

The Dartmouth
Apologia
a journal of Christian thought

A Reader
2006-2011

Introduction

This reader, and the introductions that accompany each article, were compiled by three former editors-in-chief of *The Dartmouth Apologia*: Andrew Schuman '10, Charlie Clark '11, and Peter Blair '12. It was created to replace a book discussion group that the editors used to run with the freshman class, in order to provide a more comprehensive and focused introduction to the mission, vision, and foundational influences of the *Apologia*. It is designed to be read and studied by incoming *Apologia* freshmen, under the guidance and direction of the current editors, in order to teach what the *Apologia* is and to prepare them for participation in and leadership of it. To that end, we have compiled a representative sampling of writings that capture the spirit, principles, and governing philosophies of the *Apologia*. It is not necessary for every member of the *Apologia* to agree with everything found in these pages, but it is important to remember—as we hope this reader will show—that the *Apologia* operates according to certain fixed principles. These principles have allowed *Apologia* to succeed so far and, *deo volente*, will continue to guarantee its success in the future.

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Letters

The vision for *Apologia* took shape in stages. As we look back at the first five years, we see the documents in this section as capturing the essence of what the journal has come to embody. The documents not only reflect the collective vision that inspired the journal's founding and early development, but actually helped to distill and refine the vision for *Apologia*. We have returned to certain concepts, certain formulations, even particular phrases time and time again as we continually renew our vision and evaluate our progress. We hope that these selections will help to communicate what continues to excite us about the unique mission and approach of *Apologia*. We also hope that you will be exposed to the principles that have been the driving force behind the journal over the first five years and to observe both the consistency and evolution that have characterized the journal's development.

The first two selections are taken from our very first issue. Andrew Schuman '10 guided the journal through its first three years as founding Editor-in-Chief. The journal's first major leadership transition came in Summer 2009, and the third selection is taken from the first issue from that new stage. In Spring 2010, the last of the journal's founding members graduated. The final selection comes from the period after their departure.

- Charles Clark '11

Letter from the Editor, Spring 2007

Andrew Schuman '10

Dear Reader,

Everyone at Dartmouth has an opinion about God. Sometimes it is carefully thought out; sometimes not. Often it is hard to see how God matters in daily life. With all of the exciting things to accomplish, sitting down and seriously thinking about God can seem like a waste of time. After all, there is a test tomorrow, a party tonight, and what does God have to do with any of this anyway?

The Dartmouth Apologia is founded upon the belief that what one thinks about God is of the utmost importance. We believe that one's choice of religion, including no religion at all, is the most important choice any of us will ever make. Religion, while on the one hand a deeply personal faith, is also the philosophical framework that guides our thoughts, our values, and our lives.

We, the staff of the *Apologia*, are Christians. We believe that the mystery of God was revealed in Jesus and He demonstrated His matchless love for us through His life, death, and resurrection. Members of the Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox traditions, we formed this journal because we believe that Christianity is as relevant and important today as it was in the first century. Inspired by the early Christian apologists, we seek to articulate Christian perspectives in the academic community.

We endeavor to think critically, question honestly, and link arms with anyone who searches for truth and authenticity. We don't claim always to be right or to have all the answers. This is a journal of seekers, people who desire to love God with their minds as well as their hearts and souls. *The Dartmouth Apologia* does not exist to proselytize but to discuss, and I warmly invite you to join us in this discussion.

Tolle lege,



Andrew Schuman
Executive Editor

Selection from “Why Apologia,” Spring 2007

Chris Blankenship '09

Apologia means defense. It is an answer to criticism grounded in logic and reason. Its goals are to parry an ideological attack and to convince the attacker of the validity of the defended belief. The discipline of apologetics began in the second century when “Christians felt the need to refute rumors and misconceptions regarding their beliefs and practices.”¹ Writers such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus sought to counter claims of cannibalism and incest levied against Christians due to the practice of communion and the habit of referring to one another as brothers and sisters.² These accusations proved relatively easy to dispel, but a far more difficult task remained. Greek and Roman intellectuals—drawing on a centuries-old tradition of rationalism—declared the faith intellectually lacking, a religion for the simple-minded. Contemporary literature argued that Christianity drew its converts from children and uneducated women and declared that Christians should focus on day to day matters instead of eternity. In response to these assertions, the apologists began to adopt the same tradition of rationalism, which “enabled them to explain Christianity to the educated... They presented it as the rational religion...”³ Christianity was not seen by the apologists as valid only if left unchallenged by the dominant philosophies of the day, but rather as a belief system at least worthy of consideration by even the most erudite citizens.

It is to this tradition that we aspire. While religion necessarily requires faith, faith and intellect are by no means antithetical. We strive to articulate Christianity in a manner that requires neither blind acceptance nor the rejection of one’s education. Furthermore, we seek to bring the weight of a two thousand year old intellectual tradition to bear in discussions of contemporary issues in society. Our goal with the *Apologia* is to present our views in a manner reflective of the level of thought that we bring to our own personal faith, and in doing so promote discussion among the Dartmouth community. The relationship between faith and intellect is worthy of exploration and challenge. We hope you’ll join us in this journey with a pedigree of more than two thousand years.

1 Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2001), 49.

2 Ibid, 50.

3 W. Fairweather, “The Greek Apologists of the Second Century,” *The Biblical World* 26.2 (1905), 133.

Letter from the Editor: Christianity as Fact, Fall 2009

Charles Clark '11

Religion is often marketed for its usefulness. It is endorsed with appeals to our pursuit of happiness, meaning and personal development, just like a political campaign, wonder drug or self-help bestseller. At *The Apologia*, we find this approach unsatisfactory and even distasteful, because it suggests that our beliefs suit our ulterior motives instead of reflecting our convictions about the nature of reality. We are determined not to be peddlers of our religious beliefs but to present with integrity what we hold to be objective fact. We are primarily interested not in Christianity's usefulness but in its veracity. That is to say, we are not Christians because we view Christianity as the best means to make ourselves happy or the world a better place, though we may hold those views as well. We are Christians because we think that Christianity is an accurate reckoning of the world and humanity's place in it—regardless of religion's advertised benefits. In saying this, I am paraphrasing C. S. Lewis, who once wrote, "Christianity is not a patent medicine. Christianity claims to give an account of facts—to tell you what the real universe is like."

We call the claims that Christ made about himself the Gospel, or Good News. This Gospel has always been the core of Christianity, and in it Christ asserts—as fact—that He is a God against whom we have sinned. Furthermore, he maintains that he will forgive our sins if we put our faith in Him, that is, if we acknowledge that the claims he makes about Himself are true and live our lives accordingly. These claims are either true or false. If true, Christ's claims about His Godhood, our sinfulness and His work of redemption are the supreme facts of our existence. If false, they are dangerous nonsense fit only for refutation and categorical dismissal. The alternative between true and false cannot in this case be ignored: the meaning of life depends on it. Therefore, one must either accept Christ wholeheartedly or reject him outright. Honest, intellectually gifted people have come down on both sides of the question, but there is no rational middle ground.

At *The Apologia*, we make the case that Christ's claims are true, but you may notice that few directly apologetic articles are published in this journal. Just as we have no intention of hawking religious snake oil, we prefer not to bludgeon our readers with arcane proofs for the existence of God, the superiority of Christian morality or the necessity of an Intelligent Designer. Instead, you will find articles addressing the sciences, the humanities and the arts, all from the unique perspective of Christianity. We are presenting evidence that the coherence and explanatory power of the Christian perspective supports the truth of its principal propositions, namely the truth claims of Jesus.

Richard Swinburne, this issue's interviewee, writes in *Is There a God?*, "We find that the view that there is a God explains everything." We affirm this claim, and, in the spirit of Dartmouth's liberal arts education, we seek to demonstrate that the truth of Christianity is relevant to every field of study. In so doing, we make every effort to ask and answer the hard questions, and we encourage you to do the same.



Charles Clark
Editor-in-Chief

Letter from the Editor, Spring 2011

Peter Blair '12

Ever since the work of the philosopher Rene Descartes, modern philosophy has tended to view knowledge and belief as purely intellectual enterprises. Descartes' famous phrase, "I think, therefore I am," had the perhaps unintended effect of reducing the human person to his or her intellect. The result is that the intellect, decontextualized from the rest of the human person, became the primary aspect of man, and knowledge and belief were thought to be solely those propositions or facts grasped and held by the mind.

However, the traditional Christian understanding of knowledge is much different. Father Pinckaers explains this alternative understanding in his book *Sources of Christian Ethics*: "On the text of John 10:14, 'I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me,' the *Jerusalem Bible* notes: 'In Biblical language, 'knowledge' is not merely the conclusion of an intellectual process, but the fruit of an 'experience,' a personal contact; when it matures, it is love.' Knowledge, and the vision it brings, must be understood as happening at the heart of a personal relationship. It engages the entire person: the mind, where wisdom dwells; the will, which desires and love; the imagination, the sensibilities, even the body."

In the Biblical view, knowledge has physical, experiential, and relational components, in addition to its intellectual aspects. It is not something we discover solely by the mind, but something that engages our whole person. Therefore, Christianity is not merely a set of propositions which some affirm and others deny. Christianity is rather grounded in the encounter and experience with reality, both the reality of the natural world, through which God is indirectly revealed, and the Reality of the Word Incarnate, through which God is directly and luminously revealed to us. This encounter does not give rise only to intellectual belief. As Chris Hauser '14 notes in his article "Lessons from Fairy Tales," it also engenders a certain attitude towards the world, one of gratitude, wonder, and joy. And as Susan Conroy, a Dartmouth alumna who worked closely with Mother Theresa, explains in her interview in this issue, this gratitude in turn inspires us to give to others. Christianity, then, is about experience, love, emotion, and action as much as it is about intellectually held beliefs.

Therefore, we at the *Apologia* are not trying to promote clever sophistry nor to browbeat the skeptic with aggressive argument. The *Apologia* does not exist to argue people into faith; rather we exist to use all the disciplines of thought—from history to science to philosophy—to better investigate the rational structure of our faith and to comprehend the world by it. We are a community of people who have been formed by a decisive encounter with Reality, and who seek to understand and examine the world through the light of that experience. In his now famous quote, C. S. Lewis said of Christianity, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." In the light of Christianity, we see the world. This journal is the fruit of our efforts to articulate that vision.



Peter Blair
Editor-in-Chief

Meditation in a Toolshed

C. S. Lewis

The following essay has guided *Apologia* since its beginning. In it, C. S. Lewis argues for two different, but equally important, ways of knowing: objective observation, “looking at,” and subjective experience, “looking along.” In an academic culture governed by scientific assumptions, a reasoned discussion of Christian faith—and reality more broadly—is often impoverished, and sometimes defeated, before it begins. As such, we have always considered *Apologia*’s mission to involve an epistemological project: to validate, draw upon, and hold together, both of these two sources of knowledge in the pursuit of truth. We invite our peers into this discussion, encouraging them to ask their deepest questions and explore the answers Christianity provides.

-Andrew Schuman '10

I was standing today in the dark toolshed. The sun was shining outside and through the crack at the top of the door there came a sunbeam. From where I stood that beam of light, with the specks of dust floating in it, was the most striking thing in the place. Everything else was almost pitch-black. I was seeing the beam, not seeing things by it.

Then I moved, so that the beam fell on my eyes. Instantly the whole previous picture vanished. I saw no toolshed, and (above all) no beam. Instead I saw, framed in the irregular cranny at the top of the door, green leaves moving on the branches of a tree outside and beyond that, 90 odd million miles away, the sun. Looking along the beam, and looking at the beam are very different experiences.

But this is only a very simple example of the difference between looking at and looking along. A young man meets a girl. The whole world looks different when he sees her. Her voice reminds him of something he has been trying to remember all his life, and ten minutes casual chat with her is more precious than all the favours that all other women in the world could grant. He is, as they say, “in love.” Now comes a scientist and describes this young man’s experience from the outside. For him it is all an affair of the young man’s genes and a recognised biological stimulus. That is the difference between looking *along* the sexual impulse and looking at it.

When you have got into the habit of making this distinction you will find examples of it all day long. The mathematician sits thinking, and to him it seems that he is contemplating timeless and spaceless truths about quantity. But the cerebral physiologist, if he could look inside the mathematician’s head, would find nothing timeless and spaceless there—only tiny movements in the grey matter. The savage dances in ecstasy at midnight before Nyonga and feels with every muscle that his dance is helping to bring the new green crops and the spring rain and the babies. The anthropologist, observing that savage, records that he is performing a fertility ritual of the type so-and-so. The girl cries over her broken doll and feels that she has lost a real friend; the psychologist says that her nascent maternal instinct has been temporarily lavished on a bit of shaped and coloured wax.

As soon as you have grasped this simple distinction, it raises a question. You get one experience of a thing when you look along it and another when you look at it. Which is the “true” or “valid” experience? Which tells you most about the thing? And you can hardly ask that question without noticing that for the last fifty years or so everyone has been taking the answer for granted. It has been assumed without discussion that if you want the true account of religion you must go, not to religious people, but to anthropologists; that if you want the true account of sexual love you must go, not to lovers, but to psychologists; that if you want to understand some “ideology” (such as medieval chivalry or the nineteenth-century idea of a “gentleman”), you must listen not to those who lived inside it, but to sociologists.

The people who look at things have had it all their own way; the people who look *along* things have simply been brow-beaten. It has even come to be taken for granted that the external account of a thing somehow refutes or “debunks” the account given from inside. “All these moral ideals which look so transcendental and beautiful from inside,” says the wiseacre, “are really only a mass of biological instincts and inherited taboos.” And no one plays the game the other way round by replying, “If you will only step inside, the things that look to you like instincts and taboos will suddenly reveal their real and transcendental nature.”

That, in fact, is the whole basis of the specifically “modern” type of thought. And is it not, you will ask, a very sensible basis? For, after all, we are often deceived by things from the inside. For example, the girl who looks so wonderful while we’re in love, may really be a very plain, stupid, and disagreeable person. The savage’s dance to Nyonga does not really cause the crops to grow. Having been so often deceived by looking along, are we not well advised to trust only to looking at? In fact to discount all these inside experiences?

Well, no. There are two fatal objections to discounting them *all*. And the first is this. You discount them in order to think more accurately. But you can’t think at all—and therefore, of course, can’t think accurately—if you have nothing to think *about*. A physiologist, for example, can study pain and find out that it “is” (whatever is means) such and such neural events. But the word *pain* would have no meaning for him unless he had “been inside” by actually suffering. If he had never looked *along* pain he simply wouldn’t know what he was looking at. The very subject for his inquiries from outside exists for him only because he has, at least once, been inside.

This case is not likely to occur, because every man has felt pain. But it is perfectly easy to go on all your life giving explanations of religion, love, morality, honour, and the like, without having been inside any of them. And if you do that, you are simply playing with counters. You go on explaining a thing without knowing what it is. That is why a great deal of contemporary thought is, strictly speaking, thought about nothing—all the apparatus of thought busily working in a vacuum.

The other objection is this: let us go back to the toolshed. I might have discounted what I saw when looking along the beam (i.e., the leaves moving and the sun) on the ground that it was “really only a strip of dusty light in a dark shed.” That is, I might have set up as “true” my “side vision” of the beam. But then that side vision is itself an instance of the activity we call seeing. And this new instance could also be looked at from outside. I could allow a scientist to tell me that what seemed to be a beam of light in a shed was “really only an agitation

of my own optic nerves.” And that would be just as good (or as bad) a bit of debunking as the previous one. The picture of the beam in the toolshed would now have to be discounted just as the previous picture of the trees and the sun had been discounted. And then, where are you?

In other words, you can step outside one experience only by stepping inside another. Therefore, if all inside experiences are misleading, we are always misled. The cerebral physiologist may say, if he chooses, that the mathematician’s thought is “only” tiny physical movements of the grey matter. But then what about the cerebral physiologist’s own thought at that very moment? A second physiologist, looking at it, could pronounce it also to be only tiny physical movements in the first physiologist’s skull. Where is the rot to end?

The answer is that we must never allow the rot to begin. We must, on pain of idiocy, deny from the very outset the idea that looking *at* is, by its own nature, intrinsically truer or better than looking *along*. One must look both *along* and *at* everything. In particular cases we shall find reason for regarding the one or the other vision as inferior. Thus the inside vision of rational thinking must be truer than the outside vision which sees only movements of the grey matter; for if the outside vision were the correct one all thought (including this thought itself) would be valueless, and this is self-contradictory. You cannot have a proof that no proofs matter. On the other hand, the inside vision of the savage’s dance to Nyonga may be found deceptive because we find reason to believe that crops and babies are not really affected by it. In fact, we must take each case on its merits. But we must start with no prejudice for or against either kind of looking. We do not know in advance whether the lover or the psychologist is giving the more correct account of love, or whether both accounts are equally correct in different ways, or whether both are equally wrong. We just have to find out. But the period of brow-beating has got to end.

