

Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S LAMPEL

Come Away

Tim Mossholder

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The Need

Where is He? Where is He in all this? And why doesn't He ride to my rescue? Why has He left me feeling this way, so dried up and cold, the callus hard, insensitive?

I raise my face skyward—isn't that where He dwells, after all?—I raise my face toward His and ask why He is satisfied with the way of things. Wouldn't He rather hold me more closely near His perfection? Is He pleased with the way of things? Is this part of His master plan?

Deep inside, the incessant unnerving ticking, ticking off the dimensions of the heart's emptiness, like an organic time bomb counting off the moments till detonation.

I peer inside, roust out all the customary demons so familiar and comfortable, yet still the ticking, and the uneasy feeling that I'm only discovering the effect, and not the cause.

There it is still, driving me mad with its cold persistence, so I root about, searching for the cause, pulling out all the standard tricks for search and seizure, but still the emptiness persists—and the ticking.

The feeling is very much like a nightmare in which one stumbles about aimlessly—never feeling quite right, always ill at ease. It is like the numbing nausea of homesickness—never quite able to shake the feeling that one is in the wrong place.

And it goes on and on and on. And always, the incessant ticking...

Where can it be? What can it be?

I look for Him in all the usual places, wondering why He doesn't show Himself. Have I become so distasteful to Him that only His back can now be turned towards me? Is it true: Does He now hate me?

Even in this agonizing state of disrepair I realize that of the two, I am the weaker. Surely my time will be better spent examining myself instead of my God. Yet the nagging persists: He's behaving differently now.

Listen to the heart. Examine the recesses of my devotion. Do I long for Him any less? Do I worship at the feet of another? Has my heart found solace in the arms of another? None of it has changed; my love for Him remains.

Have my associations changed? Perhaps the company I keep is drawing me into areas outside His bidding—into the darkness that knows not His light. Perhaps my activities are responsible for the dulling of my senses toward His ways. How much time do I spend with Him? away from Him?

Is my spirit now hardened? Have I gone out of my way to erect this insurmountable barrier between heaven and heart? Or has it happened by natural consequence, the result of influences outside my scope?

Anger rises. Why must I always be the one to put forth the effort? If I'm the weaker one in this relationship, why can't He somehow compensate for my inadequacies? Doesn't He realize that the cards are stacked against me—that I am the one dwelling in an alien domain? Why then won't He step closer, within my foreshortened reach?

The Search

The digging hurts. As with a surgeon removing his own appendix, the self-inflicted pain becomes an obstacle to locating the offending organ.

Is it new distance or an obstacle that separates us? If the latter, who put it there; if the former, who moved? The Book says "Magnify the Lord with me," but somehow He's become smaller, rather than large, and it is sometimes difficult to find Him through the fog.

They say "Spend more time at church"—but programs and services and structured instruction bring no comfort for the emptiness of my soul. Sitting next to my pew mates I feel soiled and inadequate; dressed in their Sabbath righteousness, they present a picture of spiritual health I no longer share. The preacher sounds as if he's never experienced this emptiness, and has little sympathy for the one who has. The hymns have a tinny ring, so confident in their knowledge of Him. Does He dwell here only? Have these people all the answers?

They say "Read your Bible more often"—but the cotton swath around my brain makes the sound of His printed voice muted, even unintelligible. I recognize the familiar wisdom, but it bounces off my brain, remaining static and cold upon the page. I try, and try again, but I only feel like a eunuch reading the Song of Solomon. His words travel past my eyes, as if etched into cold blue steel, and none take hold. None.

They say "Spend more time in prayer"—but the words don't come, and my tongue is layered with bur-lap. I close my eyes, I darken the room, I close the closet door and lie prostrate before my God—but

the words don't come, and the few that do bounce helplessly back upon me. The wall I have built renders me impotent.

They say "Talk to a friend"—but they either stare back at me with unblinking incomprehension, or they use too many words to explain to me why I am wrong. If I cannot explain myself to my God, I'll never be able to explain it to a friend.

