

THE CURE FOR TROUBLED HEARTS

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." John 14:1.

Christ and His disciples were at the table in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. Judas Iscariot had gone out to betray Christ. The Lord had just reminded Simon Peter that he would deny Him before the dawn. Christ had just informed them that He was leaving them. They were perplexed and saddened because He had told them that He was going to die. With His quick insight Christ saw the shadow on their faces. His heart went out to them, and He sought to comfort them by saying, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Those eleven men were facing the greatest upheaval of their lives. They needed preparation for the dark hours that were ahead of them. Just ahead of them was the darkness of doubt and despair. They were going to be called upon to suffer greatly and heroically for their faith. In fact, tradition tells us that ten of these eleven men died cruel and violent deaths.

Christ's announcement of His approaching death horrified and dazed the disciples. They said to one another, in substance, "He said that He is going away, going to die. What will become of His kingdom in the world? What will become of us, who came out on His side and followed Him in the face of an unsympathetic and a jeering world?" Observing their deep sorrow, Christ uttered the memorable words, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." The disciples believed in Christ, but they needed a stronger faith in Him. They needed to believe that the cross was a part of God's redemptive plan. They needed to believe that the triumph of Christ over death and the grave would assure them of a power that they had never known before. Christ was just urging them to have a greater faith in Him. If they could have sufficient faith, they would no longer be troubled in heart.

I. The Certainty of Troubled Hearts.

Christ entered into a sympathetic relationship with all to whom He ministered. He was described as a High Priest Who is touched "with the feeling of our infirmities." He was, Himself, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He knew, also, that all are exposed and subject to trouble of one sort or another. "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Of all the millions who have lived on earth, there have been but very few who have not had their share of trouble and distress on the journey of life. Truly, this is a world of trouble. One would have great difficulty in finding a spot to which he might go today with any assurance that he would escape the universal distress. Therefore, the Book which recognizes that trouble is a part of our lives, and that was written to minister to us in our trouble, is the one which none of us can afford to ignore.

This world is filled with trouble hearts. Trouble does not know any boundaries or national frontiers. It is to be found everywhere, among Christians and non-Christians. It is not any respecter of persons or families. It invades the home of the monarch in his palace and the peasant in his cottage. Rich and poor, high and low, young and old, educated and un-educated have their troubles, but some have more than others. Most people seem to be having their troubles today. If they are not of their own making, they have been made for them by others. Some are bearing both their own and the troubles of others. It is one of the laws of our complex present-day life that we cannot escape being involved in the lives of others, regardless of how hard we may try.

In a short story entitled, "Pastoral Symphony," Andre Gide told of a lovely young girl, Gertrude, who had been blind from birth. Her blindness actually caused her to be protected from life to the extent that she had a childlike sentimental picture of the people around her. One day she underwent an operation, and her eyes were opened. Two things immediately impressed her. One was that nature was more beautiful than she had even

imagined; light and color fascinated her. The other was that the faces of people were sadder than she expected; almost every one of them was lined with anxiety, care, and inner restlessness. She almost wished that her eyes had never been opened. Is this all that life has to offer?

What a world of trouble we face today! Millions in all walks of life are severely burdened and their minds are filled with anxiety. There are those who endeavor to persuade themselves that trouble may be evaded by its denial, and so they try to ignore it, and to say that all trouble is an illusion of the mortal mind, and that what we ought to do is to force ourselves to smile and to persuade ourselves that there is no trouble in the world. The majority of us are finding that life has its hard places. Life is full of difficulties, and beset with many problems.

When trouble comes to you, don't think your case is unique or different from others. Name your trouble and you will find that many others have the same thing. When trouble comes, don't indulge in self-pity. Spiritual wounds may heal on the surface, but self-pity causes them to fester underneath, bringing despondency and bitterness. Then, don't retail your troubles. There is spiritual therapy in sharing your troubles with a friend, but it is folly to retail or tell them to everybody. When people think of you they must not associate you with trouble, unless it be with the mastering of it. Somebody defined a bore as "a person who talks about his rheumatism when you want to talk about yours." Don't capitulate to trouble. God will give you the strength to overcome it. Seek to work out that which is workable, and accept that which you cannot change. Trouble can weaken you or strengthen you. It will embitter you or make you sweeter.

II. The Cause of Troubled Hearts.

God created the universe a harmonious whole. Law and order prevailed everywhere. Man, a free moral being, was assigned dominion over the earth and all things therein. At the instigation of the devil, sin entered the world, causing great confusion. All of the troubles of mankind are traceable to the supreme tragedy of man's rebellion, disobedience, and fall. Sin has caused all the trouble in this world since the day that Adam elected to go his own way independently of God.

