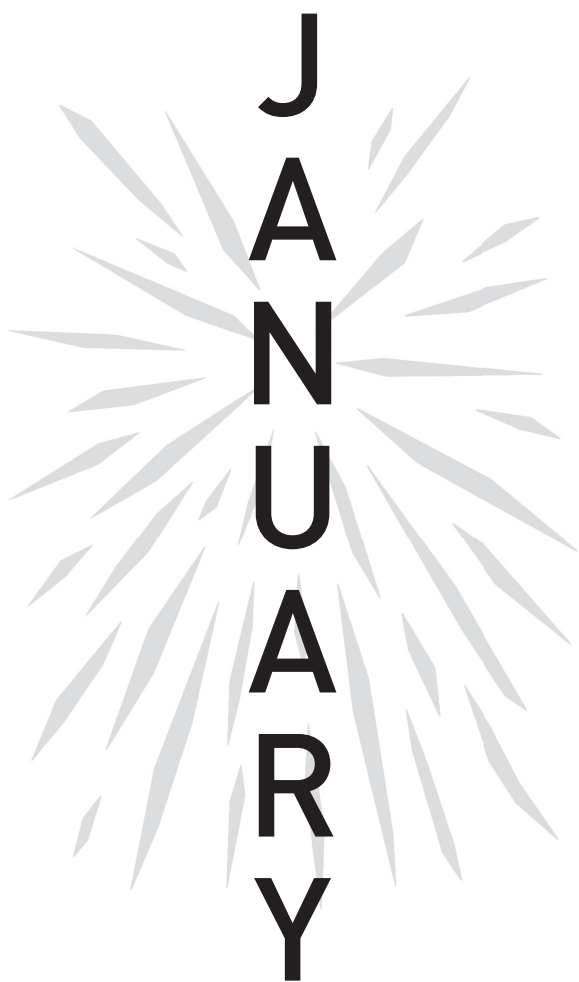


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God's Awesomeness

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of
God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond
tracing out!

—ROMANS 11:33

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary lists 550,000 words. And it is a solemn and beautiful thought that in our worship of God there sometimes rush up from the depths of our souls feelings that all this wealth of words is not sufficient to express. To be articulate at certain times we are compelled to fall back upon "Oh!" or "O!"—a primitive exclamatory sound that is hardly a word at all and that scarcely admits of a definition.

Vocabularies are formed by many minds over long periods and are capable of expressing whatever the mind is capable of entertaining. But when the heart, on its knees, moves into the awesome Presence and hears with fear and wonder things not lawful to utter, then the mind falls flat, and words, previously its faithful servants, become weak and totally incapable of telling what the heart hears and sees. In that awful moment the worshiper can only cry "Oh!" And that simple exclamation becomes more eloquent than learned speech and, I have no doubt, is dearer to God than any oratory. BAM084-085

Lord, I come, with my heart on its knees, into Your awesome presence this first day of the year. I long to know You better and to sense that awesomeness that leaves me speechless before You. Amen.

Oh!

“Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak;
I am too young.”

—JEREMIAH 1:6

In theology there is no “Oh!” and this is a significant if not an ominous thing. Theology seeks to reduce what may be known of God to intellectual terms, and as long as the intellect can comprehend, it can find words to express itself. When God Himself appears before the mind—awesome, vast, and incomprehensible—then the mind sinks into silence and the heart cries out “O Lord God!” There is the difference between theological knowledge and spiritual experience, the difference between knowing God by hearsay and knowing Him by acquaintance. And the difference is not verbal merely; it is real and serious and vital.

We Christians should watch lest we lose the “Oh!” from our hearts. . . .

When we become too glib in prayer we are most surely talking to ourselves. When the calm listing of requests and the courteous giving of proper thanks take the place of the burdened prayer that finds utterance difficult, we should beware the next step, for our direction is surely down whether we know it or not. BAM085-087

Lord, don't ever let me lose the “Oh!” from my heart. May I truly experience You so that my knowledge of You will inspire my cries of admiration. Amen.

