are so impressed by the absolute perfections of God that they think He would be diminished in some way, unless He were cut off from it. He is the architect but once the building has been made He leaves it to stand by itself. The second group are so impressed by the world as an expression of the Divine Artistry that they think God is in

the universe as the singer is in the song. The order they see in the universe is God in the universe, which, as it evolves, expresses the growth of God in perfection.

Group one assumes that the Supreme Cause is not interested in His effects. Group two assumes that the Supreme Cause is not supreme, and in identifying Him with His creation asserts that He is not perfection, but is growing thereto.

Midway between these two extremes is the view that God is the Supreme Cause from Whom all things ultimately proceed to their separate existence. God is thus the ground of all beings but remains the Separate One. In this view God is so perfect that He needs nothing outside Himself; yet, nevertheless, He has, out of love, produced a finite and limited world in a vast universe.

This world is, then, an expression of the Divine Artist and, by a consideration of the things that He has made, it is possible to see a little of the Divine Imprint; in the same way we examine a portrait and determine its authorship by some great painter.

Of all things we can ask a three-fold question. We ask—on what plan was this conceived? Some material thing, such as a flower or a dog, contains within it an idea, a blueprint, a form. We say to ourselves that the blueprint of the flower is to ensure the continuance of a plant species by the formation of seeds.

Then we ask—why was it made in the first instance? What is its ultimate purpose? And lastly we ask—

who made it?

Consider these aspects at work in an artist. He is, shall we say, a sculptor. Before he chisels his stone he must have an idea of what he wants to do. Secondly he must have a purpose, an intention to carry out his plan; and lastly he must put his plan into effect. Omit any of these and no statue will be made. The final work will embody the artist—his idea, his purpose, his skill in execution.

Wisdom

God is embodied in His universe as the Wisdom Who conceived it, as the Will Who carried out the cosmic project and as the Power Who sustains it. As *Wisdom* God is in the butterfly and the bird. They are both composed of living matter, but they belong to different orders of animal creation. What makes the living matter of the one a butterfly and the living matter of the other a bird, is the different conception of animal that each enshrines. The idea or the form is a reflection in matter of the idea that exists in the mind of the Divine Artist. Every tree and every flower embodies an idea in the Divine Mind and speaks of God as a poem speaks of its author.

The wisdom of God in creation is in its last analysis the reason why we know. When we learn, it is because we discover the form or idea hidden in the material composition of what we study. Unlike animals we have the X-ray power to penetrate material things and find what is in them. What is printed on this page is so many letters strung

into words—material things made out of pulp and print. You the reader, take the meaning out of them. Dr. Alexis Carrell in his *Reflections on Life* puts it this way ... "all (scientific) research begins with an act of faith in the rational ordering of nature." Unless nature made sense, it could not be studied. When we study it we learn a little of the divine ideas.

Goodness

God is in things secondly by His *goodness*. To things he has given a purpose. Plants are green because they contain a pigment, and the pigment has the power of absorbing energy from light and using that power to bond together inorganic materials in the atmosphere and make of them sugars and starches. In this way natural food granaries are formed and upon them feed animals, and upon them we ourselves feed and maintain ourselves in existence. The plant which makes starch and the animals which feed upon it follow blindly a purpose they do not understand.

The urge by which a plant or an animal follows the law of its nature is what we mean, then, by purpose. Man must discover his own purpose by using his reason. That purpose, the urge of a rational nature, is to discover the truth and goodness of God.

We discover goodness in things when we experience love for them. A man loves his automobile because it serves him, gets him around, is a delight to drive. A man loves his wife because of the goodness he

finds in her. In courting days he was discovering that goodness and feeling more and more attraction to it. At the same time he was finding out more about her—what sort of common interests they shared and so on. Eventually he decided that he wanted to unite with her in marriage. Love teaches us how good things and people are, and the more we love the more we want to be united with what we love, to possess and be possessed. In this sense our purpose in life is to know and love God—to seek His truth and His goodness.

Without God there is no explanation for "the rational ordering of nature"—no satisfactory explanation of our own existence. Without God there is no explanation of our purpose in life, and of our need to have a master purpose in life. Without God there is no explanation of what we mean. We are like satellites coasting in orbit and no one fired us, like arrows speeding through the air and no bowman or archer to explain them. Where did we come from, where do we go—in a meaningless orbit, from nothingness and into nothingness without explanation?

