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### I Believe in an Omniscient, Loving God

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LAST week I mentioned that a student and I were having a religious discussion in my office at the Theological Seminary. At one point he asked me, "Can we prove the existence of God?"

"Why are we always so concerned to 'prove' His existence?" I asked. "What do you mean by 'prove'? The scientist wants a factual proof by laboratory tests. Others wish to prove God's existence by deduction or logic or by the so-called ontological method. Of course, these efforts are bound to fail. You cannot prove abstract spiritual truth; it must be spiritually discerned. And the one who has the divine gift of faith does not need a test-type type of proof.

"But, personally," I went on to the student, "I know that God exists, because of the universe created by a living, purposeful God; also, because He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, and He speaks to us in Scripture. I know that God exists by personal experience. You know the passage: 'Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?' (Job 11:7).

"The very terms we use to define God are human and indicate our limits. I see in God a Father, because it is the divine attribute understandable to me, and He is thus described for me by Jesus, His Son. Yet, God is ever beyond my thoughts, for He says: 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts' (Isa. 55:9). Scripture uses the medium of the human vocabulary when speaking of God. 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him' (Ps. 103:13). God is as 'one whom his mother comforteth' (Isa. 66:13). He is as a man to his friend (Ex. 33:11). But still, God, in spite of the illustrations and metaphors that we use, is beyond our concept. The heavenly Father is mindful of His children and provides 'how much more' (Luke 11:13)."

My student asked, "Is it correct to think of God as a person?"

"Definitely. The entire universe gives evidence of a personal will. The living God to whom I pray is active in the universe, which the human mind, in spite of its spectacular achievements, is only beginning to study at the fringes. The same God is also interested in me. It matters to Him about you. We should see in God one who yearns toward men, longing to do them good."

The student asked another question: "If God is so real and so avail-

# I Believe in an Omniscient, Loving God

*God is the God of the infinitely small, as well as of the infinitely large.*

By Daniel Walther



My student asked, "Is it correct to think of God as a person?"

able, how can I reach Him? He seems so far off, so inaccessible."

"I admit that in his experience and faith the Christian must grow," I said. "We must put our faith to a daily test. Have you read that little book *The Practice of the Presence of God*? It was written not by a theologian, an evangelist, or an administrator. It was written by a cook in the kitchen of a large institution. While he did his routine work preparing meals, he practiced silently the presence of God. The results of that spiritual work were so obvious that soon leaders and theologians came to inquire about his 'secret.' He gladly obliged in disarmingly simple conversations, which

make up the little booklet *The Practice of the Presence of God*, where Brother Lawrence speaks about that peace which goes beyond his understanding. And that peace came to him as he practiced communion with God, as he says in 'renouncing everything that was not He; and I began to live as if there were none but He and I in the world' (page 27).

"There are many books and treatises, more or less erudite, which indicate a way to come near to God. But the basic idea is that I must find that way myself. I do not need other help, no matter how solicitous it may be. I must seek to walk with God alone. And that takes daily practice; it is a

daily experience. My experience will not be like yours. I will, perhaps, be led some other ways and sometimes, like Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, I will find something to complain about in walking that straight and narrow path. But, all in all, it is quite simple."

"But, there is another thing that puzzles me," said my young friend. "At the present time we think in terms of outer space, and we begin to have a faint idea of the immensity of the universe. God created all that. Whatever is connected with God is immeasurable. How, then, is it possible for Him to take notice of poor little me?"

"Precisely because our God is incommensurable in His power and infinite in His wisdom," I said. "Remember that God is Lord not only of the immeasurably great but also of the infinitely small. Man is almost as ignorant of what goes on in the atom as he is of what goes on in outer space. God created that which is too small to be visible through a microscope, as well as that which is visible, in part, through the telescope. He knows about the most minute objects, as well as the most enormous. I believe in a God who is omniscient, and there again I have to use a human example. When an ignoramus goes to a library he sees little beyond catalogs and lots of books. But the scholar, the better he is informed, the more he knows the individual author, the vaster his knowledge, the more informed he is about detail.

