

Our Pilgrimage and His Rest

Notes of Lectures

Chapter 3

A Threefold Cord

John 14:16-31

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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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