

1 Corinthians - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Letters 2, Laborers; Christian's Obligation to Servants; Combining an Occupation With Service; Work in the West Indies, The Support of

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I am anxious about a rumor I heard of your becoming a doctor, and I am sure you will forgive my anxiety for the Lord's sake and yours.... I look to the principle. Christ has ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel, and it is the clear duty of the church of God to aid those who are given up to the work. If a man can give himself wholly up to the work, and as an extra support himself by a trade he has already-all well. I have known a brother, an evangelist much blessed, who so lived, when at a certain period of the year the people (from work) could not get on weekdays to meetings-and he being a good watchmaker, mended all the watches in the country-the rest of the year was helped by brethren. This is all well.... But when I set about to learn a profession or trade, it is not merely the time, but Christ, and Christ's work, is put in a second place, and faith is set aside as to that, and the church encouraged in want of devotedness. All this seems to me evil. If you were not working for the Lord, your setting to do something would be perfectly right; but you are at the work, and it is saying, I fear—not in your heart perhaps, but as testimony—"I have put my hand to the plow," etc. I have never known but one case where a brother actually wanted: it was not known to brethren: a devoted pioneer, who pushed into unbroken ground in France. He fed on nettle tops, which they use much as spinach, not to give up an open door. The same man has been three times in prison. That was a bright testimony. I doubt you are quite there yet, and have been pinched, but so was Paul, and the Lord has very soon come in to help them. It may seem easy for me who want for nothing to press this on others, but I honestly began by giving up everything, though in point of fact my faith was never tried in that way, as an uncle left me something before I was run out, or very soon after.

But I dread settling the principle, when a man is a laborer, that the church is not to take care that those who labor shall be honored by being temporally cared for: no salary. A man is a servant, but free under Christ in his ministry, and the privilege of the church, as those at Philippi, to be partakers in the grace by helping him who labors in it. It blocks up the path of simple, humble faith. A poor man has no difficulty: and it seems as if an educated person could take this blessed and honored place of service to Christ: working when we can, and are not occupied in the work—all well, as I said. But taking up a profession is really saying I have laid down that of working for the Lord, trusting to Him who knows that we have need of these things.

I have not seen the Lord leave those who have given themselves up to work, trusting Him: and I have seen distress of spirit and greatly hindered usefulness [in those] who, through their wives or own hearts, have turned to other things to help wife or family here. The most beloved and able witness was saved from great injury to his own spirit and usefulness, by its making him thoroughly miserable, and it did hinder him. There it was a wife's doing; but no matter what, the difficulties are what faith has to overcome. I am a very poor one for faith, but I am sure the Lord is sufficient, and that He will never fail us. He may try our faith, but He will meet it and rejoice our hearts.

Here, a small place, there has been really considerable blessing. No doubt many curious ones will drop off, but a goodly number of souls have come under the power of the Spirit and truth of God. We leave (D.V.) this week for Jamaica.... The gracious Lord guide and teach you.

Affectionately yours in Him.

Barbadoes,

March 9th, 1869.

Letters 3, Baptism, The Subjects of

Beloved brother -,

I have not been able since my last letter to continue the examination of your translations with the care required to do it properly, but I have only put it off just for the present. I was obliged to answer an attack directed against the views of the brethren in a pamphlet printed at Geneva, and to occupy myself with other writing, which was pressing and had accumulated because of the local work and the general work for this country....

As to the Baptist sect, I see, beloved brother, that God has guided you in your views and actions. This question has caused agitation (by means of someone who has labored at it) in a department in France where the work of brethren has been blessed. But by being firm, and leaving to every one full liberty of conscience, it has passed away, and God has granted full peace to the brethren, and the storm has passed by without doing harm. I do not wonder at people being in doubt in the state of confusion in which the church is, so that I have no difficulty in respecting the consciences of brethren who believe that they ought to be baptized. If their conscience tells them that they have not been baptized, they do well to get baptized, if they do it peaceably. I say peaceably, because it is no longer the confession of Christianity, but an act which seeks to repair a fault of negligence. But if one makes it a sect, it is a very great evil: baptism becomes the center of union instead of Christ.

Baptism in order to receive the Holy Ghost is a miserable falsehood, for they receive Him no more than others do, but, on the contrary, are deceived by the enemy. I have seen this in South Germany and England and elsewhere. It is nothing but a miserable fallacy; facts are there to prove it. If people say they have received Him by this means the proofs are there to show what it is worth. Now the Holy Spirit has never been received by the baptism of water. Samaria and Cornelius prove this. Finally the 120 had received Him without having been baptized. I do not deny that in general people were baptized before receiving Him, and that this was the rule because baptism was the public confession of Christianity. I am perfectly certain that the reasonings of the Baptists are false in principle and denaturalize Christianity. But if a brother felt [thus] in his conscience, I would leave him the most perfect liberty in this respect. Let him be fully persuaded in his heart. By so acting, avoiding a sectarian spirit, leaving the conscience entirely free, and seeking unity in Christ, and asking of God the peace whereto we are called, you will be kept, I hope, and will get without loss over a trying moment. I will write to you more at length, beloved brother, what I think on the baptism of infants, but I care much more for the peace of the church than for any opinion about that. I have never tried to persuade anybody. I believe that everyone must act according to his own conscience.

I believe that the children of believers are relatively holy, and that this passage (1 Cor. 7:14) has precisely that bearing, but I respect the ordinance, and those who think they have not been partakers of it do well to be baptized. I deny entirely that this is a matter of obedience, and those who treat it so, upset, without being aware of it, Christianity in its very first principles.

God be with you, dear brother, and with all our beloved brethren, and help you to get over this, to you, trying moment, and keep you from a bad sectarian spirit and from false and proud pretensions, which I consider to be something very different from respect for scruples of conscience. The doctrine of the remission of sins and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost by baptism comes, I doubt not, from the enemy.

As to the conscience, I would leave it perfectly free on that point.

When they say that one cannot preach the gospel, that is nothing but nonsense, because God has blessed the gospel preached by all kinds of persons who hold the foundations of Christ without troubling themselves about the pretensions of, and others of the same kind.

I write in haste.

Your most affectionate brother.

London, April 28th, 1852.

Letters 1, 1 Corinthians 7:14

* * The objection made to the use of 1 Cor. 7:14 has no force. Among the Jews, if one married a Gentile, or vice versa, the Jew was not profane, but he had profaned himself; the children were profane, and the Jew had to send away both wife and children. The husband did not cease to be a Jew, though profaned, but his children were profane, and therefore they could not even be profaned, for that which is already profane cannot be made so.

Now, grace being come, it was the reverse which took place. The unbelieving husband did not cease to be an unbeliever, but he was relatively sanctified (not holy); then the child was holy, not inwardly in its soul, but it had right to the privileges which belonged to the people of God on earth, privileges from which the child of a mixed marriage among the Jews was debarred, because he was profane. He was no more a sinner than any other, but he was excluded from the circle in which were found the blessings accorded by God to His people, and they were great as the apostle says....

Letters 2, Activity Instead of Christ; Our Redeemed Bodies; Darwin; Devotedness; Moody's Work; the Lord's Table and Denominations; Setting People to Work; Recovered Truth of Union, Drawing Out Others to

I do indeed sympathize with you as to -, a real and profound sorrow. One can only look to the Lord to deliver him. I had heard he had got astray, but thought it was morally. See if this has been the case, for thus it often is; not having kept a good conscience, shipwreck is made of faith. The root may still be there. Modern science is rife with all this. Darwin has given up a good deal of his system as exaggerated, and those not Christians have shown its fallacy: he admits his proof fails, geological facts giving no support to it. There is a book called "Blending Lights," which may be of use to him, but see where his conscience is.

We have to go through P. Smith and Moody like all else. God will make everything work together for good to those that love Him. They (are) in some aspects signs of the last days; our business is to separate the precious from the vile. You will see a large increase of wickedness and of worldliness in Christianity by it, but souls converted to God. I dread the Americanizing effect of it; religion and activity where Christ has little place. They are all groaning under it in America, and the revivalist standing up to confess Christ-does not allow in his own chapel through experience of its effects. But it will have aroused many. The peace men have got by it is a kind of provisional peace. Thorough work will only be the more needed.

As to the first question—I dread questions, notions—I believe the body is redeemed, the Lord for the body and the body for the Lord, and that He holds it by His power for resurrection glory—some changed consequently without dying; but death and corruption in themselves are the effect of sin and Satan's power. But the body is not under his power; Christ has the keys of death and hell. Its state is the fruit of his power, but it is through redemption not in his power: only redemption is not yet applied to it in its effect in power. We are waiting for the redemption of the body. But the redemption-price is paid, and the power belongs to Christ, is His, so that Satan has no title over it.

As to the Lord's supper. They [saints in systems] may partake of it in personal communion and piety, and I doubt not do, and enjoy His grace, but they have lost the proper corporate enjoyment of it in the unity of the body....

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Nelson,

October 18th, 1875.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 2, Indwelling of the Holy Ghost

1 Cor. 6

THERE is nothing, perhaps, more striking in reading either the Gospels, or the Epistles, the sayings of the Lord Jesus Himself, or what, in some respects, are more wonderful, the statements of the apostles, than the entire familiarity that appears in them, with the highest divine things. It is never, of course, nor could it be, that familiarity which, in human things, because of their imperfection, takes away reverence. But the nearer we are to God, the more we see His blessedness, while there will be the reverence that becomes His presence; at the same time there is perfect familiarity with the highest divine things. It stamps the one born of God; it stamps the divine revelation that we have. I can tell that the Father loves the Son- nothing can be simpler than the expression; but what a thing to know His divine affections in themselves! It is not merely that He loves me, as is very true; but the Father loves the Son. So with the divine counsels. He hath " made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself." It is all brought out; as it is expressed in that word, " Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

It is not that simply certain testimonies have come out; this was the case with the prophets; or that certain commandments have been given which are the most perfect expression of what man ought to be, as in the law; but God has revealed Himself, and that in the perfectness of His own love, that He might be known. Along with this, and especially characterizing Christianity, there is not only the perfect revelation of Himself in His own nature as God, as light and love, revealing the Father, Son, and Spirit; but He has given us the Spirit. Having made us " partakers of the divine nature," that we might be capable of enjoying what He is; He has also given us the Holy Ghost, that we might know what He is. You get, first, our being set before God in perfect acceptance, " accepted in the Beloved." And then, beyond that, the truth that God has not only revealed Himself to us, that we might have confidence in coming to Him in Christ, but that He reveals Himself in us after having set us in Christ there, that the conscience should be placed in His presence.

At the same time we read in Ephesians of being " strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man "; it is also said in the same Epistle, " that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." So that He who is the center of all the thoughts and counsels of God, of all His glory as revealed, the Son Himself dwells in us, and sets us thus in the center of all this glory, that we should comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. It is not only that there has been a revelation to us of the Father and Son, and the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, but that He has so associated us with Christ as dwelling in us, and that by the power of the Holy Ghost, that He sets our souls in the center of all these affections, and of all this knowledge and glory.

Therefore the apostle cannot exactly say what it is, but only says " what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," and adds, " and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." He has been a man, and dwelt among us, yet He dwells in us, and His love passes knowledge. This brings us into such blessed intimacy, though ever more adoringly; for the more we know Him, the more we shall see that He is God. So even with Christ Himself. We are there in the same glory with Himself, but this only brings us into the capacity to know the infinite blessedness of His Person. We see this in the scene of the transfiguration. The moment there was the thought in the heart, " Let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and and for Elias," the Father says, " This is my beloved Son: hear him." Christ stands alone. Yet we now, by the grace which associates us with Him, are brought into that which is divinely blessed and perfect; such is the peculiar blessedness of Christianity.

It is not now merely sending out a law to show what man ought to be, but it is eternal life given, in the true knowledge of the Father and Son, and this in the power of the Holy Ghost. Therefore the affections of the heart are of the Spirit, and are filled with the Spirit, and they have their play in all true Christian affection. Being brought into such a place, all our ways, the condition of our soul and our conduct of course, are looked for to be conformed to that of which Christ Himself is the perfect expression. It is not merely that there is a certain rule of conduct, as in the law, but it is Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith; so that our thoughts, and feelings, and affections should flow from that source through the Holy Ghost. That is what is meant by being " filled with the Spirit." We all have the Spirit, but we are not all " filled with the Spirit." He is the one source of everything where the heart is filled with Him.

That which is here brought before us is not only the blessedness of the place we are put in, but the conduct of the Christian suitable to it in every respect. And it is that which suits the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. Whatever is not fit for His presence is not fit for the Christian. It will come down to the most ordinary things of life, because there is a path which is pleasing to God in this world-there is one way for a person to walk, and no other. Supposing a son has left his father's house, and has gone off to a strange country; he may not be outwardly given up to what shocks the conscience, but he cannot, as long as he is there, do right; he must go back in order to do what is right; until he does this, in all he does there is not one thing that is right. This is the way with man in the world. He has left God, and cannot do anything right, never can do anything positively right, till he gets back.

If we are in our right place, we do not want a way. Adam wanted no way in the garden of Eden; his business was to stay where he was. In the world, where wickedness is, we want a way; but there is no way really, because we have departed from God. But when the Spirit of God has come into it, He has created a path for him that believes. For the Jews in the wilderness, where the cloud went, there was a way directly. God can make a way for Himself, no matter how wicked the world. If I injure a man, it is wrong; and if he revenges himself, it is wrong; but Christ

can make a way through it all. He can give me to walk with wisdom and patience in all circumstances. He can bring in motives and principles for every difficulty of this world; and that is where the Christian has to walk. " He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked."

The life of Jesus should be manifested in us. Our life ought to be the expression of this new thing-that is, divine life in the midst of a world that is away from God. Nothing but Christ can do that, and it is Christ in us. The power of it is by the presence of the Holy Ghost acting upon " the new man which after God is created in righteousness and in true holiness." It is not the old thing corrected at all, because the old man never can have the divine motives, but its own motives. It may be corrected in an outward thing, for people are not all thieves and robbers; but it never can have the motives that belong to the divine nature, and therefore, though it may be decent and respectable, it never can be right. It is the nature that has departed from God, and it cannot be right before Him. We read that that which we have (the new man) is " after God, created in righteousness and in true holiness." And in another part it is said that it is " renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." The measure of spiritual knowledge, as to the walk and affections, is the image of Him who created us; and where do I see this perfectly? In Christ. He is " the image of the invisible God." The power of that life was shown in the resurrection; the character of that life was shown in all His path on earth. He was " declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The declaration of the power of the life was in resurrection; the character of it we see in the Son of God walking in this world; and Christ is our life.

" Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own." It is redeemed. " Ye are bought with a price." Being redeemed by God, the body, which is our servant and vessel of working, is the temple of the Holy Ghost. There I get power, and power by One dwelling in me, whose presence is that which must measure everything I do. Therefore He says, " Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Such is the measure He furnishes us. He gives us intelligence, and affections, and objects, which the law could not do, but Christ does. He gives us a blessed hope too; but He dwells in us now. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost: and we are called upon so to walk, that in nothing, in word or thought or act, we should grieve the Spirit of God. It is a wonderful measure in this case. The Spirit has these thoughts and feelings, and He produces them in us.

Mark then how Christ is connected with this: " Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? " What sweetness there is in that But it is not merely a fact; it is the principle by which I measure all conduct in His presence. How do I come there? I have it all of God. " Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God? " What a feeling God must have about me-to make a poor creature like me His temple-the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost! To think that God's mind about such poor creatures should be that He would make me a temple of the Holy Ghost! that He has given me the Holy Ghost to dwell in me! For this there is absolute cleansing; for He could not dwell in a defiled tabernacle, and thus He seals till the day of redemption. God has given me the Holy Ghost to dwell in me in virtue of having cleansed me, the seal of redemption and earnest of glory. God's mind has been, having cleansed me, to give me the perfect witness and testimony of His own infinite love. " He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." He gives us the Holy Ghost to dwell in us, the seal of His love and of the redemption that He has accomplished. He makes our bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost; and while this is the measure and test of all that is according to God by His own presence, that presence is the expression of God's perfect love; for His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.

And here he appeals to them as to not sinning. How can you go and sin with a body that is the temple of the Holy Ghost? It is not merely breaking such a command, or the like; but the motive here is, " What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? " And you are going to commit sin with it? All exhortations are founded upon the blessed place into which He has brought us. " Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God? " God Himself has given it, to put you in connection with Himself, and are you going into connection with sin and vileness? It is applied to purity of life. The body is the vessel of the presence and action of God by the Holy Ghost. We do fail; but that is the power; and we are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. What a place we are set in! It makes us feel our wretchedly low ways and shortcomings-and so much the better. If we are humble, we do not need to be humbled. If a man is not humble, he needs to be humbled: if he is humble, he is the recipient of grace; " for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble." And wherever a person is really humble, he may have a great deal to learn, but at any rate he is in his right place with God. Instead of His having to contend with us, we are the objects of His blessing. If it is not so, humbling must come in. " What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God? "

Then comes the second motive. " And ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." It is a motive-not simply power in the presence of God, but a positive motive from the perfect work of Christ; we are not our own. If we were, we were lost. If we are to have blessing, to be a blessing, it is in this-that we are not our own at all. Wherever I act in my own will in anything, I am wronging God of His own title through the blood of Christ. We are not our own. Christ is ours: but there is a second thing-not only that Christ is mine, but that I am His; and the heart delights to be His, and not its own, because it has learned His love to us, who has loved us, and given Himself for us.

Therefore, in the knowledge of this eternal love, our delight is to belong to Him, and this too as to practice. " Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." It is not merely saying, Do right; but He puts us at once in connection with God. Think of our glorifying God! Christ could do it as a man; but can I, wretched as I am, glorify God? Yes. If I am walking in His Spirit, and having no motive but Christ, it brings in the power of God, which the world knows nothing about. We are called to glorify God in our body: it belongs to Him-it is God's; and what a relief it is when I think that this body, which was the wretched slave of sin, now belongs to God! It is His property. It has been taken out of its old condition entirely, and it does not belong to my corrupt will at all. I am not a debtor to the body, but it belongs to God. This is an immense joy, and it shows that everything has been done for one; for even this poor wretched body belongs to God, and I am to use it thus-to glorify God.

There we have the two great leading motives and springs of conduct which the apostle sets before us here as to our faith and conduct; namely, that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God; and that we are bought with a price, and belong to God. The power, intelligence, and all, is that which we have of God; it is the Holy Ghost, of which our body is made the temple; and when I look at the body in itself, it now, through the work of Christ, belongs to God. The Holy Ghost dwells in me in power and intelligence; my body is made His temple, and I must use it according to that presence which I thus have of God. I am not my own at all-I am bought with a price-I belong to

God.

The Lord give us in joy of heart, in unfailing, deep thankfulness of spirit, to know that, on the one side, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost; and, on the other, that these bodies are bought with a price, and that they belong to God!

The Christian Shepherd: 2003, Fragment: The Body

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Cor. 6:15).

The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He acts on the soul and on the heart Christ dwells in our hearts by faith but the body is His temple, and therefore it is to be used accordingly. A great deal of mischief springs from not recognizing this. The body is only in its right place when it is a vessel which I am just using for God.

J. N. Darby

Letters 3, Unanimity

I thank God with all my heart for the blessing He has granted you.... It would seem that God is testifying that He does not give brethren up, at least, that He encourages them to count on Him, and go on; for in France, Switzerland, and elsewhere, there seems a reviving. I have asked myself if it is that He owns what little effort at fidelity there has been. At any rate, He is encouraging those who look to Him.... As to leaflets, it is at present the fashion, and it seems to me a very bad one. I quite agree with-that the assembly must act; but I accept neither unanimity, majority, nor minority. Abstract principles do not settle any practical cases. "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" is clear and decided. Who is a wicked person?- says we must be guided by the Lord. But who is to decide if we are? All these things seem to me rather labor lost. They go, without despising any, out of my head, with all I have to do, about as fast as they go into it. We want quiet godliness, and, above all, lowliness.

I have been very happy in the Lord, and find the word more rich to my soul than ever, and, I think, heaven more near. But all our thoughts are poor things, but not the Object of them. I feel, too, the direct action of God by the Spirit more than ever.

Pats, November 17th.

Letters 2, Bethesda and Principles; Addresses to the Seven Churches; Members of the Body Not a Church; Sufferings of Christ; Whether Defilement Is Endless

I am glad for your own sake that your tract is withdrawn; you will perhaps, ere I write this, have received a letter from me. Its effect I had no fear of, for the simple reason that it wholly gave up all the principles brethren meet on, and would be judged by every intelligent brother.

The loose brethren have done so pretty generally. I could give you very easily an account of all those you speak of, but feel it is better to avoid speaking of individuals. The question is not whether they are logically in precisely the same position as the blasphemers, but whether their position justifies their not being received to communion. They are not according to scripture "a new lump," if they acquiesce in evil in their midst, not clear of the committed sin. So jealous is the apostle as to the truth, that a simple friendly adieu makes a man partaker of his evil deeds, how much more a willful, determined reception of them into communion-one of the pastors holding most of the blasphemous doctrines, and when the loose brethren pretended that Bethesda had changed, and acted in discipline, C. declared they had not, and that as far as he knew, they would do the same in like case, and that he did not know a single person at Bethesda who held Mr. N. for a heretic. This was Mr. Craik's published statement long after the matter had happened. It was the open support of blasphemy, and the breach took place by an effort on the part of neutrals to force us to go on with B., as they openly stated and I personally know.

There is no such thing as members of a local church or not local in scripture, but members of Christ, a totally different idea; he speaks of foot, hand, eye, etc., you have only to react the whole passage (1 Cor. 12), and not a shadow of doubt can remain. Members are members of Christ, whatever—may mean; but it cannot have the meaning you put upon it, as it does not apply to what they were members of. But now as regards the Seven churches, they are neither the unity of the body, nor directions how to act from the Head by the apostle, but judgment by Christ on their state (I get positive directions for my conduct in 2 Timothy), Christ's judicial estimate of the whole, and what He will do if they do not repent: and this has been used to show we are to acquiesce in things as they are -if so, with everything, and exercise no discipline at all, for none is spoken of. But it is Christ's judgment of the state of things. That is found very clearly stated elsewhere. Hence it is commonly taken, and I doubt not rightly for the history of the Church at large, to the end of Popery, and the end of Protestantism. Your use of it would go to allow all evil in an assembly, fornication, communion with idols and all else, and so it has been used.

As to "ad infinitum," it is a mere bugbear; whatever associates itself with evil, be it three or three thousand or three million, is on the same ground. If I associate myself with a principle of action, what matter how many assemblies are engaged in it, if they are so? Besides, it is a denial of the unity of the body. I know of so many assemblies, discipline in one is discipline in all, and the denial of this shows plainly enough where you have all got. This is the whole question. B. is partaker thus in the guilt in question, if another gathering is in communion with it, receive from it as it is, goes to it, they are one: if fifty do it, they are one. I cannot own them as assemblies of God as a guarantee for integrity in one coming from them. I can make a difference between misleaders and misled, and allow for ignorance, but that is not the question. I sigh

over those ensnared by the unfaithfulness of others, but I find them soon corrupted in principle. I have seen none where integrity has not suffered by having to say to it. Mr. Bewley, urging reconciliation, writes a pamphlet blaming us, and told me that Mr. Craik was a decided heretic, and ought to have been put out; and when I said, Why then do you blame me for not going there when he was not put out? I do not blame you at all, he replied, and then goes on to do his best to condemn us. I sigh over ensnared ones, but I am sick of this falseness which characterizes all that are in it.- says popery is all wrong, and stays in it. Episcopal and Presbyterian ministers say the state of things is all wrong, and stay in it. This is a system destructive to conscience and the habit of excusing evil is ruinous to the soul. "Holy," " True " (Rev. 3:7), I find characterizes Christ in His relationship to the church He approves to the end. The whole question is, Is the church of God to maintain the truth in unity? My experience of the opposite system in the States in all shapes has made me firmer than ever in the path of what is called exclusiveness—exclusion of false doctrine and false practice, in contrast with protecting and excusing it.

Yours affectionately in the Lord.

I do not the least confine discipline to the Table; where persons deliberately take up the loose principle, I have nothing to say to them in divine things anywhere—could not say grace at table with them, and am of course blamed for exclusiveness.

Canada,

1873.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Miscellaneous 2, New Lump

IT may be well to state directly from Scripture what the new lump is, as it is now so much spoken of. Such a thing as leaving an assembly to be a new lump is not thought of in Scripture. I may have to leave an assembly on other grounds; but it is not what is spoken of here. The assembly of God is looked at in its true nature as an unleavened body; thus we are called upon to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. And as leaven had got in, they were called on to purge out the old leaven, that they might be a new lump as they were unleavened. The discipline applied to all, the putting out all leaven, that the assembly, as a whole, might be a new lump. Thus, there is no such thing as leaving to be a new lump. The only new lump contemplated, is the whole assembly purified by putting out leaven—the passage is as clear as possible. The great body of the saints is everywhere to be a new lump.

But, as I have referred to the currency of these questions, it is well to notice another element in operation, more moral, and wider in realization. The discussions at London Bridge had given rise to the most widespread distrust of various brethren; the feeling being—I am in communion with B., as I am of them, and thus in communion with positive evil; and getting away from evil governed the heart, and wide distress existed. Now, here, I fully recognize, was real trial; he who names the name of Christ was to depart from iniquity; yet these brethren were corporately connected with unfaithfulness. I do not identify a person bearing the name of Christ, and individually walking badly, and ecclesiastical connections with those who do. Actual right is right, and wrong wrong; still, it is very unsatisfactory to the heart and conscience to be in full confessed communion with evil; and as the evil thing judged was allowed to exist by those immediately concerned, their consciences were not at their ease. Many thought of leaving brethren. I had been in the deepest degree exercised by the very question; I agreed with them as to their judgment of the evil. But I did not think desertion was the remedy; it did not remedy the evil-satisfied, perhaps, the individual conscience, but left the saints to their fate. I not only felt the evil was not remedied, but could not be, humanly speaking. But there was another difficulty: the door was closed against the interference of those who might have sought to apply one. Still, I felt the Lord had not given up His people, and it was not my place to flee as an hireling. I was accounted an unfaithful person by those disposed to leave; but, while I sympathize with those disposed to leave, as having personally done with evil, I do not think it was the path of faith. I trusted God for His testimony; I do not find it has been in vain.

There was a third principle of extra excellence which prevailed, under the popular name of Cluffism, which professed this superiority, and does, where it still holds its ground. It took a very high ground, carrying up to the third heaven, and making the Christ who is there, as communicated in all He is there to us, to be divine righteousness, though I always found it filled people with themselves. But the truth is, its origin was a filthy, carnal mysticism, not unfolded to all, but was such, that one of its adepts admitted it could not be propounded in a mixed company, where females were present. I know this was professed to be given up, but I doubt, from what I have heard, that it is thoroughly. But it is certain that from out of this resulted a pretension of a special remnant, brethren (so called) being Laodicean. This was based, too, on theories, and all sorts of theories, as to Philadelphia. The theories I believe to be all delusion. First, the four last churches all go on to the end, and what is found is a general estimate of the church by Christ, and of its result, with a promise to him who overcame, in the circumstances in which the church was. It is a mistake to think that the churches passed, by a kind of natural sequence, from one into the other.

But having taken up the proposed remedies for a low state of things—my reader may have noticed three—the first, some " silly women " plan of a new lump, clean contrary to the whole sense of the passage; secondly, conscience justly at work, but faith failing as to trusting Christ's faithfulness in taking care of His, and His testimony; and, thirdly, Cluffism, full of pretension and want of self-knowledge (though I fully admit several dear people got among them, misled by its promises of more spirituality, which suited itself more to their cravings). Still, two of the principal adepts of the system at Edinburgh, and a third at Cork, were put out for immoral conduct. Of that I think worse than I did, for, though wild, I thought it honest, which I do not now, as a system. But having briefly reviewed these, I add the new lump, as given in Scripture, as the great point for believers—that is, the application of the divine principles of truth and holiness, and devotedness in testimony to the whole body of testimony-bearers; for that is the very force of the new lump. It might seem premature to speak of the company of testimony-bearers, but I do not believe it. I believe there are details to be carried out of God, but He does very much of it by the faithful testimony bearing; but what He looks for now, is, not occupation with evil, but the springing up of testimony in grace-plants of the Lord's planting by clear shining after rain.

Letters 3, Holy Spirit Dwelling in the House and in the Individual, The

It is not only the presence of the Spirit in the house, but His acting in the service of the saints, which I look for. As to the other point,¹ though I believe that often there is no harm meant, and that by presidency is merely meant that His leading should be followed, where it is substituted—a rare case, but which I have known—for the presence of Christ, it is an evil. He is in the midst, spiritually no doubt, but still Himself. I cannot have the same affections towards the Holy Ghost as towards Christ. He was not humbled, did not die for me, and so on. The ministrations are under the Lord, too, as such, but the active power is the Spirit. I do not think, 'leads after Him' is right, because the Father and Christ are objects. In ministry the Spirit is active, but He brings the word from on high: "whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak."

The Spirit does act in us (Luke 12:12), and I do look to the Spirit acting in me—I do not say, pray that He may act; I pray to the Father, or to the Lord, but I wait for the Spirit to act. Christ is Head, but it is the Spirit acting in us which gives what He would have said.

1881.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 4, Churches and the Church*

You ask me, Were there not churches in scripture? I answer, there were; but what are churches? The effect of the question is to bring out the state of the mind. Most Christians would immediately think of what are called churches in the religious world, perhaps in Christendom at large. They would think of the Presbyterian church, or Congregational and Baptist churches, or else of the church of Rome, or the like. The person who lived habitually in the mind of scripture would think of Corinth or others which we meet with in scripture. Are then the facts which exist in Christendom, or the thoughts there current, different from the facts found in scripture, or the thoughts formed by it? Let us inquire into this, not with a haughty heart, but if we find all gone far away from the scriptural state in principle and practice—if we find all ruined, instead of power in the Holy Ghost and unity—a fair show in the flesh, let us mourn in heart, and cry to the Lord. He will meet us in our need.

What were churches in scriptural times? "Church" means simply an assembly, or, from local use in Greek, an assembly of privileged persons, of citizens. The whole multitude of believers gathered into one by the Holy Ghost formed the assembly or church. Only here of course it was God's assembly; of course those in Rome or Corinth could not meet in Jerusalem. Hence there were assemblies in different places, forming each locally God's assembly in the place. It may be well very briefly to examine how the assembly is viewed in scripture as a whole, before we speak of local assemblies. It is viewed as the habitation of God; and also as the body of Christ, and first of the former. In one sense the church is not yet formed, not complete. All that shall be united to Christ in glory form part of it.

"I will build my church," says Jesus, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This will be infallibly accomplished. So Peter, evidently alluding to this, "unto whom coming, as unto a living stone, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house"; so Eph. 2, "in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." This is yet unfinished, and still goes on; and, though at first a public and evident body (the Lord adding daily to the church such as should be saved), it is become what is called the invisible church. It is invisible: though if it was to be the light of the world, it is hard to tell the value of an invisible light. If it is acknowledged to have fallen for ages into corruption and iniquity, a very Babylon in character, that has not been the light of the world. The persecuted saints—for God has surely had a people—gave their testimony; but the public body in the world was darkness, not light in it.