"When an inexperienced man enters a laboratory he sees only weird instruments. But the scientist patiently uses these implements and pores for days, perhaps years, over an infinitesimal detail that may be the beginning of a revolutionary finding. He does not see the atom. No one has seen it, yet the scientist has been able to master it. He knows now that it is not, as first thought, a solid pellet, but energy, which in itself is a universe where the particles travel with such energy and speed that if the atom is split it releases great power. Is it not amazing that the most terrifying power in the world comes from the smallest imaginable particle which man cannot even see! Scientists have only a faint understanding of the infinitely small in the world, but the God I worship is not only the God of outer space and incommensurable distances, He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of each individual. He is your God and mine. He cares for you."

"But," asked my friend, "does God always answer your prayers?"

"Yes, I have found that He always does. I know that He hears and

knows in advance. To be sure, He doesn't always answer prayers on my terms. He doesn't always answer them when and how I desire. But he always answers them for my best, and at the moment when it will be most suitable."

"You say that God knows in advance, and He knows what you need better than you yourself—then, why is it necessary to pray?"

"Such a question has been asked, of course, ever since man has prayed and has thought about God. Jesus Christ revealed the Father with whom He was one. Surely Jesus, in His power and sinlessness, did not need to pray as we do. But what do we find? He was in a constant intimate relation with His Father; He prayed long hours, sometimes whole nights. He prayed more intensely than anyone. Prayer is not meant to change God's will to suit my own purpose or to tell Him what He knows better than I do. Prayer, as I see it, releases divine power and opens a prayerful heart to receive God's message. As it says in the Laodicean message, 'If you open the door, our Lord will come in. Prayer is the opening of the door, giving the merciful and all-knowing God the opportunity to accomplish in and through us what He intends to do.'

"One of the greatest mysteries is that this mighty God not only knows us but He is, in essence, love. You remember that when Jesus was asked if there was a 'first' commandment He replied, 'Yes, it is to love God.' In this commandment, already contained in the Old Testament, man is asked to love God. That is basic. That is the first commandment. We all love the Lord. But, what Jesus wanted to convey was to love God entirely, with all our being, with all our resources, with our thoughts, as well as with our will. If I love God, it will then be easy

to love my neighbor. And should it be difficult to love God, who is love? In a way, when I say that God is love, that too is incomprehensible, unless I have experienced it. Already in our human relationships we cannot factually explain love, but we certainly know that it is a reality."

"How does the idea of God affect modern man?" asked my student-friend.

"In this day when man can hurl through space and see the sun rise and travel much faster than the speed of sound, doesn't that affect my faith in God? Of course it does, but it depends on our concept. Of those who have traveled through space there are different points of view. The Russian Titov said: 'In my travels around the earth I saw no God or angels.'

"From a Moscow radio broadcast, Christmas, 1960: 'Our rocket has bypassed the moon. It is nearing the sun, and we have not discovered God. We have turned lights out in heaven that no man will be able to put on again. We are breaking the yoke of the Gospel, the opium of the masses. Let us go forth, and Christ shall be relegated to mythology.'

"John Glenn had a different view: 'The God I pray to is not so small that I expect to see Him in space.'

"To know God is to love him. To know God is life. To believe in Him is to obey. To speak to Him is to invite Him into our hearts, and to listen to His voice is to receive a personal message of love, as well as a marching order: 'This is the way.'

"But then, who is He? In the words of a most influential Christian in the early church: 'God is greater in our thoughts than in our words. But in reality He is infinitely greater than He is in our thoughts.'"

[End of Series]

## Contrast

By  
BETTY JEAN  
MARTIN

A figure lone beside a column stood  
And mused. Behold that form majestic, clothed  
In robe of lucid white; the milky brow;  
The piercing eyes like cerulean skies  
Of noon; full, sanguine lips; cascading hair  
Of silken gold; great opalescent wings  
That now quiescent lie. Observe him well.

A figure lone upon a mountain sat  
And mused. Behold a form degraded, wrapped  
In shroud of lurid hue; the sallow brow;  
The glittering eyes that burn in flesh now etched  
With hate; thin, pallid lips; the falling wisps  
Of unkempt hair; great wings distorted, torn,  
Like wounded birds against the storm. Observe.