

Today, more than ever before, it is necessary for us to know and understand the beliefs and convictions of others. Hence we are reprinting two articles from the Readers' Digest as answers to the questions, along with a third locally-written article.

What is a JEW?

Reprinted from Reader's Digest

WHAT IS A JEW? It is difficult to find a single definition. Religiously, a Jew is one who accepts the faith of Judaism. Culturally, a Jew is one who without formal religious affiliation, regards the teachings of Judaism — its ethics, its customs, its literature—as his own. Practically, a Jew is one who considers himself a Jew or is so regarded by his community.

Judaism is really a way of life. It holds that man can most genuinely worship God by imitating those qualities that are godly: as God is merciful, so must we be compassionate; as God is just, so must we deal justly with our neighbor; as God is slow to anger, so must we be tolerant. Some 1800 years ago, one of our sages taught: He who is beloved of his fellow men is beloved of God.

The Jewish prayer book speaks of three basic principles of faith:

1. **THE LOVE OF LEARNING.** As long ago as the first century, Jews had a system of compulsory education: the education of the poor and the fatherless was a responsibility of both the community and the family. On the first day of school, youngsters were given honey cakes shaped in the letters of the alphabet, so that they would associate learning with sweetness.

2. **THE WORSHIP OF GOD.** From earliest childhood, the Jews are taught that He is to be worshipped out of love, not out of fear.

3. **GOOD DEEDS.** There is no Hebrew word for "charity" because, to the devout Jew, there is no such thing as "charity." According to the ancient rabbis: We are **REQUIRED** to feel the poor of the Gentiles as well as our Jewish brethren . . . "No one is exempt from obligations to his fellow men."

Jews believe in the immortality of the soul—an immortality whose nature is known only to God—but they no longer accept the literal idea of heaven and hell as physical entities. The reward for virtuous living is simply the good life itself.

DO JEWS BELIEVE THAT JUDAISM IS THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION? Jews do not presume to judge the honest worshipper of any faith. Our prayer books tell us: "The righteous of ALL nations are worthy of immortality." There are many mountain-tops—and all of them reach for the stars.

ON WHAT POINTS DO CHRISTIANS AND JEWS AGREE? Both share the same rich heritage of the Old Testament. They both believe in the fatherhood of one God, in the sanctity of the Ten Commandments, the wisdom of the prophets and the brotherhood of man. Central to both faiths is the firm belief in the imperishable nature of man's soul.

Jews do not accept the divinity of Jesus as the "only begotten Son" of God. To them he is a child of God in the sense that we are all God's children. Jews reject the principle of incarnation—God becoming flesh. God is purely spiritual to them. Judaism also rejects the principle of vicarious atonement—the idea of salvation THROUGH Christ. We believe that every man is responsible for his own salvation; that no one can serve as an intermediary between man and God, even in a symbolic sense.

DO JEWS TRY TO CONVERT GENTILES? No. Modern Judaism is not a proselytizing creed, though converts are always welcome and not uncommon. I have participated in the conversion of a number of Protestants and Catholics to the Jewish faith.

DOES JUDAISM OPPOSE INTERMARRIAGE? Practically all religions are opposed to marriage outside their faith. When husband and wife disagree on their religious creed, the prospect for a harmonious relationship, the prospect for a harmonious relationship may be harmed. Though divorce is permitted, the divorce rate among Jews is far below the community average.

ARE JEWS FORBIDDEN TO READ THE NEW TESTAMENT? Jews cannot conceive of being "forbidden" to read anything. Many Jewish scholars know the Gospels as intimately as the Old Testament.

ARE THERE VARIOUS CREEDS AND SECTS AMONG JEWS? American Judaism contains three religious groupings: the Orthodox, the Conservative and the Reform.

The *Orthodox Jews* accept the Bible as the revealed Will of God, strictly observe the dietary laws and the Sabbath (no work, no travel, no writing, no carrying of money). They wear a hat or skullcap at all times, not only during prayer. They use only Hebrew in prayer and ceremonial services.

Reform Jews accept as binding only the moral laws of the Bible and those ceremonies that "elevate and sanctify our lives." They do not follow customs they believe "not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization." They generally pray without hats. Prayer is largely in English (or the vernacular).

Conservative Jews follow the pattern of traditional Judaism, by and large, but regard Judaism as an evolving and ever-growing religion. They follow the dietary laws, with only minor relaxations, observe the Sabbath and high holidays in traditional ways, and cover their heads during acts of worship. But they have borrowed many forms of Reform Judaism, such as the late-Friday-evening service and the use of English in prayers.

