

# *Our Pilgrimage and His Rest:*

## *Notes of Lectures*

These addresses were taken down in shorthand by one who heard them, and at his desire the author has, as far as it was possible, revised them; at the same time he did not think it well to change in any way the style or expression of extemporary address, which it is well known is so different from what is deliberately written. Many will no doubt wonder that they should ever appear in print. The author can truly say that no one could ever be as conscious as he of their feebleness and weakness; but the truth sought thus to be ministered and set forth, will, he trusts, screen from view the poor vehicle which thus carries it. If the Lord shall be pleased to help or comfort any of His own through these addresses, and give thus a fresh instance of how He can take up that which is foolish, weak, base, and despised, to His name shall be all the praise and glory.

Malvern, 1875.

W. T. T.

### *Chapter 1: Cleansing and Communion John 13*

There are two subjects, beloved brethren, that are on my heart to speak of for a little this evening, in the very order in which you find them in this scripture; not merely the moral order, but the literal order as well. The subjects are the following: first, the practical positive *cleansing* to which we must be subject in order to have part with Christ; and second, the *rest* which follows.

Now, anyone who is a careful observer of the state of the people of God at the present moment, cannot fail to observe how little positive *rest* exists among them. I do not deny for a moment that there is earnestness, activity, zeal, knowledge, and intelligence; but you may possess all these together, or any one of them, and yet be destitute of positive rest, real repose. The rarest thing, at the present instant, is to find one who is consecutively restful. Now why is it? Have you ever asked yourself the question why it is that among the saints, the contrast to all around us in this respect is so little observable? My present object is to furnish, if possible, a true answer to this question.

Now, there are two great things working at the present moment amongst professing Christians, and each of them is vying with the other to give rest. One is *activity*, earnest incessant activity; occupation of heart with that which is perfectly good and right in itself, but which does not and cannot give rest. On the contrary, beloved friends, you will find it a matter of fact, that very often the amount of the activity is in consequence of the destitute state of the soul with reference to rest. You will frequently find that a person who

has not this rest of heart and this repose of soul, is driven into activity in order to get out of self.

The other popular effort at the present moment, is a kind of -- I must say it, though with all kindness -- *bettering* of the flesh in order to give it rest. That is, to express it simply, it has been said, and widely accepted too, it has been put forth and received on every hand, by earnest Christians, true children of God, that the *surrender of your will* by the force of your will gives you rest; that the moment your will gives up your will (an absurdity it looks on the face of it), the moment that your will surrenders itself, puts itself to death, so to speak, the act of doing it gives you rest.

Now, my present earnest desire is, to state positively what I see *in scripture* as that which stands in the way of the soul having this perfect rest which I find here -- a man putting his head on the bosom of Jesus -- what that rest consists in, and what the consequences of it are.

Now I believe, beloved friends, that the first and simplest reason why there is not rest is, that the feet of saints are not washed. There is practical unfitness for communion with Christ *where He is*; because, observe this at the outset, this is the great truth set before us, I believe, in John 13. It is not primarily, though that be true in itself, that the blessed Lord removes the defilement which we contract as we go on from day to day. I believe that here there is a far deeper thing than that, namely, fitness of heart for Himself where He is -- a cleansing in order to have part with Him in glory. It is not, I repeat, the fact that He washes our feet as we go on from day to day. I do not deny that, but here is a far deeper thing, even suitability for common interest, fitness for a part with Christ where He is. This, I believe, is the great thought in John 13.

I take the liberty, without in the least pretending to be a critic or a scholar, of altering that word, which anyone knows must be an entire mistake, viz., “supper being *ended*.” There would be no sense in saying so in connection with what followed, but there is every sense in the words “supper being *come*.” Instead of carrying on the association which He had with them down here in this world, He breaks it, and shows them how He can fit them for *another* and better one; and hence the passage really reads “the supper being *come*”; as much as to say, I have had association with you heretofore on your ground, but now I will show you how I can fit and qualify you to have association and communion with Me on My ground, and in the new sphere, and in the new place, into which I am about to go.

Well, beloved friends, you see He takes the basin, and the water, and the towel, and in the conscious sense that He “came from God, and went to God” -- that was God’s side of it, and His own too -- He stoops to perform this act of service for those whom He loved, and there you get the root and spring of all His action towards them. “Having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end.” Oh, what blessed love and wondrous grace of Thyself, Lord Jesus! There was in His heart an affection, in His bosom a love for them, that could live through changing times and circumstances. How blessed it is thus to get simply at the spring of the actions of the Lord Jesus Christ! And how little out hearts really apprehend it that the motives of everything are *in Himself*! The simple fact stands out in prominence that all the motive-springs which set in action every movement of His grace towards us come simply from His own heart. This, therefore, it is which leads Him to make them as fit morally for His own presence and for communion with Himself in that new sphere that He was about to take as He Himself could make them. Nothing would suit the heart of Christ but that. Have you and I the sense of that in our souls? That nothing would suit the heart of the blessed Lord but to have us as fit for His presence as it is possible for Him to make us? Have you the sense of that in your heart and in your soul? That it was in His heart to make a poor worthless wretch like me as fit to have communion with Himself in that new place that He has gone into, as it is possible for Him to have me? It is not merely a question now of my need, of the deficiencies that are in me, but of the affections of His heart, the motive-springs of His own bosom, that He desires to have me fit for Himself there; and therefore it is that He takes this basin, and the water, and the towel, and begins “to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”

Now, beloved friends, let me ask you this: Do you know what that action of Christ is with reference to you? I am speaking of simple things tonight, and I do so purposely; I speak of what perhaps many here know well. But the oldest things are those that need to be revived most in our hearts, as these are they which, although so well known, are most likely to slip through our souls, and all the more because of the busy scene that is around us. I ask you this evening, are you con-

scious of the blessed Lord having your poor feet in His hand? Do you know what it is to be subjected to that action of the Lord Jesus, so that He removes every bit of soiling influence that could possibly unfit you for communion with Himself, in order that His heart may have a deeper joy in having communion with you, than yours in having communion with Him? Are you conscious of that? And do you submit to it? Do you submit your feet to be washed? Do you *allow* Him to wash your feet? Do you *allow* Him to gird Himself in your behalf, so that He may remove by this action of His everything that would unfit you for Himself, as well as for having communion with Himself?

Why do I put those questions? Because I believe that action of Christ’s is most *unsparing*. You will perceive, if you look at it for a moment, it is an immensely solemn thing; and that it is exactly there lies the deficiency in hearts at the present moment. I do not believe, I say it boldly now, that, as a general rule, we are subjected to the piercing, separating, penetrating, power of that word, so that every single thing that would be unfit for Christ is judged and removed. There is a passage to which I would like to refer for a moment, Heb. 4:12. It will bring out clearly what I want to impress upon you.

For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Here we have the divine record of the way in which the blessed Lord removes everything that would unfit us for communion with Himself, namely, by *the word of God*. The word of God is the water; and you will find that nearly everywhere in scripture the word of God is spoken of as water. That water is the purifying power by which everything unsuitable is removed; and when that word is brought in its living, searching efficacy to the conscience and to the soul, they are brought into the presence of God through it, and the judgment of God with reference to all that is there is brought into action through that word. I also refer to it for another reason, that you may see how entirely the Incarnate Word and the written word are placed together in those two verses. Just observe the verse again: “The word of God is quick, [living] and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword . . . Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” “His sight.” Whose sight? God’s sight! But then that which is true of God is true of His word, and the very prerogatives of God, the penetrating, searching power of the blessed God, who reads the thoughts and intents of the heart, are referred to His word. I press it solemnly this evening, beloved friends, because I do not think we have in our souls the sense of the solemnity of that word, or how it would act if allowed to bear upon our consciences; and I

doubt very much -- I say it with all respect, and with all affection -- I doubt greatly, whether the word of God has really in our hearts the place it had in the hearts of saints of God in days gone by. I grant you there is an increase of intelligence to a remarkable degree, and moreover there is an increase of earnestness, but I question as to whether the powerful place which the word of God had over souls fifty years ago, holds good to-day with those who are reaping what others sowed; and I doubt as to whether there is the apprehension of what a blessed thing it is, to submit every thought and motive, and every action of our life, to the penetrating power of that living word.

Well, I say then, if that is the case, no wonder there is not rest. If there is an absence of that water which purifies us from everything that would be unfit for the presence of Christ, I can understand how there is not rest, and I can see also the goodness of God in keeping us out from rest until there is that *fitness* for Himself by which we can *enjoy* it.

Now, when I speak of His washing our feet, let me also speak of what I do not think we sufficiently enter into, viz., not merely the removal of positive unfitness for His presence, but the *anticipation* on His part -- on the part of the blessed Lord -- of that which, if it came in and were allowed, would hinder communion. And, beloved friends, I have been struck with that lately in looking at another scripture in that light. I know we admit the fact of His *restoring* grace.

“My soul He doth restore,  
Whene'er I go astray.”

We admit that He washes our feet; but there are hundreds of instances in our history as saints of God which we should look on in a different character, and in a different light, if our hearts intelligently entered into how He *anticipates* in us the working of principles which *would* bring in moral distance between us and Him. He *anticipates* as well as *removes*. I will ask you to turn to the scripture to which I refer, namely, 2 Cor. 12,

And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.

In this, you see, distance had not actually come in between Paul and Christ. The flesh had not wrought in Paul. The flesh was present to work in him; that is, there was the *basis* on which to rest distance from Christ. There were all the materials in the man, though he had been in the third heaven, on which the flesh could work. What do you find? Why this: “Lest I *should be* exalted above measure, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.”

Now, I do not believe that occurs to our hearts with the force that it ought to have. I think we confine our thoughts to the removal of distance, when flesh *has* wrought and distance is the result, and that we do not sufficiently think of how often He prevents distance between himself and us. It would throw light, I feel assured, on many circumstances in our history -- many a path that we find ourselves in -- many a

sorrow, many a trouble, many a pressure, many a weight, many a grief, many an untoward circumstance that we had wished otherwise -- if our hearts were in the divine consciousness that there was One who had gone on high, who loves us with an eternal love, and thinks of us, and knows that there is in us a material to be worked upon, so that distance would come in, and knows exactly when to interpose. What light would shine upon us in many a dark day! Oh! what a blessed sort of love that is which not only can stoop to remove the defilement when it is there, but anticipates the working of that evil nature in me, which would introduce distance, and puts a hindrance in the way of it, and gives me the blessedness of learning what the flesh is, in communion with *God*, instead of learning it in company with *the devil*: and you must learn it in one of these two ways. If you do not learn what sort of a creature you are, in communion with *God*, as Paul did, then you will have to learn it in company with *the devil* as Peter did! How very solemn! There was then, on the apostle's part, the learning of himself, in communion with God, as you get in 2 Cor. 12; and there was the *anticipative* love of the blessed Lord. “There was given to me a *thorn* in the flesh.” Blessed Savior, watchful shepherd, unfailing friend of poor, worthless things like us, but valuable to Thee as thy Father's gift, and fruit of Thine own unchanging love!