But there is another way in which God's assembly is spoken of, and still first as the house, a habitation of God, that is, as established by the instrumentality of man, and under the responsibility of man. "As a wise master-builder," says Paul, "I have laid the foundation, but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." There is human instrumentality and human responsibility. It was a large body formed on earth which was God's house or temple, the Holy Ghost dwelling in it down here as descended on the day of Pentecost (1 Cor. 3), not the body: there can be no wood and hay and stubble, which is to be burned, in that. Again, "Ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. 2:22.

This is a very interesting and precious truth, I mean God's dwelling down here in His house prepared for Him according to His will. God never dwelt with Adam innocent, though He visited him, nor with Abraham though He visited and singularly blessed him; but the moment Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, God came and dwelt among them. The dwelling of God with men is the fruit of redemption. (See Ex. 29:46.)

The true redemption has been accomplished, and God has formed a habitation for Himself where He dwells by the Spirit. It is so indeed as to the individual (1 Cor. 6); but I now speak of the assembly, the house of the living God. This is now on the earth, the habitation of God by the Spirit. He dwells and walks among us. We are God's building. Man may have built in wood and hay and stubble; but God has not yet executed judgment to remove the house out of His sight, though judgment will begin there.

The assembly is also the body of Christ; Eph. 1:23. It is by one Spirit we are baptized into one body. This though the final completeness of it will be in heaven, yet is established on earth, for the baptism of the Holy Ghost was His coming down—the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13). That this is on earth is further clear, for in the same chapter we find He has set in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, where we have miracles, gifts of healing, clearly on earth. Where, remark also, that they are set in the whole church, members of such or such a kind in the one whole body. Such is the church or assembly as depicted in scripture.

What were churches or assemblies? These were local. The apostle could say, "To the church of God which is at Corinth." It represented the whole unity of the body in that place. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Two bodies of Christ, even in one place, representatively there could not be. In Galatia, which was a large province, we read the churches of Galatia. So in Thessalonica, a city of Macedonia, we have the assembly of the Thessalonians. So in the seven churches; so John writes to the assembly. So everywhere there was God's assembly in any given place which could be distinctly addressed as such. In Acts 20 he calls for the elders of the assembly. There were several appointed by the Holy Ghost to be overseers of God's flock. Hence Titus was left in Crete to ordain them in every city. We have

(Acts 11:22) the assembly which was in Jerusalem, though it was exceedingly numerous; in Acts 13 the assembly that was at Antioch. So Paul (Acts 4:21-23) returns to Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium, and chooses for them elders in every assembly. All scripture clearly shows there was one assembly in a place, which was God's assembly.

Churches as buildings they had none: the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; and hence they met in houses where they could; but all formed one assembly, God's assembly, in that place, the elders being elders in the whole as one body. The local assembly represented the whole assembly of God, as 1 Corinthians shows us plainly. The position which Christians who composed it held was that of members of Christ, of the whole body of Christ. The only membership known in scripture is membership of Christ's body; as an eye, a hand, etc.; ministry was directly connected with this last thought. When Christ ascended up on high, He gave gifts to men, apostles, prophets: they were the foundation (Eph. 2); evangelists, pastors, teachers: these were set in the whole church or assembly; 1 Cor. 12.

If a man was a teacher at Ephesus, he was such at Corinth.

Even as to miraculous gifts, a man spoke with tongues where he was. The gift belonged to no particular assembly but was that member or gift in the whole body on earth, wrought by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12), and by which a man was a servant of Christ. In 1 Cor. 12 we have the Holy Ghost on earth distributing them as they then were. In Eph. 4 they are given from Christ on high, and only such referred to as ministered to the perfecting of the saints and edifying of the body till we all grow to the stature of Christ. They were the talents with which a man was bound to trade, if he knew the master, in virtue of having them: "as every man has received the gift, so minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," 1 Peter 4:10. They were to wait on their prophesying or exhorting. Rules are given for their exercise in scripture. Women were to keep silence in the assemblies.

But my main object now is to show that it was as gifts in the whole assembly of God everywhere that they who possessed them acted. Elders were local and were not a gift, though aptness to teach was a desirable qualification. Still all had it not; 1 Tim. 5:17. Elders were elders in a given city of God's assembly there. Gifts were exercised as set in the whole body, wherever the gifted member was, according to scriptural rules. The result of the examination of scripture is, that there was one assembly of God in each town where there were Christians; that these were members of the body of Christ- the only membership known in scripture; and gifts were exercised in the whole church, or one assembly of God in the whole world, as members and servants of Christ, by the operation of the Spirit, according to rules given in scripture. Eldership was a local office to which persons were chosen and appointed by the apostle or his deputy; and they were elders in the one assembly of God in the place over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers (Acts 14:23; Titus; Acts 20:17-28). It was not a gift, though one gift was desirable to make the office more effective; but the chief requisites were qualities which made them fit to be overseers.

No trace of this subsists at present in the common order of what man calls churches. Thank God, men cannot hinder the Lord in His work, or His raising up such as may minister to His own in a sovereign way; but man has organized churches each according to his fancy, and the church of God and the word of God are forgotten save the owning by some of an invisible church which the Lord is faithful to carry on. But that they leave to His care, and arrange the visible church each as he sees good. The church as a public body in the world had sunk into popery (or Greek corruption, with which we have less to do in the West). All was in ruin, as the apostle had predicted; and at the Reformation civil government set up national churches. The church of God no one thought of, and for some time nothing else was allowed. Religious liberty then became more common; yet no one thought of the church of God but of mere organized churches united by a system of man's devising, or independent one of another, but man arranged and organized them. The unity of the body, that membership was membership of Christ alone, that the Holy Ghost was on earth, that gifts were given by Christ and brought responsibility for their exercise with them, all this was wholly forgotten and left aside-that is, the whole original scriptural truth on the subject of the church and the presence of the Holy Ghost.

The Episcopal body was so far different that they pretended to have the original title by succession, and made people members of Christ by the baptism of water, a dream of which there is no trace in scripture. It is by one Spirit there we are baptized into one body. Baptism is to the death of Christ. But leaving aside the Episcopal pretensions and errors, the existing system is that of assemblies formed by men on some principle they have adopted with a man chosen by themselves at their head; and people are members of this so-formed church or assembly, and vote in it as such. They may be members of Christ or not: that which gives them their title is that they are members of that particular assembly. In most churches a majority, if the vote does not create a division, carry out their will. The Holy Ghost is not in question. All action from beginning to end is man.

The Presbyterians may have various church courts and have an aristocratic element in their organization; Congregationalists have all their decisions come to by each separate body and the vote of the members of the assemblies. But the whole is a human arrangement formed and carried on by man. A man is a member of a body which man has organized, and acts as such. The actual state of things is a church or assembly of which a certain number of persons are members with a person educated for the ministry at its head. It is Mr. So-and-so's flock or church: he is paid so much a year; he may or may not be converted, but he is ordained, he may be an evangelist and put into a pastor's place; he may be a pastor, but must preach to the world. Although, if he does not succeed in this, he may be dismissed, generally directly, sometimes indirectly. The whole constitution of the church of God is ignored-God's constitution, and man's substituted for it. And the order and the power of the Holy Ghost is ignored, or not believed in at all.

In scripture there is no membership of a church, no pastor of a flock peculiar to him, no such voluntary assembly formed on its own particular principles. Not a trace of such an order is in the word, if it be not in the incipient divisions called carnal in Corinthians. There was God's church or assembly, not man's churches. If Paul were to address an epistle to the assembly of God at -, no one could get it: there is no such body in existence. Churches have set aside the church of God. The operation of the Spirit of God is set aside-that is, evangelists, servants of Christ for the world; pastors and teachers, not of a flock who have chosen them, or their flock, but exercising their gift where God may bring them; teaching at Ephesus in God's assembly if they were there, at Corinth if they were there, acting according to the gift given them from on high wherever God sent them, trading with a talent because their Master has charged them with it: as every man has received the gift, ministering the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if they exhort, waiting on their exhortation; if teachers, on their teaching; and that in God's assembly as a whole.

Man has organized, but he has wholly set aside, as far as his arrangements go, God's order and arrangements as to the assembly. Thus the church, God's assembly, is set aside to have churches; the Spirit who gives gifts to various members, to have a minister of their own

choosing; and the word in which God's order is revealed. The church and Spirit and word are all set aside by what is called order, that is, man's arrangement and organization. We are told it " must be." That is, there is not faith to trust the Lord to rule and bless in His own house, according to the ordering He gave to it; yet true blessing can only come from His operation by the Spirit He has sent down. And what is the effect? It would be ungracious of me to expose (nor am I the least inclined to do it) the miserable consequences which often ensue. They are well-known: the world knows them.

My object is to show that the system is anti-scriptural, and denies the Holy Ghost and the true church of God; but it is evident that a person chosen and paid by an assembly, of which very commonly half or more is unconverted, where the object is to increase numbers and influence, and to have rich people, must please those whom he serves. And, says the apostle, " if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ." They must adapt themselves to their audience. For the practical result I appeal to every godly conscientious person conversant with the state of things. I hear their groans on every side. But it is the natural and necessary effect of the system. Ministry is not the exercise of gift given of the Lord, but a person educated for a profession and ordained, so that a great many are not really converted. The true church of God established on earth (1 Cor. 12) is ignored, as are true churches, God's assemblies in each place; and churches are made by men according to their view of what is right, and men are members of their churches, not viewed as members of the body of Christ. An unconverted member of a church has all the rights and power of a converted man, a member of Christ.

The influence of wealth, not of the Spirit of God, is paramount, and a majority decides cases, not the guiding of the Spirit. If a majority had decided at Corinth, what would have been the effect? In the whole system man, and man's will, and man's organization, have taken the place of the Spirit and word of God, and of what God organized Himself as declared in that word.

People say, Were there not churches then? I answer, surely, and this it is that shows the anti-scriptural character of what exists. Let anyone show me in scripture such a thing as a separate distinct body such as is called a church now, and membership of it; or, as I have said, if Paul wrote a letter " To the church of God at—," who could get it? All is anti-scriptural, and sets aside what is in scripture to form something else.

I do not touch on many collateral subjects, the ruined state of the church as a whole, the coming of the Lord, wishing to confine myself to the question—is the existing order of things scriptural or anti-scriptural? That men having drunk old wine straightway desire new, I understand, is not likely; but happy is he who follows the word, and owns the Spirit, if he be alone in doing so. The word of the Lord abides forever, as does he who does His will.

2 Tim. 2 and 3 clearly point out the condition of the church in the last days, and the path of the believer in them, as the first epistle gives the external details of the church when first arranged by apostolic care.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 3, Church, the House and the Body, The

It seems to me that a few words now as to the Church, though not bringing forward anything entirely new, will be opportune. The question of the Church is agitated in every sense; and those who favor the popish or high-church view of it profit by certain expressions which some find it difficult to explain. My notice of the subject will be brief.

There are two points to be considered which comprehend all that with which I am at present occupied. The first is one which I have heretofore noticed, and on which the confusion and discord rest that agitate believing protestantism; namely, the identifying the house with the body, or the outward thing here on earth (including all who profess Christianity and all baptized) with the inward thing, or that which is united to Christ by the Holy Ghost. The other is taking the figure of a building (as scripture does), and then confounding what Christ Himself builds with what is the fruit of the work of building externally—here on earth entrusted to the responsibility of man.

Confusion on the first point seems to me to have been the origin of the whole system of popery, in its leading feature; and the Reformation did not get clear of it. I mean the attributing the privileges of the body to every one who was externally introduced into the outward profession of Christianity—to every baptized person. At the beginning it was so in fact: the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved. There was no principle involved in this. It was the Lord's own work; and, of course, was done really and perfectly. What He did with the spared ones at the close of the Jewish dispensation was, not to take them to heaven, as He will at the close of the present period, but to add them to the assembly which He had formed. There can be no reasonable doubt they were added outwardly by baptism, as it was the known regular way of doing so. These as introduced by the Lord, surely, had really part in all the privileges which were found in the body they were added to. The sacramental and the vital system remained undistinguished; and indeed in certain respects undeveloped, for there was no Gentile yet received, nor was the unity of the body taught. All was there that was given; for the Holy Ghost had come down, but was, as a fact, confined to Jews and Jerusalem; so that, if the nation had repented,, Acts 3 might have been fulfilled as well as chapter 2. But if here all was developed, if the distinctive characters of the Church, as the unity of Jew and Gentile in one body, were not brought into evidence, all was at any rate real. The Lord, who added to the Church, brought men into the privileges which the Church possessed, and brought in those who were to possess them.

But this soon ceased to be the case. The Simon Maguses and false brethren crept in unawares, and sacramental introduction and real enjoyment of privilege became distinct. All who were introduced by baptism were not members of the body of Christ nor had really eternal life. I do not say they enjoyed no advantages. They enjoyed much every way, but it only turned to increased condemnation, and, according to Jude, they were the seed of judgment as regards the Church: of this scripture is thus witness. Such remains as we have of the primitive Church show that this question, or difference, was wholly lost. They contended for truth against heresy, as Irenæus; for unity, in fact, in what existed, as Ignatius (though most of what is ordinarily read of his is clearly, I judge, spurious). Both were right in the main, but that doctrine which Paul upheld with difficulty against judaizers, and, in general, the doctrine of one body (of which Christ was the head, and those personally sealed with the Holy Ghost the members), was lost; and, in general, the rights of the body were attributed to all the baptized. I say in general, for the true privileges of the body had disappeared from their minds altogether. If they kept the great elements of the faith, and Gnosticism (the denial of the humanity, or of the divinity, of Christ) were warded off, they were glad; while Platonism (through the means of

Justin Martyr, Origen, and Clement) corrupted sufficiently within. But the effect was evident. The outward body became the Church, and whatever was held of privilege was attributed to all the baptized.

This has continued in the reformed churches. Thus, "baptism wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven"; so Luther, so Calvin: only the latter affirming in other teachings, that it was made good only in the elect; so the Scotch Church-the degree only of privilege differing. Many important consequences followed from this in Anglicans and Lutherans; such as that a person had really eternal life, was really a member of Christ, yet was finally lost. I do not dwell on these things; but the immense bearing of them is evident. Now there was a double error in thus attributing, to the external sacramental rite, the actual vital introduction into the living possession of divine privileges; and, in the utter confusion of thought which followed, the attributing the privileges of one sacrament to participation in the other.

I do not deny that the sign is spoken of as the thing signified. Christ could say, "This is my body which is broken," when it was not yet broken at all, and while He held the bread in His own hand alive; "This is the Lord's passover," when God was no longer passing over at all; "I am the true vine," and so of a thousand others. It enters into all language. I say of a picture: "That is my mother." Nobody is misled by it but those who choose to be misled. "We are buried with Christ by baptism unto death"; yet we are not buried, and we do not die: that is certain. Hence we find in scripture, in a general way, this use of language as to baptism and the Lord's supper. Only, singular to say, we do not find the communication of life attributed to baptism, nor eating Christ's flesh nor drinking Christ's blood attributed to the partaking of the Lord's supper. The nearest approach to it is the washing of regeneration.¹ There may be passages from which it may be sought to prove it, as John 3 and 6 (which I should wholly and absolutely deny apply to the sacraments); but direct passage there is none. Baptism is used figuratively as our burial unto death, and it may be alleged of our resurrection with Christ. Saul was called to wash away his sins; but no one is said to receive life or be quickened therein.

Scripture recognizes a sacramental system (that is, a system of ordinances) by which men are professedly gathered into a system on earth, where privileges are found. The Jewish and the Christian scriptures have both this character; but scripture carefully distinguishes personal possession of privileges from admission to the place where these privileges are. "What advantages hath the Jew? Much every way; chiefly, that unto them are committed the oracles of God." And elsewhere we have an enumeration of these privileges which is carried on even to Christ being of them according to the flesh. But all were not Israel that were of Israel, nor were those Jews who were such outwardly.

The same is true in Christianity. In 1 Cor. 16 the apostle insists that men might be partakers of the sacraments and perish after, all. And this may go very far: a person may have all the external and real privileges belonging to the Christian system and not have life. This is the case in Heb. 6 One may speak with the tongues of men and angels, have faith to remove mountains, and be nothing. These things may be there, and "not accompany salvation." Hence, in the case of the Galatians, he stood for a moment in doubt of them, though the Spirit was ministered to them; and we have the Lord admitting that men had cast out devils in His name, yet that He had never known them (Matt. 7). And though this (it is true) is directly connected with His sojourn on earth, one may be a branch in the vine, and be taken away.² I confirm the general truth merely by this. In the Christian order of things, we have admission to the Christian system by ordinances recognized, and even outward privileges enjoyed- and yet no divine life or union with Christ.

But the Anglican system goes farther. It attributes to the baptized that of which baptism is not even a sign. That baptism should be a sign of regeneration, I have no wish to deny. It is according to scripture specifically unto death, and, in general, to the name of Christ. But it is as a sign of death, and coming up out of it may be held as resurrection; but this is individual, and has nothing to do with the body of Christ. Baptism is not even a sign of being, or being made, a member of Christ. It goes no farther than death, and, at the utmost, resurrection. It is individual. I die there: I rise up again. The unity of the body has no place in it. We are baptized alone, each one for himself. But it is by one Spirit we are baptized into one body, not by water. The Lord's supper is the sign of that; we are all one body, inasmuch as we are partakers of that one loaf. The alleging that all baptized persons have life even is unscriptural and untrue. The ascribing the possession of vital privileges, eternal life, to them is a fatal error, and that which leads to the judgment revealed in Jude. The attributing membership of Christ to them is not even in a figure found in baptism.

The sacraments or ordinances, for there is a sacramental system, are the earthly administrations of revealed privileges, an outward system of professed faith, and a visible body on earth. Life and membership of Christ are by the Holy Ghost. We are born of the Spirit, and by one Spirit baptized into one body. To say we are members of Christ by baptism is a falsification of the truth of God, by confounding (directly contrary to scripture) the external admission to the earthly profession with life from God; and it is the falsification of the meaning even of the sign. It is the other sacrament, not baptism, which (even externally) exhibits the unity of the body. The Lord's supper is in its nature received in common. The assembly or Church participate. Hence we have (Eph. 4), "one Spirit, one body, one hope of your calling." This belongs to the Spirit and spiritual persons. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism"; such is the outward profession and faith of Christ.

The confounding the outward administration by ordinances with the power of the Spirit of God is the source of popery and apostasy. It is pitiable to see how Augustine (a truly godly man personally, who felt what life and the true Church were, when the outward thing had become grossly corrupt) writhes under the effort to conciliate the two; and quails and is boggled in his answer to the Donatists-which is none. It had been determined that the baptism by heretics was good; it was held that the Holy Ghost was given by it (another egregious blunder at any rate, as the Acts plainly shows): consequently the Donatists had it, consequently were of the true Church. In vain Augustine seeks, flounderingly, to get out of the net he had spread for himself or got into. It required another remedy. In fact the bishops and Constantine had used other means than arguments.

Let me add here, what is not unimportant to remark, that baptism imports, not a change of state by receiving life, but a change of place. There are two things needed for fallen man. He was at enmity with God, in the mind of his flesh, and he was driven out away from God. Both these had to be remedied. We are born of God, get the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; but the fact of having life does not change our place; we become conscious of the sinfulness of the flesh-that there is no good thing in us (that is, in our flesh); but if we bring this into the light of God's requirements, it is only "O wretched man that I am!" A change of place, position, standing, being reconciled to God, is needed also. But that is by Christ's dying and so entering as man into a new place and standing for man in resurrection, according to the value of His work. He died unto sin once: in that He lives He lives unto God. Now it is of this that baptism is the sign, not of His simple quickening power as Son

of God. We are baptized to His death, buried with Him unto death, that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life. No doubt, if we are risen, we are alive; but we are quickened together with Him. Death has taken us wholly out of our old place; we have died out of it, as Christ died out of the world, and to sin; we are dead to the law by the body of Christ; we are dead to sin, have crucified the flesh, are crucified to the world. Now baptism represents death, and hence, when come out of it, a new place and standing before God-death and not quickening. We have put on Christ as in this new place, and have done with the world, flesh, and law, by death. This would be true, were but one Christian saved in the world. The unity of the body, which follows on it, is another truth. The doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans does not touch on this, though the practical part takes it up as a well-known truth.

I now turn to the building. Christ declares (in Matt. 16) that He will build the Church and that the gates of hell (hades)- Satan's power, as having the power of death-shall not prevail against it. The title given to Satan's power clearly shows what the rock was. Christ was the Son of the living God. The power of death (which Satan holds) could not prevail against that. The resurrection was the proof of it: then He was declared Son of God with power. Peter's confession of the truth revealed to him by the Father put him, by Christ's gift, in the first place in connection with this truth. The reader may remark that keys have nothing to do with the Church: people do not, as I have heretofore remarked, build with keys. Besides, the keys, those of the kingdom, were given to Peter. He had nothing to do with building: Christ was to do that. "I will build," says Christ. The Father had revealed Christ's character. On that rock Christ would build; Peter might be the first stone in importance, but no builder. Besides that, Christ has Himself ("also" refers to this: "I also," that is, besides what the Father has done) an administration to confer on Peter, that of the kingdom whose keys are given to him. But beyond all controversy, the kingdom of heaven is not the Church, though they may run parallel at the present time. Accordingly, when Peter refers to this, he does not speak of himself as building in any way. It was Christ's personal secret work in the soul carried on by Him, a real spiritual work, applicable individually and only to those who were spiritual, and, though by grace in their hearts, their own coming to Christ. "To whom coming, a living stone disallowed indeed of men but chosen of God and precious, ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore, also, it is contained in the scripture. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. To you, therefore, that believe he is precious "; otherwise a stone of stumbling. Now here there are no ordinances, but faith; living stones coming to a living stone. All is spiritual, personal, real. Christ is precious to faith. They have tasted that the Lord is gracious: otherwise it is not true, Peter does not build, nor any other instrument. They come by faith and are built up. Against this, most assuredly, the gates of hades will not prevail; but man's building has nothing to say to it. The body or membership of the body forms no part of Peter's revelation. Nor does he speak of the Church or assembly at all.

Let us now turn to Paul. He is full upon this question. He was a minister of the Church to fulfill or complete the word of God. Hence the doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ is fully developed by him. In Eph. 1-4, in Corinthians to and 12, in Rom. 12, in Colossians, we have large and elaborate instruction on the subject; but of course there is no talking of building a body. Christ is risen to be the Head of the body. In Col. 1 He is exalted to the right hand of God. And God has given Him, in that position, to be Head to the body which is His fullness who fills all in all. Christ has reconciled both in one body by the cross. And, as to its accomplishment, it is by the baptism of the Holy Ghost: by one Spirit we have been all baptized into one body. And, further, when he speaks of the building in its true perfect adjustment, he has no instrumental builder either. "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." This, though somewhat differently viewed, is Peter's building. We may find the same in Heb. 3, Christ's house, "Whose house are we." But Paul speaks in a different way elsewhere, and shows us the house raised by human instruments, a public ostensible thing in the world. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." And then he shows the effect of fidelity or infidelity in the work. Now in this we have the responsibility of man, and the instrumentality of man directly engaged in the work. Christ is not the builder. Paul is the master-builder and lays the foundation which is Christ; others build on it; nor is the building, consequently, fitly framed together. Wood and hay and stubble are not fitly framed in a building with gold and silver and precious stones: the work is, in such case, to be burned up: Christ's work never will. Now this gives, evidently, another character to the Church than that of Matt. 16 or 1 Peter 2.

It is on this confusion and error that popery, Puseyism, and the whole high-church system is built. They have not distinguished between the building which Christ builds, where living stones come to a living stone, where all grows to a holy temple in the Lord (that is, where the result is perfect), and that which man avowedly builds, though as God's building, and where man may fail and has failed. I am entirely justified in looking at the outward thing in this world as a building, which in pretension, character, and responsibility is God's building; yet it has been built by man, and built of wood and stubble, so that the work is to be burned up in the day of judgment which is revealed in fire. Yea, more, I may see that corrupters have corrupted it; and that, if any have dealt with it in this character, they will be destroyed. In a word I have a building which Christ builds, a building in which living stones come and are built up as living stones, a building which grows to a holy temple in the Lord. I have also what is called God's building, as that which is for Him and set up by Him on the earth, but which is built instrumentally and responsibly by man, where I may find very bad building and even persons corrupting it. The foundation well laid, and a good foundation, but all the superstructure to be in question. Thus the whole professing church stands in the position and responsibility of God's building; the actual building or work is the work of men and may be wood, hay, and stubble, or the mere corruption of the corrupter. It is not that of which Christ says, "I will build." It would be a blasphemy to say that He builds with wood, hay, and stubble, or corrupts the temple of God. Yet such the apostle tells us may take place; and it has taken place; and he who sets the title of God upon the wood, hay, and stubble, or upon the wicked corruption of His temple, dishonors God by putting (as far as they are concerned) His seal and sanction upon evil, which is the greatest of wickedness. What our path in such a case is, Paul (2 Tim. 2) tells us; but it is not my object to pursue this here, but to distinguish between those admitted by baptism and the body; and between the Church which Christ builds, and what man builds when God's building is entrusted to him. All that has been entrusted to man, man has failed in. And God has put all into his hands first, to be set up perfect in the second Man who never fails.

Adam himself fails and is replaced by Christ.

The law was given, and Israel made the golden calf; hereafter, when Christ comes, the law will be written in the heart of Israel.

The priesthood failed, strange fire was offered and Aaron forbidden to enter the sanctuary, save on the great day of atonement, and then not in his garments of glory and beauty; Christ is a merciful and faithful high priest even now in glory.

The son of David set up in person wholly fails, loving many strange women, and the kingdom is divided. Nebuchadnezzar set by God over the Gentiles makes a golden image, puts those faithful to God into the fire, and becomes a beast. Christ shall take the throne of David in unfailling glory, and rise to reign over the Gentiles.

The Church was called to glorify Christ. I, says He, am glorified in them. But antichrists and a falling away are the result: even in the apostle's time all seek their own; and the last days (John), the objects of judgment (Jude), were there. After Paul's decease grievous wolves would come, and from the bosom of the Church those who turned away the disciples would arise, and perilous times and evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, and if they did not continue in God's goodness, they would be cut off: but He will come, for all that, to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe. The Church has fallen like all the rest. Grace will produce and perfect its own work. Christ's building will be complete and perfect, but be manifested in glory. Man's building is ill built and corrupted, and will come under the worst and severest of judgments.

Christian Truth: Volume 30, All Things Are Yours

1 Cor. 3:21

Every possible glory is ours: relative blessedness, for we are children; associated blessedness in union with the blessed One, for we are the bride; official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests; human blessedness, for we shall be perfect men after the image of the second Adam; corporate blessedness, for we shall joy together; individual blessedness, for we shall have a name which no one knows but he that receives it; and we shall have the fullness of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, unhindered by these poor bodies.

Letters 3, Faith and Sight; Sealing of the Holy Spirit; the Reformation

It is a good while now since I exchanged a line with you; and, in fact, I have been laid up, so that I could do, for some time, little or nothing-entirely down, so that I did not know whether I should be raised up at all again. It is now near three months that I have been unable to pass the night stretched in my bed-at first, not at all: now I sit up in bed about a third of the night, but I sleep rather better then, than lying down—all this of the poor body, but it makes its being left, if not glorified, nearer to us. God may give higher apprehensions of the joys before us, and if all be not habitually and honestly purged before God there may be exercises of conscience, even if we know the remedy. I hardly came so near to going away as that; but I was surprised, in at least looking it in the face, how little difference there was: Christ with me for the way, and Christ at the end for full and perfect joy. It is a difference to go. It is what is eternal, but we live as in Christ in what is eternal; but faith is not sight. But the word is ever precious, which brings what is of God, and God Himself to us, in the power of His own Spirit, and so as from Himself, and this gives it a peculiar and blessed character: soon it will be better still; not from Himself, but Himself. But it is suited to us here, just like Christ Himself -what is of God and heavenly, but suited to us here—with a divine flexibility which suits itself to all circumstances and to everything that is in our hearts, but to take us up whence it comes from.

I have written a tract on the "Sealing of the Spirit." I felt its being muddled, as it was, a good deal, and this was the case everywhere; it was a sign of the state of souls. But dear was never, I think, clear; I have often told him so, never really out of Rom. 7 But how many are there! Yes, very many take for granted they are out of it, while full, perfect, simple redemption is not really known. Ask, not in Palestine, but in Boston and New York, what it is to have "no more conscience of sins," and they cannot tell; and then God for us is not known. This side in the public teaching was wanting at the Reformation. They saw Christ's work meeting our need before God, but "God so loved" was hardly a part of their gospel. On assurance they largely insisted; indeed, justifying faith was, to them, the personal appropriation of Christ's work in an assuring way: it was not sufficiently the object of faith though it was there, but the state of the soul. But when it pleases God to do so, He works with very imperfect truth, provided it be Christ; it is one of the present difficulties. At the first, full truth flowed from the center and drew souls up to it; now it works where all is confusion, to bring in divine order and faith through the word—I mean order as to the truth. But I close.

In general, throughout the country, there is a real appetite for the word—a happy sign—and brethren are blessed. In some parts of London, though there is nothing outward, the effect of local troubles remains. But the Lord loves His church, and does not cease His care for it. Nothing will fail of His purposed grace. Peace be with you, dear brother, and constant guidance, keeping near enough to hear His voice through grace.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

January 29th.

Letters 3, Assembly; Christ Known for Down Here and on High; Testimony for These Days, Resources in Low State of the

Very dear brother, -

I thank you for your letter. All this interests me much. writes to me also of the issue of this division movement of which you speak. It appears, blessed be God for it! that it is coming to an end. Often a little patience to let God act is the remedy, while judging all manifested evil, specially when the evil is more in the general state; then it is necessary to seek, by nourishing the souls of those who are Christ's, to raise their spiritual tone. For the rest we must always look beyond this poor world down here.

We ought to be a testimony for God down here, and we must surely remember this. "Ye are my witnesses," said Jehovah to Israel, and with still greater reason are Christians such, who are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. I seek this, I pray God for it, and also that He may maintain His testimony in its purity. I believe He will, but for that we must live near Him in spirit, as He lived by His Father, one with Him, in such a way that all He said and did was but the expression of what the Father was. It is what we ought to be for Christ, but for that the heart must be with Him above. The first thing is communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, for there the direct power of the life is. But it is a mistake to suppose that the heavenly things are not revealed to us: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God." Now, whilst giving us strength down here, and detaching us from the things that are seen, this accustoms us to live in the things that are our eternal portion.

