

# Pilgrim Portions - Part 2

by John Nelson Darby

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of being in God's presence, the nature of true service, and the transformative power of His love in our lives.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:28, John 14:1

**Topics:** "God's Presence", "Communion with Christ"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the importance of being 'at home' in God's presence, contrasting the comfort found in His presence with the distress experienced when we stray from it. He encourages believers to cultivate a deep communion with God, asserting that true service and strength come from this intimate relationship. Darby warns against the dangers of self-reliance and the distractions of worldly activity, urging Christians to remain focused on Christ and His love. He highlights that understanding God's love is essential for spiritual growth and fulfillment, and that our service should flow from this love. Ultimately, he reassures that God's faithfulness and presence provide the strength and peace needed to navigate life's challenges.

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## Transcript

Twenty-First Week

It is a terrible thing . . . when God's presence, in the place of being the home of our hearts, is terror and distress. I have no doubt that you will find hundreds of Christians who, instead of feeling away from home when they have got out of God's presence, are at ease.

We are called to be "at home" with God. The Lord Jesus Christ, when about to go back to heaven, said to Mary, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." We ought to be as much "at home" in spirit there as He. Was it not with joy, with confidence, that Jesus said He was going to the presence of His Father? . . . And was it not, in a certain sense, with the feeling of going home? . . . This is the church's place; we are called to be "at home" with our God and Father -- to the blessedness of His house. No matter what the world may be, we should be there at home -- happy home! as truly there in spirit, and as happy there as Christ.

We sometimes enjoy peace, we enjoy scripture, a hymn, or prayer, without realising the presence of God; and then there is not the same power, or the same exercise of heart in it. . . . It is very important not only to have a right thought, but to have it with Him. If you search your own heart, you will find that you may sing

without realising Jesus Himself.

I find the constant tendency even of work for the Lord, and an active mind, ever is to take us out of the presence of God. . . . God present puts us in our place, and Himself in His place in our hearts; and what confidence that gives, and how self is gone in joy! Our great affair is to keep in His presence.

God would have us not only say, "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ," but add, "I am manifested to God." Be much before Him.

This getting out of God's presence is the source of all our weakness as saints, for in God's strength we can do anything.

If you have the assurance that God has intrusted you with His word, do not be troubled if you are set aside for a time. . . . Profit then by your present separation from the work to be much with Him. You will learn much inwardly in your incapacity to go forward, much of Himself.

The Lord's presence in the soul will bring self into utter ruin and nothingness.

It is touching to go through the gospels, and to get sufficiently intimate with Christ to see His motives in everything; but this is much to say, and requires to live much with Him; but this is blessing. . . . If you get to trace Him through all the path, you never get anything but perfectness.

Service

"Whose I am, and whom I serve."

Acts 27:23

Lord! let me wait for Thee alone:

My life be only this --

To serve Thee here on earth unknown,

Then share Thy heavenly bliss.

Twenty-Second Week

Love for Jesus sets one to work. I know no other way.

All true service must result from the knowledge of Himself.

The grand secret of power in these days is faith in the presence of the Spirit of God.

Living to God inwardly is the only possible means of living to Him outwardly. All outward activity not moved . . . by this . . . tends to make us do without Christ, and brings in self. . . . I dread great activity without great communion.

What need we have to cast ourselves entirely on Him (the Spirit) in the work, and how simple it is when we do this! There is one thing that gives strength and that is to keep close to Christ. . . . The pressure of the work without that . . . contracts the heart, tends to make us lose that largeness of heart, that capacity of presenting the love of God freshly to souls.

It is not that I believe in the work one will always be in that liberty which sees all in the light. It is necessary to walk by faith sometimes. Alas! the best workmen have borne witness to it; an apostle, an earthen vessel . . . placed in a contest between the Lord and the enemy of souls, will feel sometimes the shock of the battle, seeing it takes place in him and by him and the engaged forces.

Oh! for labourers who after God's heart might present Christ to souls.

A real workman, "a man of God," is a great, the greatest treasure in the world.

It is a dangerous thing to be raised all at once into a pulpit. . . . Man's acceptance is not God's approbation, although God can give it to us to favour the propagation of the truth; but if we stop at the result we are at a distance from the source, and that becomes a snare to wither up our soul, instead of a means to lead us to those upon whom we should pour out His riches.

In connection with your work . . . seek the Lord's face, and lean on Him. Work is a favour which is granted us. Be quite peaceful and happy in the sense of grace; then go and pour out that peace to souls. This is true service, from which one returns very weary it may be in body, but sustained and happy; one rests beneath God's wings, and takes up the service again till the true rest comes.

Oh! how little have we of the Spirit, to baffle the plans and devices and snares of Satan! The church ought to be not only in possession of truth but so possessed with the Spirit as, though tried, to baffle all his snares. This is what so humbles me . . . no strength or adequate power to keep every saint by the presence of His Spirit out of his power.