Well, now, let me ask the question again. Do you know what it is to *be fitted* now? What have we got in our hearts as to the question of this communion with God? Do we know what communion is? I fear we know very little of what real communion is -- and it is wonderful how little it seems to affect us. If I were to ask you what you know according to scripture, of common interest, common thoughts, with Christ in glory, oh, how little we should be compelled to say our hearts know it! A person may say, “I am happy every day.” It is all quite true, but that is not John 13. It is entire fitness for His presence, so that everything that could hinder is removed, everything that could promote reserve completely put away through this washing of our feet by the blessed Lord. There is no hindrance now to my having perfect communion with Him where He is, and having the *rest* which follows it.

I believe, then, this accounts at once for the restlessness of saints -- they are not cleansed so as to have part with Christ. Their feet are not washed; there is moral distance between them and Him. Is it so with you tonight? Is there moral distance between any of your hearts and Christ? Are you conscious that there is a reserve between you and Christ tonight? Beloved friends, be assured of this, very little will produce it. The smallest thing unfit for Christ brings in moral distance between us and Him -- *the very* smallest thing! And what is so solemn is this, that I *may* withdraw my feet from His blessed hand, I *may* hinder, for the time being, His taking my feet, and so washing them, and applying His word. That is His part and not ours at all. I do not deny our side. I am speaking of Christ's side tonight. There must be on our part self-judgment, and all the rest, but I am speaking of the

blessed Lord's side. You may so withdraw your feet from His blessed hand, so thwart and hinder that action of His love, that the distance remains between you and Him, and He has to allow you to learn it in another way. What a wonderful moment it is for poor creatures like us! Oh, the grace of that Lord who stoops to wash our feet from everything unfit for Himself! What a wonderful moment, beloved friends! There is not a single thing, even the most trivial, that He does not remove; and this is the blessedness of His love, that it does not *pass over* anything. You can see the *selfishness* in us which passes over things, but His *love* overlooks nothing. Selfishness travels within its own circle; love sets itself to carry out the good of its object, and devotes itself to the good of its object; it thinks of its object for the best, and allows nothing, no, not the very smallest, to remain upon it, that would be unsuited to the affection. For what purpose? In order that it may gratify itself in having it according to itself! And oh, the joy of His heart -- how can one speak of it! -- how little one knows of it! the joy of His heart in having us *where* and *as* we can have communion with Him, and His a deeper joy than any joy of ours. Are you conscious of that? That it gives the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ greater pleasure to have you where He can have communion with you, than it ever could give you to be there with Him? It is this which is at the root of that simple action in John 13, the washing and wiping away of every soil which would not suit His presence and His heart. I press it, because I believe these are days when, with all the activity that is going on outside, and there is much of it -- there is every danger of our forgetting what is due to the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, remember that this is what His heart looks for. I feel it, I am satisfied of it in my soul, that what the heart of Christ longs for, as to testimony in connection with His people in these days, is, to find them here upon earth, not a people that are signalized by doing great things, performing exploits, but a people whom His God and Father can point to, and say, There are hearts that are proofs of the sufficiency and power of My Son to do everything for them. He is looking for specimens of the grace and power and sufficiency of Jesus, so that He can point poor, weary, desolate hearts to such, and say, "My Son can do for you what He has done for them." Have you got a divine sense within you that God has left you in this world to be specimens of what Christ is able to do for poor things like us; that He is able to take our hearts and fill them to overflowing, to fit them so as to enjoy Himself in that bright place where He is, and to be their eternal satisfaction and rest? The Lord give us grace, not to take ourselves out of His hand, but to be so perfectly before Him with this blessed word of His, searching every motive of our souls, that the full and blessed rest of it may be ours. Do not take your conscience from under the edge of His word! Do not be afraid to subject every thought of your heart and every movement of your soul to its penetrating power! Do not fear to let that word cut you through and through! Be afraid of that which would keep that word from you -- be afraid of all that would hinder you from subjecting yourself to the scrutinizing test of that word, but

never be afraid of the word of God. Never fear that love which thinks of nought else, but how it can do its best for you. That is the love of Jesus. The thoughts of His heart are set upon your blessing, His object we are, and how He may have us so that His joy might remain with us, and our joy might be full. Now, you observe, following this, and as a consequence of it, there is *rest*; because now there is nothing to hinder, the obstacle to it is taken out of the way, and there is *rest*. I take the fact in the record simply. There you find John putting his head upon the bosom of Jesus. Have you ever put your head upon the bosom of Jesus? Are you conscious that He has taken your feet and washed them, in order that you may rest on His bosom? You cannot rest on His bosom if your feet are not cleansed. If your feet are washed there is nothing to hinder your resting there. What a wonderful thing it is to lay the weary head there! And, beloved, let me say this, there is such largeness, such comprehensiveness in Christ, that there is room for every head of every saint.

Now I am not pressing the thing beyond its proper limit. This is a figure, I know, but I take the fact recorded, and use it as an illustration; and what I mean by putting your head upon the bosom of the Lord Jesus is this -- that you are brought so close to Him, so near to Him, that He is the perfect rest of your heart, and that you find your rest in being near Him. It is not what I get *from* Him, but Himself is my rest. If there was anything between you and Him, you could not have rest as long as it was there. The thing that your heart would dread, if there was anything between you and Christ, is, that when you got into His presence, there must needs be explanations. Therefore you find, beloved friends, how few there are really who can bear to be *alone* with Christ and God. You cannot bear to be alone with Him, unless everything is settled between you and Him. That is the reason why people dread being alone. It was when Jacob was left alone there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day. It was when Joseph was alone with his brethren, and no one stood by, that he made himself known unto them.

I doubt not herein is the reason why people seek relief in the ten thousand things around, in order to avoid this solitary hour with Christ or God. But when there is nothing between us and Him, we can be alone, and we can find our rest in His company. His presence, then, is the rest of our hearts. Now that is what I mean by putting your head on His bosom. Do you know what it is? How many of us here tonight can say, "I know what it is to be *near* Him?"

There are two marks of a true soul. You will find them in Luke 7. One is, I must get near him; and the other is, I must make everything of Him. But when I speak tonight of being near Him, it is being near Him *where He is*. It is not like what we have all around us. It is not bringing Christ down here to make us comfortable with the world. That is the real effect of all that is going on around. You will find that the consciences of both saints and sinners are getting relieved to go on with the world. Oh, it is not bringing Christ down to us here, into our circumstances, to make us happy in them,

but it is Christ cleansing my feet, and washing me from everything that would be unfit for the presence of God, that there may be no hindrance to my going into *Christ's* circumstances. And if your heart ever tasted the blessedness of what it is to have company with Christ where Christ is, in those wondrous circumstances of His, you could go back, and say, "I am independent of things here." The possession of the good would fortify your heart against all the counterfeits that are around you. Another reason why people are taken in, is, they have not possessed the good. If you had the good, you would know the measure of all that is against the good, and you would not desire it. No one can truly tell, or divinely know, what is false, unless he knows what is true. You must have a standard to judge it by, because there is no such thing as knowing anything in the abstract. If you do not know the truth, you cannot know the thing that is inconsistent with it, and neither are you fortified against the error; but if you have the best, you know what is bad, and you do not want it. If I possess this wonderful common interest with Christ, I am brought into His company, His presence being the rest of my soul, and my heart knowing what it is to lie down there, according to the words of Psa. 23, which do not describe any spot in this world. There are no "green pastures" here; I should like to know where they are! You must go to heaven to find such; and, as to "still waters," here there are none. Ah! no, there is no quiet amid the tumultuous storms of things here. There is neither *verdure* nor *quietness* -- nothing but unrest and unreality. But the moment my heart knows that it is in His company, because there is nothing to hinder me from being there, then I can turn my back upon the very best things of earth; and the wares of this poor world, and the counterfeits of Satan, and all his intrigues, are at once unraveled for me. Why? Because I possess the good, and the possession of the good fortifies my heart against all that is inconsistent with it, and nothing else will do.

"Then rest, my long-divided heart,  
Fixed on this blissful center, rest;  
With ashes who would grudge to part,  
When called on angels' food to feast?"

Let me point out one thing further. When you are near to Christ -- when your head is on His bosom, when you have that rest -- this necessarily flows from it, we are in the place to receive His communications. Do you know what it is to receive communications from the blessed Lord? Do you know what it is to be sufficiently abstracted from self and its surroundings, the world and its restlessness, and to be in the presence of Jesus, so that Jesus can communicate to you His thoughts? Let us look at it here for a moment, turning to v. 21.

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter, therefore, beckoned to him, that he

should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

There was confidence, and there was rest, to get the answer of confidence. Now what can be more simple or blessed than that? It was the one that was nearest to Christ to whom was accorded by the others the right of intimacy as a friend. Peter in the distance uses John's nearness, not only to quiet the doubts of their own minds, but also to get secrets from the heart of Christ. Peter knew well it was the one that was lying on Jesus' breast who would learn the secrets of His bosom -- the one to whom Christ would communicate. And, beloved friends, here is a matter of the utmost moment; He will not communicate to you in the distance. If you are at a distance from Christ, you can neither know His secrets nor hear His longings. I do not say He does not love you; but what His heart is set upon with reference to you, if you are in distance, is to bring you practically near, so that He may have the joy of communicating to you. This is ever His action. But when you are near, then He can communicate to you. He delights to do so. The others were not near enough to know the secrets of Christ. John was, and moreover he had confidence enough to say, "Lord, who is it?" and he was restful enough to hear Jesus give the answer. There was *nearness*, *confidence*, and *rest*. Do you know what these are? I am assured in my own heart, I feel that we make communications *to Him*, but how seldom we are sufficiently quiet, and near, and restful for Him to make communications *to us*. Alas! how seldom it is, and how little we seem to know how suitable to His nature it is, and how it delights His heart, to have us near Him, that He may keep nothing that is in His heart back from us. The Lord give us that quietness of soul before Him, and that rest of heart, that upturned ear, to catch the communications which His heart delights to make to those who are thus so nigh unto Him!