A Thirst for God

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you,
my God.

—PSALM 42:1

In this hour of all-but-universal darkness one cheering gleam appears: within the fold of conservative Christianity there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God Himself. They are eager for spiritual realities and will not be put off with words, nor will they be content with correct “interpretations” of truth. They are athirst for God, and they will not be satisfied till they have drunk deep at the Fountain of Living Water.

This is the only real harbinger of revival which I have been able to detect anywhere on the religious horizon. It may be the cloud the size of a man’s hand for which a few saints here and there have been looking. It can result in a resurrection of life for many souls and a recapture of that radiant wonder which should accompany faith in Christ, that wonder which has all but fled the Church of God in our day. POG007

*O Lord, I pray that a thirst for You may build and grow, may prove unquenchable and may indeed result in a recapturing of “that radiant wonder,” both in my own faith and in that of the church.
Amen.*

Show Me Your Glory

If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know
you and continue to find favor with you.

—EXODUS 33:13

Come near to the holy men and women of the past, and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him, day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking. Moses used the fact that he knew God as an argument for knowing Him better. “Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight” (Ex. 33:13); and from there he rose to make the daring request, “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory” (33:18). God was frankly pleased by this display of ardor, and the next day called Moses into the mount, and there in solemn procession made all His glory pass before him.

David’s life was a torrent of spiritual desire, and his psalms ring with the cry of the seeker and the glad shout of the finder. Paul confessed the mainspring of his life to be his burning desire after Christ. “That I may know him” (Phil. 3:10), was the goal of his heart, and to this he sacrificed everything. POG015-016

*Lord, make Your glory known to me and let me learn from Moses,
David, Paul, and others that deep longing that results in intimate
knowledge of You. Amen.*

Justified Sinners

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:9

When God justifies a sinner, everything in God is on the sinner's side. All the attributes of God are on the sinner's side. It isn't that mercy is pleading for the sinner and justice is trying to beat him to death, as we preachers sometimes make it sound. All of God does all that God does. When God looks at a sinner and sees him there unatoned for (he won't accept the atonement; he thinks it doesn't apply to him), the moral situation is such that justice says he must die. And when God looks at the atoned-for sinner, who in faith knows he's atoned for and has accepted it, justice says he must live! The unjust sinner can no more go to heaven than the justified sinner can go to hell. O friends, why are we so still? Why are we so quiet? We ought to rejoice and thank God with all our might!

I say it again: Justice is on the side of the returning sinner. . . . Justice is over on our side now because the mystery of the agony of God on the cross has changed our moral situation. So justice looks and sees equality, not inequity, and we are justified. That's what justification means. AOG071

Father, thank for You justifying me and being on my side, for loving me and making me Your child. May I walk as a child of the light this day. Amen.

Spiritual Receptivity

My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek.
—PSALM 27:8

Pick at random a score of great saints whose lives and testimonies are widely known. Let them be Bible characters or well-known Christians of post-biblical times. . . .

I venture to suggest that the one vital quality which they had in common was spiritual receptivity. Something in them was open to heaven, something which urged them Godward. Without attempting anything like a profound analysis, I shall say simply that they had spiritual awareness and that they went on to cultivate it until it became the biggest thing in their lives. They differed from the average person in that when they felt the inward longing, they *did something about it*. They acquired the lifelong habit of spiritual response. They were not disobedient to the heavenly vision. As David put it neatly, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek" (Ps. 27:8). POG062-063

Lord, give me open ears, a quiet mind, a receptive heart, and a willingness to obey. I commit before You my desire to acquire a "lifelong habit of spiritual response." Amen.

He Wants Us to Come

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

—REVELATION 22:17

God takes great pleasure in having a helpless soul come to Him simply and plainly and intimately. He takes pleasure in having us come to Him. This kind of Christianity doesn't draw big crowds. It draws only those who have their hearts set on God, who want God more than they want anything else in the world. These people want the spiritual experience that comes from knowing God for Himself. They could have everything stripped away from them and still have God.

