2 Corinthians - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Letters 2, Assembly Action and Conscience; Brothers' Meeting; Woman's Place in the Work; Dissent in Cases of Discipline

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I much value the maintenance of the responsibility of assemblies, a principle which, according to my mind, is very important. One may help them, but the conscience of the assembly must act. In the case of which you speak, the exercise of discipline has been unnecessarily complicated: but the thing has been done, if the brothers' meeting, having decided what ought to be done, has presented the result to the assembly, gathered as such, so that opportunity was offered for any remark. But the assembly ought to purify itself, and a meeting of brothers is not the assembly.... I do not desire the least in the world that the sisters should speak; I have never seen a woman take part in the affairs of the church without doing harm. They are blessed, and very useful in their place, but that place does not belong to them.

A decision taken by a few brothers for the assembly may become a frightful tyranny, and does not purify the conscience of the assembly. All the brothers may have united for a matter of discipline, I allow; but after all, the investigation, if any is needed, is made by a few—only, a few can neither exercise the discipline, nor pronounce the excision: it would not be 1 Cor. 5:13, nor 2 Cor. 7:11. The object of the apostle was to awaken the conscience of the assembly. The best thing is that a few grave brothers should make themselves acquainted with the facts, assuring themselves of the assent of the brethren who have most weight in the assembly, and that then the matter, being ripe, should be brought before it; only, let there be full liberty for all the brothers, if need be, to make their observations. If nothing is said, the matter is concluded; if any grave brother has difficulties, they wait: if it is only ill-temper, the assembly judges it, and passes on; if it cannot do so, it is then the state of the assembly which demands attention. When the brothers who are acquainted with the facts have judged excision to be necessary, there remains only to present to the assembly the conclusion which has been arrived at, and if nothing is said, the thing is done. Experience has taught me to fear the rule of individuals as much as the jealousy of a radical spirit; the conscience of all must be exercised, and the business of the individual is to awaken it, as that of the Corinthians was awakened by the first epistle of Paul.

October, 1877.

Letters 2, Assembly Action and Conscience; Brothers' Meeting; Outward Fall Not the Beginning of Evil; Tendency of Work; Excommunication; Old School Presbyterians

Very dear brother,

A fall that demands excommunication is not the commencement of evil in a Christian: the soul must have become weak in its communion, not have kept near to God. It does not depend on sincerity in these cases. Carried on by the current of work that is before him, he does not place himself sufficiently before God, does not judge himself, is not naked before God, and is occupied with the work rather than with Him; the heart is not fathomed, and he does not know himself, does not know if he is in communion with the Lord or not. If the heart were placed before Him, he would soon discover that he was not, and would seek His face. A person makes the discovery of evil, either in its root before God, or in its fruits before Satan, and if the first alternative be neglected, the second takes place sooner or later; and it is agony for the soul to have dishonored the Lord. I hope at least that others will fear and will be on their guard.

But there is one point which in a great measure makes me write. It seems from your letter that it is the meeting of laboring brothers which has pronounced the excommunication. Now I do not at all question the rightness of the act; but it is the assembly to which he belonged habitually, or the one where his failure had been committed which ought to have done it. That the laborers should have refused to labor in the work with him, is well, although the assembly had refused to put him out; but a meeting of laboring brothers is not the assembly, and the practical difference is this, that the conscience of the assembly is not purified. Paul compelled the assembly at Corinth to put out the incestuous man, in order that it should be truly a new lump, then afterward he said to them, "Ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." If the assembly does not feel itself in a state to do it, that places the brothers on their own responsibility, and if they call in other experienced brothers to help, it is all right, for the body is one; but it is the assembly that cuts off in order to purify itself, and this is of all importance; it is the essential part of discipline, and it may be that the laborers were not the most suitable people for that.

I have seen this tendency a little in France, and it does not place the assemblies before God in the consciousness of their own responsibility, which is most important. I think the assembly at-has, at least tacitly, ratified the sentence pronounced, and that our poor brother has submitted himself to it. So much the better, it is not to weaken that that I write. What he has to do is to humble himself deeply before God, and also before the brethren, that his soul may be restored. It would be the worst sign if he sought to escape the judgment pronounced on account of its form: that would take away from me any hope in his case of a speedy restoration. I write as a general caution with respect to what appears to me important. What the brethren have to do now is to seek his restoration, but I mean by that a true restoration of his soul. I believe him sincere, and that his conscience has not lost its sensibility. But there is more than that in true repentance—to be before God as to the subject of what one has done, and the dishonor done to the name of our precious Lord. Seek to lead back his soul by this way. He will understand grace better afterward if he returns thus, and the quicker the better; the heart becomes accustomed to estrangement.

Chicago,

December, 1872.

Notes and Comments 6, Cry of Christ, The

THE cry of Christ is of wonderful power and character; 2 Cor. 6:2. His cry was the perfect expression of His nature, of a divine apprehension of evil, death, and judgment—the expression in need of all that God was against sin, when that came before His soul, so that He had the consciousness of that need according to the perfection of His judgment of evil, His sense of need as Man under it, and thus in the perfect claim of what He was in Person, and in glorifying God in His work. Hence God's answer must be according to all this, according to the perfection of this claim in the Person of Christ, and hence salvation, our salvation is just this, the necessity of God's answering Christ according to the claim Christ had, and the cry made to Him. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. What a wonderful salvation! And how it places us in the intimacy of the Father's acceptance of the Son! Hence in Psa. 22, when heard from the horns of the unicorn, His first thought is: " I will declare thy name unto my brethren," and then He praises, in the joy of the answer, and relationship with His Father into which He enters on the answer, " in the midst of the congregation." His God and our God, His Father and our Father, and all the joy He has in coming, with: " Therefore cloth my Father love me," added to His everlasting delight, into the renewed light of His Father's countenance, He puts us in and we sing with Him in it. Our salvation is in the perfectness of God's necessary answer to Christ's cry, according to the claim of Christ, and what God must feel about it, and as to it.

Letters 2, Unequal Yoke

I do not occupy myself with putting in articles into the different journals: I fear there are too many, and though, I doubt not, often useful, I doubt a little if they have the freshness of the first, when truth was first blooming out, or the maturity which a good many years might seem calculated to produce. But on the point you write about [2 Cor. 6:14] I cannot hesitate a moment in stating what I feel.

Neither the warnings nor the motives confine themselves to worship, nor even have they any particular application that I can see. Chapter 6:1 is as large as can be. The principles of verses 14-17 are as general and absolute as possible. Christ has no accord with Belial anywhere, nor the temple of God with idols. God does not walk in our midst only in worship.

I am not to touch unclean things everywhere, not in worship merely: I am not to touch it anywhere, because we form the temple of the living God. Being yoked is not worship: it is everything that brings us to community of thought and moral judgment. It is a question of receiving—being owned as—sons and daughters, not of worship. I do not see a trace of any application to worship in the passage, but of everything which puts two to pull together where moral principles are concerned. "Perfecting holiness in the fear of God" is the conclusion.

What is above all to be dreaded as to the saints now, is relaxation of their principles in a worldly way. Evident immorality would be at once judged, as anything gross perhaps in worldliness, but it is this tendency to loosen the absoluteness and universality of Christ as a motive which tends to eat out the spiritual life. You are quite at liberty to use this as a testimony which I would make as strong as I possibly could against any such unholy and condemned yoke. The passage applies to marriage, to partnerships, because it applies to everything where people have to walk together on some common principle, and the Christian is to bring in Christ as his one and only motive for everything. An unbeliever cannot do this, for he has not the motive, and it is impossible they can act together. The Old Testament1 applies so far as that general principles of what God delights in, what pleases Him, are brought to light in it.

1879.

Bible Treasury: Volume 1, Is the Manifestation to Be Before Brethren of the Lord Simply?

2 Cor. 5:10. is the manifestation to be before brethren, or the Lord simply?

I find nothing in scripture which speaks of manifestation to brethren. The question is apt to connect itself very closely with the state of the conscience. it presses on it when there is anything from which it is not entirely purged before God. There may be a conviction that God will not impute without the conscience being de facto pure or purged. When purged before God or practically pure in walk (though this, as the apostle says, does not justify), the soul is not anxious about being manifested at the judgment-seat, because it is manifested to God now. This is of great practical importance.

The passages on the subject, which will be seen to be of two classes, are these—Rom. 14:12. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God, connected with verse 10, We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. 2 Cor. 5:10. For we must all be manifested (appear) before the judgment-seat of Christ to receive the things done in the body.

1 Cor. 4:4, 5. For I know nothing by myself (no evil of myself), yet am I not hereby justified: he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Rom. 2:16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts according to my gospel.

This is one class of texts. The other here follows: Matt. 10:26. Fear them not, therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known.

Mark 4:22. Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel or under a bed, and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested, neither was anything, kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

Luke 8:16, 17. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel or putteth it under a bed, but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, neither anything hid that shall not be known and

come abroad. Take heed, therefore, how ye hear, etc.

Chap. 12:1, 2. Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known.

Three great principles are here presented. First, the great general truth, that man can keep nothing secret (though it may seem so), and can conceal nothing. All must be in light. God must have the upper hand and light shall prevail. Secondly, that we are to give an account of ourselves to God. And, thirdly, that we are not to fear the secret machinations of men, but to fear God and bear witness according to the light given to us. When I say man can conceal nothing, it is scarcely absolute enough. There is nothing secret but that it should be manifested.

This is a very important principle. It maintains the authority of God as light. For could anything be withdrawn from this, it would escape His power and judgment, and evil be maintained independent of Him. It maintains also integrity of conscience.

In the second point, our personal responsibility to God is maintained in everything. Each one shall give an account of himself. We may be helped by every vessel of grace and light in the Church, but man cannot meddle with our individual responsibility to God. Each one shall give an account of himself.

The third point maintains confidence in God, in presence of what might seem otherwise a wickedness which was of a depth with which it was impossible to deal, and for which Christian truthfulness was no match.

All this is to maintain the conscience in the light before God. Where there is anxiety as to manifestation before the brethren, shame before men has still power over the heart, and will; self-love and character govern the mind. We are not in the light before God, nor has sin its right character in our eyes, because self has yet its power and place.

All is to be brought into the light, all thought of concealment rooted out and destroyed in the heart; but God will not maintain the influence of men and reputation by presenting a manifestation to them in the word, which is exactly what falsifies the moral judgment; and He does not. If the heart is comforting itself with the thought it will not be known, He breaks through the heart's deceit relentlessly, and says it will be known: everything hidden shall come to light. He does not neutralize His own authority and destroy the purity of moral principle, in saying it will be known before your brethren in that day.

Everything will be in the light, thank God; it is for the blessing, and for the joy, too, of every upright soul.

It is not necessarily simply in the day of judgment that this takes place: the Lord may deal with it now. “Thou hast done this thing secretly,” says God, by Nathan, to David, “but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.”

Thus the bringing of sin to light and judgment may be here from the hand of God. Men are chastened of the Lord that they may not be condemned with the world.

One passage remains, demanding more particular notice—2 Cor. 5— “For we must be all manifested before the judgment-seat of the Christ, that each may receive the things done by the body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad.”

I would first say, to remove what obscures the passage, that I am satisfied that the passage is general, and embraces all men. I cannot conceive how the context can leave a shadow of doubt on this point in any mind. It ought not. It is not a question of the time of appearing, but of the fact. Secondly, it is very important to remark, that as regards the saints there is no calling in question their righteousness. The manner of their arrival before the judgment-seat, and their state in arriving clearly show this, as well as the declaration of the Lord (John 5), that they shall not come into judgment. But how do they arrive on high? “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” Christ comes Himself to complete His work of perfect grace in bringing us there. In that state we “wait for the Lord Jesus Christ [as] Savior, who shall change our vile body and fashion it like his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.” (Phil. 3:20.) We shall be already like Christ; conformed to the image of God's Son, bearing the image of the heavenly. He who sits to judge according to His righteousness, according to what He is, is our righteousness.

The judgment of the saints begins when righteousness and glory are complete, when we are the same as Christ in them by grace.

What immense gain will our manifestation now be to ourselves! We shall know as we are known. If now, when perfect peace is possessed before God in a purged conscience, the Christian looks back at all his past life before and since his conversion, what a lesson of grace, patience, holy government for his good, that he may be partaker of His holiness—of care against unseen dangers, of instruction and of love, will his new history afford the Christian! How much more, when freed from the very nature which produced the evil in him, he knows as he is known, and can trace now the perfectness of God's ways with him! It will immensely increase and enhance his apprehension of what God has been for him, and of His patient perfect grace and purpose of love. It is surely a solemn thing, but of immense price and value to us. It is all wrought out in the conscience, as we learn from Rom. 14:12.

Here it is the fact. Remark the true effect on a right state of mind. First, not a thought of judgment as to righteousness has any place whatever. The judgment seat only awakens that love which thinks of those still exposed to it. “Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” Secondly, it is realized so as to put him who realizes it responsibly in the presence of God. Now “we are manifested to God.” Oh, what a healthful and blessed thing this is for the soul! The rest is a mere effect readily hoped for— “I trust that we are manifested in your conscience.” The other considerations produced a conduct proper to have this effect; but if a man was before God, it was of little matter—did not affect the soul, save in the desire of others' good and Christ's glory. This double effect will certainly be produced in any such manifestation before others, and we then shall as certainly desire nothing else. The shame of a nature we have left will not be there then; the just judgment of evil will. I say this, however, in respect of the present condition of the soul. Anxiety on this point is a proof that the soul is not wholly in the sight of God. There it disappears because we are wholly there. Scripture never brings in the thought of brethren as concerned in this manifestation, and could not; but it does maintain, in the fullest way, manifestation in the light, so that if the heart reserves anything—has not brought it wholly out before God, it should be ill at ease. We are certainly perfectly manifested to the Lord, consciously I mean (for we always are so), and to ourselves. If it be for His glory that anything should be known to the saints also, we shall not regret it then; but our proper full

manifestation is certainly to God, and in our own souls. All that is needed to verify the government of God will, I doubt not, be made manifest. All that has been, through evil, sought to be hidden, so that the heart was false, the counsel of the heart evil, will be brought to light; but where men have walked in the light, the counsels of the heart, however man may have judged them, will be made plain; for in that day God will judge the secrets of men's hearts. His grace and His government may have wrought all this in this world, and some men's sins and good works go before to judgment, but those that are otherwise cannot be hid.

My answer then is, that the brethren are never, and can never be those, manifestation to or before whom can be the subject of the revelation of scripture—everything being brought into light is. God is light, and the light manifests everything; He will bring every secret work into judgment. Further, as to responsibility, our thoughts are directed to God and to the judgment-seat of Christ. But all that is needed to display God's ways and government, and His approval of His saints will surely be brought out, as the passages quoted clearly prove. The saint loves the light, as he loves and blesses God for the grace which enables him to stand in it, and makes him meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in it. This, though doubtless imperfect, is, I believe, the true scriptural answer to the question. Where the thought of shame is introduced, it is referred entirely to the presence of Christ, and regards the service and work done for Him (1 John 2:28).

Letters 3, Power of Life in Christ, The

The meaning is that, if Christ died for all, it was1 because all had died: otherwise there would have been no such need for Him to die. You need not go down into a pit where one will perish, if he is not there perishing. That it is not all died to sin is evident from the correspondency of "all" in the sentence; and further that "they which live" are taken as some out of the "all" in what follows. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live," etc.— , not . Hence he does not know even Christ after the flesh, as a living Jewish Messiah, whom as a Jew he would have known: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world." Nor does he know Christians as belonging to the old, creation to which they had died, nor others, for they were all dead—their whole history. But if a man was in Christ, it was a new creation: he belonged to that in which all things were of God.

The whole subject is the power of life in Christ as triumphant over death. Hence, when he applies it, he does not say merely "who died for them," as when he speaks of all, but "rose again" also. It is the power and fullness of a new thing for those taken out of death through Christ's going down into it. There was neither Jew, Gentile, sin, flesh, nor any other thing of the old Adam or legal estate, but a new creation.

