



My God, I Love Thee

I

our vocation is to worship God for who He is, separate from what He does for us, then our *avocation* must be to compile those qualities that define His nature.

God's word describes the basis of our relationship with Him as a love affair, of love expressed first from God to man—

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:9-10

—then man to God:

"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

The purest, most honorable person-

to-person love is based not on recompense, but character. We love another not for how much it will profit us, but because of the nature, the goodness, of the one being loved. High love is unselfish: it is given for the good of its object, and it looks for nothing in return.

Worship is an expression of that love; love is the emotion that compels our worship.

*My God, I love Thee; not because
I hope for heaven thereby,
Nor yet because who love Thee not
May eternally die.*

The love on the other side of the God/man relationship, however, is not the same; it hasn't the same motive. God's love for man, specifically His

children in Christ, is based on *grace*.

"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers..."

Deuteronomy 7:6-8a

God's love for man is not based on recompense, nor is it based on man's character, for man would be deficient in both from the perspective of holy God.

*Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didst me
Upon the cross embrace;
For me didst bear the nails and spear,
And manifold disgrace.*

Man loves God because of God's character, and God loves man for the same reason: God's character. Man worships God because of who He is, and God is worthy of that worship for the same reason: because of who He is.

*Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ
Should I not love Thee well?
Not for the hope of winning Heaven,
Nor of escaping hell.*

*Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Nor seeking a reward,
But as Thyself hast loved me,
O everlasting Lord!*

How can we truly love Him if we do not know who and what He is? What human love affair ever survived such ignorance?

If we are indeed to worship Him simply, cleanly, honestly, how can we do that if we have not given ourselves over to comprehend the vastness, the majesty, the boundless personality of our God?

"You are My witnesses," declares the Lord,

"And My servant whom I have chosen,
So that you may know and believe Me
And understand that I am He.

Before Me there was no God formed,
And there will be none after Me.

I, even I, am the Lord,
And there is no savior besides Me.

It is I who have declared and saved
and proclaimed,
And there was no strange god among
you;

So you are My witnesses," declares
the Lord,

"And I am God.

Even from eternity I am He,
And there is none who can deliver
out of My hand;

I act and who can reverse it?"

Isaiah 43:10-13

It is to be our great joy to discover and celebrate the character of our triune God. There is no finer way to inform our devotion. There is no better fuel for the blaze we lay upon the altar of our heart.

*E'en so I love Thee, and will love,
And in Thy praise will sing,
Solely because Thou art my God,
And my eternal King.*

Francis Xavier,

Translated by Edward Caswall



What comes into our minds
when we think about God is the
most important thing about us.

A. W. Tozer

