



Open Water Ministries

~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

Never Let Go-
David Crowder

David Crowder
...Album...several songs

Prayer

Lord, I ask You to help me become consistent in prayer. I admit that other things have distracted me from being in Your Presence, but I ask You to forgive me for this and to give me the strength to say no to those things that keep pulling me away from time in prayer. Thank You for helping me to make this a high priority in my life. I know that with Your help, I can learn to discipline myself to pray. Thank You for helping me get started on the right path today. Lord, when I do not know how to pray as I ought, I ask that You give me the utterance the Words to say. I know that prayer is communion with God, help me to pray as I ought. To pray on all occasion and to pray without ceasing. When I have a need or others to ask, as Father expects us to ask, even though He knows our need before we pray because He knows it Lord we know it is answered in His time and as to His will. Give me utterance in prayer and always to pray for others and not just myself, in Jesus' name. Amen....

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

“ When They Awake In Hell”

AW Pink

Radio Stations

KWVE ...Calvary Chapel

KLOV

Bible Study Sites

Chuck Smith
Through The Bible

Bob Coy/Teachings

Mike MacIntosh

Jon Courson

Biblos.com

Billy Graham

Charles Stanley

David Wilkerson

Greg Laurie

Virtue for Women-
Cathe Laurie

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

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Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 THERE WAS a three-year famine in the days of David, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. The Lord replied, It is on account of Saul and his bloody house, for he put to death the Gibeonites. 2 So the king called the Gibeonites—now the Gibeonites were not Israelites but of the remnant of the Amorites. The Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah had sought to slay the Gibeonites— 3 So David said to the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? How can I make atonement that you may bless the Lord's inheritance? 4 The Gibeonites said to him, We will accept no silver or gold of Saul or of his house; neither for us shall you kill any man in Israel. David said, I will do for you what you say. 5 They said to the king, The man who consumed us and planned to prevent us from remaining in any territory of Israel, 6 Let seven men of his sons be delivered to us and we will hang them up before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul, [on the mountain] of the Lord. And the king said, I will give them. 7 But the king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that was between David and Jonathan son of Saul. 8 But the king took the two sons of Rizpah daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of [Merab] daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite. 9 He delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hung them up on the hill before the Lord, and all seven perished together. They were put to death in the first days of barley harvest. 10 Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until rain fell on them, and she did not allow either the birds of the air to come upon them by day or the beasts of the field by night. 11 It was told David what Rizpah daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. 12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hung them up when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa. 13 He brought from there the bones of Saul and of Jonathan his son, and they gathered the bones of those who were hung up. 14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son they buried in the country of Benjamin in Zelah in the tomb of Kish, [Saul's] father, and they did all that the king commanded. And after that, God heard and answered when His people prayed for the land. 15 The Philistines had war again with Israel. And David went down and his servants with him and fought against the Philistines, and David became faint. 16 Ishbi-benob, who was of the sons of the giants, the weight of whose spear was 300 shekels of bronze, was girded with a new sword, and thought to kill David. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's aid, and smote and killed the Philistine. Then David's men charged him, You shall no more go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel. 18 After this, there was again war with the Philistines at Gob (Gezer). Then Sibbecai the Hushathite slew Saph (Sippai), who was a descendant of the giant. 19 There was again war at Gob with the Philistines, and Elhanan son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew Goliath the Gittite, whose spear shaft was like a weaver's beam. 20 And there was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; he also was a descendant of the giants. 21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan son of Shimei, brother of David, slew him. 22 These four were descended from the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hands of David and his servants.

Chapter 21

Now in chapter twenty-one it is recorded that at this time,

There were three years of famine in the land; So David sought the Lord. [Why the famine?] And the Lord said, The famine was in judgment because of the treatment of Saul of the Gibeonites. For Saul had killed many of the Gibeonites (2Sa 21:1).

Now this is interesting to me because when Joshua was coming in to conquer the land, God said to Joshua, "Don't make a covenant with any of the people in the land. You're not to make any treaties, any covenants. Wipe them out." So after the conquest of the city of Ai, there came to Joshua these old men, with worn out shoes, with moldy bread in their hands, and ragged clothes.