[1869.]

Letters 3, Righteousness of God, The

The first and the essential question for every living man before God is, how he can be in His presence, well-pleasing to Him. (Phil. 3:7-9.) It is no question of a righteousness which should satisfy the claims which He has on man: he is already a sinner, and entirely alienated from the glory of God; he perishes without law; he is condemned by the law. (See Rom. 2 and 3) Now the infinite love of God, seeing him in this condition, spared not His own Son (see Rom. 8) in order to blot out all the sins of those who believe on Him, and by accomplishing a work which, while perfectly glorifying God, rendered at the same time those who have part in it fit, as the Man who had accomplished it, for the glory of God, so that they became the righteousness of God in Him It was a part of this righteousness to put them in the glory where Christ was, without which He would not have seen of the fruit of the travail of His soul. Many benefits and a new life accompany this blessing; but I have only laid this foundation.

Receive, beloved reader, this testimony to the efficacy of the love of which I speak, and that He has given peace with God for eternity.

March 28th, 1882.

Letters 1, Coming of the Lord; the Effect of the Thought of Death; the Judgment Seat of Christ, The

* * * It is good, dear brother, that we should be brought to think of death. The coming of the Lord is our hope, we desire, that that which is mortal should be swallowed up by life; but it is good for us to feel that death has entered this scene, that all is passing, that with our last breath all is gone, except the responsibility which has accompanied us all the way through. Thanks be to God, as to the imputation of sin: the cross is the perfect answer to that responsibility; but, with regard to this latter, it is good that the heart should be exercised, to have everything settled in the presence of God. It is thus that the apostle used even the judgment, not to cause fear in thinking of responsibility—he was pressed to persuade others—but for his walk. I am, he said, manifested to God. By faith he applied to himself what will take place when the day shall have come.

Elberfeld,

October, 1857.

Letters 1, Baptism; the Work in France; the Inner Life; Spring of Service; Unity of Christians in One Body, Other Points on

Beloved Brother,—We are here at a conference in which, thank God, we have been much blessed; we have read in order the Gospel of John, but it leaves me little time for writing to you. I was delighted to receive your account of Lyons. You know that I (spent some days in that town coming from the south, and many things had already taken place, and I saw many people also. The meeting and the work have been much on

my heart since then, so that your letter has been a great refreshment to me. In the condition in which brethren are there, in which we are all as a whole, it is not an evil that souls should come one by one. I do not believe either that those who have been brought up in system are in such a condition that they could walk without causing uneasiness and falsifying the path of brethren. There ought to be enough power amongst them to be able to receive every converted soul in L., whatever his condition might be; also in fact they would have no right to refuse any; but I rather doubt their being at present in the state to do so, and if God is doing that which tends to render to Him and to maintain for Him a true testimony, I can bless Him for it, although it is certainly humbling for brethren. They ought to answer to all the necessities of the church, but it is useless to pretend to what they are not; besides, we must leave God to act according to His perfect wisdom, and He is acting in grace, blessed be His name for it. We ought to remember also that we come on the scene when everything is already spoiled; however, Christ is sufficient for everything. We must seek to separate the precious from the vile, and we can count upon His grace.

As to my letter, I hold fast to not giving to our position, that is at L., an anti-baptist character. While deeply convinced of it, and believing that I have the light of God thereupon, I would as much avoid being an anti-baptist as a baptist. I really desire the union of all Christians in the unity of the body of Christ. If any one has the conviction that he has not been baptized, I think he does very well in getting himself baptized. My desire is that we should be one, as we are one in Christ. Now I should be much grieved if the meeting in L. was founded on opposition to baptists. We have need to be founded on grace, on that which also edifies; and that the reality of the power of the Holy Ghost should unite us in the practical grace of Jesus Himself; that our life should be of Him, and for Him; that He should live in us and that thus we should be one. If the publication of my letter gave a sectarian color to our meeting by pre-occupying minds with a subject below Christ Himself, I should much regret it, and this, dear brother, is what I dread. If you can offer them to persons who wish for them as a means of appreciating truth, and in order to prevent souls from falling into a sectarian spirit, I desire no better. With these remarks, dear brother, I leave the matter in your hands; you can dispose of the letter as you think well. You will examine before God if you can use it with this object: perhaps if you think well to have it printed you can do so without publishing it, and you can add by way of counsel what I have just said; I mean the substance of the thought.

I bless God with all my heart for His goodness towards our feeble testimony, for I have good news from Nimes also. I feel this the more because I felt that I ought to come here, and the work in the south was much on my heart. God is blessing us here; the spirit of the brethren is simple, humble, and grace rules in their relations. We are having a conference here for the study of the word in which we have been certainly blessed, and I hope that it has even done much good. I must conclude my letter; I have much to do. Grace and peace be with you, dear brother. Greet the brethren affectionately. I must leave you in order to revise the translation of the Synopsis on Kings for a few moments before our meeting. May God be with you.

Yours very affectionately.

Bristol,

September 12Th, 1851.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Miscellaneous 3, New Creation, The

2 Corinthians 5:13-21

IT is blessed to see in this chapter how the thought of God comes out in the new creation. In this aspect man is gone as to his sins and responsibility-dead in them. The judgment of the first Adam is complete. The old thing is entirely gone. It is a new creation now, and in this new creation I find God instead of man. Even Christ Himself, as known after the flesh, is known no more. True, He was, when down here, the hope and expectation of faith as coming into the world; but the apostle only knows Him now as having died for all and been glorified-all under death whether Jew or Gentile, and Christ no more known after the flesh (that is, as come after the hopes of man in it) but Head of a new creation, where all things are of God, and in which we have been made in Him the righteousness of God. God has manifested Himself in the second Man, and wrought atonement in His death, and now we are the righteousness of God in Him.

In the first creation we see man and his responsibility. In the new creation, all things are of God, and man is reconciled by Jesus Christ unto Himself. We want to have the power of this in our souls, to live as belonging to the new creation, as reconciled by God to Himself, all that belonged to the old creation forever gone to faith, " old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

We see how the apostle walked in the power of this in verse 13. " Whether," he says, " we be beside ourselves, it is to God." That is, if he were beyond the influences that belonged to him as a man, it was not an excitement that belongs to those influences, it was because he was absorbed in God. It is what is called ecstasy. When his spirit was free to rise above present service in what he was in Christ, he was lost in God, carried out beyond himself. If he were sober, if he had to weigh difficulties-come down into the sober estimate of what was before him-it was God in love working in him. His thought was entirely for others in that love. This was his daily life; as to himself, transported with God; and, when he did think about things down here, all his thoughts were for others. It was the love of Christ that constrained him, and he looked upon all around in connection with the death of Christ.

It was no longer a living Messiah in the flesh with promises for Israel. All this was over. Christ had died, and he judged that Christ would not have gone into death if men had not been there. The whole history of Adam's race is closed in death. If they had not all been dead, Christ would not have been found in death; why have gone down there if others were not lying there? And therefore those who from amongst these lived were now to live not to themselves, but to Christ who died for them, and rose again. Thus, if he met an unconverted man, he would not think of him as an old acquaintance, and know him as such. He would look upon him as one that was dead and needed to be saved by the death of Christ. Or, if the person was a Christian, it would be just the same. He would not know him after the flesh according to an old acquaintance with him; he would look upon him as one alive with Christ, and his one thought would be that Christ might be glorified in him. Even Christ Himself was not to be known any more, in connection with this creation. He had died to it, and if any man is in Christ, he is of the new creation, where old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God. Man is looked upon as dead, and God brings in a new creation.

We have the same aspect of truth, when in verse 19 he speaks of Christ coming in the flesh. It is not looked upon as fulfilling promises to Israel, but God revealing Himself in grace to the world. " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." This was the aspect of Christ's first coming, in which the apostle thought of Him. We know He came to His own, and was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers. All this is blessedly true; but here we have God in man come here, and the apostle sees neither Jew nor Gentile. If God were in Christ, He acts toward the world. To what portion of it can you confine Him, if it be a question of God displaying Himself in grace in the world? For the same reason, when he speaks of the love of Christ, he judges all to be dead, and sees neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new creation, in which God counts every man that is in Christ.

We know that that is God as to the glory of His divine Person, but the apostle is speaking here historically; and therefore when he looks upon the Lord Jesus living in the world, he sees God in Him acting in overtures of grace to the world. God was in Christ; that is the great fact, that God has been here as the Reconciler, and man would not be reconciled. Does the apostle say that God is reconciling us? No, but that God has reconciled us by Jesus Christ unto Himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation to the world: specially, no doubt, the apostles, but in their measure true of all. Man would not have God when He came, and therefore He had to make Christ sin, to work atonement for us, and now He is at God's right hand, in whom we become the righteousness of God. The apostle does not say to the Corinthians, Be " ye " reconciled, for they were reconciled; but Christ being in heaven, having gone there through death in working out atonement for us, and His presence there being necessary to complete all in glory, He must have ambassadors to carry out His work of reconciliation here; so the apostle says, when he preaches-that is the gospel to sinners-" We pray in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." That is what he had to say to men as Christ's ambassador. How far are we living thus? Living in the power of God's new creation, judging the whole thing belonging to the first creation as gone to faith, and entering into the blessedness of our place in Christ, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit? Exercised for others, that the life of Christ may have power in their walk and ways; judging evil practically in our own path through the world, but yet having our souls so full of our blessedness in Christ, of what it is to be reconciled to God, that directly opportunity arises, our hearts burst forth in praises to God, and ever go forth after others still dead in their sins. That this may be so practically, we must bring the death of Christ to judge everything in ourselves and in our ways. As the apostle says, " Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," 2 Cor. 4:10. If we do not daily, and hourly, bring everything under the sentence of Christ's death, and judge everything by it, the Spirit will be grieved in us, and, instead of filling us with the joy of our portion in Christ, He will cause the light of Christ to awaken us to the judgment of ourselves, and of our ways.

May the Lord give us to walk in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, bringing everything into subjection to Christ, that we may know what the apostle goes on to say, " Death worketh in us, but life in you." In thus bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, Paul found death to self, and the result was life to the Corinthians. Paul held the power of Christ's death on the natural man, so that when he ministered among the Corinthians, there was no Paul at all, but only Christ. It was life to them, because death was working in Paul.

May the Lord give us thus to live! And may He grant us, especially in a day like this, to judge of men as Paul did, so that whatever the boast of human nature may be, we may see that all are dead, because Christ died for all in grace-for the highest act of grace and love is the proof of it-and that the only living ones are they that live to Him who died for them and rose again, while in our own souls we enter into His new creation. We may have to go down to babes, and feed them with milk, and not with strong meat; but may we ourselves live in the light of this new creation, where all things are of God. We must pass through exercise, and be tried and tested to learn what is in our hearts, and to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil. This is all needful and profitable, but then there is our distinct place in Christ as part of the new creation, where instead of having the first man responsible to God, we have God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself in grace, and making Christ sin for us, to bring us into the new creation, where all things are of God, and where man is before God in divine righteousness, and, as to his enjoyment, finding himself lost in God. It is God, and not man. It is what God is to man, and the blessedness of man being with God: God we know, revealed in Christ; but nevertheless God revealed, and man made the righteousness of God, a part of God's new creation.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Christian Devotedness

If there be one thing of importance now, it is Christian devotedness. I do not separate this from Christian doctrine, but found it on it. I do not surely separate it from the presence and power of the Spirit (one of the most important of these doctrines), for it is produced by it. But Christian devotedness founded on the truth, and produced by the power of the Spirit, I believe to be of the utmost importance for the saints themselves and for the testimony of God. I believe surely that doctrine is of deep importance now: clearness as to redemption, and the peace that belongs to the Christian through divine righteousness, the presence and living power of the Comforter sent down from heaven, the sure and blessed hope of Christ's coming again to receive us to Himself that where He is we shall be also, that we shall be like Himself seeing Him as He is, and that if we die we shall be present with Him, the knowledge that risen with Him we shall be blessed not only through but with Christ, the deep practical identification with Him through our being united with Him by the Holy Spirit. All these things, and many things connected with them, held in the power of the Holy Spirit separate us from the world, shelter the soul by the spiritual possession of Christ glorified, the conscious possession of Christ, from the cavils of current infidelity, and give a living spring to the joy and hope of the whole Christian life. But the expression of the power of them in the heart will manifest itself in devotedness.

Christianity has exercised a mighty influence over the world, even where it is openly rejected, as well as where it is professedly received. Care of the poor and the supply of temporal wants have become recognized duties of society. And where the truth is not known and Christianity is corrupted, diligent devotedness to this, on the false ground of merit, is largely used to propagate that corruption. And even where infidelity prevails the habits of feeling produced by Christianity prevail, and man becomes the object of diligent, though often of perverted, care. The testimony of the true saint surely should not be wanting where falsehood has imitated the good effects of truth. But there are higher motives than these; and it is of the true character of devotedness I would speak.

I accept as the general rule that, any special call of God apart, Christians should abide in the calling wherein they are called. This is only the place of their walk, its motives and character are behind. These are summed up in one word— Christ. He is at once the life and the object or motive of life in us, giving thus its character to our walk. “To me,” says the apostle, “to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21). There are two great parts of divine life of which devotedness is one. Both are infinite and unspeakable privileges for us and both perfected by, manifested in, Christ. The one God Himself, the other the actings and display of His nature, as love, the divine witness of His nature which is love. This was seen in

Christ. His communion with His Father was perfect, as was His desire to glorify Him. Life to Him here below was life on account of the Father (John 6:57). But He was the display, at all cost to Himself, of divine love to men. These could not be separated in His soul. His Father was His continual delight and object, His exercise of love and display of His Father, of the divine nature by it, constant and perfect. But this was His devotedness.

Another principle must be added to this to complete those which governed His walk: undivided obedience to His Father's will, His having that will for His constant motive. Love to the Father and obedience to Him gave form and character to His love to us. And so it is with us, only that He Himself comes in as the more immediate object, but this in no way hindering the display of the divine nature in love. “Be ye imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love even as the Christ hath loved us, and delivered himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (Eph. 5:1-2 JND). Note here the fullness of motive and character which is shown, and how high and blessed that motive and character is. We are followers and imitators of God. We walk in love as Christ loved us. It is the exercise of divine love as displayed in Christ. There is no stint in it. He gave Himself, nothing short of Himself, wholly; a principle often repeated as to Christ, His love to us, for He gave Himself for us. Yet God was the object and motive constituting its perfection: “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” It is thus we are called to walk, to imitate God, to follow Him as He displayed Himself in Christ.

If it be blessed to joy in God, who is love, it is blessed to follow Him in the love He has exercised. Yet as displayed in Christ as a man, it has God Himself for its object: and so with us. The love that descends down from God working in man rises up always towards and to God as its just and necessary object. It can have nothing lower as its spring, towards whomsoever it is exercised. All the incense of the meat-offering was burnt on the altar, however sweet the savor to others. This constitutes, as I have said, its essential character and excellence; nor do its just actings in us come short of its actings in Christ. “Hereby,” says John, we know love, “because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16). There is no question of any cup of wrath for us. Here Christ stood, of course, alone; but all self-sacrifice displayed in Him we are called upon to display, as having His life, Himself, in us.

But I will consider this a little more methodically before I press it hortatively on my brethren. As to reward, as motive or merit, it is clear that any such thought destroys the whole truth of devotedness, because there is no love in it. It is self, looking, like “James and John,” for a good place in the kingdom. Reward there is in Scripture, but it is used to encourage us in the difficulties and dangers which higher and truer motives bring us into. So Christ Himself, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2). Yet we well know that His motive was love. So Moses: “He endured, as seeing him who is invisible ... for he had respect to the recompense of reward.” His motive was caring for his brethren. So reward is ever used, and it is a great mercy in this way. And every man receives his reward according to his own labor.

