

HIS INDWELLING PRESENCE

Intimate Studies in the Things of the Spirit

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THE APPROACH

THE HIGHEST QUEST OF THE HUMAN HEART

“I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory” (Exodus 33:18).

There is in the heart of man an insistent hunger. He may refuse it. He may repress it. Yet it persists. Despite his every effort to ignore it, or stifle it, still it speaks up. It is the hunger after God.

The fact that man has this hungering after God, unshared by any creature round about him, is an incontestable declaration as to man’s past descent, present duty, and future destiny. It betokens that he came from God, goes to God, and must now **“live, and move, and have his being”** in God.

As Augustine expressed it, out of a very personal experience of being far removed from God in sin: “Thou has made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee.” Again, the Westminster divines embodied this fact in their first, fundamental statement: “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”

The Cry of the Heart

Paul on Mars Hill, surveying the multiplicity of gods surrounding him, the creations of Grecian culture, sensed the crying out of the heart of the pagan world. As he stood there he contemplated their pitiful display of ignorant, idolatrous aspiration after deity. He perceived that in this they were but voicing the universal cry of the heart of man. More by far than a mere theological dogma as to God’s existence; rather, an inner urge that men **“seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him.”**

Then Paul espied an image with the tell-tale inscription, **“To the Unknown God.”**

To him this spoke of still deeper depths of hungering, voiced in the limitations of confessed ignorance—ignorance that presented a plight the more pitiable because set in the framework of the world’s highest intellectual attainments. Taking as his text this revelation of a quest unsatisfied, the Apostle of the Christian faith brought to the Athenians the glad word that the **“Unknown God,”** after whom they groped, was known to him, had revealed Himself to men, and was knowable for the seeking.

Matching the heart-cry of an ignorant heathen world is the recurrent hunger of those who have tasted, little or much, of the goodness of the living God. Knowing Him, there is a longing to know Him yet more. Shut out from His fellowship, deprived of the privilege of worship, as the exiled David found himself, the heart aspires after Him:

“As the heart panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”
(Psalm 42:1, 2)

The Answer of God

As in nature God has provided an answer to every need of the body He has given us, so in grace for the needs of the soul. He gave us a hungering for Himself only that He might satisfy it. Whenever the heart cries, with Moses: **“I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory,”** He has His all-sufficient answer at hand. What is the glory of God? What but His essential excellence in manifestation? This glory, this excellence, that which God really is, man was meant to share and show forth in his own being and experience. In its progressive manifestation, then, “glory” tells the story of redemption. There is no truer key to revelation than the successive unfoldings of divine glory.

1. THE GLORY BESTOWED—MAN IN CREATION.

God, in counsel, determined to create man by bestowing upon him His essence of being: **“And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have dominion,”** etc. (Genesis 1:26). Of man, thus created, we read, **“For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with GLORY and honour.”**

2. THE GLORY LOST—MAN FALLEN IN SIN.

Man’s conscious nakedness, coming as a consequence of his fall into sin (Genesis 3:7), is the loss of the divine glory with which he was endowed and clothed in creation. Stripped of his native glory he slinks from God’s presence (Genesis 3:8-10) and is driven from His garden (Genesis 3:24).

3. THE GLORY GLIMPSED—THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Throughout the Old Testament God’s glory is glimpsed by man, seen in such ways and under such conditions as foretold its fuller manifestation under a more perfect covenant.

4. THE GLORY MANIFESTED—THE GOSPELS.

Heralded with glory (Lu. 2:9, 14), of Christ’s presence among men we read: **“We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father”** (John 1:14). As the sum of His life-work He says to the Father: **“I have glorified Thee on the earth”** (John 17:4). Glory is the intent and content of the Son’s earthly stay.

5. THE GLORY EXPERIENCED—THE ACTS.

This experience Jesus promised His disciples upon His departure. For it He bade them tarry (Acts 1:4). On the day of Pentecost the gift of glory, the Holy Spirit sent from the Father, became theirs (Acts 2). Henceforth the Shekinah glory lived, moved and wrought in their midst.

6. THE GLORY EXPRESSED—THE EPISTLES.

The life of a man to whom the glory of God is restored, in whom He dwells and walks (II Corinthians 6:16), such is the life expounded in the Epistles. The appeal for this life is to “**glorify God in your body**” (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

7. THE GLORY ENTHRONED—THE REVELATION.

The Book of God does not close until He is pictured at the center of a state of society of which His glory is the light, a light in which the nations walk and to which they contribute whatever of glory and honour they possess, a society free from all that is unworthy or unclean (Revelation 21: 23-27).

The Only Antidote

In this unfolding program, now so largely fulfilled, so certain of complete accomplishment, we are in the crucial stage, that of EXPRESSING HIS EXPERIENCED GLORY. Surrounded as we are by a vast society that knows Him not, herein lies our chief duty—to know, to experience, to rightly express HIM. Men do not see miracles today, or any direct manifestation of God. Why? We are His miracle for our day. His glory resident in us, His expression of Himself He is purposely limiting to His redeemed.

We have fallen upon days of gross materialism. To men the world of things is the only real world. Out of this miasmatic swamp of materialism is springing every imaginable evil. Men doubt their divine origin and destiny. They deny the very existence of God. They call into question His every revelation of Himself. In consequence, they acknowledge no moral or spiritual accountability. The thought of animal-origin engenders animal-ethics. These ideas, lodged in the mind, germinate and multiply their kind. We are sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind.

For this age of ours the one and only antidote is a Spirit-filled life, a follower of Christ who has experienced the Supernatural and is expressing Him through the avenues of his every-day expressional life. There is no other remedy. Argument will not answer; mere reasoning will not turn the mind of men in these matters. Nor has invective any power to beget faith. Not even the spoken truth, unsupported by the demonstration of living reality, will suffice to uproot unbelief. Only God Himself, God in human life, can meet the seriousness of self-blinded doubt. Only a life supernaturally indwelt, supernaturally transformed, supernaturally radiant, can suffice. He Himself in us—He is the answer.

To such a life we are gloriously called.

The Secret of Guidance

“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

When once we know Him the heart mounts higher, yea becomes bolder, in its desire to know His mind and will for every personal interest. This is, indeed, the intent of His Indwelling—a Spirit-illuminated, Spirit-led life. The reward of habitually responding to His Indwelling is that we are rendered sensitive to the Spirit’s leading; whether through His Word, illuminating it as we read; through prayer, prompting His mind in us; or through His hand of providence in our affairs. For the living of such a life, a true blending of the divine and the human, as we do our part we will find Him faithful in His. Such a life is not only possible to us; it is our supreme duty and privilege.

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