

The Three Mysteries of Jesus
Glenn Clark, 1942
Part 3 of 3

Chapter III. THE NAME

In the preceding chapter I dwelt at some length upon the fact that the repentant and reverential appreciation of the blood shed by the Son of God can bring to us the experience in our lives of the Personal Christ and also the experience of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Add to this: God the Father, and we come face to face with the mystery of the Trinity. Very few of us realize the great advantage to us of having not only one aspect of God to turn to, but three.

It is very difficult for the finite mind to grasp all the mysteries of the infinite. Our little intellects are so small that it is even difficult for them to grasp the larger things of this earth, not to mention the immeasurably larger things of heaven. We are like the three blind men who had never seen an elephant, which is the largest of all animals. As each reached out his hand to touch it each claimed that he had completely grasped the whole conception of the elephant. The one who touched the leg declared that the elephant was like a pillar. The one who touched the tail asserted that it was like a rope. The one who touched the side maintained that it was like a wall. We may also be likened unto the three explorers who sought to discover the Mississippi. One discovered it at Lake Itasca, and said, "The Father of Waters is a tiny stream that walks and talks with you." Another found it at Keokuk. "The Father of Waters is a great Force that furnishes light and power for miles around." Another discovered it at New Orleans. "The Father of Waters is a mighty sea that carries the cargoes of nations upon its bosom." All were right. All were wrong if they insisted that their conception of the Mississippi was the only conception.

God is greater than any animal. He is greater than any river. He is greater than all the animals, all the rivers and all the mountains, than all the worlds, all the suns and all the universes put together. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the All-in-All. He is infinite, eternal, unchangeable--He is the Great Unexplainable.

No wonder the human mind cannot take Him in in one simple grasp. No wonder that in the childhood of the human race, simple people like the early Greeks broke their conception of God into little pieces so they could better understand Him. We call it Polytheism when there are gods for every activity in life, Mars the God of War, Ceres of Grain, Minerva of Wisdom, Venus of Beauty, Neptune of the Sea. To some ancient nations every river had its God and every mountain, every lake. To some every tree and every flower. We call this Pantheism.

Mohammedans accuse us Christians of having a Polytheistic religion because we worship three Gods--the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But that is not true. These are merely three aspects of the One God. Like the Mississippi River which is too great for all to discover at the same point, God is too great for our little souls to experience all in the same way. Like the physicist who studies the white light of the sun by breaking it up into the seven tints of the rainbow. Thus if we fail to achieve the real experience of God in our lives in one way, we are not altogether without hope for there still remain two other ways to try. I want to show you how the conception of the Trinity can enable us all, if not in one way, at least in another, to reach God through prayer.

Prayers are the soul's sincere desires reaching out to find a doorway to God. They avail us nothing unless they contact God. And only as our prayers find God and He accepts them and makes them His prayers are they ever answered.

No one believes in answered prayer more than I do, yet I stand here to announce a seeming paradox, and that is that none of my prayers have ever been answered. None of your prayers are ever answered. Only God's prayers are answered. Only as you and I succeed in making our prayers God's prayers are they ever answered. Once succeed in doing that and they are always answered.

The whole art of prayer, then, consists in getting to God and merging our prayers with His. Once reach Him and all is taken care of. If He does not approve your prayer, if He does not wish to make it His prayer, without any fuss or confusion He will simply discard it. But if you are sincere, unselfish, humble, pure-minded and loving, with real faith in His power and trust in His goodness, you will make that contact, and then if He does not grant your prayer, He will give you something better. If He approves your prayer His answer will come beyond your fondest dream.

God answers every prayer that He makes His own, because He could not do otherwise. With God and in God the desire and fulfillment are identical. They are never separated. The mountain does not grow out of the foothills--it is already there. Likewise the flower is not caused by the seed--it merely abides within the seed from the very beginning, whole, perfect and complete. Indeed, they both exist at the same time--in God's Eternity. A Desire accepted of God is merely a desire whose fulfillment already exists.

How can we make our desire God's Desire? Here is where the conception of the Trinity helps us. If we cannot reach God the Father, perhaps He can reach us through the Holy Spirit. Failing in both we can ask the Beloved Son, our Elder Brother, to make intercession for us. Wonderful it is and blessed beyond measure when we learn how to contact God through all three doorways to His Love!

1. GOD THE FATHER

Let us begin with God the Father.