Religion in an Age of Science

John Polkinghorne
Queens' College, Cambridge

St. Augustine once said that all truth is God's truth. The early scientists certainly believed this, men like Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Bacon and Newton. And yet today, faith and science are often portrayed in conflict. At the end of this essay, theoretical physicist and Anglican priest John Polkinghorne remarks: "I want to hold these two parts of me together, not without puzzles, of course, but I hope, without dishonesty, and without compartmentalism."

This is our position at *Apologia*. Like Augustine we are committed to pursuing truth wherever we find it, in the pages of Sacred Scripture and in the laboratories of modern science. We expect to find puzzles, but not final contradictions. In all our discussions on faith and science we value sound epistemology, historical perspective, and constructive dialogue, which often means digging into the philosophical and historical contexts that inform impoverished discussions of faith and reason.

-Andrew Schuman '10

I have spent most of my working life as a theoretical physicist and all of my consciously remembered life as part of the worshipping and believing community of the Church, so that I am someone who wants to take absolutely seriously the possibility of religious belief in a scientific age. If that belief is to be embraced with integrity, then I think two conditions must be fulfilled:

(1) We must take account of what science has to tell us about the pattern and history of the physical world in which we live. Of course, science itself can no more dictate to religion what it is to believe that religion can prescribe for science what the outcome of its inquiry is to be. The two disciplines are concerned with the exploration of different aspects of human experience: in the one case, our impersonal encounter with a physical world that we transcend; in the other, our personal encounter with the One who transcends us. They use different methods: in the one case, the experimental procedure of putting matters to the test; in the other, the commitment of trust which must underlie all personal encounters, whether between ourselves or with the reality of God. They ask different questions: in the one case, how things happen, by what process?; in the other, why things happen, to what purpose? Though these are two different questions, yet, the ways we answer them must bear some consonant relationship to each other. If I assure you that my purpose is to create a beautiful garden and then I tell you that how I am going to do so is by covering the ground with six inches of green concrete, you will rightly doubt the genuineness of my intentions. The fact that we now know that the universe did not spring into being ready made a few thousand years ago but that it has evolved over a period of fifteen billion years from its fiery origin in the Big Bang, does not abolish Christian talk of the world as God's creation, but it certainly modifies certain aspects of that discourse.

(2) We must understand that religious belief, just like scientific belief, is motivated under-

standing of the ways things are. Of course, a religious stance involves faith, just as a scientific investigation starts by commitment to the interrogation of the physical world from a chosen point of view. But faith is not a question of shutting one's eyes, gritting one's teeth, and believing the impossible. It involves a leap, but a leap into the light rather than the dark. It is open to the possibility of correction, as God's ways and will become more clearly known.

Scientists do not ask, 'Is that reasonable?', as if we knew beforehand what the world is going to be like. They know that when we move into regimes far away from everyday experience, all sorts of surprising things can happen. Common sense will not be the measure of all things. We are not clever enough to see very far ahead. Therefore, the scientific question is 'What makes you think this might be the case?' A different question, you see, from 'Is that reasonable?' —a question that is open to the possibility of enlarging our understanding of how things are. Let me give you an example of the surprises that the physical world has proved to have in store for us. If I were to say to you, 'Bill is at home and he is either drunk or sober,' you would expect either to find Bill at home drunk or to find him at home sober. It seems trivial and obvious; the learned would say that you have used the distributive law of logic. Oddly enough, the corresponding argument applied to a quantum world is found to obey a different kind of logic. May the same not also be true of encounter with divine reality?

In explaining my Christian belief in the setting of an Age of Science, I know it has to be motivated belief, based on evidence that I can point to. The centre of my faith lies in my encounter with the figure of Jesus Christ, as I meet him in the gospels, in the witness of the church and in the sacraments. Here is the heart of my Christian faith and hope. Yet, at a subsidiary but supportive level, there are also hints of God's presence which arise from our scientific knowledge. The actual way we answer the question 'How?', turns out to point us to pressing also the question 'Why?', so that science by itself is found not to be sufficiently intellectually satisfying. I want to spend the rest of this lecture sketching these encouragements to religion that are available to us in our Age of Science.

A characteristic of scientific thought is the drive for synthesis. We want to have as unified an understanding as we possibly can. That is the drive behind the present activity in my old subject, particle physics, which is looking for a grand unified theory—a GUT, as we say in our acronymic way. So it's the instinct of a scientist to seek as economic and as extensive an understanding as possible, a unified understanding of the world. I believe, actually, that the grandest unified theory that you could ever conceivably reach is a theological understanding of the world. Theology is the drive to find the most profound and most comprehensive understanding of our encounter with reality. Now, if we're going to look for such a total theory, there are basically two strategies that are possible, for if we are looking for a total explanation we won't get it for nothing. Every explanation depends upon certain basic unexplained assumptions. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, nothing comes from nothing. That's true intellectually, and, therefore any theory of the world will have to have its basic assumptions on which the rest of the understanding is built. There are basically two strategies corresponding to two different choices of what you regard as fundamental, (and so not to be explained). Firstly, you can just take the brute fact of the physical world as your starting point. That's what somebody like David Hume would take. Start with the brute fact of matter as your unexplained bases. Or secondly, you can take the brute fact (if that's the word to use) of God. In other words, one

can appeal to the will of an Agent, the purpose of a Creator, as the basic unexplained starting point for understanding the world. The first approach is the strategy of atheism. The second approach is the strategy of theism. I want to defend the second strategy and to explain to you why I believe that, if we are driven by the desire to have as comprehensive and unified an understanding as possible, we shall find it in a scheme of things that has a place for belief in God.

If we were to start with the brute fact of the physical world, that world is described for us at least in part by the laws of science. Therefore, if that's going to be a satisfactory starting place for us, we would have to feel intellectually satisfied with those laws as being a comfortable intellectual resting place, the foundation on which to build the rest of our understanding. The first important point I want to make is to suggest that in fact if we take the laws of nature as discerned by science seriously, and if we look at them carefully, we will find that they are not sufficiently intellectually satisfying in themselves alone. They are not sufficiently self explanatory to be comfortable resting places, or a natural given foundation for our belief. They seem to have a certain character, which I am going to describe, which actually points beyond themselves. In other words, out of the scientific understanding of the world, arise questions which seem to direct us beyond science itself to a deeper level of intelligibility. Here are two examples.

The first example is a fact about the physical world which is very familiar to us, a fact indeed that makes science possible. Most of the time we take it simply for granted, but, if we stop to think about it, I think we'll see that it is not a fact that we should accept without further thought. It is simply this: that we can understand the physical world, that it is intelligible to us in its rational transparency. Not only is that so, but it is the case that it is mathematics which is the key to the understanding of the basic structure of the physical world. It is an actual technique in theoretical physics, a technique that has proved its value time and again in the history of the subject, to look for theories which in their mathematical expression are economic and elegant. In other words, we seek theories which have about them that unmistakable character of mathematical beauty. It is our expectation that it is precisely those theories with that character of mathematical beauty which will prove to be the ones that describe the structure of the world in which we live.

If you have a friend who is a theoretical physicist and you wish to upset him or her, you simply say to them, 'That latest theory of yours looks rather ugly and contrived to me'. They will be very upset, because you are saying to them 'It doesn't have that indispensable character of mathematical beauty'. When we use mathematics in that way, as a key to unlock the secrets of the universe, something very peculiar is happening. You see—what is mathematics? Mathematics is the free exploration of the human mind. Our mathematical friends sit in their studies, and out of their heads they dream up the beautiful patterns of mathematics. If mathematics is not your subject, just think of mathematics as being a pattern-creating, pattern-analyzing subject. What I'm saying is that some of the most beautiful patterns thought up by the mathematicians are found actually to occur in the structure of the physical world around us. In other words, there is some deep-seated relationship between the reason within (the rationality of our minds—in this case mathematics) and the reason without (the rational order and structure of the physical world around us). The two fit together like a glove. If you

stop to think about it, I think you'll see that is a rather significant fact about the world. It's a fact about the world that the mathematicians, in their very modest way of speaking, would describe as non-trivial. Non-trivial is a mathematical word meaning highly significant! Not only does it strike me as significant, but it also struck Einstein that way, which is perhaps more interesting. Einstein once said, "The only incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible". Why are our minds so perfectly shaped to understand the deep patterns of the world around us?

You have a choice in these matters. You can always just shrug your shoulders and say, 'Well, that's just the way it happens to be, and a bit of good luck for you chaps who are good at mathematics'. My instincts as a scientist, as someone who is searching for understanding, is not to be as intellectually lazy as that. I want to ask the question a famous theoretical physicist called Eugene Wigner once asked, 'Why is mathematics so unreasonably effective in understanding the physical world?'. You might reply, 'Why pretty easy—evolutionary biology will explain that for you'. If our minds didn't fit the world around us, we just wouldn't have survived in the struggle for existence. Now, that's obviously true, but it's only true up to a point. It's true about our experience of the everyday world of rocks and trees where we have to dodge the rocks and miss the trees, and it's true of our mathematical thinking of the world, which I suppose amounts to a little elementary arithmetic and a little elementary Euclidean geometry. But, when I'm talking about the power of mathematics to illuminate and give understanding of the physical world, I'm not talking just about the everyday world. I'm talking, for example, about that counter-intuitive, unpicturable quantum world. That is a world that we can't visualize, but we can understand it, and, for its understanding we need very abstract mathematics, ultimately the mathematics of spontaneously broken, gauge-field theories—which I'm sure you'll agree is fairly abstract mathematics!

Paul Dirac invented something called quantum field theory which is fundamental to our understanding of the physical world. I can't believe Dirac's ability to invent that theory, or Einstein's ability to invent the general theory of relativity, is a sort of spin-off from our ancestors having to dodge sabre-toothed tigers. It seems to me that something much more profound, much more mysterious is going on. I would like to understand why the reason within and the reason without fit together at a deep level. Religious belief provides me with an entirely rational and entirely satisfying explanation of that fact. It says that the reason within and the reason without have a common origin in this deeper rationality which is the reason of the Creator, whose will is the ground both of my mental and my physical experience. That's for me an illustration of theology's power to answer a question, namely the intelligibility of the world, that arises from science but goes beyond science's unaided power to answer. Remember, science simply assumes the intelligibility of the world. Theology can take that striking fact and make it profoundly comprehensible.

You could summarize what I have said so far by saying that when we look at the rational order and transparent beauty of the physical world, revealed through physical science, we see a world shot through with signs of mind. And, to a religious believer it is the Mind of the Creator that is being discerned in that way. That's one example of how I think our thirst for understanding will take us beyond science and will make science itself, or the brute fact of the physical world, by itself an unsatisfactory intellectual resting place.

Let me give you another example, a scientific discovery of a more specific character that's been made in the last thirty or forty years. We thought a little earlier about the fact that we live in a universe that's had a very interesting history. It started about fifteen billion years ago and it started extremely simple. One of the reasons why cosmologists can talk with great confidence about the very early universe is that the very early universe is so simple, just an expanding ball of energy. Yet, the world that started so simple has become very rich and complex through its evolving history, with you and me as the most interesting consequences of that history known to us. We are the most complicated physical systems that we have ever encountered in our explorations of the world. So, the history of the universe has been astonishingly fruitful, and we understand many steps in that evolving, fruitful process. When we think about those steps and our understanding of them, we reach a very surprising conclusion.

Scientists can play intellectual games, and they play those games with a serious intent. The sort of game they play is this: when we think of the universe we live in, it is characterized by certain types of scientific laws and certain types of basic forces that go with those laws. For example, we live in an universe which has gravity in it, not just any old gravity, but gravity of a particular type and a particular strength. There is an intrinsic strength to the force of gravity built into the fabric of our universe, into the specification of what sort of world we live in. In fact, it's a very weak force, the way we measure things. That might surprise you if you have ever walked out of a second story window, but the force of gravity is intrinsically very weak. Now we can play intellectual games and say, 'I wonder what the universe would be like, and what its history would have been like, if gravity had been a bit different—if it had been much stronger, or even a little bit weaker than it is'. And we can play similar games with all the other fundamental forces of nature. We can take electromagnetism, the force that holds matter together. You can sit on your chairs because electromagnetism holds them together, and it holds you together as well! We can again say, 'What would the universe be like if electromagnetism were weaker, or if it were stronger?' and so on. We can play these intellectual games and, when we do that, a very surprising conclusion follows. Unless the fundamental physical laws were more or less precisely what they actually are, the universe would have had a very boring and sterile history. In other words, it's only a very special universe, a finely-tuned universe, a universe in a trillion, you might say, which is capable of having had the amazingly fruitful history that has turned a ball of energy into a world containing you and me. This insight is called the anthropic principle: a world capable of producing anthropoi, (complicated consequences comparable to men and women) is a very special finely-tuned universe. It's a very surprising discovery!

Let me illustrate why we think that's so. If you are to have a fruitful universe, one of the things you've got to have in it are stars. And, you've got to have stars of the right sort. The stars have two jobs that are absolutely indispensable to the fruitful history of the universe. One is, they have to act as long-term, steady energy sources. Essentially all our energy here on earth comes from the sun, either directly or indirectly through fossil fuels. The sun has been burning steadily for about five billion years and it will continue to burn steadily for about another five billion years more. You need that for the development of life. You must have long-term energy sources, because it takes billions of years for life to develop, and you must have steady energy sources, because stars that flared up or died down would either

burn life to a frazzle or freeze it to death. So you must have what we call main sequence stars which are steadily-burning, long-lived stars. Now, we understand what makes them burn in that sort of way. Basically it's the balance between the force of gravity and the electromagnetic forces. If you were to alter either of those forces, you would put the stars out of kilter. You'd have stars that either burned up very rapidly, that lived just for millions of years rather than billions of years, or you'd have stars that were very turbulent and unstable and flared up and died down, and that would be disastrous. No life could develop in a universe of that character. So you see how difficult it is to design a fruitful universe. You've got to get the right balance between gravity and electromagnetism to make the stars act as acceptable energy sources for life. But that's only part of the story, because the stars have another tremendously important thing to do. The nuclear furnaces that burn inside the stars are the source of the chemical elements which are the raw materials of life. The early universe is very simple, and because the early universe is very simple it only produces very simple consequences. In fact, the very early universe can only make the two simplest chemical elements, namely hydrogen and helium. And they are just not rich enough in their chemistry to make life possible. For life you need a much more complicated chemistry than hydrogen and helium by themselves could sustain. In particular, you need the chemistry of carbon, which has the ability to make those immensely complicated macro-molecules which are the basis of the possibility of life. Every atom of carbon inside your body was once inside a star. We're all made from the ashes of dead stars. The only place you can make those heavier elements which are indispensable as the constituents of life is inside the right sort of stars, and it's pretty difficult to make the stars do that. Think about it. What you have to do is this: first you've got to make carbon by making three helium nuclei stick together. That's actually quite hard to do and it depends upon very delicate aspects of the nuclear forces. Now, suppose you've figured out how to do that. You can't sit back and feel satisfied, because carbon is not enough. You've got to make lots more elements. You've got to make oxygen for example. That means making another helium atom stick to the carbon you already made and turn the carbon into oxygen. But, wait a minute. You've got to do that, but you must not overdo it. You mustn't turn all the carbon into oxygen otherwise you've lost the carbon. So, you've got to get all these balances right, and so on, and so on, up to iron. If you can just tune the nuclear forces right, you can make all the elements up to iron inside the stars, but iron is the most stable of all the nuclear species and you can't get beyond iron inside the stars. So, you've still got two problems left that you've got to solve. One is you'll need to make some of the heavier elements beyond iron, some way or another, and you also have to make accessible for life the elements you've already made. It's no good making carbon, oxygen, and all that, and leaving them locked up, useless, inside the cooling core of a dying star. You'll have made the elements, but they won't be of any use to bring about life. You've got to make sure that your stars are such that when they come to the end of their natural life, which is about ten billion years, some of them will explode as supernovae and so will scatter out into the environment those chemical elements that they've made. If you're made from stardust, there's got to be some dust from stars around for you to be made of. You've got to have stellar explosions. And, if you're very clever, you can arrange in the explosion that the neutrinos, as they blow-off the outer layer of the star, then make those heavier elements like lead and so on that you couldn't make inside the star itself. The details don't matter very much, but I hope I've given some feeling that making elements is a very complicated process, which depends for its fruitfulness on a very delicate, fine-tuned balance

between the nuclear forces that control these processes. If those nuclear forces were in any way slightly different from the way they actually are, the stars would be incapable of making the elements of which you and I are composed. That gives you some idea how difficult it is to make a fruitful universe. There are many, many other considerations of that kind.

