
A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

have to guard against using language which is remote from common life, above all things we have to avoid unreality. But we have, at the same time, to present the truth, and if we refuse to recognize the legitimate claim of any of the lines of study here noted we run grave risk of distorting that truth. Theology and preaching are big things, making big demands and giving big rewards. In proportion as we are big in relation to the one, so shall we be in the other.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

A Deflected Aim.

By the Reverend A. Beaghan, East Molesey, Surrey.

'Aim at what is above, where Christ is.'—Col 3[1] (Moffatt's Trans.).

I had an interesting talk the other day with a man who works in a torpedo factory, where they make those mysterious playthings for the Navy. He told me lots of wonderful things about torpedoes that I haven't time to tell you, except that they have to measure to the thousandth part of an inch when they make these baby battleships, for that is what they really are. Of course he couldn't tell me the secrets of the torpedo, but I asked him whether they could guide a torpedo with wireless yet. 'Yes, they can,' he said, 'and they can guide an aerial torpedo fired from an aeroplane in flight; at any rate, they have actually done it, though they haven't got the thing perfect yet.' He told me that they were able to guide a ship by wireless twenty years ago. I expect he thought I was very simple not to know that, but I didn't, and I expect if I made a guess I should find that you didn't know either.

But I learned something else about guiding ships by wireless, and I want to tell you about that really, and not about torpedoes. It sounds quite uncanny to think of a ship—a sort of mystery ship—out on the horizon, without a soul on board, sailing to some mysterious port, with a mysterious cargo, all under the control of a man who sits up in a tower, or at a desk, guiding the ship to its journey's end—the sort of thing you might easily see at the pictures; or like a Jules Verne story that scarcely anybody reads now, because, I suppose, so many of the things he yarned about have actually come to life. I found myself wondering why, if they knew how to control ships by wireless twenty years ago, they don't do it now. Well, I'll tell you. They made another discovery when they tested this wonderful process. They were making a great demonstration before the big people of the naval world, and the model ship was being turned just wherever the controller wanted it to go in the harbour where they were testing it. When they had finished, and everybody was bursting with excitement at the success of it, a man who was watching said quietly, 'That thing's no use and I'll prove it.' So they had another test, and all went well for a time, and then suddenly the man who was controlling the model found that the thing wouldn't do as he wanted it, but went right off on its own. It was very puzzling until they found out the cause of the trouble. The man who said it was useless was at work with another set of apparatus, a more powerful set, and that was the reason the great men looked blank. It failed—because a greater power could master it and make it quite useless.

This is the great thing I got hold of from my talk with the torpedo man. There is a twofold power stronger than we are—a power for good and a power for evil. We are like that model battleship in one way: we are governed by the power of God our Father, for He has made us and has that power over us. It is not a hard, cruel power, nor is it that of a policeman waiting to catch us out. No! It is the power of Love—a power that draws us to our Father. But there is another power, greater than we are too. It is the power with the down-pull, the power of evil, and it can and does often conquer the power of God in us. We know that only too well, don't we? But which is the greater power? It just depends what we say about it. We can choose for ourselves. The ship couldn't choose, but you can and you must. We have to choose our Leader and we have got to fight. It's not easy, it's very hard, because however hard we

fight there is always that bad other self poking in and saying, 'What about me?'

St. Paul found it out and was not ashamed to tell us, 'When I want to do good, and be glad and happy and helpful, the bad old spirit is there, telling me it's no use trying to be good and helpful to others—no use at all! that I might just as well do what nearly everybody else does when things begin to get troublesome and I find myself "up against it." Just give up! In my heart I serve the master-spirit of good and love and light, but I seem to have another self that wants to serve the dark, bad master spirit of evil.' That's what St. Paul discovered, and you can make the same discovery any time you like, and I know you'll say, 'You're right.' Perhaps you have found it out already. You know how nice it is to lie in bed in the holidays or on Sunday mornings. You know, too, how a voice comes and says, 'Get up, old lazy-bones; what about giving a hand to mother, who's often "up against it" in doing her best to make you comfy and happy?' You've heard that voice, haven't you? And you've heard the other old dragon-voice too, that says sleepily and with a big yawn, 'Why should I?' And sometimes the bad old self has conquered, and you've rolled over and gone off to slumberland again. But sometimes, just now and again, the other voice has got the better of you, and out you've jumped, and felt that it was the best day you'd spent for a long time. And you're like the battleship, you're always in danger of being deflected from the path of serving Jesus into the mean, unhappy, selfish service of the bad old spirit of evil. This is the good news—that the power of love can conquer the other power. You've got to long for it to live in you. No sneaking longings for the bad spirit with its snappy, snarly, 'I want that and I'll have it, too,' or 'You're a nasty, horrid thing, and I'll not play with you again.'