"If any thirst, let him come unto me and drink, and out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." You drink for yourself, you thirst for yourself, thus it is that rivers flow from us for others.

Divine Affections (1)

"God is love."

1 John 4:8

O mind divine! so must it be

That glory all belongs to God;

O love divine, that did decree

We should be part, through Jesus' blood.

Twenty-Third Week

What is deepest is simplest, that is the perfect love of God.

When once we come really to know God, we know Him as love. Then, knowing that everything comes to us from Him, though we be in a desert -- no matter where, or what the circumstances -- we interpret all by His love.

There is but one only sense in which God cannot suffice to Himself, that is, in His love; His love needs other beings besides Himself to render them happy. He will render others happy.

The law says, Love: it is a righteous demand. But the gospel, Christ Himself, says, "God so loved."

No creation, nothing that has ever been seen in this world, could be what the cross was. Creation may shew God's power, but it cannot bring out God's love and truth as the cross does; and therefore it remains everlastingly the wonderful and blessed place of learning, what could be learnt nowhere else, of all that God is.

There is so much selfishness in the heart of man that the love of God is to him an enigma, still more incomprehensible than His holiness. No one understood Jesus, because He manifested God.

The Holy Spirit makes us feel the love of the Father. He brings us into liberty by shewing us, not that we are little, but how great God is.

Where does faith see the greatest depth of man's sin and hatred of God? In the cross; and at the same glance it sees the greatest extent of God's triumphant love and mercy to man. The spear of the centurion which pierced the side of Jesus only brought out that which spoke of love and mercy.

It is indeed a sore trial to see one who is part of ourselves . . . taken off at one blow, and unexpectedly. Still, what a difference to have the Lord's love to look to. It is a consolation which changes everything. . . . The knowledge of the love of God, which is come into the place of death, has brightened with the most blessed rays all its darkness; and the darkness only serves to shew what a comfort it is to have such a light.

Christ must be all to us or we shall soon be discouraged. . . . When Christ is not everything and the Father's love the air we breathe for life we are not going right.

The Father's love, the source of all,

Sweeter than all it gives,

Shines on us now without recall,

And lasts while Jesus lives.

Jehovah chastens those He loves. . . . The word draws two conclusions from this truth. . . . It will not be without a cause in me; it will never be without love in God. Hence I am not to despise, for there is a cause in me which makes the holy God of love act so; I am not to faint, for it is His love which does it. It is correcting a son in whom his Father delights.

Divine Affections (2)

"The love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

Eph. 3:19

Love, that no suffering stayed,

We'll praise, true love divine;

Love that for us atonement made,

Love that has made us Thine.

Twenty-Fourth Week

The Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me, is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life, and all His dealings with me are on the same principles of grace. . . . How precious, how strengthening it is to know that Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love towards me as when He died on the cross for me.

His death opened the flood-gates, in order that the full tide of love might flow over poor sinners.

(1 Cor. 11:26.) Impossible to find two words, the bringing together of which has so important a meaning, the death of the Lord. How many things are comprised in that He who is called the Lord had died! What love! what purposes! what efficacy! what results!

O Jesus, Lord, who loved me like to Thee?

Fruit of Thy work, with Thee, too, there to see

Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,

Myself the prize and travail of Thy soul.

O what rest . . . for the poor soul when he sees he has to do with One who has conquered all enemies for him. . . . Before he came to the consciousness of this, the book of his daily transgressions appeared to ascend up before God, black with the catalogue of his offences, on every leaf of which was written, Sin, sin, sin; but now these blackened characters are effaced, and on each page is transcribed in letters of blood, in the blood of God's dear Lamb, Love, love, love.

That love is a sanctuary in which we walk while passing through a world of snares, the provoking of all men . . . and the more the crossing and entanglement of what is without, the sweeter the rest of His presence.

The great thing is to be near Christ, and to be constantly near Christ, where the soul is kept in peace . . . and thus in the sense of love, that our service may flow from thus dwelling with Him, and carry the stamp of it. How did Christ reveal the Father? "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." He . . . could declare Him, as in the present sense of the love of which He was the object, which He enjoyed in His bosom. He was perfect, and we are failing servants, but that is the only way of all carrying the unction of His presence.

And when the storm is all passed, the brightness for which He is preparing us will shine out unclouded, and it will be Himself. . . . And oh, how blessed the love, Jesu's love, that has brought us there for ever with Him.

Self-Renunciation

"Men shall be lovers of self."

2 Tim. 3:2 (New Translation).

O man! how hast thou proved

What in thy heart is found;

By grace divine unmoved,

By self in fetters bound.

Twenty-Fifth Week

The flesh always pens itself in, because it is selfish. When we are in the Spirit there is always unity.

Impossible when we think of ourselves to be witnesses to others of what God is!