We often make use of the Savior in His grace, so suited to our need, and that flows so freely towards us—who thinks of us, of all our difficulties, of all our weaknesses—and we are quite right, for He makes us pass in peace and safety through a world of sorrow and danger; but it is another thing to have the heart lifted up above the world, whilst passing through it, and attached to Him in heaven in such a way that that which fills the heart now is also the object of our hope. It is what I seek, and pray to God for, for other Christians as for myself. But we must have Christ for the journey through the wilderness; we need to know how to count on His faithfulness in all circumstances, and to wait on Him.

May God keep all the brethren very near to Him, this is our eternal position, and it keeps the conscience awake. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

1880.

Letters 2, Alone With God; Isolation; Combining an Occupation With Service; Trusteeships, The Good of Being

I was most thankful to get your letter, though long delayed by my absence in New Zealand, On arriving here I found the second one, with that from dear apprising me of his return to England. It was an additional motive for writing to you. It may have been quite right he should go, being trustee; but I feel a Christian engaged in the Lord's work ought not to be in such an office-hardly any other Christian, as it may involve law suits, which they are bound to institute as responsible for their wards. The Lord will guide him in this, and I trust he may return to you, unless the Lord have other work for him. When he had just passed surgeon, he wrote to me about working: I told him the first question was, was he a surgeon that preached, or a preacher that practiced by occasion. He understood it well, and has worked diligently ever since, practicing when occasion offered. I do trust this trusteeship may not divert him from the Lord's work. Trustees are easier to be had than laborers—true trustees of the Lord's word and grace in service.... I do hope and pray he may keep up to the calling he has already wrought in. Laborers that work from Christ and with Him, are not so plenty.

But you must not be discouraged, dear brother, if for a time alone. No one ever knew what it was to be alone as the blessed Lord did. It is a great comfort that some solid brethren are already with you. Besides, there is One above all; and it is a good experience. We may glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon us. We fancy often that the apostles soared above human feelings: it was not so. Where the apostle [Paul] was most largely blessed, he was among them "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." I have the habit of working alone, have always had, though cordially united with brethren. I am almost afraid sometimes there is fault in me, but I am cast on the Lord, and am more with Him—quite recognizing that the Lord Himself sent them out two and two, and seeing in a measure the wisdom of it, and how it makes the work wholly the Lord's own. Plymouth business, I believe, sealed this path on my spirit...

What a comfort to know that "grace and truth came" (not ' were told of,' not a rule of what man ought to be)—took place by the coming of Christ! We are in the truth and all the grace and relationship with the Father in which He stood, and which were revealed in Him. Be of good cheer, dear brother, and work away, looking to the Lord. This, as to doing, is all we have to do here; in due time we shall reap if we faint not. There is always a moment in our spiritual life when our faith must be individual and direct. In one sense it is always so, but where we are put upon it—a critical time for the soul -as Lot was, we may not be aware of all involved in it, but our condition and resolve under grace is tested. But His grace is sufficient for us, His strength made perfect in weakness.... When the right time is come, God will send help to you: we must lean on Him. Sorrows on our path we must expect. It is the time of conflict, and we must expect it: only still go on, keeping in that presence which hides us from the provoking of all men. For my part, I do not doubt my object, but I feel my love very poor. But I think the Lord is working and helping on brethren, provided only they do not become worldly: if they do—are conformed to the world—what are they worth?

Ever affectionately yours in the Lord.

Chicago,

June 27th, 1876.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 7, Work of Christ, On the

MR. SCHERER has added a second letter to that already known and has just published them together. His aim is to show that faith can abide intact spite of the denial of the inspiration of the scriptures; but this second letter is already the full proof of the contrary. The doctrine it contains is simply, in very fair phrases, the denial of the expiation of Christ and of the doctrine of justification by faith which flows from it.

The system of Mr. Scherer, who has not even the merit of originality, is only a diluted Irvingism. Besides it is the adoration of man, colored with a certain mystic tint. Under the pretext of glorifying the Person of Christ, mysticism denies the efficacy of His work. Further, without the doctrine of expiation (such is the deceitfulness of the heart), admiration of the Person of Christ and of His life may be self-admiration. Christ was a man; and, by deifying man in Him, people put on themselves the crown of His glory under the pretext of the duty and capability of being like Him internally.

This system pretends to something more real, more intimate, more personal in religion. Poor heart of man! When will it learn that nothing so humbles it (and this is what is wanted), that nothing operates in it so strongly, in the way needed, as the knowledge that all has been done outside itself? Glorifying in one's humility, and being indeed humble, are two very different things. It is not by thinking of oneself, in order to imitate humility, that one becomes humble; it is by being debtor for all to the grace of Him who has saved us. Pharisaism does not consist in attributing everything to oneself, but in blessing God for what one is, instead of blessing Him for what He is, Himself.

I do not pretend to handle this question thoroughly, but only to examine some points in Mr. Scherer's letter.

There is no novelty in his system, except that he excludes, as uninspired, what the mystics confine themselves to letting alone, namely, all the Holy Ghost's teaching by the apostles.

See pages 33 and 34, where the thing is plainly stated. " You ask me," says he, " what remains of Christianity, when the dogma of inspiration is thrown out? 'Jesus Christ remains.' What remains of scripture? 'The history of Jesus Christ.' "

We find in this second letter the same levity as in the first in assertions about serious matters, and in cases when the smallest examination would have shown how destitute of foundation those assertions are. There is the same inflation of style, serving to veil capital vices in the reasoning, and to conceal unbelief and the desire of exalting man. " Have you not found," says he, " salvation and life in Jesus Christ? and if it is so, how can you fear, lest any fact whatever should weaken this fact of immediate certainty? " (Page 28.) But it is not the fact of my possessing eternal life that this foolish doctrine weakens; it is the certainty of the truths that God uses as the means to communicate and maintain life. To deny inspiration is to deny the certain communication of truth on the part of God.

" Very far " (the author tells us) " from being incompatible with criticism, faith carries a critical force in itself." (Page 29.) This contradicts the sufficiency of moral certitude, and the historical proofs of which he speaks in his first letter. But, passing over that, there is little but words in this phrase. How does the fact that faith possesses a critical force show that something else has that force? So far as there is any force in the reasoning, the reasoning itself precisely shows the contrary of what Mr. Scherer pretends to establish; for, if faith carries a critical force in itself, faith, having made its own criticism, excludes thereby the possibility of questioning its judgment: otherwise, its judgment is null. It pronounces, because it discerns. If I say, the tongue has in itself the capacity to discern the taste of what touches it, by attributing this faculty to the tongue, I exclude all judgment pronounced on the decision of the tongue; if not, I deny what I have just affirmed. The tongue says that honey is sweet. Who disputes its decision? Who disputes the power of the tongue-the very thing one has just been affirming? And this is owing to a special connection between the quality of an object, and the capacity to discern this quality. Thus, faith is faith, because it receives and understands the things of God, which are in connection with a capacity proper to faith; that is, the critical force which it has in itself implies the incompatibility of all other criticisms. This is so much the more true, because the quality recognized by faith excludes by this very fact all other criticism; for faith recognizes the authority of God in that which it receives; it believes God; otherwise it is not faith. Who will criticize God and His words? But, until one has received a communication as being such, faith is not in activity.

This manner of expressing oneself is, however, very imperfect, because it takes in only the fact of the existence of faith in man. The word of God, as is always the case, gives us much more light than the best reasonings. " The spiritual man," it tells us, " judgeth [discerneth] all things, yet he himself is judged [discerned] of no man," 1 Cor. 2:15. There is the criticism with which all other criticism is incompatible. And what is the force of this expression? It is, that God is there introduced, and that the Spirit of God is in the spiritual man, directing him and conducting him. He discerns all things because he is spiritual.

Now, mark well too the effect of this truth. The Holy Ghost, working in man, does not exclude the responsibility of man; on the contrary, it gives him the right feeling of his relationship with God, and judges all that is inconsistent with that relationship. He does not act independently of the Lord, because He subjects man to God, and to what God has said. This was true in the case of Christ, and perfectly true in Him only. In us " the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," tending always to produce imperfection in discernment and conduct. And again the Holy Ghost, working in man, does not exclude the faculties of man; He uses them; He is not judged by them. He uses them, so that it is human intelligence employed on all the subjects with which the Holy Ghost can occupy it, but employed by Him, enlightened by Him, receiving a capacity, in a certain sense, divine, without ceasing at the same time to be human. Man is thus delivered from the dominion of his corrupt nature. Reason neither judges nor governs; for if it does, it is only the will of man aspiring to independence, that is, excluding God, and always wrong by the very fact of this exclusion. When God is not already supreme, and His authority absolute in the eyes of a man, the man is altogether in a lie, because he is not in his moral place. But, while employing and in a divine way enlarging the capacity of man, the Holy Ghost submits him necessarily to God, makes God known to him, makes him receive what is of God-the word-because it is the perfect expression of the judgment of God. It is true that the flesh " lusteth against the Spirit," so that imperfection is there. The result is not one of absolute perfection. It is only in as much as he is spiritual, as I have already said, that a man discerns all things.

The Spirit not only makes man subject to God, places him thus morally in what is true, and renders him capable of morally discerning; but He delivers him from the influence of the carnal motives which constantly vitiated his judgment. The Spirit presents to the affections of man, God in Christ, as well as a development of the truth, in all the relationships of man with God, as sinner and as saint, and that according to the height of the Person and work of Christ, and it is His work alone which gives us the true estimate of sin. Christ always estimated sin according to God; but, as to us sinners, it is only in the cross that we perfectly estimate it, because we there see it outside ourselves, in whom all is darkened by sin. It is there that the hatred of man against God, and the love of God for man, have met in one and the same act; and it is there that the moral state of man and the perfect revelation of God have been completely brought into evidence. That act is, at the same time, righteousness and salvation, death and judgment, as they were never manifested before, and never will be; and in that act they have been manifested as salvation and as life, the means which God has opened for His sovereign love and the salvation of the believer.

The insulting spear, which struck the Savior when already dead, only brought forth the water and the blood which atone for and cleanse the sin which made them flow.

Man, morally, his affections, his judgment, are thus purified by that Jesus whom the Holy Ghost presents to him, that he may possess Him in his heart. Sweet and sanctifying proof of the Father's love! The Holy Ghost in man is a real and divine power; but He also works morally, and in the intelligence of him in whom He dwells. The spiritual man discerneth all things. All means are at his disposal. He judges all things, he takes knowledge of all things if needful, according to the Spirit and by His direction. It is not his reason which judges; he judges spiritually of all things. He judges himself instead of pretending to judge God, as if he had a capacity independent of Him. It is this that is incompatible with faith; this is that criticism which is incompatible with faith, because faith acknowledges God, and judges that proud criticism, which, in its folly, would judge God.

If then one would speak of faith, it is because it has a sovereign power of criticism, because it is incompatible with criticism. That which criticizes supremely cannot be criticized, it would be a flagrant contradiction. "The spiritual man," says Paul (for faith is an abstraction), "judgeth [discerneth] all things, and he himself is judged [discerned] of no man,"

Cor. 2:15.

What is this "transformation" of faith or of truth? It purifies itself, you say, rejecting every foreign substance. Well and good; but what is that movement in which "the constitutive elements of truth are found to be carried away"? Is not the truth of God stable, immutable, and eternal, transforming man by its power and by grace, but remaining ever itself, and ever the same?

Mr. Scherer-and this is convenient-wishes one to have the courage to set aside the dogmatic notion of inspiration, and place oneself, with the appearance of faith, on the free ground of the historical point of view, etc. It is clear that if I do that, all is done. "The assurance of faith," say you? In what? Founded on what? On Jesus Christ, will you tell me? But how should I have a divine history of Him, without there being a divine capacity to write it? It is a book that I read, it is not Himself that I see. Mr. Scherer will tell me that what I read is evidently divine. Agreed. But you must fully bear in mind that you have not Jesus personally. You have only what is written: it is that which must be divine, if the Jesus whom I know is divine. Is it man that does what is divine?

Mr. Scherer acknowledges fully that, in order to invent Jesus-Christ, one must have been Christ himself. In effect, it is morally impossible to form a just idea of such a character, without having in one the moral elements of that character- without being oneself what He is. I add, that we have this security further than the fact of invention-for this fact would have been the denial of that character, so that we must necessarily have the thing itself. Now, this is what we have by writing: who is capable of it? Man, or the men who wrote it? Then they are all Jesuses-they are all inspired! This is so much the more evident, because, in order to have this perfect and adorable being, more men than one were employed. This history is not their own act; it is a whole which reproduces Him of whom they speak. Finally, if a man who has faith rids himself of the scriptures which serve as a foundation to faith, the question is not to know if he loses his own faith, but if he has not destroyed the foundations on which the faith of others may rest, and level the faithfulness of God, if he has not destroyed the very foundations of his own. For, if God has not spoken, on what is faith founded? If God has spoken by a man, then the man is inspired.

Mr. S. wishes us to "believe in the truth." "You believe in Jesus Christ: believe also in the truth." This is all very fine; but what does it mean? Truth is an abstraction. It must subsist somewhere. There is such a thing as the truth- moral perfection in relationship with the Supreme Being, or, at least, a just estimate of those relationships-a life and a position which expresses that estimate. A man who tells me things just as they are tells me the truth; but to tell of things just as they are in connection with God is to say a great deal. If everything in these relationships is in its normal state, it is moral perfection. In a state of sin the truth does not exist. All is a lie. I said, in the relationship with the Supreme Being; because, in the case of the creature, to exclude God is falsehood itself. It is what Jesus says of the adversary-"He abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him," John 8:44.

One cannot say, God is the truth, because God is perfect in Himself, and again, no relationship is obligatory for Him. To say that a thing is the truth, there must be a point of comparison by which I can judge of the conformity of what is expressed to that which ought to be expressed. But this is not the case with respect to God. Viewed in His essential existence, God does not express Himself. He is what He is. He cannot be compared with anything; He, as the word expresses it, "Dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto," 1 Tim. 6:16. How then is one to have the truth?

The truth is in Christ Himself. He is moral perfection in the relationship which can subsist with God, and in the most perfect way-the expression of God in His relationship with man. His life is also a life which is the just estimate of these relationships, amidst the evil where man is fallen. "He is the way, the truth, and the life." This is what Mr. Scherer says (it may be objected). "Can one," he says, "truly believe in one without believing in the other?" But mark it well, for Mr. Scherer there is one and the other; and as to that other thing, the truth, where does it subsist-out of Christ? Where is it realized or possessed? Realized out of Christ? No one would dare to pretend such a thing and call himself a Christian. There would be another Christ. But possessed? Well, possessed out of Christ- where? There would still be another Christ; for to be this in thought, as we agreed, we ought to be this in point of fact. The man who possesses the truth outside of Christ does not want Him; he is himself the thing that he seeks. What then would be this truth which would be something besides Christ? When I know Christ, I know I possess the truth. I am certain that that truth will be glorified, because it glorifies God, and gives to each thing its own proper place. Although I might abstract, my confidence is not in an abstraction; it is in a living being, in Christ, and in God who glorifies Him.

Why distinguish confidence in the truth from confidence in Christ? Because the first is confidence in man—confidence in oneself.

This is most evident.

You have no confidence in the force of the truth as to a tree or an animal, and you are right. Why? Because they lack the necessary capacity to receive it, and they can neither taste nor appreciate it. The force of the truth is then in the moral capacity of the one who receives it; that is to say, your confidence is in the moral state of man. It is true that the truth in Christ is adapted to the conscience of every man, whose rebel will rejects it. Under the influence of grace the soul tastes its truth. As to the natural man, "the light shineth in darkness, and the

darkness comprehendeth it not," John 1:5. For the rest, it is certain that truth came by Jesus Christ. What has been outside grace-its force in the heart of man) It is this, that the history of our precious Savior can teach us. Does Mr. Scherer believe that Christ is the truth? Was Christ received? Had the truth in its perfection that force which compels one to receive it? What then does that expression mean-" believe in the truth "? that is to say, believe in its intrinsic force to make itself received? It is but the adoration of man, in face of his conduct towards Christ. Would Mr. Scherer produce a truth more perfect than Christ, or believe in the efficacy of something less perfect? If one distinguishes between the truth and Christ, to believe in the truth is but unbelief with respect to Christ. You confide in your attachment to the truth, which without that attachment is nothing. Man as a sinner, man obeying his lusts, is not attached to the truth; the truth has no influence on him.

But one may tell me that the man who possesses the truth, who loves it, who tastes it, has confidence in it, as well as in Christ. Is it a living being, and outside of Christ? Where does it exist? In the mind of him who has confidence in it.

But by what means will it have the force which inspires confidence? It is either by the power of God, and then it is faith by the power of grace; or else it is by the acceptation of him who approves of it-that is to say, by man. Now God is here left outside. The work of God is faith in Christ. In the other case, it is confidence in man, confidence in oneself.

It is at the bottom that which Mr. Scherer acknowledges. For him " faith in Christ is a sacrifice of self; confidence in the truth is a sacrifice of our timidity, of our prejudices, of our party spirit." Who is it that thus overcomes himself? It is man. The man who is true in his heart, in his motives, but outside of Christ; for if it is Christ as power, as motive, and as object, it is faith in Christ, and it is not to believe also in the truth. This new God (for in order for us to confide in Him, He must be God) this new God, I say, is only man after all.

Truth is of all importance. One of the most important characters of the church is to be " the pillar and ground of the truth," 1 Tim. 3:15.

We are going to see if Mr. Scherer upholds it.

He tells us that " Revelation supposes... the knowledge of God and the conscience of sin." Is that truth? The Savior said, and Mr. Scherer reminds us of it, " they that are sick need a physician." No doubt; but He did not say, those who know themselves to be sick. But as to the knowledge of God, what does it reveal? The apostle said, that " by the law is the knowledge of sin " (Rom. 3:20), and that without law he would not have known sin; Rom. 7:7. The Lord Himself says that the Holy Ghost would reprove the world of sin, because they did not believe in Jesus; John 16:7, 9. If Mr. Scherer only means to say that every man has a conscience, I do not dispute it. But to say that the gospel supposes and does not create the sense of sin, and that the revelation of Jesus as light does not produce by grace, in the heart of man, the consciousness of what he is, this is to be as far off as possible from the truth. Mr. Scherer's own words show us the true consequence of this idea, that the gospel supposes the knowledge of sin; and they prove that I do not exaggerate, in supposing that he means to say that the gospel is not given to produce it. He says, " the gospel is not for everybody; it addresses itself very directly to some, whilst with others it has not one point of contact." (Page 32.) Every Christian knows the contrary, and the word of God has a language entirely opposed to this. And if one has the consciousness of sin, without a revelation, why, as Mr. Scherer will have it, is it faith which supposes a revelation that weeps and is prostrate in the dust; or which, like that of the woman which was a sinner, covers the Master's feet with her tears of repentance and stifled sobs? (Page 32.) If one has the sense of sin, without a revelation, and thus without faith, how is there but one faith, that of the publican prostrate in the dust, or that which shed the tears of repentance-that is to say, which has a true sense of sin? And, besides, is that indeed the only faith? "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace," Gal. 5:22. We have "not received the spirit of bondage again to fear," but we " have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Rom. 8:15, 16. Is that a false faith which says, He " loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father " (Rev. 1:5, 6); and which also says, " in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory "? (1 Pet. 1: 8).

Is all that tears, prostration, or stifled sobs; or else did the apostles, notwithstanding, " religious inspiration " that Mr. Scherer attributes to them, describe a false faith? Is it that I despise these precious movements of a renewed heart and conscience? God preserve me from it! But, with the habitual pretension of sentimental spirituality, Mr. Scherer confounds the first movements of the quickening Spirit in the heart with the simplicity of peace, with the calm of spirit and rest which are the portion of him who knows Christ. If there is no other faith than that which sighs and covers the Master's feet with its stifled sobs, what was the faith of this very same woman, when she went away in peace, because her sins were forgiven, and when she knew, from the lips of Jesus Himself, that this faith had saved her? But, if one would tell me that in the gospel faith receives an answer which removes the sobs and the tears, it is in that case nonsense to allege there is but the faith which weeps. Here is faith in the gospel of the grace of God, which gives peace and joy, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us; Rom. 5:5.

Sentimental people love their own sobs, not the grace which produced them. The Christian, feeble as he may be, loves God, because God loved him first. He thinks not of his repentance, but of Him who vouchsafed it to Him, who gave him access to Himself by the blood of the Lamb, and who made him joint-heir with Christ His Son, according to His ineffable love. This ignorance of the gospel explains itself by things still more serious, that we meet with farther on in this letter. But before pointing this out I shall say a few words on another matter which, according to Mr. Scherer, the gospel supposes, namely, " the knowledge of God."

What vagueness! what a superficial way of treating serious questions! What is the knowledge of God? One asks oneself if the man who affirms that the gospel " supposes " this knowledge of God has himself the knowledge of God. " He who loveth not, knoweth not God," says the apostle John; 1 John 4:8. " When ye knew not God," says another apostle, " but now ye have known God " (Gal. 4:8, 9); and elsewhere, " the Gentiles who knew not God," 1 Thess. 4:5. " The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not," John 1:5. Because the natural conscience tells a man that he is guilty, and that there is a God of judgment, does that man know God? He who speaks of a distinct motion in

the soul, as if it was the knowledge of God, ought not to cry out against dogmatism and intellectualism, as evils of a religious life.

I come to things more serious still than the vagueness which reigns in these pages. All the gospel, Mr. Scherer tells us, centers in Jesus Christ.... " If one cuts off the dogma of inspiration, there remains Jesus Christ.... What remains to faith? The Person of Jesus Christ. He is the

beginning and the end, the center and the whole." Not a word of His work, mark it well. After having cut off the dogma of inspiration, what remains of scripture? " The history of Jesus Christ." A history, mark it well, imperfect as the men who wrote it; for, not having been kept by inspiration, their writings are but fallible accounts like those of other men. But is there nothing but the history of Jesus Christ, nothing of the witness of the Spirit as to the efficacy of His work? Does there remain nothing of it, even if it were not inspired? Did the religious inspiration of the apostles occupy itself with things of no value, when enlarging on the value of the work of Christ? No, according to Mr. Scherer, there remains nothing but the history of Jesus Christ, the Person of Jesus Christ. " It is the beginning and the end, the center and the whole." For him the work of Christ is a nullity, and he declares himself that it is the suppression of the dogma of inspiration which does this.

But there is something more definite still, and it is with deep sorrow that I revert to some lines of the author, which are simply the denial of the doctrines which are essential to true Christianity. However, it is a mercy of God to, have permitted that the effect of the rejection of inspiration should be at once stated by the very man who rejects it, stated immediately, so that the weakest Christian, the very moment he hears such words, should be warned of their bearing. I accept the truth that the Person of the Lord is the great object of faith; but there is, on this point, something very ambiguous in the idealism of the author, for I can no longer call it his faith. " Something supreme," says he, " pierces through His perfection, which is so really human. Sincerely man like us, He has however the consciousness of being above man. Humanity in Him rises up to divinity. He alone knew the Father, with whom He was in a relationship which was unique. He who has seen Him has seen God. All things have been put into His hands-He abides with His own unto the end of the world. The church worships Him, and prays to Him; it acknowledges that its Savior reigns in the heaven and on the earth, and that the reconciliation is accomplished by Him, because it is accomplished in Him, namely, in the very union of the God and man." (Pages 35, 36.) Is He God, the Lord Jesus? Was He God before He became man? What pains, what subterfuges to avoid saying this word! " Humanity in Him rises up to divinity.... He who has seen Him has seen God." The Lord said: " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father " (John 14:9), and yet He was not the Father. " Reconciliation was accomplished in him, namely, in the very union of the God and man." Why of the God? Was He God? The last phrase which I have just quoted is perhaps the clearest on the subject of the divinity of Jesus; but the union of God and man leaves after all, as to the Person of Christ, and as to the true divinity of Jesus, a vagueness which nothing elsewhere can destroy. The word of God has nothing like this. " The Word," it says, " was with God, and the Word was God." " All things were made by him," and " the Word was made flesh," John 1. It is not humanity which in Him rises up to divinity, a sort of divine moral quality.... It is God-God, before being man-God who had made the heaven and the earth. " All things were created " by the Son, and for the Son, as the apostle tells us in the Epistle to the Colossians; Col. 1:16. " Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands," Heb. 1:10. One must not deceive oneself as to the meaning of words, and speak to us about dogmas. Was then Jesus the true God? He who, before becoming man, created the heavens and the earth-is He the Creator? " To raise humanity to divinity... a union of God and man." These are things that may be agreeable to man, they exalt ideal man; but was Jesus GOD outside man? Was He the

Creator?

Mr. Scherer leaves us on that point in a painful uncertainty. Now, it is important for a serious man to know if his Savior is GOD or not, and not to worship one knows not what.

On this capital point of reconciliation Mr. Scherer is by no means obscure. He denies the truth in the clearest manner. " Reconciliation was accomplished by Him, because it was accomplished in Him, namely, in the very union of God and man." Of sinful man! Is it that the reconciliation of sinful man (of a nature in which, according to the apostle, there is no good) has been effected by the union of this sinful nature with God? And what was this nature which needed to be reconciled? Was it not a sinful nature, and precisely because it was sinful? Is it that which was united to God, or to the God who united Himself to man in Jesus? And further, is it by the union of God and man that reconciliation is accomplished? " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5:19, 20. I quote the passage the nearest to Mr. Scherer's idea, inasmuch as this passage speaks of that which preceded the death of Christ; but this passage shows the complete falseness of Mr. Scherer's doctrine. For if God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them, humanity was not reconciled by its union with God. God in the man Christ was occupied with this work of love in the midst of men still sinners. Alas! men would not have it, and something else was necessary. It is that which is found at the end, in verse 20, precisely what Mr. Scherer rejects, namely, an accomplished work to which the Holy Spirit gives testimony by the apostles. " He hath committed unto us," says the apostle, " the word of reconciliation." We beseech men to be reconciled to God, for He hath made sin for us Him who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Such is reconciliation, according to God: not the reconciliation of humanity towards God in Christ, (which is nonsense, because in Christ humanity was without sin, and it was the sinner that needed to be reconciled) but the reconciliation of men as sinners, of us poor miserable ones, estranged from God, and that by a testimony of love, founded no doubt on the Person of Christ, but which is founded on His work; not that He mingled humanity in holiness to Himself, but in that He who was holy and who knew not sin was made sin for us.

It is good to put the truth solidly and simply, without equivocation, in face of the extravagant dreams of man, who would make use of the perfection of the Person of the Christ-man in order to exalt himself under the name of humanity. Christ was made sin because we were sinners. This is the truth we have need of. Call it a dogma if you like; no matter. It is a dogma which, received into the heart, gives peace according to God. Other passages are quite as clear. " Having made peace by the blood of his cross." And you, it follows, " He hath reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight," Col. 1:20, 22. We may notice, in reading what precedes, that the work of Christ is distinct from His Person.

" But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ," Eph. 2:13. The reader can examine the verses which follow: they fully confirm that the doctrine of reconciliation is by the death of Jesus, and not by the " union of God and man."

But Mr. Scherer makes his opposition to the truth still clearer.

" The work of Christ is His Person in action, as the Person of Christ is His work in power. His death is the culminating point of this work. The sufferings of Golgotha formed besides the historical condition of the struggle of the just with the world, and of the Holy One with evil.... But there is here more than a simple law of history. The work of Christ is a work of salvation. Jesus saves us by His partaking of humanity, by His realization of holiness, and by the manifestation in Him of the love and of the pardon of God. In fact, if all men have been made sinners by

the disobedience of the first Adam, the power of sin has been broken thus for all by the obedience of the Second." (Pages 37, 38.)

Would one wish for anything clearer to erase expiation from the Christian doctrine? Alas! it will be found.

" Heaven is too much considered as a dwelling-place which one may enter by pardon as one enters through a door, and where one is admitted as the consequence of an entirely judicial sentence, which is justification, in virtue of an altogether outward condition, which is the substitution of Christ, and of another condition quite arbitrary, which is faith in this institution: gross notions, which confound with the internal nature of things an imperfect symbol borrowed from the customs of men." (Page 49.)

Mr. Scherer does not believe in reconciliation by the union of God and man. The substitution of Christ is a death of Christ; it is accomplished in Him by the gross notion! His work does not even find a place in the enumeration that Mr. Scherer makes of that which, he says, people call the truths of Christianity.

" The church," he says, " would suffice to propagate what is called the truths of Christianity, original sin, the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment." (Page 41.)

Need I recall to the reader what a place the death and work of the Savior holds in all the Bible, from the sacrifice of Abel and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah up to the song of the apostle and church in the Revelation? We have seen the apostles attribute reconciliation to His death, to the death of Him who suffered " the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." He "came to give his life a ransom for many," Matt. 20:23. " Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," Heb. 9:28. "Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree," 1 Pet. 2:24. "He is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John 2:2. "Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification," Rom. 4:25. It is, I think, useless to multiply passages, if the words of Isaiah, of Jesus, of John, of Peter, and of Paul are not enough. As to Paul, we have the declaration that it is of this truth, founded on the Person of Christ, that he has been ordained preacher. " For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, whereunto I am ordained a preacher," 1 Tim. 2:5, 6, 7. Now it is not here only a question of inspiration. The ministry of reconciliation was confided to the apostles.

One of two things: either the apostle was mistaken in supposing that the ministry of reconciliation was committed to him, and was also mistaken with respect to the means of this reconciliation and the subject of this ministry... or the doctrine of Mr. Scherer denies Christianity.

Yes, it does deny Christianity.

I admit that the Person of Christ is the object of faith. I admit that, in all those who possess it really, this is living faith. But the reconciliation of which you, reader, and myself have need, which is our great business, the whole of our eternal blessing, the apostle attributes to one thing and Mr. Scherer to another, yea, rejecting as a gross notion the apostolic doctrine!

" The work of Christ," Mr. Scherer still tells us, " is His Person in action." (Page 37.) Did He not suffer? What was His activity when He was forsaken of God? " Jesus saves us by His partaking of humanity and His realization of holiness." (Pages 37, 38.) But " without shedding of blood there is no remission," Heb. 9:22. " A propitiation through faith in his blood," Rom. 3:25. It is a sacrifice offered once for all to God, which replaced all the offerings presented under the law. He has " offered one sacrifice for sins," Heb. 10:12. In a word, the gospel of Mr. Scherer is another gospel, which is not one at all.

If the apostles preached the true gospel, Mr. Scherer does not possess it; if the Christianity which the apostles taught, which Jesus Himself taught, is the true gospel, that of Mr. Scherer is not; it is on the contrary the denial of it. Mr. Scherer may pretend to be more spiritual, to be fond of more living doctrine. It may be that the theology and the sterile dogmatism of schools have disgusted him: he cannot have a worse opinion of them than myself. Nothing more than theological pedantry extinguishes life, vitiates spiritual judgment, and feeds the flame of pride. The Person of Christ, the perfection of His humanity, has an importance that no one can exaggerate; but that alters nothing. It is none the less true that, betrayed by the workings of the intelligence on these points, Mr. Scherer denies Christianity on the principal point of the reconciliation of man with God. Mr. Scherer teaches a false gospel. If he believes from the heart that Christ is the true God, and that He has been it from eternity-if he believes that the Word which created the world became man, he gives himself at least a great deal of trouble not to say so, or to say it in such a way as to satisfy those who do not believe it, and not to appear to share the faith of those who do believe it. Now, it is of importance to know if it is the Creator God who is my Savior; or if I adore one who is not really so. Let people cease speaking of the Person of Christ, if they are not sure that Christ is God. A sterile admiration of a beau ideal is not faith in the Son of God.

