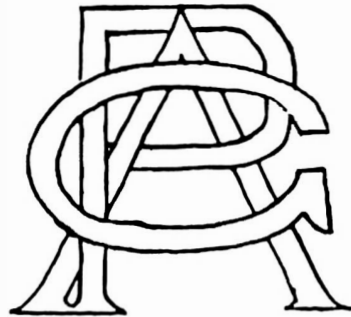


MUSINGS
ON
“ME”



Musings on "Me"

By ALFRED P. GIBBS

Some years ago there was issued a little booklet that bore the intriguing title: "How to make the most of Me." It contains instructions on how to develop one's personality, increase one's intellectual capacity and thus further one's influence over others which would result in a prosperous and successful life. Though the word "me" has but two letters, it is very often upon the lips of people. How often one hears the words: "I," "me," "my," and "mine." This is rightly so, for this expresses the personality of each individual. No two persons are absolutely identical. Their appearance may be similar, as in the case of identical twins, but their personalities are quite distinct.

It is obvious that we are living in a world characterized largely by mass production, which is based on uniformity of design. It is an interesting experience to visit an automobile factory and watch the cars rolling off the assembly line, each car being identical with the other. While this method certainly makes for business efficiency, this mechanical process does not work with humanity, for each person is a distinct individual, totally separate from every other person. It has been well said that when God makes a person He breaks the mould. Thus there will never be another person just exactly like you or me.

Personality is a difficult thing to define. It seems to consist of the impression which a person produces on others because of what he is, intellectually, emotionally and volitionally. By means of his intellect a person is enabled to obtain, retain and reproduce knowledge. His emotions endue him with the ability to react to what he knows and experiences through his five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. His will is that faculty which enables him to determine, and to carry out that determination by an act. Therefore we say that the impact which a person makes on others because of his intellect, emotions and will represents his personality. Thus when a person says: "I," "me," "my," and "mine," he is simply expressing his personality. This is all perfectly right and proper.

The Bible clearly teaches that God, the Creator of man, respects man's personality and never coerces it. He will never force His way into a person's life, but always addresses His appeal to the whole personality of each individual. Through His word He seeks to enlighten the intellect, stir the emotions and bring about a decision of the will. The proclamation of the gospel is addressed to "whosoever will." Mark the gracious invitation: "The Spirit and the bride say 'come.' And let him that heareth say, 'come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17) Our Lord sadly addressed those of His day by saying: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." (John 5:40) Again we hear Him saying: "Bc-

hold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me.” (Rev. 3:20)

God is the God of the individual. In salvation, he does not deal with humanity as a whole, but with each person in particular. God is a Person, and appeals to persons. David realized this fact and testified: “The Lord is my Shepherd.” He spoke of God as “my Rock . . . my Strength . . . and my Salvation.” (Psa. 23:1; 18:1-2) Martin Luther once remarked: “The gospel is a gospel of personal pronouns.”

Let us select, from the many occurrences of the word, “me,” four statements from the Bible which will combine to present what we may well call: “The gospel according to me,” and learn, through these four texts, the way of salvation.

We shall first consider:

1. *The honest “Me” of a plea for Divine examination. (Psa. 139:23-24)*

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” In this wonderful psalm, David acknowledges the omniscience, or all knowledge of God (verses 1-6). He realizes the omnipresence, or all presence of God in every place and at all times (verses 7-12). He confesses the omnipotence, or the all power of God (verses 13-16). It is in view of this that he prays the prayer recorded in verses 23-24. It takes rare courage to address such a petition

to the God, "to whom all things are open and naked." Each person's complex personality is like an open book to Him, and nothing can be concealed from His all searching scrutiny, for "known unto Him are all things from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:18)

Does the reader, honestly and sincerely, desire God to search his heart and life, and then reveal to him His findings? If so, then mark carefully what God has *already revealed* and recorded in the pages of holy Scripture concerning all humanity in general and of each reader in particular. In Romans, chapter three, is found God's diagnosis of man by nature. Let each reader separate himself, in thought, from every other person on the face of the earth, and lay to heart the fact that this is a description of *himself* as he appears in the sight of the God with whom he must have to do. Now mark the words carefully: "There is *none* righteous, no, *not one*; there is *none* that understandeth, there is *none* that seeketh after God. They are *all* gone out of the way, they are *together* become unprofitable for there is *no difference*, for *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Are *you* prepared to accept this statement as a true description of yourself? Are *you* willing to honestly and sincerely admit: "Yes, this is a correct description of *me*, and I now admit myself to be the lost and guilty sinner that God says I am."