The grief, which egotism and self-love produce, makes room for the action of the evil spirit on the soul.

Love likes to be a servant, and selfishness likes to be served.

If I get hold of the path, the spirit, the mind of Jesus, nothing could be more hateful to me than anything of self. You never find an act of self in Christ. Not merely was there no selfishness, but there was no self in Him.

When the soul is cast upon God the Lord is with the soul in the trial, and the mind is kept perfectly calm. The Spirit of love, the Spirit of Christ is there; if thinking of myself this is the spirit of selfishness.

The Holy Spirit has no fellowship with . . . self. The heart is not delivered from it until the Spirit has guided our thoughts to Jesus. . . . The effectual presence of the Spirit crucifies egotism and gives freedom of thought about ourselves . . . it occupies us with but one object -- Jesus.

We have the privilege to have done with ourselves in the house and bosom of God.

Our own will and making ourselves the centre is the spring of all our wretchedness; for outward circumstances may be trying -- may give sorrow, but not wretchedness -- where this is it is the fruit of will, restless and discontented.

Our natural tendency is to get pleasures for self. Innocent they may be but they take the heart from God; they are spoiled by sin. People ask the harm of these things. The question is, What use are you making of them, and where is your heart? The moment there is a turning from the cross (death to everything) our Lord says, "Get thee behind me."

Moses did not seek to have his face shine, nor even know when it did, but when he had been with God it did so. . . . A shining face never sees itself. The heart is occupied with Christ, and in a certain sense and measure self is gone.

Self is always alienation from God.

Self-confidence is ruin. "Be not wise in thine own eyes." They do not see far if they only see self, and that is what always is in our own eyes.

Our prayers, our praises and our services are so poor and worthless, and yet we are proud of them. We seek praise from our fellowmen for the very things we have to confess as tainted with sin before God. What need, therefore, to bare our hearts and say, "See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

## Songs of the Night

"In the night his song shall be with me."

Ps. 42:8

And oh I how deep the peace when, nature gone,

Thy Spirit fills the soul, strengthened with might,

With love divine; and God as love is known!

Lord I keep my soul, and guide my steps aright.

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Praise be for ever His who giveth songs by night.

## Twenty-Sixth Week

The most important victory has often come when we have been most afraid of being beaten; the brightest songs when an evil day has forced us to lean on God.

To me partings go dreadfully deep. In spirit all is well. . . . Jesus is the bond which no distance breaks and no nearness can give without Him, and which will, blessed be His name, last for ever.

He weans us in every way from this world, that He may attach us to that one for which He has created us anew.

God's hand is always better than man's; His seeming harshness even is better than the world's favour; the spring which guides it is always love, and love directed by perfect wisdom, which we shall understand by-and-by.

He makes His own feel that His support is worth all the trouble in the word.

The soul needs daily the comfort of the blood.

Broken vessels are often better than whole ones to shew the sufficiency and grace of Christ.

His good hand is upon us, even (and very particularly) in things that are painful. It was not worth while to give a long history of the prosperity of Job, but the Holy Spirit of God has given us details of all that took place in his difficulties. It was worth while; and it is for the profit of His own to the end of the age. It is there that the work of our God is found. May He give us to have entire confidence in Him.

Christianity was sown in the tears of the Son of God. It is the travail of His soul which He will see in that day. So in all service (and we must make up our minds to it) where there is to be real blessing there must be the sorrow of the world's opposition, and even in the church the greater sorrow of trials, of failure, and shortcoming, where we desire to see Christ fully represented.

Nature, of course, shrinks from suffering: still, when it comes, if we are with God, strength and joy are there. I have found in the little difficulties I have had much more trial in expecting trial than when it was there. When there I was calm and quiet and in no way uneasy. Whereas I was when expecting it: Out of it,

if it threatens you are thinking of it. In it, you are looking out of it to the Lord.

If the needed work can be done without the sorrow, He will not send the sorrow. . . . His love is far better than our will. Trust Him. . . . If He strikes, be assured He will give more than He takes away.

[The loss of] a mother . . . is always an immense loss . . . . No one can be a mother but a mother, but God can be everything to us, and towards us in all our cares.

The Man of Sorrows

"A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Isa. 53:3

O Lord! Thy wondrous story

My inmost soul doth move;

I ponder o'er Thy glory --

Thy lonely path of love!

But, O divine Sojourner,

'Midst man's unfathomed ill,

Love, that made Thee a mourner,

It is not man's to tell.

Twenty-Seventh Week

"Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." . . . Oh! to think of the Lord Himself, whom none of the princes of this world knew, but who was the Lord of glory, sitting weary on the well, thirsty, and dependent upon this world for a drink of water -- the world that was made by Him, and knew Him not!

He was the display, at all cost to Himself, of divine love to man.

