

How endlessly we break the First Commandment, and create images of God to help our blindness and weakness! Most understandable; but doomed. We can't actually find the true God like this, and images of him that we make are always wrong - dead ends, and therefore doomed. Then people discover the emptiness of what they have attempted to worship, and announce that they've lost their faith.

One way forward for us would be to try to think what God it is who's behind the human project and the project of Creation. How does he participate in it, where is he at this moment, and how are we to understand that his life simply isn't one of the lives being lived in the world.

It's a source of long meditation for me that the God the Father people imagine as sitting in some contemporary celestial observation suite, watching what we're doing - as you might watch a soap-opera - is one of these idols. So, indeed, is the God who is our mate, experiencing what we experience and sharing our struggling grasp of truth. God can be very sorry for us in our human weakness, but he could hardly *love* us in it, except in the limited sense that we might love a pet fish.

We are like God in that we can only love someone who is our equal. So can he. He loves his Son and transmits to him the whole of the divine life - the Holy Spirit - and he cannot love us until we share the Holy Spirit and become divine. Get used to this idea, because it will really help you to shed what's less than divine, and to make faster progress along the path that leads to God. What God loves is the person you are going to be when the Holy Spirit has finished his work in you.

As Jesus reaches the end of his earthly ministry, he will deliver his own human life into the hand of the Father, so that it may inherit the whole of divine life. So his last deed on earth is to "yield up the Spirit". At every stage of his earthly life, Jesus has been receiving divine love from his Father; and his whole time has been sanctified by this breathing of the life of God in human flesh. Remember those stern words when we were reading of the Bread of Life:

*It is the Spirit that gives life;
the flesh has nothing to offer.*

The cross is simply the terminus of the act of Jesus, in laying down the life of flesh, in favour of the order of the Spirit. We have to do the same in our search for meaning; we must look less and less to the order of the flesh - the enjoyment of this world and its promises and rewards - in favour of the promises of God, which are made good not in the flesh alone, but in the Spirit.

The prayer of Jesus begins with the announcement of the Hour of Christ, and the call for the Father finally to glorify his Son. Jesus is asking the Father to be the Father - to beget the divine life in him: and he is asking to be the Son, who is forever glorified and begotten by the Father. This is the deepest and most perfect prayer: Father, be God; and make me what I am to be in eternity. As he speaks of us he begins to describe what our perfection will be like: that we will take to our hearts the revelation of Christ, that we will accept the word of Christ, and accept that we have been withdrawn from the meanings of the world; that we should know the Holy Trinity, and the mutual belonging of Father and Son, which is the Holy Spirit; and that the journey should shape our hearts, which we saw in him: that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, that we came to see his glory as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth; and that we accept the power that he gave to us, to become children of God ourselves, to be divine, and therefore to be loved by the Father.