Power

God is in things by His *power*. To Moses He said "I am who am." All of us have existence, but of God it can be said simply that He exists. Our existence is partial, from moment to moment. He possesses the whole of His existence at once. Our existence is limited—our bodies die, we are chained to space and time,

controlled to some extent by pleasure and pain.

If nothingness ever were, then nothing would ever be. How can something come from nothing? Only if there is a Being Whose Being demands existence can there come from nothingness the universe that we know. All the things that are owe their being to God in the same way as the rays of the sun come from the sun.

God then is in His world by His knowledge, by His love and by His power. This triple action comes from a Supreme Being Who is a Spirit. For God is not tangible and He is not visible and in Him there is nothing of material composition. For material things can suffer change because they are composed of parts and can be taken apart. To suffer change is itself an imperfection. And God is perfect, otherwise He is not God. He is the Supreme Spirit Who is changeless, one and entire in His wholeness for He is not made of parts, possessing all of His Being all at once. He is greatness without limit; He is all that without beginning and without end; all that He does is likewise without beginning and without end. None of His loving and none of His knowing have vanished into a past, nor have more knowledge and more love yet to come. Past and future belong only to creatures who receive their being from moment to moment. God lives, God knows, God loves, God is in one eternal now without effort and without limit.

Christ, Lunatic or GOD?

If reason alone were all we had to establish the existence and essence of God, we might feel curiously dissatisfied. If God is a Supreme Spirit, omnipotent and of total benevolence, the origin and end of us all, why does He not speak and re-assure us? The Christian claim is that, in fact, God has spoken to mankind first in the prophets of the Old Testament and last of all through His Son made man.

The historical existence of Christ is what we are now concerned with, and also with His claim to be the Son of God.

The historical existence of Christ and of His followers, the Christians, is beyond dispute.

About the year 116 A.D. a Roman historian named Tacitus wrote as follows in his ANNALS apropos of the great fire of Rome in 64 A.D.: "A persistent rumor associated Nero with the starting of this fire. To combat this he decided to provide culprits and inflicted the most atrocious tortures upon that sect known as Christians, detested by the people for their practices. Their name is derived from one Christ, Who was condemned to be crucified by the procurator Pontius Pilate in the

reign of Tiberius. This pernicious sect, formerly proscribed, has established itself not only throughout Judea where it originated, but in the very City itself." This witness is a pagan and hostile. He is writing less than a hundred years since the governorship of Pontius Pilate.

Another historian of about the same time, called Suetonius, wrote the LIVES OF THE CAESARS. He refers to a persecution of Jews in Rome in the year 50 A.D. which led to their banishment under the Emperor Claudius, who, he writes, "expelled the Jews from Rome because under the influence of Christ they had become a permanent source of disorder." (This persecution is referred to in a Christian document called THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. This work was written round about the year 60 A.D. and it recounts how in Corinth the Apostle Paul encountered a Jewish family who had been expelled from Rome.)

Yet another pagan document of considerable importance mentions Christ. In 111 or 112 A.D. a letter was sent from the Imperial Legate of Bythynia and Pontus (Asian provinces on the Black Sea) to the Emperor Trajan. The writer was called

Pliny the Younger and he asked the Emperor for a directive in the treatment of Christians. The Christians, he said, met together, sang hymns to Christ and pledged themselves to avoid lying, stealing and adultery. Two had been closely questioned by him and they seemed harmless enough to the state. Nevertheless pagan priests were complaining that their temples were deserted and traders resented that there was no sale for sacrificial animals.

In the year 125 A.D. the Emperor Hadrian wrote to a proconsul in Asia directing that accusers of Christians must appear in person to substantiate charges.

As the Christians grew in numbers and importance there appeared an anti-Christian writer in the second century, called Celsus. His attacks were violent and he was answered by a Christian thinker, the great Origen. At no point in the works of Celsus do we come across the flat statement: Christ never existed. Celsus wrote as if all the historical facts claimed about Christ were true.

After the persecution of Nero in 64 A.D. the Christians went underground, quite literally, taking up their services in the burial places of Rome known as catacombs. Inscriptions of Christ, symbols of Him have been dated back to this time on the walls of the catacombs.