I adore the love that led Him to be made sin for me. There was the full testing of the love that carried Him through all. It is deeply instructive, though very dreadful to see there what man is. What do I expect of my friends if I am on trial? At least that they will not forsake me. They all forsook Him, and fled! In a judge? I expect him to protect innocence. Pilate washes his hands of His blood, and gives Him over to the people! In a priest, what do I expect? That he will intercede for the ignorant and for them that are out of the way. They urge the people, who cry, "Away with him, away with him!"

Every man was the opposite of what was right, and that one Man was not only right, but in divine love He was going through it all!

His sorrows must ever be a depth into which we look over on the edge with solemn awe. . . . It exalts His grace to the soul to look into that depth, and makes one feel that none but a divine Person (and one perfect in every way) could have been there.

He looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but found none. . . . He was tested and tried to the last degree of human suffering and sorrow, standing alone in this, praying in an agony and alone . . . none to sympathise with Him; Mary of Bethany was the only one, but for the rest never one had sympathy with Him; never one that wanted it that He had not sympathy with.

None of us can fathom what it was to One who had dwelt in the bosom of the Father to find His soul as a man forsaken of Him.

In the measure in which He knew what it was to be holy, He felt what it was to be made sin before God. In the measure in which He knew the love of God, He felt what it was to be forsaken of God.

He is the resurrection and the life. Wonderful that He, such in this world, Master of death, steps then into death Himself for us!

He has purchased us too dearly to give us up.

The traits of that face, Lord,

Once marred through Thy grace, Lord,

Our joy'll be to trace

At Thy coming again.

With Thee evermore, Lord,

Our hearts will adore, Lord;

Our sorrow'll be o'er

At Thy coming again.

Love

"Love is of God."

John 4:7

God's nature, love without alloy,

Our hearts are given e'en now to share.

Twenty-Eighth Week

When love leads us, men are indeed those for whom we give ourselves; but God, He to whom we offer ourselves. (Eph. 5:2.)

It is a serious though a most happy thing to undertake direct service. . . . The mere fact of an inclination does not shew that we are called to it. I believe the surest sign is earnest love to souls, and intercourse through the need of the heart with Christ about it. . . . It is not the desire to speak, but for souls and the building up of saints which is the real moving spring of service.

How many needs, hidden even in the most degraded souls, would confess themselves . . . if a love, a goodness, which could give them confidence were presented to them. . . . How many souls are whirling in pleasure, in order to silence the moral griefs which torment them. Divine love not only answers needs, it makes them speak.

"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." . . . I beseech you . . . earnestly to maintain this spirit of love which is the presence of God. . . . For sin is separating, and God is uniting, for He is love; and this will be the healing of all things, for they are to be gathered into one in Christ. . . . Walk then in love . . . and you will walk in power, and in the glory of God.

I dread narrowness of heart more than anything for the church of Christ.

Love enables a man to meet all trials. Should one spit in his face, this makes no difference, for love abides; because it never draws its strength from circumstances, but rides above all circumstances.

Love . . . is the true means of holiness, when it is real.

"Love to all the saints" is an element of the blessing spoken of by the apostle, and even as to intelligence -- "able to comprehend with all saints"; because they are in Christ's heart, and if not in ours, He has not His place, and self has so far excluded Him.

Love, free from self, can and does think of all that concerns others and understands what will affect them.

Love does not grow weary of serving, though service may be often in trial . . . indeed, save with rare encouragement, always in the general run of it, is. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake."

How few so present their charity to God, and bring God into their charity, exercising it for and towards Him, though in behalf of man, so that they persevere nothing the less in its exercise, though the more they love the less they be loved! it is for God's sake.

The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, &c. . . . Remark that the first of these fruits are love, joy, peace. The Spirit will surely produce those practical fruits which manifest the life of Christ in the sight of men, but the inward fruits, the fruits Godward, come first, the condition of soul needful for producing the others.

The All-Sufficiency of Christ

"My grace is sufficient for thee."

2 Cor. 12:9

Lord Jesus! Source of every grace,

Glorious in light divine.

Twenty-Ninth Week

It is a blessed truth that . . . we cannot be in circumstances Christ is not sufficient for. Whether it be the church or individual saints, it is impossible to be in a place for which Christ is not sufficient.

I was noticing awhile back how perfect the words, "Rejoice in the Lord always"! -- there is the positive portion. "Be careful for nothing" then, as to all that is down here; and in laying our burdens on His throne and heart, it is peace -- for He is not troubled and knows the end from the beginning -- the peace of God keeps our hearts. What a sanctuary to have in going through!

Above all, believe ever -- "My grace is sufficient for thee." When the heart gets on Christ, all is easy: it is away from what is a snare to us.

He is always the same, sufficient for the young, and sufficient also for the old, and so full of tenderness and grace. May we be kept humble, so as to know Him, and all the resources that are in Him, and they are in Him for . . . even loneliness -- for He has felt it: "Ye shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." So you can say, "I and Christ that is with me."