The doctrine of Mr. Scherer is but a vague and equivocal doctrine on the Person of Christ, a complete and formal denial of the gospel preached by the apostles, and of the teaching of the Holy Spirit on the subject of the work of Christ.

I will but add one instance of the same contempt, or the same negligence of what the Savior said, which I have pointed out as characterizing these letters.

To deny inspiration yet more, Mr. Scherer tells us, " We find (in the biblical accounts), preserved by an authentic tradition, deep traces that Jesus had left in the memory of those who surrounded him." (Page 41.) Very satisfactory means, it must be owned, when it is a question of possessing the words of Him of whom it is said, " He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God," John 3:34. Happily we have received from the very mouth of Jesus the assurance that what we possess is not " profound traces preserved by tradition." " The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," John 14:26. But be it the apostles or the Savior Himself, it matters not to Mr. Scherer, provided he hears the " noble accents of the human voice," and that it is not God who speaks to him.

If human subtlety was to attack divine inspiration, one has but to bless God after all that this attempt has been so soon followed by a denial of the work accomplished by the Savior to reconcile the sinner to God. The believer will understand that it is a question of the foundation of all his hopes, of his salvation, as well as of the glory of his Savior. He will understand, that to deny inspiration is to deny the teaching of the

Holy Ghost on the work of Christ and on salvation; that it is to reject all this as " gross notions," and reduce his knowledge of a living Christ to " profound traces preserved by authentic traditions! " He will understand that the scheme is another Christianity which is not one, a Christianity which takes the place of the Bible, and that all that remains to him of the volume which he possessed is only, according to Mr. Scherer, some treatises containing traditional remembrances, which teach us to do without the doctrine of the apostles; a God known without a single revelation, and traditions in order to know Him better; a beau ideal of humanity, which raises itself up to divinity; but no more propitiation for the sins which made us guilty before God. Fine inheritance! instead of the certain truth of our God, and of an accomplished salvation, which glorifies at the same time perfectly both the Person and the work of the Savior, which gives perfect peace to a heart fully reconciled, and which introduces one as a child into the communion of a God of love.

Faith in the work of Christ does not prevent us from living by Him. It is he who eats His flesh and drinks His blood who dwells in Christ, and Christ dwells in him.

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Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 2, God's Wisdom in Christ

1 Corinthians 1

ALL the foolishness of man, even of the saint, is the occasion of bringing out the wisdom of God.; all thoughts are turned into good by Him; not that this is any excuse for our foolishness. There are two things brought out here: first, all that is of man is broken to pieces; secondly, God comes in, and the righteousness of man, his carelessness, sin, everything is thoroughly broken to pieces. No flesh can glory in His presence. Then would He have men not glory at all? Not so.

Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord." And this is perfect in strength, wisdom, holiness; he will never have to be ashamed of that which is perfect, and will never pass away, when everything else does fade away. What a glorious thing for the saint! It seems wonderful for a poor sinner to be able to say he may " glory in the Lord." What a tendency there is in nature to glory in anything else! Man must glory in something; it may even be that he boasts of being the worst of sinners. He may glory in his sins, his wretchedness, anything that attaches to self. When God comes in, there will soon be an end of this; he will hide himself fast enough then, and be ashamed of everything he has gloried in before. The state of man by nature is " without God," even though he may be blessed by Him with all natural things; he would be glad to be out of God's presence if he could, but in one sense he cannot. " If I take the wings of the morning," etc. You cannot fly from His presence; yet you are miserable in it.

If a man sets up to be righteous, God will break that down, as He did in Paul. We are easily satisfied with ourselves; a very little righteousness will do. And there is another thing too: man is content with doing his own will; he knows no obedience. Will that do when God comes in? Christ came not to save the righteous but sinners; therefore, if man is to be saved, he must be treated as a sinner. Where was all the boasted righteousness of Saul of Tarsus? He must be taken up as a poor sinner. All man's self-righteousness turns out to be pride when it is traced to its root. The " elder brother " in the parable says, What, will He take in a prodigal? His pride will not let him come in to be in company with such an one. There are plenty of elder brothers now, and younger ones too. Vain man would set up to be wise: he is like a wild ass's colt. What is his wisdom? He picks up little scraps of knowledge, and calls that wisdom; it is man's wisdom, spinning thoughts to exalt himself. Man is "lighter than vanity." But "there is a path which no fowl knoweth, and the vulture's eye hath not seen it." Real wisdom lies there. All that does not give rest to the conscience is folly and fades away.

Carelessness, and boasting of sin and self-righteousness, are both folly and vanity. The difference between them is that the self-righteous man is more proud than his neighbor; but in the presence of God there is not a single motive that he would be glad to have never had. There is a way of deliverance open from the judgment. God speaks, " Where art thou? " You are naked in His presence; but there is a resource in Christ's love, and this is granted here, not when we get to heaven. There is heart enough in Jesus to open the heart of the vilest sinner. " Doth no man accuse thee? No man, Lord. Neither do I accuse thee," etc.; John 8.

There is love to meet the need: therefore I have no need to hide my sins; it leaves no room for guile in the heart; it offers no temptation to whitewash myself; but when Christ comes, it puts away all this.

Christ Jesus, " has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness (sanctification), and redemption." When we got eternal life in Christ, there was death in us; but life is come, and that life is in the Son. Christ is made unto us of God " wisdom." What kind of wisdom? Divine wisdom. How could God love such an one as I am? There is Christ's wisdom. When Christ is made wisdom for me, I can do without my own, and learn of Him as a little child. How was He wisdom? He went down into the place where death reigned, and got the victory over death. The world sinned against God, and He is come into it in mercy: that is wisdom. Wickedness is going on in the world; why does He patiently bear with it? He is saving sinners by Christ the Lord: that is wisdom.

" Righteousness " is God's own perfect righteousness. Not only can I get " wisdom," which makes me calm and quiet, but " righteousness_" in which there is not a flaw; and through His grace He is made to me " sanctification " also. The rule and measure, the power and setting apart of the new life, are all in Christ. It is not like Israel, set aside by circumcision, Red Sea, etc., but in Christ. Christ is the key to the puzzle of this world. By Him I may no longer tremble in terror before God. No; but I can glory in Him, worshipping Him who is all I need. The more I weigh and ponder it, the more perfect and the more wonderful does it seem. We are not to be nibbling a little bit of the law, and to think Christ has done all the rest. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He is a full Savior; and hence we learn that He is " redemption " too. By this the power of evil and death are set aside. We wait for the redemption of the body. I have got " redemption " now in my Head, and the fruit of it fully I wait for. Why do we wait? It is the time of His " longsuffering." " We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." Now, in the best and highest sense we are redeemed to Him. " We are in him that is tree, even in his Son Jesus Christ." We not only have the life of Adam, but are

of God in Christ- this is balm to the heart. What a different position we are in from a sinner trembling before a judge! Whence does all this come? He has taken our hearts up in grace, and will wring them, as He took Job and wrung him, to show what was in it. What came out was in it, or it would not have come out. " Glorifying in the Lord " is real humility: in it I confess I am ashamed of myself, but I acknowledge Christ.

Letters 2, Brothers' Meeting

In meetings called for the examination of cases of discipline, I should insist formally that sisters should be excluded. If they were present, I even would not go myself. It is entirely contrary to the word of God, and as unseemly as it is unscriptural. How examine certain cases with young sisters present? It would be a shame for them to desire it. Besides, the word is plain.... For my own part, I do not think it even much to be desired that all the brothers should be present. If there are a few wise brothers, who occupy themselves habitually with the good of souls, true elders given by God, and that it be not official, but according to 1 Cor. 16:15, 16, that is better than all the brothers; it is thus more evidently not the assembly, which is not equally clear when all the brothers are there: and the danger of an assembly of brothers is, lest they should believe themselves to be the assembly to decide.

But a whole assembly cannot make investigation of facts and the character of facts: two or three must do this. When all the information has been obtained, and the matter weighed before God, they communicate the result at which they have arrived, and it is the assembly that decides: if no one says anything, the matter is decided. If a brother of weight were to make an objection, or if he had anything to communicate, or knew of any circumstance likely to throw light on the subject, they might wait, or re-investigate the matter. If it is but a trifling opposition, the assembly may easily deal with it. I have seen such a case. If it is some one upholding the evil which has been judged, he becomes himself the object of judgment. (2 Cor. 10:6.)

Two things render it necessary that the action should be that of the assembly first, because it is there that Christ is; secondly, because it is the assembly which purges itself. (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 7:11.) It is rather striking that this question should have arisen in so many places, in New Zealand, and at the other end of the world—not in England, that I know of.

October 29th, 1877.

Notes and Jottings, Detached Memoranda From a Reading Meeting: First and Second Man

Whatever has been ruined in the first man will be gloriously established in the Second Man.

Adam fell, and was ruined. Christ is in the glory of God.

The law was broken. It shall presently be written on men's hearts.

The priests failed. Our Great High Priest can never fail. The kingdom failed. His throne is forever and ever.

It will all be a thousand times more glorious than what was lost—infinitely more so.

And so with the church. He will have it for His bride, He will be " glorified in his saints, and... admired in all them that have¹ believed,... in that day."

Notes and Comments 4, Fragments: "Justified"

It is one of those striking facts which one overlooks, but which have their importance in the character and teaching of Scripture, that we have not even the word "justified" in the teaching of any of the Apostles but Paul, save the well-known corrective statements in James. Nor is "righteousness" used by them in what is called the forensic, i.e., judicial sense. We have Paul stating it too in Acts 13. In the gospel, we have "Wisdom justified of her children," "This man went down justified rather than the other " (Luke), "By thy words thou shalt be justified" (Matthew), "He willing to justify himself" (Luke), "Ye are they which justify yourselves," and "The publicans justified God." These are all in the Gospels, otherwise it is as I have said. So we have seen of the Church—Christ naming it as His building—the Acts historically as a fact in the world, and manifest—else only in Paul.

Letters 3, Adam and Christ - Second Man and Last; Greek Genitive

I do not, in reference to the questions asked,¹ attach any importance to the presence or absence of . Griesbach retains it; the more recent editors give it up, with several Uncials and other authorities. As to the question itself, I judge the to be more characteristic than relative to any 'descent' from heaven, but that character to be drawn from the place He came from: origin is universally used as characteristic. Race and kind are the same word, . Thus the genitive (or really generic) case, and , which expresses origin, are in very many (perhaps all) languages used as characteristic, and in force are adjectives. In Hebrew it is well known, as in Greek, in French, English, and other modern languages; so that it may be considered as belonging to the structure of the human mind. This may be drawn from place or origin, or the material of which

anything is composed. It so far differs from an adjective that it is constitutive of character, not the character itself simply.

Here we have ("of the earth, earthy"). The former is the constitutive cause, the latter the actual character. But the cause was from origin; so with . It is characteristic, but because of the place of origin. He has not ceased to be it now; but what is expressed is not what He is now, because gone to heaven, but His character because of His origin. It attaches to His Person. He is so now, because He cannot be otherwise: because His origin was such, He was so on earth. The full display of this is when He takes the place of the (ver. 48); that gives the fulfilled consequent place, and, from the subject, is more than characteristic, though it be that. I judge, then, that is character from origin, or the place the Lord belonged to, as . Not that He came from, but that He was from, and of, and ever is. The result is, that the first is, the second . This is on high, the natural, normal, and purposed place of one , who is become a man. But still it is character and nature, though the suggests a place, I think. Hence, there is for it an abstract consequence of conformity, not a statement of what will happen: "as is the, so they also that are ; and as the , so they also that are ." Then the form, not merely character and nature and time, is brought in. It is in the second case future. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Thus origin, participation in nature and character, abstractedly given, and then actual conformity in glory, are successively, each in its place, introduced. It will be seen that, without much affecting the question, what I have said tends to justify the omission of . If it be retained, I apprehend it should be read -;`the second man, the Lord, from heaven." Not that I desire to separate "the Lord" from "from heaven," but to preserve the characteristic force of the latter.

As regards any difference in meaning in "second" and "last," think the Spirit of God means a different thing. "The second" contrasts Him with the first. It is not a modifying or sanctifying or setting right the first, but setting up a second (we cannot have both to continue together) One of and from heaven. "The last" declares that this is final and conclusive. There is no other afterward. If He be , that is easily conceived. In these days, both these truths are of first-rate importance -the non-restoration of man, the first man who is set aside and under condemnation, and a new Man, a second Man, is brought in; and then He who is made known is the last Adam, the One, and only One, in whom blessing is to be found. Men will own Christ, even infidels now, to set up the first Adam; they will with hardihood declare Him to be the excellent in His day, but that there is progress through increasing light. Scripture, which foresees all things, declares that He is a "second," in contrast with the first; and that He is the "last," so that there is and can be no progress beyond Him • the perfection in which God delights, and the center and end of all His ways, to which those who are to be blessed with Him must be conformed.

Letters 3, Last Trump, The

I see no reason to doubt that all saints¹ who have died will be raised up when Christ comes and changes us—the living that remain to the moment of His presence—and both shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. "They that are Christ's," in 1 Cor. 15:23, seem to me a category put in an expressly large style so as to embrace the saints before the church as well as such as compose it. Compare Heb. 11 And this is confirmed by the special communication which begins at 1 Cor. 15:51: " Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Here there is a secret beyond the Old Testament which revealed no more than the resurrection, and the coming with the Lord in the day of His appearing. (Job 19, Zech. 14) But the apostle was inspired to add both the manner of raising the dead saints and especially the change of us the living, then found here below, who shall all be alike changed, and, according to 1 Thess. 4, caught up to meet the Lord above. Hence in this latter scripture, "put to sleep through Jesus," may be said of dead Christians (the occasion of the need of comfort to the living, ver. 13), while the next verse speaks with greater comprehensiveness of those fallen asleep in general. Again, "the dead in Christ" need not be restrained to those since redemption; it is in contrast with the dead in Adam, or after a merely natural sort.

There is nothing said of raising saints from the dead under the seventh trumpet, though I do not object to the conclusion that, as it is the winding up of God's appeals to the world and the introduction of the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, so it announces the judicial recompense in broad terms up to the end. The time of award to His "servants the prophets, and to the saints," etc., does not fix it as the moment of their resurrection—they may well have been raised before. At any rate, nothing of the kind can be built on a passage which is silent as to that for which it is alleged.

Nor is there the least warrant to connect "the seventh trumpet" with "the last trump" of 1 Cor. 15, nor even with the "great sound of a trumpet" in Matt. 24 "The seventh" is of course the closing one of the Apocalyptic series and of the general course of the book up to the kingdom. "The last trump" of 1 Cor. 15 means simply the final summons when the heavenly saints leave their earthly sojourn to join the Lord—a figure, like others in the chapter, taken from familiar military matters. The trumpet in the gospel is rather connected with the divine call to gather Israel from all lands according to the prophets. There is no doubt that when this point is reached all the departments of the kingdom, heavenly and earthly, will be occupied and displayed by Christ, the risen saints, and the people of God, nor will it cease till every creature, even of the lost, bows and confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Daniel and Job will be there, of course, among the rest.

The scripture which is most to the point (of proving saints, raised just before the millennial kingdom begins) is Rev. 20:4; but I see no reason to doubt that the first class already enthroned includes the Old Testament saints with the church, while the two classes particularly described and then raised in addition to the foregoing are only the Apocalyptic confessors. This then gives no countenance to the view, that the Old Testament saints are reserved till then. The sufferers at the end of this age are specified as then made to live and reign with Christ: else they might seem to have lost all as regards the kingdom. No others are said to be raised at that time.

Letters 3, Party Against Evil Not Countenanced

Dear—

—'s notion is nothing new; it is held by many mystic evangelicals in a somewhat different shape, perhaps, but it is only a notion.... The general notion I have alluded to is, that there is a kind of essence or germ of the body which remains, and is glorified, which would involve the exuviae. But I have a horror of all notions, they are not Christ, and His unsearchable riches, and if the soul is full of Him, notions do not rise or suggest themselves. 1 Cor. 15:38 answers it: "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him," and what is sown in corruption is raised in incorruption, and what is sown in dishonor is raised in glory; and if we pretend to go further, we go beyond what is written, and are in danger of being designated a fool. There is no such minuteness of comparison as this notion would find: it takes it to show generally a resurrection in incorruption and glory, out of the grave of corruption and dishonor; but the exuviae is a thought man's mind adds; but, as has been said of old, we are to bring ideas from scripture, not to it. It was a natural body, and becomes a spiritual body. When the living are changed there are no exuviae: Christ could show His hands and feet pierced. It is a change; the corruptible puts on incorruption, and what is mortal, immortality. These notions are the product of men's minds, and not what flows from the fullness of Christ, and that is the evil; and if we harbor them, it tends to shut Him out. But we have to bear with idle notions, and not strive. The best thing is to bring in Christ, and they fall or collapse by their own emptiness.

—has begun to break bread.—is greatly troubled: I cannot say it did me. I could not ask them to go to A. H. till they gave up their false position, and I could hardly expect them to abstain forever, and if they acted in starting with precipitation after the action of A. H., there was no way out but one God might open. But there was not the sober weighing of all before God that we ever need, and there was in some degree the pretension to start something extra.- wrote to me of a prayer-meeting they had in London: but I answered that I had nothing against a prayer-meeting; but I could not be a party to a party, even to resist evil. But it will all get right, but as to men, I fear their seeking their own ease, not simply waiting on God for all.

The Lord be with you! He it is who works, and His Father too. May we lean constantly on Him!

Belfast, June, 1880.

Letters 2, Nearness to the Lord; Spring of Service; Weariness in Service; the Path of His Will; Tendency of Work

If our hearts are not close to Christ, we are apt to get weary in the way. All is a vain show around us; but that which is inside abides, and is true, being the life of Christ. All else goes! When the heart gets hold of this fact, it becomes (as to things around) like one taken into a house to work for the day, who performs the duties well, but passes through, instead of living in the circumstances. To Israel the cloud came down, and they stayed; it lifted up, and on they went. It was all the same to them. Why? Because had they stayed when the cloud went on, they would not have had the Lord. One may be daily at the desk for fifty years, yet with Christ the desk is only the circumstance; it is doing God's will, making manifest the savor of Christ, which is the simple and great thing. Whether I go or you go, I stay or you stay, may that one word be realized in each of us—"steadfast, immovable!" In whatever sphere, as matter of providence, we may be found, let the divine life be manifested—Christ manifested. This abides. all else changes, but the life remains and abides forever, ay, forever.

Not a single thing in which we have served Christ shall be forgotten. Lazy alas! we all are in service, but all shall come out that is real, and what is real is Christ in us, and this only. The appearance now may be very little—not much even in a religious view, but what is real will abide. Our hearts clinging closely to Christ, we shall sustain one another in the body of Christ. The love of Christ shall hold the whole together, Christ being everything, and we content to be nothing, helping one another, praying one for the other. I ask not the prayers of the saints, I reckon on them. The Lord keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as the hireling our day, till Christ shall come; and then "shall every man have praise of God"—praise of God! Be that our object, and may God knit all our hearts together thoroughly and eternally.

[1873.]

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 2, Victory

1 Corinthians 15

THERE are two characters of relationship into which we are brought: one is our union with Christ; and the other our relationship along with Christ to God as our Father, He being the firstborn of many brethren. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." This last is the result in glory, but it is founded on the great truth of "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It flows from our connection with the second Man (He, Head of a spiritual race, as the first Adam was head according to the flesh).

This is a different thing from His relationship to the bride, and the headship of the body. It teaches us how the whole of the Old Testament scripture looks at our history in the first Adam, closing that history entirely, and then brings in a new One. This is not brought out until the second Man is raised from the dead. He was in Person the same before, but He was not head of a spiritual race until He was raised. "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone," etc. It was only then that He could take such a position with His disciples as to say, "I go to my Father and your Father." All thought of any union as man, with Christ, is wrong. He could not unite Himself with us in sin: He could show compassion, but it was impossible there could be any connection between us in the flesh, as men in nature, and God. When Christ takes a new position, outside every position in which flesh could be taken account of, we are united to Him in spirit; but the whole history of man shows the impossibility of connection between man in nature with God. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." "And as I said to the Jews, even so say I to you, Whither I go, ye cannot follow me now." Flesh, corrupt and corrupting, cannot enter into

glory.

True, flesh works in the believer; but Scripture goes deep and brings out this truth, "in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." So the apostle afterward says, "When we were in the flesh." I do not know whether you would be able to say that-when I was in the flesh. If we can say so, our responsibility now is to walk as men in the Spirit. A Christian is not to walk as a man, but as a Christian. There are duties of husbands, wives, children; and the relationships between man and man have to be sustained of course; but before God I am not looked at as a man in the flesh at all. The flesh tries to hinder. It comes to be a hostile power to what I have from the last Adam; but if you walk merely as men, you are lost.

Flesh showed its weakness. The word to Adam did not provide for sin, and supposed no lust in man. In the garden of Eden lust came in, sin came in, and the separation was complete between God and man. Adam then became head of an excluded race.

Law, given afterward, supposed men needing life, but invoked responsibility. Man left to himself became corrupt before God. The earth was filled with violence. Then a flood came. Then came the law as a trial of man. Promise was not a trial of man, but it manifested grace without a question of man. There was no promise to Adam, the promise was to the second Adam, the Seed of the woman. God cannot promise to sin. There was no question of responsibility in promise. He gave it to man and left it. Afterward the question of righteousness is raised.

We too often may little weigh what the terms of the law imply. Were I to say, If you do this, you will get a fortune, this implies that you have not a fortune without. You cannot say, Do this and live, if you have life. When God said to man, "Do this and live," it implied his being dead. Man did not think so, but it was the ministry of death and condemnation, because it demanded obedience, which man could not render. Law does bring out man's guilt; he cannot be subject to the law of God.

But there was another thing that proved his guilt far more thoroughly. Will they accept God's terms when He came to them in grace? Christ came, and in His life was the perfect manifestation of goodness. He came amongst men to do them good, healing the leper, etc. But could flesh find anything attractive in Him? He was an outcast among the people to whom He brought home the goodness and love of God.

When law was given, they were not subject to it; and when Christ came, they would not have Him. Therefore the Lord said, "Now is the prince of this world judged." "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." Man, tried in every way, is proved to be bad.

In other circumstances, namely, that of the Christian, there is the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the same impossibility of its pleasing God. All flesh shows utter rejection of God Himself, and is proud of itself all the time. Before God executes judgment, man has entirely cast God off. The wonder of the cross is that He came-the sinless One came into the very place where flesh is. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." He finds Himself in the fully revealed position of man before God; He puts Himself there in grace and in obedience too. There was more than that: "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." He was "made sin," and put it away by giving up the life in which He bore it. God deals with Him about sin, and the very life ceases in which He takes it, and then He rises up. God had dealt with it, putting an end to it entirely on the cross. There was an end of the old man; and now it is said, "Reckon yourselves to be dead," etc. "He that is dead is freed from sin." Christ has taken the place of the first Adam in sin. All that I was in, Christ has stepped into and borne. He rises up, and I have an entirely new position. I am now in Christ. He has closed forever the history of the flesh (we have it as an enemy-but its history is closed forever before God) and commenced a place for us in Himself, the second Adam. "Father, glorify thy Son."

Christ returned to His place before God, having accomplished righteousness. He is Head of a new race, a family of His own. He has new glory as thus Head of a race. We are livingly united to Him, being in Christ. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." We are not in flesh, but before God in virtue of accomplished righteousness. All God's dealings with man before were grounded on sin having come in; so law, promise, government, until Christ came. Now His dealings with us are founded on righteousness. God has His righteousness before Him in a man. The Son of man has glorified God on the earth, and God has glorified Him in heaven. It is as a man He is there, though He is much more to be sure.

Life I have in Him and righteousness. Life is in the Son, the second Man, and I can treat the flesh and all connected with it as an enemy. As to that, I am dead: flesh has no place now. I have life in Christ and dead as to flesh. I have nothing to say to it, no relationship with God in flesh; I have to pray against it, fight against it, read, and use all the means I can against it; but I am not in it. There may be confusion in the mind, but not in the relationship. God can have nothing to do with flesh. "Reckon yourselves dead," for Christ has died. It is not said, Die, to the flesh. The flesh will keep itself alive as long as it can. It will try to mend itself-try to be better. There would be no sense in telling the flesh to die. But Scripture says, Ye are dead. Flesh has been judged in Christ, and therefore I am entitled to say, I am dead and am a new man. Then walk in the Spirit, walk as Christ walked, as the second Man, not as the first. You cannot get back to innocence, the uprightness of creation. True, you are upright, if in the Spirit, but more, righteous and holy. All this is equally true about sins. As surely as the first Adam was turned out of the earthly paradise and became head of a race, so He, the second Man, is Head of a race for the heavenly paradise.

Faith takes absolutely what God says. Where does it take its place? Half way, or entirely, with Christ? Flesh never can take its place before God. Faith says, I have no place before God but in Christ Himself. He is righteousness on the throne of God. Any half-savior or half-place would not do. We grow up into His likeness: but our place before God is the same at first. Christ's life upon earth is a perfect pattern for us, manifesting God in all His ways.

Our position before God is one of full favor. And we have the hope of glory before us. How it elevates the heart-not us! Grace humbles us, but elevates the heart. I have boldness before Him in the day of judgment. When we reach the heavenly tribunal, we shall be like Him, the heavenly One.

Grace alone does it. It enables us to discern between flesh and Spirit, not only between what is right and what is wrong; but we can say, That is flesh, or This is Spirit. It may look very fair, but if it is flesh, it comes to nothing. If all the world thinks a thing good, that is not Christ and I would not believe it. If a man walks with the Lord, the flesh is judged. There are the different growths of the babe, the young man, the father; but if we walk with Him, we discern what a thing is. The flesh is very subtle, but it will not last out when the Lord tries me; the wood, hay, and stubble will not stand. Gold is a rarer thing in the world than wood, hay, and stubble, but it lasts longer.

Can you then say, "When I was in the flesh," with the very distinct consciousness that you are not in it now? Then you are called not to walk as if you were in it. The Spirit does not make a fair show. You may walk with Christians, but you cannot walk with Christ without the power of the life in exercise—not going to look for the power, but having it. May the Lord give us to know what it is to be in the Spirit and not in the flesh! It may try the conscience, but the end will be peace and joy.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, As Is the Heavenly

1 Corinthians 15:48

There are two great things that the Scriptures present to us as effectual for salvation. One is the full vindicating of God's moral character in grace toward us, which the atonement does. There is righteousness in God against sin, and there is love to the sinner—for God's character is not only vindicated in the atonement, but He is glorified in it.

But, besides this, there is another and a distinct thing, and this is the coming in of power to bring us out of all the misery and wretchedness which are the effects of sin, and to set us in a new place. Both these things form a part of the great salvation. The one was absolutely necessary, if sinners were to be reconciled to God at all; for the atonement must have been made in order to our being brought near to God. If God had brought us to Himself without His righteousness having been perfectly vindicated, He could not have been the holy and blessed One that He is. But all that God is has been perfectly vindicated on the cross, which without the cross never could have been. If God had let every one off in mercy, this would not have been love; it would have been indifference to sin. If one of my children, for instance, were to be naughty, and yet I were to persist in treating him all the same as the others, this would not be love. You cannot have true love unless there is a perfect maintaining of righteousness according to the truth of God's name. But to maintain this must, necessarily, have shut out all sinners without the cross—without the death of Christ, as giving Himself up to the perfect righteousness of God, His judgment, His hatred of sin, His authority (for it is a question of authority, as well as of holiness) and, at the same time, of perfect love to the sinner.

And this is what the cross of Christ is for us, the full bringing out and vindicating of all that God is, not only in love but in holiness. It is full of blessing. We come to God as needy sinners, and we find there the mercy-seat, and His precious blood sprinkled upon it. But when in peace I can reflect upon the cross, I see how perfectly God is glorified in it.

The more it shows me the holiness of God, the more also what a wonderful thing the cross was; there is nothing like it in heaven or earth, excepting of course God Himself. No creation, nothing that has ever been seen in this world, could be what the cross was. Creation may show God's power, but it cannot bring out God's love and truth as the cross does; and therefore it remains everlastingly the wonderful and blessed place of learning, what could be learned nowhere else, of all that God is.

But while this is true, there is another thing, the coming in of a Deliverer to take us out of the condition in which we were by nature—for so indeed we were—poor, wretched creatures struggling in the ditch, and no way of getting out of it. Supposing then that God had been vindicated and glorified by the cross of Christ, it did not follow that you and I should therefore be brought out of the condition in which we were. This required that God should come down to us, and take us out of all the condition of sin and misery, and put us in another condition altogether, and this needs the coming in of divine power.

Salvation is a deliverance wrought by divine power, so as to bring us out of one condition into another. It is true we are morally changed, but we want more than that—though whoever has got that will surely have all the rest. But supposing I have the new nature, with its desires after holiness, what is the effect? It gives me the consciousness of all the sin that is in me. I want to be righteous, but then I see that I am not righteous; and I bow under the power of sin and of the knowledge of such holiness which I have learned to desire, only to find out that I have not got it. I say what is the good of my knowing holiness in this way, if I have not got it? It is no comfort to me. Here we have been speaking of God's righteousness; but when I look, I find I have no righteousness.

Where can I find a resting-place for my spirit in such a state as this? It is impossible; and the very effect of having this new nature, with all its holy affections and desires after Christ, brings me to the discovery of the lack of what this new nature cannot of itself impart. I have got the cravings of the new nature—all its holy and righteous desires; but the thing craved for I have not got. It is the desire of my nature. I say, Oh that I could be righteous; but then I am not righteous. In that way God meets us with a positive salvation. He meets us and quickens us into the desire and want of holiness, giving us a nature capable of enjoying it when we get it.

But this is not all. When I have got that nature, have I got the thing I want? No. I strive, and think, Oh! if I could get more of this holiness, but still I have not got it. I may hate the sin, but the sin is there that I hate. I may long to be with God, to be forever in the light of His countenance, but then I see that I have got sin, and know that the light of His countenance cannot shine upon my sin; I want a righteousness fit for His presence, and I have not got it. It is thus God meets us in the cross. He not only gives the nature that we want, but He gives us the thing that we want. And not only so, but in Christ He gives us both the perfect object and the nature, and this in power.

