

THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

The Desires Of All Who Live

God's alleged relationship with every human being is a source of great questioning. Some people look at the vast crowds of people on the face of the earth, and wonder how anyone can suggest that there is a Being who could relate individually to them all. Multiply these numbers by all the generations before and yet to come, and the mind reels. What evidence is there, from each of these lives, that they are all loved or cared-for by God? Some of us are sleek and healthy; but many are storm-tossed, disinherited scraps of humanity, awash with the floods of injustice, victims of every wild beast. Can we, who know about famine, speak of a God who "opens wide his hand, and grants the desires of all who live"?

Creator and Redeemer

One factor which makes us ready to believe in a universal Redeemer is the notion of a universal Creator. If God the Creator has devised such intimately personal beauty in the soul of every individual, we have already before us a mystery beyond our grasp. The myriads of lives we see, in our dizzying view of the world's millions, are *each* uniquely loveable and graced; if ever we have written off those qualities in any one of them, we have misjudged, and need to repent of our ignorance. If God has accomplished so amazing a feat in *creating*, then how should he fall short of the next step - the personal redemption of each? There is, remember, only one God. Seeing the evidence of his Creation - a series of *natural* facts that no-one can deny - teaches us the dimensions of the *super-natural* facts which we can only reach through belief.

He will give you your heart's desire

Desire is the yeast that leavens the lump of humanity. You could make that image from the Gospel your own in a very graphic way, by thinking of yourself as a pile of flour. Our life begins by being emptied out - not without distress - and from the beginning we're sieved and stirred, and mixed up, and kneaded into a shape that is acceptable. We do not know it, but there has been buried in us the yeast, which is *alive* - quite differently from any life we have known. Little by little it

is working in the warmth and sweetness, growing, lifting, integrating and expanding the heap of flour into a risen dough. When it has reached its full expansion, the dough is suddenly uncovered and "knocked back" (do you ever remember that happening to you?) and made to start the whole process again. This results in a far finer structure, a far better bread: but the process of being knocked back is not one we can enjoy. You may conclude that the hand that does it is unmerciful, or even dismissive of your achievement; *perhaps God does not want me to rise*, you may say: *perhaps that yeast was a mistake, a deception*. But it isn't so. It is a necessary part of the plan. Wisdom is given to us when we learn to be patient of this pummelling, ready to be deflated and to look small again. *But how it hurts. . . .*

To say nothing of women and children

Five thousand men to be fed is a Biblical crowd, and why shouldn't we mention the women and children? Moses came before the Lord and said: *If all the flocks and herds were slaughtered, would that be enough for them?* The Lord replied, *Is the arm of God so short? You shall see whether the promise I have made to you will come true or not.* I believe that every drop of the vast ocean of human desire in every age is there for its own portion of God's purpose. Desire, if we learn to read it aright, is our share in the knowledge of the promises of God, and even when we are "knocked back", it is the pledge of our rising again.

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