I'll move on to ask the question, 'What do we make of that?'. What do we make of the fact that the world we live in is only fruitful because its given basic scientific constitution is of a very special, very finely-tuned character. Once again, you can shrug your shoulders and say, 'Well, that's just the way it happens to be. We're here because we're here and that's it'. That doesn't seem to me to be a very rational approach to the issue. I have a friend, John Leslie, who is a philosopher at Guelph University in Canada, and he writes about these questions. He has written far and away the best book about the anthropic principle, called *Universes*. He's a beguiling philosopher because he does his philosophy by telling stories, which is a very accessible way for those of us who are not professionally trained in philosophy to get the hang of it. He tells the following story. You are about to be executed. Your eyes are bandaged and you are tied to the stake. Twelve highly-trained sharp shooters have their rifles levelled at your heart. They pull the trigger, the shots ring out—you've survived! What do you do? Do you shrug your shoulders and say, 'Well, that's the way it is. No need to seek an explanation of this. That's just the way it is'. Leslie rightly says that's surely not a rational response to what's going on. He suggests that there are only two rational explanations of that amazing incident. One is this. Many, many, many executions are taking place today and just by luck you happen to be the one in which they all miss. That's the rational explanation. The other explanation, is, of course, that the sharp shooters are on your side and they missed by choice. In other words there was a purpose at work of which you were unaware.

You see how that parable translates into thinking about a finely-tuned and fruitful universe. One possibility is that maybe there are lots and lots of different universes, all with different given physical laws and circumstances. If there were lots and lots of them (and there would really have to be rather a lot) then just by chance, in one of them, the laws and circumstances will be such as to permit the development of carbon-based life. But, of course, that's the one in which we live, because we couldn't appear anywhere else. It's a possible explanation that's called the many-universes interpretation. The other possibility is that there is more going on than has met the eye and the sharp shooters are on our side. That translates into the idea that this is not just any old universe. Rather it is a universe which is a creation which has been endowed by its Creator with just those finely-tuned given laws and circumstances that will make its history fruitful. It is the fulfillment of a purpose.

Leslie says in relation to the anthropic principle that there is an even-handed choice between those two possibilities. By itself, I think that is correct. Let me emphasize that both are metaphysical explanations. We have no adequate, scientific motivation for thinking of any other universe but the universe of our direct experience. So the speculation that there are many, many other universes is a metaphysical speculation. I'm not against metaphysics. In fact, you can't live without it, but the many-universes interpretation is a metaphysical speculation just as the existence of a Creator is a metaphysical speculation. Of course, if you think there are other reasons, as indeed I do, for believing that there is a God whose will and purpose lies behind the universe, then that second explanation, that the world is fruitful because it is a

creation, becomes the more economic and persuasive explanation. That, of course, is the one to which I myself adhere.

So, in the intelligibility of the world and the finely-tuned fruitfulness of the world, we see insights arising from science, but calling for some explanation and understanding which, by its very nature will go beyond what science itself can provide. And that shows to me, at any rate, the insufficiency of a merely scientific view of the world. In fact, I think we're living in an age where there is a great revival of natural theology taking place. Natural theology is the attempt to learn something about God by the general use of reason and by inspection of the world. That revival of natural theology is taking place, not on the whole among the theologians, who have rather lost their nerve in that area, but among the scientists. And not just among pious scientists like myself, who would be rather inclined to think that way, but among scientists who have no particular time for, or understanding of, conventional religion, but who, nevertheless, feel that the rational beauty and the finely-tuned fruitfulness of the world suggest that there is some intelligence or purpose behind the universe which is more than has met the scientific eye. That revived natural theology is also revised in the sense that it is more modest in its ambitions. Unlike either the natural theology of the late middle ages or the eighteenth century, it doesn't claim to talk about proofs of God. We're in an area of discourse, of the search for understanding, where knock-down argument or proof is not available to anyone. But we are in an area where we're looking for insights which are intellectually satisfying. I wouldn't want to say that atheists are stupid, but I would want to say that atheism is less intellectually satisfying and less comprehensive in the understanding it provides, than is a theistic view of the world.

That's part of the story and these are gifts that theology gives to science. It offers science a deeper, more comprehensive understanding than would be obtained from itself alone. But there is traffic across the border in both directions and I'll spend a few moments talking about what I think are the gifts that science gives to theology in this Scientific Age. That kind of gift is rather different—for it is to tell theology what the physical world is actually like in its structure and in its history. That raises issues to which theology has to address itself.

Let me begin by saying just a word about what many people think is the classic interaction between science and theology, namely the question of origins. How did things begin? Actually I don't think that's a very important subject, and that people are mistaken if they think it is. They are in error because they wrongly think that the theological doctrine of creation is concerned with how things began. Who lit the blue touch paper of the big bang? The doctrine of creation isn't about that. It's not concerned with temporal origin, but with ontological origin. It answers the question, why do things exist at all? God is as much the Creator today as he was fifteen billion years ago. Thus though big bang cosmology is very interesting scientifically, theologically it is insignificant. Therefore, if my friend and former colleague Steve Hawking comes along, as he does in his book, *A Brief History of Time*, and says that if you think about quantum cosmology and how quantum mechanics fuzzed out the very early universe, then, though the universe has a finite age, it has no dateable beginning, that's a very interesting scientific speculation, but there's no particular theological mileage in it. Steve says, 'If there is no beginning, what place then for a Creator?'. It is theologically naive to answer other than by 'Every place, as the Sustainer of the universe in Being'. God is not a God of

the edges, with a vested interest in beginnings. God is the God of all times and all places. So I think the question of origins is not terribly important theologically, though it is certainly interesting scientifically.

Much more interesting is the question of the process of the world. How does the world history unfold? It is in sustaining the fruitful process of the world that God is at work as the Creator, as much today as he was fifteen billion years ago. When we think about the process of the world, we get two insights that come to us from science which we have to take seriously and to think about. The first is this. I've talked about that very fertile process which turned a ball of energy into a world containing you and me. I've said that it could only happen in a very special, finely-tuned sort of universe. Let's now go on to ask the question: Given we've got a universe with fine-tuning (given we've got the right ground rules) how does it actually come about that the world makes itself? How does it realize its in-built fruitfulness, its in-built potentiality? We understand many bits of that process quite well. All those bits we do understand seem to realize that fruitfulness through an interplay between two opposing tendencies which, in a sort of slogan-way, we could describe as 'chance' and 'necessity'. Those are slippery words and I have to explain what I mean by them. By 'chance', I mean simply happenstance—just the way things happen to be. When the universe was about a billion years old, there just happened to be a little bit more matter here than there. That was chance—happenstance—getting things going. That happenstance produced something lasting through the operation of 'necessity', that is to say, lawful regularity. Because, if there is a little bit more matter here than there, then that matter exerts a little bit stronger gravitational pull, and it draws more matter to itself in a sort of snowballing process. That's how we picture the universe, which started so uniform, began to get a bit grainy and lumpy, an essential step in its fruitful history. You've got to have the stars and you've got to have the galaxies that contain the stars. A fruitful universe has to become lumpy at some stage. That begins through chance, happenstance, and develops through necessity, snowballing through the attractive force of gravity. And, it seems that the interplay between those two tendencies, chance as the origin of novelty, and necessity as the sifter and preserver of the novelty thus produced, is the prime way in which the fruitfulness of the universe is realized. A much more familiar example is provided by biological evolution. Mutations occur through happenstance. That produces some new possibility for life, which is then sifted and preserved in the lawfully regular environment which is necessary for the operation of natural selection. In every stage of the fruitful history of the universe there is an interplay between chance and necessity. Now, the question is, 'What do we make of that?'

A very great French biochemist called Jacques Monod wrote a famous book in the early 1970's whose English translation is called *Chance and Necessity*. And, in that book, Monod says, with passionate Gallic rhetoric, 'Pure chance, absolutely free, but blind lies at the basis of this stupendous edifice of evolution'. Of course the word where Monod puts in the knife is the word 'blind'. For Monod, the role of chance, of happenstance, in the evolving history of the universe subverts the religious claim that there is a purpose at work in the world. For Monod, the role of chance means that ultimately the universe is a tale told by an idiot. That's how he sees it.

Here is a serious challenge which we have to address. I would approach it this way. There is

no unique way of going from physics to metaphysics, from science to a deeper view. I will take the same scientific picture of the interplay between happenstance and regularity, but offer an alternative interpretation of it and, I would venture to say, a more evenhanded interpretation, which lays as much emphasis on the necessary half as upon the chance half of the process. I respectfully suggest that when God came to create the world he was faced with a dilemma. The Christian God is a God of love and the gift of love is always the gift of independence, the genuine otherness of the beloved. Parents know that. There comes a time when Johnny has to be allowed to ride his bicycle into dangerous traffic on his own. The gift of love is a gift of a true independence. So, a God who is loving will endow his creation with its own due freedom, its own due independence. But, independence by itself can easily degenerate into simply licence and chaos. However God is not only loving, he is faithful. And the God who is faithful will surely endow his creation also with the gift of reliability. Yet reliability by itself can easily rigidify into a merely mechanical world. I believe that the Christian God, who is both loving and faithful, has given to his creation the twin gifts of independence and reliability, which find their reflection in the fruitful process of the universe through the interplay between happenstance and regularity, between chance and necessity. That would be my re-interpretation of this insight into the fruitful physical process.

There is a second thing I want to say, and it's this: many people have a picture of the physical world which is very outdated. The great triumphs of the science in the eighteenth century, and the further discoveries of the nineteenth century, encouraged a view of the physical world as if it were in some sense mechanical, a rather rigid and deterministic world. Actually, we've always known that can't be right, because we've always known as an absolutely basic fact of human nature that we have the experience of choice and responsibility. In the twentieth century we have made further scientific gains and twentieth-century science has seen the death of a merely mechanical view of the world. In part, that is due to the cloudy fitfulness of quantum theory lurking at the atomic and sub-atomic roots of the world. But I think, more importantly still, it is also due to another unexpected insight of science gained in the last thirty–forty years. Even the physics of the everyday world, even the physics of Newton, is not as mechanical as Sir Isaac and his followers would have thought it to be. That's a very surprising discovery. Those of us who learned classical physics, learned the subject by thinking about certain tame, predictable systems, like a steadily ticking pendulum. That's a very simple robust system. If you take a pendulum and slightly disturb it, or you are slightly ignorant about how it is moving, the slight disturbance only produces slight consequences, the slight ignorance only produces slight errors in your estimation of how it will behave. We thought the everyday Physical world was all like that. It was tame, it was predictable, it was controllable—in a word, it was mechanical. Now, we've discovered that, in fact, almost all the everyday physical world is not like that at all. Almost all of the everyday physical world is so exquisitely sensitive that the smallest disturbance produces quite uncontrollable and unpredictable consequences. There are very many more clouds than clocks around. This is the insight that is rather ineptly named chaotic dynamics. It came as a very great surprise to us. It is not altogether astonishing that the discovery was first made in relation to attempts to make models of the earth's weather systems. In the trade it is sometimes called the butterfly effect: that the great weather systems of the earth are so sensitive to individual circumstance that a butterfly stirring the air with its wings in Beijing today will have consequences for the

storm systems over London in a month's time. Now, that world—that exquisitely sensitive world—is an intrinsically unpredictable world. We can't know about all those butterflies in Beijing. So we've learned that the physical world, whatever it is, it certainly isn't mechanical, even at the everyday level. It is something more subtle and more supple than that. To do justice to the full development of the argument, I'd need to say a good many more things, but I think already one can see the beginnings of a picture of the physical world that is unpredictable in detail and open to the future. That is a gain for science. Science begins to describe a world which is sufficiently flexible in its development, a world of true becoming, of which we can consider ourselves as inhabitants. The future is genuinely new, not just a rearrangement of what was there in the past. In such a world of true becoming, with its open future, we can begin to understand our own powers of agency, our own powers to act and bring things about. I would want to say also that such a physical world is one which, in my view, is capable also of being open to God's providential interaction and his agency in the world. So that whole picture of the physical world has been loosened up. It is much more hospitable to the presence of both humanity and divine providence than would have seemed conceivable a hundred years ago.

It is time for me to come to an end. I'd like to finish with a quotation which in many ways summarizes for me what I'm trying to do in my own intellectual exploration as someone who is both a physicist and a priest. You see, I want to hold these two parts of me together, not without puzzles, of course, but I hope, without dishonesty, and without compartmentalism. I don't want to be a priest on Sundays and a physicist on Mondays. I've tried this evening to show one or two examples of how science and theology interact positively to help each other, how religious belief is possible with integrity in an Age of Science. So let me end with one of my favourite quotations from a great Thomist thinker of this century, Bernard Lonergan. He once said this: 'God is the all sufficient explanation, the eternal rapture glimpsed in every Archimedean cry of eureka'. I like that very much. The search for understanding, which is so natural to a scientist is, in the end, the search for God. That is how religion will continue to flourish in this Age of Science.

Bulverism

C. S. Lewis

This article by C. S. Lewis contains two important sections, one defensive and one offensive. In the defensive section, Lewis critiques the common tendency to account for Christianity by referencing some psychological phenomena or motive which is supposed to cause faith. This is a very common, almost ubiquitous, way of speaking about faith, and Lewis' critique offers one road of response to it. In the offensive section, Lewis goes on to develop his famous "argument from reason," which he later refined in his book *Miracles*. See if you can trace the contours of the argument. Lewis here once again provides a model of rigorous and critical thought about faith, illustrating for us what the "forth quadrant" looks like in practice.

- Charles Clark '11

It is a disastrous discovery, as Emerson says somewhere, that we exist. I mean, it is disastrous when instead of merely attending to a rose we are forced to think of ourselves looking at the rose, with a certain type of mind and a certain type of eyes. It is disastrous because, if you are not very careful, the color of the rose gets attributed to our optic nerves and its scent to our noses, and in the end there is no rose left. The professional philosophers have been bothered about this universal black-out for over two hundred years, and the world has not much listened to them. But the same disaster is now occurring on a level we can all understand.

We have recently "discovered that we exist" in two new senses. The Freudians have discovered that we exist as bundles of complexes. The Marxians have discovered that we exist as members of some economic class. In the old days it was supposed that if a thing seemed obviously true to a hundred men, then it was probably true in fact. Nowadays the Freudian will tell you to go and analyze the hundred: you will find that they all think Elizabeth [I] a great queen because they all have a mother-complex. Their thoughts are psychologically tainted at the source. And the Marxist will tell you to go and examine the economic interests of the hundred; you will find that they all think freedom a good thing because they are all members of the bourgeoisie whose prosperity is increased by a policy of *laissez-faire*. Their thoughts are "ideologically tainted" at the source.

Now this is obviously great fun; but it has not always been noticed that there is a bill to pay for it. There are two questions that people who say this kind of thing ought to be asked. The first is, are *all* thoughts thus tainted at the source, or only some? The second is, does the taint invalidate the tainted thought—in the sense of making it untrue—or not?

If they say that *all thoughts* are thus tainted, then, of course, we must remind them that Freudianism and Marxism are as much systems of thought as Christian theology or philosophical idealism. The Freudian and Marxian are in the same boat with all the rest of us, and cannot criticize us from outside. They have sawn off the branch they were sitting on. If, on the other hand, they say that the taint need not invalidate their thinking, then neither need it invalidate ours. In which case they have saved their own branch, but also saved ours along with it.

The only line they can really take is to say that some thoughts are tainted and others are not—which has the advantage (if Freudians and Marxians regard it as an advantage) of being what every sane man has always believed. But if that is so, we must then ask how you find out which are tainted and which are not. It is no earthly use saying that those are tainted which agree with the secret wishes of the thinker. *Some* of the things I should like to believe must in fact be true; it is impossible to arrange a universe which contradicts everyone's wishes, in every respect, at every moment. Suppose I think, after doing my accounts, that I have a large balance at the bank. And suppose you want to find out whether this belief of mine is "wishful thinking." You can never come to any conclusion by examining my psychological condition. Your only chance of finding out is to sit down and work through the sum yourself. When you have checked my figures, then, and then only, will you know whether I have that balance or not. If you find my arithmetic correct, then no amount of vapouring about my psychological condition can be anything but a waste of time. If you find my arithmetic wrong, then it may be relevant to explain psychologically how I came to be so bad at my arithmetic, and the doctrine of the concealed wish will become relevant—but only *after* you have yourself done the sum and discovered me to be wrong on purely arithmetical grounds. It is the same with all thinking and all systems of thought. If you try to find out which are tainted by speculating about the wishes of the thinkers, you are merely making a fool of yourself. You must find out on purely logical grounds which of them do, in fact, break down as arguments. Afterwards, if you like, go on and discover the psychological causes of the error.

