

I. Homo sapiens is the result of a series of evolutionary stages in which there occurred a struggle for the 'survival of the fittest'. Concretely, it is thought that a fundamental moment in the evolution of the brain took place in the context of the hunt, an activity requiring planning, cooperation, division of functions and the use of tools. Because of certain exigencies of the environment, such as scarcity of food and competition in the jungle, the creature which would become man moved out into the African savanna and became a hunter with a complex brain.

This development presents an evolutionary surprise, in the form of a notion that may be called "survival-surplus." That is, it seems quite obvious that the brain developed in man in such a way that much more is possible than mere survival as hunter. A whole range of mental activity is not only possible, but in fact seems to lead ineluctably to many preoccupations, arts, amenities, curious investigations and also fear and anxiety. The whole scheme of instinctive behavior is transcended; choices present themselves even in the realm of the ways in which to meet the demands of mere physical survival. Most significantly for us, the surplus mental potential finds that its preoccupations and concerns become reflexive; questions are posed about the meaning of existence and of particular actions or way of life. Besides dread of uncertain eventualities, man experiences guilt, a sense of having participated in a disapproved action in a peculiarly personal and appropriating way, i.e., responsibly. This the Christian calls sin.

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II. The theological counterpart to the aforementioned surplus of mental energy is man's call to fellowship with God. God unleashed the evolutionary process of creation so that he could share his blessed life with one like himself. This person would emerge out of such a process as someone who cannot be satisfied except in knowing God. He first experiences the divine in terrible natural phenomena, and seeks to propitiate him. He also develops a super-ego which chastizes him for infractions of internalized laws; there is a corresponding father-figure who re-sanctioning presents authority. Man also experiences solidarity with his fellows, both in mutual support and in common threat. The result of these "existentials" is that man longs for protection in an ultimate sense, for approval and acceptance, and for love, i.e., for collaboration with his fellows in a way that makes him know he is valuable and also allows him to appreciate others and to have sympathy, to be bound to them as to his own species.

When man acts contrary to these directions, he sins and experiences guilt. Most commonly it occurs in the context of social interaction, where a specific action threatening or destructive of the species is met with disapproval and punishment, and perhaps banishment or death. Secondly, guilt is experienced internally, as a "bad conscience," i.e., appropriated disapproval or self-punishment. This is a deeper guilt. The most overwhelming kind is "kosmic" guilt (to borrow J. Joplin's spelling); this is the association of one's infraction with the forces of nature and their lords the gods. From this fear there is no place to hide.

III. Thus man, who experiences himself as a responsible sinner or destroyer in need of approval, protection and acceptance, has manifested his religiosity in ways which seek to fulfill these needs. But for the Christian, the decisive revelation of God occurs in Jesus Christ, foretold in the Old Testament and proclaimed in the New.

Christian revelation confirms that man stands in need of God, that he is too alone and perplexed with his surplus mental energy and the fear of his own freedom and its often tragic consequences. Man does need a Father, an authority to guide him and protect him, Someone who has the cosmos under his control and who will not let man's foot dash against a stone. This God revealed himself as the Rock of Israel, who liberated his people from slavery and gave them land, punished them for their transgressions and promised them a final deliverance.

The center of revelation is Jesus Christ. In him God came down to walk with his people, to announce that man was acceptable to him, to show man the way of salvation in Jesus, who himself became salvation for us by becoming like sin, by confronting sin and its consequences and overcoming it by the power of God. In Jesus man's predicament became embodied; he faced all the terrors of man, the hatred of his fellows and abandonment by God. He, a leader among men, was made to wear a crown of thorns in a theatre of the absurd. Yet he sided with man, he was faithful to his own, though he was a <sup>and is</sup> σκάνδαλον to those who reject him and mankind and God with him. And the authenticity of Jesus' mission was confirmed in the resurrection, so

that his message and work and person as Lord was proclaimed by those who were able to see him and believe in him. In Jesus man has a companion who walks with him, who walked before him and suffered all, and overcame by the power of God in him. This gives man the best comrade possible, a Lord who leads the way and is already victorious.

Finally the super-ego has a counterpart in the Spirit, the παράκλητος, or intercessor, helper, advocate, adviser and convincer (cf. W. Bauer's lexicon). This is the Spirit of God dwelling in us and accompanying us in our innermost being. The Spirit lets us know that God loves and accepts us, and makes us lovable to God by helping us have his same mind and heart, by discerning the things of the Spirit, by convincing us of these truths, by urging us to do good and enabling us to do it. This is the really fortunate counterpart to our mental surplus, this is the God with whom we are called to converse, this is the real authority who is legitimate, who reveals the basis for his commands, viz., our well-being (and not heteronomy, cf. Tillich). This adviser is needed because man cannot follow his instincts and his reason and concupiscence lead him astray often. This intercessor is necessary because we do not know how to pray; we also need a defender against the Accuser, who accuses us day and night. This convincer confirms us in our faith when our hands would droop, when we are too weak to resist the onslaughts of our enemies and when we falter for lack of faith. The Spirit of God, who reveals both Father and Son, is the true πν who enlivens man and who quenches the thirst of the soul longing for the living God.

IV. Anthropological study of man shows him to have certain psychological needs (for a father-figure, for a hero, for a muse, etc.) which he expresses religiously. Such data are an aspect of the hiddenness<sup>^</sup> of God, which ultimately requires a decision of faith in order to be discovered. The Christian sees in such mental constructs his ontological orientation to know and love God. I believe that man needs a supreme authority figure in order to order rightly his thoughts and actions. His freedom, responsibility, intellect and ability to choose among many alternatives cannot have as their locus merely the natural world of struggle for survival; when man acts as if this is the case, the result is disorder and destruction, or sin. Man is meant to be ruler of nature only in subordination to a higher power. When he becomes the measure of all things as an individual, he necessarily oppresses his fellow man and wrongly uses a universe that has lost its own venerability and awesomeness. There is no place for man's "surplus mental energy" but in a relationship with God. In the purely natural world, this "extra" can only absolutize creatures, seeking its true object in vain.

God's definitive and, really, only true, revelation in Jesus Christ was foreshadowed in the ontologically-based longings, projections and mental constructs of man expressed religiously and artistically. God's creation shows the imprint of its maker, its status as creature called to obedience, as recalcitrant son in need of a model and deliverer and as lost wanderer in need of a guide. Man, created in God's image, was made to know the Father through the Son and in their Holy Spirit.

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 experience! So you see this as  
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 of your Christ? From confession  
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 "little school" that you think  
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