

THE BELIEF SKETCH.

- A Are you a believer?
 B Yes.
 A In what?
 B I believe in God.
 A Who is that?
 B THE God!
 A Which "THE" God?
 B The One, True, Living God.
 A Allah?
 B No! God God!
 A Jehovah?
 B The God who made the universe!
 A Which universe?
 B This one, silly....there is only ONE universe!
 A And only one God?
 B Of course! How could there be ten Gods?
 A Why not?
 B Because one of them would have to be the chief or top dog God.
 (By the way, have you ever noticed that "dog" is "God" spelt backwards?)!
 A And the God of gods....He would be God?
 B Of course!
 A So, ARE there lots of gods with a chief God?
 B Not really. There are lots of false gods, but only one REAL one.
 A What's the difference between a false god and a real one?
 B False gods – such as money, status, power, family, self – don't work.
 A How do they not work?
 B They backfire and let you down or land you in trouble. They are not personal, loving and wise.
 A And God is personal, loving and wise?
 B Yes.
- A So, **who exactly is God?**
 B God is GOD....that is who He is!
 A Can you explain that a bit?
 B I can't tell you His great grandfather's name if that is what you mean.
 A No, but isn't "God" really His JOB rather than His name. It is what He does all day.
 B All eternity!
 A Yes...anyway...but it is His job, His role in life.
 B Not forgetting death and life after death too.
 A Yes, yes....but you see what I mean. God is what He does for a living; it is His honorary title, His job description, His role....but who exactly is He?
 B Why do you assume it is "He"?
 A Oh no, you're not one of those feminists, are you?
 B No, no....I'm a "Godist".
 A A "Godist"! What's that?
 B God is God; He's not a man. He is not a woman either. Nor is He a thing.
 He is His own sweet self....a God-self!
 A So why do you keep calling Him "Him" and "He"?
 B Because, other than the words "he", "she" or "it", the English language runs out of personal pronouns.
 A So who exactly is He, she or it....I mean God?
 B You have to find that out as you go along.

- A Go along where?
 B As you get to know Him.
 A So where do you start? How do you get to know God?
 B You don't!
 A What?!
 B HE starts it, not you.
 A Then what?
 B You follow.
 A How do you mean?
 B God introduces Himself.
 A How?
 B Through the Bible....parents reading Bible stories....school assemblies....
 Sunday School....Church life....preaching....conversations with friends....
 The life of Jesus....lots of ways!
 A Then what?
 B You have to accept and believe and pursue enquiries, ask and find out more
 and learn to love and trust and follow Him, wherever.
 A Wherever where?
 B Wherever your relationship leads you.
 A A bit like this sketch, eh?
 B Yip!
- A So, tell me, **where is God?**
 B Wherever you want Him.
 A On Earth?
 B Yes.
 A But I heard He was in Heaven.
 B There too! He's peripatetic! He gets around.
 A Where is Heaven?
 B Past the moon....fourth star on the left, over the sun, third right....No, just kidding!
 A Up in space though?
 B In space you cannot talk about up and down (and what would the Australians say
 about British definitions of up and down)?
 A But out there somewhere?
 B For a moment I thought you were going to sing "somewhere over the rainbow"!
 Anyway, have you thought about other possibilities?
 A Like what?
 B Like neither up nor down....neither in nor out....but on another dimension altogether
completely different.
 A So, is God on another dimension, on another wavelength altogether?
 B Well, I'm sure He doesn't sit enthralled at "Coronation Street".
 A But is He not here with us, on our level, tuned into our wavelength?
 B I'm sure He is.
 A So is God everywhere?
 B I don't think so. I don't believe He's inside some people's hearts and minds;
 I don't think He is in crime, cancer and cruelty, in terrorist meetings or Satan
 worship and anywhere where people give Him the cold shoulder.
 He doesn't kick their door in; He just leaves them to stew in their own juice.
 A But He could be anywhere else, could He?
 B "Anywhere" rather than "everywhere". Everywhere makes Him mechanically
 obliged to be there, while anywhere leaves Him free to choose where He wants
 to go or not go. Surely God is even more free than we are to pick and choose His
 own pals and His own favourite haunts. He is only restricted by His own reluctance
 to push Himself too strongly.

A **What else is God like?**

B God isn't like anybody else.

A But I thought we were "made in His image".

B But that doesn't mean that He is like us; it means we are like Him (and only a little bit at that)!

A Which little bit?