We get, in the expression of this, a remarkable thing in the chapter: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is not here what we shall be in point of glory, for afterward he adds, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We have borne the image of the first Adam, in all the consequences of his sin and ruin, and we shall bear the image of the second Adam. But He lays down first this great truth for our hearts, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is what we are now. There I find what my heart, as quickened of God, wants; and I learn what blessedness is in Christ, by whom God has revealed it to us. He has given us a righteousness in Christ, who is the blessed accepted man in the presence of God, of whom alone God could say, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Heb. 1:13). You have been rejected by man, but You are just my delight. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is that which God brings before us. He puts us into a new condition before Himself, and then makes us judge all that is inconsistent with it. Then, besides this, power is given—not a new nature merely, with cravings after a position which we have not got, but power to judge practically,

from a position which we have got, all that is inconsistent with it. There will be that which has to be judged, but I shall judge it in the consciousness of what God has given me in Christ. It is there that I get the measure of what God, come in in power, has made me.

“As is the earthy....as is the heavenly.” Here are these two men, so to speak. There is the first Adam, of the earth, with those that pertain to him, earthy; and there is the second Man, the Lord from heaven. There are these two Adams, and I get in both the pattern and model of all other men that are after their image. I see the first Adam, fallen, wretched, and corrupt; then I see the other Adam that becomes in a spiritual sense the head of a race after He has taken that place in God's counsels in glory.

I say, There is the pattern, and model, and head of that race. It is not merely a truth that the atonement has been made for us, in respect of what we were as belonging to the first Adam; but God has been glorified in respect of our sins. The more we get into the presence of God, the more we shall learn the value of the cross. But then this chapter, in speaking of the resurrection, speaks of the coming in of power. We just see how the Lord first deals with Christ in power of resurrection, and then, at the same time, how we are objects of this very thing.

Now what I see first in Christ, as He was upon earth, is perfect grace in His dealings with men—nothing but goodness meeting them in all their need. The heart gets cheered and encouraged by that. He feeds them when hungry, heals them when sick, and casts out devils. There was power too, but not in those with whom He had to do. It was divine power, which ministered to their wants. It was the wretchedness and misery in which man was, to which the goodness of God in Christ was applied, and the only thing in the person was the sin and misery to which the goodness was applied. I have felt latterly that, the more we get at the facts of the Lord's life on earth, the more power there will be. We do not sufficiently present facts, but we reason upon the value of the facts. I am persuaded the more the facts of the gospel are presented to people's souls, the more power there will be.

Looking then at Christ upon earth, I find God in this lowly man. Let me get firmly hold of that simple fact, in a world of misery and wretchedness and toil; God has come into it and I have found Him. I have met Him. It is by faith, of course; but still God was there, and I have met Him. I know what He is and what He is for me. I was a sinner like all the rest of the world, but God was there and He was all goodness to me. I have found Him and I know what He is, because He has been it to me. Christ was upon earth, coming down to all my need, and I have met God in Him and I know Him.

Now I say, this is in one sense everything to my soul. You may reason as to what He will be in the day of judgment; but I say I have found Him and know what He is, and it is perfect goodness. I was a vile, wretched creature, troubling myself about nothing but pleasure or worse; but I met Him and know what He is. When the soul has got this, it has got a key that opens every lock in eternity. I have found God and I have found that He is perfect light. Of course, just because He is light, I may see failures in myself, I may be ashamed of myself; but still I know what He is and what He is to me, and thus my soul gets a resting—place and a divine acquaintance with the God I have to do with. I see that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). He has been here with me on earth; but now I have another trouble—that I am not fit to be with Him in heaven. Why here is death, here is sin, here is failure to be dealt with; and sin cannot go to heaven. Therefore I get another fact: I find that this blessed One, who is the expression of this perfect grace that I did not think anything about—I find Him coming down into my condition, made sin for me, going under the death and under the judgment that were due to me, and bearing my sins.

I find Christ now not merely as a living Christ upon earth, kind toward my miseries, showing all goodness to me, but as taking my place under the suffering of the wrath and judgment of God, and there I find Him altogether alone. Christ may suffer in a way in which I may suffer with Him. He may suffer from man, and we may suffer thus in our little measure. He may learn what suffering is in this world in order to comfort me and suffer with me. But when I find the Lord suffering on the cross, there I find Him absolutely and entirely alone, and there I find the great question of sin perfectly and forever settled between God and me. But I was not there at all, I could not be where He was, for He was there just that I might never be there, bearing the wrath of God and drinking that cup of suffering of which, if I had tasted the least drop, it would have been everlasting death. Well, I see the Lord coming down to this place of my deepest misery, and now the power of God comes in there. He has taken my place in grace. Where sin had brought me, grace brought Him. There into that place of death and wrath He came, and now I see power coming in.

Atonement has been made, and where He perfectly glorified God, the power of God comes in and sets Him at His own right hand in heaven. So that I do not merely get God glorified in the cross of Christ, but I see the power of God coming in and taking that very Christ when He was down in the depths of death and setting Him at His own right hand in heaven. Here then I have found a positive actual deliverance; and so truly was this the case that Christ can celebrate the name of God in association with others. “I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee” (Psa. 22:22). He can celebrate that name, knowing it after all which He Himself has gone through for us, bringing Him into the presence of God His Father in all the full blessedness of the light of His countenance, after He had taken all the full weight of sin upon Him. But power had come in, as is said in Psalm 16:10, Thou “wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,” and He did not see corruption. True He had had there to say, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34), but even He trusts Himself to God His Father, and God puts His seal upon Him by raising Him from the dead. There I get in the resurrection of Christ the coming in of divine power, in the very place where we were lying in ruin and helplessness, and where Christ was in grace for us; and it takes Him entirely out of it.

Now I have got the Man Christ Jesus in heaven after atonement has been made, and after the question of sin has been settled in virtue of His having glorified God about it. I get Him in the place of power as the object of God's counsels. For it is in Christ that all things are to be gathered together in one, and even now God has set Him Head over all things to the church.

The whole question of sin is thus settled in the resurrection of Christ. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins ... But now is Christ risen from the dead” (1 Cor. 15:17,20); and we are not in our sins. There I find the heavenly Man that has been down here and borne my sins, in power of resurrection in the presence of God. He is “the Lord from heaven” too. Mark this. Afterward the apostle says in Ephesians, that the very same power that wrought in Christ, when God raised Him from the dead, is exercised in every one that believes. He desires that they may know “what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places.” Exactly the same power that wrought when God took Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, has already wrought in you that believe, and you

have got a place with Him there; and therefore, "As is the earthy: such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48).

We are in Christ in the presence of God; and now I get not desires only but the answer to them. I have now not merely a new nature, but that which the new nature wants, because I have found Christ. I have got not merely cravings after something, but the thing I crave. I want righteousness and holiness, and this is what I have got, because I am in Christ. I want to be without fear in the presence of God, and I am in it, because I am in Christ. I have got now, in a word, full salvation—not merely a new nature but salvation. God has come down to me and He has saved me. He has come and by His own power has taken me out of the place in which I was lying in misery and helplessness in the first Adam, and has put me in the place of the second Adam before Himself without a sin upon me—all sin put away, because all was judged in the Person of Christ.

Such is the condition into which Christ has thus brought us. After the fall of the first man, after the thorough trial of man as man—tried without law—tried under law, then God comes in with perfect grace and sends His Well-beloved Son. So to speak, He says, That is the last thing I can try man by; but when they saw Him they said, "This is the heir; Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours" (Mark 12:7). Man as the first man has been perfectly tried, and has been found wanting: no means can mend him. But what do I find in Christ? He has taken the place of the first Adam down here for us. He has died in it, and there is a total end of the whole state for those that believe. Now I reckon myself dead to sin, because Christ has died. He was treated as being in that place and He died, and the whole thing is ended—ended for me under judgment of another's bearing. As a believer I shall still feel the workings of the old nature and have to judge it; but I see Christ taking it for me, and judgment is executed upon it in His Person on the cross, and now He is out of it all, alive again for evermore. That life is wholly gone in which He laid it down, and the old nature to which sin and judgment applied is gone—just as a man who may be in prison, awaiting there the punishment of his crime, and he dies; the life to which the punishment is attached is gone.

It is impossible that there can be any longer a question of punishment for the sin: the life is gone to which the sin and its punishment attached. Just so was it with Christ; and therefore the apostle always addresses the believer as dead to sin. "Ye are dead," he says to him; you are not a living man at all. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11).

It is never said in Scripture that we are to die to sin, for if this were said, it would be ourselves that would die, and this would be an end of us altogether. But what is stated in Scripture is, that we are dead to sin through Jesus Christ. Now that Christ has died unto sin once for me, let me reckon myself to be dead to sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

This is what I get as the principle of the Christian's place; that while as a fact he is alive, yet as Christ has died, the very nature that God dealt with as to the question of sin, in the first Adam, is done with; and now a power has come in that has made me alive with Christ. The very nature that had to be dealt with is looked at as a judged and dead thing, and I am brought into the position of Christ as risen and in the presence of God. When we sit with Him, we shall be like Him, but as to our real condition before God, even now we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ. Divine love has reached down to the place of sin and death in which we were, and divine righteousness has taken us up and set us in the place of light, where Christ is; for there is no middle place.

If I know what sin is, I see that it deserves condemnation. It would not be mercy to leave the sin alone and pass it by. It must be put away; but how? It must be put away by death, because its merits are condemnation. If God is dealing with sin, looked at in my relationship to Him as a sinner, He must deal with it in death.

There is no forgiveness for the sinner, looked at as guilty before God, without that real work which deals with it according to God's nature; and it was dealt with thus in the cross. He has appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. But this is not all. Having thus put away sin, He has done with the old thing altogether, and has got into a new one, that very nature left behind in which He was responsible and suffered for sin, and now He is the heavenly Man in the presence of God; and there we are set in Him. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Therefore it is that in the Epistle of John we get the same truth brought out.

First of all we have there (ch. 4: 9) that the love of God was manifested "toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." There I see divine love that visited this world in the Person of the Son of God. There were two things that were needed. That He should be the propitiation for our sins, because we were guilty, was one; but, besides that, he goes on to say, "Herein is love [with us] made perfect." There is the perfectness of love. Not merely has God's love visited us in this world, in all our need and sorrow, to love us there, but herein is the love of God with us "made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."

How can I have boldness in the day of judgment? Why, I am the same as my Judge, and in this world too: "As he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). Just what I get here, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is the same truth. What a thing that is! What a salvation! It is not merely mercy that forgives sin; it is a real perfect salvation, a deliverance which has taken us, as in Christ, out of the condition in which we were, and has put us into another; and that other is Christ.

It is true that we shall all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ: everything must be brought out there. But even so, why, I am like Himself! What is He going to judge? How do I get there at all? Because Christ has come and fetched me. I am going, He said to His disciples, "to prepare a place for you. And if I go ... I will come again, and receive you unto myself that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3). So that when I come to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, it is because Christ has so loved me that He has come to fetch me there; and in what condition? I am in glory before I get to the judgment-seat. Everything will there be brought out, and with immense profit and gain to us. We shall know right and wrong then as we are known. We shall be manifested, but manifested before Him who is in the presence of God as the warrant of our salvation. We shall not thoroughly bear the image of Christ till the time of glory. But even now, as to our standing before God, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48).

Now, as regards my soul and eternal life, He has come and brought us into this condition, making Christ to be my life, and in Christ my righteousness and life. He has brought me in, in faith and in the truth of my new nature, into this wondrous place in Christ. The realization of

it is another thing, and may be hindered through failure or infirmity. You begin to search, perhaps in yourself, and find such and such a thought contrary to Christ. But I say, That is the old man. If you take yourself by yourself, there is not righteousness for God, and therefore you cannot stand an instant in God's sight. I must look at Christ to see what I am, and I say, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly"; and this is what I am in the presence of God. There is no veil: we are to walk in the light, as God is in the light.

Now, the measure of the judgment of the working of my flesh, and of everything else, is according to this love and grace. The moment I have got Christ, and I can say, I know a man in Christ (and so thoroughly was this the case with Paul that he could say, "I know a man in Christ ... whether in the body, or out of the body I cannot tell" (2 Cor. 12:2-3)—he is not thinking of himself at all), then everything is judged according to what I am in Christ. It is not there I glory of Paul. Paul knew what infirmities and distresses, were. But "I know a man in Christ," and I am glad of such an one to glory in. I will glory with all my heart in it (because he is not looking at himself and at his righteousness), "yet of myself," Paul says, "I will not glory, but in mine infirmities" (2 Cor. 12:5). Here I get to the true reality of what my condition is as a poor feeble creature down here below. But then God has put me in Christ; and now whatever passes in my mind must be judged according to Him. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). I may come short, but this is the only measure.

In 2 Cor. 12 Paul takes this very ground. "I will glory," he says, "in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." It is not that he was always in the third heaven, or that we shall be in the full enjoyment always of our position. But this is true, that the Christ in whom we are is in heaven. He is not here, He is in the presence of God, and we are in Him there; and even though we do not realize always our place in Christ, yet I say that Christ is never inconsistent with what He is in that presence, and Christ dwells in me; and this is where I get the perfect rule of life that I need. The power of Christ dwells in me even upon earth. If Christ walked upon earth, His walk was perfectly consistent with a heavenly Man. I find Him to be the perfect expression of the love and grace and holiness that was in the Father.

It is true Paul says, "I know a man in Christ," but does this man mean that the Christ he had then was a different Christ from the one he had known in the third heaven? No; he had got the very power that was suited to a Christ in heaven. We get the principle of all holiness of walk from the fact of our position being in Christ. I must know that this is my place before God, if my walk is to be according to Christ. "For their sakes," said our blessed Lord, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). He is set apart to God as the pattern Man in heavenly places, that the Holy Spirit may take and apply it to us here. I see this perfect Christ set apart for me in heaven, and I say I must walk according to that pattern. I will walk in love, because Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us. I get there, "Be ye imitators of God." And in another place, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). He sets before us, as walking through this world, the kindness of God even to His enemies. The starting-point of all my measure of conduct is the place in which I am already set in Christ.

Since the fall of man, since our judgment has been a fallen one by sin, our thought of obligation and duty is always as a means of gaining something. People often fancy that, if there is not the uncertainty attendant upon this responsibility to get life, there must be carelessness. But supposing you have got children, they are your children, and they never can cease to be your children. But does that destroy their responsibility? Their relationship to you is the very thing that forms their responsibility. The principle of human responsibility till sin came into the world was a blessed one. It was this—I am to act up to the condition that I am in. The Christian responsibility is not that of a man hoping and trying to be a Christian.

It is not at the time of the difficulty and danger that we get the capacity of walking according to Christ. The way to walk in a time of difficulty is by valuing Christ not because of the temptation but for His own sake. If we live in the constant valuing of Christ for His own sake, we shall assuredly have His delivering us from the temptation. If my heart is full of Christ, the things that are contrary to Him do not attract me. I may feel my failure and weakness all the more, but the God that by power has brought us into this place in Christ can sustain us in it. The whole of our relationship with God upon the ground of the old man is closed in the cross; and then in a risen Christ all is begun afresh in perfect blessing in the power of the deliverance in which we have been brought in Christ. The place in which we are thus set begins with the cross where I see my old nature judged and set aside; and therefore it is that the apostle can say such a thing as "when we were in the flesh" (Rom. 7:5). There are multitudes even of true believers who say, What are we but in the flesh now? But the apostle says, "When we were in the flesh," evidently implying that we are not in the flesh now. It is what we were in the first Adam. The standard of our walk gets its real power and blessedness when once we see that we are no longer in the flesh, but are set in Christ before God. The government of God comes in, and this is another thing; but we are brought into that blessed place in the light in the perfectness of the grace which has brought us there. We ought to be able to come, our hearts set at large by God, and, as we deal even with the world, to say, What we have to talk to you about is a salvation that we have got: I have found God, and I am come to tell you of a salvation that I have got through the delivering power of God.,

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Critical 1, Allusion in "The Last Trump", The

1 Cor. 15:52

After all the grave and wise speculations on the last trump, I strongly suspect it is merely an allusion to military matters. Somewhere in Josephus' War, and perhaps in other books, we have the order of the breaking up of a Roman camp. At the last trump they all break up and march forward. Now, I acknowledge that scripture interpretation is not to be borrowed from without; but I have seen only tortured linkings with other passages within. I am content to take the general idea of the last public call of God relating to the Church, and leave it there. But what suggested the image, I suspect, was what I say: just as, in 1 Thess. 4, beyond controversy, is a similar military term used to a similar purpose. Matt. 24:31 ("And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet"), I have not the smallest shadow of a doubt, applies to the assembling of the Jews (elect, as in Isa. 65) after Christ is come.

Christian Truth: Volume 27, Be Ye Steadfast

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58.

I have one word on my heart to press on you before going away, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable." If our hearts are not close to Christ, we are apt to get weary in the way. All is a vain show around us, but that which is inside abides—is true—is the life of Christ—all else goes. When the heart gets hold of this fact it becomes (as to things around) like one taken into a house to work for the day, performs his duties well, but passes through—does not live in the circumstances. To Israel the cloud came down, they stayed; it lifted up, on they went; 'twas all the same to them. Why? Because, had they stayed when the cloud went on, they would not have had the Lord! One may be daily at the desk for fifty years, yet with Christ—the desk only the circumstance—the doing of God's will—making manifest the savor of Christ; that's the simple thing. Whether I go or you go, I stay or you stay, 'tis all one. May that one word be realized in each of us, "steadfast, unmovable," in whatever sphere, as matter of providence, we are found. So the divine life shall be manifested—Christ manifested. That abides; all else changes, but that life remains, abides forever; yes, forever.

There is not a single thing in which we have served Christ which shall be forgotten. Lazy, alas! we all are in service, but all shall come out that's real; and what's real is Christ in us and that only. The appearance now may be very little—not much even in a religious view—but what's real will abide. Our hearts clinging closely to Christ, we shall sustain one another as members of the body of Christ. The love of Christ should hold the whole together, Christ being everything, and we content to be nothing,... helping one another, praying one for the other. I ask not the prayers of saints—I reckon on them. The Lord keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as the hireling our day, till Christ shall come; and then every man shall have praise of God—"Praise of God"; be that our object, and may God knit all our hearts together thoroughly and eternally.

As Is the Heavenly, As Is the Heavenly

If God is dealing with sin, looked at in my relationship to Him as a sinner, He must deal with it in death. There is no forgiveness for the sinner, looked at as guilty before God, without the real work which deals with it according to God's nature; and it was dealt with thus in the cross. He hath appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. But that is not all. Having thus put away sin, He has done with the old thing altogether, and has got into a new one, that very nature left behind in which He was responsible, and suffered for sin, and now He is the heavenly man in the presence of God; and there we are set in Him. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Therefore it is that in the Epistle of John we get the same truth brought out. First of all we have there (chap. iv. 9.) that "the love of God was manifested toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." There I see divine love that visited this world in the person of the Son of God. There were two things that were needed. That He should be the propitiation for our sins, because we were guilty, was one; but besides that, he goes on to say, "Herein is love with us made perfect," &c. There is the perfectness of love—not merely that God's love visited us in this world, in all our need and sorrow, to leave us there; but herein is the love of God "made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world."

How can I have boldness in the day of judgment? Why, I am the same as my Judge,—and in this world too; "As he is, so are we in this world." Just what I get here, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is the same truth. What a thing that is! What a salvation it is! not merely mercy that forgives sin. It is a real perfect salvation; a deliverance which has taken us, as in Christ, out of the condition in which we were and has put us into another, and that other is Christ. It is true that we shall all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ; everything must be brought out there. But even so, why, I am like Himself. What is He going to judge? How do I get there at all? Because Christ has come and fetched me. I am going, He said to His disciples, "to prepare a place for you. And if I go,... I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." So that when I come to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, it is because Christ has so loved me that He has come to fetch me there! and in what condition? I am in glory before I get to the judgment-seat. Everything will there be brought out, and with immense profit and gain to us. We shall know right and wrong then, as we are known. We shall be manifested, but manifested before Him who is in the presence of God as the warrant of our salvation. We shall not thoroughly bear the image of Christ till the time of glory. But even now, as to our standing before God, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Now as regards my soul and my eternal life, He has come and brought us into this condition, making Christ to be my life, and in Christ my righteousness and life. He has brought me in faith, and in the truth of my new nature, into this wondrous place in Christ. The realization of it is another thing, and may be hindered through failure or infirmity. You begin to search, perhaps in yourself, and find such and such a thought contrary to Christ. But I say, that is the old man. If you take yourself by yourself, there is not righteousness for God, and therefore you cannot stand an instant in God's sight. I must look at Christ to see what I am, and I say, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly;" and that is what I am in the presence of God. There is no veil: we are to walk in the light, as God is in the light.

Now, the measure of the judgment of the working of my flesh, and of everything else, is according to this love and grace. The moment I have got Christ, and I can say, I knew a man in Christ, (and so thoroughly was this the case with Paul that he could say, "I knew a man in Christ, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell" —he is not thinking of himself at all,) then everything is judged according to what I am in Christ. It is not there I glory of Paul. Paul knew what infirmities and distresses, &c., were. But "I know a man in Christ," and I am glad of such an one to glory. I will glory with all my heart in it—because he is not looking at himself and at his righteousness— "of myself," he says, "I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." Here I get to the true reality of what my condition, as a poor feeble creature down here below, is. But then God has put me in Christ, and now whatever passes in my mind must be judged according to Him. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." I may come short, but this is the only measure. In 2 Cor. 12 he takes this very ground. "I will glory," he says, "in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." It is not that he was always in the third heaven, or that we shall be in the full enjoyment always of our position. But this is true, that the Christ in whom we are is in heaven. He is not here, He is in the presence of God, and we are in Him there; and even though we do not realize always our place in Christ, yet, I say, that Christ is never

inconsistent with what He is in that presence, and Christ dwells in me; and this is where I get the perfect rule of life that I need. The power of Christ dwells in me, even upon earth. If Christ walked upon earth, His walk was perfectly consistent with a heavenly man I find Him to be the perfect expression of the love and grace and holiness that He was in the Father's house.

It is true Paul says, "I know a man in Christ," &c. But does that mean that the Christ he had then was a different Christ from the one he had known in the third heaven? No; he had got the very power that was suited to a Christ in heaven. We get the principle of all holiness of walk from the fact of our position being in Christ. I must know that this is my place before God, if my walk is to be according to Christ. "For their sakes," said our blessed Lord, "I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." He is set apart to God as this pattern-man in heavenly places, that the Holy Ghost may take and apply it to us here. I see this perfect Christ set apart for me in heaven, and I say I must walk according to that pattern. I will walk in love, because Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us. I get there, "Be ye imitators of God." And in another place, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." He sets before us, as walking through this world, the kindness of God even to His enemies. The starting point of all my measure of conduct is the place in which I am already set in Christ.

Since the fall of man, since our judgment has been a fallen one by sin, our thought of obligation and duty is always as a means of gaining something. People often fancy that if there is not the uncertainty attendant upon this responsibility to get life, there must be carelessness. But supposing you have got children—they are your children, and never can cease to be your children. But does that destroy their responsibility? Their relationship to you is the very thing that forms their responsibility. The principle of a real responsibility, till sin came into the world, was a blessed one. It was this—I am to act up to the condition that I am in.

The Christian responsibility is not that of a man hoping and trying to be a Christian. It is not at the time of the difficulty and danger that we get the capacity of walking according to Christ. The way to walk in a time of difficulty is not by valuing Christ for the temptation, but for His own sake. If we live in the constant valuing of Christ for His own sake, we shall assuredly have Him delivering us from the temptation. If my heart is full of Christ, the things that are contrary to Him do not attract me. I may feel my failure and weakness all the more; but the God that, by power, has brought us into this place in Christ, can sustain us in it. The whole of our relationship with God upon the ground of the old man is closed in the cross; and then in a risen Christ all is begun afresh in perfect blessing in the power of the deliverance in which we have been brought in Christ. The place in which we are thus set begins from the cross, where I see my old nature judged and set aside. And therefore it is that the apostle can say such a thing as "when we were in the flesh." There are multitudes even of true believers that say, What are we but in the flesh now? But the apostle says, "When we were in the flesh," evidently implying that we are not in the flesh now. It is what we were in the first Adam. The standard of our walk gets its real power and blessedness when once we see that we are no longer in the flesh, but are set in Christ before God. The government of God comes in, and that is another thing; but we are brought into that blessed place in the light, in the perfectness of the grace which has brought us there. We ought to be able to come, our hearts set at large by God, and, as we deal even with the world, say, What we have to talk to you about is a salvation that we have got. I have found God, and I am come to tell you of a salvation that I have got through the delivering power of God.

Bridgewater, June 17.

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As Is the Heavenly, As Is the Heavenly

I could not be where He was, for He was there just that I might never be there, bearing the wrath of God and drinking that cup of suffering of which, if I had tasted the least drop, it would have been everlasting death. Well, I see the Lord coming down to this place of my deepest misery, and now the power of God comes in there. He has taken my place in grace. Where sin had brought me, grace had brought Him There into that place of death and wrath He came, and now I see power coming in.

Atonement has been made; and where He perfectly glorified God, the power of God comes in and sets Him at His own right hand in heaven. So that I do not merely get God glorified in the cross of Christ, but I see the power of God coming in and taking that very Christ when He was down in the depths of death and setting Him at His own right hand in heaven. Here then I have found a positive, actual deliverance, and so truly was this the case that Christ can celebrate the name of God in association with others. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." He can celebrate that name, knowing it after all which He Himself has gone through for us, bringing Him into the presence of God His Father in all the full blessedness of the light of His countenance, after He had taken all the full weight of sin upon Him But power had come in, as is said in Psa. 16, "Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption; and He did not see corruption. True, He had there to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" but even He trusts Himself to God His Father, and God puts His seal upon Him by raising Him from the dead. There I get in the resurrection of Christ the coming in of divine power in the very place where we were lying in ruin and helplessness, and where Christ was in grace for us, and it takes Him entirely out of it. Now I have got the man Christ Jesus in heaven after atonement has been made, and after the question of sin has been settled in virtue of His having God about it. I get Him in the place of. power as the object of God's counsels. For it is in Christ that all things are to be gathered together in one, and even now God has set Him Head over all things to the Church.

The whole question of sin is thus settled in the resurrection of Christ. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins But now is Christ risen from the dead;" and we are not in our sins. There I find the heavenly man, that has been down here and borne my sins, in power of resurrection in the presence of God. He is "the Lord from heaven" too. Mark this. Afterward the apostle says in Ephesians that that very same power that wrought in Christ, when God raised Him from the dead, is exercised in. every one that believes. He desires that they may know "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Exactly the same power that wrought when God took Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, has already wrought in you that believe, and you have got a

place with Him there; and, therefore, "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." We are in Christ in God's presence; and now I get not desires only, but the answer to them. I have not merely a new nature, but I have got what the new nature wants, because I have got Christ. I have got not merely cravings after something, but the thing I crave. I want righteousness and holiness, and that is what I have got, because I am in Christ. I want to be without fear in the presence of God, and I am in it, because I am in Christ. I have got now, in a word, full salvation—not merely a new nature, but salvation.

God has come down to me and He has saved me. He has come and by His own power has taken me out of the place in which I was lying, in misery and helplessness, in the first Adam, and has put me in the place of the last Adam, before Himself, without a sin upon me—all sin put away, because all was judged in the person of Christ. Such is the condition into which Christ has thus brought us. After the fall of the first man, after the thorough trial of man as man—tried without law—tried under law, then God comes in with perfect grace and sends His well-beloved Son. So to speak, He says that is the last thing I can try man by; but when they saw Him they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." Man as the first man has been perfectly tried, and has been found wanting. No means can mend him. But what do I find in Christ? He has taken the place of the first Adam down here for us. He has died in it, and there is a total end of the whole state for those that believe. Now I reckon myself dead to sin, because Christ has died. He was treated as being in that place, and He died, and the whole thing is ended—ended for me, under judgment of another's bearing. As a believer I shall still feel the workings of the old nature and have to judge it; but I see Christ taking it for me and judgment executed upon it in His person on the cross, and now He is out of it all, alive again for evermore. That life is wholly gone in which He laid it down, and the old nature to which sin and judgment applied is gone—just as a man who may be in prison, awaiting there the punishment of his crime, and he dies: the life to which the punishment is attached is gone. It is impossible that there can be any longer a question of punishment for the sin: the life is gone to which the sin and its punishment attached. Just so was it with Christ. And therefore the apostle always addresses the believer as dead to sin. "You are dead," he says to him; "you are not a living man at all." "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is never said in Scripture that we are to die to sin, for if that were said, it would be ourselves that would die, and that would be an end of us altogether. But what is stated in Scripture is, that we are dead to sin, through Jesus Christ. Now that Christ has died unto sin once for me, let me reckon myself to be dead to sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ. This is what I get as the principle of the Christian's place:—that while as a fact he is alive, yet as Christ has died, the very nature that God dealt with, as to the question of sin, in the first Adam, is done with, and now a power has come in that has made me alive with Christ. The very nature that had to be dealt with is looked at as a judged and dead thing, and I am brought into the position of Christ, as risen and in the presence of God. When we sit with Him, we shall be like Him; but as to our real condition before God, even now we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ. Divine love has reached down to the place of sin and death in which we were, and divine righteousness has taken us up and set us in the place of light, where Christ is; for there is no middle place. If I know what sin is, I see that it deserves condemnation. It would not be mercy to leave the sin alone, and pass it by. It must be put away; but how? It must be put away by death, because its merits are condemnation.

(To be continued.)

As Is the Heavenly, As Is the Heavenly

1 Cor. 15:48

THERE are two great things that the Scriptures present to us as effectual for salvation. One is, the full vindicating of God's moral character in grace towards us, which the atonement does. There is righteousness in God against sin, and there is love to the sinner—for God's character is not only vindicated in the atonement, but He is glorified in it. But besides this, there is another and a distinct thing, and that is, the coming in of power to bring us out of all the misery and wretchedness which are the effects of sin, and to set us in a new place. Both these things form a part of this great salvation. The one was absolutely necessary, if sinners were to be reconciled to God at all; for the atonement must have been made in order to our being brought near to God. If God had brought us to Himself without His righteousness having been perfectly vindicated, He could not have been the holy and blessed One that He is. But all that God is, has been perfectly cleared and vindicated on the cross, which without the cross never could have been. If God had let every one off in mercy, that would not have been love; it would have been indifference to sin. If one of my children, for instance, were to be naughty, and yet I were to persist in treating him all the same as the others, that would not be love. You cannot have true love unless there is a perfect maintaining of righteousness according to the truth of God's name. But to maintain that, must, necessarily, have shut out all sinners, without the cross—without the death of Christ, as giving Himself up to the perfect righteousness of God—His judgment, His hatred of sin, His authority—for it is a question of authority, as well as of holiness—and, at the same time, of perfect love to the sinner. And this is what the cross of Christ is for us—the full bringing out and vindicating of all that God is, not only in love but in holiness. It is full of blessing. We come to God as needy sinners, and we find there the mercy-seat, and His precious blood sprinkled upon it. But when in peace I can reflect upon the cross, I see how perfectly God is glorified in it. The more it shows me the holiness of God, the more, also, what a wonderful thing the cross was; there is nothing like it in heaven or earth, excepting, of course, God Himself. No creation, nothing that has ever been seen in this world, could be what the cross was. Creation may show God's power, but it cannot bring out God's love and truth as the cross does, and therefore it remains everlastingly the wonderful and blessed place of learning, what could be learned nowhere else, of all that God is.

