

Trusting

Arthur P. Adams
(1845-1925)

I desire to bring the subject of *Faith* right down to our everyday life, so that each reader may be led to *Trust* the Lord more fully.

FAITH AND TRUST

There is a difference between faith and trust. We may have faith in a person and yet not be willing to trust him very much. We might believe a person to be very honest and upright and yet not be willing to trust to his keeping of our property or worldly reputation.

Trusting a person implies committing to his care something of our own; and the strength and fullness of our trust will be indicated by the value of the thing committed. We would trust a child with a few pennies to buy some small thing at the store, but we would not trust him with a large sum of money to transact important business.

We might trust our neighbor with some small commission, say to buy us a few dollars' worth of goods in a neighboring city, but we would hesitate to trust him further. The merchant might trust his confidential clerk with important business matters involving the risk of immense sums of money, and yet not be willing to trust him in some other things.

Sometimes we have a friend whom so far as his honesty and good intention is concerned we would trust to any extent – property, business, honor, and life itself if need be. Such a friend you cannot trust in all things; there will be some lack in judgment, perhaps, or knowledge, or experience, or self-control, or some other defect, that, while you have the most perfect confidence in his fidelity and good intention, prevents you from trusting him in all things.

What a wonderful thing it would be if one had a friend that he could *fully* trust in *all* things! One whom he knew would not fail him in *any* circumstance, either in good will or in ability. Ah, what a prize such a friend would be! How safe would be the possessor of such a friend! How comfortable, happy and secure! He would know that whenever trouble or difficulty came, all he need do would be to refer it to his friend, leave it in his hands, and then stand by and see *him* manage it. Would not that be grand? Oh, that we all had such a friend as that!

THE TRUSTWORTHY ONE

Well, have we not such a friend? Tell me, can human tongue find language wherewith to clothe a being with all the qualities of a perfect friendship, and not find even that ideal friend overtopped, and infinitely surpassed by the great, loving Friend of all, the *Father* of the human race? “No,” you say, “of course not.” Yet there is a lack about this divine friendship that every human heart feels. It seems intangible, far-away, unavailable, and inoperative.

We have a theoretical, intellectual belief in God, but “*in works we deny Him.*” That is to say, many a nominal Christian too, is yet practically an atheist, for the simple reason that the existence of God, with all His attributes of goodness and mercy, crowned with unchanging love, is to him only a religious dogma, and not a living, everyday reality.

They would know how to appreciate, and how to use a true friend of flesh and blood, but how to make any good out of the friendship of God is entirely beyond them, though intellectually they do not doubt that friendship. Their faith in Him is merely intellectual, there is but little, if any, heart-trusting.

TRUSTING GOD

Now why is this? Why do we not *trust* God? For the very same reason, I answer, that we do not trust strangers, *because we are not acquainted with Him.* The great prerequisite to a perfect trust is a perfect acquaintance – a thorough knowledge of the person to be trusted. Everyone will see this truth at once. Furthermore, we must become acquainted with Him for ourselves; no second-hand knowledge will do, however exact and truthful it may be; no mere introduction, or verbal description of His excellences will satisfy us. We must know Him for ourselves, and know Him long enough to make sure that we can trust Him.

This is most certainly true in our relationship to one another, it is no less true of our trust in God. Intellectually the Christian believes that God is his best friend; so other Christians have told them; so the Bible plainly teaches; and so they profess to believe – yet they do not trust God. They have some little *faith* in Him, they believe in Him, after a fashion, but they do not *trust* Him, *i.e.*, they do not commit themselves and all their interests to Him, and rest in the assurance that He will manage all things well. All this for the simple reason, that they are not acquainted with Him.

They have some slight knowledge of Him; they know something about Him; but they do not know *Him*. They are not personally acquainted with the Father. Oh, it is no use, you cannot trust anyone you do not know. If you know not God, then you do not trust Him, and you cannot trust Him, for as yet He is a comparative stranger to you: and we do not trust strangers however much we may believe in them. *Get acquainted with God, and trusting Him will come as natural as breathing.*

GET ACQUAINTED WITH GOD

Now a practical question. How shall we get acquainted with God? How can we come to know Him, so as to fully trust Him?