B The bit when we love even enemies, go the second mile, forgive seventy times seven, pray for persecutors, share, sacrifice for others and love.

A And what is God like when He is completely different from us?

B Well, He can be in two places at once, He knows everything and sees everything.

A Everything?

B Yes everything!

A He sees me in the toilet? Looking in the mirror?

B Yes, and He also knows what is going through your mind as you pose there!

A Oh!

B And what's more, God can do anything!

A Anything?

B Yes, anything!

A No He can't.

B Oh yes He can.

A No He can't. He couldn't make our Jimmy's mouth any wider without shifting his ears! Seriously though, God can never say "I've goofed again!" or "we sinners".

B Well you are right that God is perfect and sinless, but the heart of the Christian Good News is that God came into our world as Jesus and became the representative of the whole sinful human race and paid the price of our sinfulness for us as one of us.

A Say that again! No, just kidding!

B You asked me what God is like. In a nutshell He is like Jesus....He IS Jesus.... Jesus is God revealed....revealed in a way that we can understand.

A Tell me, **why is God so important anyway?**

B Just because He is God! Because He is important in Himself (even if nobody else thought so.

A But what is so important about Him?

B Well, for starters, He created the universe!

A Wow!

B More of a big BANG actually.

A Then what?

B He has created ever since....for example, three babies every second, new species Of flower, new seasons and so on.

A And?

B And He sustains His creation and His creatures, providing and protecting. He is the God of nature and of history.

A And?

B He fixes things, repairs, rescues and redeems.

A And?

B What do you mean "and?" How much more do you want?

A So, God is important just because He is who He is and because of what He has done for the world and the universe.

B Has done...is doing...and will do!

A No end to it, eh?

B That's right, no end at all.

IS THAT A FACT?

- A I'm scientific you see.
- B Oh yes?
- A I like to investigate everything.
- B That's nice.
- A I must have clear proof.
- B Mmm....
- A No blind leaps of faith for me.
- B No
- A I deal in facts....only in facts.
- B Is that a fact?
- A Absolutely!
- B Are you sure?
- A Course I'm sure!
- B You're not just saying that...as a "blind leap of faith"?
- A Ha! Ha! Very funny!
- B Would you say you were open-minded?
- A Of course I would!
- B But you only deal in facts, right?
- A Yes....
- B Would you be open to the possibility of there being more to life than facts?
- A How do you mean?
- B Well, answer me this: What is a fact?
- A Something I can prove.
- B Can you prove I love you?
- A Er...Yes and no. I know you love me, but it is not so easy to prove it. Of course it would help if you showed that you love me now and again. But that is another matter!
- B Anyway, easily proved facts are only a small part of life. Most of the time we live by other ways of knowing.
- A Like what?
- B We live by hunches and intuitions for example. Remember the first time we met? I just knew that you fancied me! I couldn't prove it, but I just knew.
- A You certainly seemed pretty confident when you crossed the dance floor.
- B Well, faith is hindsight in advance as they say! The point is that I had a strong hunch that you fancied me, but I really couldn't have any proof till after I tested the theory by asking you to dance. The experiment might have failed and I might have come away with a groin strain and a distinct lack of scientific evidence!
- A Oh, so it was a scientific experiment was it?!
- B Oh no, dear.....more "a leap of faith"! Seriously though, it illustrates the point that it began with faith and then the belief was put to the scientific test. Maybe we can agree that faith and scientific testing can go together.....even marry each other!
- A I don't mind admitting that things begin with faith, but they do have to end with proof and factsscientifically proven, hard facts! For example, Thomas Edison just knew that he would eventually invent the light bulb. It took him 10,000 attempts, mind you, but in the end he proved he could and he could prove how he could do it!
- B My, you certainly have a strong belief in your science.
- A How do you mean?
- B Does it ever occur to you that you might, just might, possibly, maybe could be a tiny little bit mistaken in your blind faith in scientific proof, as understood and proven by yourself?

