

Access is all.

Can God be anywhere, & can we access him anytime?

The Bible--biblical religion--is a drama in three acts:

Access--Gn.1-3.22

Access denied--Gn.1.23

Access restored--Gn.9.8-Rev.22

Edenic walking with God

Paradise lost

Paradise restored

1 "All": can anything be everything? Here's a set of odd-couple quotations: (1) "Caring is all."--Catholic mystic Baron von Huegel; (2) "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."--Football coach Vince Lombardi.

Before creation, God the Trinity was literally All, the only reality, "in himself" (the doctrine of aseity) with freedom from necessity, including a theoretical need to create. With complex relationships within himself (the "immanent" or ontological Trinity), he was being & community & the Only Thing.

2 In their intention of attentional concentration, the mystic & the coach provide us with analogies of creation's proper theocentric orientation (parallel with the solar system's heliocentric orientation). For the outer eyes, it's a dull day when the sun's not out: for the inner eye, it's a dull life when God is obscured by the cloud of amnesia (antonym of an-amnesia, "remembrance").

Creation, when unaware of the Creator, is only **nature**: worship reconstitutes nature to its full reality, viz. creation. The dualistic notion that nature has a reality independent of deity is an illusion spiked by the Bible's first sentence. But natural religion (& natural science) cannot expose the illusion. As Calvin said, "to read the book of nature" one must have the eyeglasses of the special biblical revelation. Let us add that regular worship keeps those eyeglasses clean, lest we think nature is not creation (as some implicitly do in excluding God from Tsunami '04).

3 Passively, by what the Prayer Book calls "wanderings of mind and coldness of heart," we forget that nature is creation, that creatures are more than "natural." Devotion, worship, is the cure for this amnesia. But actively, human beings are tempted to deny that nature is creation, i.e. to exclude God the Creator from nature (an impossibility), to forbid him relational access to one's heart (attention & affection) & life (the sad possibility that is the essence of sin). Eve "thought how wonderful it would be to become wise" (Gn.3.6 TEV) by disobeying God, deliberately forgetting his commandment, flaunting his will. The cure for this is to "turn around" (Hebrew, "teshuvah," repentance) & re-start obedience to God. Nature is creation even when the sinner forgets/denies it, & the sinner is a creature even when forgetting/denying it (by passively or actively forbidding him personal relational access).

4 Now let's reverse direction from our denying God access to God's denying us access (as above, Gn.1.23). By nature & nurture, some human beings are insiders & some outsiders. Since all of us are, as sinners, outsiders (Ro.1-3), we can be helped, for understanding our condition, by literary history's spectacular outsiders. First to come to mind is Franz Kafka. THE TRIAL (1925) could not be finished, for the trial was interminable, & he had no access to the judge. Nor could he ever make it into THE CASTLE (1926): he never gets to talk with (78) "the gentlemen up there." (The next year, for comic relief he wrote [with "delight," his friend Max Brod said] AMERIKA, whose last chapter is a story of unimpeded access [symbolized by a poster which read "Everyone is welcome"--272;281,290]--& intended to end with "reconciliation" [but didn't finish it].) He was, it's said, the Jewish Kierkegaard.

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