The spring and source of all true devotedness is divine love filling and operating in our hearts: as Paul says, “the love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Cor. 5:14). Its form and character must be drawn from Christ's actings. Hence grace must first be known for oneself, for thus it is I know love. Thus it is that this love is shed abroad in the heart. We learn divine love in divine redemption. This redemption sets us too, remark, in divine righteousness before God. Thus all question of merit, of self-righteousness, is shut out, and self-seeking in our labor set aside. “Grace,” we have learned, reigns “through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:21). The infinite perfect love of God towards us has wrought; has done so when we were mere sinners; has thought of our need; given us eternal life in Christ when we were dead in sins—forgiveness and divine righteousness when we were guilty; gives us now to enjoy divine love, to enjoy God by His Spirit dwelling in us, and boldness in the day of judgment, because as Christ, the Judge, is, so are we in this world. I speak of all this now in view of the love shown in it. True, that could not have been divinely without righteousness. That is gloriously made good through Christ, and the heart is free to enjoy God's unhindered love: a love shown to men in man. For the very angels learn “the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). This knits the heart to Christ, bringing it to God in Him, God in Him to us. We say nothing separates us from this love.

The first effect is to lead the heart up, thus sanctifying it: we bless God, adore God, thus known; our delight, adoring delight, is in Jesus. But thus near to God and in communion with Him, thus not only united, but consciously united, to Christ by the Holy Spirit, divine love flows into and through our hearts. We become animated by it through our enjoyment of it. It is really “God dwelling in us,” as John expresses it; His love “shed abroad in our hearts,” as Paul does. It flows thus forth as it did in Christ. Its objects and motives are as in Him, save that He Himself comes in as revealing it. It is the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord; not the less God, but God revealed in Christ, for there we have learned love. Thus, in all true devotedness, Christ is the first and governing object; next, “His own which were in the world”; and then our fellow-men. First their souls, then their bodies, and every want they are in. His life of good to man governs ours, but His death governs the heart, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us” (1 John 3:16). “The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

We must note, too, that as redemption and divine righteousness are that through which grace reigns and love is known, all idea of merit and self-righteousness is utterly excluded, so it is a new life in us which both enjoys God and to which His love is precious; which alone is capable of delighting, as a like nature, in the blessedness that is in Him, and in which His divine love operates towards others. It is not the benevolence of nature, but the activity of divine love in the new man.

Its genuineness is thus tested, because Christ has necessarily the first place with this nature, and its working is in that estimate of right and wrong which the new man alone has, and of which Christ is the measure and motive. “Not as we hoped,” says Paul (it was more than he hoped), speaking of active charity; “but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God” (2 Cor. 8:5).

But it is more than a new nature. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit; and God's love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. And as it springs up like a well in us unto eternal life, so also living waters flow out from us by the Holy Spirit which we have received. All true devotedness, then, is the action of divine love in the redeemed, through the Holy Spirit given to them.

There may be a zeal which compasses sea and land, but it is in the interest of a prejudice, or the work of Satan. There may be natural benevolence clothed with a fairer name, and irritated if it be not accepted for its own sake. There may be the sense of obligation and legal activity, which, through grace, may lead farther, though it be the pressure of conscience, not the activity of love. The activity of love does not destroy the sense of obligation in the saint, but alters the whole character of his work. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”

(2 Cor. 3:17). In God love is active, but sovereign; in the saint it is active, but a duty, because of grace. It must be free to have the divine character—to be love. Yet we owe it all, and more than all to Him that loved us. The Spirit of God which dwells in us is a Spirit of adoption, and so of liberty with God, but it fixes the heart on God's love in a constraining way. Every right feeling in a creature must have an object, and, to be right, that object must be God, and God revealed in Christ as the Father; for in that way God possesses our souls.

Hence Paul, speaking of himself, says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). His life was a divine life. Christ lived in him, but it was a life of faith, a life living wholly by an object, and that object Christ; and known as the Son of God loving and giving Himself for him. Here we get the practical character and motive of Christian devotedness—living to Christ. We live on account of Christ: He is the object and reason of our life (all outside is the sphere of death); but this is the constraining power of the sense of His giving Himself for us. So, in a passage already referred to, “The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him which died for them and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:14-15). They live to and for that, and nothing else. It may be a motive for various duties, but it is the motive and end of life. “We are not our own, but bought with a price,” and have to “glorify God in our bodies.”

What is supposed here is not a law contending or arresting a will seeking its own pleasure, but the blessed and thankful yielding of ourselves to the love of the blessed Son of God, and a heart entering into that love and its object by a life which flows from Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence it is a law of liberty. Hence too, it can only have objects of service which that life can have, and the Holy Spirit can fix the heart on; and that service will be the free service of delight. Flesh may seek to hinder, but its objects cannot be those the new man and the Holy Spirit seek. The heart ranges in the sphere in which Christ does. It loves the brethren, for Christ does; and all the saints, for He does. It seeks the all for whom Christ died, yet knowing that only grace can bring any of them; and endures “all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10). It seeks to “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:28); to see the saints grow up to Him who is the Head in all things, and walk worthy of the Lord. It seeks to see the church presented as a chaste virgin unto Christ. It continues in its love, though the more abundantly it loves, the less it be loved. It is ready to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

The governing motive characterizes all our walk: all is judged by it. A man of pleasure flings away money; so does an ambitious man. They judge of the value of things by pleasure and power. The covetous man thinks their path folly, judges of everything by its tendency to enrich. The Christian judges of everything by Christ. If it hinders His glory in oneself or another, it is cast away. It is judged of not as sacrifice, but cast away as a hindrance. All is dross and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. To cast away dross is no great sacrifice. How blessedly self is gone here! “Gain to me” has disappeared. What a deliverance that is! Unspeakably precious for ourselves and morally elevating! Christ gave Himself. We have the privilege of forgetting self and living to Christ. It will be rewarded, our service in grace; but love has its own joys in serving in love. Self likes to be served. Love delights to serve. So we see, in Christ, on earth, now; when we are in glory, He girds Himself and serves us. And shall not we, if we have the privilege, imitate, serve, give ourselves to Him, who so loves us? Living to God inwardly is the only possible means of living to Him outwardly. All outward activity not moved and governed by this is fleshly and even a danger to the soul—tends to make us do without Christ and brings in self. It is not devotedness, for devotedness is devotedness to Christ, and this must be in looking to being with Him. I dread great activity without great communion; but I believe that, when the heart is with Christ, it will live to Him.

The form of devotedness, of external activity, will be governed by God's will and the competency to serve; for devotedness is a humble, holy thing, doing its Master's will; but the spirit of undivided service to Christ is the true part of every Christian. We want wisdom: God gives it liberally. Christ is our true wisdom. We want power: we learn it in dependence through Him who strengthens us. Devotedness is a dependent, as it is a humble spirit. So it was in Christ. It waits on its Lord. It has courage and confidence in the path of God's will, because it leans on divine strength in Christ. He can do all things. Hence it is patient and does what it has to do according to His will and word: for then He can work; and He does all that is done which is good.

There is another side of this which we have to look at. The simple fact of undivided service in love is only joy and blessing. But we are in a world where it will be opposed and rejected, and the heart would naturally save self. This Peter presented to Christ, and Christ treated it as Satan. We shall find the flesh shrinks instinctively from the fact and from the effect of devotedness to Christ, because it is giving up self, and brings reproach, neglect, and opposition on us. We have to take up our cross to follow Christ; not to return to bid adieu to them that are at home in the house. It is our home still, if we say so, and we shall at best be John Marks in the work. And it will be found it is ever then “suffer me first!” If there be anything but Christ it will be before Christ, not devotedness to Him with a single eye. But this is difficult to the heart, that there should be no self-seeking, no selfsparing, no self-indulgence! Yet none of these things are devotedness to Christ and to others, but the very opposite. Hence, if we are to live to Christ, we must hold ourselves dead, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And in point of fact, if the flesh be practically allowed, it is a continual hindrance; and reproach and opposition are then a burden, not a glory. We have with Paul to bear “about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body” (2 Cor. 4:10), and so to have the sentence of death made good in ourselves. Here the Lord's help, through trials and difficulties, comes in. But we are “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37). Nothing separates us from that love. But if we come to the management of our own heart, we shall find that this “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus” is the great difficulty and tests the inward state of the soul. Yet there is no liberty of service nor power but in the measure of it; only, remark, we have this power in the sense of grace. It is the power of the sense we have of His dying and giving Himself for us, which by grace makes us hold ourselves as dead to all but Him. Outwardly it may be comparatively easy, and so is outward labor when self and Satan's power are not felt in opposition. But to have Christ's dying always made good against self, detected by the cross, supposes Christ to be all in the affections. The true power and quality of work is measured by it—the operations of God's Spirit by us. This is the one way of devotedness in God's sight, and God's power and the having the mind of Christ in the service we do render. This only is life.. All the rest of our life, not to speak of loss or judgment, perishes when our breath goes forth. It belongs to the first Adam and to the scene he moves in, not to the Second. It is only the life which we live by Christ which remains as life.

Its motives and character are twofold: the cross and Christ in glory. The love of Christ constrains us in the cross to give ourselves wholly up to Him who has so loved us, given Himself wholly up for us. The winning Christ and being like Him in glory gives energy, and the spring and power of hope to our path. But how constraining and mighty is the first motive, if we have really felt it! Yet how lowly! It makes us of little

esteem to ourselves in the presence of such love. We see we are not our own, but bought with a price. Nor is that all. The sense of the love of Christ takes possession of the heart and constrains us. We desire to live too to Him who gave Himself for us. The perfection of the offering and the absoluteness and perfectness with which it was offered, alike His love to us in it, has power over our souls. “Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14). The sense that we are not our own deepens the claim in our hearts, yet takes away all merit in the devotedness. So wise and sanctifying are God's ways! How does the thought too of winning Him make all around us but dross and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Him! What is all compared with pleasing Him, possessing Him, being with Him and like Him forever! It puts the value of Christ, as the motive, on everything we do. It leads to true largeness of heart, for all dear to Him becomes precious to us, yet keeps from all looseness of natural feelings, for we are shut up to Christ. What is not His glory is impossible. It puts sin practically out of the heart by the power of divine affections, by having the heart filled with Him. Practically the new nature only lives with Christ for its object.

It applies too, remark, to everything, because we have to please Christ in everything. Dress, worldly manners, worldliness in every shape, disappears; they cannot be alike or agreeable to Him whom the world rejected, because He testified to it that its works were evil. The tone of the mind is unworldly, does not refer to it, save to do good to it when it can. The place of the Christian is to be the epistle of Christ. Christ thus possessing the heart has a circumscribing power. The motives, thoughts, relationships of the world do not enter into the heart. But, Christ moving all within, and all being referred in the heart to Him, it carries its own character in Him out into the world. Kept from the evil, it is the active exercise of good that is in Him, the love of God: the heart shut up to God, but all the blessedness of God going out in the measure in which the vessel contains it.

The love is thus active. Christ has purified to “himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Christ's love is active, but it is guided by the mind of Christ. It loves the brethren as Christ did; that is, has its spring in itself, not in the object; but feels all their sorrows and infirmities, yet it is above them all so as to bear and forbear, and find in them the occasion of its holy exercises. It is alike tender in spirit and firm in consistency with the divine path, for such was Christ's love.

It has another character: whatever its devotedness and activity, it is obedience. There cannot be a righteous will in a creature, for righteousness in a creature is obedience. Adam fell, having a will independent of God. Christ came to do the will of Him that sent Him, and in His highest devotedness His path was that of obedience. “The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father hath given me commandment, even so I do” (John 14:30). This both guides in devotedness and keeps us quiet and humble.

Our conclusion, then, is simple undivided devotedness to Christ; Christ the only object, whatever duties that motive may lead to faithfulness in; nonconformity to the world which rejected Him; a bright, heavenly hope connecting itself with Christ in glory, who will come and receive us to Himself and make us like Him, so that we should be as men that wait for their Lord; His love constraining us, in all things caring for what He cares for, Christ crucified, and Christ before us as our hope, the centers round which our whole life turns.

There is another point one may do well to notice, which makes the plain difference between devotedness and natural kindness. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). The Lord does not tell them to let their good works shine before men; elsewhere He says the contrary. But their profession of Christ is to be so distinct that men may know to what to attribute their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven. What is wanted among Christians, is that through grace they should be Christians devoted, plainly devoted, in all their ways, devoted in heart and soul to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them.

Bible Treasury: Volume 19, Gospel, Our

The character of the ministry of the gospel is that the things are possessed for ourselves, before they can be ministered to others. In the Old Testament it was not unto themselves but unto us they ministered (1 Peter 1:10-12). We stand between the sufferings and the glories, with the Holy Ghost meanwhile sent down from heaven. Grace shines in our hearts to give out the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. When it pleased God &c. (Gal. 1:15, 16); mark, Christ was revealed not merely “to” but “in” Paul. It is the light of the gospel of the glory of God, and hence called the gospel of Christ's glory. Christ is speaking from heaven. We have got the full blessing, the last revelation connected with the glory of God in the Man Christ Jesus exalted in, heaven.

“Therefore, having this ministry, we faint not, &c.” The apostle had spoken of the contrast with Moses who put a veil on his face. It watt glorious; but no glory to be compared with that in the face of Christ. Israel could not look at glory, if it came with a legal claim on the heart of man. One never gets the light of the glory of God shining into the heart of a man, without the conscience being awakened and sin judged. If under law, I cannot stand in the presence of God; for it tells me what I ought to be, and if I am not that, haw can I look at the glory? He must hide Moses in the cleft, but when the glory of God is seen in the face of Christ, where is it seen? It is in heaven in the glorified Man—the Man that hung on the cross. We see the glory of God in His face, Who was once on the cross made sin for us. The meaning of the glory seen there is, that sin, death, and Satan, have all been put away together. He, being made sin, died, was laid in the grave but raised, and is gone to heaven. The only part man had therein was sin and hatred to Himself and to God. The glory of God in Christ is the witness that there is the complete clearing away of all evil from us. He Who is at God's right hand was made sin, went under death, has passed God's judgment, and is in glory. In virtue of the work accomplished the testimony comes to us. The Man Who bore our sins is in glory, and all is “finished” before God for the soul. There we find the full testimony to the glory of Christ, the witness to God's value of Himself and His work. All this I receive—the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Having been brought by Him to believe in God, I see the glory of God in His face, and I can look at and delight in that glory. The testimony of my salvation is the glory there; and, seeing it with open face, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. I say, “Let me see that my Sin-bearer is in glory, and I have therein the certainty that all sin has been judged on my behalf; so that the Holy Ghost comes down, and, because thus cleansed; I am sealed by Him.” A Christian stands and looks at Christ's accomplished sufferings; and, looking up, he sees the One Who wrought redemption in glory. Such is the way the glory attains its full effects by faith in the heart. It is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, though one may be confounded of course when first seeing it.

But what am I to expect if He owns me as united to Himself? I am waiting for Him to come, to take me where He is, and bring me into the things He has made mine. Power has come into this place of death. I want not to die but to be clothed upon, death swallowed up in life; I want not to die, but to be changed into the body of glory without dying at all. It is a present living power. We shall not all sleep or die, but all be

changed, the power of death broken. If I go up to Christ's judgment-seat, in what state shall I be there? The Lord will have fetched me on high. Christ, having set His love on me, comes and changes and takes me there glorified. No doubt I shall have to give an account of self, of all done in the body; and a very great blessing it is to have brought out in the light, how Christ kept in spite of my faults; when I fell, how He lifted me up. So it will be.