As we have had one instance of this, I will ask you to look at another, namely, ch. 21 of this gospel, and v. 7, "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith to Peter, It is the Lord." There is another effect of being near to Christ, beside what I have spoken of already, namely, that you are able to interpret every action, because you know the Person that does it: and you know the Person who is the author of the action so well, that you can link the action with Him.

But now, beloved friends, let me say this plainly, with reference to these two things. It is not being near Him *for that purpose*, or on account of that. It is not being near to Christ *in order* to get communications from Him, or *in order* to be able to say, "That is Christ," or "This is Christ"; it is being near Him for His own sake, no other motive in the heart; to put the head upon that bosom, the bosom of One who finds His pleasure in having it there, with no other motive than that which His person inspires.

I feel I have spoken feebly, beloved friends, far more feebly even than I feel; but the Lord give our hearts to have everything so entirely removed, to subject ourselves to Him, to allow Him to take our poor soiled feet in His blessed

hands, and to wash them by His word from everything that would unfit us morally for His presence in glory, and for communion with Himself in that bright scene into which He has entered, so that there may be nothing between us and Him, and in order that we may come simply, and put our heads where He delights to have them. Remember this, there are no favorite children in God's family. There are no *special* ones who have that place above or beyond others. Remember that it is open to all, and there is room enough for all. The bosom of Jesus, the heart of Christ, the affections of Christ, are toward all His children, and there is not a single one that is shut out from placing his or her head where John rested his. The Lord give us, beloved friends, in this day of unquiet and activity, and when it is *quantity* instead of *quality* that is in men's minds, the Lord give us to think of what would suit the heart of Christ, of what would suit the affections of Christ, and the Lord give us to rise to the dignity of our calling, and to taste the sweetness of being allowed to minister to them after our little measure, and to be kept, it may be in a solitary path and in a shady place, to be kept with this one simple thought in our soul -- my joy is to minister to the affections, and desires, and yearnings, and longings of that heart that spent itself for me!

The Lord add His blessing to His own word, supplying what is deficient, and forgiving what has been said amiss, if He sees it so, for His Son's sake.

## *Chapter 2:* *The Garden of Herbs and* *the Cared-for Land* *Psalm 84*

There are two great subjects, beloved brethren, that I desire to speak about, as the Lord may help me at this time, namely, the heavenly dwelling-place, and the earthly pilgrimage.

Now one of the peculiar features of Christianity, or rather of a Christian, is, that he combines the experiences which are connected with both of these during the term of his natural life here upon the earth; whereas with a Jew, with an Israelite, they are learned separately. That is, he had the experiences of the wilderness at one particular time in his history, and he had the experiences of the land at another. The experiences which flowed from both of these did not go on at the same moment of his natural life on earth, but they do with us. And that is the reason why it is important to have both of these in their true place; because, observe, the tendency with us all is to be narrower than the thoughts of God in everything. I believe that is the natural proclivity of our hearts, to be taken up with something *less* than God has given us. It is the case with regard to every truth, no matter which, and hence it is (if I may be allowed to say it), that we have our pet truths, and our pet doctrines; whereas, if we were really walking with God, we should have nothing less than *everything* that God has been pleased to give. We should find that all had a place, and was suited to us in our circumstances. But mark this, we would have them *in the order of importance in which they stand in His mind*. I believe it is a wonderful thing to have the truth of God

*as a whole*, and to value it as such, and at the same time to give it the order of importance in our hearts that it has in His thoughts.

Now, I will speak for a little, first of all, of what is unquestionably the lower side of the truth (if you can call one truth lower than another), and that is, the earthly pilgrimage. I repeat it, if you can call one truth lower than another; I am not sure that it is correct so to speak. But I speak of it for a moment as a truth which is certainly better grasped and better understood than the other. Now turn to Deut. 8, which brings this side of our subject prominently forward. The verses (2-5) in that chapter present the history of the pilgrimage, what I have called the earthly pilgrimage; the passage through the world, which has become a wilderness to me. The moment that I have been won over *to God* and to His truth, I am in the wilderness, and I have a pilgrimage as my journey. This is our proper history, and our proper pathway through these poor scenes. There are two things in that chapter I should like to point out to you. From v. 2 to 5, He brings out these two great facts, that the history of the wilderness was a necessary one to us, and (I say it with reverence) a necessary one to God. Now, we all own, every Christian owns, we cannot deny, that it is necessary to *us*; but I am not sure, beloved, whether we see, or have received the comfort in our hearts of seeing, that it was necessary to *God*; that it afforded Him an occasion which His heart looked and longed for, in the very circumstances in which we find ourselves in this world.

Now, with reference to *us* for a moment; there are two great things that are learned in the pilgrimage, in the wilderness, in our wilderness history, two things that are not natural to us, namely, *dependence* and *subjection*. Now dependence and subjection are two qualities that never belonged to any man naturally. On the contrary, what pertains to man in nature is *independence* and *insubjection*. These are the two great features that mark fallen man as such; they came in in the garden of Eden, they were as early as that. But when we are brought to God, and have a nature suitable to God, the features, the characteristics, the special salient qualities, of the new man, are *dependence* and *subjection*; and the circumstances through which we pass in this world are occasions whereby this subjection and dependence are tested, exercised, and brought into play, and that too by means of the difficulties, trials, and temptations of the way. Hence the blessedness of having the wilderness, and its ups and downs, and all the contingencies which happen to us as we pass along through it. If the heart is really exercised before God, and if we are walking in the power of the new man, energized by the Holy Ghost, every circumstance, every part of our history, trials, pressures, difficulties, griefs, the straits that we are brought into, afford us an opportunity for exercising dependence and subjection.

Now, allow me to call your attention to it, because it is exceedingly blessed -- these two features came out most wonderfully in the history of Him who condescended to become a man; you see them in the perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if you remember (you can look at it at your leisure), in Luke 4, (I allude to the history of the temptation in the wilderness), the very first feature which was presented by

Him to Satan in that temptation, was this, I stand fast as a *dependent* man. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." And mark this, He quotes this very Deut. 8 which we are considering tonight. I believe He does so purposely. I believe the Lord had a distinct object and a special reason in quoting from that scripture, namely, because that scripture recounts the history of Israel's wanderings through the wilderness, the purpose in God's heart being to teach them dependence and subjection. He presents the picture of it in His own Son, the perfect man. And I understand that as casting an immense light upon another scripture which sometimes presents a difficulty, namely, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matt. 2:15). What is the meaning of that? Have you ever thought of it? The meaning of that scripture, as I take it, is this, that that blessed One recommenced in His own person the moral history of Israel. Israel, as the people of God, broke down in their trial, in every circumstance in which they were placed; they failed in the wilderness, they failed in the land, and afterwards they failed in successive administrations of God. Wherever they were placed, they failed. Well, He recommences in His own person the history morally of the nation, and in every position in which they failed, He was perfect. He was perfect in the wilderness, perfectly dependent, perfectly subject, and, I need not say, perfect all through. But it is exceedingly blessed to see that God presents *in* a man One who was very man as well as very God, perfect man. He presents *in* His person the characteristic features that belong truly to a man before God. He shows them out in Jesus. You must never forget that side of it. Christ showed out in this world what God was towards man, but He was in His own person the very exemplification of what man ought to have been to God, and was not.

There was the manifestation of God to man, but there was also the expression of what a perfect man before God ought to be. And here is the very first feature of it, namely, dependence. And that is the good of straits and difficulties, beloved friends, herein is the blessedness of trial. If you are dependent, they become a matter of exercise with your heart. That is the reason why so many of the saints of God do not know what this dependence is, they have never been in a strait. I pity the person that has never been in a strait. I know it will come, beloved friends, it will surely come! I know the moment will come, because God is too true to us, and to the thoughts of His own heart about us, not to give us an opportunity of knowing the blessedness of having no one but the living God. Here is the good of it, to be brought into this position that I see none before me but the living God. And what a moment that is for each one, I have got no one but the living God! God becomes known to my soul in a way I never knew Him before, now I have tasted what it is to have my dependence exercised. I will tell you what to me it seems like. You have seen, perhaps, a mountain ash growing upon the side of the hill. The more the winds and storms blow upon that little tiny tree, feebly planted on the hillside, if it has got true, genuine roots, the deeper those roots stick. The tempest really strikes the root of that plant deeper down into the soil. That is the blessedness of it. Observe, I am speaking now of where the heart is truly exercised before God, I speak now of one who is walking with

God. The effect of straits on one who is *not* walking with God is, that the straits intervene between the soul and God, and then there is a collapse spiritually. That is the effect of it. It is exactly what is recorded in Num. 13 and 14, namely, when the children of Israel were on the point of entering the land, they got their difficulties between them and God, and what was the result? They lost the sense of subjection. "And they said one to another, Let us make us a captain, and let us return unto Egypt." They murmured and wept, and were insubject. But when the heart is really exercised, when the soul is really walking with its eye upon God, the effect of straits is, that God becomes known in a peculiar way, and there is a secret, oh, how can one speak of it! there is a secret understanding between you and God, known to none else. Did you ever know what it was to have such a secret? I believe that is what the apostle meant when he said (Phil. 4), "*My* God shall supply all your need." He does not say, "*Your* God." Why? No doubt He was the God of the Philippians just as much as of Paul, but it was because he was speaking of God as he knew Him *for himself*. It is quite true that Jesus said, "My God and your God"; but if I am speaking of God as I *know* Him for myself, I can say, There are secrets between God and me. "*My* God shall supply all your need." Now that is the good of the wilderness, that is one of the blessed effects of our pilgrimage through it, and there we find straits which exercise our dependence on the living God.

Well now, let us look at the other lesson it teaches for a moment, namely, subjection. This is blessedly presented in Christ's history as well. If you remember that magnificent Matt. 11:

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes (Matt. 11:25).