What we need to know is, that there is really a greater power to make the other powerless. Which is the greater power? That's for you to say. If you are keen to serve Jesus, He is the greater Power. If you prefer the black, horrid things, the unkind word, the angry look; if you find that you don't mind cribbing, or that you are not particular whether you've got your own pen, or bat, or anything else that isn't yours, it looks as though you are telling everybody that the stronger power for you is the 'spirit of disobedience.' And that power will slowly deflect your aim, so that you can't aim straight.

It is easy to give way to the bad spirit; that is why there are so many unhappy folk about. But we can and we must aim at kind, helpful things; at happy thoughts and brave, cheerful kindnesses; specially when we are feeling a bit like saying, 'I wonder whether it is really worth it.' I like to think that the laddie who gave his lunch to Jesus gave it after a bit of a struggle, knowing well that he might get nothing to eat till he got home, and it was evening then. But just watch his face as Jesus goes on breaking and breaking his little biscuits and dried fishes and with them feeds a whole crowd of people. It's worth it being unselfish. But it means keeping true to your aim, reminding yourself of it every day, and fighting to keep from the things that would deflect it.

Wings.

By the Reverend Alexander Small, B.D., Boreham Wood, Herts.

'Oh that I had wings!'—Ps 55^{6}.

Were you not thrilled when you heard that Miss Amy Johnson had flown by herself across the world to Australia? Didn't you feel how brave she was, how daring, how clever? No wonder the King and Queen sent a message to her saying how pleased they were. Didn't it make you feel you wanted to do something brave too? With the wings of an aeroplane she braved the dangers of the air and mountains, and jungle and sea. I wonder if you said to yourself, 'I wish I had wings.'

Hundreds of years ago, long before there were balloons, or airships, or monoplanes, or biplanes, a man wanted to fly. One day he said to himself, 'Oh that I had wings!' But he didn't want wings because he was brave; he didn't want them because he wanted to face dangers and difficulties. Oh dear, no! He wanted them because he was afraid, because he was in danger, because life was hard, and he wanted to get away to some safe place where things would be easier for him. He had a fit of the blues, and so he said to himself, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away, and be at rest.' He wanted God to give him wings; but God wouldn't give him the wings he wanted, and as he knew nothing of airships or aeroplanes, he just had to stay where he was and face his dangers, and fight his difficulties, and overcome his fears, and God gave him something better than wings, He gave him courage and strength.

I wonder if you ever feel as that man did long ago. When you've got some hard lesson to learn at school, some difficult problem to do, do you want to get away from it to do something easier?

When mother wants you to do something for her, to water the flowers or to run an errand, do you pretend you don't hear, or do you feel like slipping out of the back door to your friends, whose voices you hear as they are playing in the street? That's just like saying, 'I wish I had wings.' But it's no good wishing. You haven't any wings, and it will be a long, long time before you feel them growing out of your shoulders. It's a good thing God hasn't given you wings to get away from difficulties and hardships. God won't give you wings to fly away, but He will give you the wings of love that will make you brave, and keep you true, and help you to face your difficulties and overcome them. That is something very much better, isn't it? And if you live day by day like that, doing the hard thing, life will be very beautiful; and if you do not receive a message from King George saying how brave you are, you will have something even better, the 'Well done' from the King of kings.

The Christian Year.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Jonathan.

'O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.'—2 S $1^{25.26}$.

There are two contrasted orders of saints. One kind reaches the heights of life only with difficulty: temptations have ever beset them: they have had to fight a long and strenuous battle for the possession of their souls. Others seem to be saints quite naturally and spontaneously, like those rarely fortunate ones of whom Wordsworth tells:

> There are who ask not if thine eye
> Be on them; who, in love and truth,
> Where no misgiving is, rely
> Upon the genial sense of youth:
> Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
> Who do thy work, and know it not.

