

Mercy

“Yahweh, Yahweh Elohim, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty (Exodus 34:6-7).

“Merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.” This is how God chooses to manifest Himself. This is the aspect that He emphasises. This is His basic character and will.

He makes every effort to get men to put themselves into the channel of His goodness; to accept His blessings; to seek His help and comfort and mercy and forgiveness. All the emphasis is upon joy and reconciliation, *but*—He will by no means clear the guilty.

God made special manifestation of Himself to David, as is so marvellously revealed in the inspired Psalms. David was called the man after God’s own heart. He was not perfect. He had weaknesses and failures and serious mistakes.

“They that are whole have no need of a physician” (Mark 2:17).

But he had an intense, continuous consciousness of the reality and closeness of God. The basic pattern of his life was a mighty faith that feared nothing, and a close, mutual communion with God. And when he failed, he humbled and redeemed himself, and accepted lifelong tragedy with undiminished love for the chastening Hand.

Let us read the Psalms over and over. They give the inner soul of the man who, in great tribulation, found peace in God: the man to whom God was an over-whelming, ever-present, personal reality— *“a man after God’s Own heart.”*

Whenever there has been a special closeness to God, and manifestation by God, there has always been greater testing and trial. Where much is given, much is expected.

“God chasteneth every son whom He receiveth” (Hebrews 12:6).

“If a branch bring forth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.” (John 15:2).

The lives of such men as Moses, David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Nehemiah, had great sorrows and difficulties and losses and disappointment; but *also* great satisfaction in closeness and service to God, as useful parts of the eternal purpose of ultimate Divine manifestation in and through mankind.

In the Christadelphian Instructor, under the question, “What does the Bible reveal concerning the character of God,” the first sentence is this—

“He is kind, yet inflexible in the requirements of His Law.”

There can be no better summing up of the whole picture: infinitely kind, yet absolutely inflexible in matters of right and wrong; infinitely merciful, longsuffering and forgiving, but He rigidly insists upon total, unreserved, absolute submission and a continuous and fearful, enlightened obedience. He demands *everything* we have, but never requires more than is possible. He knows each one’s strengths and weaknesses; each one’s possibilities and limitations. He makes merciful allowance for stumblings and shortcomings, and knows who are sincerely endeavouring to serve Him with *all* their hearts.

His desire is to help and to build—to teach and to strengthen; *not* to condemn and destroy. *But* He will not for a moment tolerate the slightest degree of carelessness in His service, nor voluntary foolishness, nor wilful neglect, nor presumptuous disobedience.

His mercy is not indiscriminate. It operates upon definite, eternal, impartial principles. His mercy is to *bridge the gap* between perfection and the best that man at his best efforts can do.

Those who do not give their best and their utmost do not even put themselves into the channel of the possibility of receiving His mercy. His mercy is not for the purpose of bridging over our carelessness, or neglect, or lack of devotion. It is just to cover our impossibilities AFTER *we* have done our best. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, but only upon—

“Those that fear Him; to such as keep His covenant and remember His commandments to do them” (Psalm 103:17-18).

It is never promised to anyone else. Therefore, the apostle says—

“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

God insists, above all, upon absolute, unquestioning obedience. The mind of the flesh will raise a thousand excuses and objections. *Here* is a clear and revealing test between the mind of the Spirit and the mind of the flesh. The mind of the Spirit will always be seeking to *get closer to God*—closer to His will—closer to His commandments. The mind of the flesh seeks all the loopholes and excuses—all the secondary meanings—that will weaken the command and confuse the issue.

The mind of the flesh can be spotted before a person has uttered half a dozen words. Its approach to the Word of God is so common and universal. Most people, very quickly, reveal the basic pattern of their hearts and interest, regardless of their words or profession.

There is no middle class at the judgment seat of Christ. Just a clear, sharp line: the sheep and the goats—the right hand and the left hand. The right hand are those few who have gone *all the way*, who have not held anything back, who have filled their hearts and minds with God, and have eliminated everything else; the few who have perceived the tremendous value of the prize and have—

“sold ALL and bought it.”

The left hand are all the rest: from the nearlies to the nothings.

It is the *personal aspect* of God’s manifestation of Himself that we need to meditate upon the most fully, and *continuously*, and *deeply*; not the wind or the earthquake or the fire, but *“the still small voice.”*

We need to draw near; to learn the beauty and comfort and desirability and all sufficiency of God. Especially the all sufficiency. If there is something that can perfectly satisfy *all* our needs—from the lowest to the highest—*why* need we seek further? *Why* need we look elsewhere? *God is all sufficient for all needs.*

Other help and comfort and companionship is desirable, but not necessary; not really important. It is to be accepted with thanksgiving if it comes; but to be relinquished, if God will it, without regret.