Then we have, I believe, the most wonderful utterance that you have recorded in the whole of the word of God: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." What wondrous words from His lips, the Eternal Son of the Father! Consider; what is the history of that chapter? Why, beloved friends, simply this -- everything in His outward circumstances was a complete desolation to His heart. John doubted Him, the cities where His mightiest works were done had not repented, Israel were like children, they were piped to, and did not dance; they were mourned to, and did not lament; Capernaum, exalted to heaven, should be cast down to hell. "*In that hour*"; when there was not a solitary star to light up the darkness of things around, what was it that His heart found its solace in? Was it not this? In being perfectly subject to His Father's will. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." He retreats, He retires, into the subjection, the perfect subjection, of a perfect man, and finds His satisfaction there.

And God presents all this in a man! As surely as He presented what genuine dependence was in a man, so He presents what true subjection is in a man. And think of the wonderful grace of presenting it in a man! It is not merely that we have the revelation of it as suited to God, but it was manifested in the person, ways, walk, and circumstances of that blessed One -- God manifest in the flesh. He came down

here into this world -- oh, let us never forget it -- not only to tell out to our poor hearts what was in the heart of God about us, but to manifest, both before God and men, what a perfect man ought to be before God, and in these two great features and characteristics, namely, dependence and subjection.

Now, you will note this little word in Deut. 7:

Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these *forty* years.

Think of it for a moment. It cost Israel their forty years' pilgrimage. Forty years they wandered through the wilderness, and they were not subject or dependent. Have you learned the lesson? Have not we gone, some of us, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, perhaps eighty, years, and the lesson is not learned yet! Now, observe this -- Christ *began* His history with it as a man, herein is the difference between Him and us. We require the forty, fifty, sixty, or eighty years, as the case may be, and we are not perfected in it. He *starts* with it. He commences with it, the perfect man, God over all, blessed for evermore: let not our hearts lose the sense of this, who He was that condescended to become as truly man as He was truly God, perfect in the very things that we break down in. It is blessed to get it before our hearts. I feel what a cheer it is to one's poor heart to turn away from all else, and look at Him. The distance is no doubt immeasurably great between Him and us, and hence it is an immense comfort to the heart to see that God has found in a man, His own Eternal Son, all that His heart longed for; and though we have failed to present it to God, God has had it in perfection manifested in Christ. His God and His Father found in that blessed One, in all the perfection of His path, everything that the heart of God desired to find in a man; and that blessed One, in all His perfectness, in His perfect dependence and subjection, is set before us as the pattern, the simple pattern, of what, through His grace, and by His Spirit, God would have us to be. I am not speaking now of the *power* by which it is accomplished, but of the *fact*. The Lord give us to use the wilderness for that purpose, not merely as the place where we get our difficulties met, and our trials smoothed and softened, but as the very school where God, in the infinite riches of His grace, is perfecting His own creation in us; and wondrously blessed it is to apprehend that it is His creation that God is carrying on in us, and that He can make the untoward circumstances -- the thorns, briars, griefs, pains, and pressures of the way -- accomplish His own blessed purpose in us, for His own name's sake. It is an immense thing when our hearts are imbued with the sense of it by the Spirit of God.

Having spoken of that, let me refer for a moment to another, and, to me, a more blessed object than our need of the wilderness. You remember I said that *God* wanted it. There is no question whatever about the fact that *we* need it. But then (I say it with reverence) *God* wants it -- *God* needs it. You say, What do you mean? In what sense can it be that God needs the wilderness for us? It sounds a very strange thing in our ears. I say His affections claim this wilderness as our path, that therein they may attest their reality. Do you say, how? I will tell you, beloved friends. Because it is the only place that gives Him scope to *exercise* the unchanging love and affections of His bosom. That is the reason why He wants it. When we

come to speak of it presently, I will point it out more fully; but you know that in *heaven* we shall have neither care, nor sorrow, nor tears, nor pressure, nor pain, nor trial. All these things belong to this scene, and they are necessary to the blessed God to display Himself. It is a wonderful thing to occupy thought: divine power waiting on human weakness; human misery arresting divine compassion and divine tenderness: truly, such a world is the very scope wherein God displays the tenderness and care of His heart for His poor tried saints. He draws near to them, He comforts them, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Do you not think that while the apostle Paul had a sense of the power of God, that God had a special delight, and Christ a special delight, in drawing near to him, and saying, "Fear not, Paul?" I am bold to say tonight, that if that circumstance in the apostle's history had been wanting, there would have been some other created by the blessed God, not only on Paul's account, but to show how Christ could draw near to His servant. He would not have been without an opportunity of sustaining the heart of a faithful disciple who was standing fast for Him, and suffering for His name.

That is what I mean by saying that all those circumstances give Him an occasion to come near to us. Think of it, beloved friends. But let us be clear about this point: these things are not the *spring* of His actions. God has not a motive -- let me say it decidedly tonight; there is not a motive in the heart of God that has not its spring in Himself. He does not get His motives from *us*. He finds the occasion to manifest His mercy. He finds in our misery the suited time to display the tenderness of His heart; in our sorrows He seeks to unfold His comforts; in our difficulties He displays His inscrutable wisdom, that can carry us through: but the motives are all in His own heart. What a blessed thing to know that -- that God has His affections, and in His heart the motives for everything that He does. All the springs -- every one of them -- are in God Himself; but in the circumstances in which we are placed is revealed what was in His heart already. Oh, the blessedness of this! Oh, the infinite grace that can stoop so low! Have your hearts the sense of that this evening, beloved friends? Am I speaking to any one in sorrow, or trial, or temptation? The blessed resources of God wait upon your circumstances! Oh, if our hearts could only get the sense of that! If our hearts could only get the sense that He waits upon us, and that it delights His heart to draw near to us, and to minister, not according to what we think, but according to the infinite wisdom and deep affection of His own heart, because it is His own heart that guides His hand!

This I know, I do not understand His ways always, where I might and ought, and I see this on every hand, that there is nothing which makes people practically infidels more than judging of God by His ways; multitudes in the world at the present time are caught and stung by infidelity. It is a growing monster. I know those who have lost their balance through it. They have looked at their circumstances, at the ways they were led in, and they knew enough of God not to separate their ways from Him -- that is, they did not believe in the horrible doctrine that things happen by chance; but they judged of God by His *ways* with them, and the consequence is they have lost their spiritual balance, they have made shipwreck of faith. He has not made known His ways after that fashion, but I delight

to tell you what He has made known. There is not a secret chamber of His heart that He has not manifested -- not one! I say it with reverence, yet with confidence, there is not a single chamber in the heart of the blessed God that He has not opened; the beloved Son has manifested all the Father's affections. I know His *heart*, and what a blessed thing it is for us when we can fall back on that!

As to His ways, there may be clouds and darkness about them, I may not see the end from the beginning, and God may purposely keep it from me, but if I start with this fact -- there is nothing but love in that heart, nothing but infinite goodness in that bosom, "I know it, I believe it, I say it fearlessly, that God, the highest, mightiest, for ever loveth me." Then I am measuring His ways by His heart, and not His heart by His ways. I remember hearing of a person once who objected strongly to the truth of the gospel of the grace of God, and the only way by which a sinner can be brought to God. "Well," said this cavalier, "I do not understand that everlasting preaching of blood, blood, blood. What kind of a God must yours be? I hear you always talking of blood and death. What a God must such a God be!" What answer would you give to your own heart if that thought suggested itself to you? Now, it is well that our hearts should be *furnished* with a reply. Nothing makes a man secure against all the various storms and blasts of the devil that are sweeping this poor world, except thorough settlement in the truth of God. What answer, then, would you give to such a suggestion or thought as I have referred to? I will tell you the answer that was given. It was in the shape of another question, namely, "What was the relationship between the God whom you speak of in those terms, and the Victim whose blood you thus slight? What was the relationship between the Victim and the One who provided Him?" Oh, wondrous grace! the Victim was the Son of His bosom!

"Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love!  
Thou maker of new morals to mankind!  
The grand morality is love of Thee.  
As wise as Socrates -- if such they were;  
Nor will they bate of that sublime renown --  
As wise as Socrates, might justly stand  
The definition of a modern fool."

Knowing God's love settles everything. It meets the sneer of the infidel on the one hand, and it steadies a poor feeble heart, that might be a little affected, on the other. Oh, consider it! He gave His only-begotten Son, His *own* Son, the Son of His affections, of His love, the Son that was ever in His bosom, and *is* in the bosom; and even when He was on the earth, we find it still "the only-begotten Son, who *is* in the bosom of the Father." He never left it. He was from eternity in the bosom of the Father. That Son God gave in the inscrutable, infinite, wonderful, nature of His love, to prove to you and me that He had a heart! Such is the way He proved it. He gave the object that was dearest to His own affections to prove to us that the devil had insinuated a lie into our hearts, in denying that God had any interest in His creatures. And, beloved friends, if we start with that, what a thing it is for us! Then we measure His ways by His affections. We know His love is perfect. Ah, I know well how that gilds trying circumstances. I know well, beloved friends, how that comforts the heart in days of sorrow,

in hours of difficulty, in moments of pressure. The soul can retreat into the one heart that is changeless, the unalterable, eternal, affection of the blessed God, who needs these very trials in which we are to manifest that He is everything to us that He delights to be. That is why He wants the wilderness, to show that He can come down to meet us, to sustain and comfort us here.

And, beloved friends, as I have before observed, it is not merely a question of His coming and meeting us in the circumstances where we are, but further still, there is nothing more blessed than to fall back upon a little word in Luke 12. "Your Father *knoweth*." He does not say, "Your Father will come in with help," or, "with sustenance." Both are true. But He throws their hearts upon His *knowledge*. "He *knoweth*." Is that enough for you? Is it enough for you in every circumstance that He *knows*, that your Father *knows*, that your Father has an eye that is never dim, an ear ever open, and an affection that never alters? "He *knows*." Is that blessed reality enough to keep you? Can you retire on that? "He *knows*." Wondrous blessedness it is! The Lord give our hearts, beloved friends, to get the abundant comfort and the full solace which may be reaped from our wilderness history, from the fact that it is necessary for us to be practiced in dependence and subjection on the one hand, and that it affords the blessed God an opportunity for the display of the affections of His heart to us on the other hand -- to show that He can feel for us in weakness and weariness, and that He will draw nigh to us. Who is there that can draw nigh to us in moments like these but God? Human sympathy is the expression of its own helplessness; surely I have often felt it. It is at best but the expression of its weakness; but when God draws near, how blessed! "The *Lord* stood by me," says the apostle; and in another place, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, *whose I am*, and whom I serve."