Now let us look at:

II. *The humble "Me" of an awakened conviction and confession of sin.*

(Isaiah 6:1-7)

In this sixth chapter of his prophecy, Isaiah describes a vision that God gave him. In it he saw the Lord exalted upon a throne. Before that throne angels veiled their faces and cried: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory!" As the prophet glimpsed the majesty and glory of God, he was overcome with a sense of his own utter unworthiness and total unfitness to stand in the presence of such an august Being, and cried, from the depth of his heart: "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Surely this must also be the confession of every person who is brought into the presence of the holy God of the universe. However excellent a person may imagine himself to be, as he compares himself with his fellow men, he has no room for pride or self congratulation as he stands in the dazzling light of the absolute holiness of God! His confession must be: "Woe is me, I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips!"

No woman likes to hang out her washing on the line while the ground is covered with newly fallen snow and the sun is shining, for the best washed sheets look drab and dirty in comparison to the purity and whiteness of the snow. Likewise, the very best and noblest of men, when brought face to face with the unsullied holiness of God, are the first to admit how far short they have come of the standard of God's perfection. In fact, we are definitely told: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our right-

eousnesses are as filthy rags.” (Isa. 64:6) No wonder therefore that David prayed: “Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” (Psa. 51:7) There is a vast difference between being whitewashed and being washed white. As the reader realizes, in some measure at least, the holiness, righteousness and justice of a thrice holy God, as revealed in the ten commandments, he will also take Isaiah’s confession on his lips and confess: “Woe is me! I am undone!”

Now let us think of:

III. *The heart-felt “Me” of a desired forgiveness. (Luke 18:9-14)*

In one of His wonderful parables our Lord described two men who went up to the temple in Jerusalem to pray. One was a smug, sleek, self righteous and self satisfied Pharisee, and the other was a humble Publican or tax collector. The Pharisee proceeded to inform God of his superior moral and religious attainments and said: “God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that possess.” The Publican however, standing afar off from the altar, and not so much as daring to lift his eyes to heaven, smote himself penitentially on his breast and cried, humbly and earnestly: “God be merciful to *me*, a sinner!”

It will be observed that this man did not indulge in a “general confession,” but in a specific and personal one. He did not use the word “us”, but “*me*”. He separated himself from all others and called himself by his right name,

“sinner,” and earnestly sought God’s forgiveness and mercy. Nor did he cry in vain, for the Savior declared that he “went down to his house justified,” or declared righteous by the God of heaven. As a man’s heart is searched and his true condition revealed, he will not only own himself to be what God declares he is: a lost, guilty, helpless, hopeless and hell-deserving sinner; but he will, as this Publican, earnestly desire to be saved from the consequences of his sins, which is eternal separation from the presence of a holy God. How good it is to know that God has foreseen man’s sinful state, and has provided a means whereby the sinner may not only be forgiven, but actually declared righteous in the sight of the God against whom he has so grievously sinned!

Let the reader, who has realized his need as a sinner, pay close attention to what follows, for this is the gospel of the grace of God. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and equal and eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, came from heaven to be the Savior of sinners. Born of a virgin, His life had no taint of sin, for we are told He had no sin, knew no sin and did no sin. His holy spotless life is described for us in the four Gospels.