The fullness of redemption is manifested when we go up to the judgment-seat in glorified bodies. When He appears, we shall be like Him. What can I fear in regard of judgment? Now my Sin-bearer is ever at the right hand of God; having borne my sins on the cross the first time, He appears the second time without sin unto salvation. He will take us to Himself already made like Him. The wise virgins were asleep as well as the foolish; what brought out the difference? The midnight cry woke them all up, the testimony of the Lord's coming. The wise had got oil in their vessels, and, awakening at the cry, they were ready and went in. When asleep, they had like the foolish given up expecting the Bridegroom. When the cry came, the difference soon appeared. At first they went out full of the thought of His coming; afterward they got into ease and comfort; they went to sleep here and there, abandoning in practice the hope of meeting the Bridegroom. If the Lord Jesus came to-night, should you all be found with bright lamps ready for Him? Is it the state of your soul? We are to expect in the last days perilous times, but great blessing in the midst of all for the path of faith. Christendom has the forms of Christianity but denies the power.

In 2 Tim. 3. I am directed to the scriptures as the safeguard. When men say that the church teaches this and that, the question arises, where and what is the church? But if I believe that the scriptures say it, I know of whom I have learned the truth of God which never fails. “From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, &c.” “The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, &c.” It deals with the conscience, not the intellect merely, as man's word. If I weigh it, it deals with my conscience, coming in with irresistible power. “Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did.” Faith's root is in the conscience. People talk of apostolic succession; but there is no succession in God or His word: all there is complete and perfect.

Just before Laodicea is spued out of Christ's mouth, the word is to Philadelphia, “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, which no man can shut:” not a great deal to say about Philadelphia; but it is characterized by what God delighted in. The word of Christ had authority on the hearts and consciences; and they would be kept looking for the promise, “Behold, I come quickly.” He is waiting, and sits at God's right hand till His enemies be made His footstool. His friends are already perfected forever by His one offering. He is coming to receive us. He will not take a bit of the inheritance, till He has gathered up the fellow-heirs. Then all in heaven and earth will be gathered together in one, and all be under Christ. Our place is a peculiar one like Eve's, who was not lord of earth like Adam, but was associated with him over all of which he was lord, his helpmeet.

Our union with Christ is the one thing that constitutes our special relationship to Him. “God gave him to be head over all to the church which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” We are joint-heirs with Christ, we wait for Him, the Eternal Lover of our souls. What we Christians see by faith now, is the unveiled glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that be lost. A veil may be on man's heart, but the fact of Man being in the glory of God remains equally true. And if the veil is untaken away, there is nothing to cone but the sword of Christ, when He appears in judgment.

Then we have to bear in mind, that the trials and afflictions are all connected with the earthen vessel. Even an apostle could only be kept each day by the power of God. The vessel is one thing, the treasure another. The vessel must be nothing, if the treasure therein is to shine out. The old man is judged and crucified with Christ; and I have to look at myself as having died with Christ. But I have also in practical experience always to bear about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. Suppose a light in a lantern; but, if the glass of the lantern be not kept perfectly clean, the light will not shine out. I have a glorified Christ in my soul; but if the flesh rules me, this is not the treasure shining out of me. Not only should I a Christian reckon myself dead before God, but stand as a new man in God's sight.

To reckon self dead is a privilege for myself and a necessity for my testimony. To put it simply, suppose a mother heard her son was half killed: would she stop on her way after him to look at the shops? If a Christian is full of Christ, he will not be drawn aside by anything of flesh. Where the earthen vessel is right, the light will shine out. Scripture holds out to the Christian no rest of a natural kind; nothing but sorrows and trials: so the apostle speaks of himself and others as always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake. The Lord put the apostle through all sorts of trying circumstances. If anything of the flesh springs up, the red-hot iron must be put to destroy what is not of Christ. Death wrought in him that nothing but the life of Christ might appear. There is such a thing as a man superior to all the circumstances he may be passed through. He gets the sentence of death as he goes through everything, bold to preach &c. There is then the most complete superiority to circumstances. Look at Stephen: whilst the stones were flying about, he kneels down and prays for his murderers. He is the copy of Christ. It was life in the midst of death. “For all things are for your sakes.” So they felt who were loved of God, as shown in the gift of His Son. J. N. D.

Letters 2, Emigration; Self Knowledge; Work Affected by One's Own State, The Spiritual Danger of

I have not much to say in replying to your letter, not from want of interest in your course, but that if you are clear as to going, it is but one thing, to have Christ always before you to work for Him and from Him. It is all important for us to get to the end of ourselves, not that we do not learn more daily; but there is a knowledge of self which makes us distrust self, and it is a detected and distrusted enemy, so that there is lowliness in our walk and it deepens its character a great deal. All our work feels the effect of our state, and a heart full of Christ and the seriousness of dealing with souls for eternity, which we feel when full of Him and speaking from Him, gives weight and unction to it. It is being emptied of self which enables us through grace, with watching and praying, to do this. But carrying about the dying of the Lord Jesus is the condition of this. The energy of Moses which killed the Egyptian did not stand before Pharaoh, though it showed the energy which God would use when He had broken the will in connection with it. The energy is just the suited vessel, but we have to learn in the breaking of it, that the excellency of the power is of God. That is, no doubt, gradually learned, but there is a breaking down of self which lays the basis of it. Christ all, is the great secret of power, but when received comes the death of self which leaves, the soul free to serve more individually.

A colony tends to let loose, but Christ is sufficient for every place and every circumstance. I do not doubt there is a field out there, and a growing one, but it requires keeping close to Him not to be led off into the self-will that characterizes the colonies in general, Australia, I believe, in particular. We shall follow you with our prayers, and be glad to hear of you and those among whom you labor. There is, I believe,

plenty of work to do. The Lord be with you and keep you and guard you on your voyage too. I trust that God will give you to be large of heart, but firm in the narrow path in which it behooves the saints to walk in these last days.

Yours affectionately in the Lord.

Vevey,

September 19th, 1871.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, We Have This Treasure

2 Corinthians 4:7

It is wonderful the liberty the Holy Spirit gives in the soul. Not that we have no conflict—we have; but we have to maintain it in the power of the Holy Spirit. We possess this treasure, and we have delight in it. We not only know that we are safe, but we enjoy it. It was the desire of the apostle to be in full possession of what he now knew by faith, but was not fully brought into the possession of. He had the treasure, but not in glory. Therefore he says, “we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (2 Cor. 5:2). He was not groaning because of the weariness of the way, the trials and difficulties here; but he had such a consciousness of the blessedness of the treasure, that he groaned to possess it unhinderedly in the presence of God.

It is good to have the joy now; but there is always a tendency to confidence in the flesh. The spring of all this liberty, and joy, and blessing, is that we have seen Christ, we have seen Him in glory. The eye of faith has rested on Him. We could not have this joy without the certainty of redemption accomplished, which we have in the Man Christ Jesus, being accepted in glory. The sufferings of Christ touch the affections, but do not give this joy. An attachment is formed for God, and we would not go to another; but this is not all He gives us. We must be able to say, I have got redemption—all my sin is gone—all that was against me is taken away through the One who died and is received into glory, in order to have this joy and longing for the glory as the result. It is all contrary to the life of the flesh. Where the life of the flesh ends, the life of the Spirit begins, and practically we have power in the life of the Spirit in proportion as the flesh is dead. Christ before the soul is the key to these chapters and those that precede.

In chapter 2:9 he says, “We had the sentence of death in ourselves”—no trust in natural life. All that was of the first Adam gone, dead, and therefore nothing would touch the ground of his confidence “in God which raiseth the dead.” That confidence clearly sets aside the fear of things around. If holding oneself dead to the law and to Satan; what power has he over a dead man? The principle of power is that we are dead. Faith acts on this.

So in verse 5, “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord:... for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Then he says, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Cor. 4:7). What treasure? Christ. Paul has seen the One who has put away his sin—who is his righteousness—who is in glory. He sees Him, and he says, That is what I want. In seeing Him I see One who has the power of life, who has passed through death, and overcome it. I have this One—Christ. He is the treasure. I have it in an earthen vessel; still I have it. John says, “The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life” (1 John 1:2). There is Christ, the eternal life. I have Him in that glory known to faith. I shall have this life, the full fruit of eternal redemption in glory. Abraham believed that God was able to perform; but we believe that God the Father raised Christ from the dead. It is done, and His being there in glory is the proof that all is done.

Our standing on high in the presence of God is the fruit of the work being finished. He has appeared once “to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26). He has brought me to God. Has He brought me in my sins? No. I should not be there at all if not cleansed. “He hath made Him to be sin for us.” He hath “appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” There is the resting place of the soul. Then, in this chapter, He (Christ) is presented as the power of life. I have the treasure in earthen vessel. It is a vessel that hinders, for it is earthen; but the faith that sees the treasure has put us in possession of life. If I have life, it is because I have Christ. “He that hath the Son hath life.” “In him was life.” He who “is our life,” and “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:4).

Another view of it is Christ, the life down here. When I look at Him down here, I can say, There is my life. If I look at myself, I see the life mixed up with much that ought not to be; but when I look at Jesus, what obedience, what patience, what graciousness! and I say, This is my life! I can bless God for giving me such a life. He was perfect in everything. What rest it gives to the spirit to be able to say in beholding all that perfection in Him, That is mine!

But now, when I think of power, I must look up to Christ in glory for it. If this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, “we have a building of God” (2 Cor. 5:1). The essence of the character of life is Christ in glory. In Romans 1 He is declared to be “the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” The principle of the power was seen in His being raised from the dead. We have a title in Him to say always, that we are dead. Therefore it is “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11). When we come to live practically in this way, it is always “bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.” We cannot manifest the life of Christ practically, but as we are reckoning ourselves dead. If I walk by faith, I am bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus. If I walk by sight, Christ is not my object or my power. “We are delivered unto death” (2 Cor. 4:11). Sometimes it is necessary we should pass through trouble to break down the flesh, which cannot live by faith. Paul had to go through trial, but through it all he was beholding by faith the treasure. “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20). There is the full revelation of Christ, known to faith, and the certainty that when I see Him I shall be like Him. He is my righteousness now, and when I see Him in glory, I shall be like Him, and this I groan for and earnestly desire.

Does not His love refresh my spirit now?—does not His love restore my soul (happier not so to need it)? There is no cloud, no fear of judgment, but certainty of being clothed, and therefore there is the earnest desire to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven. So strong was the desire for this, that he did not even think of dying—“not for that we would be unclothed” (2 Cor. 5:4).

What is the secret of this? He had not only seen life in Christ, but Christ Himself, and he saw that the life could cause that “mortality might be swallowed up of life.” He had faith in that power of life in Christ that it could effect this—death would slip away and not be. Do you believe in this power of life? As long as there is a soul to gather in, His long-suffering continues, but the power exists. Then the apostle goes on to speak of dying. What can death do? If I die before Christ comes, I am in His presence. I shall only depart from this mortal body to be with Him. “Therefore we are always confident.... Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear [or be manifested] before the judgment seat of Christ.”

How are we all to be manifested? All will give an account of themselves (the saints when they are caught up to be with the Lord, the wicked at the end of the millennium). The saints give account of themselves in glory. What is there to be judged in the saint? He is identified with the very principle that will judge, if he is the righteousness of God. What was there to judge? Conscience is not awakened by it at all for the believer, for that is purged; but it does awaken something. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11). There is not only righteousness, but love. He sees the terror of judgment; the sight of the righteousness that judges is the occasion why he sets about preaching to others. It puts love in activity, and then he adds another thing: “We are made manifest unto God,” not “we shall be.” I stand in the presence of the glory now, and whatever does not suit that glory is judged now. It acts on the conscience in the way of self-judgment. We want this light, but we must have perfect confidence in God, for there can be no happy play of the affections if there is not this confidence. We cannot have fellowship with a person, if we think he is going to condemn us; but “our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).We cannot have confidence if we have not a perfect conscience (Heb. 9:9). This we have by Christ our righteousness, He having obtained eternal redemption for us. What there is a memorial of now in God's presence is, that my sins are put away by that one perfect sacrifice. I have a righteousness perfect, and so infinite that I can never get out of it. Christ is the center of everything for the heart.

When I think of the exceeding and eternal weight of glory, it may seem too much for me; but when I see the Lamb there, as the light thereof, it puts my affections in play. It is the Lamb that was slain for me—the Lamb that took away my sins.

There is grace needed every day for our passing through the wilderness, yet not for us to rise up to righteousness, as if we had it not, but to walk according to it. Christ takes knowledge of our wants. Thus there are two parts of His present blessing for us; Himself the object for our affections, and His constant supply for our daily need. We have the righteousness, and we wait for the hope of it, the glorious hope which is suitable to the righteousness of God. “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2).

Christian Truth: Volume 15, Practical Word, A

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4:10. With Paul the flesh was not allowed to interrupt the power of this divine life, so that it flowed on in an unhindered way....

It is an important fact that sacred Scripture never tells me to die to sin, for this I never could do. But the Scripture tells me that I am dead, having died with Christ, and this is Christian liberty. I begin with being dead with Christ. For I cannot die to sin, when sin is the character of my whole life apart from Christ.

Christian Truth: Volume 10, Display of Christ, The

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4:10. It is not the demand of a certain amount of human righteousness, or the removal of certain evils that hurt the conscience and offend society; it is the living display of what Christ is before men. We should never be content when we fail to display Christ before men; as Christ is righteousness for me before God, so is He the example and standard of righteousness before men-as Christ is for me before God, so ought I to be for Christ before men. This is the way for the Christian to judge of right or wrong. We may be humbled because of failure, but we must not lower the standard.

Light Affliction, Light Affliction

“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Though thy way be long and dreary,Eagle strength He’ll still renew;Garments fresh and foot unwearyTell how God has brought thee through.

J.N. Darby

Ah! It is blessed to be at the feet of Jesus in our sorrows, for there divine light shines upon them, and though we may suffer and even be oppressed with our trials, we shall not, while there, doubt His love.

“Jesus wept.” All know that the verses of our Bible are merely a human arrangement, and yet who can doubt that the Spirit of God controlled the one who made it in putting these two words into one verse? They indeed should stand alone, inasmuch as they afford such an inlet into the recesses of the Lord’s heart. They have been the comfort of mourners in all ages, and they will continue to minister consolation to His people until God Himself shall wipe away all tears from their faces.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Untold sorrows characterize the human race, and this invitation is not confined to those who are laden with sin. Jesus addresses anyone who is bowed with any possible sorrow, any possible bereavement. Whatever the burden upon you, the Lord speaks to you.

Your whole responsibility at the present moment is to “rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” And what a blessing it is that you may and can rest, whatever your suffering, on the Lord’s breast.

It is indeed an immense thing to be in communion with His mind in His object in our sufferings.

God chooses my circumstances, my sicknesses and my sorrows in view of what He is accomplishing. “We do know that all things work together for good to those who love God. . . . Because whom He has foreknown, He has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:2829 JND). He thus chooses the circumstances for us that will best accomplish His purpose of conforming us to the image of His Son. The consequence is that if I am in the line of His purpose, I will never seek to change my circumstances. In fellowship with the heart of God I will gratefully leave that to Him.

How merciful it is in the ways of God that it is only gradually we approach our sorrows and that we find when they come upon us that they are “lustered with His love”!

He alone who has made the blank in your life can fill it, and He will. When all the blanks of earth are filled with His presence we gain infinitely more than we have lost.

When the Lord returns, we shall lose all bodily weakness, so that it will take a little time, as it often seems to me, before we find ourselves at home in our new circumstances. How we shall rejoice when “in soul and body perfect.” For this deliverance we have still to wait, but the blessed hope of it cheers us in the midst of our pilgrimage.

E. Dennett

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Bible Treasury: Volume 19, Seeing Christ Glorified

How powerful is the effect! It absorbs the heart. “I have suffered the loss of all things,” said the apostle, “and I do count them but dung.” It is not only that we have given them up, but their power is gone: the actual trials on the path become a matter of joy. They are the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death. It gives unity of action and perseverance. It gives a heavenly character to the path, the calling being above, no less than confidence and joy in reference to God. It is His calling, and in the most blessed way, in Christ Jesus. Christ Himself is the object; but this is united on us as on Him — “resurrection from among the dead.” For this too divine righteousness in Christ Himself can only be fit or suffice. J.N.D.