But while that is true, there is another thing, the coming in of a deliverer to take us out of the condition in which we were by nature—for so indeed we were, poor, wretched, creatures, struggling in the ditch, and no way of getting out of it. Supposing, then, that God had been vindicated and glorified by the cross of Christ, it did not follow that you and I should therefore be brought out of the condition in which we were. This required that God should come down to us, and take us out of all the condition of sin and misery, and put us in another condition altogether, and that needs the coming in of divine power.

SALVATION is a deliverance wrought by Divine power, so as to bring us out of one condition into another. It is true, we are morally changed, but we want more than that—though whoever has got that, will surely have all the rest. But supposing I get the new nature, with its desires

after holiness, what is the effect? It gives me the consciousness of all the sin that is in me. I want to be righteous, but then I see that I am not righteous, and I bow under the power of sin, and of the knowledge of such holiness, which I have learned to desire, only to find out that I have not got it. I say, What is the good of my knowing holiness in this way, if I have not got it? It is no comfort to me. Here we have been speaking of God's righteousness; but when I look I find I have no righteousness. Where can I find a resting-place for my spirit in such a state as this? It is impossible; and the very effect of having this new nature, with all its holy affections and desires after Christ, brings me to the discovery of the lack of what this new nature cannot of itself impart. I have got the cravings of the new nature—all its holy and righteous desires; but the thing craved for I have not got. It is the desire of my nature. I say, Oh! that I could be righteous; but then I am not righteous. In that way God meets us with a positive salvation. He meets us and quickens us into the desire and want of holiness; gives us a nature capable of enjoying it when we get it. But that is not all. When I have got that nature, have I got the thing I want No. I strive, and think, Oh! if I could get more of this holiness t but still I have not got it. I may hate the sin, but the sin is there that I hate. I may long to be with God, to be forever in the light of His countenance, but then I see that I have got sin, and know that the light of His countenance cannot shine upon my sin; I want a righteousness fit for His presence, and I have not got it. It is thus God meets us in the cross. He not only gives the nature that we want, but He gives us the thing that we want. And not only that, but in Christ He gives us both the perfect object and the nature, and that in power.

We get, in the expression of this, a remarkable thing in this chapter. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is not there what we shall be in point of glory, for afterward he adds, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We have borne the image of the first Adam, in all the consequences of his sin and ruin, and we shall bear the image of the last Adam. But he lays down first this great truth for our hearts, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is what we are now. There I find what my heart, as quickened of God, wants; and I learn what blessedness is in Christ, by whom God has revealed it to us. He has given us a righteousness in Christ who is the accepted, blessed man in the presence of God, of whom alone God could say, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." You have been rejected by man, but you are just my delight. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is that which God brings before us. He puts us into a new condition before Himself, and then makes us judge all that is inconsistent with that. Then, besides that, power is given—not a new nature, merely, with cravings after a position which we have not got, but power to judge practically, from a position which we have got, all that is inconsistent with it. There will be that which has to be judged, but I shall judge it in the consciousness of what God has given me in Christ. It is there that I get the measure of what God, come in in power, has made me. "As is the earthy,.... as is the heavenly," &c. Here are these two men, so to speak. There is the first Adam, of the earth, with those that pertain to him, earthy; and there is the second man, the Lord from heaven. There are these two Adams, and I get in both the pattern and model of all other men that are after their image. I get the first Adam, fallen, wretched, and corrupt; then I get the other Adam, that becomes in a spiritual sense the head of a race after He has taken that place in God's counsels in glory.

I say, There is the pattern, and model, and head of that race. It is not merely a truth that the atonement has been made for us, in respect of what we were as belonging to the first Adam; but God has been glorified in respect of our sins. The more we get into the presence of God, the more we shall learn the value of the cross. But then this chapter, in speaking of the resurrection, speaks of the coming in of power. We just see how the Lord first deals with Christ in power of resurrection, and then, at the same time, how we are objects of this very same thing.

Now what I see first in Christ, as He was upon earth, is perfect goodness in His dealings with men—perfect goodness meeting them in all their need. The heart gets cheered and encouraged by that. He feeds them when hungry, heals them when sick, casts out devils. There was power too, but not in those with whom He had to do. It was Divine power. It ministered to their wants. It was the wretchedness and misery in which man was, to which the goodness of God in Christ was applied, and the only thing in the person was the sin and misery to which the goodness was applied. I have felt latterly that the more we get at the facts of the Lord's life on earth, the more power there will be. We do not sufficiently present facts, but we reason upon the value of the facts. I am persuaded the more the facts of the gospel are presented to people's souls, the more power there will be.

Looking then at Christ upon earth, I find God in this lowly man Let me get firmly hold of that simple fact in a world of misery, and wretchedness, and toil: God has come into it and I have found Him I have met Him. It is by faith, of course: but still God was there, and I have met Him. I know what He is and what He is for me. I was a sinner like all the rest of the world, but God was there and He was all goodness to me. I have found Him and I know what He is, because He has been it to me. Christ was upon earth, coming down to all my need, and I have met God in Him and I know Him, Now I say, that is in one sense everything to my soul. You may reason as to what He will be in the day of judgment; but I say I have found Him and know what He is, and that is perfect goodness. I was a vile, wretched creature, troubling myself about nothing but pleasure, or worse; but I met Him and know what He is. When the soul has got that, it has got a key that opens every lock in eternity. I have found God, and I have found that He is perfect light. Of course, just because He is light, I may see failures in myself, I may be ashamed of myself; but still I know what He is and what He is to me, and thus my soul gets a resting-place and a divine acquaintance with the God I have to do with. I see that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." He has been here with me on earth, but now I have another trouble—that I am not fit to be with Him in heaven. Why, here is death, here is sin, here is failure to be dealt with, and sin cannot go to heaven. Therefore I get another fact. I find that this blessed One, who is the expression of this perfect grace that I did not think anything about—I find Him coming down into my condition—made sin for me—going under the death and under the judgment that were due to me, and bearing my sins. I find Christ now not merely as a living Christ upon earth, kind towards my miseries, showing all goodness to me, but as taking my place under the suffering of the wrath and judgment of God, and there I find Him altogether alone. Christ may suffer in a way in which I may suffer with Him. He may suffer from man, and we may suffer thus in our little measure. He may learn what suffering is in this world, in order to comfort me and suffer with me. But when I find the Lord suffering on the cross, there I find Him absolutely and entirely alone, and there I find the great question of sin perfectly and forever settled between God and me. But I was not there at all.

(To Be Continued.)

Letters 3, Assembly Judgment Owned; Unity of the Body of Christ; Children Sitting With Parents; Principles of Gathering; Reconciliation and Propitiation; Reception to the Lord's Table

My judgment is (but should seek peace, and there is no rule save that "all things be done decently and in order"), that young children should be with their parents at the meetings, and that growing girls should be so too. When the boys grow up to a certain age, they are better sitting back. If girls are at school, or under a governess, they can sit with the other scholars; as it is only a question of comely protection and shelter, which grown boys do not need. But formal rule there is none: decency and order is one.

As regards the second question: the principle of meeting is the unity of the body, so that a person known as a Christian is free to come: only the person who introduces him should have the confidence of the assembly as to his competency to judge of the person he introduces. In London and elsewhere the name of the person introducing is given out; or if many know him, that is mentioned and they are responsible. Looseness is so prevalent now among the denominations that more care is needed; but I hold that every known Christian has the same title as myself; and membership of an assembly I totally reject. But I do not accept running out at a person's fancy: they may have been sinning or walking disorderly; and a person breaking bread is thereby subject to the discipline of God's house, if called for, just as if he had been constantly there. Nor do I accept any condition from them, as that they are free to go anywhere: the assembly is to follow God's word, and can bind itself by no condition. Nor do I impose any; because as the assembly is bound by the word and can accept none, so is the person subject to the discipline of the assembly according to the word.

I have never changed my views at all. The practice is more difficult because of the growing looseness in doctrines and practice of all around. But if an assembly refused a person known to be a Christian and blameless, because he was not of the assembly, I should not go. I own no membership but of Christ. An assembly composed as such of its members is at once a sect. But the person who brings another is responsible to the assembly, and should mention it; for it is the assembly which is finally responsible, though it may trust the person who introduces another in the particular case. If it were a young Christian, or one of little maturity and weak in the faith, I should like to know what sure ground there was before allowing him to break bread, on the same principle as in all other cases.

Yours truly in the Lord.

[Date unknown.] -

Letters 3, Woman's Place in the Work; Women Teaching Women

The scripture is plain,¹ that it is forbidden to a woman even to ask questions. It is not seemly for angels or men. If any strangers are allowed to come in who wish it, I should consider it a public assembly; but if it be an individual meeting for any beyond the saints, then it has a private character, and I think the woman's place is as in any other private assembly: only that in divine things, and in christian women, modesty and a retiring spirit is of great price with God. If it be a regular meeting of the assembly, the woman's part is surely to be silent. In a private meeting, it is merely a question of the modesty that becomes them. We are called to peace.

[1861.]

Letters 1, Gift as to the Assembly

With regard to speaking, I am quite clear those who speak error ought to be stopped, and those, I think, who speak merely from the suggestion of the flesh, ought to be first warned of it. Any one may do it in love, but those who guide may, if it be needed, take it up, and that for their own sakes who have done it; and if there were from this, habitual unprofitable speaking, I think it ought to be stopped. Those who are active in this, must carry the sense of the brethren, which if rightly ordered under the Spirit is a real test of unprofitableness, with them; for that is the ground of the act. I never could understand why the church of God is to be the only place where flesh is to have its way unrestrained. It is folly to suppose this. I desire the fullest liberty for the Spirit, but not the least for the flesh. The church, for God's glory, is as bound to stop it there (and more, for it is the place of holy order) as elsewhere, and the means are just the same, the grounds just the same, and it is written, "Let the others judge." Such, I think, is the very simple principle and rule of practice.

On the other hand, I am very jealous of meddling, merely because there is not the same refinement, or people being puffed up for one against another; that is just the flesh in another shape. The poor often get profit, where a refined ear would be offended. It is a holy loving wisdom which must order this. In [cases] of error, the act should be prompt, in cases of profit, patient. But I must say I have not the least idea of subjecting myself to the self-will of another's notion, that he is to speak when he cannot profit the church. I should take the liberty of going away in such an extreme case, and try the question summarily if driven to it. I never knew the Lord desert me, or rather the act of obedience to His own will. In such a case, I have no right to wrong the whole church of God, making them unhappy, and hindering the gathering of the saints, to humor the flesh of any.

But then, this must be clearly, and if needs be, patiently ascertained, acting in all quietness, though in all firmness; for the other extreme of stopping people unnecessarily, or merely because they do not please the ear as well, hinders the gathering to Christ equally on the other side.

I only await the signal to leave this, to be up in London. The Lord is working. I do not like leaving uncared for the sign of His hand; but I have learned enough of my own ways and to trust His, not to be anxious to anticipate His plans, nor to press beyond my measure; but I feel the need, and have been a good while myself anxious as to helping in London.

I have my "Revelation" ready too, if the printer could print from my writing, but it is of no consequence.

The great point, if a man were an apostle, as I see from the Corinthians, is to carry the mind of the great body of the people—all, if possible, but the offender—with you in every act of order. This was the first effect of the apostolic action, and when we act in the Spirit we shall ever do so with the spiritual; any for the moment merely led away, will see their folly and be profited.

Ever, dear——,

Very affectionately yours.

Stafford, January 31st, 1839.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 4, What Is the Unity of the Church?

I SHOULD never have spoken of Mr. F.O.'s pamphlet if there had not been in it very decided principles upon some important points, and an object which all do not perceive. If it were only the desire to cast contempt upon his brethren which was manifested in it, nothing would be easier than to pass on. Every one can judge how far Mr. O. has profited by the light of brethren whom he is pleased to treat with a measure of contempt. I do not find the proceeding very noble; but if any one wishes to kick down the ladder by which he has mounted, it certainly is not worth the trouble of writing a pamphlet, however small, to point it out. Mr. O. tells us that he has gone on his way "groping." When we submit to what is found in the word, we do not grope: one does grope with the thoughts of men. With God's word we may still be ignorant on many points; but if we receive, and that joyfully, the yoke of the word, we do not grope.

Mr. O.'s object is to establish or direct independent assemblies and to justify laxity in discipline. He understands absolutely nothing as yet of the unity of the body. Practically his pamphlet is directed against that unity. Those are the only points that I shall take up, presenting what the word of God says of assemblies, and some fresh light that God has granted me. The latter is not of any great importance: but what His word says is always of interest to the Christian. It is a happy thing to know that, if we are grounded upon the word, the fresh light we receive never overthrows the old but completes and makes it clearer.

First, allow me to say that the assemblies of so-called "Plymouth Brethren," far from calling themselves the "assembly" or "the church of God" in a particular place, have always formally opposed the title. So little truth is there in the insinuation, that it is principally this which has hindered these brethren from forming part of the Rochat flock. They believe that they alone are assembled upon the true principle of the church of God, which I in no wise doubt: but they believe that the church is in ruins, and that the pretension to be the church of God in a place would be a false pretension. I add that, if all the Christians in a place were to be found gathered together which would form (according to order) the assembly of the place, I would not give it that title, because the universal church is not gathered; and I do not believe in independent churches. I believe that there were formerly local churches representing in a certain sense the whole in their localities; but we are very far from that now. All who have taken the trouble to inquire know, or might have known, that from the first the brethren in question have taken their stand upon the principle of Matt. 18 as a resource given of God in the general ruin. The pretension to be the assembly of God has always been rejected by the brethren we speak of. Every assembly gathered by the will of God around the Person of Jesus or in His name is an assembly of God, if it be only a question of the force of words; but when it is a question of being the assembly of God in a locality, it is not so in the true sense of the word, and could not be so, considering the state of the universal church. It may gather together on the principle of the church of God, may find the promised blessing, may be the only one gathered according to that principle in the place, and may attach immense importance to it (and it ought to attach immense importance to it, if it desire to be obedient and faithful); but it is only the witness for God so far as by its separate walk it testifies to the faithfulness of God, to the divine principles which govern its walk and to the true state in which the church is found as a whole. In this case it will be God's witness; certainly it ought to be so.

Mr. O. will have it that the totality of the churches, that is to say of the assemblies, constituted the church or the assembly. Not at all. Numerically speaking, it is not true. Many Christians were scattered here and there preaching the gospel, converted without being connected with a flock, like the treasurer of queen Candace, like Paul and Silvanus and Timothy and Titus in their labors. But, what is more important, the principle is entirely false, and the question which occupies us is altogether that. The assembly or the body was composed of individuals, and not of churches or of assemblies. Here are Mr. O.'s words in p 11: "assemblies all united among themselves by one faith and one worship, and forming, in their totality, the church, the body of Christ upon the earth." There is no such idea in the word. The body had members. Now assemblies were not the members, but Christians individually were the members; and although the assemblies had the same faith and the same worship, it was not this principle which constituted the unity of the body, but the presence of the Holy Ghost which united all believers, Jews and Gentiles, in one and the same body.

Corinthians 12 makes the doctrine of the word of God perfectly clear with regard to this. The body of Christ on earth is composed of individuals and not of churches. Now if this be the case, there is unity only in the whole; there is none in any local assembly if it be detached from the whole as a whole. If it be regarded as an independent church, it has nothing to do with the body, it is not in principle an assembly of God. At the beginning of the first Epistle to the Corinthians it is said, "to the assembly of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Jesus Christ, saints by calling, with all those who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Thus the apostle could say, "Ye are the body of Christ." The assembly at Corinth represented at Corinth that one and only unity, that of all individuals united to Christ in one body by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Everything had a connection with the one body, composed of all the members of Christ. There was no action which did not relate to the whole body, no suffering of one member which was not felt by all the members of the body: 1 Corinthians 12 leaves no doubt upon this point. The gifts were exercised in this whole (1 Cor. 12:27, 28). Their object was first the perfecting of individuals, then the edification of the body of Christ; Eph. 4:12.

The object of this effort to make independent flocks is the desire of being independent, of doing their will without submitting to the discipline of the church as one body. Mr. O. says as much (p. 43). Each assembly being independent, united only by one faith and one worship (p. 11),

is in a position to judge the disciplinary proceedings of another assembly (p. 43). The unity of the body therefore does not exist. An act is the act of an independent church; it has no reference whatever to the whole, and is not binding upon other assemblies or other Christians. Some one may be put out by one assembly and another assembly may receive the one who is put out. It is evident that this is disorder. The "within" and the "without" are not simply the church of God and the world. All that is lost. It is the "within" of a small voluntary and independent assembly which only exercises discipline in relation to itself. It is quite evident that the "within" and "without" of 1 Corinthians is not merely the "within" and "without" of a particular assembly, so that the wicked man could be without at Corinth and within at Ephesus. The Epistle carefully teaches the unity of the body on the earth and only recognizes the local act in that unity, a unity composed of individuals and not of churches. Look at the act of discipline in another point of view; and you will see the immense difference of the principles, and how this system of independent churches destroys the truth of scripture on this subject. What is the real power, the real source of authority, in discipline? The presence of Jesus: not simply that the discipline is the act of a voluntary society which excludes one of its members from its bosom, but that it is the act of an assembly according to God, assembled in the name of Jesus, and acting in His name and by His authority, to maintain the holiness which belongs to that name. Now the independent church is only a society which acts for itself: another assembly may judge all that it has done. There is no trace either of the unity or of the authority of the church of God.

Does it then follow that, if another assembly has acted hastily, a flock is bound hand and foot? In no wise. Just because the unity of the body is true and recognized, and that in a case of discipline the members of that body who gather together elsewhere take an interest in what passes in each place, they are free to make brotherly objections, or to suggest some scriptural motive; in a word, they are capable of all brotherly activity with regard to it. If it be an independent assembly, it is not concerned; there is nothing for it to look into. If these things are done in the unity of the body, every Christian is interested in what passes. It may happen that the discipline of an assembly cannot be owned; but then it is rejected as an assembly, and the presence of Jesus giving authority to its acts is denied—a very grave thing, but one that may occur. Mr. O. has entirely falsified the unity of the body, and wishes for independent churches and a unity of faith and worship, the aggregate of the churches forming according to him the unity of the body. The word of God knows nothing of this system. The reader may judge of it by reading 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4 Cor. 1 and other passages of the word.

But another object is proposed wherever this system of half-Plymouth-Brethrenism-half-Independency is adopted; for it is not in Switzerland only that this ground has been taken. They wish to be free to support the Bethesda discipline, or that of the neutrals, of those who condemn absolute exclusivism as Mr. O. calls it (p. 41)—an expression which I confess I do not understand. Every one is not excluded, I suppose. Some persons are excluded in Mr. O.'s independent churches. The assemblies of the so-called "Plymouth Brethren" also exclude some. The question is, if the limits that have been put to the exclusion are scriptural. The expression "absolute exclusivism" may serve to bring opprobrium upon assemblies with which one does not agree; it is nonsense. But we have rather more intelligible expressions: "disciplinary ways which go far beyond scripture" (p. 42); and again, "to combat such teaching, we do not excommunicate in large masses Christians who are ignorant of it." There can be no mistake. Mr. O. condemns the discipline of the assemblies called "Plymouth Brethren," and he wishes the discipline of Bethesda or of the neutrals. This is the object of his pamphlet and of the support which he gives to independent churches. I will not weary either my reader or myself with the history of this question; but the real point in question is of all gravity for the church of God. Can an assembly be corrupted? We had broken with what we had considered to be outrages and blasphemies against Christ. Up to that time there had not been any great difficulty—some painful things, but settled without much delay. But here we have an assembly which receives those whom we have excluded as blasphemers: could one walk with that assembly, taking the Lord's supper with these excommunicated people?

This is the first question. For my part I could not do so, and those who admitted them knowingly and willingly were not a "new lump," 1 Cor. 5. This raised the question: Is an assembly corrupted when knowingly and willingly it admits sin as blasphemy? Our adversaries maintained that an assembly could not be defiled; that individuals who are in sin are defiled, but that the assembly could not be so. They insisted upon this in several tracts. And not only so, but the principal brethren in a so-called neutral meeting signed a printed circular affirming that, if an assembly should admit fornication knowingly and willingly, we ought none the less to acknowledge that assembly and to receive letters of recommendation from it. We judged that, if an assembly (not taken by surprise, which may happen everywhere, or through carelessness, of which we are all capable, but) knowingly and willingly admits sin or blasphemy, it is not a new lump; that in order to be a new lump it must purge itself from the old leaven (1 Cor. 5:7); and that in so doing the other members proved themselves pure in this matter (2 Cor. 7:11): otherwise they would not have been so. This is the principle in question. Several went farther, maintaining that in no case does blasphemy or any kind of doctrine call for discipline.

The effects have been, to my mind, most fatal; but I limit myself to stating the question except that I will communicate the result in one case which may arouse Swiss consciences. The doctrine in question in the United States has not been that of Mr. N. but the denial of the immortality of the soul. There is a meeting at Philadelphia (and there are even two) on the neutral principle, which does not follow the so-called exaggerated discipline and which blames the severity of brethren. Those who hold the denial of the immortality of the soul were admitted to the meeting; afterward the doctrine was taught there. We broke or rather refused all connection with these meetings. Those who blamed our severity were not willing to keep themselves thus separate, and now the principal instruments of the Swiss mission or of the Grand-Ligne deny the immortality of the soul. I hope all have not come to this—God knows.

I do not enter farther into details: it would be too painful and of but little use. It is certain that the lack of faithful discipline, the loose system extolled by Mr. O., the lack of absolute exclusivism in regard to what is false and evil, has led the Swiss mission into the doctrine which denies the immortality of the soul. They may say, We do not preach it; but the doctrine has currency; people go and ask the minister what he thinks of it; he thinks it is truth, and souls receive it. Well, we refused those who were not willing to break with this system, and I bless God for it; but there is a fine field of labor ruined precisely by the system which Mr. O. extols. Neutral meetings, taking advantage of the absence of absolute exclusivism, and approved of for this by Bethesda and by the neutrals and by the O.'s, are traps for simple souls who go to New York and Philadelphia.

The question is no longer Bethesda; but can an assembly which knowingly admits grave errors be recognized as an assembly of God, and those who are accomplices in the thing be held to be innocent, although they support evil, because they are not themselves blasphemers? In 2 Tim. 2 we are enjoined to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonor: is it purging ourselves to be in full communion with them?

Corinthians 5 and 2 Cor. 7 settle the question for me as to the condition of those who support evil without being themselves personally guilty.

There are many things I might take up in Mr. O.'s tract, but that is not my object. When it is said (p. 2), "The church is begotten of God," no passage quoted speaks of the church. It is not begotten of God; individuals are. It is not their being begotten of God which constitutes them members of the church, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I do not know in what sense Mr. O. thinks the apostle said to the church at Corinth, "Ye are the body of Christ." But I am not occupied with these things. I only keep to the fact that the tract is a plan of adhesion to a system which denies the true unity of the church, which establishes independent churches, and which justifies a discipline or rather a lack of faithfulness to Christ. This turns what are called holy assemblies into a snare for the simple to entrap them into false and injurious doctrines, and to destroy integrity of conscience-the certain result of all false doctrine.

I believe, not that the public apostasy is yet come, but that, in the spirit of the thing, it took place long ago; just as there were many antichrists although the Antichrist was not there. Now Antichrist, at least the man of sin, is connected with the apostasy. Mr. O. wishes dismemberment. It would be impertinence on my part to contend with Mr. O. about the import of French words; but in the things of God there is something more than words. I find the word he has chosen the most unfortunate possible. The proper meaning of it is the act of tearing away a member from a body. It is employed for the division of a state, a kingdom, etc. But when it is used figuratively, something of the real meaning always remains. It is the greater force coming from without which divides. Poland and Bavaria have been dismembered. And if one speaks of the dismemberment of a society so that it is divided into several parts, it always leaves the idea of an effect produced on the society. It matters little if the members are agreed about it: the society suffers violence; something of the original thought remains. Now I admit that the apostasy in the full and complete sense of the word has not arrived, and that the application of this term to the Romish system (an application made by the mass of Protestant writers¹) went beyond the true force of the word. But let it be remarked that the apostasy is the fault of the church on earth; it had lost its first love; it had had time to repent and had not repented; it had a name to live and was dead; it was to be spued out of the Savior's mouth. This was a moral condition for which the church was responsible; and if the apostasy has not come, we have reached such a point in that direction that the distance which separates us from it is scarcely appreciable: only the Spirit of God is acting in a remarkable manner. After all Mr. O. now admits the fall of the church, which is the important thing. But dismemberment (a frightful word when the body of Christ is in question) which Mr. O. can make use of because the true idea of the body has no place in his thoughts-dismemberment is only a fact.

The apostasy, or the tendency to apostasy, expresses the thought (crushing, if the grace of the Lord were not revealed) of the unfaithfulness of the church to the One who has so loved it. But there is something more. If it be a question of the body of Christ and of members united to the Head in heaven, the dismemberment of the church is a horror. If the church on earth be a simple society, then it becomes dismembered or is divided or decomposed. Now Mr. O. has not the least idea of the unity of the body, nor of the responsibility of the church to maintain that position which it has never had in his eyes. It was a society composed of several local societies. To divide might perhaps be an evil, but an evil which happens to an earthly society. "The church at Corinth, notwithstanding its disorders, was not dismembered in Paul's time; and he could still say to them, Ye are the body of Christ" (p. 3). If Mr. O. had the least idea of the body of Christ, this phrase would have been impossible; it has no meaning for anyone who understands what the body is.

I may be permitted to add a few words, with regard to the two points of view in which the word of God looks at the house.

Christ (Matt. 16) builds the house, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. It is Christ who builds; the house is not yet completed. In 1 Peter 2 The living stones are added; there is no human architect. In Eph. 2 The building fitly framed together grows up unto a holy temple in the Lord. But in 1 Cor. 3 we find quite another thing. Paul is a wise builder; every one must take care how he builds. There we have the responsibility of man, although the building may be called the building of God. He who, being a Christian, builds well has a reward; but the one who, although a Christian on the foundation, builds badly will lose his labor, but he is saved. There is a third class; he who corrupts others will himself be destroyed. Now popery and the ritualistic system have confounded the temple that Jesus Christ is building, and which grows up into a temple, with that which depends on man's responsibility-a grave and fatal error. They do the same as to the body. But there was responsibility to maintain the unity of the Spirit, and thus the manifestation of the unity of the body, and the church failed in it: then it confounded the body with what man has built. The unity in John 17 is not the unity of the body; John never speaks of the church. He speaks there of a unity of brethren or of disciples which would in fact manifest the power of the Spirit of God.

Mr. O. refers us to another pamphlet on "Elders," etc. He wished to name some whenever the minds of brethren might be prepared to receive them. As an authority for this, having thrown overboard the old dissenting principles, he has only this reasoning, namely, that the apostles must necessarily have provided for the future of the church-a point already discussed with M. de G.-which is nothing but a piece of reasoning and of false reasoning, for it supposes that God wished Christians to know that the church would subsist long upon the earth, thus destroying the present expectation of the Lord, which His word avoids in a most remarkable manner by insisting upon that expectation. I believe, in common with many Christians, that the seven churches give the history of Christianity, but God took up churches which were then in existence in order not to take Christians out of this position of continual expectation. The virgins who sleep are those who awake. The servants who received the talents on the departure of the master are those who are judged at his return; the duration of the delay does not go beyond the life of the men.

"If I will that he tarry till I come," says the Lord. "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," says the apostle. "And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord," says again the Lord. An expectation of every day is not only an idea but was what characterized the early disciples. They were converted to wait for His Son from heaven, and God is not slack concerning His promise. But as to any arrangement which supposes a long continuance of the church on earth, there is no trace of it in the word.

To support this false idea, Mr. O. has recourse to a passage from Clement of Rome-a fatal sign when one has to go outside the word to support one's thesis. But the phrase, by which Clement tries to explain his views on this point, is most obscure. One of the terms employed is a word entirely unknown, except as used in quite another sense in Plutarch, and is not found at all in Alexandre's dictionary. Even the meaning of the phrase is contested. In general it is applied to the death of the elders named by the apostles. But there are grave theologians who apply the words "when they should have fallen asleep" to the apostles and insist upon the passage as a proof of episcopacy, admitting that there is nothing of that kind in the word of God, but that the apostles in the prospect of their departure, arranged that other tried men should succeed them in their authority: a position that Mr. O., if I have rightly understood him, arrogates to himself, by putting himself among the number of those who have replaced the apostles as *ellogimoi* and *andres*. I do not accept this interpretation of the passage from Clement

which they support by the deuterai diataxeis of a passage from Irenaeus (if indeed the fragment be his), and by the nomination of Simeon as the successor of James by a convention of the apostles who were still living, of which Eusebius and other patristic authorities speak. But what a poor foundation is all this in comparison of the word of God, given for all times by God Himself, the divine light in the midst of the darkness of this world!

Now this is the main point of the matter. What gave rise to the existence of the so-called Plymouth Brethren is the grand truth, the great fact, of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, to form the body of Christ into one; then the coming of the Savior as the continual expectation of the Christian. These two truths Mr. O.'s pamphlet deifies.

There are three principal positions of Christ as Savior: on the cross accomplishing redemption; at the right hand of God, whence He sends the Holy Spirit; and returning to fetch us and to judge the world. The first truth is the gospel preached to man as a sinner. The last two have been clearly brought out again in these latter times and are those which have aroused attention, and have placed the so-called Plymouth Brethren in their present position; they also throw immense light upon the first truth. The evangelical world will not receive them: from that time nothing but conflict and opprobrium, as is always the case with truths freshly brought to light. Mr. O. admits many minor consequences; but his pamphlet entirely denies the real ground of the truth on these points. He wants a unity formed of local independent churches, having the same faith and the same worship; and he wishes to prove by reasonings, or rather to suppose, that the apostles taught Christians to expect a long course of centuries before the Lord should come. That is to say, he still denies the great truths necessary for Christians in these days. I state the fact because I believe it to be important for Christians, begging Mr. O. to be assured that there is not a trace of hostility in my heart. When evil comes in like a flood, it is not the moment for Christians to be tearing one another, however firm one may be in maintaining the principles that one is assured have been drawn from the word of God.

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Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 3, What Is the Church, as It Was at the Beginning? and What Is Its Present State?

We may consider the Church in two points of view. First, it is the formation of the children of God into one body united to Christ Jesus ascended to heaven, the glorified man; and that by the power of the Holy Ghost. In the second place, it is the house or habitation of God by the Spirit. The Savior gave Himself, not only to save perfectly all those who believe in Him, but also to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Christ has perfectly accomplished the work of redemption; having offered one sacrifice for sins, He is seated at the right hand of God. For by one offering He has forever and perfectly purified those who are sanctified: whereof also the Holy Ghost witnesses to us, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." The love of God has given us Jesus; the righteousness of God is fully satisfied by His sacrifice; and He is seated at God's right hand as a continual testimony to the accomplishment of the work of redemption, to our acceptance in Him, and to the possession of the glory unto which we are called. From heaven, according to His promise, Jesus has sent the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who dwells in us who believe in Jesus, and who has sealed us for the day of redemption, that is to say, of the glorification of our bodies. The same Spirit is, besides, the earnest of our inheritance.