I will try to answer this question. The only way we can know God is through the truth. *Christ* is “*the Truth*” (John 14:6). He is the living Word, and “*the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*” We can get near Him, for He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and through Him – “*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*” – we shall at last get to know God, for “*no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him.*”

Since we have Christ no longer among us in the flesh, it seems as hard to get to a risen and ascended Jesus, as to God Himself. What shall we do then? Turn to that best embodiment of the truth that still remains with us: the Bible. The Word incarnate is absent from us, turn we then to the written word for the light that we need to lead us to God.

We know that the one great central idea of all Scripture is *Christ*. He is the fulfillment of all the law; the anti-type of all types; the substance of all shadows; the theme of all prophecies; the subject of all Bible history; the center of Christian life and experience.

Studying the Scriptures then will be studying Christ; and learning of Christ is learning of God, since the former is the “*express image*” of the latter. Here then is the solution of our question, how shall we get acquainted with God? – Through the truth as set forth in the written word.

Not that God does not reveal Himself to us in other ways than through the Scripture, for “*the heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament showeth forth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.*” Happy is he who can see God in all things, as He most certainly is, since “*all things are of God.*”

The heavenly bodies, the solid earth, rock, hill and dale, tree, flower and shrub, lofty mountain and rolling ocean, the tiny blade of grass, and the pebble on the shore, the city full and the country waste – as well as all events great and small – all these, each and every one speak of God, million tongued, and he who has eyes and ears to see and hear the divine in the human, the Godlike in the commonplace, he shall realize how wonderful is the truth of God’s omnipresence; and instead of asking with Job, “*Oh that I knew where I might find Him*” (Job 23:3), will rather say with David, “*Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?*” Yet such power of seeing God in everything comes not except by long living in the way of truth. It is an experience that we must *grow* up by gradual development. We can no more jump into it at once than can the child leap at once into man’s estate.

THE TRUE GOD – FROM HIS WRITTEN WORD

The written Word comes first then as a means whereby to know God; it is a revelation of God’s will to man. It interprets His thoughts, His purposes and methods, and thereby makes God known to us, though we must needs have a true interpretation of that word.

The great mass of Christians do not know God so as to trust Him, not only because they have not the *truth* in regard to Him, but also because they believe many *lies* about Him. They are led astray by their “blind leaders.” It is a wonder that Christians trust Him as much as they do, when by their horrid ideas of Him they make Him out to be anything but a God of love, worthy of trust.

The great majority profess to believe that by a perpetual miracle He will eternally keep alive myriads in hell for the sole purpose that they may suffer. Believing this and many other equally absurd and unscriptural things, it is a wonder that they have any love at all for the monster their theology makes God to be; and as for trusting such a being, the idea seems impossible.

With such a faith one might trust *Christ* and love *Him*, but the only feeling toward God, possible under such a system of religion, would seem to be one of dread and apprehension. Fortunately most Christians’ hearts are better than their heads, and so with a happy inconsistency – not because of, but in spite of their theology – they love and trust God a little, though far beyond what anyone would suppose possible, knowing what they profess to believe of Him.

Oh, but how would their love and trust be augmented, from a smouldering spark to a glowing blaze, could they but see and understand the real truth concerning “*Our Father in Heaven.*”

My purpose has been from the first to set forth those truths of God’s word essential to such a knowledge of Him as will make us willing to fully trust Him. How wonderfully, for instance, does the great truth that “*all things are of God*” help us to trust Him!

If some things were *not* of God, that is to say, if some things took place independent of His will, or without His notice, or contrary to His purpose, then, though we might have perfect confidence in His good intention, we could not trust Him fully because we should not know what might happen to thwart or disarrange His plans. Yet when we know that “*He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*” – when we *know* this and realize it as a living *truth*, then we are ready to trust Him with all our interests because we see that He is worthy of our trust – that as He cannot fail from lack of kindness and love, or from lack of wisdom and knowledge, so He cannot fail from lack of power and authority. He who *controls* all things, *orders* all things, and when such power is directed by infinite wisdom and boundless love, we have a Being who is worthy of the fullest trust, and who is sure to receive it from all who know Him.