WHAT IS A RABBI? Literally, rabbi means "teacher." His authority is based not on his position but upon his learning, his ability to interpret Jewish law. He is not an intermediary between man and God. He rarely leads in the services: the cantor conducts worship. There is no religious hierarchy in the Jewish faith. Any well-informed layman may rise to the pulpit to lead the congregation in prayer. The modern rabbi, like the minister, is responsible for worship in the synagogue, for ceremonials surrounding birth, confirmation, marriage and death, and for pastoral guidance.

IS JUDAISM IS THE HOME MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE SYNAGOGUE? Many times in history, Jewish synagogues and temples have been closed by law. Yet Jewish religious life has continued intact because the centre of Judaism resides in the home. The mother, lighting the Sabbath candles; the father, blessing his children at the table; the scroll (mezuzah) on the doorpost which signifies that God is in the home—each of these is an integral part of Jewish life. Juvenile delinquency is rare among Jews and alcoholism almost unknown.

WHAT ARE THE "KOSHER" LAWS? The Old Testament (Leviticus) sets down certain definite dietary restrictions: It is forbidden to eat the meats of certain animals (such as the pig and horse) and certain sea foods (shrimp, lobster, crab, oyster). Meat must be slaughtered according to ritual and must meet specific health standards. Meat products and dairy products may not be eaten together. These restrictions originally may have been health measures.

Many of the dietary laws deal with the method of slaughtering the animal: it must be painless to the beast, and done by a God-fearing man. Incidentally, Jews are forbidden to hunt. Jews regard kosher practices as a daily lesson in self-discipline and a constant reminder that human beings must feel pity for all living things. But today only a minority of Jews in America conform strictly to the laws governing kosher food.

WHAT IS THE TALMUD? The Talmud, consisting of 63 books of legal, ethical and historical writings of ancient rabbis, is the code which forms the basis of Jewish religious law. It was edited five centuries after the birth of Jesus. Interlaced with the legal discussions of the scholars are thousands of parables, biographical

What is a CATHOLIC?

Do Catholics believe theirs is the only true religion?

Yes. The idea of many different true religions, all holding different, often contradictory, doctrines about God and man strikes the Catholic as illogical.

But, by the "only true religion", Catholics don't mean that they alone are the children of God or that only Catholics are righteous and God-fearing. Pope Pius IX wrote ". . . those who are ignorant of the true religion, if that ignorance is invincible, will not be held guilty in the eyes of the Lord." Catholics believe that in the sight of God all who love Him and sincerely desire to do His will are related in some way to the Church which His Son founded and so can be saved.

What are the chief differences between the Catholic and Jewish faiths? Catholic and Protestant faiths?

Catholicism and Judaism share the belief in God the Father, in the brotherhood of man and in the moral teachings of the prophets. The big difference is that Catholics believe that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah, true God and true man. They believe that mankind was redeemed by Christ's atonement, though individual men must still work out their own personal salvation by faith, and good works. Catholics believe that with the coming of Christ, all races and nations become "chosen people".

The chief differences between Catholicism and Protestantism seems to be these: Protestants believe in private interpretation of the Bible; Catholics believe that the Church is the divinely appointed custodian of the Bible and has the final word on what is meant in any specific passage. The Church guards orthodoxy and passes down essential Christian tradition from one generation to another. Most Protestants affirm the "priesthood of all believers" in opposition to the Catholic idea of a specially ordained priesthood.

Protestantism provides for a greater variety of opinion on such matters as divorce and birth-control which Catholics feel have been settled once and for all either by natural law or by revelation. The average Protestant thinks of "the Church" as a broad spiritual unity; the Catholic uses the same words to mean the Roman Catholic Church.

What is the meaning of the Mass?

The Catholic Mass differs from a Protestant communion service, not only in ceremony but in what each congregation believes is taking place. The Mass is the central act of worship in the Catholic Church. It is the true sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, made present on the altar by the words of the consecration (over the bread, "This is my body", over the wine, "This is my blood . . ."). In this "divine sacrifice", the Council of Trent declared "the same Christ is present . . . who offered Himself . . . on the altar of the cross . . . only the manner of offering is different".