To most of us, God is a deity very far away--a God strong and mighty, far up in the heaven. To reach Him we must send our prayer much like an archer sends his arrows. He does that partly by pulling, partly by letting go. That is a perfect formula for us to follow here. The pulling is our desire to reach Him. The letting go is the relinquishing of our desire utterly to His will. The process is perfectly described by Jesus in the garden: "Let this cup pass from me"--the desire. "Nevertheless not my will but Thine"--the relinquishment. In the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come" is the pull--"Thy will be done" the letting go.

And so, to reach God the Father we should send all our desires to Him and then accept with perfect acquiescence His decision to make or not to make them His own. And how can we send our desires to Him? Again let me remind you that the arrow reaches the mark partly by pulling, partly by letting go.

The most powerful “pull” for sending the arrow of our prayer to God is described by Jesus when He said, “Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Note what tremendous pull there is in this passage and the way Jesus reiterated and reiterated it: “For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

He gave us the best formula for “letting go” in Matthew VI: “Take no anxious thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for itself.”

Importunity in asking, seeking, and knocking is of value, as Jesus implied in His parable of the widow and the judge, and the sojourner and the sleeping householder, but the importunity is needed not for getting results from the prayer but for getting contact with the Father. Once make the contact. and the results will take care of themselves. The Prodigal Son did not make his homeward journey in order to get the best robe, the valuable ring, the new shoes and the fatted calf, but to be in the home with his Father. You, too, should make your Godward journey not for rewards but to reach the Dwelling Place of your Father. Once enter that Dwelling Place and nothing else matters.

But when the arrow reaches the mark-when your prayer does reach the Father and is accepted, what comes to you, what assurance do you have? The best assurance ever given of what happens after your arrow reaches its mark, after your prayer sent to the Father really reaches Him, is given in the 91st Psalm: “Because thou hast made the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. . . . Because he hath set his love upon me therefore shall I deliver him.”

The most perfect picture of that union that awaits us with the Father now and in the life to come is given by Jesus in His last two parables--in John XV and XIV: “I am the vine, ye are the branches,” and “In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you.”

2. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

But suppose that with all our efforts we cannot find God. Do not be discouraged. We don't have to do all the seeking to find Him. God often does the seeking to find us. Whenever He comes to the door of our heart and enters and abides in us we call it a visitation of the Holy Spirit. “For we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us.”

The coming of the Holy Spirit is an act of Grace. It is a sheer gift from Heaven. It is the wonderful legacy that Jesus left us when He finally took His departure for Heaven. “I go that the Comforter may come.” “Greater works than these shall ye do because I go to the Father.”

When one is so clear, so selfless, so dedicated, so surrendered, that there is little of the mundane left in him, then it is that the heavenly sense of destiny takes control, the Divine Plan manifests and God plants in man's heart only that which is his to have. Very simple, selfless souls are the clearest channels for this experience--of God finding man.

When this occurs we don't do the praying. God, the Holy Spirit, does it through us. In this experience we don't have to climb the windy heights to find God the Father, and ask Him to make our prayer His; in this case God the Holy Spirit descends to our humble abode and makes His prayers ours.

I have found that it is those who are most like little children who are the ones most easily reached by God the Holy Spirit. One who lives continually en rapport with the Holy Spirit, like Brother Lawrence, Frank Laubach, Dr. Carver and George Müller, all of whom had that child-like quality that permitted the Holy Spirit to pray through them, has the right to ask directly for things. George Müller availed himself of this privilege more than almost anyone I know of since Christ Himself.

When one is so child-like that the Holy Spirit makes intercession through him, and he knows that it is the Holy Spirit asking, then truly can He really expect the prayer to be answered. Every once in a while we have that experience. George Müller's child-like faith made him a constant channel for the Holy Spirit to pray through him. His tests of prayer were the following. When his prayer met all these tests he knew it would be answered:

1. Entire dependence upon Christ as the Mediator we trust, He works--a partnership--the Holy Spirit worketh in you.
2. Separation from all known sin.
3. Faith in God's promises.
4. Ask in accordance with His will.
5. Importunity and patient waiting.

George Müller would sometimes talk to the Lord some thing like this: "This orphanage was founded and supported in prayer. It isn't run for my glory but entirely for Thine. Everyone knows that it is dependent entirely upon Thy promises. If the children go without food it does not reflect upon me, but upon Thee. We trust Thee entirely to decide what should come to us."

