

ALL TIME BELONGS TO HIM

Shares in 'Belief-in-God-preferred' have taken an upsurge recently with the emotion generated by the death of Queen Elizabeth II, the ceremonies associated with her demise and the elevation of her son to the throne. The atheists among those governing us and in the media attempting to dominate our lives have been conspicuous by their silence. Those condemnatory of the influence of the British Empire and its tacit acknowledgement of the Divine in its operations, have been sidelined or marginalised – for the moment.

Betrayed by leaders at every level, even the religious, we have been given some relief by the workings of Divine providence. The new English King, Charles, seems to have awoken to the importance of his Anglican faith over the various 'faiths' of which he had earlier declared he would regard himself as 'defender'. The ground for this comment made some years ago was, of course, the title *Fidei Defensor* bestowed by Pope Leo X on the young Henry VIII for defending the *Catholic* faith against the depredations of Martin Luther, a title the appalling Henry was soon to betray. His joining in Luther's revolt against the Church God had established on earth and the devastation of the people of the realm that followed has not prevented his successors from insisting on their entitlement to the office.

The fortunate few who attend the Easter ceremony signifying Christ's Resurrection on Holy Saturday night undergo a seminal experience. As he marks the Paschal candle the officiating priest recites the following formula—

*Christus heri et hodie
Principium et Finis
Alpha et Omega
Ipsius sunt tempora et saecula
Ipsi Gloria et imperium per universa aeternitatis saecula. Amen*

"Christ yesterday and today: the Beginning and the End... All time belongs to Him", the Word of God become man. Though Him, as St John tells us, all things were made and without Him nothing that is made was made.

By his attendance at this ceremony the believer acknowledges reality; that is, he acknowledges his dependence and contingency. He accepts that the time given him has its ambit, its beginning, its end; that he came from God and will return to Him to be judged and to know his destiny. He understands that though, as Aristotle remarked, "death is the most terrible of all things" (*Ethics* III, ch. 6), he has something the Philosopher had not, namely, God's revelation to man that he was made for more than this limited earthly existence.

When a man dies he does not cease to be. Life is changed, not ended, as God teaches through His Church. Time ceases and he lives thereafter in an eternal present - either with God, or separated from Him, forever. The abandonment of the Catholic faith by millions has left them ignorant of what, under God's inspiration, she teaches: that every man who has ever existed,

or who will ever exist, has been in the mind of God from all eternity. Here we can get some understanding of how great are the evils of contraception and abortion.

God's gifts are forever: He does not take them back. Once conceived, a man begins an eternal existence. But there is a sense, too, in which it might be said that he has always existed.

For the vast majority of men the realisation of why they have been brought into existence, of the end for them intended by their Creator, is obscured or hidden completely. For them death is a descent into the dark—

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,
The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees,
Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark,
And dark the Sun and Moon, and the Almanach de Gotha
And the Stock Exchange Gazette, the Directory of Directors,
And cold the sense and lost the motive of action.
And we all go with them, into the silent funeral...¹

This blindness is one of the fruits of Luther's revolt. Error at the theological level, adopted and promoted by the few for their advantage, enforced against the many by main force, descended so as to dominate the popular mind, infected all of society. The theological truth that if you commit sin your psyche and intellect are turned awry was confirmed. Error about God gave birth to error about God's surrogate, reality. Theological error spawned philosophical error. Men began to doubt the evidence of their senses and the ability of their intellects adequately to reflect reality.

The rumblings of dissent begun in the Renaissance blossomed in the thinking of Bacon and Descartes to bear the rotten fruit of the Enlightenment exemplified in the fatuous *ipse dixits* of Rousseau and Voltaire. Aristotle's doctrine of fourfold causality, accepted by men for centuries as reflecting common sense, was rejected in favour of the simplistic notion that reality could be explained by focusing exclusively on the material. There was no need for an ordering or efficient cause of the world: belief in God had become unnecessary. The passage to the evolutionary theses of Spencer and Darwin in the century that followed was inevitable.

Considered objectively, the greatest human folly is demonstrated by the suicide. He thinks that killing himself will bring an end to existence. How could it? A man does not bring himself into existence: how can he take himself out of it? The poison of materialism blinds him to the reality that he is infinitely more than a merely material being.

¹ T. S. Eliot, *East Coker*, September, 1940

The sanity of belief in an intellectual Creator was encapsulated in sentences penned by Henry Edward Cardinal Manning in a book he published late in the nineteenth century:

“[I]t is a violation of reason not to believe in the existence of God... it is a violation of our moral sense not to believe that God has made himself known to man... that the revelation he has given is Christianity; and... that Christianity is Catholicism...”²

One would be forgiven for thinking that man is approaching the nadir of his existence as an intellectual being. Atheism is rampant: the irrationality that accompanies it bids fair to bring civilisation to its knees. Yet we have the Prince of the Heavenly Host to aid us.

*This evil has its metes and bounds:
St Michael checks them on his rounds.
His distant thunder starts, and spurs,
The Hellhound and his fellow curs
To action twenty times expounded;
To expedite the unconfounded.
The time is short, and growing shorter,
For the gate of hell's Dark Porter...*

...

*The Prince of darkness goes his way
Inevitably. But who shall say
Or soon? Or late? Or fast? Or slow? —
It is not given us to know.
We only know the truth assuring;
Christ shall conquer long perduring;
Christ shall rule the nations ever;
Christ shall reign as King forever.³*

Michael Baker

September 29th, 2022 — *St Michael the Archangel*

² *The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, 1865

³ Cf. https://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/when_the_wattle.pdf