Jonathan is one of that lovelier order. He walks on the heights of life, and we see no marks of any inward conflict or strain.

We do not give to such men the credit they are due. Their goodness seems so easy, the natural blossom of their souls. The perfection of anything is a shy quality: its mark is a seeming effortlessness, an unconscious harmony and ease which do not obtrude or draw attention to themselves; and so it escapes observation. But what more delights the seeing eye? And let us not imagine that the story of such as Jonathan is only an old story of long ago that touches us not. The saints are our bread of life. And when the story of a noble life is told and we see how lovely the character of man may be, we are listening to the voice of God whose unearthly music alone can recreate the soul.

Jonathan reveals the high quality of his soul in his relations with two men—David his friend and his father Saul.

1. In the real estimate of things, to love is greater than to be loved. That is not our ordinary thought. We take love as an evidence of the worth of the beloved. And Jonathan's passionate attachment to David becomes in our eyes only another gilding of the hero of Bethlehem. And certainly there must have been a rare charm about the shepherd lad of Bethlehem. There was his generosity and chivalry, so strange and remarkable in these rude days; his poetic sensibility that flashed in lovely image and arresting phrase; the power of song to which we are all so susceptible; and the physical beauty that gladdens the eye.

Love is its own rich and rare reward—when it is given to the worthy. Life has no greater blessing in its varied store. And Jonathan would not have counted his friendship for David among his virtues; he would have counted it his chiefest joy, for it made his days bright and full. But we can see the price it cost him: we can note the rare quality and amount of its unselfishness. For all worldly interest cried aloud against it. He could keep his love and friendship only in despite of pride and vanity and ambition.

First of all, David soon outstripped him in the people's favour; he became his successful rival in the race for glory. Now we have all a spice of vanity in us. It is Nature's provision that none of her children shall lack some savour in life, some spring of fresh hope and energy amid life's contradictions and disappointments. And there is nothing so intoxicating to human vanity as the glory whose stage is the wide resounding theatre of public life. Fame, says Milton, is the last infirmity of noble minds. When men have drunk of that heady draught, the thirst for it seldom leaves them. And Jonathan had drunk of it; he knew its intoxicating thrill. For he was the hero of Mich-mash. But now the shepherd lad of Bethlehem has come; he has slain Goliath. And the fickle populace have turned to him. To man's proud heart it is gall and wormwood to see another outstripping him in the race for fame. Jonathan saw it; he went through that fieriest of trials and neither

smoke nor smell of fire passed upon him. That reveals the sterling generosity in his soul.

And what of ambition, the dear desire for place and power? Now the monarchy was not as yet firmly established in the line of Saul. Any strong man who could capture popular favour might aspire to be king over at least some portion of the community. That was the possibility emerging for David. Saul saw it, for hatred, like love, sharpens the sight. And he said to his son, 'So long as David liveth, thou shalt not be established nor thy kingdom.' Jonathan knew it well, for once he said to his friend, 'Thou shalt be king in Israel, and I shall be next to thee.' That was his glad acceptance of his destiny. When Henry of Navarre was taunted with his change of religion he said gaily, 'Paris surely is worth a mass.' Was not the throne of Saul his father worth fighting for? Jonathan gave it up unrebellingly. Had we not known that he was a brave soldier we might have said, Here is the policy of a craven spirit: he takes the second place who will not fight for the first. But Jonathan had no need to consider his reputation for courage: that was safe.

To the world's surprise that spiritual greatness shall be revealed some day. Here when men are successful we heap more and more laurels on their heads. This world worships the favourites of fortune. It is not so with God. In His presence the second oftentimes are first; shall not He who humbled Himself to the Cross hail him as one like-minded with Himself, a kindred soul who can enter into the fellowship of His mind and share in the inward rapture of His heart?

2. The other personal relation in which we see Jonathan is toward his father King Saul. That relationship is apt to be overlooked. But Jonathan shows himself as fine and perfectly tempered towards his father as towards David. And this side of his life and character is summed up for us in the tragedy on Mount Gilboa.

