

University of Notre Dame  
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Answering Joe College.

"An Humble 'Joe College' Catholic" protests against a "spirit of unfairness" and lack of "largeness of Catholic wisdom" in our "terse commentary" in the March 17 Bulletin on certain passages quoted from a recent magazine article on "Spiritual Rebirth" by Dr. Jung.

Inasmuch as Joe College thinks Dr. Jung accepts heaven, hell, purpose in the world, he feels that perhaps the Doctor is moving closer to Catholicism and should have been encouraged rather than "scorned".

But certain other paragraphs from Dr. Jung's article reveal a chasmic difference between him and Catholicism. From his article it doesn't follow that he accepts heaven, hell, purpose in the world, in the common sense at all. For example:

He says in one place, "As modern man is driven back upon himself by doubt and fear, he looks inward to his own psychic life to give him something of which his outer life has deprived him....it does not seem beyond the range of possibility to believe that we stand on the threshold of a new spiritual epoch; and that from the depths of man's own psychic life new spiritual forms will be born."

The religion, then, that Dr. Jung is hoping for is to have its origin on the inside of man -- from man's own psychic energy.

Just because Dr. Jung was smart enough to see that men of the Middle Ages lived in (to them) a meaningful world, Joe College inferred that Dr. Jung himself saw sense in things. But Dr. Jung says that he tells his patient harassed by doubts, "My dear man, I don't know any more than you do, the meaning of the world or the meaning of your life

And again Dr. Jung says, "That medieval man we have talked of had a beautiful relationship with God. He lived in a safe world or one that he believed to be safe." -- In still another paragraph the Doctor runs along as follows: "When modern science disinfected heaven it did not find God. Some scientists say that the resurrection of Jesus, the Virgin Birth, the miracles -- all these things which fed Christian thought through ages, are pretty stories, but none the less, untrue. But what I say is, Do not overlook the fact that these ideas which millions of men carried with them through generations are great eternal, psychological truths." Perish the thought that he should admit them as having been externally real.

Psychological truths, psychological forms, these seem to be the essence of Dr. Jung's religion. And these forms and truths, according to him, do not depend upon objective reality at all but can be produced by a man's own psyche. The medieval man produced them, why can't we? This is his message.

In other words, Dr. Jung's psychological studies and experiences lead him to believe that the modern man needs a safe religion -- needs a religion such as they had in the Middle Ages. But he doesn't conclude that the modern man should, therefore, embrace the religion of the Middle Ages. On the contrary, he holds that man, out of his own psyche, should invent for himself such a safe religion. As to the possibility of this, we simply remarked in the previous Bulletin that Santa Claus, Hother Goose, the Big Bad Wolf could be invented successfully that way, but no heaven, hell, and the Ten Commandments. We were not flippant at all.

What Dr. Jung needs to know further is this: that the medieval Church satisfied mankind because God the maker of mankind was at the same time maker of that religion. That religion was not true or safe because man needed it and because it "worked"; but man needed it (and still needs it) and it worked (and will continue to work) because it is divine and therefore safe and true.