Occasionally I have found the Holy Spirit making similar intercession through me like this. When it does great results always follow. But I can never stir up this Spirit till it is ready. I always know when I have a right to speak like this to God--and it comes only after times of great preparation.

As Psalm 91, which describes the powerful eagle ascending to the craggy heights of the Secret Place of the Most High, gives the picture of abiding in God the Father, Psalm 23, which describes the helpless sheep guided by the loving Shepherd, gives the picture of the helpless and child-like ones resting in the Holy Spirit. We must climb the windy heights of mystic prayer to reach God the Father; God the Holy Spirit descends into our valley of stillness to find us. And so through our seeking Him and His seeking us, we may hope to have our prayer become His prayer--knowing that the moment this happens all our prayers are answered.

3. GOD THE SON

But supposing we are not strong enough to reach God the Father, supposing we are not helpless, innocent or child-like enough to be reached by God the Holy Spirit. Supposing we are weak, supposing we are sinners, what shall we do? Do not despair. There is another expression of God, for most of us the dearest and

most precious of all. Besides God the Father to reach Whom we must strive, and climb the heights to make contact, and besides God the Holy Spirit who, without our knowing how, sometimes enters us so fully and takes such complete charge that He makes our intercession for us, there is also God the Son. He loved the sinner, the despairing, the weak. He came to be a ransom for many. He can be our intercessor now.

Jesus gave us the formula by which we may have the blessed privilege of letting Him make all our prayers for us. He gave this promise in a very simple statement that to most of us is shrouded in great mystery when He said seven times in seven slightly different ways, "Whatsoever ye ask In my name the same will I give unto you."

Let me repeat again what I said at the beginning of this chapter, that it is not our prayers but only God's prayers that are answered. In the case of God the Father's prayers we have to climb the heights of selflessness, of love, of faith, of hope, and relinquish our desires to the Most High and let Him decide which and how much of our prayer He will make His own. In the case of the Holy Spirit we find that God has reversed the process and has come down into our hearts and has furnished through His revelation, and His divine inspiration, the prayers that we are to ask with the assurance that they are already answered.

But now at the midway place stands God the Son. When God seems so far away that we cannot climb the misty heights to contact Him; when our doors of faith seem so tightly closed that His Holy Spirit cannot reach into the murky depths to touch us, then it is that we can turn to our Elder Brother, put our hand in His, and ask Him to make our prayer His own. The secret formula for that is to turn it completely over to Him and let Him put His name upon it.

If I want my friend appointed Ambassador to England my request to the United States Senate carries no weight. But if I can talk it over with the President of the United States, and he makes my wish his own wish, then he sends the request to the Senate, perhaps using the exact letter that I had myself prepared, but merely having it typed upon White House stationery and signing his name instead of mine at the bottom. Then the appointment is made at once.

When I can't dial a friend over the telephone I ring the operator and ask her to make the connection for me. Christ is the Central Operator to connect us with God.

To one who has long practised living in the presence of Christ, this way of praying becomes very easy, and very, very effective. For instance, when asking for someone to be healed, ask the omnipresent, all powerful, all loving Christ, to sit by the bedside of your friend and if your prayer receives His sanction and He finds it worthy to put His signature and stamp upon it, He will bring the healing in His beautiful and perfect way. Then when the healing comes give Him the credit, don't take it yourself.

Knowing that the compassionate Christ would put His loving approval upon all petitions where a spiritual preparation has been conscientiously made, when all enemies have been forgiven, when one's intentions and purposes are all as high and pure and clean as one knows how to make them--then we should not be surprised at the wonderful answers to the prayers that Christ as our Senior Partner can bring to pass for us.

The following prayer, if prayed in all sincerity, humility and faith, will always be answered:

“Jesus, I have tried to take this prayer to God the Father and leave it completely in His hands. I have tried to open my heart in child-like trust and let it be inspired by God the Holy Spirit. Will you now put the stamp of your approval upon it and make it your own, please? If it does not fit into the Divine Plan that heaven has prepared for me, I gladly relinquish it and ask that you make my vision clearer, that I may see the Plan and ask aright. But if it does fit into the perfect Plan that God has for me, I know that you will answer it at the right time and in the right way. Thank thee, dear Savior. Amen.”