

Letter: 38f 78 -, Plymouth, April 19th, 1845

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon reflects on the importance of trusting God's promises and the discipline found in the life of the Apostle Paul amidst trials.

Scripture: Numbers 17:8-10, Isaiah 26:3, Romans 8:28, Philippians 1:21-24, Philippians 4:11-13

Topics: "God's Promises", "Selflessness in Christ"

Description

John Nelson Darby reflects on the lessons learned from the Book of Numbers and the Epistle to the Philippians, emphasizing God's unwavering promises despite the people's complaints and failures. He highlights the significance of Aaron's rod as a symbol of grace and authority, and how God's discipline leads to a deeper understanding of His faithfulness. Darby admires the Apostle Paul's perspective on life and death, noting how his trials shaped his reliance on Christ and his commitment to the church's well-being over personal concerns. This selflessness and peace found in Christ serve as a model for believers to emulate.

Transcript

p78 [From the French.] * * * I have lately read Numbers and the Epistle to the Philippians with edification. The setting up of the rod of Aaron, priest in grace, while in authority still, after all the murmurings of the congregation; its use, although this was by Moses; the want of its use on the occasion of fresh complaints of the congregation; all this has singularly instructed me. At the same time, when God has judged and disciplined the people, the way in which He immediately speaks (chap. 15) of all His promises and of the land being theirs, as having been given them by Him, touched me very much. His promise and His thoughts for His people are as firm as if nothing had happened. The responsibility, and the food of the priests, as such, and of their families, as families, and the points of difference, I also found very instructive.

What struck me in the Epistle to the Philippians, is the way in which the apostle has his death continually before his eyes; then that the trials he had endured had acted as a wholesome discipline, causing Christ to be everything for him, and himself to be nothing. And what peace that gives! He knows not if he is to be condemned. For himself, the decision of the magistrates does not enter into his thoughts; for himself, he knows not what to choose; but for the church it is good that he should remain: it is decided then. He judges his case by the sole consideration that such a decision will be for the good of the church, and thus Christ will have it decided. Is it thus that we trust in Him, dear brother? Alas! no; at least too often we are not enough divested of ourselves; we cannot say with the apostle, "I have learned." This is what we need to

learn. Well, it is the life of this man, so faithful, so devoted, and so gifted by God, the life of the Apostle Paul, instructed and disciplined in this manner, and the perfect calm which he enjoys as the result of this discipline, which has lately edified me in reading this epistle.

Plymouth, April 19th, 1845.

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