In other words, you must show *that* a man is wrong before you start explaining *why* he is wrong. The modern method [Note: This essay was written in 1941] is to assume without discussion *that* he is wrong and then distract his attention from this (the only real issue) by busily explaining how he became to be so silly. In the course of the last fifteen years I have found this vice so common that I have had to invent a name for it. I call it "Bulverism." Some day I am going to write the biography of its imaginary inventor, Ezekiel Bulver, whose destiny was determined at the age of five when he heard his mother say to his father—who had been maintaining that two sides of a triangle were together greater than the third—"Oh, you say that *because you are a man.*" "At that moment," E. Bulver assures us, "there flashed across my opening mind the great truth that refutation is no necessary part of argument. Assume your opponent is wrong, and then explain his error, and the world will be at your feet. Attempt to prove that he is wrong or (worse still) try to find out whether he is wrong or right, and the national dynamism of our age will thrust you to the wall." That is how Bulver became one of the makers of the Twentieth Century.

I find the fruits of his discovery almost everywhere. Thus I see my religion dismissed on the grounds that "the comfortable parson had every reason for assuring the nineteenth century worker that poverty would be rewarded in another world." Well, no doubt he had. On the assumption that Christianity is an error, I can see clearly enough that some people would still have a motive for inculcating it. I see it so easily that I can, of course, play the game the other way round, by saying that "the modern man has every reason for trying to convince himself that there are no eternal sanctions behind the morality he is rejecting." For Bulverism is a truly democratic game in the sense that all can play it all day long, and that it give no unfair advantage to the small and offensive minority who reason. But of course it gets us not

one inch nearer to deciding whether, as a matter of fact, the Christian religion is true or false. That question remains to be discussed on quite different grounds—a matter of philosophical and historical argument. However it were decided, the improper motives of some people, both for believing it and for disbelieving it, would remain just as they are.

I see Bulverism at work in every political argument. The capitalists must be bad economists because we know why they want capitalism, and equally Communists must be bad economists because we know why they want Communism. Thus, the Bulverists on both sides. In reality, of course, either the doctrines of the capitalists are false, or the doctrines of the Communists, or both; but you can only find out the rights and wrongs by reasoning—never by being rude about your opponent's psychology.

Until Bulverism is crushed, reason can play no effective part in human affairs. Each side snatches it early as a weapon against the other; but between the two reason itself is discredited. And why should reason not be discredited? It would be easy, in answer, to point to the present state of the world, but the real answer is even more immediate. The forces discrediting reason, themselves depend of reasoning. You must reason even to Bulverize. You are trying to *prove* that all *proofs* are invalid. If you fail, you fail. If you succeed, then you fail even more—for the proof that all proofs are invalid must be invalid itself.

The alternative then is either sheer self-contradicting idiocy or else some tenacious belief in our power of reasoning, held in the teeth of all the evidence that Bulverists can bring for a “taint” in this or that human reasoner. I am ready to admit, if you like, that this tenacious belief has something transcendental or mystical about it. What then? Would you rather be a lunatic than a mystic?

So we see there is justification for holding on to our belief in Reason. But can this be done without theism? Does “I know” involve that God exists? Everything I know is an inference from sensation (except the present moment). All our knowledge of the universe beyond our immediate experiences depends on inferences from these experiences. If our inferences do not give a genuine insight into reality, then we can know nothing. A theory cannot be accepted if it does not allow our thinking to be a genuine insight, nor if the fact of our knowledge is not explicable in terms of that theory.

But our thoughts can only be accepted as a genuine insight under certain conditions. All beliefs have causes but a distinction must be drawn between (1) ordinary causes and (2) a special kind of cause called “a reason.” Causes are mindless events which can produce other results than belief. Reasons arise from axioms and inferences and affect only beliefs. Bulverism tries to show that the other man has causes and not reasons and that we have reasons and not causes. A belief which can be accounted for entirely in terms of causes is worthless. This principle must not be abandoned when we consider the beliefs which are the basis of others. Our knowledge depends on our certainty about axioms and inferences. If these are the results of causes, then there is no possibility of knowledge. Either we can know nothing *or* thought has reasons only, and no causes.

[The remainder of this essay, which was originally read to the Socratic Club before publication in the *Socratic Digest*, continues in the form of notes taken down by the Secretary of the

Club. This explains why it is not all in the first-person, as is the text-proper.]

One might argue, Mr. Lewis continued, that reason had developed by natural selection, only those methods of thought which had proved useful surviving. But the theory depends on an inference from usefulness to truth, of which the validity would have to be *assumed*. All attempts to treat thought as a natural event involve the fallacy of excluding the thought of the man making the attempt.

It is admitted that the mind is affected by physical events; a wireless set is influenced by atmospherics, but it does not originate its deliverances—we'd take no notice of it if we thought it did. Natural events we can relate one to another until we can trace them finally to the space-time continuum. But thought has no father but thought. It is conditioned, yes, not caused. *My knowledge that I have nerves is inferential.*

The same argument applies to our values, which are affected by social factors, but if they are caused by them we cannot know that they are right. One can reject morality as an illusion, but the man who does so often tacitly excepts his own ethical motive: for instance the duty of freeing morality from superstition and of spreading enlightenment.

Neither Will nor Reason is the product of Nature. Therefore either I am self-existent (a belief which no one can accept) or I am a colony of some Thought and Will that are self-derived from a self-existent Reason and Goodness outside ourselves, in fact, a Supernatural.

Mr. Lewis went on to say that it was often objected that the existence of the Supernatural is too important to be discernible only by abstract argument, and thus only by the leisured few. But in all other ages the plain man has accepted the findings of the mystics and the philosophers for his initial belief in the existence of the Supernatural. Today the ordinary man is forced to carry that burden himself. Either mankind has made a ghastly mistake in rejecting authority, or the power or powers ruling his destiny are making a daring experiment, and all are to become sages. A society consisting solely of plain men must end in disaster. If we are to survive we must either believe the seers or scale those heights ourselves.

Evidently, then, something beyond Nature exists. Man is on the border line between the Natural and the Supernatural. Material events cannot produce spiritual activity, but the latter can be responsible for many of our actions in Nature. Will and Reason cannot depend on anything but themselves, but Nature can depend on Will and Reason, or, in other words, God created Nature.

The relation between Nature and Supernature, which is not a relation in space and time, becomes intelligible if the Supernatural made the Natural. We even have an idea of this making, since we know the power of imagination, though we can create nothing new, but can only rearrange our material provided through sense data. It is not inconceivable that the universe was created by an Imagination strong enough to impose phenomena on other minds.

It has been suggested, Mr. Lewis concluded, that our ideas of making and causing are wholly derived from our experience of will. The conclusion usually drawn is that there is no making or causing, only "projection." But "projection" is itself a form of causing, and it is more reasonable to suppose that Will is the only cause we know, and that therefore Will is the cause

of Nature.

A discussion followed. Points arising:

All reasoning assumes the hypothesis that inference is valid. Correct inference is self-evident. "Relevant" (re evidence) is a *rational* term. The universe doesn't claim to be *true*: it's just *there*. Knowledge by revelation is more like empirical than rational knowledge.

Question: What is the criterion of truth, if you distinguish between cause and reason? *Mr*

Lewis: A mountainous country might have several maps made of it, only one of which was a *true* one; i.e., corresponding with the actual contours. The map drawn by Reason claims to be that *true* one. I couldn't get at the universe unless I could trust my reason. If we couldn't trust *inference* we could know nothing but our own existence. Physical reality is an inference from sensations.

Question: How can an axiom claim self-evidence any more than an empirical judgment on evidence?

[The essay ends here, leaving this question unrecorded.]

Epilogue from *The Real Jesus*

Luke Timothy Johnson

One of the main commitments at *Apologia* is to serious, rigorous scholarship. The space between academia and religion that *Apologia* intends to explore can be difficult to navigate. While we believe that Christianity and intellectualism are fundamentally compatible, the paucity of examples for how to negotiate between the two in a faithful, critical way is a present reality. In this selection, we can watch a great Christian mind grapple with difficult questions about belief and knowing and learn from how he confronts the tensions between his own academic specialty and his faith.

- Charles Clark '11

In this book, I have tried to bring some clarity to a conceptually and culturally confused discussion concerning the historical Jesus and the implications of Historical Jesus research for Christian faith. Here are some of the major points I have tried to establish:

1. History is a limited mode of human knowing. Historical analysis can yield real knowledge about earliest Christianity and the figure of Jesus. But there are intractable limits to this knowledge. When inquiry seeks to surmount those limits, evidence is distorted and history itself is discredited.
2. The New Testament writings yield some historical information, but that is not what they do best. And when the compositions are fragmented, chopped into small pieces, and arranged in arbitrary sequences, they do not work at all. The literary compositions of the New Testament are analyzed best when their literary integrity is respected and appreciated. Approached in this fashion, they can be appreciated as witnesses and interpretations of religious experiences and convictions.
3. Despite the obvious diversity in genre, perspective, and theme in the New Testament compositions, the coherence of their generative experiences and convictions can be glimpsed from their remarkable consistency concerning the image of Jesus and of discipleship.
4. If the expression *the real Jesus* is used at all, it should not refer to a historically reconstructed Jesus. Such a Jesus is not “real” in any sense, except as a product of scholarly imagination. The Christians’ claim to experience the “real Jesus” in the present, on the basis of religious experiences and convictions, can be challenged on a number of fronts (religious, theological, moral), but not historically.
5. Corresponding to the Christian claim, there is a “real Jesus” in the texts of the New Testament as they have been transmitted to this generation. It is a Jesus inscribed literarily in the New Testament compositions *as* compositions. Jesus appears there as a definite, indeed unmistakably specific person, who defines by his life and death a pattern of existence measured in terms of obedience and suffering, service and love.

One further aspect of the cultural confusion remains to be discussed. I hope that the shape of

this book makes it evident that I think about these things both as a Christian and as a critical scholar. My final remarks touch on the possibilities for a truly critical biblical scholarship within a church that is also faithful to its Lord.

The Credibility of Christianity

From the start, Christianity has been rooted in the paradoxical claim that a human being executed as a criminal is the source of God's life-giving and transforming Spirit. From the start, this "good news" has been regarded as foolishness to the wise of the world. Christianity has never been able to "prove" its claims except by appeal to the experiences and convictions of those already convinced. The only real validation for the claim that Christ is what the creed claims him to be, that is, light from light, true God from true God, is to be found in the quality of life demonstrated by those who make this confession.

Only if Christians and Christian communities illustrate lives transformed according to the pattern of faithful obedience and loving service found in Jesus does their claim to live by the Spirit of Jesus have any validity. The claims of the gospel cannot be demonstrated logically. They cannot be proved historically. They can be validated only existentially by the witness of authentic Christian discipleship.

The more the church has sought to ground itself in something other than the transforming work of the Spirit, the more it has sought to buttress its claims by philosophy or history, the more it has sought to defend itself against its cultured despisers by means of sophisticated apology, the more also it has missed the point of its existence, which is not to take a place within worldly wisdom but to bear witness to the reality of a God who transforms suffering and death with the power of new life.

Christianity has credibility, both with its own adherents and with its despisers, to the degree that it claims and lives by its own distinctive identity. This means, at a minimum, recognizing that Christianity is not measured by cultural expectations but by the experiences and convictions by which it lives. A church that has lost a sense of its boundaries—that is, a grasp of its self-definition—can only recover it by reasserting its character as a community of faith with a canon of Scripture and a creed.

The erosion of these boundaries has been exposed in the current Historical Jesus debate. There has been no clear sense of where "the church" stands as a community concerning the historical Jesus. Indeed, as we have seen, official leaders of a church, like Bishop Spong, have expressed opinions that are, on the face of it, incompatible with the classical Christian creed. "Christians" have been strung all along the continuum of stimulus and response in this discussion. But there is no explicit realm of discourse that can be called the church's.

One reason has been the loss within the church of any sense of how the Scripture can function as a basis for debate and decision making in response to crisis. This loss, in turn, is in considerable measure owing to the hegemony of the historical critical method. Several generations of scholars and theologians have been disabled from direct and responsible engagement with the texts of the tradition in their religious dimension. Even more obvious has been the disappearance of the creed as a meaningful framework for reading Scripture and undertaking

theological discourse within the Christian community.

It is not at all obvious *how* Christians can recover some sense of community, canon, and creed. The present polarization and distrust between conservative and liberal tendencies within Christianity can make the recovery more difficult. But a start might be the simple recognition that whatever the church's discourse is, it should not be the same as the academy's, nor should it be subject to the same rules or the same criteria of validity. It is time for a return from the academic captivity of the church. It is time for Christians to recognize that not every intellectual tendency or shift of mood is one that enhances the church's fundamental responsibility for handing on a tradition of life from one generation to another.

The place where this modest change of heart must take place is where the double-mindedness is most obvious, namely, in seminaries, divinity schools, and schools of theology. If the church is to be renewed as a community of faith with a distinctive, functional, and flexible mode of discourse, if it is to live by a canon of Scripture and within the rule of faith, then professors within Christian seminaries need to find a way to combine a commitment to tradition with intellectual integrity and freedom. But at the very least, such professors should be willing to make their fundamental commitment to the tradition, and not simply to the ever-shifting sands of scholarly fashion.

Allow me to speak as just such a teacher of New Testament in a seminary. Shouldn't we communicate to students that the church is not really only an institutionalized form of racism, sexism, homophobia, and speciesism, but is a place in the world where the power of resurrection life can be realized and enacted? Shouldn't we treat the canon of Scripture as something more than the arbitrary or ideologically motivated preemptive suppression of variety in the ancient church by patriarchal bishops, and show students how the fundamental issue of the character of God's gift in the crucified Messiah, and therefore also the character of discipleship in response to that gift, was and is at stake in the question of which documents are to be read in the church? Shouldn't we be willing to assert with students, as every Christian theologian before us was willing to assert, that Jesus is Son of God made flesh, before raising the question of how that paradoxical statement can be intellectually engaged?

Most of all, we need to understand the primary task of theology not to be the reform of the world's social structures, nor the ideological critique of the church as institution, nor the discovery of what is false or distorting in religious behavior, but the discernment and articulation of the work of the living God. Within the Christian community, this means the discernment of the ways in which the transformative power of the Spirit of the risen Christ is present and active, as well as the ways it is resisted and impeded. It means articulating the implications of God's work in human experience or the response of the church in obedience and service. By such theological activity, the story of Jesus comes alive both within the texts of human experience and in the texts of the New Testament.

Those of us who are entrusted with the formation of Christianity's ministers and leaders ought, I think, to take less seriously the judgment of our academic colleagues and more seriously the judgment of God, "before whose judgment seat we all shall stand" (Rom. 14:10). We need to ask not only what we are teaching but also what we are failing to teach. We can begin by affirming what is positive in the gift of God in Jesus Christ and what is of astonish-

ing and transformative power in the story of Jesus, before asking what is lacking in it and how it might need supplementing from other traditions. We should, in a word, ask of one another, before and during our criticism of the Christian tradition, an explicit and exquisite loyalty to it.

The Role of Critical Biblical Scholarship

If such loyalty is to be an authentic expression of faith, however, it must also *be* critical. Ultimate human loyalty is appropriately directed to the living God rather than to community memory. The task of theology in the church is not only discernment of God's word and praise of God's work, but also critical reflection on the received tradition and the adequacy of the human response to God.

Biblical scholarship can play a key role in such critical reflection. It has failed to play that role adequately because it has for too long attached itself to a narrow construal of "critical." In biblical scholarship, "critical" has tended to be identified with "historical." The historical critical method, furthermore, has tended to be overly critical of the tradition and insufficiently critical of itself. For biblical scholarship to play its appropriate critical role within Christian theology—and my argument here concerns *only* its function within the church as distinct from the academy—it requires a broader and more comprehensive model for the apprehension of the New Testament writings as such, and requires as well a more inclusive sense of "criticism."

A MORE COMPREHENSIVE MODEL

One of the remarkable features of the academy is that scholars, who analyze everything else with such ease, so seldom and so poorly analyze their own procedures. That is not entirely true, of course, for scholars are always criticizing each other's use of methods. But the attention usually falls precisely on method: was a certain procedure carried out correctly, or were the criteria properly applied? What is often lacking is reflection on the fundamental models or paradigms within which methods function. These are often what is "taken for granted" or "assumed." They are also what are often most in need of criticism.

The use of the historical critical method in biblical scholarship is an obvious example. The very phrase is misleading, for historians use a variety of methods and procedures. What is conventionally called "method" is, in reality, a *model*. I use the term *model* to mean an imaginative construal of the subject being studied, as well as a structured picture of both process and product: a model is a paradigm within which the data pertinent to a discipline makes sense.

In answer to the question, What are the New Testament writings about?, the historical model responds that they are about the history of early Christianity, including its founder. The goal of inquiry is the description, and possibly even the reconstruction, of historical development. For this goal, the writings of the New Testament have importance as *sources* for such a reconstruction. Ideally, if the goal of a satisfactory reconstruction were achieved, the sources would not need to be revisited. The historical model provides no compelling reason for reading the New Testament except to correct or improve the historical account of earliest Christianity.