The Lord give us, by His Spirit, to taste the sweetness of these exercises as we pass along through this weary land, exercised in full dependence upon Him, and in the conscious sense that it is necessary to His heart to meet us, and to display the affections that are there!

Let us now look at the other side of the truth for a moment, that which I said was not so well understood, namely, the heavenly dwelling-place. I believe that the heavenly dwelling-place as a present thing known to the soul, is far less apprehended than the pilgrimage I have been dwelling on. I know many who understand the first, but who have not the least conception of the second. We ought to know both. The Lord give us to abound in both.

Now the exercises that I have already spoken of will be nothing to your heart if you do not know what I am going to set before you. I must ask you to turn to Deut. 11, because there you have the divine description of the land, the dwelling-place, and its character. Observe those verses for a moment in ch. 11, and you will see the contrasts (I particularly call your attention to it). He contrasts Egypt with the land. This world is to us both Egypt and the wilderness; it is Egypt in its moral character, it is the wilderness in its experimental character. Look at v. 10 for an instant. "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye

came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." What does that mean? I believe the first part of this passage points to the fact that everything you have in the wilderness has trouble connected with it. There is no such thing in this world as a day without clouds. Take, for instance, seed-sowing, or harvest; there is trouble connected with both. The farmer will tell you he has trouble with his crops in every stage and season. He has trouble before he prepares the ground, he has trouble in sowing the seed, and abundance of anxiety and care before harvest comes. It was doubly so in Egypt, because I believe what the Spirit of God alludes to when He speaks of their watering the land with their feet, is this -- that the only source from whence ancient Egypt derived its fruitfulness was the Nile. It was necessary to construct channels for the river, when it overflowed its banks, to run into and irrigate the soil. This was done with the foot. But what trouble and labor all that entailed! This, therefore, you see, is the first contrast between this scene and that blessed place of which I hope to speak more particularly. Right well many of our hearts here know what sorrow's night is. I am satisfied I am not speaking to a single saint of God within these walls this evening that is not certified in his heart that there is nothing, even the very best thing in this world, that has not trouble connected with it. I care not what it is, be it the costliest treasure your heart delights in here, trouble lies at its root. Take the relationships of life, are they not exposed to trouble, trouble, trouble? "Enlarge them," as was once said, "and you only make a wider target for death to shoot at." Ah, that is all. No matter what it is you possess in this world, the costliest jewel of your heart, the very best thing, there is no immunity in regard to it from the common lot of men in a world where death and sorrow both find their natural home. Hence, this is the first contrast. The second is like unto it, namely, that in the best thing here there is a deficiency, a lack, there is scarceness. Therefore He says (ch. 8), speaking of the land, "A land wherein thou shalt eat bread *without scarceness*, thou shalt not *lack* anything in it." First of all, then, there is trouble with reference to the best things in this world, and secondly, even the best thing is deficient. It is like John 2, the wedding feast, and the wine out! There is no such thing as absence of scarceness, it is all want here.

These are the two great contrasts, beloved brethren. Have not our hearts proved them? Now let me tell you what I regard as a mournful thing. Whilst I admit that hundreds of saints of God freely and fully own that there is trouble and sorrow and difficulty connected with the best thing here, yet they do not know that this of itself will *not* wean the heart from this scene. I see those who are left like a tree that was blasted by lightning, from its remotest stems to its very roots. I have seen those who are without a solitary green spot; there they are in that state, *but they are not satisfied elsewhere*. They are scorched by the fire of trial here, but the heart is not invigorated elsewhere. I believe that God works both ways with us. He rolls in death on us here as to our circumstances and as to our history; He makes this very scene where our hearts

would fain strike their roots, too hard for us; He makes it to be the corrective of itself. But mark this, whilst He does that on the one side, He holds out an intensely attractive object on the other; and when both these things go together, the heart weaned because it has found an object outside the place where we are, and death being upon the very best thing in it; I say both these things work blessedly, wonderfully, together. I mean that when we have an object outside this world of want and desolation, and, at the same time that we are in the desolation, our hearts are kept from looking at anything but the object outside that satisfies us. I understand the apostle to mean that when he said, "Death worketh in us, but life in you"; that is, the effect of death working in *him* here, was that there was the manifestation of life going out towards *them*. There were the two things. Never let us forget that a person may die, or have everything blasted around him for his own sake; or he may die and have everything withered for Christ's sake. There is a vast difference there. I do not believe that knowing we have everything in Christ will secure us against the blast of death here; but if our hearts are found in this heavenly dwelling-place, with an object that is ineffably precious beyond everything here, *then* God subjects us to trial here for *his* sake, for *Christ's* sake, for the *Gospel's* sake, in order that He may exhibit in us and to others, what He has done, and can do for us: and what He can be to us. This is a higher order of trial that I am speaking of, namely, that we die to *exhibit* the good of what is in heaven, in place of dying to *find out* the fading nature of everything on earth. Oh, how great is the difference! Many are obliged to die in order to *find out* the excellency of that spot where death never enters; but on the other hand, they may begin with that spot first, and come down here into this scene to display it, to be the specimen to which God can point, the canvas as it were on which He can paint the blessedness of that place, on which His eye continuously rests.

Look at this other point a moment, where He contrasts the wilderness and the land. He says (chap. 11), "The land . . . is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven." It is supplied from its own sources. It is {sic, Is it} not dependent upon anything that is here; its springs are in itself. "It drinketh water of the rain of heaven. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year." I ask you tonight, What is the spot where God's eyes are always detained? Where is it? It is not the one spot where Jesus is? I know no other place upon which His eye rests always save that. That, then, is the place He gives you and me for our home. He gives it to us to be the dwelling-place of our hearts; the land that he careth for is the spot that detains His own affections.

Now, meditate on that for a moment. Think of the blessed condition of that into which He brings us rest -- in the very sphere where *His* affections have found their perfect delight, and where *His* eye rests with eternal complacency. "The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it." Oh, beloved friends, think of what it is to taste it now in any little measure, be it ever so feeble! I grant it is very poor and feeble with us all. May the Lord, by His Spirit, awaken a desire in our hearts to taste it *now*, to taste the blessedness of living there *now*; and of living in it, not merely as a *refuge* from the storm and trials, but as a *home*; to know the joys of *home*! There is a great

difference between a shelter and a home. A shelter is not necessarily a home. You can readily perceive a *shelter* is a place into which you run and hide from the storm, but you may come out again when the storm is past. *Home* is the place where your affections are detained; and if Christ is *only a shelter* to you, you will not of necessity abide there. And hence the feebleness of presenting Christ only as a shelter. It does not secure the permanent abiding of the heart with Him; but if He is a *home*, if there are the joys of home, the delights of home, the comforts of home, the fellowship of home, the affections of home, then I say, let me tarry there, that is the dwelling-place; that is where I am furnished, where I am satisfied, where I am comforted. I have to go through this world in all its varied scenes, yet *there* is my home.

“High in the Father’s house above  
My mansion is prepared;  
There is the home, the rest I love,  
And there my bright reward.

With Him I love, in spotless white,  
In glory I shall shine;  
His blissful presence my delight,  
His love and glory mine.”

Let me give you an illustration of it. Many of you have been in the mining districts, and you have seen how and where the miners earn their daily bread. They go to their mine and work in the morning, and there they toil and labor all the day long; but their home is not down there. Their work, their exercise, is there, but not their rest. There is a quiet spot that each man has, which is consecrated in each heart, under the name of “home,” and he goes forth from thence day by day to fill his allotted niche in the labor of life; and unto that you and I are also called. We are appointed to pass through this world with all the blessed consciousness in our hearts that we *have* a home. I know it may be said, But we are going on to it; true, yet this does not in the least invalidate the other. I know we shall be there in body by-and-by; but the Lord gives us to have it in faith *now*, as the sphere where our hearts rest. It is this likewise which will impart a *character* to us. Be assured, if we walk through this present world with the blessed air of that goodly place about us, it surely imparts a *character*. A person who has found a home and rest for the heart in heaven is as easily recognized as a person who has not. Activity will not procure it for you. There is no use in deceiving ourselves about it: we may toil and labor all the day long, and be most energetic, but that does not ensure any rest for your heart. Your activity is restless, your service is restless, your work is restless. Everything that you do is colored by what you yourself are. Be assured that being in the company of Christ, makes you like Christ. The company you are in, the associations that you live in, tell themselves out in everything to which you put your hand.

If you have not the rest of *home*, and quiet of heart, you may be over-laborious and active, but it is restless. It has the stamp upon it of un-quiet and unrest. God looks at this present moment for a heart so satisfied, restful, and quiet -- because it has found an anchoring ground, a solid certainty, in the One on whom His own eye rests with ineffable delight -- He looks for those who can go forth here like the sun out of his chamber,

and like a strong man refreshed with wine to run his course.

The Lord teach us to possess that place, and to be in the company of His Christ now!

One word further, because the question may arise, and very properly, What occupies us there? That is a very important question. Is there any occupation there? Is there ought to engross, absorb the soul there? Most surely there is. May I ask you to turn to Deut. 26? I believe in that chapter the *first-fruits*, the *place* and the *priest* are all typical of Christ. Christ is the great anti-type of all these things. It is Christ then who occupies me. It is Christ who engages, Christ who absorbs, Christ who rivets my affections, Christ who commands my powers, my tongue, everything. Everything connected with that place is connected with Him, and it is upon Him that my eye adoringly rests, and it is with Him my heart is everlastingly occupied -- what blessedness! what glory!

But remember, you cannot be engaged with Him until you get there. Mark those words -- “It shall be when thou art *come in* unto the land.” Then it is you are occupied with the One who has brought you there; not with your blessing, but with the blesser -- with Himself, who has won this place for you with His affections, with His Person. When you have come in and possessed the land, and when you have dwelt in it, when it is the home of your heart, the One that has made it so to you is the one that engrosses you in it.

There is a scripture in the NT to which I would desire to refer: you remember that beautiful chapter Col. 3. In ch. 2 the Apostle throws us out of *man*, and in ch. 3 he puts us in association with the last Adam risen from the dead. You must be somewhere. You are out of man in ch. 2; you have died with Christ. If His death has thus closed all my history as connected with the first Adam, where am I? Surely in association with Christ risen. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.”

