

What God is Like

By Archdeacon T. C. Hammond.

There are several important truths enshrined in the concise language of the First Article. There is only opportunity to notice a few of them very briefly.

God is spoken of as "one living and true God." The emphasis is on the word "living" as it is there that modern speculation halts and returns vague answers to the inquirer. Matthew Arnold for example spoke of "a stream or tendency making for righteousness." The use of words like "law"; "sequence"; "natural development"; so common in scientific writings, while perfectly admissible as partial descriptions of the operations of what is even more vaguely described as "Nature," tend to weaken the force of the contention that behind the processes which we observe in the world there is an Intelligent Power. To their credit the Stoic philosophers grasped this essential fact. They spoke of the "Anima Mundi". The Hebrews emphasised the truth thus dimly apprehended. "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

This God we are told is "everlasting."

One of the saddest features in our earthly life is the fact that it cannot continue always. Man struggles, but struggles in vain, against the relentless fate that assigns him and his works to the oblivion of the grave.

But God abides. No change of time can touch Him in His eternal majesty. The true, the only sure, hope of immortality lies in the assurance "Because I live ye shall live also." It is a great comfort to realize that there is a living God Whose life is not dependent on any circumstances of time but continues in unchanging permanence

"The Catholic Faith," Griffith Thomas, 21/-.

"John Charles Ryle," Canon M. L. Loane, 3/6.

"A History of the Evangelical Party," G. R. Balleine, 21/-.

"The Layman's History of the Church of England," G. R. Balleine, 9/-.

And many others.

amid all the changing incidents of our mortal existence.

To Will Was To Act

This truth is further emphasized by teaching us that God is "without body, parts or passions." The body is the instrument of the mind of man, but it is a very imperfect instrument. All the will in the world cannot enable a man to bend his arm backwards from the elbow. We have to govern our activities by the limitations of our frame.

A distinguished theologian begins a series of short expositions on the doctrine of the Church of England.

The Bible says of God, "He spoke and it was done." To will was to act without any intermediary. It is not an easy conception to entertain but it is a great one. And God is a complete unity. Not only will and purpose are combined, but all His attributes harmonise completely. God cannot be divided.

Fatal Error.

It is the fatal error of the polytheist to assign certain activities to one being and certain to another and thus to rob God of His sacred pre-eminence. Those who seek to put in contrast God's mercy and His love fall into the same error. Nor can God be swayed by outside influences. No power in earth or heaven can control and subdue the will of God. He acts from the inner recesses of His own nature and doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him.

God is not swayed by fleeting emotion. His love, His pity, His justice, His mercy are but enduring reflections of His eternal Being. He is always just and yet He is always loving; He is always pitiful and yet He is always righteous. His immutability inspires spires confidence. Such a God, and such a God only could be, as He is, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness,

ARTICLES OF RELIGION.

I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

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A True Unity.

God is a true unity. Yet the unity of the Godhead is something greatly different from a mere identical numerical enumeration. When we say God is One, we do not mean, as so many foolishly imagine, God counts as one like each pebble on the beach or every apple on a tree. The whole of nature cries out against any such mechanical enumeration. The Trinity in Unity is the peculiar revelation of God. Philosophers groped after it. They sought to discover the One in the many, and the many in the One. But God Himself in His Word by a gentle process extending over thousands of years made clear this amazing fact.

Our personality is a faint reflection of the doctrine of the Trinity. There is always in our thought the subject and the object and the inner activity that binds the two into the unity of consciousness. This surprising fact helps us to understand more clearly that man was made in the image of God.

Again, we realise ourselves most fully in contact and intercourse with other selves like unto us. The family, the business, the state, all reflect in proper measure the interactions of persons adapted for a communal existence. It is astonishing to find that the Christian revelation alone does full justice to this basal fact of human relations by teaching that God is not an abstract unity but holds in essential essence differentiation of office and distinctions of consciousness similar to, although infinitely transcending, those that meet us in the great web of human life and endeavour. It is a great feat of human achievement when the man can humbly say, "I believe in God."