I exhaust the spiritual toolbox; nothing remains except bits of broken dreams and greasy stains from past attempts. But because the longing is still there—because even in my debilitated state I can still recognize the presence of disease—I press forward, struggling to reattach the broken cord.

A Quick Fix

The nagging discomfort is proof that the God-shape inside me remains filled. There is no irretrievable loss of Him in this life. All I need do is find again the method for reestablishing the elusive connection. He has moved away, or I have moved away, or each of us have gone our separate ways. And for whatever reason He has left it to me to find the lost link, so I pray again, and I read again, and I listen patiently for Him to answer and call again to me in the stillness.

And He does. Yes, there He is; I once again hear that familiar voice. He has not abandoned me, nor I Him, and the communion is pleasant. I am restored, enveloped in His grace.

Yet it is a fragile peace. The bane of the one heaven-looking is that his feet are still earth-locked; no revival of the heart is sufficient to raise us skyward one iota. Heaven may be home, but the journey to it

has not ended.

It doesn't feel quite right—like linoleum painted to look like wood, like an automobile made of plastic.

Can the peace I find at His feet ever be permanent so long as my feet are planted atop the soil of earth? Can it be sustained so long as my hope rests in someone promised yet unseen?

Inside is the ticking beat of my God-vacuum being paced off: Filling with stale air as the tenuous reuniting with Him ticks away, slips away from my grip.

A New Search

There's something tawdry about a cheap fix with the Almighty—something that leaves a bad taste in the mouth and an acid pit in the belly. When the chasm once again widens I consider why: Why does He need more? After all, isn't the quick fix good enough for everyone else? Isn't that how we do things nowadays?

In fact, the quick fix seems to leave things worse than before—as if He's been insulted by my easy recklessness with the relationship. He thought He meant more to me than that.

He does, and I realize that my frivolous repair has hurt me, too. If I were to treat my human friends in this way, I'd find myself even more alone than I already am, for they would not be nearly so forgiving and gracious as He.

He's not to be trifled with! His boundless capacity for mercy and compassion and forgiveness does not preclude His insistence on being treated fairly and with respect. He has invested so much of Himself in me; why am I so timid about how much I will invest in

Him? Why is it I carefully measure out what I give to Him, while He throws open the gates on what He gives to me?

Perhaps my reaction to this interrupted communion has become a measuring stick for how I feel about my God. How much, and how easily, will I move in His direction? Is my tepid response the measure of how much of my life is involved with Him? Is it the true measure of how I felt about Him before? Sloppy repairs and tissue paper wrappings are perfectly suited to my world. They are all most people are willing to expend for anyone other than themselves. But the Almighty, I am learning, considers such things worse than none at all. He is a God of substantial elements.

It seems a turning point. It takes so little to reach Him, I wonder why I don't bother with the small effort more. Just my willingness to reappraise—my willingness to consider that the first effort was less than it should have been—seems to extend His willingness to forgive.

It is the God-shape in me that aches from the separation; the emptiness is felt in that compartment. When I became His, He entered that compartment and took up residence, making Himself at home. When the communion is broken, it feels as if He has stepped out.

But it only feels that way. I muster the courage to admit that, in fact, I am the one who has somehow stepped away from the relationship. I am the one who has broken communion.

The emptiness echoing in my God-shape blinds my reason, and in desperation I grasp at the easy solution—

the quick fix. Surely He understands; surely He is as impatient as I to reconnect. But His patience knows no bounds; He is content to wait for the real thing.

I must remind myself: If God has bothered to move into my life, then it is clearly an important relationship to Him—and deserves my very best efforts. I don't treat Him as I would the grocery clerk, the mailman, the person I order tickets from, the deacon, the elder, the pastor—even my best friend. My relationship with God—because of His relationship with me—is unique, and profoundly important. So the quick fix is only insulting to Him.

But, oh, when I determine to do whatever is necessary—when I determine that nothing, nothing will stand in the way of my relationship with the Almighty—when all obstacles of pride and sloth and selfishness have been removed—bless His name, He meets me more than halfway! He runs to me, eager for the renewed communion.

