
THE PRESENCE OF GOD: THE I AM

A little plant was placed in the cellar for protection against the cold blasts of winter. The cellar was closed and there was little air, so the plant drooped, its leaves withered and turned brown, and it nearly died. Then spring came and it was taken from the cellar out into the abundant air, whereupon it immediately revived, and instead of dying, became a strong, hardy and flowering plant.

We have deprived ourselves in some measure at least, for we can never do so wholly, of the presence of God. We have turned to other gods, feared or worshipped them, turned to other shrines, and glorified sickness, sin, death, and other troubles by believing in them; and by taking for granted many of the good things of the earth earthly, our "too, too solid flesh," our straight backs, our straight legs and arms, our good eyesight, and hearing, and like and similar things, and we have failed to give God the glory and praise to which He is entitled. Thus have we turned from God and deprived ourselves of the fullness of the presence of God, with the result that like the plant, we began after a while to droop, get old, lose our natural beauty, color, form, and some of us have become invalids, and some others have even died, just as the little plant would have done if it had continued to be deprived of the necessary air.

When however, the plant turned to the good pure air of spring-tide, with its constituents of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon-dioxide, nitric acid, aqueous vapor, nitrogen, ozone, etc., etc., then the air bestowed all those several things upon it, and it speedily revived, put off the old withered leaves, etc., and put on the new, and very soon by its newly appearing sprouts showed signs of good health, strength, and hardiness.

Similarly when one turns to God, to the "I" or Ego, not to any person, but to the "I" which is God, Spirit, the Ego, or lets the "I" go unto the Father, he begins to put off the old man and to put on the new; and is renewed in every way, and speedily shows forth

newly acquired strength, activity, health, peace, life, love, and abundance of whatever is good, which is of course the normal condition.

Jesus maintained this presence of God, as everyone ought to do, with the result that when anyone turned to him, they actually turned not to the personal Jesus, but to the Christ, or the actual presence of God, Spirit, which was his true "I" or Ego, and so the applicants actually were in the very presence of God, and instantaneously began to build up the drooping forms, the weakened systems, and frail bodies, etc., and so were healed. With the air, the element of time enters into the revivification of the plant, but it is not so with the Presence of God, and the healing may be and in fact should be instantaneous. The only reason why this is not invariably so, is owing to the non-maintenance of the fullness of God's presence.

Could the air speak it might say "I am oxygen, I am hydrogen, I am nitric acid, I am aqueous vapor, I am nitrogen, and I am ozone, etc., etc., I am that I am, and I give all these things to the plant."

God speaks and says, and we must recollect that the "I" or Ego of everything and everybody, is God, and speaks through all: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; I am the resurrection and the life; I am the bread of life; I am the water of life; I am substance; I am faith; I am supply; I am love; I am peace; I am joy; I am mirth; I am laughter; I am health; I am beauty; I am color; I am form; I am action; I am sight; I am hearing; I am Spirit; I am Mind; I am all there is or ever will be; for I AM that I AM; and it is My good pleasure to give all these things to man and the universe."

The air is everywhere, omnipresent, and you do not have to go afar to breathe it or accept it. You breathe it wherever you may be. In fact you cannot breathe it where you are not, nor can anyone else breathe it for you. You must breathe the air yourself. So it is with God, omnipresent good. You do not have to go afar to receive good, but you take it wherever you are; you cannot take it where you are not; nor can another take it for you. All good is bestowed upon man and the universe individually and collectively—universally.

It may be said of the air you breathe, that it is your own air, and so is it with everybody and everything, yet it is all one omnipresent

air. It may be said too of God, Spirit, that each and everything has its own God, its very own "I" or Ego, for God is entirely impartial in His bestowals to His creation; and to each and everyone and everything, God, the "I" or Ego, is present at all times and under all circumstances. "Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." You do not go about trying to breathe the air of someone else, you do not attempt to breathe the air which is in the street outside; but you breathe the air wherever you may be. Never do you try to breathe the air of someone else, you always breathe your own. Of course air is everywhere and wherever you may be, and everyone has of it abundantly, but each breathes his own.