- A Oh I do know that I don't know everything. I know that I can misinterpret the evidence and proofs before me, but there are some things which are simply, obviously, objectively beyond dispute. Either Edison's light bulb switches on or it does not. It works or it doesn't. It has nothing to do with me.
- B That is my point. Only some things are like that. Most things are not so neat and simple as that. Some things we stand back and watch, like a scientist conducting an experiment; and we try to minimise our involvement in the experiment in case we prejudice the result. Thomas Edison had to keep himself out of his lightbulb experiments. But it was completely the opposite when I wanted to test whether you fancied me rotten or not. For that experiment to work I had to put myself into the action and ask you to dance.
- A Ah, but that was different.
- B Exactly! Proving electricity in lightbulbs is very different from proving electricity in personal relationships with people. In one you put your whole self out, in the other you put your whole self in!
- A Sounds like the Hokey Cokey!
- B Seriously though, it is the very basic scientific principle that what you study determines how you study it. You have to ask the right questions to get the right answers. So, if you study stars, you use a telescope; but if you study lemon meringue pies you use your tongue. If you get them mixed up, you stick your tongue out at the stars and look at your lemon meringue pie with a telescope. Then, I do "believe" that it will be a "fact" that you will get nowhere.... Fast!
- A Ah, but I still say that proof is essential. Different things require different proofs, fair enough, But in their own way everything still has to be proved. Proof is proof!
- B So, what would prove electricity?
- A When you flick a switch and the electric light comes on.
- B What would prove Alpha Centauri our nearest star?
- A When I see it with my own eyes through a telescope.
- B What would prove that I love you?
- A A bunch of flowers now and then, and maybe a Chinese take-away thrown in.
- B So, what would prove, say....God, to you?
- A Not a lot!
- B Now, that's not scientific!
- A Well, if I could see Him through my telescope.
- B That's not scientific either! Seriously though, what would constitute a proof? What would God have to do to convince you of His existence?
- A Well, maybe if He sent me a bunch of flowers to say He loved me.
- B By the way, everything seems to be so subjective. It is all to do with you. But God can exist with or without your opinions.
- A Please Himself! But I'm only interested in how it affects me.
- B Now that's definitely not scientific! Anyway, the point I want to make is that God is unique, different, in a set of one and He has to be studied uniquely, differently and in the way appropriate to Him.
- A Aye, right! So you want to re-write the rules for Him.
- B No. It is the scientific principle that everything has to be studied in its own way. Same goes for God. He is not a thing, nor a theory but a person. He is not a human person but a divine person. We cannot possibly see Him through a telescope, taste Him with our tongue, nor prove him like a mathematical formula.
- A So it can't be done....it is impossible.
- B Well there are difficulties. The main problem is that tiny brains in tiny creatures on a tiny planet can't comprehend the vastness of the universe nor the infinity of its Creator. We can't stand God up and measure Him, we can't put Him in some context, we can't see the whole picture, we can't test Him, we can't reach up to Heaven, we can't put Him on a microscope slide, we can't

experiment on Him in a science lab.

A There you go then....He's not provable, by definition!

B Not quite! It is true that we can't prove God. But HE can prove God. Lost sheep can't find shepherd, but Good Shepherd can find lost sheep. We can't cross the dance floor to Him, but He can cross the dance floor to us. We can't prove Him by scientific experiment, but we can get to know Him in a courtship. We can't see the invisible God, right enough, but He can reveal Himself to us and give us eyes to see Him.

A How?

B He reveals Himself through the Bible –His written Word, the Church – His spoken Word and in Jesus – His Word lived out in flesh and blood. God's Word comes in this three-fold way – all ways which we can understand and relate to. These are your proofs. You've got the package - now unpack it! Experiment, test, prove scientifically all you like. In the end faith is the appropriate way of knowing, the best way, the only way of knowing a person whether human or divine. It has to mean personal involvement not personal detachment.

A I thought you said we should not keep putting ourselves into centrestage.

B What I am saying is that there is a right and a wrong personal involvement. When we want to know God, or anyone, we have to invest ourselves in getting to know them. However, we must let them reveal themselves to us and not jump in with our preconceptions and prejudices. We must sit under Jesus, the Bible, the Church, not sit above acting as judge and jury picking out just what we want to hear, making God in our own image! By the way, have you ever checked out the evidence? Have you read the Bible, gone to Church, studied Jesus?

A Er...no, not really.

B Well that's not very scientific, is it?

A I suppose not.

B In the end, I prefer to speak about "trusting Jesus" rather than "proving God", just as I prefer trusting you rather than proving you. We don't speak that way. We prove theories but we trust persons. And see when I trust you, or Jesus, it is not blind leaping faith, irrational conclusions without evidence and facts. On the contrary I only trust folk whom I know well and with whom I have had a long-standing relationship. I like to look before I leap just like I looked a long time before I crossed the dance floor that night we met!

A Actually, for me, it was a blind leap of faith, love at first sight.

B Is that a fact?