When I set my face to go to any length to restore the sweet communion, the God-shape in me bursts into song—a song of love and forgiveness. When I am willing to come to Him on my knees, admitting my spiritual poverty, He is quick to lift me up, quick to hold my quaking breast to His, to surround me with His healing arms.

Never a Direct Path

Only for a moment do I question the integrity of what has gone before; only for a moment do I wonder whether His response had been real.

"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" Was Job's response to his wife, when his world had

crumbled into ruin about him. The ease of my journey has little to do with the quality of my relationship to Him. If His actions are based on His character rather than mine, then just as I cannot take credit for His grace, I also cannot complain about His judgments.

If God cannot lie, and if He is incapable of being anything but true to Himself, then everything He says to me, everything He does for me, is true.

So when the sweet communion falters, I am disappointed, but I do not despair. When the world and its ways push back in, elbowing and bludgeoning their bulk between me and my God, I do not question that He remains firmly in place.

I am a traveler far from home; it is inevitable that the alien ways of the world will shoulder their way into my spirit. But it is up to me whether or not they have any influence upon my relationship with the Lord. It is up to me whether they simply disrupt, or take hold.

Back

There is a happy euphoria in approaching the throne that diminishes every other pursuit. It is returning home after a tiresome journey; it is seeing the face of a loved one after a long absence; it is catching sight of land after long months at sea.

I approach Him with solemn, yet joyful determination. He is God—but He is my God; He is Lord of heaven and earth, but He is also Lord of my heart. In Christ, He will not turn me away.

The closer I get to Him the easier it is to see His righteousness. When the communion is broken it is easy for the lies to take hold, easy for the picture of my God to become stained by the way others feel about

Him. With the communion broken, it is easier to listen to the lies.

The closer I get to Him the easier it is to see that He has never lied to me. His words have been true—constantly true. There is no malice in Him, no desire to harm or shame or demean. Everything He has told me about Himself has been true.

The closer I get to Him the more clearly I see His radiance. As if peering through a dense fog, with the communion broken His brilliance is diminished by my filtered perception. Others may masquerade in light, but His light is true; others may shield my view of Him with their own false brilliance, but His light will shine through.

The closer I get to Him the more easily I shed those things that have kept me from His presence. They drop away like scales from my eyes: anger, regret, self-delusion, pride, sloth, selfishness—and, worst of all, the corrosive illusion that I know more than He.

Communion

Our God is constant; His qualities never change. No matter what changes around Him, He faithfully behaves and acts according to who He is. His righteousness and light flow steadily out toward His people.

But sometimes the communion is lost. Breaks occur, weak points develop. The world's fog envelops us and clouds our clear vision of the throne.

When that happens—and it will—it is important for us to remember that our God is not the one who has severed the connection. There is nothing in Him that would cause Him to break communion with His people, His children.

Through Christ we belong to Him, and through Christ we have the privilege to approach His throne with confidence. His mercy and boundless love never cease; they remain freely available to all those who come to Him.

When we are ready to do whatever is necessary to restore that lost communion, our God stands ready to

Come, Thou my Light, that I may see
Thy truth divine, Thy love so free.
Dispel the clouds of doubt and sin,
And let the face of God shine in.

Come, Thou my Life, that I may be
Made one in living faith with Thee.
Renew my will and make it Thine,
Thou living Source of life divine.

Come, Thou my Guide, that I may know
The way my seeking soul should go;
And never from Thee let me stray,
Thyself the Life, the Truth, the Way.

Come, Thou my King, and I will make
My heart a shrine for Thy dear sake;
Until this earthly life of mine
Shall be forever wholly Thine. Amen.
Hugh T. Kerr

Callus

cal-lus (kal' uhs) n. [L., var. of callum, hard skin] a hardened, thickened place on the skin.

TWENTY YEARS of living in Southern California—San Diego, to be precise—were sufficient to develop a rather thick defense mechanism against that overpopulated, clamorous, claustrophobic community. One was obliged either to embrace the culture with unbridled enthusiasm, becoming a true believer and lifestyle advocate, or to develop a protective callus against such things as gridlock traffic; your house stacked in such close proximity to the next, that one could reach over to answer the neighbor's ringing telephone; and obnoxious manners on the freeway, in the line at DMV, and in the checkout of the local grocery.