Similarly worship God. Do not try to worship another's God. Worship your own. None can enter the Kingdom of God vicariously. Do not be someone else. Be your own self. God is your true selfhood, your own, your very own Ego. True He is everybody's Ego, for He is universal as well as individual. If you behold another breathing clear air, you know perfectly well that it is available to you also. If Jesus, Enoch, Elijah, and maybe John, attained the Kingdom of God without passing through the experience of death, so may we, so may anyone, but none may do it vicariously. Each must take the position of the "I". Not that the person is God, not at all, but the "I" is God, and this "I" or Ego is present at all times and under all circumstances. "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." "I will never leave thee and I will never forsake thee." You breathe your own air and not another's, nor can anyone else breathe for you; yet we all breathe the one air, and we all worship the one infinite God. Worship then your own God, and not another's, nor expect another to worship for you. Nor do you have to go elsewhere to worship God, for He is "nearer than hands or feet." "This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that thou shouldest say, 'Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?' neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, 'Who shall go over the sea

for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?" but the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

All that is good constitutes God. Faith is a constituent of God, so is understanding, so are love, life, health, peace, substance, intelligence, supply, action, sight, hearing, beauty, color, form, etc., etc. They constitute God just as nitrogen, hydrogen, oxygen, nitric acid, aqueous vapor, ozone, etc., constitute air, or H_2O constitute water. As the air gives freely of all the things of which it is constituted to the plant, to the world and all that is therein, and withholds nothing, so God, the "I" or Ego in which all things "live and move and have their being" gives to man whatever God has to give and withholds nothing.

Sometimes we hear it said "I am unable to receive the things of God." This is an utterly absurd statement. One cannot avoid receiving the good of God any more than the little plant can fail to receive the ingredients of the air, for they are both constituted to receive each its own. The little plant was not changed that it might receive the air and its constituents. It was simply its very own self. It was made to receive the air. When therefore it was placed in the air, immediately it began to function as was intended, and as we come into the presence of God, we too begin to function as is natural, and to take in the constituents of God.

A little boy was ill. His mother telephoned for assistance. The one applied to said "You have not turned to this personality, for he of himself can do nothing, but you have turned to God, and so you are in the very presence of God. Your boy is like the little plant, and as the plant revived in the air, became strong, hardy, and flowered, so your boy in the presence of God will become well, strong, hardy and blossom forth into health and strength." Next morning the mother telephoned that the boy was all right but she added she had kept him from school. Why? was asked. She replied "I kept him home to read, study the lesson, and work and pray." The other answered "Did the little plant have to do so? Study, work, read? Or was its fervent prayer, just being its own self, or living the Truth? Very well then let the boy be just himself and go

to school where he belongs—let him live the Truth. Such is true prayer.”

Does this mean that like the plant we shall not read, study or pray? Not at all. The plant is always just itself, whereas unfortunately we have been educated to be other than just ourselves. So we read, study, and pray in order that we may understand how to conduct ourselves properly, or that we may lead evangelical lives, for “the human self must be evangelized” (S & H 254) and as this is done, we are just ourselves, and to be just oneself or to live the life of the Christ as exemplified by Jesus, is true living and true living is prayer—constant prayer.

The plant does not get the air from the other plants. It takes the air and its constituents directly from the air itself. So man receives everything directly from God. We perceive this readily enough with life, health, etc., but when it comes to supply, or love, curiously enough we look to people and things and away from God expecting to receive elsewhere than from God. Thus doing we become limited and dependent; but if we look to God directly for our supply and love, our supply of both will be unlimited, and we shall be independent of others, and since God is infinite substance and supply, and infinite Love, we shall receive naturally sufficient for all our requirements and happiness.