Bible Treasury: Volume 17, Seeing Christ Glorified

Note the effects of the power of seeing the glorified Christ more distinctly. It absorbs the heart. “I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung.” It is not only that we have given them up, but their power is gone. The actual trials on the path become matter of joy; they are the fellowship of His sufferings, conformity to His death. It gives unity of action and perseverance. It imparts a heavenly character to the path (the calling is above), confidence and joy in reference to God. It is God's calling, and in the most blessed way in Christ Jesus. Christ Himself is the object; but this is united with our being glorified by divine favor resting on us as on Him. Resurrection too is “from among the dead “: for this too divine righteousness in Christ Himself can alone fit or suffice.

Christian Truth: Volume 33, Suffering and Glorified One, The

2 Cor. 3

I have been thinking how the contemplation of the sufferings of our blessed Lord is used to produce the effect in us of being epistles of Christ down here. In this chapter, evidently, it is the glory of the Lord. If I take the sufferings of the blessed Lord in themselves, I have to watch against mere human feeling. It is blessed to think of His sufferings, and it draws out the affections of saints even more than the glory; but there may be a great deal of natural sympathy and feeling about the sufferings of Christ, with nothing divine in the soul. "Weep for yourselves and for your children," Jesus said. There is nothing divine in their weeping.

In the supper, the Lord calls us back to dwell on His death in remembrance of Him, and in that way presents Himself to us as the glorified One, as the Person who would draw us completely out of the world unto Himself. We look back with Him at what His sufferings and sorrows were; then we see their divine character. When we contemplate Christ as the humbled One (see Phil. 2), we stand and adore; He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life," etc. He can give it as a motive for His Father to love Him.

When I trace His life, a lonely life, I see divine love at every step. He is the most gracious, the most affable of men, full of lowliness and grace, utterly without any sympathy from man. I see in Him divine love come down, bearing our sorrows and carrying our sicknesses; I get there the divine thing. I stand and look on that divine Person-

Christ made sin-no place where He was so alone as on the cross. In the glory we shall be with Him; we shall see Him as He is, and shall be like Him. On the cross He was alone. When I see Him as man working that work by which I am with Him in the glory, my heart is fixed upon Him there; my mind dwells on Him in glory. If my soul has taken hold of that, the effect is to make me like Him down here.

Faith is an individual matter, and each must have it for himself. Faith is always lonely; it must look to God, and God only. There are moments in every man's life when he must act with God absolutely, and with God alone; and so in every step faith is a practical possession of the soul. The Lord is the summing up in His own Person of all that the Spirit unfolds through the Word. The Spirit of the Lord gives me to behold a Man in glory, gone up on high, all accomplished in His Person, and glory the result. Then there is liberty in the presence of the holiness of God, sin settled, death done with, Satan's power done with, all the fruit of His work; we are the fruit. Liberty of heart in God, and being made the righteousness of God in Him, being associated with Jesus, the heart at liberty in perfect love-at liberty from Satan, from death, from sin-all this is the fruit of His blessed work. We are foolish to let our hearts slip down again into bondage, and miss the enjoyment in the power of the Holy Ghost of this divinely-given, divinely-wrought, divinely-sustained place, this place of a child of God, of an heir of God, etc. When the heart turns back and sees the perfect divine work, and the divine Person who stood there, then always the divine element comes out, and we must adore.

Where is the glory now? It is in the face of Jesus Christ. There is no veil on the glory of God for me; the place where I see it, is in the face of the Man who bore my sins. I dwell on Him and look on Him and am changed into the same image, but my heart goes back to see how it was all accomplished, to see Him as the bread which came down from heaven; and we must be in heaven to know the Lamb that was slain. He will be the theme of praise there, and the more through the Spirit I know Him exalted to God's right hand, the more my heart goes back to the cross to see Him as the One who became obedient unto death. The moment I see the glory in the face of Jesus Christ, my heart goes up; though angels veil their faces, I can adore. I am still a poor feeble creature, but I can look on Him, can dwell on Him, and get blessed and established by it.

Is there any constancy of heart in us to contemplate the glory? Are we steadfastly looking up into heaven like Stephen? I feel for myself how little one does it, but in the measure of that steadfastness is the result that we shall be the epistles of Christ, known and read of all men; and it is comforting after all to think that God contemplates us with individual love. When I think of looking at His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, I think of my weakness in doing so; but when I think of His looking at me, I find there is no cloud; He is steadfastly looking upon me, though I am feeble in looking steadfastly at Him. "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous" (Job 36:7).

Letters 3, Sentence of Death in 2 Corinthians 1:9

The whole of the beginning of 2 Corinthians is founded on the circumstance, that the apostle had just been in a violent persecution, in which it seemed impossible to escape with life. The sentence1 referred to declares that this outward danger of being put to death had no power over him whatever, because within he held himself for a dead man, and trusted in Him that raiseth the dead. What was killing to a dead man who only looked for the power of resurrection to be exercised? I take to be a judicial sentence, not an answer, though it has this sense also. He held himself as a child of Adam under sentence of death. It was a condemned, sentenced, nature. But he says more than this; he had this in himself—he held himself for dead. His own life was condemned for himself. As far as the natural man moves, and wills it, it is flesh; but holding the flesh as actually dead in one's own mind is holding the body to be dead, as far as any mental sentence can go. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; and the Spirit is life."

2 is stated to have a passive or rather neutral sense as well as active, it is not simply deadness. It is not the state of death, but (where not killing) the act of dying: so putting to death even is used in English; only agency is supposed there. I may say, 'his putting to death' was inexcusable, that is, his being put to death. In Rom. 4 it is not simply death, as if Sarah were dead, but the losing the power of life which had taken place: he did not think of Sarah's womb losing its vital powers. In 2 Cor. 4:10 it is not losing, as in Rom. 4:19, but he realized in the body the applying death to it, as death was Christ's portion. It is not, as to Christ, the Jews' act of crucifying and slaying, which is in mind. Hence killing does not suit, but the fact of the setting aside of life. No English word exactly answers. Dying is looked at as the fruit of something at work; but it is not the working of the instrument which is looked at, but the effect on the person. He held his body down as dead because, as regards Christ in this world, he knew Him as one who had died to it, for whom putting to death was His portion and the source of all blessing. It is the cross applied to the flesh's life. is making a corpse of, depriving of life; this ended with his body because it has so been with Christ. So Peter says, Christ having suffered in the flesh, we are to arm ourselves with the same mind.

[1867.]

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 2, Jehovah My Shepherd

Psalm 23

THE blessings into which, as the Shepherd, the Lord leads the flock are not merely temporal but spiritual. The veil is now rent from top to bottom, and we are brought to God. God is not only caring for us all the way, but the exercise of our souls should be to walk in the light with Him, and, if by any means, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. The care He takes is to bring us up to walk in the power of that heavenly glory with Himself. " Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." God is not only known to us as Jehovah, giving us mercies all the way along the road; but it is the Father blessing us with spiritual things. True, the hairs of our head are all numbered; but there is discipline for our souls as well, which leads into blessing.

Any pious Jew, having a renewed nature, in old time might know and use this psalm, saying, "Jehovah, my Shepherd." The holiness of God was not fully revealed; and therefore the conscience not disquieted, and the distance not felt. They knew the favor of God and counted on His goodness then; but now we are brought into the light and see what judgment is. The veil is rent, and God's holiness is manifested; for we are in the light, as He is in the light, through Jesus. " The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

Now that sin has been fully shown out-the death of Christ proving what the enmity of the heart was-this matter must be settled. I cannot say, " I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever," if I have not the knowledge of sin forgiven. I cannot talk of confidence, if I have a fear of judgment and I see the desert of sin in the light of His holiness. I cannot consistently speak of One who may be my Judge, that He is my

Shepherd, and I shall dwell with Him. To know Him as our Shepherd, we must not have it an unsettled matter about sins being forgiven. God cannot let sin into His presence.

There must be a conscience purged. Christ has been accepted, and He puts us into His place, having made peace through the blood of His cross. " He has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." He has "entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." God does not see sin in Jesus; indeed in Him was no sin: and we who believe are in Him; therefore He sees no sin in us. The comfort and peace Christ had, as a man walking on the earth, He gives us. " My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Now I have come to put you in the place of unhindered confidence with the Father; and that is, what you could never have, if the least sense of sin were upon you. The peace is made: therefore He can not only say, " Peace I leave with you," but " My peace I give unto you." These were not idle words, and we can see how He could give it to us, having brought us to God and put away everything against us.

Now the question is one of happiness with God. Conflict by the way there is also of course; but God is my Shepherd. Not only has He done something for me, but He is something to me: therefore it is said " that your faith and hope might be IN GOD." I believe in God as seen in Christ, as one who has loved me perfectly and manifested His love by putting away my sins. " The kindness and love of God our Savior towards men hath appeared." The thought I may now have of God is that He has done all this for me, and that He is all this to me. I may fail and so get into evil, and this will make me ashamed; but it should not destroy my confidence, because my faith and hope are in God Himself. Now God is my Shepherd, and we may have confidence in Himself, for it is not merely said, He has done this, and He will do that, but " I shall not want." There never can be a want to the soul that has the supply. It is the application of this power and goodness of God to my every-day need that I shall feel, and all this must go on the ground of sin forgiven. Now I have found out, not only my need of being justified, but that He has justified me. Whom He called, them He also justified; Rom. 8.

The starting-point of Christian experience is "God for us"; and "if God be for us, who can be against us? " I am the object of His favor, which is better than life. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters." I shall find good everywhere. I shall lie down, no one making me afraid. Though the wolf may prowl in the way, I lie down in green pastures. It is " He leadeth me," and that must be in perfect peace and enjoyment " beside the still waters." This is the natural Christian state. We realize all things ours, for God is for us; therefore we may lie down. We shall have conflict, etc., but amidst it all enjoyment. If the sorrow gets between our souls and God so as to produce distrust, it is sin. Even if sin comes in, sad as it is, He can restore the soul. Whether from trouble, or from offending, He can restore. See what thoughts are here given about God! The Psalmist does not say, I must get my soul restored, and then go to God, but " He restoreth my soul." So " if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Who can restore but He? There may be something to correct in us, if not actually a fall. There may be hardness in my heart, which trouble shows me, and the like. For our good in this way He sends trouble, as well as that which is our proper portion following Him who was the " Man of sorrows." But if He restores, it is " for His name's sake." Here am I, a poor, fainting, wretched creature, and the Lord comes in and lifts me up-why? " For his name's sake." Whatever I am, God is for me; and not only in this way, but also against enemies. " For, though I walk through the valley," etc. (v. 4). Man had reason to quail at death before Christ came; but now in the fullest sense, we need " fear no evil." Death is " ours " now. " We have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead." If they took my life, they could not hurt me, for I am trusting to One who could raise me. Paul as good as says, If they take this life, I have lost nothing; nay, it is positive gain, for it hastens me on the road. Death is not terrible now. Why? " Thou art with me." It is terrible without this. " Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." It is not a rod, but Thine, so I shall fear no evil. No one can compete with God. Death is the very thing by which Christ has saved me, and it is that by which He will take me into His presence-" Absent from the body, present with the Lord." It may come as a trial to exercise my soul. Well, I have to remember, " Thou art with me."

There is not only failure in life and failure in death to meet, but there are mighty enemies (v. 5). Nevertheless I can sit down amongst them, and find everything given me for food. I feed on this dying Christ, and it was in His death Satan's power was most put forth. In another light Satan comes and tempts me with the flesh, but I can say to him, I am dead; I have a right to say it-I may fail in saying it, but that is another thing. Satan cannot touch anything but my flesh; and if I am mortifying my members, he has no power. If my members are alive, Satan cannot count me dead. In the presence of all then I can sit down and say, I have done with them all-" for Thou art with me." I have found that power by which they are made nothing to me. Then we arrive at further security, joy, and blessedness still: " Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Now that Christ has ascended and the Holy Ghost has been given, there is triumphant peace and abounding in joy through the power of the Holy Ghost.

I now find God Himself the source of all, and not only this as a present thing, but seeing what God is, I can say, " goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of Jehovah forever." We shall never want goodness and not find it. " Goodness shall follow me." Assuredly the goodness of God is better than man's, even if we could get this. There is a place to dwell in: that is my hope. For us it is the Father's house. There are not only blessings conferred, but a place to dwell in with the Father forever. As He brought Christ through, of course He will bring me through too, and I am there now by faith. I am at home with my Father. He would have us feel that all the correctings and chastenings by the way are founded upon the fact that He is for us. When peace is really settled through the work of Christ, I have all these exercises; and what is known only to faith at the beginning becomes afterward experience, though always faith too; but, every step having had this experience, we can say that we know it. Whatever it be we meet with by the way, we know it is all for good, and we shall dwell forever with Him. Wonderful grace!

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 8, Familiar Conversations on Romanism: The Mass

N-. Well, Mrs. James, good evening. I suppose James will be here.

Mrs. lames. He will; for he went to see Bill M., and they will come, I expect, together. Sit down, sir, if you please. They will soon be here; and the two gentlemen will, too, I suppose.

N-. Well, Mrs. James, and what do you say to what you have heard?

Mrs. James. I am very thankful for my husband, and for Bill M. It would have been a great grief if James had been led away from the truth. I could only look up that he might be kept. But to think of his being led into what I knew was false; and then the children! It was terrible! but God is very gracious. I was astonished at some things I heard; and it is a sorrowful thing to think that what the blessed Lord planted so fair and lovely by His Spirit, should have become so awfully corrupt. But I think, sir, when persons have known redemption and forgiveness themselves, and rest in Christ, they do not want all this. They have found a sure resting-place themselves in the work and Person of the Lord Jesus Christ-can cry, Abba Father, in the consciousness of the present grace wherein they stand. They know that what they have got is the eternal grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us; they trust that love; they have known and believed the love that God has to them: and their spirits are at rest in the love and favor of God. And I have found that these Romanists (but I do not say but some of them. love Christ) are for slaving to gain His favor, and by penances, as if God wanted to torment them; and prayers, as if praying was not a delight and comfort, and none like it; and, after all, it ends in absolution and purgatory. It is not Christianity in which by divine love and God's righteousness we are reconciled to God and have peace. They seem never to have real peace. Satisfied some are, but no true peace with God, or they could not want to be working so to make it, seeing that Christ has died for us and we know God's love.

N-. It is most true; still I do not doubt that some of them love the Lord. There is piety, but no knowledge of redemption.

Mrs. James 1 see some of them pious, but their piety is all mixed up with looking to the Virgin, who is not God, and never died for us, and of course could not; and to penances, and mortifying the body, and voluntary humility, as you know the scripture says, sir. Their piety is not true Christian grace and happiness, any more than their doctrines are Christian. I never saw one that had the liberty of the Spirit; and pretending still again to offer Christ must keep them there. They do not know what it is to believe that God has said " their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," because of Christ's precious offering of Himself, by which He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. It is a blessing to think what the love of God has been to us.

N-. And is, Mrs. James: we dwell in it; at least that is the Christian's abode, even here below.

Mrs. James. It is true.

N-. But you are right; " He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Well, we must pray for them, and that the word may be blessed to them; for it is sorrowful to think that the pious ones you speak of should be kept from the blessed liberty of divine favor in which Christ set us in Himself, and which we enjoy through the Holy Ghost. The last point you referred to is the one we are to take up this evening. But it is true that when a person really knows redemption, Romanism is at once to them a fable, and the very denial of Christianity; but how many pious persons, and not only among Romanists, but Protestants though mercifully preserved, who do not know redemption! I do not mean they deny it, perhaps have professedly no other hope, but who do not know it so as to possess its present peaceful effect by faith. How many there are who truly own Christ to be the Savior, who think it presumptuous to be assured of forgiveness and salvation! Yet, Scripture is plain enough. In that day, when the Comforter would be come, they should know, it is written, they were in Christ and Christ in them. How can they cry, Abba Father, which is what distinguishes the Christian state, if they do not know they are children?