Twenty-eight years of living in the tranquility of the Midwest countryside have been sufficient to remove that hardened crust. Linda and I now choose to live where callus is not necessary: where the sounds are not of bickering humans, but

of chattering birds and squirrels; where screeching tires have been replaced by snorting deer and birdsong; where the rain is not laced with exhaust fumes.

Oh, to be sure, we have paid a price for our decision. We now are more vulnerable whenever we are out in public. Since there are still some things that must be acquired with hard cash in a store—a store often located in the diminutive metropolis of Des Moines—these moments suffered without benefit of a layer of callus can be trying, painful, even panic-inducing. Even while still within the boundaries of our land, the sound of the occasional stray voice from our closest neighbor (almost a mile away) that wafts near upon a northern breeze on a quiet day, seems alien—even unnaturally amplified and strange.

Yet even with these liabilities, the decision to live here was right for us, since flesh removed of callus can also be flesh softened to the

things of God. The built-up callus that permits one to live in populated society today is the same hardened crust that often deadens the touch of God upon one's soul.

Satan's Roar

The adversary is noisy.

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8

The roar of Satan is most often heard in the clattering cacophony of modern "civilization." He gives full voice to anything that might interrupt our communion with God. Believe it, Satan and his minions are hard at work, night and day, to drown out with noise the quiet voice of God. From the blare of the thunderous Dolby 5.1 Surround home theatre to the persistently demanding and ubiq-

uitous smart phone; from the whining traffic of the freeway to the pre-worship nattering in the pews; from the sounds of commerce to the roar of construction we are bombarded by Satan's noise. To be sure, none of these things are inherently satanic. But they are convenient, earth-bound implements put to use by supernatural evil. And all mean to insulate us from God's voice.

The abiding Spirit enters us at the moment of conversion and immediately begins the softening process. He begins to work on whatever callus is there that might insulate us from communion with the Father. He systematically chips away at our anger, impatience, self-centeredness and greed, softening the heart as He steadily shapes and molds us into Christ's image. But because we still live in the world, because we must survive in a land that hates what we now represent, we keep replacing the callus the Spirit has removed.

It is a risky business, letting one's callus soften. The world today is better suited to those wearing a tough suit of armor, and it can be a brutal environment for someone more tuned to the lilt of God's voice on an evening breeze. But when

He speaks in the wind rustling the trees, when the crickets and cicadas sing His praise in the heavy summer dusk, He expects us to listen.

And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

1 Kings 19:11-13

The Stillness

Our God has many voices, and He has the right to use any of his choosing. Since with His voice alone He created the universe, that same voice can break rocks or drive fierce gales. More often than not, however, He speaks in the qui-

etness, the softly-spoken language of the spirit and heart. God need not shout; *real* power speaks softly. So when we wish to hear what He has to say, it is best to come away from the din of this world, to a quiet place of hushed reverence.

More than the quiet nature of the locale, it is our own heart that must be softened and still for this holy communion. We begin the conversation by permitting the resident Spirit to take charge, to break through our built-up callus so that there might be a free-flowing exchange with the Father. Save for the sanctifying blood of Christ, we need nothing to stand between us, nothing to insulate us from His wrath. For He has no wrath for the believer, only compassion, affection, and grace.

Thus prepared, we step out of the abusive noise of the world and into the stillness of God's presence. There not only are we comforted, forgiven, and renewed, we are energized and equipped to reenter the world for Him.

Sweet Privilege

The believer enjoys a sweet privilege of knowing God intimately. It is the privilege forfeited by our parents, Adam and

Eve, in the garden. They chose a passing earthly delight over the undying delight of communion with the Lord.

As believers, every day we are given the opportunity to make a similar (if not so cosmic) choice. We can embrace the things of this world, thus building up our callus and insulating ourselves from God. Or we can dare to remove the hardened callus, letting the Spirit soften our heart to the things of God.

When, in the morning stillness He moves, and the world falls silent in anticipation before Him, God seeks those who have dared to remove their protective shell, those who have opened themselves completely to His tender touch.