The more we know of Him, the more we know He is everything.

Our wisdom is to know that we can do nothing without Jesus -- with Him everything that is according to His will. The secret of peace is to be occupied with Him for His own sake, and then we shall find peace in Him and through Him, and be more than conquerors when trouble comes.

It is a great thing to see that the power of Christ in us can set us entirely above everything.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." In practice we often contradict this truth, probing into that which is below, and only learning disappointment. But God is never disappointed when we are disappointed. He allows us to be disappointed with ourselves, in order that we may better learn our need of, and be satisfied with, Christ.

"Lead me in the way everlasting." . . . Is not this way Christ Himself, the only way, the way everlasting? . . . He (is) pleased to search out our own ways, that He may lead us therein -- to shew us that Christ must be practically to us that which He declares Himself to be in His word, "the first and the last," our "Alpha and Omega." . . . All is well that leads us "in the way everlasting," that beats us out of our own ways and brings us there, that makes us in result value Christ for the way, as well as at the outset, and the end -- Christ learnt as our portion to live upon, as well as known for the pardon of our sins.

Divine Energy

"This one thing I do."

Phil. 3:13

Thy glory, Lord -- this living waste

To us no rest can give;

Our path is on with earnest haste,

Lord, in Thy rest to live.

Thirtieth Week

The man with one object is the energetic man. The Christian's one object is Christ.

It is devotedness that . . . God will have: everywhere . . . that love for souls which seeks them out with more activity easily rows slack. . . . One may lose one's first love as to the work while continuing to work. May God kindle in us again that energy of love.

Certainly riches never entered the church of God without producing more trial and difficulty. You may see rich men giving their riches to relieve the poverty of others, and this is very blessed; but wherever the character of riches continues it enfeebles the energies of the church of God.

Where there is the energy of the Spirit, there is light, and a single eye which makes us judge that Christ is worth all, and that all else is worth nothing: and this purifies the saint's heart.

We need to be constantly renewed; without that, spiritual energy does not keep up. . . . And it is not progress in knowledge that effects that . . . what is of moment is the keeping of oneself near God. There love maintains itself and grows -- His love in our soul.

In seeking earnestly the Lord and His grace . . . power comes in to deliver and free us and make us find in Christ delight which shuts out evil and the world. Seek this, and do not be lazy in divine things.

Christ is presented in glory as One who leads us on in energy, conforming us to what He is according to glory; and . . . when the question is of nourishing the inward life . . . and character, it is the humbled Christ on whom we have to feed. This is partly the case in Philippians 2 and 3: the former the inward state and character, Christ coming down; the latter a glorified Christ, the Object after which we run.

(2 Cor. 11. 23-33.) Troubles and dangers without, incessant anxieties within, a courage that quailed before no peril, a love for poor sinners and for the assembly that nothing chilled -- these few lines sketch the picture of a life of such absolute devotedness that it touches the coldest heart; it makes us feel our selfishness, and bend the knee before Him who was the living source of the blessed apostle's devotedness, before Him whose glory inspired it.

Our souls know what it is to leave things here behind, and to find Christ excellently precious: and then some vain trifle comes in, and pulls us down, and makes us more intensely interested about the passing trifle than all the solid realities which are in Christ Jesus.

God produces desires within us that nothing but the glory can satisfy. The Holy Ghost produces the power now to enter into these things. This shews the importance of our minds dwelling there . . . . "Whatsoever is lovely" -- or "of good report, think on these things." How bright the heart would be! What growing up to the knowledge and preciousness of Christ, if accustomed to be where God dwells.

The secret of real progress is personal attachment to Himself.

Help from the Sanctuary

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

Isa. 11:31

Though thy way be long and dreary,

Eagle strength He'll still renew

Garments fresh and foot unwearied

Tell how God hath brought thee through.

Thirty-First Week

We should be in the spirit of waiting pilgrims, not weary ones.

You must not call yourself old as if you were tired. The Lord is never weary, yet the Ancient of Days; you have to renew your strength as an eagle to bear fruit in old age.

The source of real strength is in the sense of the Lord's being gracious. The natural man in us always disbelieves Christ as the only source of strength and every blessing.

His way is "in the sanctuary" if His way is "in the sea," and if we are with Him there, the sea bows to His power; but to none else that I know of . . . when He works all is soon still.

Oh, if the Lord Himself was not the workman, how hopeless would be the thought of reaching all the souls that are in need. It is a comfort then to be able to look to Him, that His eye and grace may reach them.

I have only one precious word to say to you: keep close to Jesus, you know you will find there joy, strength, and that consciousness of His love which sustains everywhere and makes everything else become nothing, there is our happiness and our life.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." . . . Human efforts shut this help out. . . . No human planning is ever right. In His own time and way, God will come in. . . . Human efforts prove want of faith and restlessness, and planning is mere flesh.

