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# What a God!

By DR. C. MERVYN MAXWELL

I WAS ONE of four college teachers on a TV panel assigned to discuss the death of God.

All at once the professor at my right turned to me and asked, "Do you really mean to say that the students in your college come out of their laboratories still believing in God? Don't you know that Copernicus drove God out of the universe four hundred years ago?"

To which I replied, "The students at the college where I teach come out of their labs believing in God more firmly than when they went in!"

Science, far from proving God does not exist, constantly provides ever greater evidence that He does exist. And man, what a God it portrays!

I shall never forget the night ten years ago when my wife and I stood on the Chicago shore of Lake Michigan and searched the sky for one of the earliest sputniks.

The voice at the newspaper office had told us on the phone exactly when it would appear (10:30 p.m.), how high in the sky (forty-five degrees above the horizon), and the direction in which it would be traveling (due south).

We were ready. At 10:30 we focused our eyes forty-five degrees above the horizon, facing north-east. Right on time, precisely where we were searching, there it was. Its light was the same clear colour as the stars and of about the same intensity; but it was easy to tell the difference. This "star" was moving rapidly, and its light was pulsating off and on as it tumbled gently in its flight.

A thrill of excitement went through me.

As a child I had heard my older brother say that a ball could be made to fly clear around the earth if only someone could be found to hit it hard enough to get it started. I believed him implicitly, and often turned the idea over in my mind. What a fantastic possibility! I can still see an imaginary ball sailing out over the



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corner of our backyard on its way into orbit. Of course, I knew such a thing could never happen.

But here it was happening, right before my eyes.

Then as I looked up into the heavens, watching the shining satellite fade into the orange haze above Gary and Hammond to the south, the sky seemed suddenly to be disturbingly crowded. A Bible verse I had recited since childhood raced through my mind: "The heavens declare the glory of God." Psalm 19:1. But this time it insisted, "The heavens declare the glory of man!"

The presence of this shiny sputnik seemed a profane violation of a fundamental principle. It had no right to be there. I had been taught that the stars prove the unique power of an omniscient Creator; but here was a new star claiming equal power for man.

For a fleeting second I felt myself becoming an agnostic, an atheist. And then I gave it further thought. The Russians had laughed at America's first tiny satellite and called it a grapefruit. Here in the sky now was one of theirs—and it was not much larger than a garbage can, not much bigger than one of the break-water rocks lying at my feet on the shore of Lake Michigan. Marvellous as it was, this sputnik was a very little thing compared with our little earth or the great universe.

The stars up there—the other stars beyond the sputnik—shine on and on for ever. No astronomer has any



idea how many there are up there, nor how long they have been there. Scientists estimate there are at least 200,000,000 stars in our own Milky Way galaxy, and compute that there are over a thousand million more such galaxies in the whole universe. That is, they used to tell us this when they thought the edge of the universe was 350,000,000 light-years away.

But in 1963 astronomers found a "quasar" that appeared to be emitting radio and light energy millions of times more powerful than all the stars in our entire Milky Way galaxy put together! They labelled it "3C 273" and identified it with a faint star they formerly had supposed belonged to our own private galaxy; only now calculations indicated that it was a thousand million light-years away, *three times as far from us* as we had previously supposed was the outer rim of the universe!

Since then, Maarten Schmidt has found another quasar that may be four to eight thousand million light-years away. Suddenly, what we once had thought to be our entire universe turns out to be a neighbourhood, a housing development, a small suburb of the real universe that goes on, perhaps, for ever.

And what does all this prove about God?

Did that sputnik launch itself into space? Did the lunar Surveyors bolt themselves together, blast off from their pads, and land within a few miles of their targets

on the moon *by chance*? It took a world-wide team of highly trained men to make them succeed. Thus space-age science offers compelling proof of the existence of a living God. A spacecraft, tiny as it is, cannot get into orbit without a living brain to plan for it. What nonsense, then, to suppose that a thousand million island universes can soar through space without an infinite Intelligence to guide them!

"The heavens declare the glory of God"—and man, what a God!

When an archaeologist finds a primitive stone arrow-head buried under river gravel in an abandoned cave, he says, "Here is evidence of an ancient civilization. Man used to work here!" But when a paleontologist finds a complex trilobite fossil exposed in a Cambrian rockslide, he is prone to say, "Here is evidence that there is no God. Complex animal life developed by chance." But this is not the kind of reasoning that commends itself to everyone, least of all to many inquiring teenagers. A survey made as recently as 1956, after a century of evolutionary instruction (*Life*, October 8, 1965), showed that *more than half* of all United States high school students are still *unwilling* to accept evolution as a valid hypothesis. The students in my college are not the only ones who can come out of a laboratory still believing in a living God.

And they are right. Copernicus did not drive God out of the universe four hundred years ago. If anything, he established Him more certainly than ever at His desk.

Centuries before Copernicus, men believed in the limited and disorderly hypothesis of the ancient astronomer Claudius Ptolemy, with its "progressions" and "retrogressions" and individual planetary "epicycles." Copernicus demonstrated that our solar system is far more orderly and considerably more immense than Ptolemy had ever dreamed it could be—and in the process provided better proof than ever of the existence of a Master Intelligence at the control of things. Though persecuted by a church which did not understand him, Copernicus continued an admiring friend of the Lutheran theologian Osiander; he died a Christian still, a firm believer in a living God.