In brief—literary and archaeological sources make it impossible to deny the historical existence of that man Whom Christians claim to be God.

The four Christian documents

about the life and teaching of Christ are the Gospels. It is now commonly accepted by the vast majority of scholars that they are historically valid and accurate. Various editions are continually being discovered, indicating that the text now used was in use substantially in very early Christian times. The most celebrated relic is a fragment of Chapter 18 of the Gospel of St. John, called the Rylands Papyrus because it is kept in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, England. All authorities agree in dating this fragment to 130 A.D. a mere thirty years from the date at which the original Gospel was composed.

The four Gospels are biographies of Christ. No other biographies in the world have had to face such intense and sustained critical examination; and no other biographies have been so jealously guarded in their integrity by those who have copied them and later printed them in their 1900 years of history. Yet no one has proved that they are faked.

The light of modern scholarship has established that these documents were written by four men vastly differing in temperament and aim. Three of them, Matthew, Mark and Luke wrote for the first generation of Christians when the words and deeds of Christ were enshrined in the memory of the followers and disciples of Christ. The accounts all have accidental differences indicating that their composition was individual and not collective, but substantially the resemblances between them are so striking that one feels

that here is history at first hand. Though primarily the Gospels were not written as historical documents, the findings of modern archaeology confirm the rare instances when exact chronology is given. Thus in the 3rd Chapter of St. Luke the preaching of John the Baptist is pinpointed "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judea and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip being tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis and Lysanus, the tetrarch of Abilene." Every name mentioned here is known from other sources and inscriptions, as belonging to the period and time Luke is pin-pointing.

When John writes (Chapter 5, verse 2) of how Christ cured a paralyzed man in Jerusalem by a "pool with five porches," archaeologists discover in our time the foundations of a rectangular pool with galleries on four sides and a division across the center of the pool dividing it into two basins with five porches.

Christ claimed to be God

According to the Gospels, and to the earliest writings by the first Christians about the central character of the Gospels, Christ was a man who claimed to be God, and to speak with authority on what man must believe and do in order to be united with God.

He belonged to a tiny and obscure province of the Roman Empire as far removed from the importance of living as a small tribe today in central South America. His public life was only three short years. He died

ignominiously crucified on a Cross by the Roman authorities. His followers claimed that He rose from the dead. And by human standards that should have been the end of the affair—a public execution and the growth of a myth. Within less than 300 years, however, the religion that He preached and His followers after Him had become the official religion of the Western World, and a little later it dominated all of Europe. This spread was combatted in the beginning by the whole organization of the Roman Empire. Despite wave upon wave of persecution this religion rose from the ruins like a phoenix; and upon it is built today our constitution and our democracy, while those who are hostile to it comprise the Communist world. And the vast majority of those who are indifferent to the message still show unconscious acceptance of it every time they date a letter and write down the year of our Lord. All history for the Western world falls into two divisions—the years before and the years after Christ. By Him the Western world still sets its clocks.

In the Gospels Christ is seen as a teacher and as a worker of miracles. The purity and excellence of His moral teaching are such that even the Moslems who do not believe He is God, honor Him as a prophet. He claims to do miracles by the power of God, so that the teaching that He gives must stand or fall, in the sense that the perfection of His moral teaching disappears if it is based on a lie.

This is particularly true of the key miracle—namely His prophecy that He would rise from the dead

and its fulfillment. This miracle was the divine guarantee on His entire life, for if He rose from the dead by the power of God and at the same time was falsely claiming to be the Son of God, then God was a partner to deceit.

It has been truly said that Christ was either a lunatic or was the Son of God He claimed to be. Jewish and Gentile history, incidentally, are full of characters who claimed to be the Messias sent by God and in every case they appear as mad. Attempts have been made to prove that Christ was mad. But they convince no one. All through the Gospels the wonderful and absolutely sane personality of Christ appears, far more balanced than those who accused Him to Pilate and those who put Him to death. The mob hysteria which shouted for His blood swirls about the victim Who is Himself unmoved. Pilate is swayed in the end by fear of Caesar; the leaders of the people are consumed by blood lust and ferocity; the crowd round the Cross insults and reviles Him; and in the middle of it all at the height of His sufferings He forgives them and prays for them.

