

FAITH AND REASON

John is his Name: What, then, will this child be? For surely the hand of the Lord was with him. An understandable reaction surely when one considers the wonders that surrounded the birth of this child. Yet, if we consider the sheer wonder of the conception and birth of every child, one would be justified in saying, "What will this child be? For surely the hand of the Lord was with him". If we consider the microscopic world the child has come from, and the creation of this unique human soul by God, then we will not only conclude that our reaction does not overstate the case but understates the case.

Let us now contemplate this wonder the medium of wisdom - human and divine! *'What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and in movement how express and admirable! in action like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals".

So speaks William Shakespeare through the mouth of Hamlet, expressing no doubt, the mood of the Renaissance, proclaiming man's confidence in his own worth. Such eloquent praise of the human person does not explore the wonder of the human person because it does not ask or answer the question of pivotal importance, what is man!

Let us follow the probing mind of Hilaire (Hillary) Belloc as he lays bare the implications of this age-old question. We human beings are faced with a question manifestly greater than any other. The question is, what am I? We are insistently faced with the problems which, as they concern our very being, are of a different sort and infinitely more momentous than other problem whatsoever. Where do we come from? Where are we going? What is the meaning of life? What duration is the lease of life? In what will the fulfillment of life consist of? How are we to attain the happiness of life i.e., the fullness of being? All these questions are contained in the master question, what am I? Next, as necessarily attached to such a group of questions comes the further group dealing with method: "In what shall we attain secure answers?... On what authority shall we accept these answers so as to be certain that they are the right ones? If such an authority exists how shall we know it for what it is? Does such an authority even exist? All these, I say, and every cognate question of whatsoever form you may devise come back to that primal comprehensive question "Quid Sum" What am I. The Psalmist raises the same question. Lord, what is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him? You have made him little less than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under his feet" (Ps 8).

The question still remains unanswered. "What is man?" Human reason applied to divine revelation (theology) reveals the answer! "What is man? Man is not an ordinary being. Therefore, he is not called to live an ordinary life. By nature, and by grace, man is truly what St Bernard says of him: "A noble creature with a majestic destiny". Man is endowed with reason and free will. He is the only creature in all creation who is not a means to anything. Man is truly an end in himself. God is his master. Therefore, under God he is invited to participate freely in the fulfillment of his destiny. He is the servant of truth, and only of truth, for truth is the governor of his mind. His destiny is an eternal one. His life, therefore, does not pass with the years. On the contrary, his life comes closer and closer to its fulfillment with the passing of time. This explains the hunger in the mind and heart of the human person.

When St Bernard entered the famous Abbey of Citeaux, and presented himself to Abbot St Stephen, he left nothing outside the monastery except pride, and disorder. In the true Catholic spirit, he became a monk in order to become an integrated Christian man. The ancient Catholic spirit proclaims that man is normally, by nature, at the very core of his being, a lover of God. If man will accept the divine challenge to enter within himself, within his memory, in which he is asleep in his history, if he will push aside the accumulated clutter of the years that he values so highly, and come face-to-face with himself, he will realize that his life, must be the fulfillment of that memory.

One of the greatest lessons of Catholic Humanism is that man is most man when he loves most perfectly, for it is then that he is in most possession of his freedom. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments, then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free". Accepting this truth..... abiding in this truth will enable us to live the divine life of the Most Holy Trinity given to us in baptism. The alternative is to reject truth, the truth about God, about self, about life, and to seek refuge in a fabrication of the truth, and by so doing become a fugitive from reality.... **Fr. William C. Mooney**

Man's Salvation: I answer that, It was necessary for man's salvation that there should be a knowledge revealed by God besides philosophical science built up by human reason. Firstly, indeed, because man is directed to God, as to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason: "The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee" (Is. 66: 4). But the end must first be known by men who are to direct their thoughts and actions to the end. Hence it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation. Even as regards those truths about God which human reason could have discovered, it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few... **Thomas Aquinas**

Normal food is less strong than man, it serves him, is taken into man's body to be assimilated and to build it up. But this special food, the Eucharist, is above man and stronger than man. Consequently, the whole process involved is reversed: the man who eats this bread is assimilated by it, taken into it; he is fused into this bread and becomes bread, like Christ himself. "Though many, we are one body, for we are one bread." The result of this insight is quite clear: Eucharist is never merely an event a deux, a dialogue between Christ and me. The goal of eucharistic communion is a total recasting of a person's life, breaking up a man's whole "I" and creating a new "We" ... **Pope Benedict XVI, Behold The Pierced One**

Safely Home: I am home in Heaven, dear ones; Oh, so happy and so bright! There is perfect joy and beauty In this everlasting light. All the pain and grief is over, every restless tossing passed; I am now at peace forever, safely home in Heaven at last. Did you wonder I so calmly trod the valley of the shade? Oh! but Jesus' love illumined every dark and fearful glade. And He came Himself to meet me In that way so hard to tread; And with Jesus' arm to lean on, Could I have one doubt or dread? Then you must not grieve so sorely, For I love you dearly still. Try to look beyond earth's shadows, Pray to trust our Father's Will. There is work still waiting for you, So you must not idly stand; Do it now, while life remaineth. You shall rest in Jesus' land. When that work is all completed, He will gently call you Home; Oh, the rapture of that meeting, Oh, the joy to see you come!

A Thought For the Day

Sunday Happy the man whose words issue from the Holy Spirit and not from himself.
Monday Sanctity does not consist in being odd, but it does consist in being rare.
Tuesday Through Christ we see as in a mirror the spotless and excellent face of God.
Wednesday All the ways of the world are as fickle and unstable as a sudden storm at sea.
Thursday Perfect correspondence to His grace consists in a strong, deep, interior sorrow.
Friday Hold out, be steadfast, endure, bear the delay, and you have carried the cross.
Saturday In God alone is there primordial and true delight, and in all our delights it is this delight that we are seeking.

Always give good heed to the Word of God, whether you hear or read it in private, or hearken to it when publicly preached: listen with attention and reverence; seek to profit by it, and do not let the precious words fall unheeded; receive them into your heart as a costly balsam; imitate the Blessed Virgin who 'kept all the sayings' concerning her Son, 'in her heart.' And remember that according as we hearken to and receive God's words, so will He hearken and receive our supplications... **St. Francis de Sales**

The Beautiful Hands of a Priest: We need them in life's early morning, We need them again at its close; We feel their warm clasp of true friendship, We seek them while tasting life's woes. When we come to this world we are sinful. The greatest as well as the least. And the hands that make us pure as angels are the beautiful hands of a priest.
At the altar each day we behold them, And the hands of a king on his throne are not equal to them in their greatness. Their dignity stands alone. For there in the stillness of morning ere the sun has emerged from the east, there God rests between the pure fingers of the beautiful hands of a priest.
When we are tempted and wander to pathways of shame and sin 'Tis the hand of a priest that will absolve us. Not once but again and again. And when we are taking life's partner other hands may prepare us a feast but the hands that will bless and unite us, are the beautiful hands of a priest.
God bless them and keep them all holy, for the Host which their fingers caress. What can a poor sinner do better but to praise thee who chose thee to bless. When the death dews on our eyes are falling, may our courage and strength be increased to see, raised above us in blessing, the beautiful hands of a priest.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go... Joshua 1:9

In His Will is Our Peace
Fr. William C. Mooney

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