They said, "We've come from a long distance, because we've heard of your fame, and how that God destroyed the Egyptians and how God is with you. Our leaders have sent us to you to make a league with you that we'll not attack you, and you're not to attack us."

Joshua said, "Well, where are you from?"

They said, "Well, we're just a long way off. In fact, when we left home, this bread was hot in our hands, but look how moldy it is. These sandals were brand new, look how worn out they are."

The Bible says, "They took stock of their victuals and inquired not of the Lord." And they made the covenant with them. They made the same mistake that we often make, using our own "good judgment" instead of seeking God for wisdom and advice. We look over a situation, we say, "Oh well, that's all right. That's obvious, Lord, what You want me to do here. I don't need to really bother You about this. I'll take care of this matter. I can see what's going on here, Lord." We don't inquire of the Lord.

There is that verse to the song, "Oh what needless pain we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." That is so true.

So they took stock of their victuals, inquired not of the Lord, and they made this covenant with the Gibeonites. And, as they got to the next city, and they started to deploy the troops, the guy said, "Oh no, you can't attack this city."

"What do you mean?"

"This is our city."

So Joshua realized that he had been snookered by these guys, and so he said, "Okay, I accept it. You've deceived me, but," he said, "you guys are gonna have to chop our wood for us and be our servants." They said, "That's fine, you know better to be your wood choppers and servants and all, than to be dead."

Now they made the covenant. God told them not to. They made it, but the interesting thing is, once they made it, God expected them to honor it. Even though the covenant they made was wrong to begin with, even though they had no business making that covenant. Even though they made it in deception, being deceived, once they made it, they were told not to make any covenant to begin with. So they disobeyed God in making it, and in making it, they did it because they were deceived, yet God required that they honor that covenant.

It is interesting to me how that God expects us to honor the covenants that we make. Now I have so many times, people come to me for counsel and they have made a covenant of marriage, and they say, "Oh, it was a mistake. I never should've done it." And they want to disannul the covenant. They want to set aside the covenant that they made, say, "Oh, that was a mistake. I should never have done it and I want to set aside that covenant." It is interesting to me that once you make a covenant, mistake or not, God expects you to honor that covenant.

Saul broke the covenant with the Gibeonites. He began to kill some of them, and so later on, and this is years later under David's reign, Saul had been dead for years, Saul has been dead for at least thirty years at this point, but now here comes three years of famine.

David inquires of the Lord, and the Lord said, "This is in judgment because of Saul breaking the covenant with the Gibeonites, and killing many of the Gibeonites.

And so David called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; What shall I do for you? how can I make it right with you, that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord? And the Gibeonites said unto him, We don't want any silver or gold from Saul, nor from his house; neither do we want you to kill any man in Israel. And he said, Well what shall I do for you? And he answered, and said, The man that consumed us, and devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, that we may hang them before the LORD in Gibeah, [the city where Saul lived]. And the king said, I will give them. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan because of his own covenant with Jonathan, but he took the two sons of Rizpah, whom she bare unto Saul, and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite (2Sa 21:3-8):

Now we are told earlier in the scriptures that Michal was sort of childless, as David's punishment to her for her sort of mockery of him when he was dancing before the Lord, as he brought the Ark of the Covenant back from the Kirjath-Jearim when he was bringing it back to Jerusalem. There he was out dancing before the Lord, and when he got home, you know he was all excited. He was gonna bless his family, she says, "Aha, weren't you a pretty one out there today dancing with all of those people like you were a commoner."

David says, "I'm gonna be more common than this" and all. He refused to have relations with her. She did not have—she remained childless till the day of her death. So if you will go back in the record, you will find that these five sons were the sons of Merab, who was the daughter of Saul, who originally was supposed to be given to David for killing Goliath.