But here are your husband and Bill M. Good evening.

James and Bill M. Good evening, sir. I see the gentlemen are not here, so we are not too late.

N-. We were speaking, while waiting for you all, of the assurance of salvation, or at least had got on that point, when you came in.

Bill M. I wish I had it.

N-. Well M., it is the plain privilege of every simple believer. It is written, " He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life "; and again, " By him, all that believe are justified from all things."

Bill M. Well, I suppose then, I do not believe, for I cannot say that I have everlasting life, nor that I am justified.

N-. Your conclusion is not just. Do you not believe in your heart that the blessed Jesus is the Son of God?

Bill M. That I surely do; that is not what I doubt, but I do not -know I have any part with Him; and the more I see the blessedness of it, and the more I know myself, the more I doubt.

N-. All this searching of heart is very useful; but, as to the truth, you see, God has pronounced in your case. You believe on the Son, and the word of God declares that whoever believes on Him has eternal life and is justified.

Bill M. I see; at least in my mind, I see it clear.

N-. What we are going to speak of may clear it up still more for you; still it must be a faith wrought by God in your soul. This doctrine of justification by faith was just what was brought out at the Reformation; and indeed they went too far then, so as yet to cloud it a little. They held that personal assurance of one's own salvation alone was justifying faith, and that is just what your reply amounted to; and this was condemned by the Council of Trent, as the vain confidence of the heretics. But this was the believing something about oneself, not about Christ; whereas Scripture presents Christ as the object of faith, and tells us judicially that he who believes on Him is justified. But Christ, not our own justification, is the object of faith, and we know it when we submit to God's judgment about it, instead of forming our own about our state, which must leave us in doubt. And we have to be humbled, and, as to this, emptied of self and self-righteousness in its subtler forms, to bow to God's way of justifying.

Bill M. But it is said somewhere we are to examine ourselves whether we are in the faith.

N-. The words are there; but it is only half a sentence, and cutting off the first half entirely changes the sense. The whole sentence is, " Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me,... examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." " Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me " is an unfinished sentence; and before concluding it, there is a parenthesis which is evidently such, and then the original sentence is concluded with " examine yourselves," etc., as already quoted. And the apostle immediately appeals to their certainty that they were Christians to show their folly in questioning his apostleship. " Know ye not your own selves, how that Christ dwells in you

except ye be reprobates? " How did he come there, if Christ had not spoken in him, for he had been the means of their conversion? Paul had been proving he was an apostle, which the false Judaizing teachers had called in question, because he was not ordained and sent by Peter and the others. Paul appeals to his miracles and labor amongst them, and every other proof of his apostleship. And at last, reproaching them for their folly, says, " If I am not an apostle, how are you Christians? Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, examine yourselves.' If Christ did not speak by me you are not Christians, for, as he says, I have begotten you all by the gospel." It was an unanswerable argument to them. They denied their own Christianity if they denied his apostleship.

James. I see plain enough; I never noticed that. Why, Bill, it is no precept to examine ourselves at all, but to them a confounding proof he was an apostle.

N-. It is all well to examine if we are walking up to it; but that is another thing. But tell me, M., how should you like your children to inquire if they were your children?

Bill M. Nay, that would never do.

N-. Surely not. It would be ruinous. But if they were to examine themselves, and judge themselves as to whether they were dutiful children, walking up to the place and duty of children?

Bill.M. I wish they always did.

N-. We see the difference clearly; and the latter is all right, provided it is done because we are children, and in the true confidence of a child in his father's love. We all pass through the other; and it is very natural, when we are in earnest, till we see redemption clearly; because we are inquiring what we are for God, not believing what He has been and what He has done for us. Now judging ourselves as to holiness of walk and living to Christ is all very right; but if I connect this with my acceptance, I have not learned God's love to me when a sinner, nor the efficacy of that work in the value of which I stand before God. It is in principle self-righteousness, though very useful to make us find we cannot make out any true righteousness. So the prodigal talks of being a hired servant before he met his father; once there and the father on his neck, that was all over; his place depended on what his father was for him, not what he was for his father; his fitness to go in was the best robe-Christ. Yet he was going right from the time he came to himself. Never forget, M., that our duties flow from the place we are already in. The duties are not the means of winning it, for they are not duties till you are in it. You cannot have the duties of a servant to me, because you are not such. Your children are bound to obey you, because they are your children.

Bill M. That is plain, but we have a deal to get rid of.

N-. Get Christ as a Savior and you get power too, and liberty from sin: " Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace."

But here are these gentlemen. Good evening, Mr. R.; good evening, Mr. D.

Mr. R., Mr. D. Good evening.

N-. We were waiting your arrival, and have not entered on our subject, but were speaking of the peace we have through Christ.

R. We are about the hour fixed, I think. Peace is a happy thing no doubt, but we must take care we do not deceive ourselves. Presumption is a dangerous thing, and we may most easily deceive ourselves. " No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him."

N-. Assuredly we may deceive ourselves, and there are cases where warning may be timely; but that is the comfort of resting on God's word. This cannot deceive us. Your quotation from Ecclesiastes has no application to our Christian place. " Hereby know we love that he laid down his life for us." Do we not know evil in the world's rejection of him, man's hatred against God? We know perfect love, and alas! perfect hatred in the cross. To say nothing of our own enjoyment of it, it is monstrous to apply this to the gospel or to the Christian. John says, " we have known and believed the love God hath to us." " God hath commended his love to us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us "; surely we ought to believe in it. Ecclesiastes takes up what is done under the sun-whether mortal man can find satisfying happiness here, and learns that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. It is not the revelation of grace in the Son of God.

James. Pray be seated, gentlemen. We are all anxious to hear you on the subjects you spoke of. Bill M. knows more about it than I do; but we are both glad to hear what you have to say, and to know the truth.

Bill M. I should above all, if you are so kind, desire to hear about the Mass. It was made so much of with me, and seems the great point with the Catholics. They go to hear Mass, and say it brings people out of purgatory, and is for the remission of sins. I shall be glad to hear about transubstantiation, but this is a darker matter for me, which I do not much understand. But everything was made of the Mass with me; and if there is still a sacrifice for the remission of sins, it is a wonderful thing and no one should despise it. I see a great deal more than I did of the good of Christ's one sacrifice, but about the Mass I am not clear.

N-. If these gentlemen have no objection, then, we will begin with the Mass, and speak of transubstantiation afterward. " He goes to Mass " is the very definition of a Roman Catholic, so to say. I do not think, important as it may be and is, it will keep us very long.

R. I have no objection, nor I suppose Mr. D. either.

N-. Well then, we will take up the doctrine of the Mass; we have ample authority as to the Roman Catholic doctrine on the subject, but we had better let Mr. R. make his own statement.

R. We must approach so holy and solemn a subject with reverence, but the proofs of the truth of it are as simple as they are strong. No religion in the world was ever without a sacrifice, and when men left the true God to worship idols, they still kept up this thought, identified, as it is, with the instincts of human nature, and sanctioned by the revelation of God, beginning with Abel, who was surely taught of God as to it, and developed in the sacrifices commanded to be offered under the law. It is impossible to believe that Christians-the true religion of God-should be left without any. Moreover it is contrary to the plain revelation of prophecy. Malachi declares as plainly as words can express it, " From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is a sacrifice, and

there is offered to my name a clean oblation." This is express. So we find in Gen. 14 that Melchisedec brought forth bread and wine, and (or indeed for) he was priest of the most high God. And Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec; so that bread and wine in connection with priesthood according to the order of Melchisedec is fully confirmed. I might adduce

Corinthians to where we read, " Ye cannot drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils," etc. Now the table of devils was their altar; hence we must clearly conclude that what is called the Lord's table is also an altar. This makes the institution of it by the Lord very plain which took place on the words, " This do ": in which the sacrifice was instituted, and they were consecrated priests with the command to offer it: for " doing " is a sacrificial word. We have also the uniform testimony of the Fathers from Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Cyprian, all of whom speak of this sacrifice and in the strongest terms. And it is not merely Catholics, but the whole professing church has accepted it- Greeks and all sects which have sprung up-outside the pale of the church.

N-. Well, Mr. R., you have fairly given the proofs alleged by Bellarmine, and even the Catechism of the Council of Trent. Milner does but repeat the same more briefly. One would say, he felt weak on the point. He refers back to what he had said in his letter on the means of sanctity as a motive for being brief-a convenient cover for having little to say, if people do not refer to the letter; for there he has said nothing at all, save quoting Malachi, the universal resource, and the words of institution which he does in this letter on the Mass. Again Dr. Milner's definition of a sacrifice is clearly false and poor. He says, " it is an offering up and immolation of a living animal or other sensible thing to God in testimony that He is the master of life and death, the Lord of us and of all things." Now, not to say that there were sacrifices which were not of living or sensible things under the law, as the meat offering, and confining myself to what was sacrifice in the full sense of it, all that he speaks of leaves out the question of sin altogether. The majesty of God is owned as having power over life and death, but upon the face of his definition no thought of sacrifice for sin has any place. The Council of Trent gives us no definition of sacrifice, but states pretty fully its doctrine of the Mass: only that the church has a visible sacrifice to represent Christ's bloody sacrifice, and that was to be permanent (Sess. 20, cap. 2), referring to the institution of the Lord's supper and Malachi's prophecy.

Into what is said of the sacrifice of the Mass itself, I will go fully though briefly. I only note here how the idea of sacrifice is lost in its true value. Bellarmine's definition is " an external oblation made to God alone, which in acknowledgment of human infirmity and profession of the divine majesty, the object of the senses and permanent, by a lawful minister, is by a mystic rite consecrated and transmuted " (Bell. de Sacr. Such. X. Lib. 5, cap. 2, 5 26.) This would lead us very little to a just thought of the sacrifice of Christ. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, De Eucharistic; Sacramento, cap. 4, 71, gives its being offered to God as the essential difference between sacrament and sacrifice in the Eucharist. But leaving these generalities, valuable only as shewing the vagueness and unsatisfactoriness of the Roman Catholic idea of a sacrifice, I turn to that on which it is precise enough, the sacrifice of the Mass. That is a propitiatory sacrifice available for the sins not only of the living but of the dead-truly propitiatory. (Conc. Trid. Sess. XXII, 2.) Christ is unbloodily immolated there. The decree of the Council, after grossly misapplying Heb. 4:16, which speaks of Christ's priesthood in heaven, not of sacrifice, adds, " for by the offering of him [Christ] the Lord is appeased granting grace and the gift of penitence, forgives crimes and sins, even very great ones [ingentia]: for it is one and the same victim, the same one now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross, the manner of offering alone being different. Wherefore it is rightly offered according to the traditions of the apostles, not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities of the faithful who are alive, but also for the dead in Christ not yet fully purged." So in the Catechism of the Council of Trent somewhat more fully (Part II De Eu. Sacr. 76.) " The Mass is and ought to be considered one and the same sacrifice with that of the cross, for the victim is one and the same.... The bloody and unbloody are not two but only one victim whose sacrifice is daily renewed in the Eucharist.... The priest is also one and the same, Christ the Lord." And alleges as proof that the priest does not say This is Christ's body,' but This is my body.' " It is a truly propitiatory sacrifice by which God is appeased and rendered propitious to us.... For so delighted is the Lord with the odor of this victim, that, bestowing on us the gifts of grace and repentance, He pardons our sins. Hence this usual prayer of the church ' as often as the commemoration of this victim is celebrated, so often is the work of our salvation being done.' "

It is even more distinct in expression than the Council of Trent. Its benefits extend " to all the faithful whether living with us on earth, or already numbered with those who are dead in the Lord, but whose sins have not yet been fully expiated." This is very plain. Christ offers Himself visibly, permanently, or renewedly (both expressions are used); often, daily renewed, is the expression in the Catechism. This sacrifice, offered by Christ, appeases God, is propitiation for the sins of the living and of the dead in Christ when they are not fully purged, says the Council of Trent; expiated,' says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, confers pardon of sins,' besides many other graces.

Does Christianity recognize this? It not only does not do so, but with diligent care expressly denies it in every part. It is instituted, we are told, that the church might have a perpetual sacrifice by which our sins might be expiated and our heavenly Father turned from wrath to mercy. Let me make a remark in passing that the statement that the priest's saying This is my body' shows he represents Christ is a mere fallacy. It is in the Mass a recital of what Christ said at the last supper. The canon of the Mass says, " who " (Jesus Christ) " the day before he suffered took bread in his holy and venerable hands... saying, Take and eat all of this, for this is my body." They are clearly and only the words of Christ the day before He suffered.

To clear my way I would say that sacrifice lies at the basis of all relationship of man with God. But at the same time such an expression as turning our heavenly Father from wrath by it is not by itself a true or scriptural way of putting it; though Protestant confessions have continued it on from Rome. God is a righteous Judge, and the atonement was absolutely necessary that grace might reign through righteousness. But the origin and source of all is left out in this statement. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. The Son of man must be lifted up, the holy victim be offered up. But where to find it? The love of God saw us all lost sinners, and did not spare His own Son for us. Christ " through the eternal Spirit offered himself up without spot to God "; nay, in the same love, said, " Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." But if righteousness required the propitiation, love provided the victim. " Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And this changes the whole character of the gospel; God's love was the source and origin of it all, though it became God to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering. As the apostle John states it, " But we have seen and do testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world." The Father's wrath indeed is not a scriptural expression at all; God's wrath is. A Father is the Father of His children.

That the heathen took up sacrifice from corrupted traditions of the truth and the necessity of the human heart, I believe with Mr. R., and do not doubt that Abel's offering was by God's will, for Abel we are told offered it by faith; Hebrews That in Christianity there is a sacrifice, I admit as truth and vital truth, the basis of our relationship with God, as what I need for my own salvation. Indeed, I do not doubt a moment that all

other sacrifices from Abel on rested on divine and divinely taught reference to this, the heathen sacrifice, being corruptly derived from this original source, connected with false ideas of God, namely, that the gods were hating and jealous beings who had to be won, a thought which still exists in corrupted Christianity.

But you will remark, Mr. R., that the early sacrifices were bloody sacrifices. The law, in special figures of Christ, introduced meat-offerings along with these, and most interesting is the instruction they afford; but what was essential was that death and the shedding of blood should come in, because therein man owned that sin and death by sin had come in, and that only by the death of another could man come to God. Abel came with this; Cain with what cost him far more toil and labor, but which did not own sin and death, and separation from God, and was rejected with his offering. What first effectually covered man's nakedness was that God clothed him with the skins of slain beasts. Man's state in sin, death, and separation from God was owned, and met. This (which is of the essence of the one true sacrifice and carefully set forth in the earliest types to which you and I both refer, as making the essential difference of what was necessary and acceptable to God, as all their sacrifices, and peremptorily the difference of Cain and Abel's demonstrate) is wholly left out in Milner's and Bellarmine's definition of a sacrifice. When we remember what the sacrifice of the Mass is, it is not difficult to understand why. If death and the shedding of blood be essential to an acceptable sacrifice, the Mass, avowedly an unbloody sacrifice, and so called, is not really one at all. A commemoration or memorial of such it may be, but not itself such. It fails in what is essential, and, I must add, denies the whole true ground of relationship with God; it legitimates Cain's sacrifice which God rejected.

Bill M. That is true, though I believe we must have the death and blood-shedding of Christ itself for forgiveness. How dark one is in one's thoughts!

R. But the blood is consecrated apart, expressly to show forth the shedding of the blood.1

Bill M. To show it forth, it may be; but you do not mean to say, sir, that there is a real shedding of the blood of Christ.

R. Not materially, of course. It is an unbloody sacrifice, and so the church teaches.

Bill M. Then I do not see what it is worth. But I should let Mr. N. go on. I beg pardon for interrupting.