I hope I have made clear that I see nothing problematic about the historical model in itself. It is obviously important to study Christian origins historically. And in such historical inquiry, faith commitments should play no role. Christianity is no more privileged for the historian than any other human phenomenon. My reservations have to do with the difficulties this model has in reaching its goal in this case: the writings of the New Testament are too few, too fragmentary, and too lacking in chronological and geographical controls to enable a truly comprehensive reconstruction of Christian origins.

The greater problem with the historical critical model is that until very recently it has tended to dominate scholarship to the exclusion of other approaches. As a result, the historical critical model comes to be equated simply with “critical.” But by reducing everything to a single dimension, the historical model distorts what it can know and misses a great deal of what is important to know.

New Testament scholars need a model that enables them to approach the texts in as many ways as the texts approach us. At least four dimensions of the New Testament texts should be taken into account.

1. Anthropological: These writings are thoroughly human in the process of their composition. Appeals to divine inspiration are claims about the ultimate origin of the texts and their authority. Inspiration is not a key to the interpretation of the texts. The anthropological dimension also considers that the texts result from real human persons interpreting their experience, and seeking to understand their experience with available cultural symbols. It recognizes that religious literature is generated by real experiences and convictions, and not simply by aesthetic concerns.
2. Historical: The writers of the New Testament were not Trobrianders. They were Jews of the first-century Mediterranean world. Their experiences and convictions, therefore, were necessarily interpreted within a symbolic framework specific to that place and time. The complex overlap of Mediterranean, Greco-Roman, and Jewish cultures affected the shaping of this literature. Above all, the experiences of the first Christians were clothed with the garments of Torah. If the anthropological dimension establishes connections between readers and these texts, the historical dimension demands coming to grips with the cultural “otherness” of the writings. Recognizing the historical dimension of the texts (as an essential aspect of their interpretation) is not the same as using the texts for historical reconstruction.
3. Literary: The canon of the New Testament consists of compositions that are diverse in their literary fashioning, perspectives, and purposes. The meaning of texts is inextricably connected with their literary construction. Gaining access to such meaning demands of the interpreter, therefore, a genuine engagement with the literary complexities of the respective compositions. As I have suggested, one of the great deficiencies of the historical critical model has been its disregard for this dimension, leading to the fragmentation of the texts into smaller pieces that can be used as historical sources. It is certainly true that some New Testament compositions were complex in their construction and did not make use of earlier sources. But the final literary form of such texts was canonized, and only attention to this given literary dimension can accurately be called the interpretation of the “New Testament.” It is striking that all the Historical Jesus research we have surveyed begins with the *elimina-*

tion of the literary structure of the Gospels.

4. Religious: These compositions were produced by members of a religious movement for other members of that movement. More than that, specifically religious experiences and convictions generated the compositions. To read these compositions in terms simply of the historical information they provide is to miss the most important and most explicit insight they offer the reader, namely, how the experience of the powerful transforming power of God that came through the crucified Messiah Jesus created not only a new understanding of who Jesus was but, simultaneously, a new understanding of God and God's way with the world.

A more adequate model for reading the New Testament, then, can be called an "experience/tradition" model. The model takes seriously the deeply human character of the writings, the experiences and convictions that generated them, and the cultural and historical symbols they appropriate. It enables the scholar to apprehend the historical dimensions of the New Testament texts without forcing them to perform a task for which they are ill-equipped, namely, to serve as sources for reconstruction of Christian origins. More significantly, the model enables other crucial dimensions of the texts to be apprehended and appreciated as well. Best of all, it is a model that enables a community of faith that also experiences the powerful presence of the risen Lord to engage these texts (together with those of Torah) in a continuing conversation. The model for understanding how the New Testament compositions came into existence, in other words, also provides a framework for interpreting these compositions within the life of the church.

THE MEANING OF CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP

New Testament scholarship within the church should be critical first of all by being self-critical. Because so much of the work done within the framework of the historical critical method lacked such self-examination, its hidden normative assumptions remained untested. The development of "ideological criticism" among contemporary scholars begins with the recognition that literature and art are not neutral but always have an interest. Some of this criticism has focused on the ideological interest of the New Testament writings (e.g., their patriarchalism) without also taking into account the ideological agenda of the interpreter.

The more recent tendency in scholarship to identify and name the ideological commitments of the interpreter is a positive step. Other critics can then evaluate fairly the extent to which such an ideological starting point enables readings and the extent to which it suppresses readings. They can also test the degree to which readings are consistent with declared perspectives.

It is entirely appropriate for an interpreter to declare an allegiance to the traditional Christian code as the ideological starting point for his or her interpretation. The readings generated by such an interpreter can then fairly be tested by reference to that code. It would be equally appropriate for those who detested and despised traditional Christianity and sought to destroy it by means of undermining confidence in its normative texts to state their commitment clearly, so that their efforts could also be fairly evaluated by their chosen standard. In recent Historical Jesus scholarship, such clear declarations of ideological starting points have mostly been lacking. The exceptions, like Stephen Mitchell, are to be appreciated for their candor.

Biblical scholarship can also be “critical” of the New Testament texts themselves in ways that the “historical critical” model did not allow. I have repeatedly challenged the premise that any historical reconstruction can, by itself, function as normative. Without a community’s commitment to acknowledge “a more adequate history” as normative, the criticism of tradition carried out by historical research is strictly beside the point. In fact, however, Christian faith and Christian theology have never made such a commitment to the normativity of historical reconstruction. They have instead made a commitment to the “history” limned in the texts of the New Testament, and above all to the “story of Jesus” inscribed in the Gospel narratives.

But the texts of the New Testament are open to criticism on other than historical fronts. They can be challenged morally, religiously, and theologically for their adequacy, consistency, and cogency. Do the texts of the New Testament when taken at face value support a structure of society in which women are oppressed? Such texts can best be criticized, not by constructing an imaginary, alternative history of early Christianity in which women enjoyed equality, but on the basis of theological convictions that God’s Spirit has brought to maturity within the church. Does the New Testament’s inherited monotheism bring with it a virus of intolerance toward diversity that has infected Christian attitudes and behavior? These texts can best be criticized, not by inventing a history of Christianity that was non-Jewish, but by invoking other moral and religious principles within the texts to counter the virus of intolerance.

Within an ecclesial hermeneutics that begins with the premise that God’s Spirit is working in the world to transform people into the image of the “real Jesus,” the discernment of the complex texts of human experience are brought into conversation with the complex and often conflicting voices of the normative texts of tradition. The diverse voices in the canon are allowed to converse with the diverse voices of contemporary experience. Contradictions in the scriptural texts can be exploited to provide new insights into the “mind of Christ” by which the church seeks to live. Biblical scholarship need not be “historical” in order to be “critical.”

Finally, “critical” can mean allowing the texts to criticize the practices of the church and the assumptions of the tradition. This is obviously a legitimate and important function of scholarship within the church. It is what was originally intended by Luther’s principle of *sola scriptura*. Luther recognized that without a dialectical relationship to the texts, in which they were given their own authority over the church, tradition could swallow them up and manipulate them to its own ends.

I have shown how the historical critical method inherited this perspective. A mistake was made, however, when the critical function was given to historical reconstruction rather than to the texts themselves. In truth, the sort of criticism of the church intended by Luther is located in the texts and not outside them. Here is where contemporary Historical Jesus research has most seriously missed the point. The Jesus Seminar, for example, declared its animosity toward a Jesus purveyed by televangelists. It regarded this Jesus as too much shaped in the direction of the divine by later doctrine. It saw this Jesus as too much the figure of eschatology.

But what the Seminar failed to understand was that these images—if they are, indeed, seen as negative—would best be criticized *from within* the Gospel narratives themselves, not by constructing an “alternative fiction,” or an image of Jesus recoverable only by dismantling the

texts. If the Jesus Seminar is concerned about Christianity's preoccupation with Armageddon, then there are more than sufficient texts within the canon of the New Testament to challenge that obsession. The attempt to create a "noneschatological Jesus" not only distorts history, it is bad tactics. Those who consider the end of the world to be the gist of Jesus' message are convinced that it is found in the texts. Only the demonstration that the texts themselves do not support such an overemphasis, and indeed combat such an emphasis, can be convincing.

In *The Five Gospels* the Jesus Seminar warns against looking for a comfortable Jesus. That is sound advice. What I have tried to demonstrate in this book, however, is that the truly uncomfortable Jesus, the genuinely "countercultural" Jesus, is not the one reconstructed according to the ethos of contemporary academics—whether it is Crossan's politically correct revolutionary Jesus or Borg's charismatic-founder Jesus or any of the others—but the one inscribed in the canonical Gospels. The Jesus who truly challenges this age, as every age, is the one who suffers in obedience to God and calls others to such suffering service on behalf of humanity. This is the Jesus that classical Christianity has always proclaimed; this is an understanding of discipleship to which classical Christianity has always held.

Does the church act triumphalistically, or treat its people arrogantly? Is it an agenda for the suppression of human needs and aspirations? Does it foster intolerance and small-mindedness? Does the church proclaim a gospel of success and offer Jesus as a better business partner? Does it encourage an ethos of prosperity to the neglect of the earth's good, or an individualistic spirituality to the neglect of the world's needy? Are its leaders corrupt and coercive? Such distortions of Christianity can find no harsher critic, no more radical rejecter, than the Jesus found *only* in the pages of the New Testament, the Jesus who was himself emptied out for others and called his followers to do the same.

The Jesus to whom Saint Francis of Assisi appealed in his call for a poor and giving rather than a powerful and grasping church was not the Historical Jesus but the Jesus of the Gospels. One must wonder why this Jesus is not also the "real Jesus" for those who declare a desire for religious truth, and theological integrity, and honest history.

The Ethics of Elfland

G. K. Chesterton

G. K. Chesterton is probably, after C. S. Lewis, the second most important influence on the *Apologia*. Like Lewis, Chesterton was deeply committed to the intellectual project of Christian Humanism, and though they thought and wrote very differently (Chesterton is a poet of paradoxes, whereas Lewis prioritizes analytic clarity), many important confluences exist in their thought.

In the following essay, Chesterton argues for a startling conclusion: that the principles embedded in fairy tales are more rational than the norms of scientific rationalism (which is to be sharply distinguished from the practice of empirical science). His critique of what is called nomological realism and his insights into the nature of contingency (which means, roughly, dependency) are essential for any philosophically literate Christian to grapple with. Moreover, his joyful embrace of Christian Humanism and his ability to speak for faith in a intelligent and non-evangelistic way provide models for the spirit and content of the journal.

-Peter Blair '12

When the business man rebukes the idealism of his office-boy, it is commonly in some such speech as this: "Ah, yes, when one is young, one has these ideals in the abstract and these castles in the air; but in middle age they all break up like clouds, and one comes down to a belief in practical politics, to using the machinery one has and getting on with the world as it is." Thus, at least, venerable and philanthropic old men now in their honoured graves used to talk to me when I was a boy. But since then I have grown up and have discovered that these philanthropic old men were telling lies. What has really happened is exactly the opposite of what they said would happen. They said that I should lose my ideals and begin to believe in the methods of practical politicians. Now, I have not lost my ideals in the least; my faith in fundamentals is exactly what it always was. What I have lost is my old childlike faith in practical politics. I am still as much concerned as ever about the Battle of Armageddon; but I am not so much concerned about the General Election. As a babe I leapt up on my mother's knee at the mere mention of it. No; the vision is always solid and reliable. The vision is always a fact. It is the reality that is often a fraud. As much as I ever did, more than I ever did, I believe in Liberalism. But there was a rosy time of innocence when I believed in Liberals.

I take this instance of one of the enduring faiths because, having now to trace the roots of my personal speculation, this may be counted, I think, as the only positive bias. I was brought up a Liberal, and have always believed in democracy, in the elementary liberal doctrine of a self-governing humanity. If any one finds the phrase vague or threadbare, I can only pause for a moment to explain that the principle of democracy, as I mean it, can be stated in two propositions. The first is this: that the things common to all men are more important than the things peculiar to any men. Ordinary things are more valuable than extraordinary things; nay, they are more extraordinary. Man is something more awful than men; something more strange. The sense of the miracle of humanity itself should be always more vivid to us than

any marvels of power, intellect, art, or civilization. The mere man on two legs, as such, should be felt as something more heartbreaking than any music and more startling than any caricature. Death is more tragic even than death by starvation. Having a nose is more comic even than having a Norman nose.

This is the first principle of democracy: that the essential things in men are the things they hold in common, not the things they hold separately. And the second principle is merely this: that the political instinct or desire is one of these things which they hold in common. Falling in love is more poetical than dropping into poetry. The democratic contention is that government (helping to rule the tribe) is a thing like falling in love, and not a thing like dropping into poetry. It is not something analogous to playing the church organ, painting on vellum, discovering the North Pole (that insidious habit), looping the loop, being Astronomer Royal, and so on. For these things we do not wish a man to do at all unless he does them well. It is, on the contrary, a thing analogous to writing one's own love-letters or blowing one's own nose. These things we want a man to do for himself, even if he does them badly. I am not here arguing the truth of any of these conceptions; I know that some moderns are asking to have their wives chosen by scientists, and they may soon be asking, for all I know, to have their noses blown by nurses. I merely say that mankind does recognize these universal human functions, and that democracy classes government among them. In short, the democratic faith is this: that the most terribly important things must be left to ordinary men themselves—the mating of the sexes, the rearing of the young, the laws of the state. This is democracy; and in this I have always believed.

But there is one thing that I have never from my youth up been able to understand. I have never been able to understand where people got the idea that democracy was in some way opposed to tradition. It is obvious that tradition is only democracy extended through time. It is trusting to a consensus of common human voices rather than to some isolated or arbitrary record. The man who quotes some German historian against the tradition of the Catholic Church, for instance, is strictly appealing to aristocracy. He is appealing to the superiority of one expert against the awful authority of a mob. It is quite easy to see why a legend is treated, and ought to be treated, more respectfully than a book of history. The legend is generally made by the majority of people in the village, who are sane. The book is generally written by the one man in the village who is mad. Those who urge against tradition that men in the past were ignorant may go and urge it at the Carlton Club, along with the statement that voters in the slums are ignorant. It will not do for us. If we attach great importance to the opinion of ordinary men in great unanimity when we are dealing with daily matters, there is no reason why we should disregard it when we are dealing with history or fable. Tradition may be defined as an extension of the franchise. Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about. All democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death. Democracy tells us not to neglect a good man's opinion, even if he is our groom; tradition asks us not to neglect a good man's opinion, even if he is our father. I, at any rate, cannot separate the two ideas of democracy and tradition; it seems evident to me that they are the same idea. We will have the dead at our councils. The ancient Greeks voted by stones; these shall vote by tombstones. It is all quite regular and official, for

most tombstones, like most ballot papers, are marked with a cross.

I have first to say, therefore, that if I have had a bias, it was always a bias in favour of democracy, and therefore of tradition. Before we come to any theoretic or logical beginnings I am content to allow for that personal equation; I have always been more inclined to believe the ruck of hard-working people than to believe that special and troublesome literary class to which I belong. I prefer even the fancies and prejudices of the people who see life from the inside to the clearest demonstrations of the people who see life from the outside. I would always trust the old wives' fables against the old maids' facts. As long as wit is mother wit it can be as wild as it pleases.

Now, I have to put together a general position, and I pretend to no training in such things. I propose to do it, therefore, by writing down one after another the three or four fundamental ideas which I have found for myself, pretty much in the way that I found them. Then I shall roughly synthesise them, summing up my personal philosophy or natural religion; then I shall describe my startling discovery that the whole thing had been discovered before. It had been discovered by Christianity. But of these profound persuasions which I have to recount in order, the earliest was concerned with this element of popular tradition. And without the foregoing explanation touching tradition and democracy I could hardly make my mental experience clear. As it is, I do not know whether I can make it clear, but I now propose to try.

My first and last philosophy, that which I believe in with unbroken certainty, I learnt in the nursery. I generally learnt it from a nurse; that is, from the solemn and star-appointed priestess at once of democracy and tradition. The things I believed most then, the things I believe most now, are the things called fairy tales. They seem to me to be the entirely reasonable things. They are not fantasies: compared with them other things are fantastic. Compared with them religion and rationalism are both abnormal, though religion is abnormally right and rationalism abnormally wrong. Fairyland is nothing but the sunny country of common sense. It is not earth that judges heaven, but heaven that judges earth; so for me at least it was not earth that criticised elfland, but elfland that criticised the earth. I knew the magic beanstalk before I had tasted beans; I was sure of the Man in the Moon before I was certain of the moon. This was at one with all popular tradition. Modern minor poets are naturalists, and talk about the bush or the brook; but the singers of the old epics and fables were supernaturalists, and talked about the gods of brook and bush. That is what the moderns mean when they say that the ancients did not "appreciate Nature," because they said that Nature was divine. Old nurses do not tell children about the grass, but about the fairies that dance on the grass; and the old Greeks could not see the trees for the dryads.