Remember Saul said, "If any man kills the giant, I'll give my son, great rewards." And so forth. Merab was the daughter that was supposed to have been given to David, but Saul gave him a dirty turn and gave her to someone else. She had five sons, and so these sons that were turned over now to the Gibeonites to be hung, were the five sons of Merab the woman who was supposed to be David's wife originally. Plus the two others who were actually the sons of Saul from one of his concubines.

And so he delivered them to the Gibeonites, and they hung them all seven, in the days of the barley harvest. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah [whose two sons were hung] took sackcloth, and spread it upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped on them out of heaven, and she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor beasts of the field by night. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. And David took the bones of Saul and of Jonathan, [and the bones of these fellows] and buried them all together there in one of the burial places in the sepulchre of Kish (2Sa 21:9-14):

Now beginning with the fifteenth verse, we find that,

The Philistines again make war against David; and David was out in battle against the Philistines: and he began to wax faint. And Ishbibenob, who was one of the sons of Goliath, whose spear had weighed three hundred shekels of brass, he was about ready to kill David. And Abishai the son of Zeruiah helped David, and he smote the Philistine, and he killed him. And then the men of David swore unto him, saying, You're not to go out into battle with us anymore at all, lest you quench the light of Israel (2Sa 21:15-17).

So David's getting a little old now for fighting. He's out there, he's out of shape, started to faint, and the son of Goliath just about got him, until Abishai came to his help. And so from this point on, they wouldn't allow David to go out into battle.

It tells then of the death of the rest of Goliath's relatives, all of the giants of the Philistines, even ones who had six fingers, and six toes on each hand, twenty four in all as far as his toes and fingers in number.

(Through The Bible Series C-2000; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986; Commentaries Through The Bible)

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"Knowledge Of The Holy " AW Tozer

CHAPTER 3; A Divine Attribute: Something True About God

Majesty unspeakable, my soul desires to behold Thee. I cry to Thee from the dust. Yet when I inquire after Thy name it is secret. Thou art hidden in the light which no man can approach unto. What Thou art cannot be thought or uttered, for Thy glory is ineffable.

Still, prophet and psalmist, apostle and saint have encouraged me to believe that I may in some measure know Thee. Therefore, I pray, whatever of Thyself Thou hast been pleased to disclose, help me to search out as treasure more precious than rubies or the merchandise of fine gold: for with Thee shall I live when the stars of the twilight are no more and the heavens have vanished away and only Thou remainest. Amen.

The study of the attributes of God, far from being dull and heavy, may for the enlightened Christian be a sweet and absorbing spiritual exercise. To the soul that is athirst for God, nothing could be more delightful.

Only to sit and think of God, Oh what a joy it is!

To think the thought, to breath the Name , Earth has no higher bliss.

Frederick W. Faber

It would seem to be necessary before proceeding further to define the word attribute as it is used in this volume. It is not used in its philosophical sense nor confined to its strictest theological meaning. By it is meant simply whatever may be correctly ascribed to God. For the purpose of this book an attribute of God is whatever God has in any way revealed as being true of Himself.

And this brings us to the question of the number of the divine attributes. Religious thinkers have differed about this. Some have insisted that there are seven, but Faber sang of the "God of a thousand attributes," and Charles Wesley exclaimed,

Glory thine attributes confess, Glorious all and numberless.

True, these men were worshiping, not counting; but we might be wise to follow the insight of the enraptured heart rather than the more cautious reasonings of the theological mind. If an attribute is something that is true of God, we may as well not try to enumerate them. Furthermore, to this meditation on the being of God the number of the attributes is not important, for only a limited few will be mentioned here.

If an attribute is something true of God, it is also something that we can conceive as being true of Him. God, being infinite, must possess attributes about which we can know. An attribute, as we can know it, is a mental concept, an intellectual response to God's self-revelation. It is an answer to a question, the reply God makes to our interrogation concerning himself.

What is God like? What kind of God is He? How may we expect Him to act toward us and toward all created things? Such questions are not merely academic. They touch the far-in reaches of the human spirit, and their answers affect life and character and destiny.

