

The Service of Women

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the vital role of women in the church through service, good works, and the transformative power of Christ's love.

Scripture: Ephesians 6:5, 1 Timothy 5:10

Topics: "Transformation through Christ", "Service"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the vital role of women in the church, highlighting their service through acts of kindness, hospitality, and support for the afflicted, as outlined in 1 Timothy 5:10. He explains that while not everyone is called to be a teacher or hold an office, all can minister to one another in various ways, reflecting Christ's love and grace. Darby also discusses the transformative power of Christ's sacrifice, which cleanses believers and enables them to walk in righteousness, emphasizing the importance of faith and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. He encourages believers to focus on the glory of Christ, which leads to spiritual transformation and a deeper understanding of God's love. Ultimately, he calls for a life that glorifies God through service and faithfulness.

Transcript

We find that the service which would commend widows to the bounty of the church were these: "If she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." (1 Tim. 5:10) All are not qualified for teachers or church office; but all are qualified to minister to the Lord, in ministering one to another. There may be those whose ministry will be, in being given to hospitality, and distributing to the necessities of the saints: there may be others whose ministry will be in being "obedient to them that are their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." (Eph. 6:5-8.)

White as Snow

{From a booklet 'The Blood of the Lamb and Other Papers' published by C. A. Hammond.}

"But we all, with open [unveiled] face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18

Good character, useful and indeed necessary in human affairs, avails nothing with God for salvation. There is not a man that would have all he has done, thought and said, written on the wall of his house. But it is all out before God. Leave a man alone for two or three hours, and he must think of something, but he will never think of Christ. When you come to know the real condition of man's heart, Christ has no place in it. It is not Christ he loves at all. Christ came and passed through this world to carry God's love to every one. He came to sinners in their sins because they needed Him. Christ comes and shows us what we are. The law shows us what we ought to be. If the light comes in, the person is convicted, but Christ is there in perfect grace. I was under death, sin, the curse and wrath: and on the cross He came under death, sin, the curse and wrath.

When I come before the judgment-seat of Christ, whom shall I see there? The Man that put away my sins. God would have us happy, happy in a holy walk, happy with Himself; and in order that I may be happy, He has put away all my sins and made me WHITE AS SNOW. Then I can walk with God happily.

The glory is in the Person who bore my sins. I like to look at the glory now; every ray of it is the proof that my sins are gone. I look at it, think of it, delight in it, and then I am changed into the same image from glory to glory.

My heart has confidence in Him; that is faith; and I follow Him and see where He is and get practically like Him. God has proved His righteousness by taking Christ to His right hand. My sins are not only put away, but I am in Christ, made the righteousness of God in Him. I have sins, but God says: "I have righteousness for you." Don't tell me I can't know it. Why Christ says I shall. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. I believe what Christ says.

Christ is coming, and I believe the moment is hastening on. Supposing He came to-night. Well, I say, "Thank God, His first coming redeemed me. He is coming again to take me to be with Him in the same glory as Himself."

What we want to learn is the wonderfulness of this love. "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." (1 John 4:16). We shall see Him face to face whose visage was more marred than any man's. He washed me from my sins the first time He came, and He is only waiting to come and take me to Himself. Have you seen Christ in glory in this way? God Himself has interfered and made me as white as snow. Christ took the fruit of what I did, and I get the fruit of what He did. I am the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. He is my everything, and I must seek to please Him in everything I do. The more we look at Him, the more we shall see what poor weak creatures we are; but let those of us who are Christians make it our business to glorify Him in everything, remembering how He has loved us and given Himself for us.

The blessings which Characterize Christianity

{From a booklet 'The Blood of the Lamb and Other Papers' published by C. A. Hammond.}

The possession of eternal life in Christ Jesus risen and glorified, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, are blessings which characterize Christianity, and it is consequently of the utmost importance for the child of God to apprehend these truths. The two are intimately connected, as we shall see.

As to what we are by nature there is no room for doubt: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Nor will improvement or reformation gain acceptance with God, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." Even the knowledge of forgiveness of sins does not touch the root of the evil in us. Supposing the fruit of a

tree is offensive, to strip off the fruit may remove the offence for the time being but will not prevent a fresh crop appearing. Just so: many a soul truly trusting in the blood of Christ, but knowing only the forgiveness of sins, fails to enjoy settled peace. Fresh sins and daily failure trouble the soul, and there is a constant recurrence to the blood to get relief for the conscience. What then is needed, is not only forgiveness for our sins, but the judgment of our state, and a new nature given - a new life capable of enjoying God and of bringing forth fruit pleasing to God. All this we have in Christ. He has not only borne "our sins in His own body on the tree," but in His death God has condemned sin in the flesh, so that faith can say, "I am crucified with Christ"; adding also, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). This, and nothing less, is our place in virtue of the work of Christ. "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have" (not merely forgiveness of sins or even the new birth, but), "eternal life."

