

1 Timothy - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Notes and Comments 5, Fragments: 1 Timothy 1:5

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Timothy 1: 5. How very perfect this statement as to the result! In what an atmosphere of blessing it puts us, in contrast with the idle speculations of man's mind! The object of the commission is not idle speculation, but love (God's own nature) enjoyed and active, purity in the affections, a pure heart which sees God—the conscience, with nothing on it, happy in God's presence; and then faith, the spirit of dependence on, and confidence in God. How bright a state in God's presence!

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 8, Propitiation and Substitution

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MY intercourse with saints, and especially with those who preach, has led me to discover that a good deal of obscurity in their manner of putting the gospel (and I may add a good deal of Arminian and Calvinistic controversy) arises from not distinguishing propitiation and substitution. I am not anxious about the words, but about the practical distinction, which is very simple, and, I think, of moment. I say the words, because in propitiation, in a certain sense, Christ stood in our stead. Still there is a very real difference in Scripture.

This difference is clearly marked in the offering of the great day of atonement. Aaron slew the bullock and the goat, which was called Jehovah's lot, and sprinkled the blood on and before the mercy-seat and on the altar. The blood was presented to God, whose holy presence had been dishonored and offended by sin. So Christ has perfectly glorified God in the place of sin, by His perfect obedience and love to His Father, in His being made sin who knew no sin. God's majesty, righteousness, love, truth, all that He is, was glorified in the work wrought by Christ, and of this the blood was witness in the holy place itself. Our sins gave occasion to it; but God Himself was glorified in it. Hence the testimony can go out to all the world that God is, more than satisfied, glorified; and whoever comes by that blood is freely, fully, received of God and to God. But there was no confession of sins on the head of this goat; it was about sin by reason of Israel's sinfulness; but it was simply blood offered to God. Sin had been dealt with in judgment according to God's glory; yea, to the full glorifying of God; for never were His majesty, love, and hatred of sin so seen. God could shine out in favor to the returning sinner according to what He was; yea, in the infiniteness of His love, could beseech men to return.

But besides this there was personal guilt, positive personal sins, for which Israel was responsible, and men are responsible, according to what is righteously required from each. On the great day of atonement the high priest confessed the people's sins on the scapegoat, laying both his hands on its head; the personal sins were transferred to the goat by one who represented all the people, and they were gone forever, never found again.

Now this is another thing. Christ is both high priest and victim, has confessed all the sins of His people as His own, and borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The two goats are but one Christ; but there is the double aspect of His sacrifice, Godward, and bearing our sins. The blood is the witness of the accomplishment of all, and He is entered in not without blood. He is the propitiation for our sins. But in this aspect the world comes in too. He is a propitiation for the whole world. All has been done that is needed. His blood is available for the vilest, whoever he may be. Hence the gospel to the world says, "Whosoever will, let him come." In this aspect we may say Christ died for all, gave Himself a ransom for all—an antilutron *peri panton*, an adequate and available sacrifice for sin for whoever would come-tasted death for every man.

But when I come to bearing sins, the language is uniformly different. He bore our sins, He bore the sins of many. "All" is carefully abstained from. I say carefully, because in Rom. 5:18, 19 the difference is carefully made. The first, our sins, is the language of faith, left open indeed to anyone who can use it; but used and to be used only by faith. The believing remnant of Israel may use it, including the blessing of the nations, for He died for that nation; Christians use it in faith, for all that have faith to use it. The second "many" restricts it from all, but generally has the force of the many; the *oi polloi*, as contrasted with a head or leaders, the mass in connection with them. Adam's *oi polloi* were in result all, but all as in connection with him; Christ's *oi polloi*, those connected with Him. But it will never be found in Scripture that Christ bore the sins of all. Had He done so, they never could be mentioned again, nor men judged according to their works.

That Christ died for all is, as we have seen, often said in Scripture. Hence I go with His death to the world as their ground and only ground of approach, with the love shown in it. When a man believes, I can say, Now I have more to tell you: Christ has borne every one of your sins; they never can be mentioned again.

If we look at the difference of Arminian and Calvinistic preaching, we shall see the bearing of this at once. The Arminians take up Christ's dying for all, and generally they connect the bearing of sins with it; and all is confusion as to the efficacy and effectualness of Christ's bearing our sins, for they deny any special work for His people. They say, If God loved all, He cannot love some particularly; and an uncertain salvation is the result, and man often exalted. Thus the scapegoat is practically set aside.

The Calvinist holds Christ's bearing the sins of His people, so that they are effectually saved; but he sees nothing else. He will say, If Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, there can be no real love for anything else. Thus he denies Christ's dying for all, and the distinctive

character of propitiation, and the blood on the mercy-seat. He sees nothing but substitution.