Must not Jonathan have been torn in twain as his father determined to do battle with the Philistines? He had been his father's right hand always. Saul had not been always a mere gloomy tyrant; he had a kingly nature, though at the last this was buried deep under the convulsions wrought by his jealousy of David: there had been possibilities of greatness where Jonathan would love to trace the real lineaments of the man. But with the clear vision that love gives, he must have seen the dark, fateful ending drawing nigh. King Saul had come to despair of himself; he felt abandoned by God and even by the soldier-like qualities of his early days. And he went to consult witches and soothsayers. The battle with the Philistines was the gambler's last throw of the dice. Should he gird on his armour and go with Saul to the hopeless fight, or should he withdraw to David with whom was the promise of a brighter to-morrow? How many conflicts are there in the inward soul of a man, that none knows, where the greatest of issues are at stake! Jonathan's answer was to gird on his armour and confront death.

Certain lines of Keats tell the secret of all true spiritual greatness:

> He ne'er is crown'd
> With immortality, who fears to follow
> Where airy voices lead.

That is no maxim of worldly prudence. But the men of real value, those who count in the long run and are not mere bubbles in the current, must have an ear to catch the soundless melodies of the spirit. The world will praise thee when thou doest well for thyself. So says the Psalmist, indulging in unusual irony. Jonathan will never earn such praise. The voices to which he listened called him to the second place, the shaded light of a more brilliant soul: they called him to support a failing cause, to venture his all in a desperate enterprise. But he never hesitated. These voices of love and loyalty were, his heart knew, the voice of God, for all the sweetness and the nobleness of life, all that makes a man respect himself, and shows him his life in a setting of glory, were in them.

As we follow that old-world story; as we contemplate his life and death, and think of all he was as well as of all he enjoyed and suffered, shall we not say—'Jonathan chose the better part: be my soul with him and with all the generous and the loyal, the loveliest and best of our race!'[1]

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Friendless.

'Woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.'—Ec 4^{10}.

The preacher here is calling for pity upon him that is alone when he falleth. He is thinking of suffering. But we may permit ourselves to think of moral catastrophe.

Do we recognize the fact that, many a time, it is not viciousness of disposition or outstanding weakness of will—certainly not deliberate choice of evil—that sends men on a downward path, but

[1] R. Glaister, *The Beauty of the Lord*, 81.

just sheer, dreary loneliness? Yes! and a loneliness that is only accentuated by nominal membership in a great city community. In the country-places, with the mountains and the sea and within him his heart to bear witness, a man may be alone rather than lonely. It is in the city, though round us crowds may be moving, that solitariness has its dwelling. As a man walks down a street, each lighted window speaks to him of companionship. Let him ring one of the bells and claim companionship! He laughs to think of the blank stares that would greet his intrusion. Companionship for them; and, all the more for that, loneliness for him. As he reflects bitterly, a group of friends pass him. They laugh together, intent the one on the other. But for him they have no more heed than for an inhabitant of another planet. What wonder if such a man, when night after night he returns to the solitude of his lodgings, reflects that companionship of a sort can be bought, or a temporary oblivion imbibed?

Now, it ought to be the part of the Christian Church to supply something of this lack. Certainly, in the first place, in regard to its own members. The Christian Church is a Christian family. So we are taught in the Lord's Supper. We must devise means of making that a more practical ideal. I know that there are difficulties, but we might open our houses more. Many congregations, I believe, do try to meet this problem. The ideal will be reached when, if a man or woman shall come and say that he or she is friendless, ministers will be able, in reply, to hand over their Communion Rolls, with the suggestion that these contain the names of, say, nine hundred odd friends for a start. There, at any rate, in one clear way, we shall be bearing one another's burdens and thus fulfilling the law of Christ.

Moreover, we shall be fulfilling the intention of man's Creator. The Almighty does not intend us to be alone; for He setteth the solitary in families. Which reminds us of a most important duty: keep strong and true the family bond. Endure, yield, be charitable up to the last limit of principle rather than break it.

But, when all is said and done, a certain loneliness is the portion of us all. There is a quality of loneliness in life's trials, and there is certainly a loneliness in our sins, from which we cannot escape. And it is there that we need to be reminded of the fact of Christ in God.