III. The Cure For Troubled Hearts.

One recently expressed the attitude of many today when he said, "There is so much trouble in life, I wonder if it is worth living." We need to remember that Christ never promised freedom from trouble in this life. Rather, He told His disciples that they would often be in the midst of adverse situations. He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But He graciously provided a cure for troubled hearts, whatever their plight might be.

When Sir Walter Scott, that eminent novelist, lay dying, he said to his son-in-law, Lockhart, who was also his biographer, "Read to me from the Book." Lockhart answered, "What book?" The dying man replied, "There is only one Book, the Bible." Taking the sacred volume, Lockhart read from John 14. When he had finished reading, Sir Walter Scott said, "Well, that is a great comfort, I feel as if I were going to be myself again." So that great man found consolation in those precious words that fell from the lips of the Saviour, and since then multitudes have pillowed their heads upon them in the time of their troubles and sorrows.

How may troubled hearts be cured? Various answers have been given to this question. Among them are the following:

1. The answer of despair.

Wave after wave of trouble came over Job. He lost his property, his children, his health, his friends, and then his wife said, "Curse God and die." That was the answer of despair. How tragic! That was no cure for trouble. Some are prone to accept that answer to life's pains, perplexities and trials. Some are prone to take the road of despair, and then commit suicide. But suicide is never justifiable.

Various things cause people to despair — business reverses, shattered confidence, disappointed friendships, broken health, and, worst of all, is the down-pulling power of sin. There is nothing like an accusing conscience, which is the result of sin.

2. The answer of Stoicism.

Stoicism says to steel your heart against all feeling; deaden your sensibilities and your emotions; refuse to cry; be sublimely indifferent, regardless of what comes. But such doctrine will never cure a broken or troubled heart.

3. The answer of Epicureanism.

This doctrine is that one should forget all his troubles. It teaches that one should plunge into the realm of pleasure and sound all of its depths. But an attempt to drown one's troubles will never cure them.

4. The answer of denial.

This answer boldly declares, "There is not any trouble; there is not any sin; there is not any suffering; there is not any death." It declares that all such is nothing but bad thought, so one ought to forget it. That is a false philosophy. Some people would have you to believe that there is no such thing as trouble, or a broken heart. They propose to get by the difficulty by denying the facts. For one to deny the facts of sin, sickness, suffering, sorrow and death is to make him ridiculous in the eyes of intelligent and honest people. These solemn facts are all about us. Repeatedly people are beaten by the flail of disappointment. But there is no cure for trouble in denying its existence.

Where can we get our troubles cured? There is just one place. Christ states the cure. He is the physician for a troubled heart. If you reject His comfort, there is no other anchorage, healing, recovery, and peace sufficient for a troubled heart. Christ invites you to put your case in His hands.

If and when your heart is troubled, there is one source to get it cured, and that is Christ. Stake your all on Christ. Why?

(1) He is worthy.

You cannot gainsay anything He ever said, or any work He has ever done. There is nothing about His person, character, or life to condemn, even though many have criticized and found fault with much of it.

(2) You will be left bewildered without Him.

When you consider the great questions that baffle and perplex humanity, such as sin, sickness, suffering, sorrow, and death, Christ is the only satisfying answer to them. You will be utterly bewildered, baffled, and broken in the presence of those blinding and burdensome mysteries, apart from Christ.

What can one do about sin, if Christ is disregarded? No man has resources suff-

icient to master sin. Christ said, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Christ alone can save His people from their sins.

Without Christ, you will be left baffled and helpless in the presence of sorrow. One can hear the undertone of sorrow everywhere. You can see its reign on every side as you stand beside the caskets and the open graves. But there is One Who can turn the very shadow of death into morning. There is One Who can take life's tears and attune them to the sweetest music, and His name is Jesus. Apart from Christ one cannot be comforted in the day of broken hearts.

What will you do when you walk down into the valley of the shadow of death, if you do not have Christ with you? Caesar stood up in the Roman Senate and said: "If there be anything beyond death, I do not know. If there be anything beyond the grave, I cannot tell." Christ went down into the grave and explored it, and then on the third day He came back from the grave with the keys of death and of the invisible world swinging at His girdle, and He says to us: "You cleave to me, and you need not be afraid of death and what death can do to you."

Christ is the light of the world. Let us follow Him! Let us follow Him today and all the tomorrows! As the poet wrote:

"So, I go on not knowing,
I would not know if I might.
I would rather walk with Christ in the dark
Than to walk alone in the light.
I would rather walk with Him by faith
Than to walk by myself with sight."

Christian friend, follow Him from this hour until death and beyond forever.