The truth is, Christ is said to love the church, never the world. That is a love of special relationship. God is never said to love the church, but the world. This is divine goodness, what is in the nature of God (not His purpose), and His glory is the real end of all. But I do not dwell on this, only pointing out the confusion of propitiation and substitution as necessarily making confusion in the gospel, enfeebling the address to the world, or weakening the security of the believer, and in every respect giving uncertainty to the announcement of the truth. I believe earnestness after souls, and preaching Christ with love to Him, will be blessed where there is little clearness, and is more important than great exactitude of statement. Still it is a comfort to the preacher to have it clear, even if not thinking about it at the moment; and, when building up afterward, the solidness of the foundation is of the greatest moment.

Bible Treasury: Volume N8, Ransom for All

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I quite believe that Christ died for all, but I cannot say that He bore, as a substitute, the sins of all. The word, it seems to me, is very clear on this point in its doctrines, in the consequences that it draws from them, and in its types. So that I take ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων [a ransom for all] in the simplest and widest sense. Satisfaction has been presented to God for men, but here (1 Tim. 2:6) it is evident these words refer to the desire to make of Jesus, at least of the Messiah, a mediator of the Jewish nation. No, says the apostle, He is so for all. God θέλει (not βούλεται) that all, not the Jews only, should be saved; He has given, therefore, one Mediator for all, who has made the propitiation which was necessary, and demanded by the Majesty of God, so that the door is open to all through the satisfaction that He has made to the outraged majesty of God.

J. N. D.

Letters 2, Exercises and Ground of Peace

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I need not tell you what real joy it has been to me to learn that you have received peace; so I will not send my answer to your letter. When God has stripped us of ourselves, He has (in His goodness) only to give us peace. It is what we see throughout in the word. Once the soul is in its true state before God, there is always "grace" for it, and nothing but grace.

But now that you are there, without doubting the love of God, there are some precautions to be taken, seeing the way in which you have been shaken. I am glad that you should tremble at the thought that you could lose your happiness. It is a serious thing, whatever be the goodness of God, to find peace with a God of holiness. Christ has made peace; but He would have us feel what it is to have need of it, in order that we may know it. Our hearts are so subtle and wicked, that following on peace comes negligence. We feared sin before, and now that we are freed from this heavy burden, we go forward not only more easily, but alas, often carelessly. Rejoice before God, and not without God, for the peace which He has given you; rejoice in trembling. It is the means of preserving peace, by grace. Moreover, pay great attention, never to say anything that goes beyond your experience; nothing is of more importance for our own souls.

Neither let the work lead you on to be occupied with other people, in such a way as to neglect yourself. It is before God that you have found peace; it is before God, also, that we keep peace, in the sense of the enjoyment of the true assurance of His favor. "Take heed," said the apostle, "unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4:16.) If you do so, it will be a lesson for the brethren, and a lesson more real than much preaching. Yes, dear brother, above all, keep your soul before God. Do not think that the 'work depends on you; see how it has been done without you. This does not mean that it would not be a great blessing to work in the Lord's work, but when we do so, we do so saying that we are servants, and feeling that it is God who does the entire work. Work then; edify others; but do not work beyond your communion. Nothing would be more calculated to make you lose peace. Seek to walk "in the fear of the Lord"; it is the beginning of wisdom: it is that which accompanies "the comfort of the Holy Spirit" in the Acts.

On the other hand, do not be surprised or discouraged if you do not always feel all the joy that you experienced at the beginning. There are deeper things in joy than this first satisfaction, because they belong more directly to communion with God Himself; but inasmuch as it is in us, it is of human nature, that the first impression becomes enfeebled. Do not be contented with that. Seek that it may be replaced by a deeper communion, and a fuller revelation of God, but do not be discouraged. Rest on what Christ is, and not on what you feel about it; it is there that you have found peace, it is there that it is kept....

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Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 6, 1 Timothy 5:17: On Rule

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I AGREE that, as a rule, gatherings get on where there is one who cares for souls. I have long noticed it; and, while in a small gathering, care one for another may be easy and simple, I have always held it to be a bad sign if time and increase of numbers did not develop the care of souls in persons whom love led to devote themselves more or less to it.

It may be in one aspect mutual or general, as Heb. 12:12-15; or more direct and positive, as 1 Thess. 5:12-14, where, indeed, we have both, Heb. 13:17 (v. 7, they are deceased). In none of these cases are they viewed as official. It is, moreover, the contrary to official in 1 Cor. 16:15. They are those who "take the lead" (1 Thess. 5:12) and "leading men" a word used of Judas and Silas in Acts 15:22.

