

God Is in Control

We sometimes question the source of our difficulties, blaming the devil or other people. The truth is, God is in control of everything that pertains to us.

One of the greatest obstacles to an unwavering experience in the interior life is the difficulty of seeing God in everything. People say, "I can easily submit to things that come from God. But I cannot submit to man, who is the source of most of my trials."

This is no imaginary trouble and is of vital importance. If we cannot deal with this trouble, it really does make the life of faith an impossible and impractical theory. For nearly everything in life comes to us through human means, and most of our trials are the result of somebody's failure, ignorance, carelessness, or sin.

We know God cannot be the author of these things. Yet, unless He is the agent in the matter, how can we tell Him we desire His will regarding it?

Besides, what good is there in trusting our affairs to God if man is to be allowed to come in and disarrange them? How is it possible to live by faith, if human agencies, in whom it would be wrong and foolish to trust, are to have a prevailing influence in molding our lives?

Receive All as From God

We must see God in everything and receive everything directly from His hands. We must be brought to this before we can know an abiding experience of entire abandonment and perfect trust. Our abandonment must be to God, not to man. Our trust must be in Him, or we shall fail at the first trial.

There are many Scriptures that tell us not to worry about anything because the Father cares for us. Here are a few of

them:

- “One [sparrow] shall not fall on the ground without your Father” (Matt. 10:29, KJV).
- “The very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matt. 10:30).
- “Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19).
- “We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13:6).
- “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31).
- “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1).
- “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Is. 43:2).
- “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee” (Ps. 91:2-4,9-10).

To my mind, these Scriptures, and many others like them, settle forever the question regarding the power of “second causes” in the lives of the children of God. Second causes must all be under the control of our Father. Not one of them can touch us except with His knowledge and by His permission. No man or company of men, no power in Earth or heaven, can touch that soul that is abiding in Christ without first passing through His encircling presence and receiving the seal

of His permission.

A Father's Protection

An earthly parent's care for his helpless child is an example of this, although it is a weak example. If the child is in its father's arms, nothing can touch it without that father's consent, unless he is too weak to prevent it. And even if this should be the case, he first suffers the harm in his own person before he allows it to reach his child.

If an earthly parent would care for his little helpless one in this way, how much more will our heavenly Father, whose love is infinitely greater, and whose strength and wisdom can never be baffled, care for us! I am afraid some of God's own children scarcely think He is equal to themselves in tenderness, and love, and thoughtful care. In their secret thoughts they charge Him with a neglect and indifference of which they feel themselves incapable.

The truth is that His care is infinitely superior to any human care. He who counts the very hairs of our heads and suffers not a sparrow to fall without Him, takes note of the minutest matters that can affect the lives of His children. He regulates them all according to His own perfect will.

There are numerous examples in the Bible. Take Joseph, for instance. What could have seemed to be more utterly contrary to the will of God than the action of his brothers in selling him into slavery? And yet Joseph, in speaking of it, said to his brothers, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Gen. 50:20).

Joseph's brothers undoubtedly sinned, but by the time it had reached Joseph it had become God's will for him, and was in truth, though he did not see it then, the greatest blessing of his whole life. And thus we see how God can make even "the wrath of man [to] praise [Him]" (Ps. 76:10), and how all things, even the sins of others, will work together for good

to those who love God (see Rom. 8:28).

I learned this lesson long before I knew the scriptural truth concerning it. I was attending a prayer meeting held in the interest of the life of faith, when a woman rose to speak. I looked at her, wondering who she could be, little thinking she was to bring a message to my soul that would teach me a grand practical lesson.

She said she had great difficulty in living the life of faith on account of the second causes that seemed to her to control nearly everything that concerned her. Her perplexity became so great that at last she began to ask God to teach her the truth about it, whether He really was in everything or not.

After praying this for a few days, she had what she described as a vision. She thought she was in a perfectly dark place. A body of light came toward her from a distance, which gradually surrounded and enveloped her and everything around her. As it approached, a voice seemed to say, "This is the presence of God! This is the presence of God!"

While surrounded with this presence, all the great and awful things in life seemed to pass before her—fighting armies, wicked men, raging beasts, storms and pestilences, sin and suffering of every kind. At first she shrank back in terror.

But she soon saw that the presence of God so surrounded and enveloped her and each one of these things that not a lion could reach out its paw nor a bullet fly through the air unless the presence of God moved out of the way to permit it. And she saw that if so thin a film of this glorious Presence were between herself and the most terrible violence, not a hair of her head could be ruffled nor anything touch her unless the Presence divided to let the evil through.

Then all the small and annoying things of life passed before her. She saw that she was so enveloped in this presence of God that not a cross look, nor a harsh word, nor a petty trial of

any kind could affect her unless God's encircling presence moved out of the way to let it.

Her difficulty vanished. Her question was answered forever. God was in everything.

She saw that clearly. She saw that her life came to her, day by day and hour by hour, directly from the hand of God. Never again did she find any difficulty in an abiding consent to His will and an unwavering trust in His care.

Joy in Trials

If it were only possible to make every Christian see this truth plainly! I am convinced it is the only way to a completely restful life. Nothing else will enable a soul to live only in the present moment, as we are commanded to do, and to take no thought for tomorrow.

Nothing else but seeing God in everything will make us loving and patient with those who annoy and trouble us. They will then be only the instruments for accomplishing His tender and wise purposes toward us, and we will find ourselves inwardly thanking them for the blessings they bring.

Nothing else will completely put an end to all murmuring or rebelling thoughts. If our Father permits a trial to come, how can we complain? This does not mean that we must like or enjoy the trial itself, but that we must see God's will in the trial. It is not hard to do this when we have learned to know that His will is the will of love and is, therefore, always lovely.

Seeing our Father in everything makes life one long thanksgiving and gives a rest of heart. More than that, it gives a joyfulness that cannot be described.

God is sure to have His own way concerning those who abandon themselves to Him in perfect trust. He will lead them into

wonderful green pastures of inward rest and beside blessedly still waters of inward refreshment!

He who sides with God cannot fail to win in every encounter. In all circumstances we can join in the apostle's shout of victory, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14).

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