Now, for us to go to the solitary whom we could help and tell them that God loves them, and then leave them to that reflection, is manifest insincerity. But it is not dealing with a vain thing for us to remind ourselves of the fact of the nearness of God in relation to trouble that must be borne alone.

First, let us remember that the Lord Christ knows that inner solitariness of our hearts through and through. It was His chief trial. He trod the winepress *alone*. There was no man—none to hear and none to answer. The burden and the shadow fell on Him; and the rest knew not that there was a burden or a shadow. If we bear the unspoken trial bravely, we are in His steps; and He is not far from them that follow Him.

And, second, if our loneliness be the loneliness of sin—and sin is always at the core lonely; Judas went out, and it was night—then let us remember God knows all about it, more than we do, and *still cares*. Yes, cares as Christ did; and that is, by the measurement of a Cross. If only that fact can bite into us, not only our solitariness, but our slavery, will die; and for our days here, in place of solitary guilt, there will be peace with God and the prospect of the satisfying of the heart's dearest desires, in the presence of the Father.[1]

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Cure for Trouble.

'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.'—Jn 14[1].

Is there a cure for trouble? Let us consider a few of the replies that have been given to this question.

1. The first remedy to be considered is the Stoic remedy. The Stoics of old maintained that there is a cure for trouble, that there is a means of healing the cruel aching of the heart, and their name for that cure was *Apathy*. 'Let all passion, all ardent attachment, die out of your nature,' they counselled. 'Give it all up. Desire nothing; hope for nothing. Accept the universe; take what comes; resign yourself patiently to the inevitable. The way of indifference is the way of peace.' Such was the teaching of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. And there are some persons in our own time who still find themselves attracted by the ancient Stoic wisdom.

Now it cannot be denied that there is something impressive and even splendid in the Stoic attitude. We cannot but admire the stern fortitude of these people. Nevertheless it is impossible to be satisfied with the Stoic remedy—simply for the reason that this cure for trouble costs too much. It can,

[1] J. R. P. Sclater, *The Enterprise of Life*, 299.

indeed, in a great measure, make us dead to pain; but only by making us dead to joy as well as pain. And we simply cannot afford to pay so high a price. Even to be rid of trouble, we cannot, we dare not, sacrifice all the beauty and the brightness and the rich variety of our life. Let us look on the portraits of the Stoic worthies; observe their settled melancholy, their dreary impassivity, their utter lack of buoyancy and high-spirited enthusiasm; and then ask ourselves seriously whether we wish to become like them. Here, for instance, is Marcus Aurelius, emperor and philosopher, concerning whom a great scholar has written that 'Marcus had as little joy or hope as ever man had who got through a life of work without hanging himself.' Or here is George Eliot, coldly penning the famous letter in which, after comparing faith in God to 'taking opium,' she goes on to say, 'The highest "calling and election" is to do without opium, and live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance.' Or here, again, is Matthew Arnold, another prophet of endurance, gazing out on the endless battle of good and evil in the world, and oh! so weary of the strife that goes on and on and on and never issues into victory:

> Creep into thy narrow bed,
> Creep, and let no more be said!
> Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
> Thou thyself must break at last.
>
> Let the long contention cease!
> Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
> Let them have it how they will!
> Thou art tired: best be still.

Love and joy and sympathy and hope and noble ambition are things too precious to be jettisoned, even for the sake of bringing the ship of the soul to anchorage in what Marcus Aurelius calls 'the untroubled peacefulness of a waveless bay.'

2. The second cure for trouble, in default of a better description, may be named the *Pleasure-Cure*. The idea of it is that a man may checkmate pain by plunging over head and ears into pleasurable distraction. 'Stifle your pain with amusements. Forget it in excitements.'

But does the pleasure-prescription answer? Probably it often does in the case of the minor troubles of life. When one is worried or annoyed, it may be the best thing one can do to dine out or go to the theatre, and forget the annoyance if only for an evening. After the temporary respite one is fitter to contend with the obnoxious matter. But the pleasure-cure works only in the case of the lesser troubles; it breaks down irretrievably where the greater troubles are concerned. A mother is told in one day that her two soldier sons have fallen in the war; a literary man, who gets his living by his writing, discovers that he is doomed to blindness; a husband sees his idolized wife fading away beneath his eyes for want of common necessaries which he is too poor to procure for her—will we venture to tell such people to go away, and divert themselves, and have some fun, and forget their troubles? We may endeavour by this means to narcotize our suffering, but no pleasure can give us lasting alleviation, and the suffering continues with us just the same; only now it has become the suffering of a cowardly and degraded mind, 'which,' as says Romola in George Eliot's novel, 'is the one form of sorrow which has no balm in it.'