What is it to have eternal life? It is to have Christ. "He that hath the Son hath life." "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." Observe, it is the gift of God, and it is in His Son. It is not in our keeping, but it is secured for us in Christ. (1 John 5:11, 12). So we read, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear" (Col. 3:4). Faith believes God's record, receives Christ, and passes from death unto life; as the Lord says, "He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation" [judgment, it should be], "but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). How simple! May it be yours, dear reader, if not sure of your portion in Christ, to receive what God gives in the simplicity of faith. He has given His word for the purpose of removing every difficulty. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

2 Corinthians 4

{From a pamphlet of that name published by Morrish.}

Scripture speaks of man in his natural state in two ways. Alive in sins, as in Romans; and dead in sins, as in Ephesians. As to sins, and as having sinful lusts, man is alive enough. Plenty of activity and energy for self-pleasing, and for sin, but nothing for God. Every vanity, amusement, dress, or what not, preferred to God. For sin, he is alive: for God, dead. "Dead in trespasses and sins." It is the same condition, only looked at in different aspects, and in order for there to be deliverance from this condition two things are needed. As dead in sins, he must be quickened: it is a "new creation" that is necessary. As alive in sins, death must come in; he must die. There is no other remedy or way of deliverance before God, but death. This side of the truth we get in Romans, where the death of Christ is presented as meeting man's guilt, and death with Christ, as the deliverance from our state.

Chapter 6:2-11. When a man is dead you cannot say he has evil lusts and passions, or a will of his own. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," &c. There is no remedy for being alive in sins but death. Ephesians gives us the other side of the truth: there we are seen as "dead in trespasses and sins," and God quickens, and raises us up together with Christ. (Chap. 2) It is an entirely new creation. Colossians gives both aspects. (Chap. 2:11, 13) As alive in sins we have died with Christ, and are buried with Him, as in Romans; thus getting clear of the state we were in, for we have died out of it, and are brought into a new place in righteousness, by virtue of Christ's resurrection. As dead in sins we are quickened together with Him, as also taught in Ephesians. Thus the Epistle to the Colossians goes, as

it were, between the two. We are taken farther than in Romans; because in chapter 3 we are spoken of as being raised with Him, which Romans does not teach. But it does not present us as seated with Christ in the heavenly places, as Ephesians does. It directs us to Christ as there, and tells us to seek those things which are above, "where Christ sitteth."

Now all this, and more, was revealed to Paul, and declared by him in the gospel he preached. There was no veil on the glory of God, as in Moses' case: if hid, it was in the minds of unbelievers; the effort and work of Satan to blind men's minds to it. In verse 4, "Blinded the minds of them that believe not." This is the action of the "god of this world," and he does it by means of man's evil lusts, &c.

The gospel is "the gospel of the glory of Christ," (not the "glorious gospel of Christ," but) the revelation of His glory, who had been on the cross bearing sins, but is now glorified at God's right hand. The glory of God shines in His face, and there is no veil on this. All about God has come out: He no longer hides Himself as formerly He did; dwelling in "the thick darkness." So that if God is not seen and known, the veil is on man's heart, not on God's face. The blinding of Satan is not exactly because of the rejection of the gospel, but rather in leading man to reject it. The point is, that there is no veil now, except on the human heart, and it is in contrast with Moses, who put a veil over his face. When he came out to the people from the presence of God he put it on, because they could not bear the "glory of his countenance;" not even that little reflection of the glory of God which shone in his face. Man "came short of the glory of God;" and when only its reflection was brought before him, he could not endure it connected as it was with the law, or God's claim on him. But now the glory shines "in the face of Jesus Christ," and there is no veil upon it. Moreover there is not, nor do we need, a veil upon our face, but are like Moses, in Exodus 34:34, who had no veil on when he went in before the Lord. He turned to the Lord, and took the veil away. Israel's heart shall turn to the Lord, and then the veil shall be taken away from them. (2 Cor. 3:16.) But we do not wait for that day, but even now, "with open (or unveiled) face," behold the glory of the Lord. And not only are we free to do this, but we love to do it, for it shines in the face of Him who died for us, and put away all our sins! Every ray of it tells how completely the work was done, for, though He was once on the cross, and our sins "were laid on him," He is now in the glory, and certainly has not got our sins there. In Moses the glory connected itself with the law - requirement from man, and therefore man could not bear it; but in the gospel it shines in the face of Him who died for us. Christ has been "made sin" for us. He is now in the glory; and we, beholding with affection and intelligence the glory in Him and taking delight in it, are "changed into the same image, from glory to glory." We see this in Stephen, when being stoned. He was stedfastly looking up into heaven, and saw "the glory of God, and Jesus standing." Christ filled his vision, and see how like he is to his Lord. He is not thinking of the stones, but calmly prays the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit, as Jesus committed His spirit to His Father, and prays for His murderers, as Jesus did.

