

# FAITH AND REASON

**If you wish to be my disciple:** The Greeks like to talk about their gods. This gave a very definite tone and richness to their literature, but that was as far as it went. They lived by their philosophy if they lived by any rule at all. The Romans, until they began to go "Greek" were forever worrying about taboos, ceremonies, omens: they lived a life haunted by the unseen and were forever trying to dodge the implications of it.

In the year 140 a.d. Aristides of Athens, reputed to be a philosopher of Athens, wrote an Apology, which he addressed to Antoninus Pius, the Successor of Emperor Hadrian. Aristides speaks of the Creator who became man in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles, the Gospel. Then in glowing terms of the exemplary conduct of Christians: "What they would not want done to them, they would not do to another..... the commandments of God are impressed on their hearts, they obey the commands of God without wavering.....for the sake of Christ they are ready to lay down their lives, they give thanks to him every hour".

Minucius Felix, a Christian layman of Rome and a distinguished member of the legal profession, wrote the following in a letter to Emperor Octavius c.218-235 a.d. In his letter he too speaks in glowing terms of the conduct of Christians "you punish crimes when they have been committed. With us, it is a sin even to consider a crime. You fear witnesses, we fear even our own conscience which we cannot escape. And finally, the jails are full of your people, but there is no Christian there unless his crime be his religion, otherwise he is an apostate."

The world, generally speaking, has changed, and not for the better. Allowing for the numerous good people in our world we must concede that something is radically wrong with the world. What has caused such a seismic shift? What has really changed? God has not changed... God's message has not changed - a message safeguarded, defended against the powers of this world over two thousand years.... People have changed - their attitudes, values, lifestyles have changed. And now, their attitudes and values come not from their faith but from the world. This is-the source of the social, political, moral, spiritual disorder so/characteristic of our times. It is not simply a matter of politics, spirituality, morality, society; it is really a matter of the political person, the moral person, the spiritual person, the social person. We are the determining factor... we "call the shots", so-to-speak. The question that goes to the heart of the matter is, what is the point of having a religion as opposed to having none?

One could point to the satisfaction one derives from knowing that a supreme intelligence lies behind the riddle of life. One could point to the depth, the meaning, the direction that life acquires one believes that one has a God-given destiny to fulfil under God. One could point to the general wellbeing, order, peace, that religion brings to society. And last, but not least one could to the eternal reward that awaits us.

A necessary follow-up question is, does it really matter what a person believes, so long as it gives him the religious attitude to life which we all agree is so valuable? Many concerned people assert that our country indeed, the world, is finished unless we introduce religion into the minds and hearts of the people, but they are not any way specific. Some people wonder if we could manage, conveniently one must say, with a syncretistic religion, a combination of beliefs. Others believe that morality - always very vague, general, very accommodating, is all that is required. This belief is based, not on a belief in the supernatural world, but on a conspiracy to behave as if the supernatural world existed. This is precisely what happens when one says that "religion is a good thing". For then, one is understood to mean, and not unreasonably, that the religious attitude is a good thing. This religious confusion is inevitable when people do not understand that the meaning of the word "religion" was radically changed by the Incarnation, God taking on pure human nature.

Religion is not a mere attitude of mind. Religion is a transaction for the payment of a debt, an offering of oneself to God. It means adoration, the aim of which is to put Jesus at the center of our lives. Religion is therefore a claim, a claim that God has on us, to live and worship as he has asked. And why?.. Because we are on debt, we are indebted to Jesus, because he has redeemed and saved us. This is a far cry from turning to religion to attain a sense of Security, a sense of wellbeing, a sense of satisfaction, meaning and purpose. All of the above have some value, but that is not why God came among us.

Winchester was the seat of the Saxon Kings and the ancient capital of England. During the English Civil War, the Parliamentary soldiers destroyed many of the stained-glass windows in the Cathedral. Sometime later, an unknown workman lovingly gathered the fragments and used them to reconstruct a window, which is one of the finest and most beautiful treasures in Winchester Cathedral today. Filling the large west window is a mosaic composed of hundreds of pieces of the ancient stained glass, as beautiful as the original window from which they came.