3. Let us notice one other prescription. If we cannot find a cure for trouble in apathy or in pleasure, may we find it, perhaps, in *Work*—in doing the daily duty, in carrying out the allotted task conscientiously and strenuously, in fulfilling the engagement? Is work the way to peace? That was the conviction of the great novelist, Émile Zola. Some twenty years ago Zola addressed to the students of Paris a remarkable oration in which he spoke of his own work and of the consolation it had brought to him. 'I,' said he, 'have had but one faith, one strength—work! What has sustained me was the enormous labour I set myself. . . . How often in the morning have I sat down to my table . . . tortured by some great sorrow, physical or mental! And each time—in spite of the revolt my suffering has caused—after the first moments of agony, my task has been to me an alleviation and a comfort.' And he continued, 'From the time one accepts the task, and from the time one begins to fulfil it, it seems to me that tranquillity should come even to the most tormented.'

But work is not genuinely remedial, although it is a great help. Work by itself cannot mend a broken heart.

4. So far, then, we have failed to find by human ingenuity an effectual cure for trouble. Let us now turn to One who is named the Good Physician. What remedy has He to offer? 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.' This is the *Religion-cure*, and somehow it seems to go down to the very root of the matter. Let us observe for a moment its terms. First, 'ye believe in God.'

When the Cardinal Legate from Rome had an interview with Luther at Augsburg, he said to him

furiously: 'The Pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend *you*? I tell you, No! And where will you be then?' And Luther answered, 'Where I am now: in the hands of Almighty God.' And it was the same Luther who used often to say to Melanchthon in the stormy days of the Reformation: 'Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth psalm, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."' Yes, to be certain of God, to be certain that God cares for us, to be certain that God knows all about our suffering, and is controlling it to the working out of a wise and beneficent purpose, to be certain that, even in the most desperate circumstances and situation, we are still grasped and sustained by a Providence that we can absolutely trust—this is to be mailed against adversity. In the strength of such faith in God, we can confront 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'; we can echo the words of Pascal, 'Thou alone knowest what is expedient for me. . . . Give to me or take away from me, only conform my will to Thine'; we can say with General Gordon, 'My Friend is with me, and I am quieted with the knowledge of His rule'; we can sing with the Quaker poet:

> In all the maddening maze of things,
> And tossed by storm and flood,
> To one fixed state my spirit clings—
> I know that God is good.

'Ye believe in God'—that first. But let us not forget the second clause of Christ's prescription—'Believe also in me.' Jesus our Lord, Jesus Himself—is He not at once the example and the guarantee of a heart untroubled in the midst of trouble? He came and lived this troubled life of ours. He drank of the cup of sorrow. And this, that He might show us how to triumph over trouble, and change 'the bitter water of our affliction into the wine of joy and gladness.' The Man of Sorrows offers Himself as Sorrow's Healer. And as we look on Him, and conform ourselves to His image, do we not learn to meet our troubles with the same heavenly mind? We share His unfaltering trust in the love of God, His willing and cheerful acceptance of the all-righteous Will of God, His eagerness to devote Himself at any cost to God's service; and, sharing so much, we share also His happy experience of inward peace in the midst of outward agitation. Let us think of Carlyle's magnificent apostrophe to Marie Antoinette, led bound to her execution: 'Far as the eye reaches, a multitudinous sea of maniac heads; the air deaf with their triumph-yell! The Living-dead must shudder with yet one other pang; her startled blood yet again suffuses with the hue of agony that pale face, which she hides with her hands. There is, then, *no* heart to say, God pity thee? O, think not of these; think of Him whom thou worshippest, the Crucified,—who also treading the wine-press *alone*, fronted sorrow still deeper; and triumphed over it, and made it holy; and built of it a "Sanctuary of Sorrow," for thee and all the wretched!'[1]

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Father of Jesus.

'God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'—Ro 15^{6}.