But I deal here with what ethic and philosophy come from being fed on fairy tales. If I were describing them in detail I could note many noble and healthy principles that arise from them. There is the chivalrous lesson of "Jack the Giant Killer"; that giants should be killed because they are gigantic. It is a manly mutiny against pride as such. For the rebel is older than all the kingdoms, and the Jacobin has more tradition than the Jacobite. There is the lesson of "Cinderella," which is the same as that of the Magnificat—EXALTAVIT HUMILES. There is the great lesson of "Beauty and the Beast"; that a thing must be loved BEFORE it is loveable. There is the terrible allegory of the "Sleeping Beauty," which tells how the hu-

man creature was blessed with all birthday gifts, yet cursed with death; and how death also may perhaps be softened to a sleep. But I am not concerned with any of the separate statutes of elfland, but with the whole spirit of its law, which I learnt before I could speak, and shall retain when I cannot write. I am concerned with a certain way of looking at life, which was created in me by the fairy tales, but has since been meekly ratified by the mere facts.

It might be stated this way. There are certain sequences or developments (cases of one thing following another), which are, in the true sense of the word, reasonable. They are, in the true sense of the word, necessary. Such are mathematical and merely logical sequences. We in fairyland (who are the most reasonable of all creatures) admit that reason and that necessity. For instance, if the Ugly Sisters are older than Cinderella, it is (in an iron and awful sense) NECESSARY that Cinderella is younger than the Ugly Sisters. There is no getting out of it. Haeckel may talk as much fatalism about that fact as he pleases: it really must be. If Jack is the son of a miller, a miller is the father of Jack. Cold reason decrees it from her awful throne: and we in fairyland submit. If the three brothers all ride horses, there are six animals and eighteen legs involved: that is true rationalism, and fairyland is full of it. But as I put my head over the hedge of the elves and began to take notice of the natural world, I observed an extraordinary thing. I observed that learned men in spectacles were talking of the actual things that happened—dawn and death and so on—as if THEY were rational and inevitable. They talked as if the fact that trees bear fruit were just as NECESSARY as the fact that two and one trees make three. But it is not. There is an enormous difference by the test of fairyland; which is the test of the imagination. You cannot IMAGINE two and one not making three. But you can easily imagine trees not growing fruit; you can imagine them growing golden candlesticks or tigers hanging on by the tail. These men in spectacles spoke much of a man named Newton, who was hit by an apple, and who discovered a law. But they could not be got to see the distinction between a true law, a law of reason, and the mere fact of apples falling. If the apple hit Newton's nose, Newton's nose hit the apple. That is a true necessity: because we cannot conceive the one occurring without the other. But we can quite well conceive the apple not falling on his nose; we can fancy it flying ardently through the air to hit some other nose, of which it had a more definite dislike. We have always in our fairy tales kept this sharp distinction between the science of mental relations, in which there really are laws, and the science of physical facts, in which there are no laws, but only weird repetitions. We believe in bodily miracles, but not in mental impossibilities. We believe that a Bean-stalk climbed up to Heaven; but that does not at all confuse our convictions on the philosophical question of how many beans make five.

Here is the peculiar perfection of tone and truth in the nursery tales. The man of science says, "Cut the stalk, and the apple will fall"; but he says it calmly, as if the one idea really led up to the other. The witch in the fairy tale says, "Blow the horn, and the ogre's castle will fall"; but she does not say it as if it were something in which the effect obviously arose out of the cause. Doubtless she has given the advice to many champions, and has seen many castles fall, but she does not lose either her wonder or her reason. She does not muddle her head until it imagines a necessary mental connection between a horn and a falling tower. But the scientific men do muddle their heads, until they imagine a necessary mental connection between an apple leaving the tree and an apple reaching the ground. They do really talk as if they had found not only a set of marvellous facts, but a truth connecting those facts. They do talk as

if the connection of two strange things physically connected them philosophically. They feel that because one incomprehensible thing constantly follows another incomprehensible thing the two together somehow make up a comprehensible thing. Two black riddles make a white answer.

In fairyland we avoid the word “law”; but in the land of science they are singularly fond of it. Thus they will call some interesting conjecture about how forgotten folks pronounced the alphabet, Grimm’s Law. But Grimm’s Law is far less intellectual than Grimm’s Fairy Tales. The tales are, at any rate, certainly tales; while the law is not a law. A law implies that we know the nature of the generalisation and enactment; not merely that we have noticed some of the effects. If there is a law that pick-pockets shall go to prison, it implies that there is an imaginable mental connection between the idea of prison and the idea of picking pockets. And we know what the idea is. We can say why we take liberty from a man who takes liberties. But we cannot say why an egg can turn into a chicken any more than we can say why a bear could turn into a fairy prince. As IDEAS, the egg and the chicken are further off from each other than the bear and the prince; for no egg in itself suggests a chicken, whereas some princes do suggest bears. Granted, then, that certain transformations do happen, it is essential that we should regard them in the philosophic manner of fairy tales, not in the unphilosophic manner of science and the “Laws of Nature.” When we are asked why eggs turn to birds or fruits fall in autumn, we must answer exactly as the fairy godmother would answer if Cinderella asked her why mice turned to horses or her clothes fell from her at twelve o’clock. We must answer that it is MAGIC. It is not a “law,” for we do not understand its general formula. It is not a necessity, for though we can count on it happening practically, we have no right to say that it must always happen. It is no argument for unalterable law (as Huxley fancied) that we count on the ordinary course of things. We do not count on it; we bet on it. We risk the remote possibility of a miracle as we do that of a poisoned pancake or a world-destroying comet. We leave it out of account, not because it is a miracle, and therefore an impossibility, but because it is a miracle, and therefore an exception. All the terms used in the science books, “law,” “necessity,” “order,” “tendency,” and so on, are really unintellectual, because they assume an inner synthesis, which we do not possess. The only words that ever satisfied me as describing Nature are the terms used in the fairy books, “charm,” “spell,” “enchantment.” They express the arbitrariness of the fact and its mystery. A tree grows fruit because it is a MAGIC tree. Water runs downhill because it is bewitched. The sun shines because it is bewitched.

I deny altogether that this is fantastic or even mystical. We may have some mysticism later on; but this fairy-tale language about things is simply rational and agnostic. It is the only way I can express in words my clear and definite perception that one thing is quite distinct from another; that there is no logical connection between flying and laying eggs. It is the man who talks about “a law” that he has never seen who is the mystic. Nay, the ordinary scientific man is strictly a sentimentalist. He is a sentimentalist in this essential sense, that he is soaked and swept away by mere associations. He has so often seen birds fly and lay eggs that he feels as if there must be some dreamy, tender connection between the two ideas, whereas there is none. A forlorn lover might be unable to dissociate the moon from lost love; so the materialist is unable to dissociate the moon from the tide. In both cases there is no connection, except that one has seen them together. A sentimentalist might shed tears at the smell of apple-blossom,

because, by a dark association of his own, it reminded him of his boyhood. So the materialist professor (though he conceals his tears) is yet a sentimentalist, because, by a dark association of his own, apple-blossoms remind him of apples. But the cool rationalist from fairyland does not see why, in the abstract, the apple tree should not grow crimson tulips; it sometimes does in his country.

This elementary wonder, however, is not a mere fancy derived from the fairy tales; on the contrary, all the fire of the fairy tales is derived from this. Just as we all like love tales because there is an instinct of sex, we all like astonishing tales because they touch the nerve of the ancient instinct of astonishment. This is proved by the fact that when we are very young children we do not need fairy tales: we only need tales. Mere life is interesting enough. A child of seven is excited by being told that Tommy opened a door and saw a dragon. But a child of three is excited by being told that Tommy opened a door. Boys like romantic tales; but babies like realistic tales—because they find them romantic. In fact, a baby is about the only person, I should think, to whom a modern realistic novel could be read without boring him. This proves that even nursery tales only echo an almost pre-natal leap of interest and amazement. These tales say that apples were golden only to refresh the forgotten moment when we found that they were green. They make rivers run with wine only to make us remember, for one wild moment, that they run with water. I have said that this is wholly reasonable and even agnostic. And, indeed, on this point I am all for the higher agnosticism; its better name is Ignorance. We have all read in scientific books, and, indeed, in all romances, the story of the man who has forgotten his name. This man walks about the streets and can see and appreciate everything; only he cannot remember who he is. Well, every man is that man in the story. Every man has forgotten who he is. One may understand the cosmos, but never the ego; the self is more distant than any star. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; but thou shalt not know thyself. We are all under the same mental calamity; we have all forgotten our names. We have all forgotten what we really are. All that we call common sense and rationality and practicality and positivism only means that for certain dead levels of our life we forget that we have forgotten. All that we call spirit and art and ecstasy only means that for one awful instant we remember that we forget.

But though (like the man without memory in the novel) we walk the streets with a sort of half-witted admiration, still it is admiration. It is admiration in English and not only admiration in Latin. The wonder has a positive element of praise. This is the next milestone to be definitely marked on our road through fairyland. I shall speak in the next chapter about optimists and pessimists in their intellectual aspect, so far as they have one. Here I am only trying to describe the enormous emotions which cannot be described. And the strongest emotion was that life was as precious as it was puzzling. It was an ecstasy because it was an adventure; it was an adventure because it was an opportunity. The goodness of the fairy tale was not affected by the fact that there might be more dragons than princesses; it was good to be in a fairy tale. The test of all happiness is gratitude; and I felt grateful, though I hardly knew to whom. Children are grateful when Santa Claus puts in their stockings gifts of toys or sweets. Could I not be grateful to Santa Claus when he put in my stockings the gift of two miraculous legs? We thank people for birthday presents of cigars and slippers. Can I thank no one for the birthday present of birth?

There were, then, these two first feelings, indefensible and indisputable. The world was a shock, but it was not merely shocking; existence was a surprise, but it was a pleasant surprise. In fact, all my first views were exactly uttered in a riddle that stuck in my brain from boyhood. The question was, "What did the first frog say?" And the answer was, "Lord, how you made me jump!" That says succinctly all that I am saying. God made the frog jump; but the frog prefers jumping. But when these things are settled there enters the second great principle of the fairy philosophy.

Any one can see it who will simply read "Grimm's Fairy Tales" or the fine collections of Mr. Andrew Lang. For the pleasure of pedantry I will call it the Doctrine of Conditional Joy. Touchstone talked of much virtue in an "if"; according to elfin ethics all virtue is in an "if." The note of the fairy utterance always is, "You may live in a palace of gold and sapphire, if you do not say the word 'cow'"; or "You may live happily with the King's daughter, if you do not show her an onion." The vision always hangs upon a veto. All the dizzy and colossal things conceded depend upon one small thing withheld. All the wild and whirling things that are let loose depend upon one thing that is forbidden. Mr. W. B. Yeats, in his exquisite and piercing elfin poetry, describes the elves as lawless; they plunge in innocent anarchy on the unbridled horses of the air—

"Ride on the crest of the dishevelled tide, And dance upon the mountains like a flame."

It is a dreadful thing to say that Mr. W. B. Yeats does not understand fairyland. But I do say it. He is an ironical Irishman, full of intellectual reactions. He is not stupid enough to understand fairyland. Fairies prefer people of the yokel type like myself; people who gape and grin and do as they are told. Mr. Yeats reads into elfland all the righteous insurrection of his own race. But the lawlessness of Ireland is a Christian lawlessness, founded on reason and justice. The Fenian is rebelling against something he understands only too well; but the true citizen of fairyland is obeying something that he does not understand at all. In the fairy tale an incomprehensible happiness rests upon an incomprehensible condition. A box is opened, and all evils fly out. A word is forgotten, and cities perish. A lamp is lit, and love flies away. A flower is plucked, and human lives are forfeited. An apple is eaten, and the hope of God is gone.

This is the tone of fairy tales, and it is certainly not lawlessness or even liberty, though men under a mean modern tyranny may think it liberty by comparison. People out of Portland Gaol might think Fleet Street free; but closer study will prove that both fairies and journalists are the slaves of duty. Fairy godmothers seem at least as strict as other godmothers. Cinderella received a coach out of Wonderland and a coachman out of nowhere, but she received a command—which might have come out of Brixton—that she should be back by twelve. Also, she had a glass slipper; and it cannot be a coincidence that glass is so common a substance in folk-lore. This princess lives in a glass castle, that princess on a glass hill; this one sees all things in a mirror; they may all live in glass houses if they will not throw stones. For this thin glitter of glass everywhere is the expression of the fact that the happiness is bright but brittle, like the substance most easily smashed by a housemaid or a cat. And this fairy-tale sentiment also sank into me and became my sentiment towards the whole world. I felt and feel that life itself is as bright as the diamond, but as brittle as the window-pane; and when the heavens

were compared to the terrible crystal I can remember a shudder. I was afraid that God would drop the cosmos with a crash.

Remember, however, that to be breakable is not the same as to be perishable. Strike a glass, and it will not endure an instant; simply do not strike it, and it will endure a thousand years. Such, it seemed, was the joy of man, either in elfland or on earth; the happiness depended on NOT DOING SOMETHING which you could at any moment do and which, very often, it was not obvious why you should not do. Now, the point here is that to ME this did not seem unjust. If the miller's third son said to the fairy, "Explain why I must not stand on my head in the fairy palace," the other might fairly reply, "Well, if it comes to that, explain the fairy palace." If Cinderella says, "How is it that I must leave the ball at twelve?" her godmother might answer, "How is it that you are going there till twelve?" If I leave a man in my will ten talking elephants and a hundred winged horses, he cannot complain if the conditions partake of the slight eccentricity of the gift. He must not look a winged horse in the mouth. And it seemed to me that existence was itself so very eccentric a legacy that I could not complain of not understanding the limitations of the vision when I did not understand the vision they limited. The frame was no stranger than the picture. The veto might well be as wild as the vision; it might be as startling as the sun, as elusive as the waters, as fantastic and terrible as the towering trees.

For this reason (we may call it the fairy godmother philosophy) I never could join the young men of my time in feeling what they called the general sentiment of REVOLT. I should have resisted, let us hope, any rules that were evil, and with these and their definition I shall deal in another chapter. But I did not feel disposed to resist any rule merely because it was mysterious. Estates are sometimes held by foolish forms, the breaking of a stick or the payment of a peppercorn: I was willing to hold the huge estate of earth and heaven by any such feudal fantasy. It could not well be wilder than the fact that I was allowed to hold it at all. At this stage I give only one ethical instance to show my meaning. I could never mix in the common murmur of that rising generation against monogamy, because no restriction on sex seemed so odd and unexpected as sex itself. To be allowed, like Endymion, to make love to the moon and then to complain that Jupiter kept his own moons in a harem seemed to me (bred on fairy tales like Endymion's) a vulgar anti-climax. Keeping to one woman is a small price for so much as seeing one woman. To complain that I could only be married once was like complaining that I had only been born once. It was incommensurate with the terrible excitement of which one was talking. It showed, not an exaggerated sensibility to sex, but a curious insensibility to it. A man is a fool who complains that he cannot enter Eden by five gates at once. Polygamy is a lack of the realization of sex; it is like a man plucking five pears in mere absence of mind. The aesthetes touched the last insane limits of language in their eulogy on lovely things. The thistledown made them weep; a burnished beetle brought them to their knees. Yet their emotion never impressed me for an instant, for this reason, that it never occurred to them to pay for their pleasure in any sort of symbolic sacrifice. Men (I felt) might fast forty days for the sake of hearing a blackbird sing. Men might go through fire to find a cowslip. Yet these lovers of beauty could not even keep sober for the blackbird. They would not go through common Christian marriage by way of recompense to the cowslip. Surely one might pay for extraordinary joy in ordinary morals. Oscar Wilde said that sunsets were not valued because we could not pay for sunsets. But Oscar Wilde was wrong; we can pay for

sunsets. We can pay for them by not being Oscar Wilde.

Well, I left the fairy tales lying on the floor of the nursery, and I have not found any books so sensible since. I left the nurse guardian of tradition and democracy, and I have not found any modern type so sanely radical or so sanely conservative. But the matter for important comment was here: that when I first went out into the mental atmosphere of the modern world, I found that the modern world was positively opposed on two points to my nurse and to the nursery tales. It has taken me a long time to find out that the modern world is wrong and my nurse was right. The really curious thing was this: that modern thought contradicted this basic creed of my boyhood on its two most essential doctrines. I have explained that the fairy tales founded in me two convictions; first, that this world is a wild and startling place, which might have been quite different, but which is quite delightful; second, that before this wildness and delight one may well be modest and submit to the queerest limitations of so queer a kindness. But I found the whole modern world running like a high tide against both my tenderesses; and the shock of that collision created two sudden and spontaneous sentiments, which I have had ever since and which, crude as they were, have since hardened into convictions.