In 1 Cor. 16 they have "addicted themselves," as indeed we have no trace of elders at Corinth; the Lord, doubtless, allowing it that we might have the internal state, and care, and duty, of an assembly in Scripture itself. These care-takers were not, as is truly said, the gift of teachers. This case is distinguished in 1 Tim. 5:17. But it was desirable, not that they should be teachers as a gift (pastor and teacher are united under one head in Eph. 4), but that they should be "apt to teach," 1 Tim. 3:2; able to carry the word with them in their episcopal ministrations, and use it—shepherd and feed, not merely superintend; though they might usefully do the latter alone according to 1 Tim. 5:17.

These have been the passages which have guided students of Scripture as to that by which God meets the need of saints when public order and official authority are lost to the church, with general warnings in Old and New Testament as to the care of the beloved sheep of Christ. Still the promise remains, that where two or three are gathered together to Christ's name, He is there in the midst of them.

But I would draw your attention to one of these passages—and this is my object in these lines—a leading one on the point. The household of Stephanas had "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." In the heart of him who so labors, when rightly done and efficient, it is done in the spirit of service, not of rule. Love works: they addict themselves; as Paul, free from all, became the servant of all for Christ's sake. There is a gift of rule, but love delights to serve. In this verse, which is a specially guiding one, service (diakonia) is that to which they addict themselves. He who thus addicts himself in love, will assuredly find himself blessed in it, though patience may be exercised, and must have its perfect work.

Letters 1, Dublin; the Flesh to Be Rebuked; Early Blessing in Plymouth; the Lord's Help When Walking in Communion of the Spirit, The Early Meeting in

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I meant to have written to you before; it is relief to me to write to you now, bearing as I do our dear brethren at Plymouth upon my heart, while I do so, for while I have been much blessed, yet I find incessant intercourse with men distracts me in my weakness of communion. I was very thankful to get your letter indeed, in the midst of many anxious services which every one working the Lord's work now must have. The order and peace of Plymouth is one of my comforts here; I do trust the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, my God, will keep them ever, and I am persuaded He will, walking in good works, and abounding therein with thanksgiving, in humbleness of heart that God thus undeservedly blesses us all. I do pray He may make them all a pattern of believers, yet growing themselves into deep and brighter conformity to Christ, having Him ever before their eyes, and [leading1] also young and old in Christ into the depth of the riches of His grace. I do remember you—in weakness in my prayer, yet in my measure of faith that it may be so, and trust it may be according to the measure of His goodness, and not any man's weakness—that you grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and none fall in any wise from their own steadfastness. May the Lord keep you all. May the Lord give you peace, always, and by all means, from Himself.

I can tell you for watchfulness, dear brethren, as well as comfort, that your report, whether of weakness or strength, is gone out, so take heed that you walk very close with the Lord. The last place I heard of H—was in the County Clare, in a newspaper... with no great honor, but that, of course, we may all expect from the world. It assumes to my mind daily more importance, and that which therefore more immediately presses on my mind is, that they may be all kept in humbleness—great humbleness, that they may walk in God's righteousness and true holiness by the power of the Spirit dwelling amongst them, granting too what He will so we honor Christ. Do not marvel if such things as—'s impatience arise; Satan will try to trouble you by them. But if you walk in the communion of the Spirit in power in any measure, the Lord will help you through it, rebuking the flesh and the enemy in him, if indeed you be separated from it and sanctified; for then you will discern it to be of the flesh and the enemy, while you, being sanctified, will have power to repress it, giving all liberty to the Spirit, but rebuking all disorder. And it may be, some time there may be need to rebuke, as we learn from the blessed apostle by the Spirit. But the flesh cannot rebuke the flesh, nor will the flesh submit to it; but if you indeed walk in the Spirit, you have God's authority according to your measure, and Satan will yield to the Spirit, and the sanctioned witness of God's Spirit among you. Pray much for this Spirit; let your prayers abound for it, so shall you be able to discern all things, and the brethren shall grow up soon, unexpectedly, in all things, looking ever towards the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