For the path where my Saviour is gone

Has led up to His Father and God --

To the place where He's now on the throne:

And His strength shall be mine on the road.

Duty ever leads into difficulty, but I have the consolation of saying, God is there, and victory certain.

Occupy yourselves with Christ that you may be refreshed and strengthened. . . . It is a great thing to pass through sorrows with Him; they are then turned to a well, and grace comes down too. Pray for the saints -- all of them -- carry the sorrows to Christ, and in your own spirit bring Christ to the sorrows.

It is a great comfort that, in looking at Christ, I not only see the thing I ought to be, but I get the thing I ought to be, "grace for grace." "We all, with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory unto glory." There is real growth there. . . . In likeness to Christ, and it ought to be growth every instant.

I generally have many things which press heavily within the range of my responsibility. But I commit them to Him who is mighty above all which this poor world can require, and to whom a burden is no burden at all. . . . He orders everything according to the counsel of His will.

Rest

"Come unto me ... and I will give you rest"

Matt. 11:28

There is rest in the Saviour's heart,

Who never turned sorrow away,

But has found, in what sin had made our part,

The place of His love's display.

Thirty-Second Week

We . . . look to our state and our fruit and our feelings to know if we are His . . . which cannot give rest, and ought not. Jesus does not say, Find out our state and you shall have rest, but "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden," as you are, "and I will give you rest." Our rest comes not from our being what He wants, but His being what we want.

It is Jesus who gives abiding rest to our souls, and not what our thoughts about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks about that which is in ourselves as its ground of rest; it receives, loves and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus, in whom is His rest.

And here we walk, as sons through grace,

A Father's love our present joy:

Sons, in the brightness of Thy face,

Find rest no sorrows can destroy.

He has not only made peace, but "My peace I give unto you." . . . What was the peace of Christ? He was here in uninterrupted intercourse with the Father -- the peace of perfect communion. Christ puts us into His place, and we have fellowship with the Father; and when we walk in that, we have this peace of Christ.

There is but one man . . . who never had a place of rest. . . . "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." And if we now have a nest, a place of rest in God, it is because for our sakes Jesus was without rest on earth.

After weariness of heart in the world -- after the Lord Jesus had gone through the world and found no place where a really broken heart could rest -- He came to shew that what could not be found for man anywhere else could be found in God. This is so blessed! that after all, the poor wearied heart, wearied with itself, with its own ways, wearied with the world and everything, can find rest in the blessedness of the bosom of the Father.

One may rest sometimes with God, as well as act with Him; for one cannot act without Him, save to trouble, even though meaning to do good.

He gives rest supreme as One who knew what peace was in trouble as none ever did.

I . . . seek to minister Christ. It is what souls want, both for quietness and forming them in His image. It is those who are not with Him who are restless.

What settled quietness of spirit it gives, to have found yourself with the Father, through the knowledge of the Son, in confidence of heart! Have your hearts got that? Are they really occupied with the Father? . . . Can our hearts say, I have found the Father in Christ?

The Faithfulness of God

"God is faithful."

1 Cor. 1:9

Oh! when -- without a cloud --

His features trace,

Whose faithful love so long

We've known in grace;

That love itself enjoy --

Which ever true

Did, in our feeble path,

Its work pursue?

Thirty-Third Week

We should . . . have faith in the faithfulness of God to keep His own.

He will not always use us in everything, but He will always do His own work, and we can or ought to trust Him for it.

Patience is often a great remedy, because there is a God who acts. . . . There are cases where we must let God alone do all.

Do not doubt His faithfulness . . . oh, how ungrateful I should be if I did not testify to His faithfulness, and to His great and sweet and precious patience with His poor servant.

Mere attacks, I feel, are never to be answered. If we have failed -- acknowledge it; if not -- leave it to the Lord.

"Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God." . . . You get as dirty in contending with a sweep as in hugging him . . . our part is to live above these things, and not to think of attacks but of souls.

When God works we look for full results.

I have constantly found that bringing things to God, if real, is the way of having them done.

His love and grace never fail. Were we alone in the world, His grace would be sufficient, and blessed be His name, perpetual company.

Paul . . . could do all things through Him who strengthened him. Sweet and precious experience! not only because it gives ability to meet all circumstances, which is of great price, but because the Lord is known, the constant, faithful, mighty friend of the heart. It is not "I can do all things," but "I can do all through him who strengtheneth me." It is a strength which continually flows from a relationship with Christ, a connection with Him maintained in the heart. Neither is it only "one can do all things." This is true; but Paul had learnt it practically. He knew what he could . . . reckon on. Christ had always been faithful to him, had brought him through so many difficulties, and through so many seasons of prosperity, that he had learnt to trust in Him, and not in circumstances. And Christ was the same ever.

