

# **“Abba Father”**

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At the beginning of this year let us take up afresh this Name, which is in truth the beginning of all Christian language. The babes know the Father, (1. John 2:13), and *ABBA* is the language of the babe; yet there is a sweetness and wealth of meaning in it that the oldest saint on earth has not wholly comprehended. It is remarkable that it has been left untranslated into our English tongue, and, indeed Paul, as inspired by the Holy Ghost did not give its equivalent in Greek, in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. It is left there as the Lord Himself used it, when in His agony of blood He bowed down in prayer in the Garden. It is left for us, and given to us and we may take up the very word, the very sound, that came forth from His mouth when He addressed His Father there.

Let us consider it as and when the Lord used it, for then we may gain a fuller entrance into its meaning. His disciples were not able to watch with Him in that solemn hour, but we may look back to it now and contemplate Him there. What holy unquestioning submission, what confidence pervaded His prayer! He shrank from what lay before Him, *if it had been possible* He would have asked to have been saved from it, but the Father’s will was supreme, His will must be accomplished whatever the cost and suffering might be, and so when the agony was past He said, “The cup that My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”

It is Mark that tells us that He said, “Abba Father.” Mark who writes of Him as the perfect Servant. His path of service had brought Him to this dark hour when He had to say, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful to death.” To whom could He turn? Only to Him whom He served with that holy and perfect devotion and in whom was all His trust, He put the whole matter into His hands saying “Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.” Again we say, what blessed submission, what confidence, what trust, and what intimacy! And what heart can conceive the affection with which the Father viewed Him then. He had said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life ... this commandment have I received of My Father.” Did not that love flow forth upon Him in the garden? and was He not conscious of it? It surely did, and He surely was, and it seems to us that in the presence of that upflow of confidence and holy submission to the Father’s will, and that downflow of unspeakable affection we learn something of what the Name, *Abba* implies. It describes a relationship in which the knowledge of a perfect love finds a response in perfect trust. It is thus we see it revealed. It was perfectly revealed in and by Him.

But we have been brought, according to inconceivable grace, into this relationship, and the Name, *Abba*, may be upon our lips as we address our prayers to God. The Name describes for us the character of the relationship. It is not one of bondage or of fear. We do not stand at a distance but we draw near. It implies a holy intimacy coupled with deepest reverence. It describes a love towards us and care for us that attracts us and attaches us with unbreakable bonds to Him who bears that Name, a love and care that creates within us an ever increasing trust and true submission. In view of the sufferings of this present time of which Romans 8 speaks, and which many of God’s children are feeling keenly, this Name is most sweet, most blessed. It is in the sense of it that we can say “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.”

And Galatians 4:6 helps us. “Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, *Abba, Father.*” This Spirit is the Spirit of God, but in this special character and active in this special way. It is the Spirit of His Son, and surely if we are to know

the meaning of this cry we must contemplate His Son.

“Thou shalt call Me, My Father, and shall not depart from Me,” was God’s word to a backsliding people in ancient days, and it seems to us that this Name, Abba, is that that will keep us from wandering, and preserve us from worry. In the knowledge of His perfect love and care for us we shall rest, and whatever our lot may be in the future, submission to His will and trust in His love will pervade our lives until the sufferings of this present time give place to the glory that shall be revealed in us, who are the beloved children, and destined heirs of God.

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