But all this would be always true, even if there were not a Church upon earth. That is, it is one thing that there are individuals saved, children of God, heirs of glory in heaven; quite another is their union with Christ, so as to be members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones; and yet another it is to be the habitation of God through the Spirit. We will speak of these latter points.

There is nothing clearer in the holy scripture of truth than that the Church is the body of Christ. Not only have we salvation by Christ, but we are in Christ and Christ in us. The true Christian who enjoys His privileges knows that, by means of the Holy Ghost, he is in Christ and Christ in him. "In that day," says the Lord, "ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." In that day, that is to say, in the day when we should have received the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Accordingly we are in Christ and members of His body. This doctrine is largely unfolded in Eph. 1-3. What is there clearer than this word, "He gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body"? Observe, that this marvelous fact began, or was found existing, at soonest when Christ was glorified in the heavens, even though all that is found contained in these verses is not yet accomplished. God, says the apostle, has raised us up with Him, and has seated us together in Him in the heavenly places—not yet with Him, but "in him." And in chapter 3, "Which [mystery] was not in other ages made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel... that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God."

Here, then, is the Church formed on earth by the Holy Ghost descended from heaven, after the glorification of Christ. It is united to Christ, its heavenly Head; and all true believers are His members by means of the same Spirit. This precious truth is confirmed in other passages; for example, in Rom. 12, "As in one body we have many members, and all the members have not the same office; so we who are many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

It will not be necessary to cite other passages: we will only call the attention of the reader to 1 Cor. 12. It is clear as daylight, that here the apostle speaks of the Church on the earth, not of a future Church which shall be made good in heaven, and not even of churches scattered over the world, but of the Church as a whole, represented however by the Church at Corinth. Therefore it is said, at the beginning of the epistle, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." The totality of the Church is clearly seen in the words, "And God hath set in the church: first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healing," etc. It is evident that apostles were not in a particular church, and that the gifts of healing could not be exercised in heaven. It is the Church universal on earth. This Church is the body of Christ, and the true believers are its members. It is one by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of this one body, though many, are one body; so also is Christ," v. 12. Then, after having said that all these many members work, each in its own function, in the body, he adds (v. 27), "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members each in

particular." Bear in mind that this is come to pass by the baptism of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. Consequently this body exists on earth, and embraces all Christians wherever they may be; they have received the Holy Spirit whereby they are members of Christ and members one of another. Oh, how beautiful is the unity! If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it together.

Here the word teaches us besides that the gifts are members of all the body, and that they belong to the body as a whole. The apostles, the prophets, the teachers are in the Church, and not in a particular church. Consequently these gifts, given by the Holy Ghost, are exercised in all the Church where the member is found, because he is a member of the body. If Apollos taught at Ephesus, he teaches also when he is at Corinth, and in whatever locality he may be.

The Church is, then, the body of Christ, united to Him, its Head, in heaven, and one is a member by the Spirit who dwells in us, and all Christians are members one of another. This Church, which will be by and by made good in heaven, is at present formed on earth by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, who abides with us, and by whom all true believers are baptized into one body. The gifts, in the next place, are exercised as members of this one body in the entire Church.

There is, as we have said, another character of the Church on earth; that is to say, it is the habitation of God on earth. It is interesting to see, by examination, that this had no place before redemption. God did not dwell with Adam even while innocent; nor with Abraham, though He visited with much condescension both the first man in paradise and the father of the faithful. Nevertheless He never dwelt with them. But no sooner was Israel redeemed out of Egypt than God comes to dwell in the midst of His people. As soon as the building of the tabernacle was revealed and regulated, God says, "I will dwell in the midst of Israel and I will be their God; and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, who hath taken them out of the land of Egypt to dwell in their midst," Ex. 29:45, 46. Thus the dwelling of God in the midst of the people was the end of the deliverance: the presence of God in the midst of the people is their greatest privilege.

The presence of the Holy Ghost is what characterizes true believers in Christ. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. 6:19. "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Christians taken together are also the temple of God; and the Spirit of God dwells in them; 1 Cor. 3:16.

Not to speak more of the individual Christian, I will say then that the Church is God's habitation on earth by the Spirit. Most precious privilege! The presence of God Himself, the source of joy, strength, and wisdom for His people! But at the same time there is very great responsibility as to the way in which we treat such a guest. I will cite some passages to prove this truth. In Eph. 2, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and pilgrims, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Here we see that, though this building is already begun on the earth, the intention of God is to have a temple formed, made up of all that believe after that God had broken down the partition-wall that shut out the Gentiles; and that this building grows till all Christians are united in glory. But meanwhile the believers on earth form a tabernacle of God, His habitation through the Spirit who abides in the midst of the Church.

In 1 Tim. 3 the apostle says, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." By these words we see that the Church on earth is the house of the living God; that this epistle teaches Timothy how to behave himself in this house. We see also that the Christian is responsible to maintain the truth in the world. The Church does not teach, but the apostles taught. Teachers instruct, but the Christian maintains the truth by being faithful to it. It is the witness of the truth in the world. Those who seek the truth do not seek it among Pagans or Jews or Mahometans, but in the Christian Church. It is not authority for the truth, but the word is its authority. The Church is the vessel that contains the truth; and where the truth is not, there is no Church. Such is the Church, the body of Christ, who is its heavenly Head.¹ Such is the house of God by the Spirit on earth. When the Church is complete, it will join Christ in heaven, clothed with the same glory as its Bridegroom.

Now it is necessary, before speaking of the state of the Church as it was at the beginning, to notice a difference which is found in the word of God as to the house. The Lord said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." It is Christ Himself who builds His Church; and consequently the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.² Here it is not man who builds, but Christ. Wherefore the apostle Peter, speaking of the spiritual house, says nothing of the workmen, "To whom coming as unto a living stone... ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood," 1 Peter 2. This is the work of grace in the heart of the individual by which man approaches Christ. Accordingly, once more, in the Acts it is said that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." This work could not fail, being the work of God, efficacious for eternity, and manifested in its time. We read, moreover, in Eph. 2, "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." This building which grows may be manifested before the eyes of men; but if the effect of this work of efficacious grace is not manifested in its exterior unity before men, God will not for that fail to do His work, gathering His children for eternal life. Souls come to Christ and are built upon Him.

The apostles John and Paul, and more particularly the latter, speak of a unity manifested before men in testimony to men of the power of the Holy Ghost. In John 17 we read, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Here the unity of the children of God is a testimony borne to the world, that God has sent Jesus in order that the world may believe. Now this truth is, consequently, the evident duty of God's children. All know how the state opposed to this truth is a weapon in the hands of the enemies of this truth.

The character of the house and the doctrine of the responsibility of men are still more clearly taught in the word of God. Paul says, "Ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every one take heed how he buildeth thereupon." Here it is men who build. The house of God is manifested on earth. The Church is the building of God; but we find there not only God's work (that is, those who come to God moved by the Holy Ghost), but also the effect of the work of men, who have often built with wood, hay, and stubble. Men have confused together the exterior house built by men and the work of Christ, which may indeed be identical with the work of men, but it may also differ widely. False teachers attributed all the

privileges of the body of Christ to the great house composed of every sort of iniquity and of corrupt men. But this fatal error does not destroy the responsibility of men as regards the house of God, His habitation through the Spirit; any more than it is destroyed in respect of the manifestation of the unity of the Spirit in one body on earth.

I considered it important to notice this difference, because it throws much light on questions of the day. Let us now pursue our subject. What was the state of the Church at the commencement when it began at Jerusalem? We find that the power of the Spirit of God was wonderfully manifested. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," Acts 2. And in chapter 4, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands, or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need," Acts 4:32-35. What a beautiful picture of the effect of the power of the Spirit in their hearts! an effect which was too soon to disappear forever; but Christians ought to seek to realize it as much as possible.

The evil of the heart of man soon appeared; and Ananias and Sapphira, as also the murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration, manifested that the sin of man's heart joined to the devil's work was still working in the bosom of the Church. But at the same time the Holy Spirit was in the Church and acted there, and was sufficient for putting out evil and changing it into good. The Church however was one, known by the world; and one could say that the apostles, having been let go, went to their own company. One only Church, filled with the Holy Ghost, bore testimony to the salvation of God and to His presence on earth; and to this Church God added all those who were to be saved. This Church was all scattered abroad because of the persecution, save the apostles who abode at Jerusalem. Then God raised up Paul to be His messenger unto the Gentiles. He begins to build the Church among the Gentiles, and teaches that in it there is neither Gentile nor Jew, but that all are one and the same body in Christ. Not only the existence of the Church among the Jews, but still more the doctrine of the Church, of its unity, of the union of Jews with Gentiles in one body, is proclaimed and put in execution. It was the object of the counsels of God already before the foundation of the world, but hidden in God; a mystery which had been hid from the ages in God, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God: which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets³ by the Spirit. So also in Col. 1:26, "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."

All Christians were known, all admitted publicly into the Church, Gentiles as well as Jews. The unity was manifested. All the saints were members of one body, of Christ's body; the unity of the body was owned; and it was a fundamental truth of Christianity. In each locality there was the manifestation of this unity of the Church of God on the earth; so that an epistle of Paul addressed to the Church of God at Corinth arrived at a single assembly; and the apostle could farther add to it "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Nevertheless, if we speak specially of those at Corinth, he says, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." If a Christian member of Christ's body went from Ephesus to Corinth, he would have been equally and necessarily also member of Christ's body in this latter assembly. Christians are not members of a church, but of Christ. The eye, the ear, the foot, or any other member which was at Corinth, was equally such at Ephesus. In the word we do not find the idea of members of a church, but of Christ.

Ministry, as it is presented in the word, is likewise a proof of this same truth. The gifts, source of ministry, given by the Holy Spirit, were in the Church (1 Cor. 12:28, 8-12). Those who possessed them were members of the body. If Apollos was a teacher at Corinth, he was also a teacher at Ephesus. If he was the eye, ear, or any other member whatever of Christ's body at Ephesus, he was also such at Corinth. For this subject there is nothing clearer than 1 Corinthians 12 one body, many members; the Church one, in which were found the gifts that the Holy Spirit had given—gifts which were exercised in any locality whatsoever where he might be who possessed them. In Eph. 4 the same truth is set forth. When Christ ascended on high, He "gave gifts unto men... and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love."

This unity and the free activity of the members are found realized in the time of the apostles. Each gift was fully owned as efficacious to accomplish the work of the Lord, and was freely exercised. The apostles labored as apostles, and likewise those who had been scattered on the occasion of the first persecution labored in the work according to the measure of their gifts. It is thus that the apostles taught (1 Peter 4:10, 11; 1 Cor. 14: 26-29). And it is thus that the Christians did. The devil sought to destroy this unity; but he was not able to succeed as long as the apostles lived. He employed Judaism for this work; but the Holy Spirit preserved the unity, as we read in Acts 15. He sought to create sects in it by means of philosophy (1 Cor. 2), and of both together (Col. 2). But all these efforts were vain. The Holy Spirit acted in the midst of the Church, and the wisdom given to the apostles to maintain the unity and the truth of the Church against the power of the enemy. The more one reads the Acts of the Apostles, the more one reads the Epistles, the more one sees this unity and this truth. The union of these two things can only take effect by the action of the Holy Ghost. Individual liberty is not union; and the union of men does not leave the individual his full liberty. But the Holy Spirit, when He governs, necessarily unites brethren together and acts in each according to the aim which He has proposed to Himself in uniting them, that is to say, according to His own aim. Thus the presence of the Holy Ghost gathers together all the saints in one body, and works in each according to His will, guiding them in the Lord's service for the glory of God and the edification of the body.

Such was the Church: how is it now and where does it exist? It will be perfected in heaven. Granted: but where is it found now on earth? The members of Christ's body are now dispersed; many hidden in the world, others in the midst of religious corruption; some in one sect, some in another, in rivalry one with another to gain over the saved. Many, thanks be to God, do seek unity; but who is it that has found it? It suffices

not to say that by the same Spirit we love each other; for by one Spirit we have been baptized into one body. " That they all may be one... " says the Lord, " that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." But we are not one; the unity of the body is not manifested. At the beginning it was clearly manifested, and in every city this unity was evident to all the world. All Christians walked everywhere as one Church. He who was a member of Christ in one locality was so also in another, and he who had a letter of recommendation was received everywhere, because there existed but one society.

The Supper was the outward sign of this unity. " We being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread," 1 Cor. 10: 17. The testimony the Church gives now is rather that of proclaiming that the Holy Ghost with His power and grace is unable to surmount the causes of the divisions. The greatest part of what is called the Church is the seat of the grossest corruption, and the majority of those who boast of its light are unbelievers. Greeks, Romanists, Lutherans, Reformers cannot take the Supper together; they condemn each other. The light of God's children who are found in the sects is hid under a bushel; and those who are separated from such bodies, because they cannot endure the corruption, are divided into hundreds of parties who will not take the Supper together. Neither the one nor the other pretends to be the Church of God, and they say that it is become invisible; but what is the value of an invisible light? Nevertheless there is no humiliation or confession in seeing the light become invisible. Unity with respect to its manifestation is destroyed. The Church-once beautiful, united, heavenly-has lost its character, is hidden in the world; and the Christians themselves-worldly, covetous, eager for riches, honor, power-like the children of the age. It is an epistle in which one cannot read a single word of Christ.⁴ The greatest part of what bears the name of Christian is the seat of the enemy or infidel; and the true Christians are lost in the midst of the multitude. Where can we find one loaf, the sign of one body? Where is the power of the Spirit who unites Christians in a single body? Who can deny that the Christians were thus? and are they not guilty for being no longer what they were? or shall we call it well to be in a state totally different from that in which the Church was at the beginning and from that which the word demands from us? We ought to be profoundly grieved at such a state of the Church in the world, because it no way answers to the heart and love of Christ. Men rest satisfied in being assured of their eternal salvation.

Do we seek what the word says on this point? Here is what we read there, in a general way, for what concerns every economy or dispensation, and the ways of God with the Jews and towards the branches from among the Gentiles who were substituted for the Jews (Rom. 11). " On them which fell, severity; but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Is it not a serious thing, when the people of God on the earth are cut off? Certainly the faithful are and will be kept; for God has no thought of failing in His faithfulness; but all the systems in which God glorifies Himself on the earth may be judged and cut off. The glory of God, His real visible presence, was once at Jerusalem, His throne was over the cherubim; but ever since the Babylonish captivity His presence abandoned Jerusalem, and His glory as well as His presence were no more in the temple in the midst of the people. And though His great patience endured long, until Christ was rejected, yet God cut them off as regards that covenant. The remnant became Christians, but all the system was terminated by judgment. Such will be the issue of the Christian system, if it continue not in the goodness of God. But it has not continued in God's goodness.

Therefore, though I believe firmly that all true Christians will be preserved and caught up to heaven, yet for what concerns the testimony of the Church on earth, the house of God through the Spirit, it will exist no more. Peter had said already, the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And in Paul's time the mystery of iniquity was already working and was to be continued till the man of sin appeared; already in the apostle's time all sought their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. The apostle tells us farther that after his departure there should enter among the Christians in the Church grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; and that in the last days perilous times should come, men having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; that evil men and seducers should wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; and that finally the apostasy should come. Now is all this continuing in God's goodness?

And this unfaithfulness, is it a thing unknown in the history of man? God has always begun by putting His creature in a good position; but the creature invariably abandons the position in which God set it, becoming unfaithful therein. And God, after long forbearance, never re-establishes it in the position it fell from. It is not according to His ways to patch up a thing which has been spoiled; but He cuts it off, to introduce afterward something entirely new and far better than what went before. Adam fell; and God will have the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. God gave the law to Israel, who made the calf of gold before Moses came down from the mountain; and God will write the law in the hearts of His people. God ordained the priesthood of Aaron, but his sons from the very first offered strange fire; and from that moment Aaron could no more enter the holiest with his garments of glory and beauty. God made the son of David to sit on the throne of Jehovah; but, idolatry having been introduced by him, the kingdom was divided, and the throne of the world was given of God to Nebuchadnezzar, who made a great image of gold and cast the faithful into a burning fiery furnace. In every case man was faithless; and God, having long borne with him, interposes in judgment and substitutes a better system.

It is interesting to observe how all the things in which man has broken down are established in a more excellent way in the second Man. Man shall be exalted in Christ, the law written in the heart of the Jews, priesthood be exercised by Jesus Christ. He is the Son of David who is to reign over the house of Israel; He is to govern the nations. Likewise as regards the Church, it has been unfaithful; it has not maintained the glory of God which had been confided to it. Therefore shall it be cut off as a system on the earth, the order of things established of God shall be closed by judgment, the faithful shall go up to heaven into a state much better to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, and the kingdom of the Savior shall be established on the earth. All this will be an admirable testimony to the faithfulness of God, who will accomplish all His counsels spite of the unfaithfulness of man. But does this take away the responsibility of man? How then, as the apostle says, could God judge the world? Ought not our hearts to feel that we have cast the glory of the Lord into the dust? The mischief began in the times of the apostles: each added to it his own; and the iniquity of ages is heaped upon us; and soon the house of God will be judged. The blood of all the righteous has been required of the Jewish nation by Jesus, as also Babylon will be found guilty of the blood of all the righteous.

It is true that we shall be caught up to heaven; but, along with that, ought we not to mourn over the ruin of the house of God? Yes: formerly one, a beautiful testimony to the glory of its Head by the power of the Holy Ghost; united, heavenly, so that the world could recognize the effect of the power of the Holy Spirit who put men above all human motives, and, causing distinctions and diversities among them to disappear, made believers in all countries and of all classes to be one family, one body, one Church, a mighty testimony to the presence of God on earth in the midst of men.

But it is objected that we are not responsible for the sins of those who have gone before us. Are we not responsible for the state in which we are found? Did the Nehemiah's, the Daniels, excuse themselves for the sins of the people? Or rather, did they not mourn over the misery of the people of God as belonging to them? If we were not responsible, why then should God put them aside, why judge and destroy all the system? Why should He say, "I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent"? Why does He judge Thyatira, replacing it by the kingdom? Why does He say, "I will spue thee out of my mouth"? I believe that the seven churches furnish us with the history of the Church from the beginning to the end; in all cases we have there the responsibility of Christians as to the state of the Church. It will be said perhaps that there are none but local churches which are responsible, and not the Church universal. What is certain is that God will cut off the Church as a system established on earth.

Still more to demonstrate responsibility continually from the beginning to the end, let us read in Jude, "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation." They had already slipt in. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all." Thus those who in the time of Jude had already crept in would bring the judgments on the profane professors of Christianity. In this epistle we have the three classes of iniquity and their progress. In Cain there is purely human iniquity; in Balaam ecclesiastical iniquity; and in Korah rebellion, and then they perish. In the field where the Lord had sown the good seed, while men slept the enemy sowed tares. It is very true that the good seed is gathered into the garner, but the negligence of the servants has left the enemy the opportunity of spoiling the Master's work. Shall we be indifferent to the state of the Church, beloved of the Lord, indifferent to the divisions that the Lord has forbidden? No; let us humble ourselves, dear brethren, let us own our fault and have done with it. Let us walk faithfully, each for his part, and endeavor to find once more the unity of the Church and the testimony of God. Let us cleanse ourselves from all evil and all iniquity. If it is possible for us to gather together in the name of the Lord, it is a great blessing; but it is essential that this be done in the unity of the Church of God and in the true liberty of the Spirit.

If the house of God is still on the earth and the Holy Spirit abides in it, is He not grieved at the state of the Church? And if He abides in us, should not our hearts be afflicted and humbled at the dishonor done to Christ and the destruction of the testimony that the Holy Ghost is come down from heaven to bear in the unity of the Church of God? He who will confront the state of the Church, as it is described to us in the New Testament with its present state, will feel his heart profoundly saddened by seeing the Church's glory dragged into the dust and the enemy triumphing in the confusion of the people of God.

Finally, Christ has confided His glory on earth to the Church. It was the depositary of that glory. There the world ought to have seen it displayed by the power of the Holy Ghost, a testimony to the victory of Christ over Satan, death, and all the enemies that He has led captive, triumphing over them in the cross. Has the Church preserved this deposit and maintained the glory of Christ on the earth? If this has not been done, tell me, Christian, is the Church responsible for it? Was the servant, to whom the Lord entrusted the care of His house (Matt. 24), responsible or not for the state of his Master's house? It will be said, perhaps, that the wicked servant is the outward church, which is corrupted and is not really the Church: as for me, I am not a member of it at all. But I reply that, in the parable, the servant is alone; and the question is whether this sole servant is faithful or unfaithful? It may be true that you are separate from the iniquity which fills the house of God, and you have done well; but is not your heart bowed down because of the state of that house? The Lord shed tears of grief over Jerusalem; and shall we shed none over that which is still dearer to His heart? Here the glory of the Lord has been trampled under foot: shall we say that we are not responsible for it? His only servant is held accountable. Even though, individually guided by the word, I may be apart from all the iniquity which corrupts the house of God, nevertheless, as Christ's servant, I ought to identify myself with the glory of Christ, and with its manifestations to the world. It is in this that faith is shown: not merely in believing that God and Christ possess the glory, but in identifying this glory with His people (Ex. 32:1-6; Num. 14:13-19; 2 Cor. 1:20). First, God entrusts His glory to man, who is responsible to maintain himself in his position, and to be faithful in it, without leaving his first estate; by and by God will establish His own glory according to His counsels. But, first of all, man is responsible where God has set him. We have been set in the Church of God, in His house, in the habitation of His glory on the earth: where is it?

Letters 2, Gathering; Principle of Meeting as Members of the Body of Christ; Reception to the Lord's Table; Patriotism, Principles of

I write for both, because I hardly know who is in -, indeed for all, as to my heart's desire; and you will not be astonished at my being interested in the assembly there. I have heard from Mr. -, and also through another, only one side of course of the circumstances, and consequently I say little of them; N., indeed, alluded to the question raised, but not to circumstances. I shall refer chiefly to principles, for you will feel that we are all, as of one body, interested in the position taken, and still more in the glory of Christ and our brethren's welfare.

The question is, as to reception of saints to partake of the table of the Lord with us, whether any can be admitted who are not formally and regularly amongst us. It is not whether we exclude persons unsound in faith or ungodly in practice; nor whether we, deliberately walking with those who are unsound and ungodly, are not in the same guilt-not clear in the matter. The first is unquestioned; the last, brethren have insisted on, and I among them, at very painful cost to ourselves. This is, to me, all clear and plain from scripture. There may be subtle pleas to get evil allowed, but we have always been firm, and God, I believe, has fully owned it. The question is not there; but suppose a person known to be godly and sound in faith, who has not left some ecclesiastical system-nay, thinks scripture favors an ordained ministry, but is glad when the occasion occurs-suppose we alone are in the place, or he is not in connection with any other body in the place, staying with a brother, or the like-is he to be excluded because he is of some system as to which his conscience is not enlightened- nay, which he may think more right? He is a godly member of the body, known such. Is he to be shut out? If so the degree of light is title to communion, and the unity of the body is denied by the assembly which refuses him. The principle of meeting as members of Christ walking in godliness is given up, agreement with us is made the rule, and the assembly becomes a sect with its members like any other. They meet on their principles, Baptist or other-you on yours, and if they do not belong to you formally as such, you do not let them in. The principle of brethren's meetings is gone, and another sect is made, say with more light, and that is all. It may give more trouble, require more care to treat every case on its merits on the principle of the unity of all Christ's members, than say "you do not belong to us, you cannot come"; but the whole principle of meeting is gone. The path is not of God.

I have heard, and I partly believe it, for I have heard some rash and violent people say it elsewhere, that the various sectarian celebrations of the supper are tables of devils. But this proves only the unbrokenness and ignorance of him who says it. The heathen altars are called tables of devils because, and expressly because, what they offered they offered (according to Deut. 32:17) to devils, and not to God. But to call christian assemblies by profession, ignorant it may be of ecclesiastical truth, and hence meeting wrongly, tables of devils is monstrous nonsense, and shews the bad state of him who so talks. No sober man, no honest man, can deny that scripture means something totally different.

I have heard-I do not know whether it be true-that it has been said that the brethren in England act on this ground. If this has been said, it is simply and totally false. There have been new gatherings formed during my absence in America which I have never visited; but the older ones, long walking as brethren, I have known from the beginning have always received known Christians, and everywhere, I have no doubt, the newer ones too, and so in every country. I have known individuals take up the thought, one at any rate at Toronto, but the assembly always received true Christians: three broke bread in this way the last Lord's day I was in London. There cannot be too much care as to holiness and truth: the Spirit is the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of truth. But ignorance of ecclesiastical truth is not a ground of excommunication, where the conscience and the walk is undefiled. If a person came and made it a condition to be allowed to go to both, he would not come in simplicity in the unity of the body; I know it to be evil, and cannot allow it, and he has no right to impose any conditions on the church of God. It must exercise discipline as cases arise according to the Word. Nor, indeed, do I think a person regularly going from one to another systematically can be honest in going to either; he is setting up to be superior to both, and condescending to each. That is not, in that act, "a pure heart."

May the Lord guide you. Remember, you are acting as representing the whole church of God, and if you depart from a right path as to the principle of meeting, separating yourselves from it is to be a local sect on your own principles. In all that concerns faithfulness, God is my witness, I seek no looseness; but Satan is busy to lead us one side or the other, to destroy the largeness of the unity of the body, or to make it mere looseness in practice and doctrine; we must not fall into one in avoiding the other. Reception of all true saints is what gives its force to the exclusion of those walking loosely. If I exclude all who walk godlily as well, who do not follow with us, it loses its force, for those who are godly are shut out too.

There is no membership of brethren. Membership of an assembly is unknown to scripture. It is members of Christ's body. If people must be all of you, it is practically membership of your body. The Lord keep us from it; that is simply dissenting ground.

Ever, beloved brother,

Affectionately yours.

I should, if I came to -, require clear evidence what ground you are meeting upon.

Kingston,

April 19th, 1869.

Letters 3, Blessing in 1 Corinthians 11; the Act of Breaking Bread; the Doctrine of Concomitancy; Consubstantiation; Pretension to Priesthood; Romanism; Sufferings of Christ; the Lord's Supper; Transubstantiation, The Meaning of

I regard all pretense in any to priesthood, save that which can be attributed, and which in scripture is attributed to all saints, as the principle of the apostasy in its present form of development, and the denial of Christianity. Judaism had priests, because the people could not themselves go directly to God where He revealed Himself; Christianity has none between God's people and Himself in their worship, because Christians are brought to God and have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. To set a priest to go for them as one nearer to God, is to deny the effect of Christianity. Besides, priesthood has essentially to do with intercession, or sacrifice and offerings: and in the Lord's supper there is no sacrifice, nor is it intercession. The whole idea of priesthood on earth is to be rejected, therefore, as utterly contradictory both to Christianity and the act of breaking the bread.

But, on the other hand, it is a mistake to think we partake by breaking the bread, or that we break it. The whole force of the thing consists (as to this point) in our partaking of already broken bread. It is His body broken for us that we take and eat. We are not the breakers of His body, properly speaking. So that, I apprehend, the true partaking of the Lord's supper is after the bread is broken. The breaking of the bread now is, of course, a necessary accident to such participation, but is no part of the communion at all. And every one acquainted with scripture on the point, knows that "blessing" means simply giving thanks, and not consecrating the bread. See 1 Cor. 11:24 and compare Matt. 26:26, 27; Mark 14:22; and Luke 22:19. So in Luke 9:16, the miracle of the loaves and not the Eucharist, He blessed them and brake; in John 6:11, 23; Mark 8:6, 7 (also Mark 6:41), the terms are united; in Matt. 14:19 He blessed, and in chapter 15:36 gave thanks. In 1 Cor. 14:16 we find incontestable proof of what indeed the previous passages can leave no doubt on to a reasonable mind. "Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" Blessing is blessing God, a giving of thanks. So the apostle says, in chapter 11, "the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks," and in 1 Cor. 10 "the cup of blessing which we bless." Matthew and Mark, speaking of the bread, say He blessed; and speaking of the cup, say He gave thanks. In Luke it is simply, He gave thanks. Thus, the blessing which precedes the breaking of the bread is a giving of thanks; and in this, of course, all join, as in every thanksgiving, though one may utter it. Every saint is essentially competent, though in a large congregation godly order of mind may leave it to such as may have justly earned the respect of the body; yet, as the feeling of priesthood is readily slipped into, I should think it desirable that it were not always one.

The breaking of the bread is in itself no religious act; it represents the putting of Christ to death, and, as an outward act, was consummated by wicked men. But the Lord did break it in the last supper, showing it was a dead Christ they had to feed on; and hence he who gives thanks

breaks the bread. The communion comes after and is on a broken body. The breaking is the killing of Christ, and though absolutely necessary as a figure, because His death was absolutely necessary and is the very point shown forth, yet the act of doing it is no religious part of the thing which one has a privilege in doing. And as to pouring out the wine, it is done no doubt often, but is no part of the Lord's supper at all. The wine is, in the institution, supposed to be already in the cup, still pointing to the great fact, that the communion refers to an already dead Savior. The blood is out of the body—"my blood which is shed for you." The act of pouring out would not represent death, because the body is not thus represented, and hence it is not referred to at all. The already shed blood is given thanks for or blessed, already poured out: "the cup which we bless," etc. There is the breaking of the bread as significative of the breaking of His body; but this is preparatory to communion.

It is this consideration which shows the terrible import of the Roman Catholic doctrine as to the Eucharist, and how Satan has taken them in their own wisdom and, so to speak, mocked them. The laity are deprived of the cup and are consoled by what is called the doctrine of concomitancy; namely, that the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus are in the bread (indeed in both species). But if the blood be in the body, and not shed and separate, there is no redemption. It is shed blood, not blood in the body, which is the power of redemption; without shedding of blood there is none. This confirms the view, taken above, that it is a body already broken, and blood already shed, of which we partake. Thus, though the bread must be broken as it was by Christ, by him who gives thanks, this is but preparatory and forms, strictly, no part of the communion; and, as representing the putting Christ to death, it is no part of the holy service itself, though needed to shew that it is of a dead Christ we partake: it is of no living, existing Christ, but of a dead Christ, and there is none such. Remark further, how this sets aside transubstantiation and consubstantiation; for no such Christ exists as that celebrated in the Eucharist. As in the Passover a slain lamb, so a dead Christ is represented there, and shed blood; but there is no dead Christ now, He is alive again for evermore. As risen with Him, we remember the sorrows and sufferings which gave us a place there. That atoning death is accomplished and passed, and sin is put away for us, and we are alive with Him for evermore.