When asked in reverence and their answers sought in humility, these are questions that cannot but be pleasing to our Father which art in heaven. "For He willeth that we be occupied in knowing and loving," wrote Julian of Norwich, "till the time that we shall be fulfilled in heaven.... For of all things the beholding and the loving of the Maker maketh the soul to seem less in his own sight, and most filleth him with reverent dread and true meekness; with plenty of charity for his fellow Christians. "To our questions God has provided answers; not all the answers, certainly, but enough to satisfy our intellects and ravish our hearts. These answers He has provided in nature, in the Scriptures, and in the person of His Son.

The idea that God reveals Himself in the creation is not held with much vigor by modern Christians; but it is, nevertheless, set forth in the inspired Word, especially in the writings of David and Isaiah in the Old Testament and in Paul's Epistle to the Romans in the New. In the Holy Scriptures the revelation is clearer:

The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord,

In every star Thy wisdom shines;

But when our eyes behold Thy Word,

We read Thy name in fairer lines.

Isaac Watts

And it is a sacred and indispensable part of the Christian message that the full sun-blaze of revelation came at the incarnation when the Eternal Word became flesh to dwell among us. Though God in this threefold revelation has provided answers to our questions concerning Him, the answers by no means lie on the surface. They must be sought by prayer, by long meditation on the written Word, and by earnest and well-disciplined labor. However brightly the light may shine, it can be seen only by those who are spiritually prepared to receive it. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

If we would think accurately about the attributes of God, we must learn to reject certain words that are sure to come crowding into our minds - such words as trait, characteristic, quality, words which are proper and necessary when we are considering created beings but altogether inappropriate when we are thinking about God. We must break ourselves of the habit of thinking of the Creator as we think of His creatures. It is probably impossible to think without words, but if we permit ourselves to think with the wrong words, we shall soon be entertaining erroneous thoughts; for words, which are given us for the expression of thought, have a habit of going beyond their

proper bounds and determining the content of thought. "As nothing is more easy than to think," says Thomas Traherne, "so nothing is more difficult than to think well." If we ever think well it should be when we think of God.

A man is the sum of his parts and his character the sum of the traits that compose it. These traits vary from man to man and may from time to time vary from themselves within the same man. Human character is not constant because the traits or qualities that constitute it are unstable. These come and go, burn low or glow with great intensity throughout our lives. Thus a man who is kind and considerate at thirty may be cruel and churlish at fifty. Such a change is possible because man is made; he is in a very real sense a composition; he is the sum of the traits that make up his character. We naturally and correctly think of man as a work wrought by the divine Intelligence. He is both created and made. How he was created lies undisclosed among the secrets of God; how he was brought from no-being to being, from nothing to something is not known and may never be known to any but the One who brought him forth. How God made him, however, is less of a secret, and while we know only a small portion of the whole truth, we do know that man possesses a body, a soul, and a spirit; we know that he has memory, reason, will, intelligence, sensation, and we know that to give these meaning he has the wondrous gift of consciousness. We know, too, that these, together with various qualities of temperament, compose his total human self. These are gifts from God arranged by infinite wisdom, notes that make up the score of creations loftiest symphony, threads that compose the master tapestry of the universe.

But in all this we are thinking creature-thoughts and using creature-words to express them. Neither such thoughts nor such words are appropriate to the Deity. "The Father is made of none," says the Athanasian Creed, "neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son: not made nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding." God exists in Himself and of Himself. His being He owes to no one. His substance is indivisible. He has no parts but is single in His unitary being. The doctrine of the divine unity means not only that there is but one God; it means also that God is simple, uncomplex, one with Himself. The harmony of His being is the result not of a perfect balance of parts but of the absence of parts. Between His attributes no contradiction can exist. He need not suspend one to exercise another, for in Him all His attributes are one. All of God does all that God does; He does not divide himself to perform a work, but works in the total unity of His being. An attribute, then, is a part of God. It is how God is, and as far as the reasoning mind can go, we may say that it is what God is, though, as I have tried to explain, exactly what He is He cannot tell us. Of what God is conscious when He is conscious of self, only He knows. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Only to an equal could God communicate the mystery of His Godhead; and to think of God as having an equal is to fall into an intellectual absurdity. The divine attributes are what we know to be true of God. He does not possess them as qualities; they are how God is as He reveals Himself to His creatures. Love, for instance, is not something God has and which may grow or diminish or cease to be. His love is the way God is, and when He loves He is simply being Himself. And so with the other attributes.