But Christ did not come into the world merely to live a spotless life, for this would only have condemned us, and could not have saved anyone. Christ came to seek and save the lost, to pardon the guilty and to make it possible for God, in perfect righteousness, to receive, pardon and relieve sinners. To accomplish this, He allowed Himself to be nailed

to a cross and there, willingly, in infinite love, bore our sins in His own body, and then suffered, at the hands of a holy God, all the judgment that our sins deserved. Thus the Lord Jesus, by His sacrificial and substitutionary death, has satisfied all the claims of God against every sinner who will trust Him as his own personal Savior, and confess Him as the Lord of his life.

Having accomplished all the work needed for our salvation, Christ rose from the dead, and is now glorified at the right hand of God in heaven, able to save to the uttermost every sinner who will own his need and receive Him as his own Savior. Is the reader to be that person? You have heard the gospel. May it be yours to take advantage of this wonderful way of salvation, and personally appropriate the forgiveness that Christ has made possible at such infinite cost. Make the desire of the Publican yours and say from the depths of your heart: "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Now let us examine the fourth "me", which we shall call:

IV. *The happy "Me" of an assured salvation.*
(Gal. 2:20)

The glad confession of the great apostle Paul was: "The Son of God, who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." He knew what it meant to realize his need of salvation, for he speaks of himself as the "chief of sinners." He, too, had ardently desired to be saved and now, through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he knew, beyond any peradventure and doubt, that he was saved. He could also write to

others who had trusted the Savior and say: "By grace are ye saved through faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9)

The prophet Isaiah also, the same one who said "Woe is me," also testified: "Behold, God is *my* salvation; *I* will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is *my* Strength and *my* Song; He also is become *my* Salvation." (Isa. 12:2) Notice the personal pronouns in this statement. Best of all, you can also take these words upon your lips if you will rest in the work Christ did for you on the cross and receive Him as your Savior and Lord.

The story is told of a boy who received a beautiful pocket knife on his birthday, and took it to school in order to show it to his friends. As they gathered around him, he allowed each one to handle it and admire it. Every boy had something nice to say about the gift, but after they had all examined it, and it had come back to the boy he said: "Fellows, you have all had something nice to say about the knife, but I can say what you cannot for, best of all, it's mine!" Happy indeed is that one who can truthfully sing:

*"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His
blood!"*

There are many who say: "No one can know for certain that he is saved, until after he dies and then, if his good deeds outweigh his bad deeds, he will go to heaven; if not, he will end

in hell.” This is pure fallacy, and has no foundation whatever in the word of God. On the contrary, the Bible clearly and plainly affirms that each sinner who has trusted Christ as his own personal Savior may *know* that he is saved, that he is the possessor of eternal life, that he is accepted before God, that he is justified and that he is eternally secure. Let us look at just one scripture, out of very many we could quote: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:13)

You will notice it is not a matter of feeling, but of knowing, and this simply because God says so. There is no such thing as “feeling saved.” A person is not saved because he feels happy, but he will certainly feel happy when he knows, on the authority of God’s word, that he is saved. Someone wrote:

*“Believe, and the feeling may come or
may go:
Believe in the word which was writ-
ten to show,
That all who believe their salvation
may know—
So believe, and keep right on be-
lieving!”*

Long ago, in the land of Egypt, God provided a way of salvation for His people Israel, from a judgment He was going to bring upon the whole land. Moses was instructed to tell the Israelites to take a lamb, keep it for four days and then kill it and catch its blood in a basin. Then, by

means of a bunch of hyssop, the blood was to be sprinkled on the lintel and on the side posts of the door of their houses. God then promised that when He passed through the land in judgment when He saw the blood He would pass over them. Thus these Israelites not only had the blood of the lamb to secure their safety, but they also had the word of God for their assurance of safety: the blood made them *safe*, the word made them *sure*. See Exodus 12.

Likewise, every sinner who takes shelter in the finished work of Christ is not only safe from the condemnation and penalty of his sins, but also has the written word of God as the guarantee of his security.

Here then is "the gospel according to me." The honest "me" of an earnest plea for Divine examination. The humble "me" of an awakened conviction and confession of sin. The heart-felt "me" of an ardently desired salvation. And the happy "me" of an assured salvation. May these "me's" be true in the experience of each reader!

*"Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the just is satisfied,
To look on Him and pardon me!"*

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