

*Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: According to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD. (Psalm 25:6-7)*

In order for us to understand and identify with an incomprehensible and eternal God, we often make accommodations for our finite minds. One of these accommodations is an anthropomorphism, a human characteristic that is imputed to Him that enables us to word our petitions. The psalmist here ascribes to God memory, forgetfulness, the possibility of holding grudges, or being prejudiced.

We want to think that God remembers certain things in relation to us, and that He likewise forgets things that we would like to forget ourselves. Of course, we must realize that God does not remember in the sense that we recall things in the past. Time, past or future, has no qualification on the intelligence of God. He has always known all: past, present and future. He cannot gain any new information that He did not have, neither can He forget or lose any of His knowledge. He is always perfectly omniscient.

But there is a sense in which He puts certain things before His eyes and certain things from His view in order to accomplish the purpose He has for us. These are the things for which we plea.

He does, in a real sense, forget the sins of our youth, our past foolishness. He does not remember them in His contemplation of bestowing His goodness upon us. We must remember, however, that God is too holy and just to arbitrarily forgive sins unless their just penalty has been satisfied. When we realize that we have forgiveness of sins only because God's Son suffered the just penalty for them, we can no longer think lightly of our disobedience to His holy commandments. The grace of God teaches us to forsake sin and seek to walk justly and unblameably.

God does also, in a real sense, remember His good eternal purpose for those whom He has chosen. Our salvation therefore is predicated, not upon our lack of sinfulness or our past holiness, but upon His particular lovingkindness for us. He remembers us for good because of the mercy He has purposed in eternity (before the world began) to bestow upon us. Therefore, we can be assured that if we have reason to believe that God has ever been kindly disposed toward us, then He will never change His mind. His mercy through Christ Jesus is the sole cause of our salvation.

-C.M.