Having found in many books different methods of going to God, and divers practices of the spiritual life, I thought this would serve rather to puzzle me, than facilitate what I sought after, which was nothing but how to become wholly God's. This made me resolve to give the all for the All: so after having given myself wholly to God, to make all the satisfaction I could for my sins, I renounced, for the love of Him, everything that was not He; and I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the world. Sometimes I considered myself before Him as a poor criminal at the feet of his judge; at other times I beheld Him in my heart as my Father, as my God: I worshiped Him the oftenest that I could, keeping my mind in His holy Presence, and recalling it as often as I found it wandered from Him. I found no small pain in this exercise, and yet I continued it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that occurred, without troubling or disquieting myself when my mind had wandered involuntarily. I made this my business, as much all the day long as at the appointed times of prayer; for at all times, every hour, every minute, even in the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thought of God.

When we are faithful to keep ourselves in His holy Presence, and set Him always before us, this not only hinders our offending Him, and doing anything that may displease Him, at least willfully, but it also begets in us a holy freedom, and if I may so speak, a familiarity with God, wherewith we ask, and that successfully, the graces we stand in need of. In fine, by often repeating these acts, they become habitual, and the presence of God is rendered as it were natural to us.

Brother Lawrence

Taking a Break

HERE I SIT, doing only a little bit more than nothing at all, meandering around an Iowa lake in a small roofless boat. Sharing this diminutive yet seaworthy universe is my good wife and her parents—all three old hands at the fine art of snaring innocent piscatorial victims.

For my part, in this situation I am, as it were, like a fish out of water. My role, while my stalwart companions try to reel in dinner, is to stay out of everyone else's way at the far end of the boat, reading, snoozing, valiantly struggling to keep the hot sun out of my eyes and off my back.

It is true that there are moments of serene pleasure—especially when we first go out, when there still lingers an early-morning coolness on the water. The sun is still low on the horizon, its heat and brilliance hiding behind the lake's encircling trees, leaving a tender, misty chill across the shaded water. After that, how-

ever, the day gets hotter, the breeze diminishes, and my bottom gets sore from all the sitting.

My reflexive lack of enthusiasm for an activity that others find so pleasurable stems less from the discomfort and boredom it inflicts than the fact that it takes me away from my work. It certainly is pleasurable to spend time with my wife and her mom and dad in the company of God's creation. But the seemingly restorative benefits of a day upon the lake have always escaped me. For my part in the experience, I would place it in the same category as lolling about on a beach in Acapulco. Were I to magically find myself in that southern paradise (for only if I were tragically insane would I ever go there intentionally), I would spend every minute bemoaning all the things not getting done while I laze about on the sand.

For life is short—and the Lord has grant-

ed me only one.

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment...

Hebrews 9:27

If, however, one is to use God's word to rationalize one's guilt over taking a day off, one is also duty-bound to discover what it says on the *merits* of same.

In point of fact, it is far easier to back up the philosophy of periodic rest by Scripture, than to validate that of nose-to-the-grindstone, unrelieved work. God Himself established the over-arching principle six days into creation, and handed it down to His chosen people, Israel.

"Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease from labor so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave, as

well as your stranger, may refresh themselves.”

Exodus 23:12

And if we say we long to live as our Master, to behave as He, to learn from His ways, then we should realize that even the Lord Jesus—Creator, eternal High Priest, Sovereign Lord, member of the triune Godhead—grew weary from time to time during His brief sojourn in flesh. The relentless crush of those pleading for His touch and His words bore down upon Him and He sought relief and physical restoration away from the press of people and their demands.

Jesus understood the value of time off—even from a job of so brief a lifespan as His, and so important it was ordained by the Godhead from before there was time. More than that, He also taught the lesson to His disciples.

The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. And He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.” (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time

to eat.) They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.

Mark 6:30-32

And even someone as diligent as the apostle Paul knew the value of a time of recuperative rest.

Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company.