One God! one Majesty! There is no God but Thee! Unbounded, unextended Unity! Unfathomable Sea! All life is out of Thee, and Thy life is Thy blissful Unity. Frederick W. Faber



CHAPTER 4; The Holy Trinity

God of our fathers, enthroned in light, how rich, how musical is the tongue of England! Yet when we attempt to speak forth Thy wonders, our words how poor they seem and our speech how unmelodious. When we consider the fearful mystery of Thy Triune Godhead we lay our hand upon our mouth. Before that burning bush we ask not to understand, but only that we may fitly adore Thee, One God in Persons Three. Amen.

To meditate on the three Persons of the Godhead is to walk in thought through the garden eastward in Eden and to tread on holy ground. Our sincerest effort to grasp the incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity must remain forever futile, and only by deepest reverence can it be saved from actual presumption. Some persons who reject all they cannot explain have denied that God is a Trinity. Subjecting the Most High to their cold, level-eyed scrutiny, they conclude that it is impossible that he could be both One and Three. These forget that their whole life is enshrouded in mystery. They fail to consider that any real explanation of even the simplest phenomenon in nature lies hidden in obscurity and can no more be explained than can the mystery of the Godhead.

Every man lives by faith, the nonbeliever as well as the saint; the one by faith in natural laws and the other by faith in God. Every man throughout his entire life constantly accepts without understanding. The most learned sage can be reduced to silence with one simple question, "What?" The answer to that question lies forever in the abyss of unknowing beyond any man's ability to discover. "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof" but mortal man never.

Thomas Carlyle, following Plato, pictures a man, a deep pagan thinker, who had grown to maturity in some hidden cave and is brought out suddenly to see the sun rise. "What would his wonder be," exclaims Carlyle, "his rapt astonishment at the sight we daily witness with indifference! With the free, open sense of a child, yet with the ripe faculty of a man, his whole heart would be kindled by that sight.... This green flowery rock-built earth, the trees, the mountains, rivers, many-sounding seas; that great deep sea of azure that swims overhead; the winds sweeping through it; the black cloud fashioning itself together, now pouring out fire, now hail and rain; what is it? Ay, what? At bottom we do not yet know; we can never know at all." How different are we who have grown used to it, who have become jaded with a satiety of wonder. "It is not by our superior insight that we escape the difficulty," says Carlyle, "it is by our superior levity, our inattention, our want of insight. It is by not thinking that we cease to wonder at it.... We call that fire of the black thundercloud electricity, and lecture learnedly about it, and grind the like of it out of glass and silk: but what is it? Whence comes it? Whither goes it?"

Science has done much for us; but it is a poor science that would hide from us the great deep sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle; wonderful, inscrutable, magical and more, to whosoever will think of it."

These penetrating, almost prophetic, words were written more than a century ago, but not all the breath-taking advances of science and technology since that time have invalidated one word or rendered obsolete as much as one period or comma. Still we do not know. We save face by repeating frivolously the popular jargon of science. We harness the mighty energy that rushes through our world; we subject it to fingertip control in our cars and our kitchens; we make it work for us like Aladdin's jinn, but still we do not know what it is. Secularism, materialism, and the intrusive presence of things have put out the light in our souls and turned us into a generation of zombies. We cover our deep ignorance with words, but we are ashamed to wonder, we are afraid to whisper "mystery."