MOST ARE DEPENDED UPON CIRCUMSTANCES

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

With most people their happiness and comfort depends on their circumstances. Hence, since circumstances are very changeable, and for the most part entirely beyond our control, our happiness is very precarious; and the happiness of such ones, even when surrounded by the most favorable circumstances, will be more or less marred by the ever haunting fear of possible impending calamity.

If there was any way whereby we might rise superior to circumstances, so as to be perfectly independent of them, then we should have not such fear, and our happiness would be unalloyed. Still, there is only one Being who is thus superior to circumstances, that is the Maker of circumstances, the Director and Controller of *all things*.

What shall we do then, puny little boats as we are, tossed on the wide sea of life by ever contending influences, driven hither and thither by ever shifting circumstances, knowing not what a day may bring forth, nor how soon the red wine of our enjoyment may be turned into the bitterest gall of blasted hopes and thwarted purposes? What *can* we do but coldly wrap around us the mantle of a dull indifference, and, reckless of the future, enjoy the present as we may?

Ah, but there is something better than that we may do. We may take our place under the shadow of God's wing – ay, creep into the bosom of His love, and be as independent of circumstances as He is. How? By simply considering that every circumstance is the expression of His will, *i.e.*, the expression of His wisdom and love, and so most certainly a *blessing*, whether in disguise or otherwise.

I want the reader to particularly notice this point as it is the only secret of a restful, happy life. We can never be happy until we triumph over circumstances. We cannot control circumstances, but if we have a perfect trust in Him who *does* control them, *we* can triumph over them through that trust, as completely as *He* triumphs over them by this power.

Such a trust, and consequently such a triumph, depends upon knowledge of God, acquaintance with Him, and can come only as the outgrowth of such knowledge. I will try then to help the reader to the knowledge, that he may ultimately possess the trust, and the consequent peace and joy.

Probably every one has had the following experience. Events have occurred in their lives that have seemed at first very great calamities, but have afterwards proved the greatest of blessings. We have complained and wept and been bitterly disappointed, and perhaps rebellious over something that has afterwards proved to be one of the greatest blessings we ever had perhaps, so that we look back upon it in after years with joy and thanksgiving that we ever had such an experience. Thus in our own lives we have been convinced that troubles, sorrows and seeming calamities *sometimes*, at least, blossom into heaven's richest blessings, and ultimately laden with "*the peaceable fruits of righteousness.*"

Now suppose we could be absolutely assured that this was the case *always*? – that no matter what occurred however dark or calamitous it might appear, however grievous and distressing it might be, in the end it would prove a blessing, something that we should greatly rejoice over and be exceedingly glad that it had happened. If we could only be perfectly assured of this so that we had no doubt of it, then we should be independent of circumstances; for we should *know* that *nothing* could take place to our ultimate detriment.

Let it be remembered that all of us have had the experience, as the above, where seeming terrible misfortunes have been turned into ultimate blessings – where what at first has caused us sorrow has ultimately given us joy. Now we only have to extend this experience to all events

– have *all* things work together for our good – in order to be in a position where we should feel perfectly independent of circumstances. Come what might we would be *sure* of being benefited in the end, and hence of course we should fear *no* event.

I need not tell any reader of the Bible that in the foregoing I have simply been describing the possible experience of all *“them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”* All things, absolutely all things, work together for their good.

“All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God” (II Corinthians 4:15).

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience” (Romans 5:3).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:17).

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:6-7).

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (I Peter 5:10).

This is wonderful! It makes the one who fully receives it master of the situation; it is a triumph of faith, claiming complete dominion of God’s universe, counting it ours on the strength of God’s word, and rejoicing in it as though we actually had it in possession, just as by faith we reckon ourselves *“alive unto God,” “risen with Christ,”* and already *“seated in heavenly places.”*

Such a life is a life of *trust*. One leading such a life can say with Paul,

“I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (II Timothy 1:12).