Romans 15:30-32

I don’t suppose there will ever come a day when there will be stars in my eyes over spending the day at the lake, or the beach, or sipping iced tea while lolling beneath the cooling umbrella of a shade tree. My level of guilt over recreational leisure is hard-wired. It is in my DNA.

But I have learned never to discount the extent of God’s grace, and His willingness to change me for the better. My opinion (or even DNA) doesn’t really mat-

ter. If it was good enough for Paul, good enough for Jesus, and good enough for Father God to take a break once in a while, then it is certainly good enough for me.

But, Lord, let me never take a break from You.

Find Your Rock

BEFORE MOSES BEGAN HIS SERVICE to God, it was required of him to get alone with God, to hear His voice and intentions.

Before the apostle Paul could begin his ministry for Jesus Christ, he had to get away for a period of instruction and preparation.

Even Jesus prepared for His own ministry in the solitude and privation of the desert, listening to the Holy Spirit—

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

Matthew 4:1-2

—and periodically during His earthly ministry it was necessary for Jesus to get alone with God the Father.

But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were

gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

Luke 5:15-16

None of us can hope to sustain an authentic Christian walk without getting away to commune on a regular basis with God—to leave behind the noise and distracting activity of “civilization” to spend time with our heavenly Father in gentle quietude.

The temporal view of accomplishing anything is with an agenda, an “action plan,” computer and smart phone. The quarry is success and the pursuit is executed with a ruthless passion. But the pursuit of God’s voice is not such a sweaty exercise.

Many years ago, while we were living in California, there was a favorite place of mine. It was a high outlook of huge, boulder-shaped rocks that offered a pan-

oramic view of the desert floor far below. It was a high and windy place, scorched by the sun and blessed with an exquisite quietude. There one could sit quietly for hours, gazing out over the expanse, contemplating things more ultimately important than calendars and phone calls and freeways filled with cars. There one could listen to God.



Where is your rock? Where is the place you go to listen to God, to think on heavenly, eternal things? You say such benign activities are a waste of time? You say you haven’t time in your busy schedule to come away and be quiet?

Jesus Christ had all of three short years to change the world. In less time than it takes people to attend college, Jesus had to begin His ministry, find and teach His disciples, and change the world forever. Yet, under time constraints that would

make an executive crazy with anxiety,
He took time to go “sit on His rock.”

And He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.” (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.

Mark 6:31-32

The goal in communing with God is to become more Christ-like; the method of listening to God is to behave like Christ.

Jesus understood the importance of quiet times with the Father. Where have we picked up the arrogance that says our activities take precedence over something that was so important to the Lord Jesus?

Go, find your rock. Go spend time with the Lord.

On His terms.

For what purpose did Christ go up into the mountain? To teach us that loneliness and retirement is good when we are to pray to God... For the wilderness is the mother of quiet; it is a calm and a harbor, delivering us from all turmoils.

John Chrysostom

In the desert God strips away the many encumbrances we've piled upon ourselves. There He happily removes our burdens of self-importance, ego and conceit. There He reduces us to our essential self, bereft of all our comforting insulation—until, finally, we are left with no artificial barrier to stand between us and the Father, and we can at last find utter peace, contentment and joy in His arms.

*Allured into the desert,
With God alone, apart,
There spirit meeteth spirit,
There speaketh heart to heart.
Far, far on that untrodden shore,
God's secret place I find;
Alone I pass the golden door,
The dearest left behind.*



*There God and I—none other;
Oh far from men to be!
Nay, midst the crowd and tumult,
Still, Lord, alone with Thee.
Still folded close upon Thy breast,
In field, and mart, and street,
Untroubled in that perfect rest,
That isolation sweet.*

*Stilled by that wondrous Presence,
That tenderest embrace,
The years of longing over,
Do we behold Thy Face;
We seek no more than Thou hast given,
We ask no vision fair,
Thy precious Blood has opened Heaven,
And we have found Thee there.*

*O weary souls, draw near Him;
To you I can but bring
One drop of that great ocean,
One blossom of that spring;
Sealed with His kiss, my lips are dumb,
My soul with awe is still;
Let him that is athirst but come,
And freely drink his fill.*

Gerhard Tersteegen