Anyone who truly *has* God, has everything. David expresses the ideal to which we must strive—

“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee; my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. They that are far from Thee shall perish, but it is good for me to draw nigh unto God” (Psalm 73:25-28).

Any experience, harsh though it may be, that helps to lead us to this frame of mind is of the love and mercy and blessing of God.

We must strive to perceive the deep truth of Paul's words—

“Our sufficiency is of God” (2 Corinthians 3:5).

Every moment of our life, every thought, must be consciously related to God and His purpose.

God is the whole essence and meaning of life. The closer we get to Him, the deeper and fuller our life becomes. *This* is the key to everything: the solution to all problems, the end of all struggle and striving. Our minds must be filled continually with God. *This* is the power that transforms our characters. This is our transition from the natural to the spiritual; from death to life, from passing emptiness to eternal fullness of joy.

“. . . whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK on THESE things”

(Philippians 4:8).

Only the things of God so qualify. *Think* on these things; meditate upon them; give thyself wholly to them. These are the words of the apostle.

“Set your affection upon things that are above, not on things on earth” (Colossians 3:2).

The natural mind is petty, self-centred, small, narrow, ignorant and childish. We must *enlarge* our minds, get them onto the track of real and eternal things; clear out all the passing rubbish of the present. This must be the foundation of our mind and consciousness. *All* must be viewed from this one perspective.

The degree of the closeness that we attain to God is the measure of our real value and maturity. The degree to which God fills our minds and thoughts is the measure of our wisdom and intelligence. Everything outside of God is stupidity and folly, regardless of how imposing and impressive it may appear in the eyes of a benighted world.

The ideal to which we must pray and strive is a constant, moment to moment consciousness of the manifestation of God: a continuous, unbroken communion and contact; all thoughts with God in the foreground, all actions done as unto God, and in partnership with God, trusting and expecting God's active guidance and assistance in *everything* we do: *every* deed, *every* decision.

We should never wonder—never ask ourselves—if anything is serious or important enough to make a matter of prayer, for this is an entirely wrong conception. For the process to be meaningful, it must be continuous and unbroken.

Life must be a *continuous* prayer—a continuous relationship—in everything, large and small. Everything worth doing is worth praying about. *It must be* prayed about, if we hope to be *in* God and God *in* us. It cannot be on and off, seeking God's help *part* of the time, depending on ourselves for the rest; deciding what is “important” enough to approach Him about.

We need His help and partnership and presence and comfort in everything that we do. We must live in a continuous atmosphere of *working with God*; for this is the only possible way to control the flesh and to live *in* the Spirit.

This is very prominent in the Psalms: the love of God's law, meditating therein day and night; *not an exaggeration*, but an essential truth. *Anything* we cannot pray about, approach God in, seek His help in, should not be done at all.

And there *are no exceptions* to this rule. Any exception would destroy—completely destroy—the whole pattern of oneness. It must embrace the whole life. There can be nothing held back. Nothing too unimportant to bring into full harmony with the spiritual unity of the individual with God.

It is infinitely more intimate than any *human* relationship, for God can both read and control the innermost thoughts of the heart.

Unity between humans, even at its highest and most beautiful development, is but a groping and a clasping of hands in the dark; comforting, but still agonisingly partial and incomplete.

But *unity with God* has no barriers, no limitations, no obscurities, no disappointments, no misunderstandings. It must be a constant flow of coordination with God in every act. We must believe and expect His help in everything, great and small.

Truly, we never reach this ideal. There are constant lapses and failures. But the important thing is that they be recognised *as such*, and be repudiated and striven against. We can never accept, as satisfactory, anything short of perfect unity with God. This is the whole essence of the manifestation of God.

Paul exhorts (Ephesians 4:30)—

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.”

Surely this statement is the deepest, most revealing of all aspects of God’s manifestation to man.

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.”

Why should God, the All-powerful, the All-sufficient—the Possessor of heaven and earth—*why should He expose* Himself to being grieved by puny, mortal man?

The essence of love’s power is *personal involvement*. Love, in its working, necessarily exposes itself to hurt. This is the beautiful sacrifice it is willing to make to accomplish its glorious end. And God, above everything, is love.

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.”

What stronger appeal could there be to goodness, if there is any potential or goodness or spirituality in us at all?

We feel with the apostle—

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).

“This God is our God for ever and ever. He will be our Guide even unto death” (Psalm 48:14).

“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4).

(Taken from “Be Ye Transformed” Volume 4 Pages 38-43 by Bro. G. V. Growcott)