Beloved friends, it is more blessed to see that the apostle does not define what “those things” are. He does not tell you. It is the *Person* that gives them character. It is the *Person* of which they are the surroundings which makes them objects of acquisition. If you say to a heart that is set on Christ, “Christ is there,” that answers every question. It is the fact of His presence that secures everything, and explains everything for the devoted one. There is no need to go into details if it is *Christ* your heart is looking out for, because He it is who makes your heart at home amid such things.

The Lord, by His Spirit, give us to excel in both these exercises; may we know what it is to find this rest, this blessed, wonderful rest, in this heavenly dwelling-place, where, as He says, “The sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.” I take those two birds to be symbols exactly of what our poor hearts are naturally. The sparrow is a worthless bird; it is valueless because it is so plentiful. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?” says the blessed Lord. The swallow is a type of ceaseless activity and unrest; but both sparrow and swallow have found a home. Where? “Thine altars, O Lord of hosts; my King and my God.” Then mark this, “Blessed are they that  *dwell* in thy house, they will be *still* praising thee.” They are

detained, engrossed, occupied “praising thee.”

The Lord give us, beloved friends, to know these truths I have been setting forth, in their divine and proper order in our souls, and so fortify and strengthen us, that we may go forth, in the dignity of our calling, to present in this poor world, where there is not a particle of rest or quiet, a bold front in the midst of all its ceaseless unrest around us. May He give us hearts that can be undisturbed amid its storms, proofs of what being brought *into His presence* and finding a home there can do for them. He would have us be like ocean steamers, whitened it may be up to the very top of the funnel, by reason of the sea and storm, the severe weather we have encountered, but commanded so well, and guided so skillfully, that all who see us must say, That vessel has weathered all the gales: how well manned and skillfully piloted she must have been! Thus no wave can be too strong, no tempest too crushing -- thus we shall not desire one trial less, or one sorrow mitigated!

### *Chapter 3:* *A Threefold Cord* *John 14:16-31*

There are three subjects in John 14 to which I will direct my observations this evening, as the Lord may help me. It is a scripture familiar to us all, and thoroughly read and beaten out, one might say, except that it is the word of God, and that in which there is always something fresh. I shall not travel through the chapter, but just glance at three distinct facts -- blessed facts -- which the Lord brings before the hearts of His disciples in the way of comfort. The first which is not recorded in the verses which I have read, but earlier in the chapter, is the blessed truth that the earth no longer affords a resting-place for His disciples -- us, His own. Now this is a truth that we are not so familiar with as we ought to be, at least those of us who understand something, through the grace of God and by the power of His Spirit, of what God has brought out in these last times.

I feel confident I am correct in saying, that side of the truth is not nearly so well understood or known, either outwardly or in the heart, as this, namely, that we have no standing whatever in man, looked at as man in the flesh. I suppose the great majority of those listening to me this evening, however little their hearts may have really grasped the fact for themselves, nevertheless admit this truth, that the history of the first man was closed in the cross of Christ. I will explain that term, because it is well perhaps, not to use expressions that every one would not understand. There may be some here to whom such terms are new and strange. What I mean is this -- that man, looked at in his natural condition before God, was tested in a variety of ways by God himself; and the end of the testing, the result of it, was that he was entirely set aside, and that man, looked at as natural man, or man born into the world, has got no standing whatever as such before God. The moment a person is a Christian, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he stands, not now as connected with the first man at all; he is not looked at by God, God does not regard him as having any connection with the first Adam, but he is looked at

as standing entirely in a new position in Christ risen from the dead.

Now this truth, beloved friends, through God's mercy and grace, is brought out and known, however little or feeble the effect may be seen in any of us. It would have an immense power over souls if it were really felt and known in our consciences. Wondrous fact it is, that I have no standing in Adam before God, and that we have a new place altogether in Christ! “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.” You could not go back, if that truth had really possession of your soul; and that is a better way to put it than to say, “if you had a hold of it.” If it had a grasp of you, you could not go back to anything that was connected with the first Adam, without doing violence to poor conscience and the truth; and in proportion as you walked with a good conscience before God, your conscience would be kept in exercise, and would be a quick witness to you as to when and how you passed the line.

This, I believe, is where there is a grand mistake. Many of us are a great deal too anxious to get hold of truth, in place of being sufficiently quiet before God, so that it might get a hold of us. If it seizes hold of us, it is the *truth* that is operative, and not us. Now I know that is a very humbling thing. We naturally do not like it, because we all prefer *doing* something. We like to be occupied in working on the truth; but what *God* does is, He takes and places us before Him in the quietness of His presence, so as to secure for the truth simply its own effectual working by the Spirit upon our consciences. I will give you an illustration of it. When Moses went up to the mount to get the tables of testimony the second time. was he working upon anything that was up there before? Did Moses get the color of the glory by any working of his own when he was up in the mount? Moses was quiescent before Jehovah, and the glory of God both left its impress, as well as reflected itself, in Moses's face; and when he came down, the only man of the company who did not see the glory that was reflected there, was Moses himself. Everyone else saw it -- everyone else witnessed the effect of Moses being in the presence of God. I feel that this is a day, of all others, when there is immense need for that quietness of soul before God; that restfulness of heart, so as to allow the truth to form and fashion us according to itself. The moment you allow your mind to work on the truth, you bring in one of the most effectual hindrances thereto. There is all the difference between the truth of God, wielded by the Holy Ghost, producing certain effects upon our conscience and our mind working upon that truth; because, you perceive, your mind may work upon the truth, and, after all, the devil may get hold of you in a way you little think. I know how Satan might get advantage of a person through the mere fact of the outward intelligence working upon the truth, when the conscience has not been sufficiently exercised before God for the truth to work upon *it*.

The moment I accept my true place, viz., that I am outside of the first Adam altogether as to standing, and that my place is entirely in Christ risen from the dead -- as soon as ever that has a hold upon my conscience, then everything connected with me, everything concerning me, is to be ordered to suit that. There is an immense difference between trying to make things

suit us, and God fashioning us to suit Himself by the truth. He delights to have us so as to answer to the place He brings us into. It is not ours to order things so as to suit ourselves; we are brought into the most wonderful position before God that it was possible for a human heart to conceive, and God says, Now I am going to have everything about you suited to that position, and therefore everything else must go. And the more my heart is in the affections of the blessed God, the more willing they are that everything else *should* go.

Now, the other truth is not so well known by any means, either in the outward understanding or in the affections, in the conscience or in the soul; namely, not only do I not belong to the first man at all, but I do not belong to the earth. I know many people here tonight will not like that. Everyone is glad enough to say, "I do not belong to the first man, thank God; I have got a new place in Christ risen from the dead; I belong to glory, to Christ; I am in the risen One"; but the question is, Are you ready to say, "I do not belong to this earth?" I do not say the earth does not belong to you, for it never did. If it did, be good enough to produce your title-deeds to it. God never gave it to you; but there is a deeper truth -- *Christians do not belong to it*. You will find the two things in Eph. 1 and 2; you can read them at your leisure. You will perceive a Christian is out of man, out of earth. We do not belong to the first man as to standing, and we do not belong to this earth as to place. We are here in the body -- I do not deny that; but then it is an immense thing to know we have no *place* on this earth. The earth is closed to us. You have not got a place in it, any more than Christ had. Oh, how blessed, yet how solemn! Now here is the truth that falls with such immense power upon a person's heart that yearningly asks, Where is my *place*? Where is my home? Tell me where my heart is free to go in and out?

This, then, is the first thing recorded in John 14. He says to His own, I have a place for you outside this ruined earth. There is a definiteness in the words "unto myself." Is there not likewise definiteness in Col. 3? "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Is that not locality? There is a definiteness about it to a believer's heart -- it is a distinct place which He has for me, outside all the ruin and wretchedness which is around. That is the first thing -- a positive, distinct place, a mansion. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Now, mark this for a moment, how the two things run closely together -- the truth in Col. 3, and this first truth in John 14. You observe when the apostle is speaking in Colossians, after throwing them out of man in ch. 2, and showing them their new place in ch. 3, then he says, "Seek those things which are above." To give a distinctness to "those things above," in their hearts and to their affections, he puts in this little word, "*where* Christ sitteth." And, beloved friends, those three little words in Colossians are the same in scope and meaning as the precious three in John 14, "where I am." They supply everything that is necessary to a heart that is simply set on Christ. I do not desire to adopt the fanciful definitions or

descriptions I have heard about heaven. I do not believe in such things; and I am struck with the silence of scripture on this head; it is wonderful how little is said about heaven. I suppose it is natural to us all to indulge in fancies concerning it, but there is hardly anything said about it in scripture. But this is said, that we shall be where Jesus is -- it is the Person that gives character to the place. It is the blessed fact that He will have us with Himself; and the heart that has Christ for its object is satisfied to know that He is there; that is, it is His presence that gives definiteness to it -- this meets every longing affection. With Him, for He is there! Anywhere with Him!

Now I wish to point out another blessed fact. I see this, beloved friends, that, no matter where the presence of Christ is spoken of, that determines our place -- that is, His position, the position of Christ, determines ours. It is impossible for Him to be anywhere where He will not have us. Oh, wondrous glory, to be able to say that! An amazing thing it is to get such a sense of the affections of that heart that delights to have His own eternally with Himself, so that one can boldly say, He would not be satisfied if He had not us where He is! And therefore, the moment I find Christ's position, I have also found ours. "Where I am, there *ye may be* also."

Will you turn with me to another side of this very same truth in Heb. 13? It is presented to my thoughts and heart just at this moment. It will serve as an illustration of the principle I am seeking to press upon you. Verse 12: "Wherefore Jesus also," (I ask your particular attention to this scripture) "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Now observe, He tells you He has a place up there in the heavens -- *mansions* {abodes} -- the very best place conceivable, or that our hearts could possibly desire; and that it is His being there that gives character to it, and definiteness to it, and that He wants to have us there. How one's heart delights to think of that! But what do you think of this Heb. 13? Let me, beloved friends, exercise your conscience a little. May the Lord be pleased to do it through His word tonight! Have you put yourselves into Heb. 13? There is an immensity of sentimentality passing current in minds, and it is difficult, in speaking about the truth of God, to avoid treading on these sentimental thoughts that many have about heaven in these days; I desire to be both faithful and loving in all I say.

But look at Heb. 13. There is a great deal of what is plain and matter-of-fact about that.

Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

And look at the wisdom of the Spirit of God. If you stay inside, you escape the reproach; if you go outside unto Jesus, you will get the reproach. And what sweetens it? This -- that you go forth *unto Him!* It is not the bare fact that I go outside and that I protest when I get outside against everything that is inside; but I go outside (and I urge this upon you), I go outside as much from affection to Christ as from a divinely-exercised conscience. I go outside, it is true, from a divinely-exercised conscience, because I cannot stay inside, but I am attracted by a living Person outside! I look up into the heavens, and I say, Where is Jesus? Inside there. Then I go in there! Here on earth

He is outside, and I go outside! That fills up the two parts of my history. I go *inside* to enjoy and share in the delights of home; I go *outside* to keep company with the One who has made the home for me up there. Do your hearts enter into that, beloved? Does that suit you? And oh, friends, there may be a great many things which this will touch. I have no doubt it is a sword that cuts in a circle. I have no question as to that. Some of us here know *how*, and *when*, and *where* it cuts; but there is this sweetener in it -- not only the fact that He is there, but the point that presses upon my heart is, the moment that the Holy Ghost finds Jesus for you, there is your place, *if your heart is true to Him*. The moment that He shows you Jesus in the many mansions which He has for you outside this ruined earth, then your heart is at once attracted into that place, and He tells you He has them there for *you*. Well, can you not bear the break-up of things here now? the withering blasts of sorrow, the rolling waves of trial? It is this which enables one to stand before the piercing arrows of death, and they are shot everywhere this side. There is not a single spot on earth into which they do not penetrate. The insatiable archer fires his darts everywhere in this poor world, and nothing is secure against them. The sunniest region is desolated by these arrows of death. But Jesus goes up there, and says, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again." It is not only that He has it for us, it is not only that His presence prepares it -- because that is the force of the passage -- but He will come and receive, and welcome us into it.

I do not believe that the activity of Jesus is exercised in getting that place ready. It is His presence there that prepares it. The activity of Jesus in that place is about us *here* -- not in connection with the place, but the persons, His own here, upon the earth -- keeping us fit for His presence, as fit for His presence as His blood has made us -- His blood the *ground* upon which we are in His presence, and His grace the *principle* upon which we are maintained in fitness for His presence. But His presence in the place gets it ready, and then there is only one thing wanting, and that is, the Person to welcome us into it. He says, "That is the work *I* must have; I shall not only have a place prepared by being there, and I will not only keep you clean from moral distance from myself whilst you are here and I am there, but the first note of welcome into that prepared spot of my presence shall be from myself!" "If I go away, I will come again and receive you, unto myself."

You observe, it is the *person* here again. It is not "heaven," or "glory," but "unto myself." Oh, what joy in that! "That where I am, there ye may be also."

Now, beloved friends, before I pass on, let me ask you affectionately tonight, what kind of an influence does that exert over your hearts? I believe all of us live far too much in the spirit of the day; and now I will touch on that as lightly and as gently as I can, but I must touch it. I should be unfaithful to the truth of God, and to my Master, if I did not. What I mean is this, the tendency of the time in which we live is to make the best use that we can of Christ, and then forget Him! This is the spirit of the day, to get all the good out of Christ that I can, and then forget Him. It is exactly the same as that which actuated the man who was very glad to use Joseph in order to have his prisoned spirit revived by the prospect of future

prosperity and comfort, and who then forgot him. It is, I say, precisely the same. Very well, the effect of that reaches even to us, and I will show you how, namely, in this way: You will find everyone looking for *relief* -- relief for conscience, or relief for heart; for we are complex creatures. We have consciences, and we have hearts, though some appear as if they had none. A man who has only conscience, and no heart, is only half the sort of man that scripture deals with; and the man that has only a heart, and no conscience, is only half a man, looking the other side of it. The truth is, we have a conscience to be purged, and we have hearts to be satisfied. The *blood* of Christ sets our conscience at perfect liberty, the *person* of Christ satisfies the heart's affections. That is the way things are met. This is what I mean by using Christ simply for what He is worth, and then forgetting Him. You will find it even so with regard to the truth that I am speaking of tonight -- the blessed fact that He has a place for us outside this earth, and that our hearts can turn in there when the blasts of death sweep over everything here. When the storm is over, what do you do? Do you come out? That is the result, if Christ and the place where He is are nothing more than a *refuge* in the storm: you come out when the storm is past.

Now, beloved friends, what Christ says is this: namely, "I have a *home* for you." I do not deny it is a *relief*, a refuge, a shelter. It is the only bit of shade in all the withering, blasting, heat that is around; but if it has not to your heart the elements of *home* about it, the attractiveness, the joys, the blessedness, of home, in company, too, with One who is skilled in putting the heart at ease -- then I say you will come out when the storm is over. You have used Him only as a relief in the difficulty, and when it is gone by, you are found once more outside, where it met you. Now this is what is found in the world around us to-day. There is no thought of having a home with Christ *outside* this scene: people think this world an uncommonly good home, and they bring down the grace of Christ, the love of Christ, the help of Christ, and the redemption of Christ, in order to make themselves comfortable in it. This, beloved friends, is the spirit of our time.

Now the effect which God intended should follow upon the redemption of Christ, His blood, and His grace, is this -- to *unsettle* us as regards this world, but to *unsettle* us *here* by settling us *there*. If we are settled in that wondrous place where He is, because we are at home there, we are unsettled here.

Now I will try to make this plain to you by an illustration; and those who are, perhaps, more advanced in these things will bear with me while I speak to many this evening to whom these things are fresh and new. Suppose a man were to drop into this great city tonight from the antipodes: that man does not need to *make* himself a stranger here, he need not seek to *get up* the spirit of strangership, nor the temper of a stranger. That man *is* a stranger here. What makes him so? Simply that he comes from a spot where he is *at home*. There is a country where he is not a stranger, a place where his heart delights to say that he is at home, where his interests and all his belongings are; he drops into a place which is not that to him, and he is necessarily a stranger in it. The surest mark of a person not really a pilgrim is the effort to be one. You will always see people *trying* to be what they are not; but if one is genuinely

and really a pilgrim, there is no effort about it -- it is just the simple product of life and nature. There is no effort about the plant, or the herb, or the tree, as it grows in the field. All it wants is heat and light. It wants the light of the sun and the heat of the sun, and with them it grows, and asserts its nature. And it is the same here; there is no *effort* at being a pilgrim on the part of one who is such.

Beloved friends, there are two things you can never do. You can no more *acquire* the spirit of a stranger than you can fit yourself for the presence of God as a sinner. The one is just as impossible as the other. You cannot, by any possible means in your power, give your conscience a title to be in the presence of God, and you cannot *acquire* the spirit of strangership; but the moment that your heart is set at rest and at home in Christ, where He is, you are drawn out of the *current* of things here, and they *become* strange to you; they cease to be your interests or concern.

There is not one of us here tonight that would not be obliged to confess to God, if He inquired of us, how little awkward we are here in this world. It is not uncongenial to us, as it ought to be. We do not find ourselves out of gear, as it were, in it; we do not find our spirits burdened by all around, as we should if we lived on high. We do not suffer from the uncongenial nature of the atmosphere, as a plant out of its true sphere. Alas, we have become acclimatized! We have lived so much in the spirit of the things around us, that we have become hardened. Is not this the real and true state of the case? We can face this world now, because we have been under its frosts and winters so much, that we have settled down -- are we not settled? are we not *dwellers* on earth rather than *visitors*? The Lord make us rather *visitors* here, by making us *dwellers* there! If we dwell there, we visit here; and if we dwell here, we are only at best visitors there. I fear this is where most of us are. I fear the history of most of us might be so described and written.

But, beloved friends, is not this the purpose of God, that we should so *dwell* there, as to find the circle of home joys so attractive to our poor hearts, in connection with the blessed Person who makes them at home in the place which He has opened to us, that we would be only *visitors* here? and that we should *visit* here, in all the grace, blessedness, meekness, strength, and power of Christ?

And (let me say this word) you see the same spirit in the way things here are met: people try to fortify themselves in prospect of trouble. They scan the supposed trouble, they measure it, and they try to get themselves prepared. You can never do it! I never saw any try that plan yet, that they were not worsted, when the moment came. You cannot do it: why? Because He gives fresh strength for the need when it arises, according to His riches in glory. It is not *accumulative* strength. He never gives you anything *in store*. He gives everything as you want it. Oh! how wise and good He is in this. He knows well if He gave us anything in store, we should use His gifts to become independent. He keeps the thing in His own hands in infinite mercy, and He keeps our hearts dependent upon Him for the things we need. All we have to do, is, to go on with God for *to-day*: the more we have to do with Christ in that place where He is, and the more our hearts

delight themselves in the circle of home joys that are there, the more we meet the things that come up every day simply and naturally, without effort, without trying to fortify ourselves beforehand. Oh! to go on simply in the patience and quietness and joy of Christ *to-day*, and when trouble comes, to meet it in the grace and power of Christ. It is the way in which we enjoy that blessed place where Christ is that fits us for hardships here. We cannot face these troubles unless we come back from that place and thus meet them. Oh! to come back in all the *dignity*, the *ease*, the *quietness*, and the *power* of Christ, to face the things here, where we are but heavenly visitors. Oh! to dwell amongst our own people more, and from thence to be militant in an enemy's country! And remember the grace of Christ is as much *magnified* in enabling us to tide over the difficulties that are here, as it was *manifested* in giving us the place with Himself there.

This then is the first point that was on my heart in speaking of John 14. Allow me now to direct your thoughts to our side of it, and I should desire particularly to fix your minds on one verse. I want, if I can, to address your conscience for a moment; look at v. 23. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me he will keep my word." I take the liberty of changing a word here -- it is "word," not "words." The meaning of it is, he will keep my revealed counsel: further on, you find the plural, and properly so, "my sayings," that is, the actual words of Jesus: but here it is in the *singular*. "If a man love me, he will keep my word." Are you up to this test of affection for Christ? Observe, it is not *working*, it is not "If a man love me he will work." -- this great gospel day in which we live men would fain have it thus. God forbid that I should say a word detrimental in the smallest way; far be it from me to speak so, of anything that God, in His infinite sovereignty and mercy, may be pleased to use as an instrument for His purposes, -- but I must accept the word of the Lord as I find it; and the test to-day is, not how much you can do, but, Are you keeping the word of Jesus? Look at that verse again. "If a man love me, he will keep my *word*." May God write that word on your hearts tonight!