Israel "could not look to the end of that which is abolished." (Chap. 3:13.) They could not understand even the glory which was in the ordinances, as a figure of that which was better and permanent. The whole system ordained by the hand of Moses was veiled to their eyes, and the people fell under the letter that "killeth," even in that part which was a testimony of things to be spoken afterwards. Occupied with "the letter" of the covenant under which they were they did not see that all the types and shadows - the legal ordinances - pointed to One yet to come. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (Ver. 6.) "Now the Lord is that spirit" (not Spirit, ver. 17), and this they did not apprehend. The institutions under the law looked on to Christ, though even in the grace part of them there was the veil, a standing witness that God had not revealed Himself, and there was no way for man to approach His immediate presence. Under the law God did not come out, and man could not go in. The law came out, and the prophets came out; but

God Himself was hidden behind the veil. In Christ, of course, God had come out, as He says in John 12:46, "I am come a light into the world." There God had come out, but man could not yet go in. Faith could say, "We beheld his glory," but redemption must be accomplished in order to enable man to go in before God. This having now been done, we see a Man in the glory, "crowned with glory," and God's glory in His face. Now all is out: God is fully revealed, and man enters the glory. The veil is rent "from the top to the bottom." God has come out, and man is gone, and can go in.

Chapter 4:12. Paul gave out the things of the gospel as pure as he received them in. He did not corrupt the doctrine, but manifested it in all the purity and brightness in which he had received it. Not only was the glory of God fully revealed with open face in Christ, but it was also manifested without a veil in the pure preaching of the apostle. This ministry, which was the power of the Spirit of God acting in the chosen instrument, made man responsible for submission to this glorious Christ; and when Christ was thus proclaimed, there was either submission of heart, or the blinding of Satan. We cannot take this ground as to the power of our preaching - as to the subject of it we ought to be able to do so. I may preach the gospel in a place without effect, and another may come and present it with greater power, and the people be saved. Still I might, in a general way, say, If you do not receive the gospel I preach, you will be lost for ever.

In 1 Corinthians 2 we see (ver. 12) the apostle received these things in by the Spirit: verse 13, he told them out by the Spirit, so that we get them as pure as he received them, both being by the Spirit. And then (ver. 14) it is also by means of the Spirit that the things are received by those to whom they are addressed. "Comparing spiritual things," is not the thought: it should be "communicating spiritual things by spiritual means."

God has shined into our hearts, in order for there to be the "shining out" of the knowledge of His glory. This is the meaning of "give the light," in verse 6 of the chapter before us. (2 Cor. 4) It is something like lighting a candle in a lantern that the light of it may shine out through the glass; and what Paul could say was, that the light shone out as clear and pure as God had caused it to shine in. The treasure was in an earthen vessel and the only way for the light of the lamp to be seen, was by the pitcher being broken, and Paul did not mind the vessel being knocked about, and hardly pressed, so that the light shone out all the more. In chapter 1:8, he had been "pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life," but what of that? He had the sentence of death already in himself. It was realised already in his mind, and its coming outwardly only gave the consciousness of it greater vividness. He could fully say, as in this chapter, "Death worketh in us." Hence Paul as a mere man had ceased to exist in his service. He was a vessel. For the Corinthians it was only the power of life in Christ which worked in him. Their gain was in all his trouble, as he says, "but life in you."

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." (Ver. 10.) This is practically reckoning myself dead continually in order that the body may be simply a vessel through which the life of Jesus manifests itself. If the body is anything but a vessel, it is sin. When I walk as one dead with Christ, the flesh is not allowed a place. A person may even cultivate the flesh making a provision for it (Rom. 13:14), but that is bad indeed! He is a bad gardener that cultivates the weeds!

He says (ver. 11), "alway delivered unto death." (see also chap. 1:8-10.) Here the circumstances Paul was in helped him the more completely to realise himself as dead with Christ. God makes Paul realise these things by the very circumstances he has to pass through, in order that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal body. Thus death wrought in the apostle: what was merely of man and natural life

disappeared, in order that life in Christ, developing itself in him on the part of God, and by the power of God, should work in the Corinthians by his means. The flesh must be kept down, and not allowed to move or act, and when one is in earnest the Lord passes him through circumstances which help him in it. Paul learns in an honourable way, for if the circumstances were trying, they came upon him for Christ's sake. With us the Lord has often to send discipline, because we have been allowing the flesh.

"All things are for your sakes." (Ver. 15) What a wonderful thing for Paul to say! How much like his Master here, as also in what he says in 2 Timothy 2:10, and other places.

Christ in glory is my righteousness: Paul had no better, and no one had any other; and it is Him I am following after, to be with Him, and like Him. My life ought to be like a man in a long passage, going towards a bright lamp at the other end of it. I do not get the lamp till the end, but I have the light of it all the way, and the nearer I get to it, the more brightly it shines upon me, and in that sense I get more of the lamp every step I take. The nearer I get in my spirit to the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," the more I can afford to regard the trouble on every side as "light affliction," and "but for a moment." All present things become less to me, the more really I am looking at eternal things. Positive persecution I find to be less hard to bear when it actually comes, than it seems in looking forward to it. When it is before me I look at it - when I am in it, I look out of it at Christ and find relief in God. And thus we do not faint.

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