Oh, the holy presumption and divine recklessness of such a trust! How sturdily and fearlessly it strides forward to meet the future! If things pleasant come, they are accepted, not with the surprise of unbelief, but as a matter of course. If things for the present grievous befall, they are received with a smile of anticipated triumph, even though the cheeks be wet with tears, and the heart wrung with agony from the stinging pain, for trust shall be the gainer in the end; *no other issue is possible.*

Though all the forces of evil in the universe were let loose upon one trusting soul, they could but shower ultimate blessings upon him, and hurry him on to his coronation. Oh, it is grand thus to be able, through the omnipotence of faith, to defy all enemies, sure, not only that they cannot ultimately harm you, but that they can do nothing but bless you!

THE WILL OF GOD

Now let us take another step in our effort to draw near to God, and to know Him, Whom to know is life eternal: *The Christian's Home is the Will of God.*

I would have every reader realize something of the unspeakable preciousness of God's will. Most Christians are afraid of His will. It seems to them something fearsome, so strict, and severe, and uncompromising. This, again, is because they do not know Him. When we come to know Him and trust Him, His testimony will be sweet to us because we shall then realize that it is the expression of His love (His being), and just the thing we should ourselves choose, could we but see the end of all events as well as He does.

As another has said, God's will is not a burden to carry but a pillow to rest on. Mark this also: whatever comes to us is according to His will, and hence for our good. Nothing can happen contrary to His will. Is God's will done on earth? Yes, most assuredly.

Why then the prayer, "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?*" If His will is done on earth, why the prayer that it may be done? God's will is *not* done on earth as it is in Heaven; and yet we know that God's will is done on earth in some sense, for we are told so in just so many words. "*He worketh **all things** after the counsel of His own will.*"

If God's will is not done on earth, whose is? The devil's will? The will of wicked men? If you say yes, then I ask, is God's will then thwarted or resisted in whole or in part? Are there any creatures that can override the will of the Creator? Nay, verily; such a condition of affairs would throw us back in "chaos and old night," and leave us uncertain who was ultimately to triumph, God or the Devil.

No middle ground can be taken, God is God. His will is never thwarted, therefore all things must be in accordance with His will, and hence tending to the fulfillment of His purposes of grace and love. It *must* be, as the Bible declares,

"He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou." (Daniel 4:35).

God's will, then is done even now; it cannot be otherwise, but it is not yet done as *it is in heaven*, voluntarily, and from the pure motive of love, but it shall be, so sure as Christ's prayer cannot go unanswered. Here again then we see what full ground we have for trusting God. All that comes to us is by His appointment, and for our good.

Of every trial and vexation, great or small, that we meet with from day-to-day we may say, "This is the will of God; the Father presses this cup to my lips; He puts this thorn in my

way; He appoints this storm, this trouble, this sorrow; and so doing He says, ‘take this bitter medicine, my child, it is not pleasant but it is needful, and therefore because I love thee I cannot withhold it.’”

How foolish we are to resist! Like the sick child that struggles against the loving ministrations of its mother; rather should our attitude be as expressed by David, “*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it.*” (Psalms 39:9).

TRUST SPRINGING UP SPONTANEOUSLY

Thus a knowledge of these glorious truths brings God near to us, makes Him known, and trust springs up spontaneously. If we thus understand something of God’s ways and purposes, and thereby get acquainted with Him, we shall surely trust Him, not only in the seemingly great matters of life but in all the little everyday affairs.

Here is where many fail; they do not see that God is in all things; in their common household affairs – cooking, cleaning, or minding the baby; in business matters – on the farm, in the counting room, the work shop, or the study.

Do you know how to take a care to the Lord and *leave it with Him*? Many take their cares to the Lord, but keep on bearing them just the same, and the Lord lets us stagger along under these needless burdens because so shall we the sooner learn to cast them on Him.

“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psalms 55:22).

How wonderful is the promise! “*Cast thy burden upon the Lord and*” – He will bear it for thee; that is what we should *expect* it to say, and that would be blessed; but it says more than that. “*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.*” He will carry thy burden *and you too*; and yet many of His children are so distrustful that they will not even let Him carry their burden. This is a real practical truth. Our burden is that which frets and irritates us; not the *hard* work but the *constant* worry; *that* is our care, and that is what we are to cast upon the Lord and *leave* with Him, at the same time letting Him take charge of ourselves.

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (I Peter 5:7).