(Paul's) heart rested in God; his assurance with regard to the Philippians expresses it. My God, he says, shall richly supply all your need. He does not express a wish that God may do so. He had learnt what his God was by his own experience. My God, he says, He whom I have learned to know in all the circumstances through which I have passed, shall fill you with all good things. . . . He applies his own experience of that which God was to him, and his experience of the faithfulness of Christ, to the Philippians.

May the presence of that faithful and all good Jesus sustain you and rejoice your heart.

Submission

"Take my yoke upon you."

Matt. 11:29

There is rest in the blessed yoke

That knows no will but His;

That learns from His path, and

the words He spoke,

What that loving patience is!

Thirty-Fourth Week

All power and real effective service will be found to spring from entire submission.

Circumstances would not trouble if they did not find something in us contrary to God; they would rustle by as the wind.

Until the will has been crushed in the presence of the majesty of God, there cannot be a right state before God.

There is nothing that forms the heart, breaking down the will in us, like the delight that we have in Christ in fellowship with the Father.

Whenever I act in my own will in anything, I am wronging God of His own title through the blood of Christ.

The breaking of the will is a great means of opening the understanding.

It is only when the will mixes itself up with the sorrow that there is any bitterness in it, or a pain in which Christ is not.

"So it seemed good in thy sight" was the hinge of the Lord's comfort.

Liberty of will is just slavery to the devil.

We want our hearts to get right; we want our wills broken down; if we go to look at Christ as . . . presented to us in Gethsemane, can we seek to satisfy the will now?

There is a wonderful difference between a soul . . . whose will has been broken and made subject, and one which, while seeking to do right, does it according to its own will.

If the soul walks with God, it is not hard, but it is submissive; and there is no softer spirit, nor one which is more susceptible of every feeling than submission; but then it takes the will out of the affections without destroying them, and that is very precious.

God is full of mercy and has compassion on us and on our weakness. He is tender and pitiful in His ways; but if we are determined to follow our own will, He knows how to break it. . . . The worst of all chastening is that He should leave us to follow our own ways.

He (the Lord Jesus Christ) takes the sorrows of human nature -- weariness, hunger; but with a heart that never was weary when a service of love was to be performed. . . . It is most sweet and blessed to see it, and to see He had no will of His own in it. When they tell Him, "He whom thou lovest is sick," we should have thought He would have started off at once. No, He abode two days still where He was, He had no commandment from His Father. We see it was to shew His Godhead. Still, as a servant, He had no word, and He did not stir. It seemed very hard. His home, if He had one on earth, was that house at Bethany. You never find Him going out of the place of a servant, and a never was anything but the perfection of love in it.

Satisfaction

"He satisfieth the longing soul."

Ps. 107:9

My heart is filled with bliss --

Heaven's own eternal joys:

My soul at rest --

Of peace possessed --

That world its strength employs.

Thirty-Fifth Week

God could find no rest save in Jesus. We may look throughout the world, we shall find nothing which can satisfy our hearts but Jesus.

When the heart is made full with the rich blessings of Christ, it will not turn back to gnaw upon itself.

All the things that will make me blessed in heaven I have now. . . . If you want to know what makes a Christian happy in life and death it is that the Christ he has got now is the Christ that he will have in heaven. He has got his home there, where the One he loves and knows best is already.

The fact is, your hearts are too big for the world, it cannot fill them; they are too little for Christ, for He fills heaven; yet will He fill you to overflowing.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you;" He had no, joy from the world. He had perfect joy in the Father. His joy was in bringing forth fruit to the Father's glory. He is thus shewing to us how in fruit-bearing we can have joy and blessedness down here. "That your joy might be full." That is what He wants us to have -- fulness of joy; and it is not from the world, but the kind of joy He had. It is His desire that we should have His own joy.

Every one who does not know Christ has either a disappointed heart or a heart seeking what will disappoint it.

If His love is not filling my heart, I shall go to some vanity in a shop to satisfy me: my heart will get into my business. If my spirit is wrapped up in the love of Christ, there will be rivers of water flowing out.

No testimony, no preaching, no teaching, even if the matter of it be all right, is right teaching, when the soul is not filled for itself first from God. We must drink for ourselves that rivers may flow. Indeed all else dries up the soul.

The world at once sees if God is the centre of a person. The heart is not morbid, but thoroughly happy in God; it has perfect satisfaction in Him, this is what makes such a difference in life.

"Is the wilderness before thee --

Desert lands where drought abides?

Heavenly springs shall there restore thee

Fresh from God's exhaustless tides."

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I . . . go unto the Father." Inasmuch as He has exercised love to us, He associates us with Himself, and expects us to rejoice in His happiness. What a place to give us: to be able to say, "I am happy because He is glorified;" our hearts satisfied that Christ, who has loved us and made us happy, is contented! We see Him in the glory due to Him, and we are satisfied. . . . He expects us to be glad in His happiness!