Jesus came to offer us salvation, eternal life. Jesus did not come to make us the "beautiful people". He came to put all the pieces of shattered lives back together again. a new creation. Therefore, we must accept the gift of salvation and live this new way of life.....

**Fr. William C. Mooney**

**Let us pray with Pope Clement XI (1700-1721)** "Lord, guide me by your wisdom correct me with your justice, comfort me with your mercy, protect me with your power. I offer, you Lord, my thoughts to be fixed on, you; my words: to have you as their theme; my actions: to reflect my love for you; my sufferings: to be endured for your greater glory. I want to do what you ask of me: in the way you ask it, for as long as you ask it, because you ask it."

**Worrying appeals to us** because it gives us a sense that we are in control of what might happen—that by thinking through what could happen, we could somehow stave off potential harm or damage. There can be advantages to thinking problems through and trying to prepare ourselves for whatever may come, but we can often take it to an extreme, leading to decision making based on fear and anxiety rather than balance and trust.

**I always begin my prayer in silence**, for it is in the silence of the heart that God speaks. God is a friend of silence. We need to listen to God because it's not what we say but what He says to us and through us that matters. Prayer feeds the soul and brings you closer to God. It also gives you a clean and pure heart. A clean heart can see God, can speak to God, and can see the love of God in others. **St. Teresa of Calcutta**

#### **A Thought For the Day**

**Sunday** The way of love has a name; it is Sacrifice.

**Monday** Untested, faith is no faith at all.

**Tuesday** Every genuine human love is a reflection of the love that is God himself.

**Wednesday** To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.

**Thursday** It is requisite for the relaxation of the mind that we make use, from time to time, of playful deeds and jokes.

**Friday** The patient and humble endurance of the cross—whatever nature it may be—is the highest work we have to do.

**Saturday** The spirit of humility is sweeter than honey, and those who nourish themselves with this honey produce sweet fruit.

**Above all, it is necessary to ask of God every morning the gift of perseverance**, and to beg of the Blessed Virgin to obtain it for you, and particularly in the time of temptation, by invoking the name of Jesus and Mary as long as the temptation lasts. Happy the man who will continue to act in this manner and shall be found so doing when Jesus Christ shall come to judge him. 'Blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord shall come, he shall find so doing' (Matt. 24:46) ... **St. Alphonsus De Liguori**

**The man who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages.** These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ, such as humility, poverty, patience, and obedience; we speak in those languages when we reveal in ourselves these virtues to others. Actions speak louder than words . . . it is useless for a man to flaunt his knowledge of the law if he undermines its teaching by his actions. But the apostles spoke as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech. Happy the man whose words issue from the Holy Spirit and not from himself! ... We should speak, then, as the Holy Spirit give us the gift of speech. Our humble and sincere request to the Spirit for ourselves should be that we may bring the day of Pentecost to fulfillment, insofar as he infuses us with his grace, by using our bodily senses in a perfect manner and by keeping the commandments... **St. Anthony of Padua**

**Do Not Ever Forget:** Your presence is a gift to the world. You are unique, and your life can be what you want it to be. Take it one day at a time. Count your blessings, not your troubles, and you will make it through the day, whatever may come. Understand, have courage, be strong. Do not put limits in yourself. Your dreams are waiting to be realized. Do not leave your important decisions to chance. Reach for your peak, your goal, and your prize. Nothing wastes more energy than worrying. The longer a problem is carried, the heavier it gets. Do not take things too seriously. Live a life of serenity, not a life of regrets. Remember that a little love goes a long way. Remember that friendship is a wise investment. Life's treasures are people... together. Have health and hope and happiness. Take time to wish on a star. And do not ever forget, even for one day, how very special you are.

**In His Will is Our Peace**

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