The Gospels here are marvels of objective reporting. What was said and done is recorded without comment or opinion. The centurion in charge of the detail officially declares that the prisoner is dead. Assurance is made doubly sure by the stroke of a lance into the dead man's side. Pilate is informed, expresses surprise that it is over so quickly and gives permission for the body to be buried. The Scribes and Pharisees secure permission for a guard of sol-

diers to watch the tomb lest the body be stolen, and claim be made that He had arisen. And there the matter should have ended, a nine days' wonder with the usual ending.

Witnesses of the Resurrection

The Gospels record then that those who went to the tomb on the third day, Sunday, found the tomb empty. Subsequently Christ appears in different times and different places. He is seen by so many witnesses that a few weeks later Peter can face a crowd in Jerusalem and claim that the man they put to death is the Son of God because he can produce witnesses that He has been seen. The tomb is empty; Christ has re-appeared; what have they to say to that? And there is nothing said against it. The city knew about the empty tomb, and there were crowds of witnesses to attest His re-appearance.

After the Gospels come the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES which record the growth of the Christian Church in the first few years after Christ has departed from earth. Its growth is seen in Palestine and in Asia Minor, Malta and Rome. In Athens, Paul is scorned because he preaches Christ crucified and risen; to Jewish communities the Risen Christ is a scandal because of the hideous mode of His dying. In Ephesus there is a revolt at the preaching of Christ by Paul.

Yet despite opposition, incredulity, and persecution, the growth went on and as it did so, slowly the worst abuses of the Western world begin to go. Marriage and the family gain a new dignity; the individual

is seen in his proper worth; a new perspective comes into history; and at long last the human caravan knows its destination.

The Roman Empire at last breaks down only for the Huns and the Goths to be conquered by the faith of their victims. A new Europe slowly takes shape in the Dark Ages and the time comes at the Renaissance for Columbus to discover the New World and bring to America the faith of the old. In all that time and from that time to this the four small books that are the Gospels have spoken to each man that has read them in a language he can understand. They are more the basis of American culture than all the laws of the splendor that was Rome and all the writings of the glory that was

Greece. They and the Christ they tell of are so much part of us that we end by forgetting that we are what they have made us.

For all men of good will to whom creation speaks as a wonderful work of God; for all honest men who feel within themselves the experience of emptiness and of hunger for truth and justice; for all men who search for a meaning in life and a destiny to pursue, for all of those and to all of them Christ offers Himself as the way, the truth and the life which begin and end with God.

To the individual and to the nation is offered the liberty of the sons of God, a liberty which is enshrined in the Constitution and should be in the heart of every citizen, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Upon what are its bases grounded? or who laid the cornerstone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God made a joyful melody? Who shut up the sea with doors . . . And I said: Hitherto thou shalt come, and shalt go no further, and here thou shalt break thy swelling waves. Didst thou since thy birth command the morning, and shew the dawning of the day its place? . . . Where is the way where light dwelleth, and where is the place of darkness . . . Didst thou know then that thou shouldst be born? and didst thou know the number of thy days? . . . Dost thou know the order of heaven, and canst thou set down the reason thereof on the earth? . . . Who can declare the order of the heavens, or who can make the harmony of heaven to sleep?

The Book of Job
Chapter 38

THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD

The central teaching of the Christian religion which distinguishes it from Judaism and Mohammedanism is that in God, Who is unique, eternal, infinite and necessary, there are three Persons truly distinct, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

To this teaching from the earliest ages of Christianity all converts from paganism had to subscribe. A command was laid upon the Apostles (Matthew 28:19), that they should teach all nations. Christ added "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

From the year 100 A.D. there has existed a Creed called the Apostles' Creed which defined that in one God there are three Persons. In its earliest form, the Creed is as follows: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. The third day He rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy

Ghost, the Holy Church, in the remission of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting."

There are many early Christian texts of the second and third centuries A.D. which attest this Creed, though for a complete quoting of it in Latin we have to wait until the fourth century.

The New Testament affirms that human reason can establish the existence of God. St. Paul writing to the Romans (1:20) observes: "For the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." And to the men of Lystra (a town in Roman Asia Minor), he preaches (Acts 14:16): "God left not himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with good and gladness."