The Church has not hesitated to teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Without pretending to understand, she has given her witness, she has repeated what the Holy Scriptures teach. Some deny that the Scriptures teach the Trinity of the Godhead on the ground that the whole idea of trinity in unity is a contradiction in terms; but since we cannot understand the fall of a leaf by the roadside or the hatching of a robin's egg in the nest yonder, why should the Trinity be a problem to us? "We think more loftily of God," says Michael de Molinos, "by knowing that He is incomprehensible, and above our understanding, than by conceiving Him under any image, and creature beauty, according to our rude understanding."

Not all who called themselves Christians through the centuries were Trinitarians, but as the presence of God in the fiery pillar glowed above the camp of Israel throughout the wilderness journey, saying to all the world, "These are My people," so belief in the Trinity has since the days of the apostles shone above the Church of the Firstborn as she journeyed down the years. Purity and power have followed this faith. Under this banner have gone forth apostles, fathers, martyrs, mystics, hymnists, reformers, revivalists, and the seal of divine approval has rested on their lives and their labors. However they may have differed on minor matters, the doctrine of the Trinity bound them together.

What God declares the believing heart confesses without the need of further proof. Indeed, to seek proof is to admit doubt, and to obtain proof is to render faith superfluous. Everyone who possesses the gift of faith will recognize the wisdom of those daring words of one of the early Church fathers: "I believe that Christ died for me because it is incredible; I believe that he rose from the dead because it is impossible." That was the attitude of Abraham, who against all evidence waxed strong in faith, giving glory to God. It was the attitude of Anselm, "the second Augustine," one of the greatest thinkers of the Christian era, who held that faith must precede all effort to understand. Reflection upon revealed truth naturally follows the advent of faith, but faith comes first to the hearing ear, not to the cogitating mind. The believing man does not ponder the Word and arrive at faith by a process of reasoning, nor does he seek confirmation of faith from philosophy or science. His cry is, "O earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." Is this to dismiss scholarship as valueless in the sphere of revealed religion? By no means. The scholar has a vitally important task to perform within a carefully prescribed precinct. His task is to guarantee the purity of the text, to get as close as possible to the Word as originally given. He may compare Scripture with Scripture until he has discovered the true meaning of the text.

But right there his authority ends. He must never sit in judgment upon what is written. He dare not bring the meaning of the Word before the bar of his reason. He dare not commend or condemn the Word as reasonable or unreasonable, scientific or unscientific. After the meaning is discovered, that meaning judges him; never does he judge it. The doctrine of the Trinity is truth for the heart. The spirit of man alone can enter through the veil and penetrate into that Holy of Holies. "Let me seek Thee in longing," pleaded Anselm, "let me long for Thee in seeking; let me find Thee in love, and love Thee in finding." Love and faith are at home in the mystery of the Godhead. Let reason kneel in reverence outside.

Christ did not hesitate to use the plural form when speaking of Himself along with the Father and the Spirit. "We will come unto him and make our abode with him." Yet again He said, "I and my Father are one." It is most important that we think of God as Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. Only so may we think rightly of God and in a manner worthy of Him and of our own souls. It was our Lord's claim to equality with the Father that outraged the religionists of His day and led at last to His crucifixion. The attack on the doctrine of the Trinity two centuries later by Arius and others was also aimed at Christ's claim to deity. During the Arian controversy 318 Church fathers (many of them maimed and scarred by the physical violence suffered in earlier persecutions) met at Nicaea and adopted a statement of faith, one section of which runs: I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, The only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of Him before all ages, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made. For more than sixteen hundred years this has stood as the final test of orthodoxy, as well it should, for it condenses in theological language the teaching of the New Testament concerning the position of the Son in the Godhead. The Nicene Creed also pays tribute to the Holy Spirit as being Himself God and equal to the Father and the Son: I believe in the Holy Spirit; The Lord and giver of life, Which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and Son together; Is worshipped and glorified. Apart from the question of whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone or from the Father and the Son, this tenet of the ancient creed has been held by the Eastern and Western branches of the Church and by all but a tiny minority of Christians. The authors of the Athanasian Creed spelled out with great care the relation of the three Persons to each other, filling in the gaps in human thought as far as they were able while staying within the bounds of the inspired Word. "In this Trinity," runs the Creed, "nothing is before or after, nothing is greater or less: but all three Persons coeternal, together and equal." How do these words harmonize with the saying of Jesus, "My Father is greater than I"? Those old theologians knew, and wrote into the Creed, "Equal to His Father, as touching His Godhead; less than the Father, as touching His manhood," and this interpretation commends itself to every serious-minded seeker after truth in a region where the light is all but blinding. To redeem mankind the Eternal Son did not leave the bosom of the Father; while walking among men He referred to Himself as "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father," and spoke of Himself again as "the Son of man which is in heaven." We grant mystery here, but not confusion. In His incarnation the son veiled His deity, but He did not void it. The unity of the Godhead made it impossible

