

## Behind All The Strange Puzzles Of Life There Is The Secret Working Of God

In all our activities we may be seeking God: in our work, on our social occasions, as we walk along the road, even when we are so busy that we have not time to think of anything except what we are doing... God can deal with us under a thousand forms for our spiritual hallowing. Behind all the strange puzzles of life there is the secret working of God, creating life, creating character, accepting service -- all sorts of spiritual shaping going on.

*~ from CHRIST THE COMPANION by S.D.C. Father Andrew*

When I sat down to start writing about this passage from Fr Andrew's book, I was tempted just to "leave it" – to let the words speak for themselves, to let you, the reader, find your own connection with them without the need of any extraneous input from me.

But I do get very excited when I find a passage such as this - where it is so exquisitely written, so beautifully laid open and so deeply relational in its substance. This passage could have been written just for me – that's what it feels like. And so, I simply I have to share it. I have to share the sense of connectedness I feel, the relief that my thoughts and my feelings have been named and so are open. I am smiling as I write this because I am overwhelmed by the deep sense of "yes that's it" that resonates with me right now. And I hope that something is resonating with you.

These few lines were written by an Anglican friar who lived and worked in London's East End during the Second World War and who died shortly afterwards aged 77. This particular book was published in 1945, so the passage above seems all the more poignant when we consider it was probably written during the blitz.

Fr Andrew's words are always rich and inviting, comforting and yet deeply challenging. Reading his work – be it his poetry, his plays or his books always leaves me a little excited and a little uncomfortable all at the same time.

He was a prolific writer, his work published by Mowbray and Sons, but sadly his books are all out of print and extremely rare, but his work is highly valued as a source of inspiration and I believe that Lambeth Palace has an almost complete collection in its library. If you ever find a copy in a second-hand bookshop – buy it, bring it home and take the time to find the treasures that are in those worn and aged pages.

Because this passage could have been written for us, each and every one of us, last week, or this morning or next week. And it is a comfort for me to find myself in those words written all those years ago by this humble man. He was a true servant of God, who in his advanced years refused to leave his church and people during the

bombing (the church was bombed three times) but instead stayed to serve because that is what he had been called to do.

I hope that I would be this brave, this trusting in God were I to be faced with such adversity. I hope that my faith would be strengthened, not weakened by fear. I hope that I would know such a deep sense of my calling with God that I would be able to find the words to share it with others, putting my own self aside to be fully present in the love of God for others.

It seems like a tall order, perhaps. But then again no, because as Fr Andrew reminds us – it is not in our own strength that we do this, any of this, but in God's. He reminds us that God holds us in everything we do: "God can deal with us under a thousand forms for our spiritual hallowing." That is, he is with us, bringing us ever closer to him and teaching us to remember our sacredness before him and our connectedness to him.

God is always there behind the scenes, creating, creating. We don't see that because we don't need to see it – that is what Fr Andrew means by "secret" here – not that God is hiding anything from us, but that we simply don't need to see it – we trust in him and all his works and therein lies the beauty of our relationship. There is "all sorts of spiritual shaping going on." How lovely. How lovely to know that God isn't finished with me or you yet.

These words written amidst the rubble of World War II London somehow reminds me strongly of a song by Hillary Scott and the Scott Family from Nashville. I've included the YouTube link on the written script. I encourage you to listen to it. Hillary Scott was born in 1986 and yet this song echoes Fr Andrew's words written some 71 years earlier. The song is entitled "Still" and it's a song that I have returned to time and again (as I do Fr Andrew's books and poetry) at times when I am struggling to make sense of everything around me. So, I share this with you too, in the hope that it will help you to make sense of everything that has been going on, all of our misunderstandings, our resentments and anger at the difficulties we may have been encountering.

And to look forward.

There is comfort in knowing that God is with us through it all. Sometimes we forget that. But God doesn't. His hand is steadfast. His love is never ending. He holds us firm.

<https://youtu.be/CAt33bl-1As>

### **Still – by Hillary Scott and the Scott family**

I believe that You are God alone  
But sometimes I still try to take control  
'Cause I get scared when I can't see the end

And all You want from me is to let go

You're parting waters  
Making a way for me  
You're moving mountains that I don't even see  
You've answered my prayer before I even speak  
All You need for me to be is still

I bring my praise before I bring my need  
'Cause there's no fear You've not already seen  
I rest my heart on all Your promises  
'Cause I have seen and know Your faithfulness

You're parting waters  
Making a way for me  
You're moving mountains that I don't even see  
You've answered my prayer before I even speak  
All You need for me to be is still

And know that You are God  
Be still  
And know that You, trust that You are parting waters  
Lord, You whispered my name  
Oh, You answered my prayer  
You're moving mountains

You're parting waters  
Making a way for me  
You're moving mountains that I don't even see  
You've answered my prayer before I even speak  
All You need for me to be is still  
Be still