

Constancy of Christ Our Comforter John 13

by John Nelson Darby

Jesus' love is unwavering and perfect, unaffected by humanity's nature to destroy it, and is the occasion for manifesting His love and compassion.

Scripture: Psalm 32:1-2, Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 11:28, Luke 19:14, John 13:1, John 15:13, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 2:4-5, 1 John 4:9-10

Topics: "The Love of Christ", "Grace and Compassion"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the unwavering love of Christ as a source of comfort for believers, despite the indifference and hatred He faced from the world and even His own disciples. He illustrates how Jesus' love remained constant and unyielding, even in the face of betrayal and sin, demonstrating that His compassion is directed towards those who are lost and in need of grace. Darby encourages listeners to acknowledge their own weaknesses and the necessity of Christ's love in their lives, reminding them that Jesus loves His own 'unto the end' and meets them in their struggles. The sermon calls for a recognition of the depth of God's grace and the importance of sincerity in our relationship with Him.

Transcript

It is evident that Jesus here addresses the disciples who then were around Him; but what we see there of Jesus draws the soul to Him. That which draws the sinner, which gives Him confidence, is what the Holy Ghost reveals of Jesus.

I desire we should consider what is found in verse 1, that is, the constancy of Christ's love - a love that nothing damped nor weakened. If we think what the disciples were, and the world, and the adversaries, we shall find that Jesus had a thousand reasons putting a stop to His love. We see round Him three kinds of persons - the disciples, the indifferent, and the adversaries. The latter are more especially the children of the devil. They are those who, when they saw the Lord was going to take the kingdom and reign over those things, said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." There are some who from the bottom of their hearts have the certainty that Jesus is the Christ, and who will not have Him. The adversaries may draw away the indifferent. All that was in this world was of a nature to destroy Jesus' love, had it not been perfect and invariable: for there is nothing that wounds love more than indifference.

We naturally love sin, and we would make use of all that God has given us to satisfy our lusts. Jesus saw all that. He saw the disgusting state of this world and said, "How long shall I . . . suffer you?" When we are in the light of God, it is thus we judge sin.

Where are the parents who would not desire their children should avoid the corruption they knew themselves? It was because Jesus knew the sad state of man that grace led Him to come to take him out of it. God sees everything. In His compassion He takes cognisance of everything in order to meet our wants. But what does He meet with? Indifference of heart. The heart of the natural man sees in Jesus something contemptible. He cannot acknowledge his own state, and he will not be a debtor to God to get out of it. He prefers remaining in indifference with respect to that God who loves him; and, again, let us remember that there is nothing that discourages love more than indifference.

Jesus met with hatred also. All those who loved not the light, because their deeds were evil, hated Jesus. Pride, carnal assurance, self-will, everything in man, repelled God. There was nothing in this uncleanness, this indifference, and this hatred, that could attract the love of Jesus. That love might have been led to give up when, for instance, Jesus saw that Judas was betraying Him.

149 If a person were going to betray us, we should be too much occupied with ourselves to think of those who will not betray us. This was not the case with Jesus.

Although iniquity abounded, Jesus shewed all His love; and finally, His disciples themselves forsake Him also! Those who loved Him were so selfish and so much the slaves of the fear of man that it was impossible for Jesus to reckon upon them. Such is the heart of man that, although a man may love Jesus, yet his heart is worthless. Jesus had to love in presence of a hatred which never relented. He loved us even when we were covered with uncleanness, indifferent, full of hatred for the light and having denied it a thousand times. He who knows himself best knows best how true this is. If we were to treat a friend as we treat Jesus, friendship would not last long.

What a contrast we shall find, if we consider how different that which Jesus found on earth is from what He enjoyed in heaven! There He found the Father's love, and in the presence of that perfect love, the purity of His own could not be manifested, because it found no obstacle. But here below, remembering what He had left, He loves His own, even in their uncleanness; this itself draws out upon them His compassion. The object of grace is iniquity and evil. The indifference of His own proved to Jesus all the extent of their misery and the need they had of Him! Even the hatred of man shewed that man was lost. God came to seek man, because he was not in a state to seek God. How many things God has borne with! What indifference, what betraying, what denials! One would be ashamed to act with Satan as one acts with the Lord. Nevertheless, nothing stops Jesus: He loves His own unto the end. He acted according to that which was in His heart, and all the wickedness of man was for Him only the occasion of manifesting His love.

The Lord has done all that is necessary to re-establish the soul in relationship with God. Sinners as we are, the grace of God came to seek us. Righteousness and the law require that evil and the wicked be removed. John the Baptist required repentance; it was the beginning of grace. But pure grace (far from saying to man, Leave thy state and come to me) comes itself to man in his sin; it enters into relationship with him, that God may be much more manifested, than if there had been no sin.

150 Grace applies what is in God to the need which is produced by the ruin where we are. Jesus loves unto the end.

What consolation to know that Jesus is all that is needed for all that we are! This places us in that which is true, and leads us to confess the evil which is in us, and not to hide it. Grace alone produces sincerity; Psalm 32:1, 2. A man who has a profession to follow wants to appear strong even when he is weak. Grace produces truthfulness - makes us acknowledge the weakness and infirmity in which we are. If we were in

the place of Peter, we would do what Peter himself did, if we were not kept. Jesus loves His own "in the world," in their pilgrimage and their circumstances, in spite of their misery, of their selfishness, and of their weakness. All that Satan could do, and all that was in man, was quite of a nature to hinder Jesus' love: nevertheless, "he loved them unto the end."

Can you say, "I have a share in that love, in spite of my weakness? I have understood the grace and the manifestation in Jesus of the love of the invisible God." Have you acknowledged that it was necessary that Jesus should come into the world, in order that your soul might not go to the place where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth?" Have we made up our mind to acknowledge ourselves to be what we are? This is disagreeable to the flesh, it is painful; like the thorn of Paul, it is something that continually tells him, Thou art weak; and that is precisely why God allows it to remain. Is the flesh sufficiently mortified in us for us to be content that Jesus should be all, and ourselves nothing, and for us to rejoice in seeing our weakness, since it is to manifest the strength of God in us?

Jesus has not forgotten any of our wants. The heart which is free from selfishness thinks only of that which love would do. Thus it is that Jesus, on the cross, does not forget His mother, but commends her to the disciple whom He loved.

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