

THERE IS A BETTER WAY

We live in a generation that largely considers the worship of the living God to be a waste of time, a relic of a bygone age. So vague are the majority of people about the reality of God that they are practical atheists — they behave as if God is not there. They do not feel or recognize any sense of accountability to him, but “do what is right in their own eyes”. They are completely caught up in the concerns, cares and struggles, and joys of this world — as if that is all that there is.

What each person needs to know is that their Creator God, in whose image they are formed, loves them with a love beyond understanding. He is aware of who they are and all that they are going through. He is an unavoidable reality and presence both now and for ever. There is no place where we can successfully hide from him. He is there and he is not silent. He speaks to call us, personally, by name, into a real, restored and transforming relationship with him.

How does God speak? He speaks through creation, through conscience, through Christ; he speaks through the word of God, the Bible. He also speaks through other people, through circumstances, through dreams and visions. He speaks in poetry, in prose, in pictures and in music, “in many and various ways”. But the person through whom he has spoken with supreme clarity and finality is his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the visible expression and the exact likeness of the living God.

God’s invitation into a relationship of covenant friendship with him is one which was responded to by all the great men and women of faith in the Bible. Abraham was described as his friend by God himself, who confided in him as someone in whom he placed the fullest confidence. Moses was described as “speaking to God face to face, as a man speaks to his friend”. Friendship with himself is what God desires for all of us — He has an infinite capacity for friendship. God’s work in history has always been directed towards the restoration and deepening of that friendship.

Friendship with God is unique, in that it must be based on faith, rather than sight. “Though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an unutterable joy, because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” God makes friends with us by telling us his story — the story of his gracious and firm dealing with the people he calls to be his own. We are part of that continuing story as we respond to his voice, his revelation of himself to us.

Jesus says to his disciples; “I no longer call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you”. Jesus took his disciples into his confidence by passing on to them all that he had learned from his Father. He chose and appointed them to go and bear lasting fruit, that would bring praise to the Father and to Him. If we trust, follow, love, and obey Jesus Christ, we will know both the love of the Father and the hatred of the world. We will experience the world’s persecution because we no longer belong to it, but belong to Jesus and identify with him. Christians are targeted for persecution all over the world, not because of their evil, but because of the Christ who lives within them.

There is nothing in this life or in eternity more precious than the true friendship of God. To be truly known and loved for who we are is the longing of every human being — and this is exactly where God starts.

“Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me
And that thou bid’st me come to thee, O lamb of God, I come.