Mass must be celebrated by a priest or a bishop, with whom the congregation joins in offering to God "a re-presentation and a renewal of the offering made on Calvary. Catholics believe that after the priest pronounces the words of consecration the whole substance of the bread becomes the Body of Christ, the whole substance of the wine becomes the blood of Christ. They believe that Christ is truly and substantially present in the Eucharist, body and soul, humanity and divinity.

Do Catholics believe the Pope can do no wrong? Must Catholics accept everything he says?

Catholics do not believe the Pope can do no wrong, nor does the Pope. He confesses regularly to a simple priest, like the humblest peasant in the Church. While admitting that there have been Popes who have been wicked, Catholics believe that a Pope, be he a sinner or saint, is preserved by God from leading the Church into doctrinal error. These are the conditions of a papal announcement which the Catholic considers infallible: 1) It must come under the heading of faith or moral; 2) the Pope must be speaking as head of the Church with the intention of obliging its members to assent to his definition. Everything that one Church declares as infallible doctrine a Catholic must accept.

What do Catholics believe about the Virgin Mary? What does the doctrine of assumption mean?

Catholics believe that from the moment of her conception, Mary was preserved free from original sin. This is what is known as the Immaculate Conception, often confused with the Virgin Birth, which of course, refers to the birth of Christ. Catholics believe Mary is the greatest of the saints. Catholics pray to God through her because they believe that she is a powerful intercessor.

The Assumption (the belief that soon after Mary's death her body was reunited with her soul in heaven) is not a new belief. The Feast of the Assumption was celebrated as early 1500 years ago. But in 1950 Pope Pius XII declared that the ancient belief was now formal doctrine, to which all Catholics must give assent. The Pope made this declaration in answer to a widespread popular request by clergy and laity.

Do Catholics believe that unbaptized babies cannot go to heaven because of "original sin"?

Yes. It is a Catholic belief that no one by nature has a "right" to heaven. Man does not have a claim on the supernatural happiness which he enjoys in seeing God "face to face". It is a free gift of God. The loss of supernatural life, generally called the fall from grace, was incurred by Adam. Because Adam was head of the human race, all mankind was involved in the historic sin of disobedience.

Since the redemption by Christ, it has been possible to regain the life of grace. Baptism restores supernatural life. Without that life, man simply does not have the capacity to enjoy heaven. Unbaptized babies (in limbo) do not suffer in any way, even from a sense of loss. Their happiness is greater than on earth, however limited compared with that of the saints in heaven.

What is purgatory?

The word refers to a place and a state. Catholics believe that purgatory exists to purify those souls not pure enough for heaven, yet not in a state of mortal sin. Though they have escaped eternal hell, they must undergo the purifying pain of intense longing for God until they have paid the debt of temporal punishment.

Why do Catholics worship graven images?

They don't. Like any religion, Catholicism uses symbols to heighten the meaning of the spiritual truths. The Council of Trent summed up the Catholic position 400 years ago: "The images of Christ and the Virgin Mother of God, and the other saints, are to be honoured and venerated; not that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them but because the honour which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which these images represent."

Is it true that Catholics consider all non-Catholic children illegitimate?

No. It is Church law that the wedding of a Catholic must be performed in the presence of a priest and two witnesses. In the case of

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sketches, historical notes, humorous anecdotes and epigrams — a storehouse of wisdom.

WHAT IS YOM KIPPUR? It means Day of Atonement. It is marked by 24 hours of prayer and fasting, during which the worshipper (and the congregation collectively) recounts the catalogue of human transgressions—pride, greed, jealousy, vanity, lust, and so on. Throughout this day runs the prayers: "Father, we have sinned before Thee." The worshipper also seeks God's grace through deeds of love and compassion.

"Rosh Hashana" means New Year. It ushers in the Ten Days of Penitence, during which mankind "passes in judgment before the heavenly throne." It is the season when Jews also sit in judgment on themselves by comparing their aspirations to their conduct during the year which has just ended. The Rosh Hashana of 1952 will mark the Jewish year 5713.

What is a PROTESTANT?

Dr. W. E. Garrison in his book entitled A PROTESTANT MANIFESTO says "Protestantism is not easy to define in positive terms. The usual shift and the one almost always adopted for popular use, is to say what it is not. Thus the indispensable Webster — no great authority on ecclesiastical matters, but certainly a competent witness as to how words are actually used, can think of nothing better than this: Protestant — any Christian not of the Roman Catholic Church, the Old Catholic Church, or the Eastern Church".

