

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

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

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

We older children, grope our way  
 From dark behind to dark before;  
 And only when our hand we lay,  
 Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,  
 And there is darkness nevermore.

6. And light is a symbol of something more. Those of you who have learned English history, and have got as far as the reign of Queen Mary, will remember how people were in those days burnt because there was some little difference between their religious belief and that of those who held power for the time being. Of course, nowadays, we should be ashamed to hurt other people because they don't believe as we do. But it was different then. Now when two good men, Bishops Latimer and Ridley, were led to the stake at Oxford, Latimer greeted the other with the words: 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as (I trust) shall never be put out.' So the light stands as a memorial of martyrs, of good and great men who gave up their lives for what they believed true, and thus have left to succeeding ages the bright light of their noble example that will never, never be extinguished.

### The Christian Year.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

God's Anxiety.

'Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.'—  
 I P 57.

These words of the Apostle are very familiar to all of us. They are often quoted by us to our friends, and we do so with the hope that they will be of comfort and strength to them. Yet again and again when they occur to us in our own necessities they do not seem to have the same effect upon us that we hope they have upon others. Part of the reason no doubt lies in the fact that as we have them before us, they do not suggest just the same close and intimate meaning which the writer intended, and this result is due to a certain imperfection or limitation in the translation. It may be that when the translation was made the English words had a somewhat different meaning for the minds of the readers from what they have now, but if we follow the Greek closely and give the corresponding meaning which the

words now would have they undoubtedly gain in strength and have a stronger appeal in them. If we were to read them somewhat as follows we would see the difference. 'Throwing all your anxieties upon Him; for He is anxious about you' or 'for you.'

We do not think of God in this way. We never think of Him as having that deep, personal and individual interest in our lives which is put before us when we think of those closest to us as worrying about us, or having us on their minds, or being anxious for us because they see we are troubled and distressed either in mind or in body. Yet this is just what the writer had in mind, and this is the way he thought of God and why there is that sense of intimate and real affection and concern in His mind for His children who have so many troubles and disappointments, anxieties and worries which wear down the strength and take away the swift and glad consciousness of the greatness of living.

In Luther's *Table Talk*, a book which tells us more of the inner spirit of a man than any other book which was ever written, he says: 'I expect more goodness from Kate my wife, from Philip Melancthon, and from other friends than from my sweet and blessed Saviour Christ Jesus; and yet I know for certain, that neither she nor any other person on earth, will or can suffer that for me which He has suffered; why then should I be afraid of Him? This, my foolish weakness, grieves me very much.' It is not often we hear any one speak so frankly, and yet he tells only what perhaps most of us are as sure of as he. Our words do not have behind them that actuality which comes from a deep and personal experience or consciousness. So it is also with God.

1. Most of us do not think of God in this tender, familiar way that Peter did. We never think of Him as worrying about us or caring really enough to worry about us. To us He is something mysterious, awful, unimaginable, and remote. There is nothing *near* about Him; that is, near in a personal and spiritual sense. We think of Him as a great, living, energizing power which overshadows and overwhelms the whole of life. He is behind and before, but He is not after all near to us in the same way even that Jesus Christ is. He, we feel quite sure, was deeply familiar with the actual experiences, the poor human foibles and weaknesses, the sins and failures, the disappointments and despairs, the hard trials and the silent sorrows,

all the vast, minute and ever-changing and ever-shifting thoughts, hopes, dreams and sadness of this strange and complex life of ours. He is not only familiar with it, we are sure, but we have also a pathetic feeling and hope that He cares and sympathizes with us in so far as the actual knowledge of the actual facts of life is concerned. This is what has kept Him always through all the ages the one single person to whom all the plain, simple, silent people of the world have turned with such a sure confidence in His affection. But it has not, for the most of us at least, been at all this way with God. We are puzzled and weary with the search for what He really is and how He really feels.

2. Now if one really felt that God cared just as much as Jesus Christ, and cared in just the same personal, minute way, how utterly different it would be. It would make a difference in so many strange ways that it would be quite impossible to tell them all, but it is easy to see how great the change would be. If it was really true to us we would feel that God was worrying about us at all times when we were not just what He wanted us to be. If we were hard and brutal and selfish and mean, and what we call cantankerous, not even in any way speaking of the things people call sins, but just those common facts which make life hard and human nature not fine and interesting or true; if we thought that this all really distressed Him as we are sure it must have always distressed Jesus when He saw the insincerity, the brutality, the wretched and gross selfishness, then it does make a difference. No one in the best part of his soul really wants to pain or distress his friends. Many people for the sake of others have suffered a good deal of self-denial. This because one feels that it would worry and distress them. Now, if one really felt that God cared in just this way one might go with a quite different feeling and tell Him all these things, make a clean breast of it, put the matter before Him just as one feels sure one would put the matter, whatever it was, before Jesus Christ. And in doing so one might be quite certain that it would meet with His soothing and sympathetic interest.

If you have a son or daughter and you see that they are keeping something from you, though you feel reasonably sure that you know, you have a feeling something akin to what we are told here God

feels toward us. He cares, really cares, is anxious about us, worries about us, if you want to use the word, and does so because most of all He sees that we are not quite sure of Him, perhaps, as again and again it happens, are not sure of Him at all. There is a wide dreary space between the soul of the child and the soul of the parent and nothing can bridge it or seems able to do so. Of course all this is quite childish. It does not in the least agree with the common notions which we have got together from our reading and study or experience. There is nothing scientific or philosophical about it. These both teach some wonderful, some deep and splendid things about what God has done and how vast and mysterious His creation is, but they do not say after all any of the things which Jesus Christ says, nor do most of them resemble Jesus Christ any more than the rest of us do. And the God about which they tell us is not the same, or at least it is not the same side which Jesus so wonderfully speaks of. There is none of that gracious yearning tenderness. There is none of that immediate feeling of a Father quite near and always waiting and wanting a fuller and closer relation with His children. Now this was the God Luther found through Jesus Christ, and this was the God that lifted him up and made him the mighty man that changed the world or helped to change it. He was so sure that God cared, that He looked at and after each of His children, that he was quite prepared to leave everything to Him. If things went wrong, if men were brutal and selfish and did shocking things he was deeply stirred, but he knew somehow and sometime men would learn how much they could trust Him and how great the need is always that they should trust Him.<sup>1</sup>

#### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

##### Faith in Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.—Ac 16<sup>31</sup>.

Faith is the constant experience of the life of God in the soul, a sense of relationship with the eternal. It is the conviction that God is, that He is with us, that He is with us to lead and help and heal. The God in whom we believe is the God we see in Jesus Christ; therefore faith is belief in Jesus Christ. Faith, then, is an experience. It is

<sup>1</sup> S. Means, *Parish Sermons*.