Nearness to God

"It is good for me to draw near to God."

Ps. 73:28

Oh! wondrous, infinite, divine!

Keep near, my soul, to that blest place,

Where all those heavenly glories shine

Which suit the brightness of His face!

Thirty-Sixth Week

The nearer we are to the Lord Jesus, the better we understand that he who touches His brethren "toucheth the apple of his eye."

The true effect of being near to Christ puts me into fellowship with Himself about others, instead of being under my own circumstances. How can I be turning my heart to the joys of one, and the sorrows of another, unless I am living close to Christ, and getting my heart filled with Him instead of self.

Oh! that we . . . had nearness enough to Christ to draw from Him all grace and all devotedness, and correct in ourselves whatever tends to mar the one or the other.

Activity, unless renewing itself in communion with Him, may be sincere, but will degenerate into routine . . . and is even dangerous; the soul gets far from God without knowing it.

If we live near enough to Christ we live for the church not from it. It is . . . not by what we find, but by what we bring that we can serve in Christianity. . . . Living in the good with Him, you carry it in with you into the service and circumstances of the church. . . . You must not want the support of the walking well of the church. It is the greatest comfort, but you must be for Christ whatever the church needs.

If we get near to the Lord, if we are in communion with God within the holy place, we see all the saints with His eyes, as dear to Him . . . objects of Christ's delight and the fruit of the travail of His soul; then intercession for them is easy, and faithfulness to them becomes easy and gracious too. . . . Divinely, given love for God's people on high is the spring of severity even, if needed below.

The absolutely perfect and living rule is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him all written rules are united in one solitary living example. . . . Happy is he who keeps by His side to learn how one ought to walk.

The great point is to be nearer Him in heart than even the work, and then we do the work from Him and in some measure as He would.

A time of retirement is a very good thing in our service, it puts us before God instead of our work before us, and makes us feel, too, that our work is in His hands and not our own. I remember when I used to be ill every year, I always felt if I had been near enough to God I should not have needed it.

He that is nearest to Christ will best serve Him, and there is no serving Him without it.

When one is near heaven, when Jesus is all, one place scarcely differs from another; God remains God, holy and love, and man remains man.

Backsliding and Restoration

"He restoreth my soul."

Ps. 23:3

Still sweet 'tis to discover,  
If clouds have dimmed my sight,  
When passed, eternal Lover,  
Towards me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright.  
Oh! guard my soul then, Jesus,  
Abiding still with Thee;  
And if I wander, teach me  
Soon back to Thee to flee.

Thirty-Seventh Week

Habitual faithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of not falling.

It is very disagreeable work to get to know ourselves, but very useful work. Peter is sifted, and has to learn that this confidence that he has in himself is the very occasion of his failure. . . . In the end the Lord not only restores his soul but makes him the channel of blessing to others. When you know your own utter nothingness, then you can go and help others. "Go and feed my sheep" the Lord says to Peter.

Humility before man is often the best proof of restoration before God.

Suppose my soul is out of communion, the natural heart says, I must correct the cause of this before I can come to Christ. But He is gracious; and knowing this, the way is to return to Him at once just as we are, and then humble ourselves deeply before Him. It is only in Him and from Him that we shall find that which shall restore our souls.

To be truly restored the Christian must recognise the point of departure where his soul gave up communion with God and sought its own will. . . . Communion with God is not thoroughly re-established, self and its will are not thoroughly broken, as long as the Christian has not found the point where his heart began to lose its spiritual sensibility, for the presence of God makes us feel that.

Diligence in your business is all right, but do not let it get between your soul and God. If you are not as bright with Him, and more and more so, search out why, and look to Him, for He giveth more grace.

If the sorrow gets between our souls and God so as to produce distrust, it is sin. . . . Whether from trouble, or from offending, He can restore. . . . The Psalmist does not say, I must get my soul restored, and then go to God, but "He restoreth my soul."

How often the absence of God causes His value to be felt, whose presence had not been appreciated!

The slippery path of sin is often trodden with accelerated steps, because the first sin tends to weaken in the soul the authority and power of that which alone can prevent our committing still greater sins -- that is, the word of God, as well as the consciousness of His presence, which imparts to the word all its practical

power over us.

It is of all-importance that our inner life should be kept up to the height of our outward activity, else we are near some spiritual fall.

It is surprising what a man can believe when he is left to himself, without being kept by God, when the power of the enemy is there. We talk of common sense, of reason (very precious they are), but history tells us that God alone gives them or preserves them to us.

The Light of Eternity

"The things that are seen (are) for a time, but those that are not seen eternal."

2 Cor. 4:18 (New Translation).

There all's unsullied light;

My heart lets in its rays:

And heavenly light

Makes all things bright

Seen in that blissful gaze.

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