

# A Twentieth Century American's Understanding of GOD

(From *The Spirit of St. Louis*, by Charles A. Lindbergh, pp. 318, 319, 320, 321)

## As A Child and Youth

“... Is there a God? Is there an existence after life? Is there something within one's body that doesn't age with years? There were times when I considered taking up the study of biology and medicine so I could explore the mysteries of life and death. But these sciences belonged to well-grounded, brilliant minds; their study was intricate, and my school marks were poor in the subjects they demanded as a background.”

“Being a physician, **Great-grandfather Edwin** must have lived in close contact with both life and death. There didn't seem to be any conflict in his mind between science and God. His studies of **biology didn't convince him that all existence ends with the flesh**. He had faith in some quality that is independent of the body.”

“... **You can't prove that the atheists are wrong**, and you can't prove that the Democrats are wrong, but the arguments of science can't be denied when an airplane actually flies or a human voice is carried from one city to another without wires.

“Science is a key to all mystery. With this key, **man can become like a god** himself. Science is truth; science is knowledge; science is power. With its telescopes it reaches out to the stars. With its microscopes its learning the innermost secrets of life. By **its growing proofs of evolution**, it's confounding preachers with their **fables of Adam and Eve**. When I grow up maybe I'll become a scientist, too.”

“I don't understand **evolution**. It's all mixed up with dinosaurs and stone-age men. But science says its true. And if its true, that **may prove there isn't any God**. If men descended from apes, they didn't begin with Adam and Eve. The answer seems to depend on “the missing link.” That's an old skull, half ape and half man. And **Grandfather thinks** that some day they'll find it. Then **the Bible would be proved wrong**. And if it lies about Adam and the Garden of Eden, how can one trust what it says about Heaven and hell, and God?”

## As A Man of Twenty-Five

“It's *hard to be an agnostic* up here in the *Spirit of St. Louis*, aware of the *frailty of man's devices*, a part of *the universe* between its earth and stars. If one dies, all this goes on existing in *a plan so perfectly balanced*, so wonderfully simple, so incredibly complex that it's *far beyond our comprehension*—worlds and moons revolving; planets orbiting on suns; suns flung with apparent recklessness through space. There's the *infinite magnitude* of the universe; there's the *infinite detail* of its matter—the outer star, the inner atom. And *man conscious of it all—a worldly audience to what if not to God?*”

Humanism

“A system of thinking in which man, his interests and development are made central and dominant, tending to exalt the **cultural and practical**, rather than the scientific and speculative.

Scientific

agreeing with the rules, principles, or methods of science; accurate; exact; systematic (organized)

Webster

According to the rules or principles of science

Speculative

theoretical; purely scientific; opposed to practical

Webster

theoretical; ideal; not verified by fact, experiment or practice

**Cultural**

Pertaining to the training of improvement, and refinement of mind, morals, or taste.

**Practical**

Pertaining to or governed by actual use and experience or actions, as contrasted with *ideals* and *speculations*.

Trained by or derived from practice or experience.

Having reference to useful ends to be attained; applicable to use

Webster

capable of practice or active use; opposed to *speculative*

That may be used in practice; that may be applied to use

Introduction to the Spirit of St. Louis  
by Reeve Lindbergh

“This book was written as much for the Bud Gurneys of my father’s life as for any other readers. It was a celebration of the beginnings of aviation as a profession, for my father and for others, and an acknowledgment of its coming of age. ‘We have accomplished our objectives, passed beyond them,’ he writes in his preface. ‘We actually live, today, in our dreams of yesterday, and living in those dreams, we dream again.’ He touches a little on the subject of aerospace research, with its aviation roots, and **he even raises questions about the effect of technological progress on the quality of human existence, a theme that was to preoccupy him for the rest of his life.**”

Preface

“Along with most of my fellow fliers, I believed that aviation had a brilliant future. But my vision, extravagant as it seemed at the time, fell short of accomplishments now achieved with aircraft, by their pilots, engineers, and executives. Speeds, ranges, altitudes, powers, sizes, economies, and destructive capabilities today have shattered limiting factors of a quarter century ago. Science has transformed the frail craft of Le Bris, Lilienthal, and the Wright brothers into metal, and loaded them with cargoes varying from orchids to atomic bombs. Thousands of men, women, and children now cruise each day above the racing pilot’s speed of 1927. Agencies all over the world sell tickets to cross the ocean at steamer-travel prices. Airlines have flown billions of passenger miles between fatalities. Engines have changed their horsepower ratings from hundreds into thousands. Military crews fly regularly above what the world’s altitude record used to be.

“Technically, we in aviation have met with miraculous success. We have accomplished our objectives, passed beyond them. We actually live, today, in our dreams of yesterday; and, living in those dreams, we dream again. Our visions of the future now embrace rocket missiles and supersonic flights. We speculate on traveling through space as we once discussed flying across oceans. But, **unlike the early years of aviation, our dreams of tomorrow are disturbed by the realities of today.** In this new, almost super-human world, we find **alarming imperfections. We have seen the aircraft, to which we devoted our lives, destroying the civilization that created them. We realize that the very efficiency of our machines threatens the character of the men who build and operate them.**

“Together with people outside the field of aviation, we find ourselves moving in a vicious circle, where **the machine, which depended on modern man for its invention, has made modern man dependent on its constant improvement for his security—even for his life.** We begin to **wonder how rocket speeds and atomic powers will affect the naked body, mind, and spirit, which in the last analysis, measure the true value of human effort.** We have come face to face with the essential **problem of how to use man’s creations for the benefit of**

**man himself.** But this leads beyond the scope of my story, which ends on May 21, 1927, when we were still looking forward to the conquest of the air.”

C. A. L.

pp. 318, 319, 320, 321

“. . . People have been preaching about God and arguing about government for hundreds of years, and still they don't agree about who's right and who's wrong. Science isn't like that. It confronts opinion with facts. In science men are measured by what they really do. There's no unfairness about it. It doesn't matter whether you believe in God, or whether you are a Republican or a Democrat. Your experiment works, or it doesn't. A machine will run, or it won't. You can't prove that the atheists are wrong, and you can't prove that the Democrats are wrong, but the arguments of science can't be denied when an airplane actually flies or a human voice is carried from one city to another without wires.

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“These problems continued to throb in my mind through years beyond childhood. Is there a God? Is there an existence after life? Is there something within one's body that doesn't age with years? There were times when I considered taking up the study of biology and medicine so I could explore the mysteries of life and death. But these sciences belonged to well-grounded, brilliant minds; their study was intricate, and my school marks were poor in the subjects they demanded as a background.”

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# A Twentieth Century American's View of Man

## Man's Great Interests and Development

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“In this *new, almost super-human world*. . . .”

—Preface, *The Spirit of St. Louis*  
Charles A. Lindbergh

“Flying has *torn apart the relationship of space and time*. It uses our old thought but with **new** yardsticks. We can travel over the world in the space of days or over countries in the space of hours. Every American can be proud that *we have entered the great new age of airplanes*.”

—*Northwest Airlines World Traveler*, January, p. 52



## ROMANS 1:20–23

“For the *invisible things of him* from the creation of the world *are clearly seen*, being *understood by the things that are made*, even *his eternal power and Godhead*, so that they are without excuse;

“Because, when they knew God, *they glorified him not as God*, neither were thankful, *but became vain in their imaginations*, and their foolish heart was darkened.

“*Professing themselves* to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image make like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.