My heart is with you, dear brethren, while you walk in order, and therefore was your letter such a comforter. You are my comfort and joy, and therefore it ought to be so with me; and, dear friends, I make my boast of you, so (as the apostle says) I hope I shall not be ashamed of the same confident boasting. Yea, I trust it may make you humble and ashamed of yourselves, that you are not more conformed to Christ, when men come to see your ways. The brethren who have met together in Clare, that is Ennis, have much followed your order at Plymouth. Some brethren have met here in weakness, but I trust the Lord will be with them. At Rathkeale they have met, and seem going on well, though in weakness. In Dublin,—a brother I trust, whom you know, has troubled the body exceedingly, as he was about to do before. I pray God it may not produce evil, but it has thrown them into confusion: my God will bring them out of it into a brighter order and good, if they hear and learn of Him. I know not whether they will receive my word, but I have written—perhaps he will think sharply and haughtily—to B—; but I felt quite assured of what I was doing in love. Pray for them, that all may be well before God. Dear brethren, and you, dear brother, give no allowance to the flesh in any wise, but give all liberty to the Spirit, which is our blessing and power, as indwelling amongst us, and you shall be blest; and if you would be able to repress and rebuke the workings of Satan by it in others, give it no law in yourselves, but yield yourselves to God as those that are alive, yield yourselves to His Spirit, and seek it diligently.

I am refreshed in writing to you, dear brother, and I hope to see you all again shortly, though I have some service here first—I mean, not only in this place, but in other parts, or all of this county. Let me hear from you all again, please; but I reckon on the continuance of blessing amongst you, and if so, I am happy. Remember me with all affection to dear——, and all the brethren and sisters, one with another. I do trust you may be all kept positively and actually together, so that your faith may be spoken of, for it is not our going, but our faith traveling, that sends the testimony. The Lord especially lead: I am glad to hear that you think of reaching Sidmouth. It would be well if the Lord lead us there, that is all I look to. Pray for us all here, as I would for all of you, dearest brother. Grace be with you all. I got several of the pamphlets for you; they are of the old edition. There is one defect, the resurrection power is not duly stated in them. I see I shall have to be speedily in England, though my body might say rest somewhere. I dread the responsibility of a new pamphlet on it, not knowing the church to be prepared to receive it—but you say it is. Dearest brother, walk close to the Lord, our witness in strength, and our help. My best christian affection to your wife and children. I am your debtor for much kindness. Grace be with you, dear brother.

Ever most affectionately Yours in the Lord.

I should tell you this country is much blessed, by the expectation of the Lord's coming becoming a wonderfully practical thing in it. I long for the time of retirement, but it is not easy to make it with the work there is. Grace, mercy and peace, be with you. Tell Miss——, that as I was writing to you I do not to her, but I will, please God, ere long. The Lord is wonderfully gracious to us in an evil world. I have written a paper on De Burgh on the Revelation.

Letters 1, "Destruction;" Denial of Immortality of the Soul, The Force of the Term

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BELOVED BROTHER,-

I have not seen the writings which are circulating in Switzerland, but here the immortality of the soul, that is to say, of the soul that has not received Christ, is denied by all who have adopted these ideas. Among them are found two classes: those who make the soul perish finally with the body, and those who say that, although death be the end of the soul as of the body, man will be raised again to be judged and then burned by degrees like a branch. The natural immortality of the soul, by the will of God in creation, is denied by both classes. They cite the passage, "God only has immortality," forgetting that the angels do not die, and that the one who wrote it himself had immortality, according to their system. That God can destroy, I allow, as He could create. The question is to know what He says.

In their system, man is a "living soul," and so is a beast. Now, it is very plain that if a beast were to receive eternal life, it could not be held guilty, in respect to what it had done as a beast; that is to say, that this system overturns the nature of man. We are the offspring (γένος) of God; Adam was, in this sense, son of God. Made to enjoy Him, we are perfectly miserable without Him. How true this is! Now, I say that in this system expiation is null, since it took place for things done by the flesh, which differs nothing from that of a beast.

I doubt whether one could find a single passage to show that "destroy, destruction," signify the absolute cessation of existence. They admit, it is true, that nothing is annihilated, but they say that the soul by means of the fire loses its personality and its individuality, and is dissolved into its elements. Just like a bit of charcoal-I have answered them.

In detail, the consequences of their doctrine are infinite. Judgment is after death... but, how judge what has ceased to exist? or else (when it is a question of the second class), how raise what has ceased to exist?

Their tricks and dishonesty, besides, soon gave proof of the source of their doctrine. The soul of the child brought back to life by Elisha returned, and re-entered its body. As for their fine theories about the goodness of God-men who insist upon absolute destruction or restoration-we must understand that not only man, but Satan and his angels are in question; otherwise, these theories would be but man's love for his own race, and it would be a fraud to speak of God, as though it were a question of His glory. I say this, not to reason about it, but to show that it concerns the spirit and pretensions of those who maintain these doctrines. We always find, in them, the spirit of lying.

New York.

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