There are those who see Protestantism only as a negation. Our Roman Catholic friends infer this when they refer to Protestants as Non-Catholics. Even some Protestants think in this same frame of mind. They see Protestantism as a protest against those principles proclaimed in Roman Catholicism. Now it is true that there is much in Protestantism which does protest against certain dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, but if Protestantism had been built wholly upon negations it never would have done the mighty things it has done, and never would have been the mighty spiritual force it has been in the world. If we would understand Protestantism, we must see not only wherein she protests against the Principles of Rome, but we must understand those great, positive, spiritual dynamics, which are the root and underground of the Protestant faith.

The word Protestant does not merely mean protest, but as you know from your Latin, *Protestis*, it means a witness on behalf of something, a witness for something. It is this witness which has helped to shape and direct our democratic way of life.

To understand those spiritual principles, we must of necessity resort to history. One does not need to thresh old straw. The story of history is written clearly so that all may read. The Spirit of reform has always been in the church. As certain excrescences came upon the church, and as the church became diverted from that true faith which was delivered to the saints by our Lord Jesus Christ, it was inevitable that from time to time certain voices would cry out against them. Your history will remind you of Savonarola in Italy, John Wycliffe in England, and John Huss in Bohemia. These were as voices crying in the wilderness. They preached, they proclaimed against the abuses in the Church, but the church would give them no heed. Many were the fore-runners of the Reformation and many like Savonarola and Huss went to a martyrs' death because the church would not listen.

It was not until the 16th C. that we see the full flowering of the reforming spirit at work. The principal movements of reform in the 16th C. to which, considered together the collective name of Protestant Reformation can be applied, were these:

1. Luther's beginning at Wittenberg, Germany.
2. Zwingli's, originating at Zurich, Switzerland.
3. Calvin's, centering at Geneva and spreading widely from there.
4. The Anabaptists, first in Eastern Switzerland and Southern Germany.
5. The Socinians, Italian in origin but with their first large following in Poland.
6. The Anglican Reformation.

It is clearly seen that these great movements covered the majority of Europe. It cannot be said that anyone of these was an off-shoot from any other. There were cross currents of suggestions and influences among them, but each was derived from independent and initial impulses and developed its own characteristic features. Dr. Harrison points out that this needs to be said several times over that there can be no misunderstanding about it. He goes on to point out "that there was no single original Protestantism which then split into the sections, which we know as denominations or Protestant Churches. These were several centres of revolt against Rome and of constructive religious reform".

If one is to understand fully the Reformation, he must recognize the salient features of its appearances upon the historic scene. Secondly, we should remind ourselves as Dr. W. Pauck says in his book, *THE HERITAGE OF THE REFORMATION*, "that the reformers never claimed to be innovators or revolutionaries as if they intended either to introduce a new religion or to destroy Christianity. They laboured for the reformation of Christianity by rejecting its Roman Catholic form in the name of the Christian faith". Protestantism saw itself as a return to the faith delivered to the saints. It drank again in the spiritually refreshing waters of the New Testament. It recognized afresh the true authority of the Divine Word written, *THE BIBLE*. It saw itself as having true membership in that body which is known as the Church. For this latter reason it could say with all truthfulness, "I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church". Ever since intelligent Protestants have asserted this claim. They see themselves as Catholics. They demand that their fellow Christians who look to Rome use the prefix—Roman. Hence for the purpose of contrast it is much easier to use the words Romanism and Protestantism.

In this short essay on Protestantism it is not possible to deal fully with all the articles of the Protestant faith. Your essayist would invite and refer interested readers to the small booklet entitled *WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?*, published by the United Church of Canada. Suffice for this essay to limit ourselves to the five cardinal points outlined by Dr. Pauck, in his book referred to above.

The five major principles of Protestantism are these, (Quotes from Dr. Pauck).

1. "The central affirmation of Protestant Christianity concerns not man but God. It proclaims the sovereignty of God. God, the Creator and Redeemer, is not bound. He is not confined to limited forms of life, i.e. to historically relative man-made institutions, for example the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Protestant faith and life arise from the hearing of the speaking God who discloses himself when and how he chooses, and calls men into fellowship with himself. The Church, therefore, is a communion of believers, a people committed to God because He has chosen them. It is not an institution of a super-personal character".
2. "Protestantism believes then in the living word of God — Jesus Christ is the Word of God. In a way Protestantism has always treas-

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