God, however, has spoken not only through what He has made; He has spoken to His Chosen People, the Jews, in the books of the Old Testament. To them He gave His Law and promised a Kingdom and a Deliverer. This Deliverer, the Messiah, is, claims the Epistle to the Hebrews, none other than His Son. "God, who at sundry times and in

divers manner spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world" (Hebrews 1:1-2). These verses show that Christ is the end-point of God's Revelation. All the things that God had to say were summed up completely and finally in Christ, the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

From the things that God made, and from the things that God revealed in the Old Testament much can be gathered as to what God is. It is only in the pages of the New Testament, however, that we gather who God is. Christ tells us of the intimate life of God in the Family of three Persons. To the question who is God, God gives a threefold answer. God is the Supreme and Infinite Spirit, and this Divine Nature is possessed by three Persons, distinct from each other.

This is the great Christian mystery, a mystery because in all of our experience we only know in man of one person to one nature. The word "nature" here means what man is—namely a rational animal; the word "person" means that each man is captain of his soul, responsible, that is, and incommunicable. We sometimes call "personality" the central self—the center of our being, the "I myself" who is John or James and no one else.

The Christian affirms that in God there is one Nature—one Infinite Spirit that knows and loves. Three Persons wholly possess that Nature in such a way that if one acts all

must act and none can be in isolation, yet in their joint action there is a triple emphasis which shows their inter-relationship with each other. A little later we will return to this statement and endeavor to elucidate it by example. At the moment we must try to define the functions of the three divine Persons in one Divine Nature. We begin with the Christian teaching on God the Father.

The Father

All of us know what we mean by human fatherhood according to the flesh. It is the special kind of relationship that arises when a husband begets a son in his image and likeness. The Fatherhood of God is not according to the flesh, for God is a Spirit.

That which is spirit in man shows itself in our knowing and loving, the operations of intellect and will. Quite often we talk of a spiritual begetting. We call a book an author's "brain-child"; we talk of a poet "giving birth" to a poem; we refer to the "fertile" mind of a genius; and an inventor prizes his inventions as if they were children.

Dimly and with difficulty we can apply this notion to the mind of God. St. Paul does in Colossians 1:15. Having given thanks (v. 12) to "God the Father... who has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love," he refers to Christ as the image of the Invisible God, the first-born of every creature."

Just as the son is often the image

of his father, so Christ is the image of God the Father.

St. John calls Christ "the Word." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Just as the word expresses our thought, so Christ is the complete expression of God's thought.

Christians rightly understand in these phrases a reference to the spiritual paternity of God, a begetting which is everlasting and has always been of the Son by the Father.

This Heavenly Father is often on the lips of Christ in the Gospels. In John 16:28 and 32 Christ declares: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world . . . I am not alone because the Father is with me." In the next chapter Christ declares: "Glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with thee." He prays for His followers, "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee" (John 17:5 and 21).

Thus Christ talks of God as Father, and of Himself as God the Son made man—as God the Son, possessing glory which "I had before the world was, with thee." Difficult as the revelation is, it becomes apparent that as soon as Christ refers to Himself as Son, He must have a Father; and that when He calls God His Father, the Father must have a Son.

"Behold," writes St. John (1 John 3:1) "what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God." To the Christian, Baptism is the fact that makes us

children of God. Without Baptism we are God's creatures; with its reception the Redeeming death of Christ upon Calvary is applied to us, and we become by Divine action the adopted sons of the Heavenly Father, and thus united to the Son of God.

God The Son

The Christian belief is that the Christ of history is the Son of God, eternally begotten by one ceaseless action from the Father. When at a moment in time this Second Person of the Trinity took upon himself a body and soul like ours, was born into our world, grew up and died, our human nature was raised up to God.

To the enquirer who asks, "What is Christ?" the Christian replies that Christ is fully God and fully man. To the question, "Who is He?" the answer is that He is God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity.

To the question of, "What did He do?" the answer is that He built a bridge between us and God, over an enormous gap made by human sin and malice and rebellion. He was able to do this because being the Son of God, whatever He did was charged with divine significance, and by the donation of His life He made satisfaction for our sins.

But this is only half of what He accomplished. He gave to us all the possibility of a new and higher kind of life, if we would accept it.