N-. You are quite free, M. I am glad you noticed this truth distinctly. As to its being commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, and I will add, of Himself, giving Himself in love, and a blessed one too-this is surely true and held by all Christians; but the seventy-ninth Article of the Catechism of the Council of Trent is precise on the other doctrine. " It is not a mere commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross, but also a truly propitiatory sacrifice." It is propitiation and remission without blood-shedding. We have seen it is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living, and for those of the dead in Christ not expiated; appeases God and obtains pardon; is daily renewed, Christ Himself being the offerer. Now what does Scripture say? It declares positively and in formal terms that there is no more sacrifice for sin. The whole Romanist system is founded on, has its practical existence from, that which is formally denied by the word of God.

James. That is true though.

N-. But I must be more precise. We are told that it is the same Christ that offered Himself upon the cross that offers Himself daily in a renewed sacrifice. I read in the word of God-I quote your own translation (Heb. 9:25-27): " Nor yet that he should offer himself often... for then he ought to have suffered often from the beginning of the world; but now once at the end of ages he hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself." You tell us that the sacrifice is renewedly offered, permanently in the church. The word says (Heb. 9:28), " So also Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many; the second time he shall appear without sin to them that expect him unto salvation ": and again (chap. 10: 18), " Now where there is a remission of these [sins], there is no more an oblation for sins." And He gives the blessed reason in chapter 10: 14; " For by one oblation he has perfected forever them that are sanctified." The word of God teaches that by His one oblation He has exhausted the sins of many, and appears the second time to take them to glory; and that the sins being remitted, there is no more oblation. You tell me there is, and that for the remission of sins, and truly propitiatory. If we take your translation-" exhaust the sins of many "-it makes it still more clear, that if exhausted, they cannot be brought up again against the Christian, or any other sacrifice be needed. You tell me that it is an unbloody sacrifice, that blood is not shed there. The word tells me (Heb. 9:22) that " without shedding of blood there is no remission." That is, in every point the word of God teaches me the exact contrary of what Rome teaches, and teaches too in what is the center and substance of all her worship.

Bill M. Well, Mr. R., I am astonished. This Mass was their great subject with me, besides the church; and I see the word of God condemns it altogether, and I see too that the abiding efficacy of Christ's blessed work is in question.

R. But Mr. N. interprets the Scriptures, and we are not capable of doing that; we must learn what the church teaches from it, and in all ages it has held that the Eucharist was an offering made to God.

N-. Excuse me, Mr. R., I do not interpret at all; I set your authorized statements in simple juxtaposition with your own scriptures.

They say Christ does not offer Himself often. You say He does.

They say that there is no more oblation for sin. You say there is.

They say that without shedding of blood there is no remission. You say that it is an unbloody sacrifice, but there is remission.

I need no interpretation; the statements contradict one another. A great deal more might be said, were I to reason and expound; for Heb. 9 and to discuss the point fully, and elaborately, and blessedly, I will add, for us; but it is not necessary. These chapters insist, all their reasonings for blessing and for judgment are founded, on Christ's offering being one only, and once for all, never to be repeated. Nothing can be stronger or plainer. Either the Scriptures are false, which God forbid, or the Romish religion is, in the very heart and foundation of its worship, and of its teaching on the foundation of all our hopes, the work of Christ.

Bill M. Sure it is not interpreting, Mr. R. Teaching is not wanted. If the word of God says Christ is not to offer Himself often, and you say, He is and does, both cannot be true. It is plain enough how the matter stands. I was somewhat puzzled about the church, but this is plain enough. But what it is to be ignorant of the word of God! But then, to be sure, my soul was not right with God. I do not say I am all right now, but this

about the Mass is clear enough.

D. But it is a commemorative sacrifice or offering.

N-. You forget, Mr. D., that we have seen that the Catechism of the Council of Trent, the highest possible authority, tells us that it is not a mere commemorative sacrifice, but a truly propitiatory one. The Mass is a denial of the abiding value of Christ's work once for all and completely accomplished and accepted of God, so that He sits at the right hand of God, when, as the Rhemish Testament expresses it, He had been once offered to exhaust the sins of many.

James. But what do the Roman Catholics say to this, sir?

N-. The Council of Trent and the Catechism of the Council of Trent prudently say nothing; they are wholly silent as to it. Bellarmine however takes up the objection as to Christ's not offering Himself again; he replies that He was not to do so in the way of dying, coming out of heaven and dying again, and that the apostle refers to this, for he says, " Then must he often have suffered." But this wholly misrepresents the apostle's argument; he does not say He was not to offer Himself in a bloody way, so as to suffer, but that He was not to offer Himself often, for then He must have suffered often. It is an additional proof. The apostle had no idea of an offering of Christ without suffering. His statement is that He was not to offer Himself often; for that if He did He must suffer: the strongest possible testimony against the Mass. To the point of no remission without blood-shedding, he replies, That speaks of Jewish sacrifices. But to what purpose is the apostle using the witness of these sacrifices? In themselves he declares the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sins, and makes the general and absolute statement that there is no remission of sins without blood-shedding, and applies it to Christ, saying that He has suffered once for all, and gone into heaven itself, not with blood of others, but by His own blood entered in once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption; Heb. 9:22-25.

Dr. Milner states that the apostle is barely proving to the Hebrews how infinitely superior the sacrifice of Christ is to those of the Mosaic law, particularly from the circumstance which he repeats in different forms, namely, that there was a necessity of their sacrifices being often repeated, which after all could not of themselves, and independently of the One they prefigured, take away sin, whereas the latter, namely, Christ's death on the cross, obliterated at once the sins of those who availed themselves of it.

Bill M. But that is just a proof that it had not to be repeated. Ah! it is all plain enough.

N-. He adds that this does not militate against the Mass, because it is the same as to the victim and as to the priest, the manner only being different.

Bill M. But even so it is repeated, and according to them has need to be repeated, only in a manner that takes away its reality, for there is no suffering for sin, no blood-shedding. I see through it all. But it is awful to think they should have invented it.

N-. It is awful, but I do not know that we can charge them with inventing it all at once. The Fathers, so-called, though often falsely quoted as to this, used the most glowing language as to the Eucharist, and talked of tremendous mysteries, to act on the superstition of the people who had no real faith. So soon as the full efficacy of the sacrifice of the blessed Lord was lost to the church's faith, and the testimony that all sins were put away from him that believed by the sacrifice, they were obliged, even for those who really loved the Lord, to have some means of quieting the conscience. Persons of severe habits of mind allowed no known forgiveness after baptism; others allowed it once. The church, with growing superstition, provided means for it in a system which gradually developed itself, as the Eucharist turned into the Mass, and absolution. Then purgatory was invented, at least its first germ, in the seventh century. The Mass was not fully developed till a great deal later; but when once perfect acceptance in Christ was unknown, souls could not find rest, and sought it in superstitious observances, and heathenism was deliberately introduced into Christendom. I have said, " Lost to the church's faith "; but the language is not exact: the church never had it since the apostles. In the word our acceptance is clear enough; many a poor soul whose record is on high may have enjoyed it; but in the history of the church our full acceptance in Christ is never found.

D. What do you mean?

N-. What I mean is very simple. The apostle Paul tells us that the mystery of iniquity did already work. He tells us too, that as soon as he was gone, both from within and from without the evil would break in, or develop itself. And it is a matter of historical fact, that truth such as Heb. 9 and 10 afford us, to go no farther, and true faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost were never found in the historical church. Objective truths (and I fully admit their importance), what we may call orthodoxy, were maintained, taking the history as a whole; but the relationships of a true believer with God as perfected in Christ, and the sealing with the Holy Ghost which gave him to know it, and his place as a son with the Father, and the union of true believers with Christ as members of His body, is not found in church history. For example, take Hebrews 1o, to which we have referred. The worshippers once purged having no more conscience of sins, that Christ is forever2 at the right hand of God because by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified through the offering of His body once for all; not like the Jewish priests, who stood, as priests do now, to offer often because the work was never really done; the consciousness that we are in Christ and Christ in us, by the Comforter given to us, of which we are assured by the Lord Himself in John 14, " In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you ": and blessed it is to know that we are perfected forever in Christ, and in Him; and in Him our being sons with the Father, and that He is gone to His Father and our Father, His God and our God: all this is lost, never found in church history, but a system of ceremonies to make good the loss of it. In Scripture it is plain enough.

D. But is it not dangerous to say, however sincere, that we are perfected forever?

N-. Is it not so written in the word? Is it not very presumptuous to say that what God says is dangerous for the soul? That sinful man will abuse every favor God has given him if he trusts his own heart is quite true; but it is not in denying the truth he is secure. We are sanctified by the truth. One truth too guards another, and, remark, every one who professes to be a Christian professes to be perfected forever, unless he makes a gospel for himself; for Christ's gospel so speaks. Indeed, Dr. Milner, in terms, is forced to admit it; he says, as we have seen, " Whereas the latter," namely, Christ's death on the cross, " obliterated at once the sins of those who availed themselves of it." Now every true Christian has, and every professing Christian professes to have, availed himself of it.

R. But he must use the means the church affords.

N-. I fully admit, and am thankful that God has furnished us with means, as prayer, and the word, and the ministry, the Lord's supper, and fasting if rightly used; but these add nothing to the value of Christ's work; and you will please to remark that Dr. Milner says-is obliged, in commenting on Heb. 9 and to, to say-" Obliterated at once "; but if so, it is all settled, and the conscience purged, and if I am to believe the word of God, we are sanctified to God, by His offering, and perfected forever. Remark another thing; there can be no spiritual affections without this. How can I feel as a child and a son if I do not know whether I am one or not? How even can I be thankful for acceptance before God, if I do not know whether I am accepted? But however this may be, the Mass is formally condemned by Heb. 9 and 10. There is no more oblation for sin. Allow me, Mr. R., to ask you, Does Christ die in the sacrifice of the Mass?

R. Of course He cannot.

N-. Surely not; He dieth no more. But then your Mass sacrifice is of no worth at all, for to redeem and put away sin He poured out His soul unto death; He made His soul an offering for sin; and He does no such thing in the Mass. It is utterly without value. There is, says Scripture, of necessity the death of the testator. I need hardly insist on the death of Christ being the ground and basis of all hope and of the very essence of His sacrifice; Isa. 53:10-12; Heb. 9. Is Christ made sin for us now in the Mass?

R. No, He cannot now; He is in glory. That was on the cross.

N-. Then the Mass is no true sacrifice. It is Christ being made sin for us that gives the sacrifice its value, that we may be the righteousness of God in Him. The cross alone is a true sacrifice. Does Christ bear our sins in the Mass?

R. That cannot take place now; He sits on the right hand of God.

N-. Then the Mass is no true sacrifice, and can procure no true remission. It is by bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, that He has obtained forgiveness, and has obliterated them at once, as Dr. Milner says. Again, you admit that it is an unbloody sacrifice; that there is no shedding of blood in the Mass.

R. It may be mystically figured in pouring the wine into the cup; but we all own there is no actual shedding of His blood.

N-. " Mystically figured " we shall not quarrel about. We all own the blessed value of it as a memorial and commemoration, but if there be not, as you admit, and it is evident, the Mass is nothing worth-gives no remission of sins nor makes peace with God; for without shedding of blood there is no remission; and He has made peace by the blood of His cross; Col. 1:20. Thank God, He has made it. Further, is Christ made a curse in the Mass?

R. He cannot be made a curse now.

N-. Then it is no redemption from the curse, for that is by His being made a curse for us-another thing that is so wholly and evidently wanting that I do not ask you about it, but yet is essential to the true sacrifice. There is no redemption in the Mass; for we have redemption through His blood: and if Christ were put to death in the Mass-and the thought would be absurd and blasphemous as a present thing-where is resurrection? As a memorial, I need not bring that in; I commemorate His sacrifice consummated in His death; but if you will have it a real sacrifice, there is no resurrection, and we are yet in our sins. The whole thing is false. Not one element of true sacrifice, the sacrifice of the cross, is there. No death, no blood-shedding, no curse, no cup to drink, no bearing of sins, no being made sin, no suffering the just for the unjust, no forsaking of God-not one single element of what makes the wondrous cross of the blessed Savior an accomplishment of redemption, on which our salvation rests secure-a perfect and finished atonement through which we have remission, and a perfectly purged conscience, and acceptance with God. It is a mere return to the repetition of Jewish sacrifices, which proved that nothing was really done, only denying thereby that Christ's work is accomplished, instead of pointing to it, as those sacrifices did. If a sacrifice is still needed, the work of redemption is not accomplished. It is only a vain delusion to say it is the same, it is a repetition, not a thing done once for all, as the Epistle to the Hebrews insists, and is not the same in a single element which gives value to a sacrifice, which makes it true and really such. That is found in the cross and in the cross only.

But allow me to ask you another question, since we are speaking of the value of the sacrifice, Is it not your doctrine that the body, blood, soul and divinity are in the one species, as you call it-what I should call the bread, but which you, of course, would no longer call such after the words ' This is my body ' are pronounced over it-but in the one kind? and that it is on the ground that it is so in the body, that you declare the communicants at large lose nothing by not having the cup, because the blood is in what you hold to be the body-a whole Christ, as you would say-or what is called the doctrine of concomitancy?

R. Surely we do.

N-. But then, if He be a whole Christ, there is no redemption or remission; for, for this the shedding of His blood was needed. " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

A whole Christ is the perfect blessed Son of God even if in humiliation on earth, but there is no redemption while He is such. And further, if the pouring the wine into the cup figures the shedding of the blood, how have you the blood still in the body in the one species of bread?

D. But is not this somewhat sophistical?

N-. No, Mr. D.; it is merely exposing the sophistry which is found in the attempt to reconcile what is utterly false in every respect, and to satisfy those whom the system you now delight in deprives of half the institution of Christ, and persuade them they have still all. What is false will never stand examination, though it may puzzle. You speak of sophistry because you have no answer.

R. But we do not deny it is a memorial.

N-. It cannot be a memorial if it be the thing itself. And you make it a true propitiatory sacrifice, denying that Christ finished this, and that it was done once for all.

D. But why cannot we consider it as offered to God so as to present to Him, and call to mind what Christ once did?

N-. Then do not call it a true propitiatory sacrifice, but call to mind to whom? If it call it to mind to us, it is all well, we do it in remembrance. But such a view gives wholly false thoughts of God as forgetful (God, forgetful!) of Christ's work, or an unpropitiated God who has need to be put in mind of what has been done to appease Him; and also sets aside other parts of truth. For Scripture speaks of the efficacy of that blood being always under God's eye within the veil, and Christ always appearing in the presence of God for us; so that the eternal efficacy of the one sacrifice is always before God. And explain it as you will, it is a repetition of the sacrifice, if it is a sacrifice at all, as if the value of Christ's sacrifice were not so present to God. But more than this: the offering to God, though needed, is not the sacrifice properly; the Roman Catholic definitions deny, by omission, what is essential. Christ did offer Himself through the eternal Spirit to God as a victim, but then when the spotless Lamb had thus given Himself to God for this purpose in endless love, God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin: that was not His offer of Himself, but God making good that for which He offered Himself. The Lord hath laid on Him our iniquity. He offered Himself spotless to God, and God laid the iniquity on Him; 2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:6. We may look at it as a whole, but when Scripture takes up the question distinctly, it does not confound these two things. Even the Greek words are different: prosphero and anaphero. The first part is Christ offered Himself, prosenegke; secondly, He bore the sins as a victim, and was sacrificed as on the altar-bore the sins there, anenegke. Commonly the Roman Catholic doctors confound these to save the credit of the Mass, but usually they in general take up the first part only, and so really does Bellarmine in his definition, leaving all the true sacrificial part out. Subsequently Bellarmine, feeling the difficulty, treats the question of death when offered: I will speak of it in a moment. Dr. Milner uses the word " immolation," but then it is only to own God's title over life and death; no question of sin is raised in it.