This is the most daring and the most evolutionary title that was ever given to God by men. Yet to-day it often falls from our lips, a grandiloquent and sonorous phrase from which the meaning has well-nigh faded.

1. Wherever the expression occurs in the New Testament, it always betrays a mounting wave of emotion in the writer's breast. In the religious lands of the East the pious worshipper never uses the name of God without muttering after it, 'Blessed be His name.' The first Christians never spoke the words, 'The Father of our Lord Jesus,' without murmuring some such words of adoration, 'Blessed be He!' All the feelings of awe and reverence and self-abasement which used to visit these sons of a desert faith when they thought on the Nameless One—the Unseen, the Eternal, the Supreme—transferred mysteriously and made to cluster round the words, 'The Father of Jesus!' When they wanted to make the most solemn asseveration, as if under the All-seeing Eye, it was the Father of our Lord they called to witness. 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus,' wrote Paul in that letter of vehement, protesting sorrow to the recalcitrant Church at Corinth, 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.' The sound of the words was a summons to worship and to glorify. It is so in the example we have chosen as a text, chosen merely because it is the first occasion of its use in the New Testament. All the others are either in thanksgiving or in prayer, benediction, or doxology. At the very beginning of the letter to Colosse, Paul writes: 'We give thanks to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.' It is an opening doxology

[1] F. H. Dudden, *The Delayed Victory*, 17.

in the Epistle to the Ephesians: 'Blessed be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' In the heart of that Epistle we see the outward as well as the inward demeanour which the words inspired: 'I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.' It comes at length as a ray of heavenly sunlight after the storm-clouds had rolled away from Corinth: 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.' For two nights and a day the forbidding Cross has kept a broken-hearted disciple from unsaying his denial; but he has hardly put pen to paper long after, when in a burst of doxology we catch the reflection of the Resurrection glory which scattered his despair: 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a living hope by the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

2. Perchance, to-day, we might get back behind the cold, formal ring it seems to have too often when we thrust it into our devotions, and recall a few faint gleams of its old radiance by pondering over it in humble meditation. 'The Father of our Lord Jesus'—let us try to carry the words back on the wings of fancy to the quiet circle of the hills round Nazareth, and to the shores of the Lake of Galilee.

On the streets of the little country town we meet a young man as He goes to and from His day's work with His tool-bag slung over His shoulder. And when we venture to exchange greetings with Him, we pass on with a vague and puzzled impression of something not quite ordinary about the Man. What sort of home has He sprung from?

The days pass, and led by some impulse we turn in to converse with Him by the bench, for we want to know Him closer. And He lifts upon us great, dark, luminous eyes. And the unsolved puzzle in our minds about His pedigree gives way to a feeling of startled wonder. That something about the Man had nothing to do with the delicacy of human nurture. It is a rare thing that stands confronting us. To use an expressive phrase of the street to-day, it is a white soul.

Days pass, and weeks, and we meet Him again by the Lake, a Teacher with a few unlettered followers round Him, and the crowds hanging upon His words. Suppose we approach one of these disciples and begin to question him. . . . 'You ask me why do I follow Him? Why, because He has brought me into the presence of God. Yes, He knows God, knows the Most High, the Ever Blessed One. No, I never inquired about His parents, or His home.' . . . And the flame kindles in his eyes as, with a sudden access of conviction that takes your breath away, the disciple says, 'The God of Jesus, the God the Master is always speaking of—and speaking to—*He* is the Father of Jesus. I cannot tell how, but I know. He has made me so sure, so sure. Come with me and listen to Him awhile.' And we draw near and listen.

Yes, He is talking about Someone, very reverently and yet in the most *intimate* and familiar way. A breath blows out of the open skies and fans your cheek—a breath from the Unseen. Gentle and pure like the trembling light from a pulsing star, but convinced that He was sent; sensitive, yet all His sensitiveness transformed into Divine strength—He seems to be speaking about Someone who is beside Him, all about Him—lending a glory to the red lily at His feet; a joy to the wheeling flight of the birds overhead; a wave of life beating down through the sunshine that sweeps along the hillside; falling through the rain on the springing corn in the valley; and whispering in His heart. Someone all-great, all-knowing, without whom not a sparrow falls, who sees in secret, who can be spoken to anywhere, and, best of all, alone. He calls Him the heavenly Father.