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

RESTING IN HIS WILL

Let me say further that there is not the slightest occasion for any anxiety or laborious exertion to know God’s will. A brother wrote to me a few days ago that he was “earnestly waiting upon God to know His will.” From the gist of the letter it was plain that the brother was anxious to do a certain thing, but the Lord did not seem to open the way so that he could do it, and he was earnestly waiting upon God, not so much to learn His will, as in hopes that He *would* open the way.

There is not the slightest need of such exercise. Be free with your Father; if He gives you no special clue of His will, do what you can, or what seems best according to your own judgment, or do nothing. Doing nothing is usually the hardest thing to do, and yet sometimes it is the only thing we can do.

“... *Having done all, to **stand. Stand therefore** ...*” (Ephesians 6:13-14).

“*But they that **wait** upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint*” (Isaiah 40:31).

“***Be still**, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth*” (Psalms 46:10).

“*Or ministry, let us **wait** on our ministering ...*” (Romans 12:7).

If that is God’s will – to do nothing, to stand and wait – then in so doing you are just as perfectly following out the will of God, as though you were engaged in the most active service. Some Christians act as though they believed that if they did not keep constantly – *doing* – “working for the Lord,” they call it – the Lord’s cause would immediately begin to lose ground. With the most strenuous and persevering efforts they just barely manage to keep “the car of salvation” moving on. Should they relax their exertions, that vehicle would not only stop but immediately begin to slide back. These ignorantly zealous (Romans 10:2) persons think altogether too much of themselves. According to their idea it would seem to be a marvel how ever the Lord got along before they were born, and almost a dead certainty that He will have to suspend operations altogether after they are dead.

To all such ones the Lord says, “*Be still, and know that I am GOD.*” They do not keep still long enough to find that out in the sense intended here, for the verse goes on to say, “*I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*” What? The Lord be exalted in the earth if they keep *still!* That cannot be, they think. Let me assure you, my dear perspiring brother or sister, that the Lord’s cause will not suffer in the least, and you will be a great gainer, if you will give over your air-beating (I Corinthians 9:26) for a little while, and take time to cultivate the Lord’s acquaintance.

Study and “*Search the Scriptures*” for they testify of Him (John 5:39) – knowing that all revelation comes from the Revelator, Christ Jesus. Trust that He will reveal something of His methods and plans, and then you will begin to see how foolish is the greater part of your sweating and straining, and how thoroughly “*all things are of God.*”

Instead of talking and thinking so much about your *own* work, you will be able to say with the Psalmist,

“*Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work: I will triumph [not in my own work but] in the works of Thy hands. O Lord, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this*” (Psalms 92:4-6).

It is the knowledge of *this* truth, that God is “*working salvation in the midst of the earth*” (Psalms 74:12), that gives calmness, tranquility and confidence, while others are in a perfect fever of excitement. Those who *know* God, will *trust* Him, and such will enjoy “*the peace of God.*” And while others fret, fume, tug and strain, working hard but to no purpose because through their ignorance they are out of God’s order, they shall be *resting* in the Lord and waiting patiently for *Him*.

“*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him ...*” (Psalms 37:7).

“*When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?*” (Job 34:29).

I would have every Christian see that God is managing in this world, as well as “*in the army of heaven.*” Without the least interruption or hindrance, His plans are being carried out, always and by all things, so that there is not the slightest occasion for worry or anxiety on that score.

“*As for God, His way is perfect ...*” (Psalms 18:30).

So far as we ourselves personally are concerned, as we get acquainted with the Lord and come to know Him better and better we shall trust Him more and more fully, realizing that our experiences, whether for the present, joyous or grievous, must be in accordance with God’s will and hence sweet, and good and precious.

Oh, the blessed will of God, who would fear it, knowing that it is always the expression of His love! Take refuge then, tried and weary soul, in this great truth: God’s will is being done *even now* in you, toward you, and around you in the world. “*All are His servants*” (Psalm 119:91), whether voluntary or involuntary, and no creature shall move a finger except as the Creator wills, hence thou can fully trust Him, without fear, knowing that your hardest trials are your greatest blessings, as you will fully realize in the end. Make His will your home then, and look to that glad hour when His will shall be done in you, and in all, “*even as it is in heaven.*”

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