So also died Isaac Newton, whose name is so often cited in proof of the disappearance of God. "God," many people say today, "was invented in ancient times to fill the gaps in man's knowledge of the universe. Now that science has filled most of these gaps with well-established theories like Newton's law of gravity, we don't need God any more."

Newton never understood his work to be a graveyard for the Deity. His epoch-making discoveries in mathematics and astronomy have earned him praise even from Albert Einstein as "this shining spirit," this "marvellously inventive . . . genius"; but Newton gave the glory for his achievements to God and crowned his years with nearly four hundred thousand handwrit-





ten words on the prophecies of the Bible and on his hope in the second coming of Christ.

Though I am interested in heavenly bodies, microscopic things have always fascinated me far more. In my college days the single-celled paramecium, with its complement of minuscule organelles so analagous to human organs, was my favourite little animal. Recently the T4 bacteriophage virus has taken its place in my affections.

This interesting little creature that destroys bacteria in our intestines ("bacteriophage" means "bacterium eater") is so precisely designed and constructed that most people cannot believe their eyes when they first see a picture of one. I could not believe mine.

Unbelievable as it is in its appearance, with its icosahedral head, its "end plates," and so on, the behaviour of the T4 when it confronts a bacterium is even more incredible. Its leg-like fibres swing back to allow its end plate to contact the "skin" of the very much larger bacterial cell. Its spring-like sheath snaps closed, driving its ribbon of DNA down into the heart of the bacterium's protoplasm. Genes in the DNA ribbon force amino acids in the host cells to reorganize themselves. Within fifteen minutes, two hundred icosahedral heads have taken shape at intervals along the DNA ribbon; then two hundred collars, two hundred cores, two hundred sheaths, two hundred end plates, and two hundred sets of leg-like fibres gather around them. In less than half an hour the bacterium is dead, and in its place stand two hundred new T4 viruses, fully assembled and ready to start the cycle over again in two hundred other bacterial cells.

This process, incidentally, is taking place in your body at this very moment. Since the time you began to read this article you have helped to produce countless millions of these amazing viruses.

To say that the T4 bacteriophage just "happened" is like saying that electronic "chips"—those microcircuits, complete with diodes, capacitors, and transistors, which are so widely used in appliances from hearing aids to spaceships—just "happened." If it took brains to develop the electronic chip, then there is intelligence behind the development of the T4 bacteriophage! And what a God this suggests, as much a master of the infinitesimally small as of the infinitely large!

Complex and wonderful as viruses are, the human body is, of course, much more so.

The body of an adult human male contains, on the average, sixty billion (60,000,000,000,000) cells. Think of it! Counting at top speed for twelve hours a day, allowing barely enough time to catch your breath, you could scarcely count to a thousand million in thirty years. Merely to enumerate the cells in one's own body would require twenty thousand lifetimes.

And what about the individual cells? On the average, each cell contains two hundred billion (200,000,

000,000,000) molecules. And these molecules, in their turn, may contain up to thirty thousand atoms each! There are thousands of different kinds of molecules in each body cell, and each minute of his life a person produces thousands and thousands of them in each of his sixty billion cells. A pretty young girl student may be a complete failure in the subject of general chemistry and at the same time be synthesizing in her body thousands of compounds the exact structures of which are unknown even to the most brilliant scientists.

And what about the atoms that make up these molecules? Democritus said that atoms were simple solid bodies, the ultimate building blocks. Thirty years ago everyone knew this was wrong; atoms themselves are complex units generally thought to be composed of protons, neutrons, and electrons. Today scientists claim to have identified some thirty or so additional "elementary particles" smaller than atoms—mu-mesons, antilambda particles, anti-xi-zero particles, and many more.

Perhaps the most mysterious elementary particles are the neutrino and its antimatter counterpart, the anti-neutrino. Neutrinos pour into the universe from the heart of the sun at such a rate that over a hundred thousand million of them pass through the thick of your thumb every second. Nothing stops them. At night, when the sun is shining on the opposite side of the world, they stream in undiminished number through the eight-thousand-mile thickness of the earth and on out into space at the speed of light. In the course of a lifetime there pass through a person's body a number of neutrinos represented by a ten with twenty-three zeros after it, yet *only one* is likely to interact with you and stay by.

What a universe we live in! Neutrinos at one end of the scale of things, and a thousand million island galaxies at the other! What a Master Intelligence must lie behind it all! A loving Intelligence, concerned with the very small; a powerful Intelligence, able to accomplish whatever He desires!

The Bible calls this intelligent being God, and portrays Him, not cold and heartless, but as truly a person as is any human scientist. (For scientists, after all, behind their white lab coats, are generally family men who know the meaning of love.) Jesus taught us to call God "Father" and to address Him in prayer as "our heavenly Father." He invited us to believe that He is attentive to our needs and knows all there is to know about us and loves us just the same.

The Bible invites you to "throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon Him, for you are His personal concern." 1 Peter 5:7, Phillips. No problem is too small to bring to the God of the neutrinos, nor too large to bring to the God of the island galaxies.

Man, what a God!

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