In this new kind of life above the demands of our ordinary nature, He enlightens us, uplifts us to being children of God, guides us by His inspirations within us, and animates us with His own life. "I am the Vine

and you are the branches," He tells us in the Gospel of St. John, "whoever abides in me and in whom I abide, the same bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

God The Holy Spirit

Who is the Third Person of the Trinity? The Father begets the Son as the Thinker begets the Thought in one eternal action. In this eternal action the Love that flows between them is the Third Person, in the fashion dimly of what happens when we reflect upon ourselves, and the "I" that thinks knows the "I" that is thought of and we rest complacent in the affirmation of our identity.

God's Spirit is the Love Who proceeds from the mutual contemplation of Father and Son.

In the Gospels it is the Holy Spirit who is responsible for the conceiving of Christ in the womb of Mary in Nazareth, by His spiritual power, of course, and not by way of human generation (Luke 1:35). He is present at the baptism of Jesus by John (3:22); it is under His impulse that Jesus retires to fast in the desert (4:1) and casts out demons and works miracles (11:20).

Such close union in the earthly life of Christ is significant of the eternal union of the Holy Spirit and the Son of God. When Christ's earthly task is accomplished, when He has died, risen from the tomb and ascended into heaven, then He sends upon His Church the Holy Ghost. "If I go not," He tells them in John 16:7, "the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you."

In this context Christ calls Him the "Spirit of Truth" and says "he shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine and shall show it to you" (John 16:14). In the next verse Christ reminds the Apostles of the relation between Himself and His Father—"All things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine."

In thus revealing the mystery of the Trinity to us our Lord illustrates our statement that none of the Divine Persons act in isolation from each other yet show in their joint action a triple emphasis according to their function. Take for example the Incarnation, in which the Son of God was made man, as we have explained.

1. It is the Second Person Who takes on human nature, not the Father and not the Holy Ghost.
2. The Second Person comes from the Father into the world, but is not alone and not separate from Him—I and the Father are one.
3. The Holy Ghost is the agent of the Incarnation, and a partner in the work of Redemption.

St. Athanasius, one of the early Christian Fathers, summarizes the matter as follows (Ad Serapionem 1, 23, Migne, 26, 596): "The Trinity is indivisible by nature, and its operation is one; for the Father does everything through the Word in the Holy Spirit; thus is the unity of the Holy Trinity safeguarded, and thus is it that only one God is preached by the Church, the God Who is above all, Who compensates all, Who is in all."

Christ has revealed to us the mystery of the inner life of God in the relations of the three Persons towards each other. That it should be a mystery is not surprising. A religion which explains the inner life of the Triune God and makes it a transparently clear reality would have the hall marks of a man-made religion.

Yet in the revelation of the very life of God in the Blessed Trinity, of eternal life without evolution or succession manifested in Divine Love, God comes closer to us. In the words of Christ: "If any man love me he will keep my word; and my Father will love him and we will come to him and take our abode in

him" (John 14:23).

St. Augustine shall have the last word (De Trinitate—Migne, Latin Fathers, 927, 928). He is recalling the words of Paul in Ephesians 4:3 exhorting Christians to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"In God this bond is the Holy Spirit Himself, the reciprocal love Who unites the Father and the Son; we ought to imitate this union and thus attach ourselves to God and to each other; and the divine peace that passes all understanding will be the ideal model of that peace which, in this world, will unite all Christians together."

In those old days, with what incredible assurance we ignored God; finding indeed a million stars, but not the least proof of their Maker! Evolution and Protoplasm were then words to conjure with. But granting everything that evolutionists have a right to claim, there must have been originally an Evolver; and there may be an evolution obedient to Divine arrangement, as well as one obedient to blind necessity. The former is indeed the sublimest possible theory of the Divine method. Allowing that the primal germ contained all possible potentialities, the question still remains:—"Who made that germ, and gave it those potentialities?" An infinite Volition must have started matter on its journey, and ordered the direction of its evolution. What matters the *modus operandi*, whether by ages of development, or by special creation, provided we acknowledge a Divine Mind as the great Originator? To call a substance "Protoplasm" is not an explanation of the origin of life, nor does that substance obviate the need of a First Cause.

John L. Stoddard

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