These people are not vastly numerous in any given locality. This kind of Christianity doesn't draw big crowds, but it is likely to draw the hungriest ones, the thirstiest ones, and some of the best ones. And so God takes great pleasure in having helpless people come to Him, simply and plainly and intimately. He wants us to come without all that great overlordship of theology. He wants us to come as simply and as plainly as a little child. And if the Holy Spirit touches you, you'll come like that. AOG030-031

Thank You, Lord, for this warm invitation. I come to You humbly, deeply grateful for Your compassionate desire to meet with me and fill me. Amen.

The Sum Total of Our Hungers

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God?

—PSALM 42:2

One of the big milk companies makes capital of the fact that their cows are all satisfied with their lot in life. Their clever ads have made the term “contented cows” familiar to everyone. But what is a virtue in a cow may be a vice in a man. And contentment, when it touches spiritual things, is surely a vice. . . .

Religious complacency is encountered almost everywhere among Christians these days, and its presence is a sign and a prophecy. For every Christian will become at last what his desires have made him. We are all the sum total of our hungers. The great saints have all had thirsting hearts. Their cry has been, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” Their longing after God all but consumed them; it propelled them onward and upward to heights toward which less ardent Christians look with languid eye and entertain no hope of reaching.

Orthodox Christianity has fallen to its present low estate from lack of spiritual desire. Among the many who profess the Christian faith, scarcely one in a thousand reveals any passionate thirst for God.

ROR059-061

Oh, Lord, deliver me from the complacency that is so prevalent both around me and within me. Give me an unquenchable thirst for You that I may cry out for You along with the saints of long ago. Amen.

Seeking for More of God

Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

—EXODUS 33:18

When Moses saw the glory of God, he begged that he might see more. When God revealed to him that he had found grace, he wanted more grace. Remember this: The man that has the most of God is the man who is seeking the most ardently for more of God. . . .

I have been greatly and deeply concerned that you and I do something more than listen, that we dare to go to God like the Lady Julian and dare to ask Him to give us a faithful, fatherly wound—maybe three of them, if you please: to wound us with a sense of our own sinful unworthiness that we'll never quite get over; to wound us with the sufferings of the world and the sorrows of the Church; and then to wound us with the longing after God, a thirst, a sacred thirst and longing that will carry us on toward perfection. . . .

Almost every day of my life I am praying that "a jubilant pining and longing for God" might come back on the evangelical churches. We don't need to have our doctrine straightened out; we're as orthodox as the Pharisees of old. But this longing for God that brings spiritual torrents and whirlwinds of seeking and self-denial—this is almost gone from our midst. MDP116-117

Lord, I pray that You will bring about a renewed, intense longing for You in my heart. Begin the work in my own heart, and let it spread also to all of Your Church! Amen.

Daily Glimpses of His Glory

Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

—ISAIAH 64:4

Every emotion has its reaction, and every pleasurable experience will dim after a while. The human organism is built that way, and there is nothing we can do about it. It is well known that the second year of marriage is often the most critical, for then the first excitement has worn off the relationship, and the young couple has not had time to acquire a new set of common interests and to learn to accept a more stable if less emotional kind of life.

Only engrossment with God can maintain perpetual spiritual enthusiasm because only God can supply everlasting novelty. In God every moment is new and nothing ever gets old. Of things religious we may become tired; even prayer may weary us; but God never. He can show a new aspect of His glory to us each day for all the days of eternity, and still we shall have but begun to explore the depths of the riches of His infinite being. . . .

The sum of all this is that nothing can preserve the sweet savor of our first experience except to be preoccupied with God Himself. Our little rill is sure to run dry unless we keep it replenished from the fountain. GTM127-129

*Lord, every day there is indeed some new glimpse of Your glory.
May I enter the day today with a holy anticipation! Amen.*

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