First, I found the whole modern world talking scientific fatalism; saying that everything is as it must always have been, being unfolded without fault from the beginning. The leaf on the tree is green because it could never have been anything else. Now, the fairy-tale philosopher is glad that the leaf is green precisely because it might have been scarlet. He feels as if it had turned green an instant before he looked at it. He is pleased that snow is white on the strictly reasonable ground that it might have been black. Every colour has in it a bold quality as of choice; the red of garden roses is not only decisive but dramatic, like suddenly spilt blood. He feels that something has been DONE. But the great determinists of the nineteenth century were strongly against this native feeling that something had happened an instant before. In fact, according to them, nothing ever really had happened since the beginning of the world. Nothing ever had happened since existence had happened; and even about the date of that they were not very sure.

The modern world as I found it was solid for modern Calvinism, for the necessity of things being as they are. But when I came to ask them I found they had really no proof of this unavoidable repetition in things except the fact that the things were repeated. Now, the mere repetition made the things to me rather more weird than more rational. It was as if, having seen a curiously shaped nose in the street and dismissed it as an accident, I had then seen six other noses of the same astonishing shape. I should have fancied for a moment that it must be some local secret society. So one elephant having a trunk was odd; but all elephants having trunks looked like a plot. I speak here only of an emotion, and of an emotion at once stubborn and subtle. But the repetition in Nature seemed sometimes to be an excited repetition, like that of an angry schoolmaster saying the same thing over and over again. The grass seemed signalling to me with all its fingers at once; the crowded stars seemed bent upon being understood. The sun would make me see him if he rose a thousand times. The recurrences of the universe rose to the maddening rhythm of an incantation, and I began to see an idea.

All the towering materialism which dominates the modern mind rests ultimately upon one assumption; a false assumption. It is supposed that if a thing goes on repeating itself it is probably dead; a piece of clockwork. People feel that if the universe was personal it would vary; if the sun were alive it would dance. This is a fallacy even in relation to known fact. For the variation in human affairs is generally brought into them, not by life, but by death; by the dying down or breaking off of their strength or desire. A man varies his movements because of some slight element of failure or fatigue. He gets into an omnibus because he is tired of walking; or he walks because he is tired of sitting still. But if his life and joy were so gigantic that he never tired of going to Islington, he might go to Islington as regularly as the Thames goes to Sheerness. The very speed and ecstasy of his life would have the stillness of death. The sun rises every morning. I do not rise every morning; but the variation is due not to my activity, but to my inaction. Now, to put the matter in a popular phrase, it might be true that the sun rises regularly because he never gets tired of rising. His routine might be due, not to a lifelessness, but to a rush of life. The thing I mean can be seen, for instance, in children, when they find some game or joke that they specially enjoy. A child kicks his legs rhythmically through excess, not absence, of life. Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we. The repetition in Nature may not be a mere recurrence; it may be a theatrical ENCORE. Heaven may ENCORE the bird who laid an egg. If the human being conceives and brings forth a human child instead of bringing forth a fish, or a bat, or a griffin, the reason may not be that we are fixed in an animal fate without life or purpose. It may be that our little tragedy has touched the gods, that they admire it from their starry galleries, and that at the end of every human drama man is called again and again before the curtain. Repetition may go on for millions of years, by mere choice, and at any instant it may stop. Man may stand on the earth generation after generation, and yet each birth be his positively last appearance.

This was my first conviction; made by the shock of my childish emotions meeting the modern creed in mid-career. I had always vaguely felt facts to be miracles in the sense that they are wonderful: now I began to think them miracles in the stricter sense that they were WILFUL. I mean that they were, or might be, repeated exercises of some will. In short, I had always believed that the world involved magic: now I thought that perhaps it involved a magician. And this pointed a profound emotion always present and sub-conscious; that this world of ours has some purpose; and if there is a purpose, there is a person. I had always felt life first as a story: and if there is a story there is a story-teller.

But modern thought also hit my second human tradition. It went against the fairy feeling about strict limits and conditions. The one thing it loved to talk about was expansion and largeness. Herbert Spencer would have been greatly annoyed if any one had called him an imperialist, and therefore it is highly regrettable that nobody did. But he was an imperialist

of the lowest type. He popularized this contemptible notion that the size of the solar system ought to over-awe the spiritual dogma of man. Why should a man surrender his dignity to the solar system any more than to a whale? If mere size proves that man is not the image of God, then a whale may be the image of God; a somewhat formless image; what one might call an impressionist portrait. It is quite futile to argue that man is small compared to the cosmos; for man was always small compared to the nearest tree. But Herbert Spencer, in his headlong imperialism, would insist that we had in some way been conquered and annexed by the astronomical universe. He spoke about men and their ideals exactly as the most insolent Unionist talks about the Irish and their ideals. He turned mankind into a small nationality. And his evil influence can be seen even in the most spirited and honourable of later scientific authors; notably in the early romances of Mr. H.G. Wells. Many moralists have in an exaggerated way represented the earth as wicked. But Mr. Wells and his school made the heavens wicked. We should lift up our eyes to the stars from whence would come our ruin.

But the expansion of which I speak was much more evil than all this. I have remarked that the materialist, like the madman, is in prison; in the prison of one thought. These people seemed to think it singularly inspiring to keep on saying that the prison was very large. The size of this scientific universe gave one no novelty, no relief. The cosmos went on for ever, but not in its wildest constellation could there be anything really interesting; anything, for instance, such as forgiveness or free will. The grandeur or infinity of the secret of its cosmos added nothing to it. It was like telling a prisoner in Reading gaol that he would be glad to hear that the gaol now covered half the county. The warder would have nothing to show the man except more and more long corridors of stone lit by ghastly lights and empty of all that is human. So these expanders of the universe had nothing to show us except more and more infinite corridors of space lit by ghastly suns and empty of all that is divine.

In fairyland there had been a real law; a law that could be broken, for the definition of a law is something that can be broken. But the machinery of this cosmic prison was something that could not be broken; for we ourselves were only a part of its machinery. We were either unable to do things or we were destined to do them. The idea of the mystical condition quite disappeared; one can neither have the firmness of keeping laws nor the fun of breaking them. The largeness of this universe had nothing of that freshness and airy outbreak which we have praised in the universe of the poet. This modern universe is literally an empire; that is, it was vast, but it is not free. One went into larger and larger windowless rooms, rooms big with Babylonian perspective; but one never found the smallest window or a whisper of outer air.

Their infernal parallels seemed to expand with distance; but for me all good things come to a point, swords for instance. So finding the boast of the big cosmos so unsatisfactory to my emotions I began to argue about it a little; and I soon found that the whole attitude was even shallower than could have been expected. According to these people the cosmos was one thing since it had one unbroken rule. Only (they would say) while it is one thing, it is also the only thing there is. Why, then, should one worry particularly to call it large? There is nothing to compare it with. It would be just as sensible to call it small. A man may say, "I like this vast cosmos, with its throng of stars and its crowd of varied creatures." But if it comes to that why should not a man say, "I like this cosy little cosmos, with its decent number of stars and as neat a provision of live stock as I wish to see"? One is as good as the

other; they are both mere sentiments. It is mere sentiment to rejoice that the sun is larger than the earth; it is quite as sane a sentiment to rejoice that the sun is no larger than it is. A man chooses to have an emotion about the largeness of the world; why should he not choose to have an emotion about its smallness?

It happened that I had that emotion. When one is fond of anything one addresses it by diminutives, even if it is an elephant or a life-guardsmen. The reason is, that anything, however huge, that can be conceived of as complete, can be conceived of as small. If military moustaches did not suggest a sword or tusks a tail, then the object would be vast because it would be immeasurable. But the moment you can imagine a guardsman you can imagine a small guardsman. The moment you really see an elephant you can call it "Tiny." If you can make a statue of a thing you can make a statuette of it. These people professed that the universe was one coherent thing; but they were not fond of the universe. But I was frightfully fond of the universe and wanted to address it by a diminutive. I often did so; and it never seemed to mind. Actually and in truth I did feel that these dim dogmas of vitality were better expressed by calling the world small than by calling it large. For about infinity there was a sort of carelessness which was the reverse of the fierce and pious care which I felt touching the pricelessness and the peril of life. They showed only a dreary waste; but I felt a sort of sacred thrift. For economy is far more romantic than extravagance. To them stars were an unending income of halfpence; but I felt about the golden sun and the silver moon as a schoolboy feels if he has one sovereign and one shilling.

These subconscious convictions are best hit off by the colour and tone of certain tales. Thus I have said that stories of magic alone can express my sense that life is not only a pleasure but a kind of eccentric privilege. I may express this other feeling of cosmic cosiness by allusion to another book always read in boyhood, "Robinson Crusoe," which I read about this time, and which owes its eternal vivacity to the fact that it celebrates the poetry of limits, nay, even the wild romance of prudence. Crusoe is a man on a small rock with a few comforts just snatched from the sea: the best thing in the book is simply the list of things saved from the wreck. The greatest of poems is an inventory. Every kitchen tool becomes ideal because Crusoe might have dropped it in the sea. It is a good exercise, in empty or ugly hours of the day, to look at anything, the coal-scuttle or the book-case, and think how happy one could be to have brought it out of the sinking ship on to the solitary island. But it is a better exercise still to remember how all things have had this hair-breadth escape: everything has been saved from a wreck. Every man has had one horrible adventure: as a hidden untimely birth he had not been, as infants that never see the light. Men spoke much in my boyhood of restricted or ruined men of genius: and it was common to say that many a man was a Great Might-Have-Been. To me it is a more solid and startling fact that any man in the street is a Great Might-Not-Have-Been.

But I really felt (the fancy may seem foolish) as if all the order and number of things were the romantic remnant of Crusoe's ship. That there are two sexes and one sun, was like the fact that there were two guns and one axe. It was poignantly urgent that none should be lost; but somehow, it was rather fun that none could be added. The trees and the planets seemed like things saved from the wreck: and when I saw the Matterhorn I was glad that it had not been overlooked in the confusion. I felt economical about the stars as if they were sapphires (they

are called so in Milton's Eden): I hoarded the hills. For the universe is a single jewel, and while it is a natural cant to talk of a jewel as peerless and priceless, of this jewel it is literally true. This cosmos is indeed without peer and without price: for there cannot be another one.

Thus ends, in unavoidable inadequacy, the attempt to utter the unutterable things. These are my ultimate attitudes towards life; the soils for the seeds of doctrine. These in some dark way I thought before I could write, and felt before I could think: that we may proceed more easily afterwards, I will roughly recapitulate them now. I felt in my bones; first, that this world does not explain itself. It may be a miracle with a supernatural explanation; it may be a conjuring trick, with a natural explanation. But the explanation of the conjuring trick, if it is to satisfy me, will have to be better than the natural explanations I have heard. The thing is magic, true or false. Second, I came to feel as if magic must have a meaning, and meaning must have some one to mean it. There was something personal in the world, as in a work of art; whatever it meant it meant violently. Third, I thought this purpose beautiful in its old design, in spite of its defects, such as dragons. Fourth, that the proper form of thanks to it is some form of humility and restraint: we should thank God for beer and Burgundy by not drinking too much of them. We owed, also, an obedience to whatever made us. And last, and strangest, there had come into my mind a vague and vast impression that in some way all good was a remnant to be stored and held sacred out of some primordial ruin. Man had saved his good as Crusoe saved his goods: he had saved them from a wreck. All this I felt and the age gave me no encouragement to feel it. And all this time I had not even thought of Christian theology.

On Fairy-Stories

J. R. R. Tolkien

When describing his conversion to Christianity, C. S. Lewis remarked: “What Tolkien showed me was this...the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened.”⁴ In the following essay you will read this argument in Tolkien’s words.

At *Apologia* we hold two things dear about this piece. The first is the intimate connection between truth and joy. As we rigorously pursue truth we hope that our pages reflect the freshness, liveliness, and freedom that come from knowing the “eucatastrophic joy” at the center of reality. The second is Tolkien’s brilliant and subtle example of apologetic structure. In his treatment of joy, we see Tolkien examine this universal human experience, implicitly suggest its irrationality in a materialist worldview, and then show how it is both rich and rational in the Christian narrative. At the end, we are left one step closer to seeing how Christianity coherently explains reality.

-Andrew Schuman ‘10

This “joy” which I have selected as the mark of the true fairy-story (or romance), or as the seal upon it, merits more consideration.

Probably every writer making a secondary world, a fantasy, every sub-creator, wishes in some measure to be a real maker, or hopes that he is drawing on reality: hopes that the peculiar quality of this secondary world (if not all the details) are derived from Reality, or are flowing into it. If he indeed achieves a quality that can fairly be described by the dictionary definition: “inner consistency of reality,” it is difficult to conceive how this can be, if the work does not in some way partake of reality. The peculiar quality of the “joy” in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth. It is not only a “consolation” for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction, and an answer to that question, “Is it true?” The answer to this question that I gave at first was (quite rightly): “If you have built your little world well, yes: it is true in that world.” That is enough for the artist (or the artist part of the artist). But in the “eucatastrophe” we see in a brief vision that the answer may be greater—it may be a far-off gleam or echo of evangelium in the real world. The use of this word gives a hint of my epilogue. It is a serious and dangerous matter. It is presumptuous of me to touch upon such a theme; but if by grace what I say has in any respect any validity, it is, of course, only one facet of a truth incalculably rich: finite only because the capacity of Man for whom this was done is finite.

I would venture to say that approaching the Christian Story from this direction, it has long been my feeling (a joyous feeling) that God redeemed the corrupt making-creatures, men, in a way fitting to this aspect, as to others, of their strange nature. The Gospels contain a fairy story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories. They contain many marvels—peculiarly artistic, beautiful, and moving: “mythical” in their perfect, self-

4 C.S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, p.977

contained significance; and among the marvels is the greatest and most complete conceivable eucatastrophe. But this story has entered History and the primary world; the desire and aspiration of sub-creation has been raised to the fulfillment of Creation. The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man's history. The Resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation. This story begins and ends in joy. It has pre-eminently the "inner consistency of reality." There is no tale ever told that men would rather find was true, and none which so many sceptical men have accepted as true on its own merits. For the Art of it has the supremely convincing tone of Primary Art, that is, of Creation. To reject it leads either to sadness or to wrath.

It is not difficult to imagine the peculiar excitement and joy that one would feel, if any specially beautiful fairy-story were found to be "primarily" true, its narrative to be history, without thereby necessarily losing the mythical or allegorical significance that it had possessed. It is not difficult, for one is not called upon to try and conceive anything of a quality unknown. The joy would have exactly the same quality, if not the same degree, as the joy which the "turn" in a fairy-story gives: such joy has the very taste of primary truth. (Otherwise its name would not be joy.) It looks forward (or backward: the direction in this regard is unimportant) to the Great Eucatastrophe. The Christian joy, the Gloria, is of the same kind; but it is preeminently (infinitely, if our capacity were not finite) high and joyous. But this story is supreme; and it is true. Art has been verified. God is the Lord, of angels, and of men—and of elves. Legend and History have met and fused.

But in God's kingdom the presence of the greatest does not depress the small. Redeemed Man is still man. Story, fantasy, still go on, and should go on. The Evangelium has not abrogated legends; it has hallowed them, especially the "happy ending." The Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die; but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed. So great is the bounty with which he has been treated that he may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in Fantasy he may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. All tales may come true; and yet, at the last, redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike the forms that we give them as Man, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen that we know.

The Weight of Glory

C. S. Lewis

This essay is principally important to the *Apologia* for two main reasons. First, it models rigorous Christian thought applied to common defeater beliefs (beliefs that prevent people from serious consideration of Christianity). Lewis is constantly, though often implicitly, considering popular defeater beliefs or attitudes and correcting them. He plays excellent defense in this article. We aspire to this kind of argumentation.

Second, his main theme in this article is Christian Humanism, that Christian attitude which takes seriously nature, world, and the human person, seeing them as intrinsically valuable insofar as they were created good by God and reaffirmed in their goodness by the Incarnation of Christ. Nature and grace are not sharply discontinuous; rather, the latter fulfills the former. Lewis' Christian Humanism, along with his writings on desire (watch for his famous "argument from desire" in the below essay), is perhaps his greatest contribution to Christian thought.

