

BE . . . ing

Ex 3:1-6, 13-15; Jn 8:48-58; Acts 17:22-31; Ps 139:13-14

I. DEFINING: BE/BEING—THE INDISPENSABLE VERB (underlying assumption in all thought, speech)

- A. Substantive verb (“anything that expresses existence is substantial,” i.e. standing under), taking various forms—is, am, was, will be . . . (remember Bill Clinton’s “it all depends on what the meaning of is is”)
 - 1. To exist—*isness* (Is business your Isness, or is Isness your business?)
 - 2. To maintain status, position, givenness, essence (Parmenides partially right)
 - 3. *Ex nihilo* instantiated, given via creation; e.g. soul immediately created by God
- B. Ultimate metaphysical import
 - 1. Classical realism, objective perspective (Plato; Aristotle; Augustine; Aquinas)
 - a. Things differ in Essence (i.e. the inner “what is” form—soul in man, three-sidedness in triangle, oakness in acorn) but all share universal, underlying Existence
 - b. Things generally Becoming (i.e.—constantly changing, naturally unfolding) but all reveal constancy of Existing
 - 2. Modern, subjective perspectives
 - a. Rationalism—Descartes’ doubts resolved by inner certainties; *cogito ergo sum*
 - a. Nominalism—know only names
 - b. Existentialism—Kierkegaard’s “leap of faith;” Nietzsche’s perspectivism, Simone de Beauvoir’s becoming, not born, a woman; transgenderism;

II. ENJOINING: “BE/become WHO YOU ARE!”—IMAGO DEI (essence: spirit)

- A. **Homo Sapiens:**
 - 1. Classical: reasoning, language-shaped-and-shaping, meaning-seeker, answering “why” questions
 - 2. Modern denial: reigning irrationalism—Post-Modernists’ “no truth”; denying self-evident verities
- B. **Homo Libertus:**
 - 1. Classical: free to choose
 - 2. Modern denials: entrenched scientism subjects man to naturalistic chemical/biological forces
- C. **Homo Aestheticus:**
 - 1. Classical: beauty-appreciating (“music of spheres), creating (music of Mozart)
 - 2. Modern denials: established “artists” spew forth inner imaginings—Expressionists, Surrealists,
- D. **Homo Ludens:**
 - 1. Classical: playing games—Olympics, chess, football, poker—rules prescribed, joy derived; humor
 - 2. Modern denials: playing purely instinctive, relieving stress—dogs chasing, dolphins leaping
- E. **Homo Moralis:**
 - 1. Classical: ethical aspect—aware of, capable of doing good or evil; natural law embedded
 - 2. Modern denials: higher animals without ethical compass; Machiavelli, Nietzsche, Russell
- F. **Homo Religiosus:**
 - 1. Classical: natural worshipper, awe-attending, meaning-seeker; perceiving Ultima, Supreme Being
 - 2. Modern denials: childish, wish-fulfillment fantasies (Feurbach; Marx; Freud)
- G. **Homo Imago Dei:**
 - 1. Classical: icon, model, image of God—C.S. Lewis: “The Weight of Glory”
 - 2. Modern denials: evolved animal in purely physical world

III. REVEALING: “HE WHO IS” DISCERNED IN HIS IMAGE (*analogia entis; analogia fides*)

- A. As *Homo Sapiens*, capable of seeing the **LOGOS**—Mind within all; Jesus, the “image of the invisible God “by Him all things were created” and “He is before all things and in Him all things consist” (Col 1:15-17)
- B. As *Homo Libertus*, aware in free choices of the ultimately **FREE ONE**—Jesus lord of winds & seas; could have called 10,000 angels but chose to suffer & die
- C. As *Homo Aestheticus*, awed by **BEAUTY**—“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth” (50:2); beauty of Christ, “fairest of 10,000”
- D. As *Homo Ludens*, struck by serious things **PLAYFUL**—enjoying creation, ultimate Divine Comedy in history; Good News of Gospel, announcing ultimate victory of Goodness; Trueblood re *Humor of Christ*
- E. As *Homo Moralis*, impressed by **ETHICAL**—conscious of good & evil; Jesus’ example & edicts
- F. As *Homo Religiosus*, instinctively **RELIGIOUS**—cannot *not* worship; Jesus prays, worships, instructs
- G. As *Homo Imago Dei*, revealing an **ARCHETYPE**—earthly model of heavenly Reality; Jesus “the express image (icon)” of God, 2d Adam fulfilling original design of 1st Adam

The Weight of Glory —C.S. Lewis

“... 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 on 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 your 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.” (pp. 7-8)

“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 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 that 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 is a pretty good indication that such a thing exists and that some men will.” (pp 8-9)

“The promises of Scripture may very roughly be reduced to five heads: (1) that we shall be with Christ; (2) that we shall be like Him; (3) with an enormous wealth of imagery, that we shall have ‘glory’; (4) that we shall, in some sense, be fed or feasted or entertained; and (5) that shall have some sort of official position in the universe—ruling cities, judging angels, being pillars of God’s temple.” (p. 10)

“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.” (p. 13)

“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 can 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. . . . There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilisations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals with whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. 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) 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 neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ *vere latiat*—the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.” (pp. 18-19)