It is not the ceaseless activity that runs hither and thither, seeking for some great thing to do; there may be all that, beloved friends, and more even, which I will point out as most solemn in connection with it. There maybe zeal and labor, and yet not one single particle of genuine affection for Christ at the bottom of it! "How extreme!" people will say. "What an extreme statement!" I shall prove it. I will not ask you to take anything that I cannot prove: turn to Rev. 2, at the opening verses. This very same Jesus, who walks in the midst of the candlesticks, with penetrating eyes of fire, and who hears everything, reads everything, detects everything, judges everything -- observe what He says now, "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write . . . I know thy works, and thy labor and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted." Where could you meet to-day a condition of things that would be as favorable under eyes like a flame of fire? Search Christendom, if you please, and find it if you can.

No, beloved friends, nowhere can such be discovered.

What does He say about it? “Nevertheless,” allowing it all, giving full credit for the labor, and He mentions it first (what He can allow He names first); “I have against thee, because thou hast left thy first love!” Now that, beloved friends, we are familiar with; but I am not so sure that we take into account the solemn, most solemn, possibility of doing the works, *when the love is not there*. Did that ever occur to you? On the face of the thing, it is plain that He valued the affection a great deal more than the works; but it is immensely solemn for all of us to think how possible it is to labor so as to get like credit, even from Him, when the heart is not genuinely true to Himself. Surely it is not a small thing for us to beware lest we are doing the works, when the motive-spring of affection is absent. I take and test things as I find them about me to-day, and I take the simple word of the Lord Jesus. “If a man love me, he will keep my word.” Have you affection for Christ? I speak to you, friends, in the name of the Lord; do you love Him? Is your heart towards Him? Have you expressed your affection for Christ? Do you say, Yes, I love Him? It is a day when people tell out their feelings pretty freely. “If a man love me, he will keep my word,” and if you are not keeping His word, His counsel, His revealed will, is it not vain for you to say you love Him? You remember what Delilah said to Samson. She understood love, poor, wretched, polluted woman though she was; a miserable, guilty woman, yet she understood something of the nature of genuine affection. She said, “how canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?” “If a man love me, he will *keep* my word.”

Now, in contrast with that for one moment look at Rev. 3. When He looks at Philadelphia, there is not a word about the works except this, that *He knew them*. And I believe the reason is that *nobody else* recognized them. I am perfectly satisfied that the “works” of Philadelphia were of that nature that there was no eye that scanned them or understood their character but the eye of Jesus. “I know thy works.” No one else could. They were too insignificant, too much below the surface, too much hidden from the gaze of the world, of too different a *character*, from too different a *motive*, with too different an *object*, to be recognized by any eye but the eye of Christ. “*Know* thy works.” What else does He say? “Thou hast a little strength, and hast *kept my word*”: the same thing as “my counsel,” the very same thing as John 14. “Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” The difference between Philadelphia and the church that comes after -- though I will not speak of it now -- is that, in the one, divine power energizes human weakness; whereas, in the other, there was the power of Satan energizing man. Oh! what a wondrous thought, divine power energizing human weakness; and how immensely solemn to think of the power of the devil acting on man! Then it is most comforting to see that as you get the reward in John 14, so it is in Philadelphia.

I will speak for a moment of the reward as presented in John 14. “If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our *abode* with him.” Now this is the same thing exactly as mansion or dwelling; the Greek word is identically the same as mansion in v. 2. “We will take a *mansion* {*abode*} in his

heart.” Oh! it is a wonderful thing to say, “He has a mansion {*abode*} for me up there,” but it is a great deal more wonderful to think He will come down and take a mansion in my poor heart here! Is it no marvel to think that poor things like us can make a mansion for Jesus and the Father in our hearts? That He will condescend, in the infinite grace of His nature, whilst He waits to take us into the mansion that His heart has for us in glory, to come down and take a mansion in our poor hearts here! Oh! how little is thought of that to-day on every hand! Where are the hearts that covet His presence? Where are the hearts whose delights are that Jesus should have His mansion there? The Father and the Son coming down to make their abode in them! Who could credit a fact of such surpassing wonder, if Christ had not said it -- this poor, little volatile heart, a mansion for the Father and the Son! Oh! friends, what do you think of that? If the first subject we have been dwelling on is the best *place*, is not this the best *company*? Do you suppose one would mind being alone, if conscious of such company as that? The best company. Oh, what company! The Father and the Son! The Father and the Son doing what? Visiting? No, but *dwelling* -- positively taking a mansion in the heart of a poor creature like you and me down here; in a heart too, perhaps, in which the world, or the devil, or the flesh, once reigned triumphant. The Lord, by His Spirit, give us to be exercised, beloved friends, as to whether we really have a desire that they should take up their dwelling-place in us!

Does it give you exercise? Did it ever give you a night’s trouble, or reflection, as to how the word of Jesus is set aside? We talk of our love to Christ, of our affections for Him, of our desires for the word of Jesus; does it, I ask, grieve our hearts well nigh to breaking, to see how consistently and systematically all seek their own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ’s?

We talk of our love, of our affection -- it is a poor, wretched, miserable, polluted, selfish thing! If our hearts and minds were genuinely and really in keeping with the affections of Christ, could we take as easily as we seem, the total indifference to His desires? Would it not afflict us to see how lightly esteemed is the longing of His soul, that for which He died, “to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad,” and for which He desires “that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us?” Is that purpose and prayer of Jesus regarded or slighted by professing Christendom? “If any man love me, he will *keep* my word.”

The last thing I shall speak of in our chapter is (vv. 26-28) *the best circumstances*. We have been dwelling on the best place and the best company, and now we turn to the best circumstances. I give you the three things together, as it may help you to remember them. The best *place* in the heavens with Christ the best *company*, “outside the camp” with Him here, and His taking a dwelling-place in our hearts; and now the best *circumstances*. What are they? First of all, this *double* peace. I will only say a few words upon the peace, because I presume most here are familiar with it. The first peace is that which He made by the blood of His cross, and the second is that which He enjoyed as an obedient and dependent man, as Son with His Father. I am not speaking of Him now as the eternal Son. I am

speaking of Him as the Son of God born into this world. The first peace which He leaves, is, as I said, the peace made by the blood of His cross. The second is that which He gives us, which He had Himself, which flows from *dependence*, *subjection*, and *obedience*. One passing word upon both. Has every one here this double peace? It is not an uncommon thing to find many who have not peace. It is too common, I grieve to say, to find many amongst the professing people of God who have not peace. Now the first peace, I will tell you in simple words what that is: simply this -- that there is no enemy to show himself. That is the meaning of it. There is no enemy to lift up his head. If you see that every enemy has been disposed of, you have got the peace that Jesus made by the blood of His cross. I put it to you tonight: I speak to any one who has not got it: will you dispute this? Is there an enemy that Jesus has not disposed of? What about *sin*? "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." What about *Satan*? He "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil." What about *death*? He took the sting out of it. "O death, where is thy sting?" What about the *grave*? He has taken the victory from it. "O grave, where is thy victory?" There *is* no enemy. Well now, if your heart bows simply in the presence of the blessed One who accomplished all that upon the cross, and rests in Him, you have this peace, and with this peace no enemy can show his head *to you*.

The second peace, beloved friends, is the peace which comes from simple subjection of heart to Christ -- dependence and subjection. This peace is mine when I take His yoke upon me, and learn of Him. The "yoke" is taken up, generally speaking, for *work*; but the "yoke" is really taken up there *for rest*. "Take my yoke upon you," not to work but for rest. "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." That is to say, as soon as my heart simply takes this place of owning myself to be thoroughly and completely set aside as to all that I was in the flesh before God, and in everything else: as soon as I own myself to be what I am before God, that is, a dead man -- the *will* not in exercise: as soon as I reckon myself dead in the power of life in Christ, then it is I get the second peace: as soon as I account myself dead -- when by faith I own the fact, and keep my reckonings with God, then I get the second peace. This I believe is where people are thrown out. They do not keep their reckonings with God. There is the *reckoning* of faith, as well as the *realization* of it. If you do not reckon yourself to be dead, your will is *governing* you, and if your will is not *governed*, you cannot have the second peace; but if you keep your reckonings with God, your will is kept with the cross upon it, and you have got peace, the second peace, the peace of a dependent, subject man. That which keeps us out of dependence and subjection is this *will*, and we cannot, beloved brethren -- I say it strongly -- we cannot surrender will by force of will. Can you by your will surrender your will? Did you ever know will to abdicate? There have been sovereigns who have done so, but this never! It never has and never will! There is only one thing that disposes of us altogether, and that is the cross! I have to keep my reckonings with God; God has put an end to me; God has closed up in death all that I *was*, and it is mine simply to reckon myself "to be dead indeed unto sin."

One thing more in this John 14, in connection with the best circumstances, which is most beautiful and blessed. "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." Oh! beloved friends, how little our hearts seem really to have

entered into this! He says, as it were, I have brought you into such perfect association with myself, I have set you down in a place of such complete fulness in myself, that I reckon upon you sharing my joy. I give you to be partakers with me in my joy." What is that? To forget your own sorrow in my joy! "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." How little our hearts -- these poor selfish hearts of ours -- these wretched hearts that travel everlastingly within that narrow circle of self, self, self -- how little in His joy we are! How little absorbed we are by occupation with Christ, so as to share His joy, so as to find our joy in the fact that He has His! "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father. For my Father is greater than I."

I believe, beloved friends, these are vital truths. I have spoken of them feebly, I know. They are truths that God would keep before our hearts in days like these. I know well there is enough of energy for *service*, but is there rest enough for *communion*? I am satisfied that none can take their part in the position in which God would have His people in these last times in connection with His truth, except those who are simply restful enough to know communion with His own heart. And we cannot have communion if our heart is not at rest. If we have not rest -- rest of conscience, of course, but I mean rest of heart -- we are not free. And, I believe, as I said last week in this place, that the state in which many of God's people are found at this moment, is a fruitful one to invite the trial by their hearts of ten thousand things that are around, so as to banish if possible the dreariness that results from not having rest of heart before God.

The Lord give us, in the midst of all that is weak within as well as withering around, so to know this blessed place which Jesus has gone into to give it character to our hearts, that it may be the home of our souls at this present moment; and to know His presence as our company whilst we are here, and the circumstances which He delights to bring us into, the peace and joy which He gives, until we hear His voice, and are caught up to be with Him for ever!

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