And in the twilight, as we climb the hillside, the memory of those eyes of arresting purity, and the radiant smile, and the strong reposeful face, comes back to us. And His words, startling in their beauty, their depth, their simplicity—why, they were alive! . . . Mad? *He* mad? Nay, but the one soul of perfect sanity in a world awry! It is we—we, who are suffering from illusions—great thick clouds of suspicion and doubt and care and fear, that shut God out of life. And as we approach the hill-top when the first few faint stars begin to show, we hear the voice of one engaged in earnest talk. Dimly we discern a figure all alone. And faintly, borne on the night breeze, we catch at intervals the words, 'O my Father,' 'Holy Father,' 'O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.' And we steal away. We, too, have become like the disciple fisherman. Without another question we repeat, 'The God of Jesus is the Father of Jesus. I know not how or why, but it is so.'

3. We think of Him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, not merely because Jesus was so intimate with Him, but because Jesus was so *satisfied* with Him. But in those remote highland glens of Galilee, what could He know, we are fain

to ask, of the great world with its passions of greed and hate and lust that drench the world with blood, its envy and its misery, its sorrow and shame, its anguish and despair? His was a sheltered life, and in solitary brooding and communing with God among the hills He never had need to question Him about the darkness and sorrow of the world.

To say that Christ knew little of life because He was not a city child in touch with the great world is simply to blind one's eyes to the truth. All the known facts of His life are dead against it. He knew what sorrow meant, and hunger. He had stood by the dying Joseph's bed. Chief mourner, He had followed the coffin to the grave—only a boy. He knew what cruelty and avarice could be when turned against an unprotected widow mother. He had to battle with temptation in most powerful forms, and with despair. Yet there never flitted across His mind so much as a shadow of dissatisfaction with the God who kept Him company all the time. Shall not God clothe you—feed you, as He clothes the lilies, feeds the birds? Your heavenly Father knows. He greatly cares. Looking up to God in every vicissitude of life, He was perfectly satisfied with Him.

But more than that, beside sin and misery, in their most tangled and hopeless forms, He found the forgiving love of God equal to the worst that the human soul could bring upon itself. To the bitter end He was perfectly satisfied with God.

'To the bitter end?' What, then, of the agony of the Garden? Was that not a wrestling of His human will with God's? No, it was not even a questioning of God's will for Him, as He staggered beneath the burden. But as the shadows were deepening round Him, He saw one awful spot on the way ahead of Him. That the intimate fellowship with His Father should be broken even for a moment—that was what He fain would forgo. But He only prayed, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass.' And all the time of that dread agony and sweat and prayer the name on His lips was 'Father.' It is because Peter could not forget the almost unbearable pathos of it, when he tells the story, that he quotes the very word of His mother-speech which Jesus used on this occasion, 'Abba! Abba!'—still satisfied.

But that awful cry of God-forsakenness from the Cross? Was not all His satisfaction in God disannulled by that word? Nay, He is still crying up to God through the black pall that lay upon His soul. And how does He address Him? Does He cry, 'O God, if there be a God?' Does He say, 'Great and terrible unseen Being, whoever you are?' No, but '*My* God, *My* God.' Oh, the love that would not let God go, even in that hour of shuddering eclipse on the Cross! Oh, the love and trust that conquered with a sigh: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit'!

How perfect must be the God who could satisfy such a man! A stainless, flawless soul—there must be no shadow cast by turning, no darkness at all in the God who could satisfy such as He. Greater love was never shown by man for men than by this Jesus on the Cross. Surely the God with whom He was well pleased must be a great Well of love unutterable.[1]

[1] J. A. Robertson, in *United Free Church Sermons*, 180.

'The Cambridge Ancient History' and the Old Testament.

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II.

The Old Testament History.

We use the term 'The Old Testament History' to indicate the period and the events covered by the narrative portions of OT Scripture, namely, the sixteen hundred years or so from the era of Hebrew origins in Abraham to the time of the consolidation of ecclesiastical or theocratic Judaism under Nehemiah and Ezra. This epoch, roughly 2000–400 B.C., constitutes the range of national incidents and developments with which the Biblical writers deal in those books of Jewish Sacred Scripture