that He should surrender anything of His deity. When He took upon Him the nature of man, He did not degrade Himself or become even for a time less than He had been before. God can never become less than Himself. For God to become anything that He has not been is unthinkable.

The Persons of the Godhead, being one, have one will. They work always together, and never one smallest act is done by one without the instant acquiescence of the other two. Every act of God is accomplished by the Trinity in Unity. Here, of course, we are being driven by necessity to conceive of God in human terms. We are thinking of God by analogy with man, and the result must fall short of ultimate truth; yet if we are to think of God at all, we must do it by adapting creature-thoughts and creature-words to the Creator. It is a real if understandable error to conceive of the Persons of the Godhead as conferring with one another and reaching agreement by interchange of thought as humans do. It has always seemed to me that Milton introduces an element of weakness into his celebrated *Paradise Lost* when he presents the Persons of the Godhead conversing with each other about the redemption of the human race. When the Son of God walked the earth as the Son of Man, He spoke often to the Father and the Father answered Him again; as the Son of Man, He now intercedes with God for His people. The dialogue involving the Father and the Son recorded in the Scriptures is always to be understood as being between the Eternal Father and the Man Christ Jesus. That instant, immediate communion between the Persons of the Godhead which has been from all eternity knows not sound nor effort nor motion.

Amid the eternal silences; None heard but He who always spake, And the silence was unbroken.

O marvellous! O worshipful!

No song or sound is heard, But everywhere and every hour, In love, in wisdom, and in power, The Father speaks His dear Eternal Word.

Frederick W. Faber

A popular belief among Christians divide the work of God between the three Persons, giving a specific part to each, as, for instance, creation to the Father, redemption to the Son, and regeneration to the Holy Spirit. This is partly true but not wholly so, for God cannot so divide Himself that one Person works while another is inactive. In the Scriptures the three Persons are shown to act in harmonious unity in all the mighty works that are wrought throughout the universe. In the Holy Scriptures the work of creation is attributed to the Father (Gen. 1:1), to the Son (Col. 1:16), and to the Holy Spirit (Job. 26:13 and Ps. 104:30). The incarnation is shown to have been accomplished by the three Persons in full accord (Luke 1: 35), though only the Son became flesh to dwell among us. At Christ's baptism the Son came up out of the water, the Spirit descended upon Him and the Father's voice spoke from heaven (Matt. 3:16, 17). Probably the most beautiful description of the work of atonement is found in Hebrews 9:14, where it is stated that Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God; and there we behold the three persons operating together. The resurrection of Christ is likewise attributed variously to the Father (Acts 2:32), to the Son (John 10:17-18), and to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:4). The salvation of the individual man is shown by the apostle Peter to be the work of all three Persons of the Godhead (1 Pet. 1:2), and the indwelling of the Christian man's soul is said to be by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-23).

The doctrine of the Trinity, as I have said before, is truth for the heart. The fact that it cannot be satisfactorily explained, instead of being against it, is in its favor. Such a truth had to be revealed; no one could have imagined it.

O Blessed Trinity!

O simplest Majesty! O Three in One!

Thou art for ever God alone.

Holy Trinity!

Blessed equal Three.

One God, we praise Thee.

Frederick W. Faber