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## *Day 1*

# *God Is Never Found Accidentally*

*Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.*

*Hosea 6:3*

Christian theology teaches the doctrine of prevenient grace, which, briefly stated, means that before a man can seek God, God must first have sought the man.

Before a sinful man can think a right thought of God, there must have been a work of enlightenment done within him. Imperfect it may be, but a true work nonetheless, and the secret cause of all desiring and seeking and praying which may follow.

We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit. "No man can





come to me,” said our Lord, “except the Father which hath sent me draw him,” and it is by this prevenient *drawing* that God takes from us every vestige of credit for the act of coming. The impulse to pursue God originates with God, but the outworking of that impulse is our following hard

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*The greatest need of the human personality is to experience God Himself.*

*This is because of who God is and who and what man is.*

—AWT in *That Incredible Christian*

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after Him. All the time we are pursuing Him we are already in His hand: “Thy right hand upholdeth me.”

In this divine “upholding” and human “following” there is no contradiction. All is of God, for as von Hügel teaches, *God is always previous*. In practice, however (that is, where God’s previous working meets man’s present response), man must pursue God. On our part there must be positive recipro-

cation if this secret drawing of God is to eventuate in identifiable experience of the Divine. In the warm language of personal feeling, this is stated in Psalm 42:1-2:

As the hart 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?



This is deep calling unto deep, and the longing heart will understand it.

The doctrine of justification by faith—a biblical truth, and a blessed relief from sterile legalism and unavailing self-effort—has in our time fallen into evil company and been interpreted by many in such a manner as actually to bar men from the knowledge of God. The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. Faith may now be exercised without a jar to the moral life and without embarrassment to the Adamic ego. Christ may be “received” without creating any special love for Him in the soul of the receiver. The man is “saved,” but he is not hungry nor thirsty after God. In fact, he is specifically taught to be satisfied and is encouraged to be content with little.



*There are two reasons for loving God:  
no one is more worthy of our love,  
and no one can return more  
in response to our love.  
—Bernard of Clairvaux*



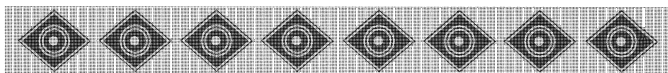


The modern scientist has lost God amid the wonders of His world; we Christians are in real danger of losing God amid the wonders of His Word. We have almost forgotten that God is a person and, as such, can be cultivated as any person can. It is inherent in personality to be able to know other personalities, but full knowledge of one personality by another cannot be achieved in one encounter. It is only after long and loving mental intercourse that the full possibilities of both can be explored.

All social intercourse between human beings is a response of personality to personality, grading upward from the most casual brush between man and man to the fullest, most intimate communion of which the human soul is capable. Religion, so far as it is genuine, is in essence the response of created personalities to the creating personality, God. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).



*Tis not enough to save our souls,  
To shun the eternal fires;  
The thought of God will rouse the heart  
To more sublime desires.*



*How little of that road, my soul!  
How little hast thou gone!  
Take heart, and let the thought of God  
Allure thee further on.*  
—Frederick W. Faber