- Peter Blair '12

If you asked twenty good men to-day what they thought the highest of the virtues, nineteen of them would reply, Unselfishness. But if you asked almost any of the great Christians of old he would have replied, Love. You see what has happened? A negative term has been substituted for a positive, and this is of more than philological importance. The negative ideal of Unselfishness carries with it the suggestion not primarily of securing good things for others, but of going without them ourselves, as if our abstinence and not their happiness was the important point. I do not think this is the Christian virtue of Love. The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

We must not be troubled by unbelievers when they say that this promise of reward makes the Christian life a mercenary affair. There are different kinds of reward. There is the reward which has no natural connexion with the things you do to earn it, and is quite foreign to the desires that ought to accompany those things. Money is not the natural reward of love; that is why we call a man mercenary if he marries a woman for the sake of her money. But marriage is the proper reward for a real lover, and he is not mercenary for desiring it. A general who fights well in order to get a peerage is mercenary; a general who fights for victory is not,

victory being the proper reward of battle as marriage is the proper reward of love. The proper rewards are not simply tacked on to the activity for which they are given, but are the activity itself in consummation. There is also a third case, which is more complicated. An enjoyment of Greek poetry is certainly a proper, and not a mercenary, reward for learning Greek; but only those who have reached the stage of enjoying Greek poetry can tell from their own experience that this is so. The schoolboy beginning Greek grammar cannot look forward to his adult enjoyment of Sophocles as a lover looks forward to marriage or a general to victory. He has to begin by working for marks, or to escape punishment, or to please his parents, or, at best, in the hope of a future good which he cannot at present imagine or desire. His position, therefore, bears a certain resemblance to that of the mercenary; the reward he is going to get will, in actual fact, be a natural or proper reward, but he will not know that till he has got it. Of course, he gets it gradually; enjoyment creeps in upon the mere drudgery, and nobody could point to a day or an hour when the one ceased and the other began. But it is just in so far as he approaches the reward that he becomes able to desire it for its own sake; indeed, the power of so desiring it is itself a preliminary reward.

The Christian, in relation to heaven, is in much the same position as this schoolboy. Those who have attained everlasting life in the vision of God doubtless know very well that it is no mere bribe, but the very consummation of their earthly discipleship; but we who have not yet attained it cannot know this in the same way, and cannot even begin to know it at all except by continuing to obey and finding the first reward of our obedience in our increasing power to desire the ultimate reward. Just in proportion as the desire grows, our fear lest it should be a mercenary desire will die away and finally be recognized as an absurdity. But probably this will not, for most of us, happen in a day; poetry replaces grammar, gospel replaces law, long-ing transforms obedience, as gradually as the tide lifts a grounded ship.

But there is one other important similarity between the schoolboy and ourselves. If he is an imaginative boy he will, quite probably, be revelling in the English poets and romancers suitable to his age some time before he begins to suspect that Greek grammar is going to lead him to more and more enjoyments of this same sort. He may even be neglecting his Greek to read Shelley and Swinburne in secret. In other words, the desire which Greek is really going to gratify already exists in him and is attached to objects which seem to him quite unconnected with Xenophon and the verbs in μ . Now, if we are made for heaven, the desire for our proper place will be already in us, but not yet attached to the true object, and will even appear as the rival of that object. And this, I think, is just what we find. No doubt there is one point in which my analogy of the schoolboy breaks down. The English poetry which he reads when he ought to be doing Greek exercises may be just as good as the Greek poetry to which the exercises are leading him, so that in fixing on Milton instead of journeying on to Aeschylus his desire is not embracing a false object. But our case is very different. If a transtemporal, transfinite good is our real destiny, then any other good on which our desire fixes must be in some degree fallacious, must bear at best only a symbolical relation to what will truly satisfy.

In speaking of this desire for our own far-off country, which we find in ourselves even now, I feel a certain shyness. I am almost committing an indecency. I am trying to rip open the inconsolable secret in each one of you—the secret which hurts so much that you take your revenge on it by calling it names like Nostalgia and Romanticism and Adolescence; the secret

also which pierces with such sweetness that when, in very intimate conversation, the mention of it becomes imminent, we grow awkward and affect to laugh at ourselves; the secret we cannot hide and cannot tell, though we desire to do both. We cannot tell it because it is a desire for something that has never actually appeared in our experience. We cannot hide it because our experience is constantly suggesting it, and we betray ourselves like lovers at the mention of a name. Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter. Wordsworth's expedient was to identify it with certain moments in his own past. But all this is a cheat. If Wordsworth had gone back to those moments in the past, he would not have found the thing itself, but only the reminder of it; what he remembered would turn out to be itself a remembering. The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited. Do you think I am trying to weave a spell? Perhaps I am; but remember your fairy tales. Spells are used for breaking enchantments as well as for inducing them.

And you and I have need of the strongest spell that can be found to wake us from the evil enchantment of worldliness which has been laid upon us for nearly a hundred years. Almost our whole education has been directed to silencing this shy, persistent, inner voice; almost all our modern philosophies have been devised to convince us that the good of man is to be found on this earth. And yet it is a remarkable thing that such philosophies of Progress or Creative Evolution themselves bear reluctant witness to the truth that our real goal is elsewhere. When they want to convince you that earth is your home, notice how they set about it. They begin by trying to persuade you that earth can be made into heaven, thus giving a sop to your sense of exile in earth as it is. Next, they tell you that this fortunate event is still a good way off in the future, thus giving a sop to your knowledge that the fatherland is not here and now. Finally, lest your longing for the transtemporal should awake and spoil the whole affair, they use any rhetoric that comes to hand to keep out of your mind the recollection that even if all the happiness they promised could come to man on earth, yet still each generation would lose it by death, including the last generation of all, and the whole story would be nothing, not even a story, for ever and ever. Hence all the nonsense that Mr. Shaw puts into the final speech of Lilith, and Bergson's remark that the *élan vital* is capable of surmounting all obstacles, perhaps even death—as if we could believe that any social or biological development on this planet will delay the senility of the sun or reverse the second law of thermodynamics.

Do what they will, then, we remain conscious of a desire which no natural happiness will satisfy. But is there any reason to suppose that reality offers any satisfaction to it? "Nor does the being hungry prove that we have bread." But I think it may be urged that this misses the point. A man's physical hunger does not prove that that man will get any bread; he may die of starvation on a raft in the Atlantic. But surely a man's hunger does prove that he comes of a race which repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist. In the same way, though I do not believe (I wish I did) that my desire for Paradise proves that I shall enjoy it, I think it a pretty good indication that such a thing exists and that some men

will. A man may love a woman and not win her; but it would be very odd if the phenomenon called “falling in love” occurred in a sexless world.

Here, then, is the desire, still wandering and uncertain of its object and still largely unable to see that object in the direction where it really lies. Our sacred books give us some account of the object. It is, of course, a symbolical account. Heaven is, by definition, outside our experience, but all intelligible descriptions must be of things within our experience. The scriptural picture of heaven is therefore just as symbolical as the picture which our desire, unaided, invents for itself; heaven is not really full of jewelry any more than it is really the beauty of Nature, or a fine piece of music. The difference is that the scriptural imagery has authority. It comes to us from writers who were closer to God than we, and it has stood the test of Christian experience down the centuries. The natural appeal of this authoritative imagery is to me, at first, very small. At first sight it chills, rather than awakes, my desire. And that is just what I ought to expect. If Christianity could tell me no more of the far-off land than my own temperament led me to surmise already, then Christianity would be no higher than myself. If it has more to give me, I must expect it to be less immediately attractive than “my own stuff.” Sophocles at first seems dull and cold to the boy who has only reached Shelley. If our religion is something objective, then we must never avert our eyes from those elements in it which seem puzzling or repellent; for it will be precisely the puzzling or the repellent which conceals what we do not yet know and need to know.

The promises of Scripture may very roughly be reduced to five heads. It is promised, firstly, that we shall be with Christ; secondly, that we shall be like Him; thirdly, with an enormous wealth of imagery, that we shall have “glory”; fourthly, that we shall, in some sense, be fed or feasted or entertained; and, finally, that we shall have some sort of official position in the universe—ruling cities, judging angels, being pillars of God’s temple. The first question I ask about these promises is: “Why any of them except the first?” Can anything be added to the conception of being with Christ? For it must be true, as an old writer says, that he who has God and everything else has no more than he who has God only. I think the answer turns again on the nature of symbols. For though it may escape our notice at first glance, yet it is true that any conception of being with Christ which most of us can now form will be not very much less symbolical than the other promises; for it will smuggle in ideas of proximity in space and loving conversation as we now understand conversation, and it will probably concentrate on the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of His deity. And, in fact, we find that those Christians who attend solely to this first promise always do fill it up with very earthly imagery indeed—in fact, with hymeneal or erotic imagery. I am not for a moment condemning such imagery. I heartily wish I could enter into it more deeply than I do, and pray that I yet shall. But my point is that this also is only a symbol, like the reality in some respects, but unlike it in others, and therefore needs correction from the different symbols in the other promises. The variation of the promises does not mean that anything other than God will be our ultimate bliss; but because God is more than a Person, and lest we should imagine the joy of His presence too exclusively in terms of our present poor experience of personal love, with all its narrowness and strain and monotony, a dozen changing images, correcting and relieving each other, are supplied.

I turn next to the idea of glory. There is no getting away from the fact that this idea is very

prominent in the New Testament and in early Christian writings. Salvation is constantly associated with palms, crowns, white robes, thrones, and splendour like the sun and stars. All this makes no immediate appeal to me at all, and in that respect I fancy I am a typical modern. Glory suggests two ideas to me, of which one seems wicked and the other ridiculous. Either glory means to me fame, or it means luminosity. As for the first, since to be famous means to be better known than other people, the desire for fame appears to me as a competitive passion and therefore of hell rather than heaven. As for the second, who wishes to become a kind of living electric light bulb?

When I began to look into this matter I was shocked to find such different Christians as Milton, Johnson and Thomas Aquinas taking heavenly glory quite frankly in the sense of fame or good report. But not fame conferred by our fellow creatures—fame with God, approval or (I might say) ‘appreciation’ by God. And then, when I had thought it over, I saw that this view was scriptural; nothing can eliminate from the parable the divine accolade, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” With that, a good deal of what I had been thinking all my life fell down like a house of cards. I suddenly remembered that no one can enter heaven except as a child; and nothing is so obvious in a child—not in a conceited child, but in a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised. Not only in a child, either, but even in a dog or a horse. Apparently what I had mistaken for humility had, all these years, prevented me from understanding what is in fact the humblest, the most childlike, the most creaturely of pleasures—nay, the specific pleasure of the inferior: the pleasure a beast before men, a child before its father, a pupil before his teacher, a creature before its Creator. I am not forgetting how horribly this most innocent desire is parodied in our human ambitions, or how very quickly, in my own experience, the lawful pleasure of praise from those whom it was my duty to please turns into the deadly poison of self-admiration. But I thought I could detect a moment—a very, very short moment—before this happened, during which the satisfaction of having pleased those whom I rightly loved and rightly feared was pure. And that is enough to raise our thoughts to what may happen when the redeemed soul, beyond all hope and nearly beyond belief, learns at last that she has pleased Him whom she was created to please. There will be no room for vanity then. She will be free from the miserable illusion that it is her doing. With no taint of what we should now call self-approval she will most innocently rejoice in the thing that God has made her to be, and the moment which heals her old inferiority complex for ever will also drown her pride deeper than Prospero’s book. Perfect humility dispenses with modesty. If God is satisfied with the work, the work may be satisfied with itself; “it is not for her to bandy compliments with her Sovereign.” I can imagine someone saying that he dislikes my idea of heaven as a place where we are patted on the back. But proud misunderstanding is behind that dislike. In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised. I read in a periodical the other day that the fundamental thing is how we think of God. By God Himself, it is not! How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except in so far as it is related to how He thinks of us. It is written that we shall “stand before” Him, shall appear, shall be inspected. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that

examination, shall find approval, shall please God. To please God...to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness...to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is.

And now notice what is happening. If I had rejected the authoritative and scriptural image of glory and stuck obstinately to the vague desire which was, at the outset, my only pointer to heaven, I could have seen no connexion at all between that desire and the Christian promise. But now, having followed up what seemed puzzling and repellent in the sacred books, I find, to my great surprise, looking back, that the connexion is perfectly clear. Glory, as Christianity teaches me to hope for it, turns out to satisfy my original desire and indeed to reveal an element in that desire which I had not noticed. By ceasing for a moment to consider my own wants I have begun to learn better what I really wanted. When I attempted, a few minutes ago, to describe our spiritual longings, I was omitting one of their most curious characteristics. We usually notice it just as the moment of vision dies away, as the music ends or as the landscape loses the celestial light. What we feel then has been well described by Keats as “the journey homeward to habitual self.” You know what I mean. For a few minutes we have had the illusion of belonging to that world. Now we wake to find that it is no such thing. We have been mere spectators. Beauty has smiled, but not to welcome us; her face was turned in our direction, but not to see us. We have not been accepted, welcomed, or taken into the dance. We may go when we please, we may stay if we can: “Nobody marks us.” A scientist may reply that since most of the things we call beautiful are inanimate, it is not very surprising that they take no notice of us. That, of course, is true. It is not the physical objects that I am speaking of, but that indescribable something of which they become for a moment the messengers. And part of the bitterness which mixes with the sweetness of that message is due to the fact that it so seldom seems to be a message intended for us but rather something we have overheard. By bitterness I mean pain, not resentment. We should hardly dare to ask that any notice be taken of ourselves. But we pine. The sense that in this universe we are treated as strangers, the longing to be acknowledged, to meet with some response, to bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality, is part of our inconsolable secret. And surely, from this point of view, the promise of glory, in the sense described, becomes highly relevant to our deep desire. For glory meant good report with God, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgment, and welcome into the heart of things. The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last.

Perhaps it seems rather crude to describe glory as the fact of being “noticed” by God. But this is almost the language of the New Testament. St. Paul promises to those who love God not, as we should expect, that they will know Him, but that they will be known by Him (I Cor. viii. 3). It is a strange promise. Does not God know all things at all times? But it is dreadfully re-echoed in another passage of the New Testament. There we are warned that it may happen to any one of us to appear at last before the face of God and hear only the appalling words: “I never knew you. Depart from Me.” In some sense, as dark to the intellect as it is unendurable to the feelings, we can be both banished from the presence of Him who is present everywhere and erased from the knowledge of Him who knows all. We can be left utterly and absolutely outside—repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored. On the other hand, we can be called in, welcomed, received, acknowledged. We walk every day on

the razor edge between these two incredible possibilities. Apparently, then, our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation. And to be at last summoned inside would be both glory and honour beyond all our merits and also the healing of that old ache.

And this brings me to the other sense of glory—glory as brightness, splendour, luminosity. We are to shine as the sun, we are to be given the Morning Star. I think I begin to see what it means. In one way, of course, God has given us the Morning Star already: you can go and enjoy the gift on many fine mornings if you get up early enough. What more, you may ask, do we want? Ah, but we want so much more—something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves—that, though we cannot, yet these projections can, enjoy in themselves that beauty grace, and power of which Nature is the image. That is why the poets tell us such lovely falsehoods. They talk as if the west wind could really sweep into a human soul; but it can't. They tell us that “beauty born of murmuring sound” will pass into a human face; but it won't. Or not yet. For if we take the imagery of Scripture seriously, if we believe that God will one day give us the Morning Star and cause us to put on the splendour of the sun, then we may surmise that both the ancient myths and the modern poetry, so false as history, may be very near the truth as prophecy. At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in. When human souls have become as perfect in voluntary obedience as the inanimate creation is in its lifeless obedience, then they will put on its glory, or rather that greater glory of which Nature is only the first sketch. For you must not think that I am putting forward any heathen fancy of being absorbed into Nature. Nature is mortal; we shall outlive her. When all the suns and nebulae have passed away, each one of you will still be alive. Nature is only the image, the symbol; but it is the symbol Scripture invites me to use. We are summoned to pass in through Nature, beyond her, into that splendour which she fitfully reflects.

And in there, in beyond Nature, we shall eat of the tree of life. At present, if we are reborn in Christ, the spirit in us lives directly on God; but the mind, and still more the body, receives life from Him at a thousand removes—through our ancestors, through our food, through the elements. The faint, far-off results of those energies which God's creative rapture implanted in matter when He made the worlds are what we now call physical pleasures; and even thus filtered, they are too much for our present management. What would it be to taste at the fountain-head that stream of which even these lower reaches prove so intoxicating? Yet that, I believe, is what lies before us. The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain of joy. As St. Augustine said, the rapture of the saved soul will “flow over” into the glorified body. In the light of our present specialized and depraved appetites we cannot imagine this *torrens voluptatis*, and I warn everyone seriously not to try. But it must be mentioned, to drive out

thoughts even more misleading—thoughts that what is saved is a mere ghost, or that the risen body lives in numb insensibility. The body was made for the Lord, and these dismal fancies are wide of the mark.

Meanwhile the cross comes before the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning. A cleft has opened in the pitiless walls of the world, and we are invited to follow our great Captain inside. The following Him is, of course, the essential point. That being so, it may be asked what practical use there is in the speculations which I have been indulging. I can think of at least one such use. It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbour. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner—no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbour he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ vere latitat—the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.