I would just add, that the expression in 1 Cor. 10:16 has no reference to one or to many, but to what Christians do in contrast with Jews and Gentiles. The apostle is treating the question of idolatry. Jews were partakers of the altar, Gentiles drank the cup of devils. What we (Christians) partake of is communion with the sacrifice of Christ. We are identified with the sacrifice, we cannot be with the cup of devils too.

[1859.]

Letters 2, Signification of "Table of Devils"

As to the sects' table being the table of devils, it is simply monstrous folly: the apostle is speaking [1 Cor. 10] of idols according to the passage in Deuteronomy [32:17]. I have heard an individual saying it, but only proving his own ignorance. With my light I could not own them to be the Lord's table; but dear saints, I do not doubt for a moment, go there with delight in the Lord, and get individual blessing from Him who loves them. I think they lose much, but may enjoy Him in their souls by individual faith.

All I see in chapter 10 is that, in partaking at the Lord's table, they are identified with the Lord as the Israelites with Jehovah and the Gentiles with their devils; and these last could not go with the other. In chapter xi. they were not eating the Lord's supper, but their own, and so abusing shockingly what it professed to be, for which they were chastened severely. I think you would find it hard to make out peculiar church or future blessing, save that it is, besides its immediate purpose of remembering the blessed Lord, the symbol of the one body. There is in the gospels a special reference to founding, on God's side, the new covenant in His blood, "shed for many" as well as Israel; but this is referred to in general in chapter 11....

Letters 2, Breaking Bread; Power of Full Grace; Nearness to the Lord, The Act of

My answer has been long delayed, but I have been on the ocean, and towards the end in Canada, had three meetings a day, and could only just get through them; but I was fully interested in your account of the work. Infidelity is rampant here, and the question is daily becoming more and more, Christianity or antichristianity; and so as to the word of God. But we have only to work on. "Let thine eyes look right on," it is written.

As to "my body which is broken for you"; as "broken" is not, I suppose, in scripture, it is well to avoid it: the bread was clearly broken, and as a sign of death I do not doubt, and the blood taken as shed; and this I think essential to the meaning of the ordinance; nor does the word therefore trouble me, because the sense is true and essential; and I think "a bone of him shall not be broken" misapplied, with you: and I should insist on the thought that it is shed blood, and that the bread should be broken, a sign that it was Christ's death. It is being given as one in whose life, so to speak, a breach was made by death; and care must be taken in losing the word, that the sense of the thing be not lost. Criticism in divine things is dangerous ground for the soul, and resting on words where things are in question. But scripture is wiser than we are, even in language....

The Lord be with you! May He keep us single-eyed and simple, looking to Him! We shall soon find, what we know to be true, that He is all. The saints, thank God, are far more looking for Him—I do not mean merely those in communion -than they were. Holiness is closely connected with the glory He is in, and that we shall be with Him in it when He comes, everywhere in the New Testament.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

June, 1877.

Letters 2, Christianity; Sacramental System; the Lord's Supper; Transubstantiation, The Starting Point of

*** I believe that the bread remains simply and absolute bread, and the wine, wine-that, physically, there is no change whatever in the elements. To seek for material and physical things in such a precious institution of the Lord is, to my mind, a poor and miserable manner of regarding it. I have a charming portrait of my mother, which reminds me of her just as she was. If I am told of the canvas or the coloring. I should feel that those who spoke thus knew nothing about it. That would not be my mother. That which is precious in it to me is my mother herself; and they turn my attention from her to the means employed to recall her to me; and the reason is, that they have no idea of what my mother is to me. The portrait has no value except as far as it is a good representation of her who is not there. I say, It is my mother. I could not throw it aside as a mere piece of canvas; I discern my mother in it. I cherish this portrait; I carry it with me; but if I stop at the perfection of the painting as a work of art, the link with my heart is lost.

There is more than this in the Supper of our Lord, because the Lord is really present with us in it spiritually according to the intention of the institution; and this is very precious. But it has pleased Him to give us a physical means by which we may be reminded of Him, so that I am authorized to speak of a portrait by way of comparison. I have still further authority to repel the idea of any physical change in the bread and wine, in that the Lord has said, in John 6, which you have quoted, "The Spirit quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." The verses of this chapter, however, which speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, do not speak at all of the Lord's supper, but of Christ: I am, I do not say persuaded, but sure of this. The supper speaks of that of which the chapter speaks; but the chapter does not speak of the supper-the symbol-but of the thing symbolized. This is perfectly evident; one has only to read the chapter to see it. If the application that has been made of it to the supper be correct, then not one of those who have partaken of it would be lost, and he who had not partaken of it would be lost, whatever he might be; and those who participate of it would not only be blessed, but they would be eternally saved. (See vers. 53, 54.) Further, the Savior says that it is of Himself, come down from heaven, that He speaks (not of the supper)-of the same Person who will ascend up where He was before in heaven. (Vers. 35-41, 48, 51, 58-62.)

The Supper presents Christ in only one of these conditions, but in that which is, so to speak, central: it presents to us a dead Christ; but this foundation of all, this precious truth, which could be a motive even for the Father Himself to love Christ-this fact that it is a dead Christ which is presented to us, is the proof that we could not have a living Christ presented to us in the elements. This would be to deny the state of death, and to destroy the object and intention of the institution. This institution presents to us the death of Christ -a dead Christ-His body broken and His blood shed; but there exists no dead Christ. He desires that we should remember Him: "Do this in remembrance of me;" but I do not speak of the remembrance of Christ living in heaven. I live by Him; He is my life; I enjoy communion with Him; I dwell in Him; He dwells in me: there is no separation. If, through my folly, communion is interrupted, it is no question of remembering Him, but of being with Him anew-with a Savior who manifests Himself to us as He does not to the world.

And see where these poor Roman Catholics (and I love them much) have been brought by their material explanation of this precious institution. They wish it should be taken according to the letter ("the letter killeth"); so they take away, in the literal sense, the blood; they do not drink the cup; and this is very important, because the fact that the blood is out of the body is the sign of death-of the efficacious work of Christ; we are reconciled, justified by the blood. In order to compensate for this loss, they teach that the body, soul, blood, and divinity of Jesus Christ are in [each of] the two kinds. Now, if the blood is in the body, there is no redemption; without their knowing it, their sacrament is a sacrament of the non-accomplishment of redemption. This is the effect of materializing this institution. There is no greater proof of the manner in which Satan makes sport of men, when they leave the Spirit for the flesh, than this fact, which is the center of the Roman Catholic system. I affirm positively that their Eucharist is a sacrament, not of redemption, but of non-redemption. If you tell me that many among them think of the Savior, of the efficacy of His death, I rejoice to believe it; but for this they must quit the materialism of their system for the thoughts of faith. They think, then, of the blood shed, and they drink it; they think of a Savior dead, and a body broken, and they really eat His flesh. Satan has not in this case-blessed be God!-been able to hide from their faith that which is denied in the form to which they attach so much value.

It is the same thing in John 6 as in chapter 3, where we are said to be born of water. If that is applied to baptism, then we are born of God by the water. It is the same system everywhere-a system which the enemy has introduced into the church to destroy the necessity and the power of a real work in the heart, and to reduce Christianity to the level of Judaism; that is to say, to a religion of forms, adding to these forms a pretension, which is not found even in Judaism, to confer on man that which Christianity alone gives him. Baptism [they say] procures for us that of which John 3 speaks, whereas it is said (John 15) we are cleansed by the word; "the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26), which reveals the Word living, dead and raised again for us.

Now, do we by this diminish the importance or the sweetness of this institution? Quite the contrary; we hinder the materializing of it, and we insist that the spiritual realization, or that which it represents, be in the heart, instead of that which is called an opus operatum, which is purely material. We are united to a Christ glorified; this is the point of departure: there is no longer a dead Christ; death has no more dominion over Him. I enjoy communion with a glorified Christ; I am one with Him; I shall be like Him. I rejoice; my heart is full of love at the thought of seeing Him, at the hope of the glory of waking up in His likeness. Shall I, therefore, forget His death and His sufferings? God forbid! It is precisely this which binds us to Christ by the most tender affections. There where He had to suffer and to do everything, He was alone; my heart at least will be with Him He does not ask me to be one with Him there; I could not have been. There He was willing to be alone-blessed be His name!-and He has accomplished all. But the heart which would give itself for me there is the same which thinks of me now, and which loves me. In remembering His death, His love, His sufferings, what shall I say?-divine though human! I am united in heart with Him there, where He is, on high; it is not another person, another love. Whether in the supper, where we remember Him in such a peculiar and touching way, or whether at other moments, when I think of His death, when I eat Him as dying for me, I am in communion with Him living, and I realize the love of Him who lives-that same love, that same heart of the Savior; I dwell in Him, and He in me. It is not said exactly, "Do this in remembrance" of my death, but "of me." Still we remember Him on the earth, in His incarnation, in His life of humiliation, and finally and specially as dead on the cross. I remember Him!-not Him in the heavens, but Him who lives in heaven as once humbled and dead for me: there is also a certain action of the heart-we eat. In John 5 the Son of God quickens whom He will: here (chap. 6) we eat the bread come down from heaven; we eat His body, and we drink His blood.

It is most important to understand that it is a dead Christ, who in this state exists no longer, because we cannot have any relationship with a Christ living on the earth. If even as Jews we had had this relationship, we should have been obliged to say with Paul, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Death has put an end to all the relations of Christ with the world, according to the flesh, and He lives now as Head of a new race—the second Man. Thus then, in John 6:53, the Lord lays down, as a necessary condition of life, the eating of His flesh, and the drinking of His blood—receiving Him in His death. Hence we remember Him before His resurrection; we are united to Him, as living, after His resurrection; as He has said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Thus our union is with a Christ glorified; we do not know Him otherwise: but the most powerful spring of affection for the heart is a Christ, man in the world, and a dead Christ. I am nourished by this; I eat it, and I live by this but if we wish to bring back, so to speak, a Christ such as He has been in this world, as present, we overthrow entirely the intention of this institution, and even Christianity itself. Every time that we eat this bread and drink this cup, we show the Lord's death till He come; but if we will introduce a living Christ to animate this dead one, so to speak, we destroy Him. Why then is it said, "They discern not the Lord's body?" What body? His dead body. A perfect love, His accomplished work, an obedience which was arrested by no difficulty, present themselves to our eyes! Is there anything else there but a dead body?... If so, I know not where I am, nor what the supper means. Do not animate it with the life that Christ had before death: His obedience was not yet finished, nor His work accomplished, nor His love perfectly demonstrated. Do not animate it with the life of a Christ now risen: you take Him from me as dead; death is no more there—death which is the basis of salvation, the proof of obedience, the glorification of God. Take not from me this death, this body broken, this blood forever shed, which tells me that all is accomplished, and—through the love of my Savior—that sin is put away forever. If you can lead me to grasp yet more firmly what is precious in this dead Savior, in the death of Him who is the eternal Son of God; if you can make me eat Him with more faith, more spiritually, with more divine intelligence, more heart—ah! I shall be very grateful to you; but let it be my dead Savior that is left to me! When one is in communion with Him living, there is nothing so precious as His Death; yes, precious even to God. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." For my spiritual intelligence it is the end of, or rather the proof and the consciousness that I have done with, the first Adam; that the first creation no longer exists—blessed be God!—for faith: for the heart it is the tender and perfect love of the Savior. I am no more either Jew or Gentile, or a man living on the earth; I am a Christian. The death of Christ, Head of all, has put an end to the first creation. He has introduced us into a new creation as firstfruits united to Him.

I discern then the body of the Lord, but the body of the Lord broken—His blood shed—His death. It is not an ordinary repast, a simple remembrance, if you will, but an institution that Christ has given to His own; not that they may find in the elements anything else than the bread and the fruit of the vine, but that their faith may, in the sweetest way, by the power of the Holy Spirit, nourish itself by Jesus, by that which He has been for them when He died upon the cross—a work of which the efficacy remains eternally, even to the Father's eye, but of which the love is all for us. If I treat this memorial with lightness, I am guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, for it is that body and blood which are presented to me in it.

I doubt if there is any one in the world who enjoys the Lord's supper more than I do (though I doubt not that there is with many more piety); but that which makes me enjoy it is that it presents to me the body and blood of my Savior dead, and consequently a perfect love and a perfect work. But He cannot be in His dead body, which I discern there by faith. He is in me, that I may enjoy Him; if He is introduced living, that which I ought to discern no longer exists. All this is in connection with the fact of the entirely new position of the living Christ—a doctrine which Paul presents to us with such divine energy, and which the enemy has always sought to hide, even under the form of piety, and for the preservation of which Paul so contended. What anguish he suffered from the efforts of the enemy to draw souls back to Judaism, as if they were still living in the world! "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

May God give us to discern yet more the body of Jesus—to eat His flesh and to realize His death more! Yes: this death is precious. It meets us in our need just as we are, and it delivers us from it by introducing us there, where He is, in the power of a new life which by His death knows not the old.

I have written you at much length. I could willingly enlarge on this subject, for instead of thinking lightly of the supper of the Lord, it is of all institutions the most precious to me; only to be so it must be a dead Savior that is presented to me in it. I am living with Him now in heaven.

There is another aspect—the unity of the body—which I have not touched on, though it be a precious side of the truth of this institution of the Lord: but it is outside your question. I hope you may, at least, apprehend the ground of my thought, though I write in great haste.

[Date unknown.]

Letters 1, Attacks; Proposal to Abstain From the Lord's Supper; sufferings of Christ, How to Meet

I got your letter.—, I think, has never been able to look at it peacefully, or I think to trust the Lord as he ought about it, though himself all right and anxious to help others, but too anxious about it. This to me really is more trying than the attacks.... I doubt that any correction of my papers would have the smallest effect in removing the hostility of those who have attacked me. I do not think, or for a moment believe, that the doctrine was their motive. I doubt that most would have found other than edification in reading the papers, even if imperfection be there. I am sorry those I have loved and walked with in charity should have fallen so much away from the path of simple faith. I do not say much about it, lest I should be ensnared into any want of charity; but the whole matter is as clear to me as the sun at noonday. It is to me very bad indeed, and therefore I say nothing about it. I certainly had rather be myself than they at present; but I greatly prefer remaining quiet. The fruits of righteousness are sown in peace. The Lord has His own wise and blessed reasons for allowing it, and I bow before it. I do not mean, if occasion occurs, I should not republish my tract on "The sufferings," correcting, or noticing what had to be corrected, but I have no thought of entering into the strife of tongues. I have replied to those who wrote to inquire. Charity demanded that; but I have no thought of defending myself against attacks. Hence, as I knew their real objections, I had no anxiety to see the papers written against me....

Perhaps from my being older, I feel nearer heaven than such a strife would be, poor and unworthy as I may be; as I said, I have not the most distant anxiety about myself. On the brethren's faithfulness and position it is a rude attack, and, of course, a stumbling-block to those

without; but there the case 'is, and, though grieved, I can trust the Lord for it. I mourn that those I have loved should come to be tools in Satan's hands; but in some respects I am not surprised, nor should I, if in part it should go farther and surprise others; the gracious Lord avert it. As I said, it was because I saw it was a rude joust of Satan that I proposed to leave brethren on their own ground, discharged of the conflict. I ask myself how far in anything I have given occasion to it before the Lord; but my only anxiety is as to the testimony, and the hindrance to souls, and for that I look to the Lord. "There must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest." I shall not trouble any brethren who might be troubled by my presence. I am satisfied with the approbation of Christ if I have that. He will judge who has sought His glory, and who has not. I inquire with myself what state of the brethren, if such there-was, gave occasion to the Lord to allow this trouble to come upon them; I am sure in quietness and assurance will be their strength; if it was leaning on me, it was of course so much the better. If it was Paul, it was God working in them, not Paul.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

New York,

November 22nd, 1866.

Letters 1, Word of God, The

Very Dear Brother,—I have received your letter: I have been deeply thankful to God for what you tell me of -; although we must still watch, and watch in praying, against the wiles of the enemy, for it is a pure work of the enemy....

I am at Bristol at present, but inactive on account of my knee, otherwise pretty well, still uncertain whether God will restore to me my bodily strength for active work, but extremely happy, never, I think, so happy, in the consciousness of His love, and in peace.... Peace be with you, dear brother; keep near the Lord, and follow His word. You will be surprised at such counsel, but when this fleeting life shall be over, that only shall abide which has been produced by the word. Man lives by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. "The word of God abideth forever." May Christ be our object; if we should go, the rest is with God.

I greet all the brethren affectionately.

Yours affectionately.

Bristol,

October, 1858.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Reflections on Mixed Marriages

[The following remarks were made on a particularly solemn instance, where a young sister (converted in 1853) fell into the snare of accepting an offer of marriage made by a worldly man. This she had contrived to conceal from the assembly of Christians where she lived; but a delay, which arose out of seemingly accidental circumstances, gave occasion to a brother's discovering her intentions, and warning her solemnly. She owned the wrong, but persisted; left for a relative's, where she sickened of a violent fever, which from the first she owned to be the chastening of the Lord; and died after three days, His word having penetrated and brought her, not only to entire self-judgment, but to fullness of joy. The details, for various reasons, are omitted.]

The preceding history relates, in all Christian simplicity, facts which show how God can interfere in discipline to deliver His children from the sad spiritual consequences which flow from a want of faithfulness. A young Christian allowed herself to be drawn into accepting an offer of marriage with an unconverted man. Her conscience plainly showed her that she was acting against the will of God. But she did not know how to stop at the first step, and, not having at once rejected, as unfaithfulness and sin, the thought of that which was offered to her, she had not afterward the strength to give it up; and God was forced to take her away from this world to keep her from a sin which she did not desire to commit, but which she had not the strength to resist. Oh how difficult it is to stop when once we have set out on such a road!

Any one who has closely observed the walk of Christians, and who has cared for souls with a heart in any little measure zealous for the glory of the Lord and desirous of the spiritual welfare of the dear children of God, will not have failed to perceive the fatal influence that the world exercises over them when it gains entrance into their hearts. God only knows, and the one who has suffered from it, by what subtle means, and under what an amiable guise the world often invades the heart of the Christian. But the manifestation of Christ to the soul, and the power of His presence, are never ways by which the world insinuates itself into the heart. Those, therefore, who are found, by grace, near Christ, are shielded from the influence of such feelings, and can judge them and everything which tends to make a way for the world within the heart, or for desires which are connected with the world.

Here we are in warfare with the enemy. He seeks to surprise us when we are not upon our guard; and, in order to accomplish this, he knows even how to transform himself into an angel of light. If we are not near to Christ and are not clothed with the whole armor of God, it is impossible to resist his devices. To resist the power of Satan is not the principal difficulty, for Christ has conquered for us this terrible enemy, but it is to discover the snares which he lays for us, and, above all, to discern that it is himself who is at work. In our combats with the enemy, it becomes a question of knowing the state of our own hearts. The single eye (that is to say, the heart filled with Christ) discerns the wile, and the soul has recourse to the Savior for deliverance; or even, its affections being fixed upon Christ, the heart presents no prize for the efforts of the enemy. A heart that is simple and occupied with the Lord escapes many things which trouble the peace of those who are not near Him.

Thanks be to God, the troubled and tormented soul finds a resource and complete restoration in the grace of the One whom it has so foolishly forgotten; but it enjoys the fruits of grace through many sorrows and exercises of heart. Yet let it take courage. He knows how to deliver as well as to have compassion.

Now these are the two principles which regulate the ways of God with regard to us. On the one hand, God keeps the heart to cause it to discern His own purpose; and, on the other, Christ intercedes for us with respect to all that may be called infirmity. There are real difficulties along the way, and there is weakness in us, and alas! a will which does not like to be bridled, and which betrays itself in a thousand forms of thought and deed. Our weaknesses, like our will, tend to hinder us from reaching the end of our journey; but there is a great difference in the way in which God acts with regard to our weaknesses, and with regard to our will and the thoughts which flow from it. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). God judges our thoughts and intentions by His word. Nothing escapes Him; He is faithful towards us. His word is in the heart like an eye from which nothing is concealed; "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). Do you hear that, foolish soul that would desire to feed upon the illusions that you love? Nothing is hidden; not one of your thoughts or intentions is hidden from the eyes of Him with whom you have to do. Nor is that all. His word is simple, plain, and clear; it speaks in your conscience: do you hear it? Do you know that when God speaks, you have to do with Him who speaks, as well as with what He says? Will you resist Him who speaks and provoke Him to jealousy? You cannot escape from Him: He has already a hold over your conscience, and He will never give it up.

Will you kick against the pricks? But think rather of the end that God has in view. He might have left you to yourself; He might have left you to fall into things which, if His grace interfere not, may render the whole of the wilderness journey sad and humiliating for you. He might have said to you what He said to His beloved Israel, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hos. 4:17). Terrible punishment! Harder than the most severe outward chastening! But our God will not deprive us of the light of His countenance and the sweetness of His communion. For God does not chasten willingly: it is a strange work for Him, as He says (Isa. 28:21). But sin is always sin in His eyes, and He cannot allow it. How, then, does God work in our poor hearts? He reaches them by His word, in order that our conscience may see everything as He sees it Himself. His eye is upon us, upon our heart, and the eye of our conscience is enlightened as to what is passing in the heart by that word which reveals God to it. Is that which you find in your heart the thought of a pilgrim, the thought of one who loves God? Is it a thought in accordance with the will of God—a thought suitable to one whom Christ has so loved as to humble Himself even to death for him? Stop, poor soul, and ask yourself if you are allowing the thought which occupies you because it is agreeable to Christ, to the Christ who gave Himself for you to save you? He has your salvation at heart; He loves you; He knows what tends to ruin you, to make you fall in the wilderness. He will govern by no principles except His own—those of holiness—those which are the delight of the new man—those which belong to the divine nature. He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). He desires that you should not incur the terrible discipline which awaits the soul that has wandered. He desires that you should not suffer the losses into which your folly will drag you, if you allow yourself to follow your own will. He desires that you should not lose the enjoyment of His communion, and that the proofs of His love towards you should not be suspended or weakened in your heart. He speaks to you in His word, He judges the thoughts and the intentions of your heart. Would you rather hear Him judge you, that ask Him to deliver you from what is too mighty for you? Or will you say, like Israel, "I have loved strangers and after them will I go" (Jer. 2:25)? You know that this thought does not come from Christ; you have not consulted Him, although you may perhaps have dared to ask Him to bless your intentions and to direct you. You know that the word judges what you are still keeping in your heart and what has power over you; you are the slave and not the master of your thought. No, that thought is not from Christ, and, while you allow it, you are neglecting God and His word. Well, you are bringing upon you the chastening of God. God is full of mercy and has compassion on us and on our weaknesses. He is tender and pitiful in His ways; but if we are determined to follow our own will, He knows how to break it. He governs everything, and He governs His children in particular. He is not mocked, and what a man sows he will reap later on (Gal. 6:7). The worst of all chastenings is that He should leave us to follow our own ways.

The second point that I wish to lead you to notice is the government that God exercises with regard to His children. He warns them by His word, and if they do not listen, He interferes in His power to stop them in order that He may be able to bless them. See Job 36:5-14; Job 33:14-30. In the dealings of God salvation is not brought into question. He looks upon His children, and chastens those whom He loves. The persons of whom the Holy Spirit is speaking in Job are called "the just." God does not withdraw His eyes from them, and He says also to Israel by the prophet Amos, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2).

In the Epistle to the Corinthians we see that, when the Christians turned the Lord's supper into a scene of dissoluteness, God laid His hand upon them. Some of them were sick and others had even fallen asleep (that is, had died); and the apostle in calling attention to it adds, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:31-32). Solemn thought! We are under the hand of the Lord who punishes sin wherever He finds it. He is a consuming fire, and, when the moment is come, judgment begins at His house. What a difference between such relations with God, and the joy of His love and communion when one has not grieved His Spirit, and when one is walking under His eye and in the light of His countenance! I do not doubt that a large part of the sickness and trials of Christians are chastenings sent by God on account of things that are evil in His sight, which the conscience ought to have paid heed to, but which it neglected. God has been forced to produce in us the effect which self-judgment ought to have produced before Him. It would, however, be untrue to suppose that all afflictions are chastenings. Though they are so sometimes, they are not always sent because of sin. There are things in the soul connected with the natural character, and which need to be corrected in order that we may live more in communion with God and glorify Him in all the details of life. What we do not know how to do with regard to these things, God does for us; but there are many children of God who commit faults which their conscience ought to feel, and which they would discover if their soul were in the presence of God.

Jacob had to fight all his life against himself, because God had known his ways; and, in order to bless him, God must wrestle with him too, and on this account also He was not pleased to reveal His name to him. It is totally different in the history of Abraham. A thorn in the flesh was given to Paul to hinder evil; for in his case the danger did not arise from his carelessness, but from the abundance of the revelations which he had had.

Where there is a real affection which acknowledges God and all the relations in which He has placed us with Himself, it is absolutely impossible that a Christian should allow himself to marry a worldly person, without violating all his obligations towards God and towards Christ. If a child of God allies himself to an unbeliever, it is evident that he leaves Christ out of the question, and that he does so voluntarily in the most important event of his life. It is just at such a moment that he ought to have the most intimate communion of thought, affection, and interest with Christ; and He is totally excluded!

The believer is yoked with an unbeliever. He has chosen to live without Christ; he has deliberately preferred to do his own will and to exclude Christ rather than give up his will in order to enjoy Christ and His approbation. He has given his heart to another, abandoning Christ and refusing to listen to Him. The more affection there is, the more the heart is attached, the more openly has something been preferred to Christ. What a fearful decision! to settle to spend one's life thus, choosing for a companion an enemy of the Lord's. The influence of such a union is necessarily to draw the Christian back into the world. He has already chosen to accept that which is of the world as the most beloved object of his heart; and only things of the world please those who are of the world, although their fruit is death (Rom. 6:21-23). "The world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17). What a dreadful position! Either to fail in faithfulness to Christ, or to have constantly to resist just where the tenderest affection ought to have established perfect unity. The fact is, that unless the sovereign grace of God comes in, the Christian man or woman always yields and enters little by little upon a worldly walk. Nothing is more natural. The worldly man has only his worldly desires. The Christian, besides his Christianity, has the flesh; and further, he has already abandoned his Christian principles in order to please his flesh, by uniting himself to one who does not know the Lord. The result of such an alliance is that he has not a thought in common on the subject which ought to be the most precious to his heart, with the person dearest to him in the world, and who is like a part of himself. They will have nothing but quarrels: as it is written, How "can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). If not, they must first yield to worldliness and then take pleasure in it; but this sad result is lost sight of when they first place themselves in the position which renders it inevitable. The Christian is drawn away little by little; he is not in communion with his Savior, and he can find pleasure in the society of a person who is agreeable to him without thinking of Jesus. When he is alone, he does not think of praying; and when he is with the one whom he loves, though his conscience or his Christian friends may warn him, he has no strength, and Christ has not sufficient power over his heart, to lead him to turn from his way and give up an affection which he knows to be disapproved of by the Lord. He binds himself more or less by other motives, such as a feeling of honor—sometimes alas! by more detestable motives, such as pecuniary interest—and he sacrifices his conscience, his Savior, his own soul, as far as it depends upon him, and, at all events, the glory of God. That which at first was nothing more than a fancy has become unrestrained will.

There is another remark which the history of this young person leads me to make. The first start of a converted soul, however sincere it may be, produces anything but the judgment of self and the flesh, which, by unveiling to us our weakness, causes us to lay down our burden at the feet of Jesus. We then seek for strength only in Him, and we confide in Him alone. The confidence which a soul that knows and distrusts itself has in Jesus what gives it a lasting and solid peace, when it has understood, not only as a doctrine, but by the acceptance of the heart, that He alone is our righteousness. But we only arrive at this when we have been in the presence of God and have there made the discovery that we are only sin, that Christ is perfect righteousness, and God perfect love. From that time we distrust ourselves, we fight against ourselves, and the flesh and the enemy have no longer the same power to deceive us.

I do not think that the young person of whom these pages speak had been stripped of self. There are many Christians in this condition, and although we may all be exposed to the same dangers, yet such have more particularly to dread the wiles of the enemy, because they have not learned how far the flesh deceives us, and do not know with how terrible a traitor we have to do. When we have come to a knowledge of this, although there may be a lack of watchfulness, yet Christ has a larger place in the heart, and there is more calm, and less of self.

Observe how deceitful the heart is, and how it loses all self-command when it departs from God. That poor young girl (when she was getting farther and farther into the slough, on the borders of which she had been trifling, to use her own expressions) asked her mother's friend to do all she could to remove every obstacle; and she, who was a woman of some piety, was surprised that A. should be disposed to unite herself to a worldly man.

How wily and deceitful is our heart! What slaves does an idol make of us! For although we may endeavor to escape the danger, yet we take means to secure the accomplishment of the thing that we desire, even while we flee from it. What a terrible thing it is to get away from God! This young person before she was entangled through this affection, would have shrunk with horror from the idea of such an action. When the heart has abandoned God, it dreads man more even than God. The God who loved A., and who was really beloved by her, must needs take her away from this world where she had not the courage to return to the right path. God took her to Himself. She died in peace, and through pure grace she triumphed. The Christian, whilst enjoying peace in his last moments, should always feel that it is God whose hand is there. What a solemn lesson for those who wish to depart from God and from His holy word, in order to satisfy an inclination which it would have been easy to overcome at first, but which, when cherished in the heart, becomes tyrannical and fatal! May God grant to the reader of these lines, and to all His children, to seek His presence day by day.

Christian Truth: Volume 3, Women With Heads Covered

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn; but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." 1 Cor. 11:3-9.

Here we have another instance of how the greatest truths are brought into connection with commonplace subjects. Here it is a question whether a woman is to have a covering on or not. The whole ordering of God is brought in to say whether a woman is to wear a cap [covering] on her head (vv. 3-16). It was the custom there with women inspired by demons to have their hair flowing out wild, and this was

not the order for a woman. They were to recognize the authority of man if they prayed or prophesied. Women did prophesy, for Philip had four daughters that did. The woman had her place for praying and prophesying, but not in the assembly. Men are to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands. If a woman's husband were unconverted, it would not be right for her to pray with him if other men were there.... I have known a converted husband, when he went from home to tell his wife to pray with the household, including unconverted men; but I do not believe it was right.

The woman's head was to be covered. The Apostle shows by her hair that God had covered her, and her mind and will are put on the same ground. A woman ought to be covered at family prayers, or as one of Philip's daughters prophesying in her father's house. The principle applies to both praying and prophesying. The man is the head of the woman, and she puts a covering on her physical head to show that there is authority over her. The Apostle takes the state of the head of the body as a sign of the condition of the man or woman in respect of their moral head. The woman's head—the man—is her head really, and she must cover her own head in sign of her subjection; and so she says in effect, I have no head myself; the man is my head, and I am in subjection. The man could not do that, or there would be no visible head. A woman's gift ought to be confined to women, or to her own family....

"For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." v. 10. She is therein a spectacle with all present to the angels, and angels ought not to see disorder among Christians. The whole subject is modesty, and order, and comeliness, and things in their right place. Therefore the woman ought to have power on her head on account of the angels; that is, the sign of subjection. Angels should learn something in the Church.

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