D. But what do you say then to those passages to which Mr. R. already referred, as for example, Malachi?

N-. Let us take the passage: " For from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith Jehovah of hosts." Is that fulfilled? Is Jehovah's name great from one end of the earth to the other? Has not the great mass of the world remained, and do not some three-quarters of it still remain, heathen? Your prophecy, according to your own interpretation of it, is not fulfilled. It is vain to allege that the gospel went out into all the world, as the Fathers sometimes do. In a certain sense nobody denies it; but the essence of the prophecy is, not that it should go forth, but that Jehovah's name should be great everywhere among the Gentiles, and this is not so: no pure offering is offered.

R. But it will be.

N-. That is no answer; but who told you it will be? That this prophecy will be fulfilled, I am fully assured, but that is another thing from saying it refers to the Mass, for it is not true in fact as to that. Nor is that all; do you own that we Protestants have a pure offering?

R. You have none at all.

N-. Then here is a very large part indeed of Christendom where you would say it had been, where it is not. And the Greeks?

R. Well, they are nearer, but they are heretical as to the Holy Ghost and are in schism.

N-. Is their offering pure?

R. Well, I cannot say it is.

N-. And Mahometans in Asia and Africa, where once there were numerous churches?

R. They of course have nothing to say to it.

N-. Your pure offering then has largely lost ground.

D. But there it is in the prophecy, and you profess to receive the Scriptures.

N-. What is in the prophecy?

D. That Jehovah's name will be great among the Gentiles everywhere and a pure offering offered.

N-. That I fully believe. But that it is the Mass is another question. Of that it is not true, the limits even of Christendom have receded. Nor is there the slightest ground for saying that the spread of the gospel will accomplish this work. " When thy judgments are in the earth," says Isaiah, " the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness," Isa. 26:9. And Zephaniah is as plain as possible. " Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent." I might multiply quotations, but it would be going too far. These show distinctly that it is when God's judgments are executed on the earth that the universal blessing will take place. The Son of man will gather out of His kingdom " all things that offend, and them that do iniquity." It is Jehovah's power in judgment, not the Father's sending the Son in grace, which sets the world as such right. It is the most gratuitous notion, without any ground whatever, that the pure offering to Jehovah is the Mass. It is neither true in fact, nor according to the statement of Scripture. That an offering of heart, and mind, and praise to God, and worship exists wherever grace works, is true, but the application of the prophecy of Malachi to the Mass has no ground whatever.

D. And what do you say to partaking of the table of devils and table of the Lord? The table of devils was clearly an altar, and so must the table of the Lord be.

N-. I reply to these arguments as you all allege them, but they are really only a proof of how little you have to say for your doctrine. You all quote the same texts, because there is nothing else, and prove there is nothing really to plead for your cause, if that could be, against the positive statement of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which formally contradicts your doctrine. The table was in no case an altar, neither with heathens, Jews, nor Christians. The altar was the place of sacrifice and offering; the table the place where they ate, in certain offerings not wholly burnt, a part of the animal which had been offered: but they never did so at the altar. Sacrifice and feasting were never the same; but

feasting on what was a part of the animal offered, when done with knowledge, identified him who did so with the altar where the other part was offered. Hence the apostle expressly puts the case of being invited to a feast; in such case what was put on the table they were to eat without any question for conscience' sake; if it was said this was offered to idols they were not to eat, for that would practically, at any rate in the mind of him who said it, identify them with the idol. But that did not make the table an altar. Take the Roman Catholic system:-the people eat of the wafer. That identifies them with the altar; but their place is not at the altar at all. The table is not the altar in any case; the case actually put by the apostle is a common meal; but if it was said, This is offered to idols, then he did not eat, because the animal of which he ate had been offered to the idol, and part sacrificed actually to it. The table was not the altar, but what he ate identified him with the idol; and the table at which he sat covered with idol meat was figuratively the table of demons. If he sat at meat in the temple, the case was more apparent; but even then they did not eat off the altar, but of the meat offered to the idol on it; and that is the ground the apostle takes. It is the communion of the body of Christ, the communion of the blood of Christ; it is not where it was eaten, but what it was which was in question. Take the offering of Christ; did they eat where He was offered? Eating of the altar is not eating off it, as if the table was an altar. We own an altar spiritually, but it was where Christ was really offered once for all: feeding on Him by faith does identify us with that. Bellarmine himself says he does not urge Heb. 13:10, because many Catholics take the altar there for the cross. But if this be so, eating of the altar does not mean that the person eats off it so that the table is an altar. We eat of what was on the cross, but not off it as a table. The whole thought is false.

As to Melchisedec, if the bread and wine were an offering to God, a priestly service, is it not strange that the Epistle to the Hebrews makes not the slightest allusion to it? And though Christ be priest after the order of Melchisedec, when the word speaks of the exercise of Christ's priesthood, it is uniformly a comparison with what Aaron did, and the Jewish sacrifices. In the Old Testament there is not the most distant hint of his offering to God. Melchisedec was a priest on his throne on earth, not a sufferer on the cross; there was no death in his case, but a testimony that he lives. He brings forth the bread and wine, but bringing forth is no offering. You are obliged to say with Bellarmine, We must suppose that he did so, admitting he brought it out to Abraham to eat, but that he must be supposed to have offered it first. In the account, they cannot deny, there is no trace of it. Now Melchisedec is a figure of Christ when He takes to Him His great power, and reigns as king of righteousness over the earth. Now He exercises His priesthood after the similitude of Aaron in the holy place- heaven itself as Hebrews teaches us-which Melchisedec does not at all. But when Christ takes His own throne, it is He who has suffered and offered the one sacrifice, and therefore, as Melchisedec, He has none to offer; He confers the blessing contained in the revelation of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, on those who belong to Him and have conquered. As Melchisedec, He has no sacrifice to offer, because this has been done once for all. Now His service is different; He is gone within the veil, not without blood, and there, we know, sits on the Father's throne, at the right hand of God till His enemies be made His footstool. Then the rod of His power will go out of Sion. But His present exercise of priesthood is not according to Melchisedec, as the Epistle to the Hebrews fully shows.

I add that Bellarmine's statement, that Judg. 6:18, 19, shows that the Hebrew word used for brought forth signifies priestly offering, has no foundation. Gideon brought out meat, and broth, and cakes, and Jehovah turned it by His power into a sacrifice; but the word does not mean " offering "; habi does, because it is the opposite to this word. Yatsa is " brought out "; be is " brought in or nigh." The last is used for bringing up to be a sacrifice, which means the contrary to bringing forth (yatsa). But on their own showing there is no statement of any offering in Melchisedec bringing forth bread and wine, because they are forced to suppose that the offering had been made before it was brought forth. All this, as I have said, I have answered because it is alleged; but it is a mere lame attempt to get up some evidence out of nothing by far-fetched reasoning, the difficulty of answering being, that there is no tangible reason for it-nothing really to answer. I rest on the great fact that the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the truth of Christianity, deny and reject altogether the whole doctrine of the Mass.

But let me ask you, Mr. R., where does the sacrifice take place in the Mass?

R. I am not a theologian, and it may be somewhat difficult to answer. But our teachers do not enter on that in their ordinary instruction, but speak of its value and blessing. Some attribute it to the priest's consumption of it in eating it.

N-. And can you really believe that the priest's eating the wafer is the real propitiatory sacrifice of Christ so as to obtain remission of sins?

James. But do they really say that, sir? Well, I could not have believed it. It is a strange system.

Bill M. Well! I am confounded: to liken that to Christ's dying when He had offered Himself up to God for a blessed saving sacrifice! It is horrible to think.

N-. Mr. R. however is right; they do say that. Bellarmine holds it; others, owning it as a probable opinion, seek in another part of the Mass the true point of sacrifice.

James. But there is no such difficulty in finding a sacrifice in the blessed Lamb of God. He offered Himself without spot to God, and bore our sins, and was made a curse for us, and died. And then we know His sacrifice is accepted, for He is risen and gone to sit down at God's right hand. All is plain there.

N-. Because it is a sacrifice: but they are thoroughly puzzled to make one out of the Mass. But why, Mr. R., if this be so, is not the people's eating it a sacrifice?

R. Well, the priest does it as part of his sacerdotal office, which the people cannot do. But, as you have read Bellarmine, you will know what he says as to it.

N-. Well, he is greatly at a loss; he admits bread and wine are offered, first, as such, but offered to be changed; but then the difficulty arises, that they are not yet Christ at all. However, not to follow all his reasoning, he makes three acts which constitute the Mass a sacrifice: first, what is common is consecrated; secondly, it is offered to God as placed upon the altar; and then adapted to change and destruction which is necessary to a sacrifice, only here done sacramentally and under the form of bread. The priest's eating it answers to the burning of the burnt offering. The first offering is necessary to the integrity, but not to its essence; so of the consecration; for the Lord in the institution never so offered, nor is the breaking either. But its consumption by the priest is its essence, though not its whole essence. The consecration alone cannot be it, as then mere bread would be sacrifice, not Christ. Still the consecration is essential to the sacrifice, though destruction being necessary, the priest's eating it is what properly constitutes it a sacrifice. His commentator tells us the opinion of two consumptions or

destructions is probable, but the other opposite opinion more probable: that is, that what makes the real essence for Bellarmine is not so at all, but the consecration only. Who could think that all this wretched caviling was the sacrifice of the blessed Son of God, He Himself offering it? But it is of importance in order to show that they do not know themselves how to find any truth or reality in it.

The learned editor of the Venetian edition of the works of Gregory the Great, after the Benedictines of St. Maur, published with the permission and privilege of the superior authorities, has another system in his Isagoge (9, B. 169 c., 3, 15, 16), and one that shows more reverence at least. He says that the offering may be of a victim to be immolated, or that has been immolated, confounding the bringing the victim up to be a victim, and the actual offering when slain, on the altar. He holds that Christ offered Himself to God at the institution of the Supper, and was an actual victim on the cross. Now He is offered, though still alive, like the scapegoat, as one who has been slain as a victim. The slaying is thus on the cross; the Mass only an offering. Others, he says, put the force of the sacrifice on the slaying of the victim; we in the offering of a victim slain or to be slain. They will have sacrifice to be instituted as a declaration of God's supreme dominion over His creatures; we to represent Christ's death. Surely he has more truth here. Milner takes the other view, but his illustration from the scapegoat is unhappy, because he goes away with his sins on him.

Did Christ do that after being a victim? For so he takes it in connection with the goat, whose blood was put on the mercyseat. The editor of Gregory closes by saying whichever opinion seems the truer and stronger to maintain the Catholic dogma against the innovators, let each follow, mindful of that word, in what is necessary unity; in doubtful liberty; in all charity. But this is a poor uncertainty to get forgiveness and grace by, the evident effect of trying to make a sacrifice of what is not one, resulting too in making uncertain altogether what it consists in. In this writer's case, the consumption on the altar being the only true offering after being slain, this second offering after being slain cannot take place now. It is really mere remembrance. Indeed he says pretty nearly as much (c. 12, p. 168). There is a sufficiently plain testimony moreover, of the representative nature of our sacrifice in those words of Christ, " As oft as ye shall do these things, do it in remembrance of me "; and he adds a good deal more, that in doing this continually in commemoration of that (the bloody sacrifice), we confess by act that Christ is entered once into the holy place, eternal redemption being found.

R. But these are individual opinions, not the church's teaching.

N-. Be it so; but when the church has taught it is a truly propitiatory sacrifice, her ablest children cannot find what the sacrifice consists in, because there is none there. It is killing under the form of bread, killing being necessary to sacrifice, but no real killing there. It is a striking proof of the falseness of the whole thing. Bellarmine felt the difficulty, for if consecration were the sacrifice, then bread was what was offered, as is evident, though they think consecration turns it into the body and blood; but then it must be that first to be sacrificed! so he will have it to be essentially the priest's eating it, though consecration be essential to it.

D. But do not you think we may treat it with more reverence?

N-. The truth of Christ's sacrifice with the profoundest and Christ-adoring reverence. But treat what with reverence? The Mass, or Christ's sacrifice on the cross? I am citing what they say. What they say of the Mass, and the utter irreverence of it, the moment we think of the cross of the blessed Lord, is just the proof how utterly distant it is from and opposed to the blessed sacrifice once offered there. As a sacrifice it has no relationship with or resemblance to it. You deceive people by identifying them, and desiring for the blasphemous fable of the Mass, as you once professed to think it, the reverence with which the sacrifice of the blessed Savior should be spoken of. And I show you that their language as to the Mass is irreverent folly instead of being the sacrifice of Christ. Just think of the priest's chewing the wafer being Christ's giving up His blessed life as a sacrifice for sin. I am almost ashamed to put them in the same sentence.

James 1 wonder such reasoning does not open their eyes. I should think it ridiculous folly if it was not so shocking. But people do not know these things.

N-. It is astonishing it does not open them. But we must make allowance for the effect of education, and the fact that all their own importance is connected with it. All worship the wafer, but the more ignorant know nothing of the theological explanations given. In a country where I have known the effect of the system well, it is a common expression, " You would not fear the man that can make God? "

R. But you do not attribute that to Roman Catholics in general.

N-. I should attribute it as an effect to the doctrine they teach. It is with the unlettered the natural expression of their belief that the priest by the word, " This is my body," turns the bread and wine into the body and blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. But I confine myself to the sacrifice itself at present.

Bill M. Of course they look at it so. How could they sacrifice Jesus Christ, if it was not Himself that was there?

James. Well, I am glad I was kept from such unholy notions.

Bill M. But you know nothing of all this when you are brought in. It is only, Hear the church, and you have a sacrifice and get forgiveness of your sins; and the Protestant has none. And when you do not know that you are forgiven and accepted, that is a comfort. But we will let these gentlemen go on.

James. I understand well what you mean. It all depends on knowing the value of the blessed work of Christ. But you are right; we will let these gentlemen proceed. Mr. D. was ready to say something.

D. I was only going to say that it is the uniform testimony of the Fathers that there is a permanent sacrifice in the church, and that the Eucharist is that sacrifice:

N-. Have you ever examined them for yourself?

D. I have looked at some, but they are quoted by all who have treated the subject.

N-. No doubt. I attach no importance whatever to the statements of the Fathers. No one can have read them, or studied the history of the church, but must know, if he knows the truth at all, how early the truth was lost.. If he takes for granted that they have the truth, of course he

will receive what they say, if he can receive nonsense and contradictions. But the apostle John warns us to hold fast to what was from the beginning, and that they clearly were not. He tells us that they who are of God hear them (the apostles). You say they were nearer the apostles, and so must be nearer the truth, as they were nearer the source. But we have the apostles and the source itself, and do not want to know what was nearer or farther.

R. But there is the interpretation of the Scriptures, which too are in dead languages.

N-. And there is the interpretation of the Fathers, which are in the same dead languages. For example, on this very subject your most learned men, who quote and read the Fathers, cannot tell what the essence of the sacrifice is in the Mass. But I will refer to them simply because they quoted them. And if we wait on God He will help us to understand His own word, but not mere uninspired writings of men. In these discourses to the people they do speak in the most florid terms, somewhat later indeed, of this tremendous mystery. And they speak generally of the sacrifice, and refer to the passage in Malachi; but it is far from true that they had the thought of a proper sacrifice in the Mass. It was the custom to bring offerings of bread and wine, etc., which were then used for the service or otherwise as for the poor; and this is constantly spoken of as the sacrifice, which is quite another matter; and the whole service is spoken of in terms which deny the Roman Catholic interpretation of its meaning.

Milner is bold enough to quote Justin Martyr, which, if I mistake not, Bellarmine is too wise to do. Milner refers to his dialog with Trypho the Jew; but there, after referring to the sacrifice of the great day of atonement among the Jews, and the Lord's coming when rejected, and His coming again when the Jews will own Him-for this Justin held very positively3—he adds, " And the offering of fine flour, which was ordained to be offered for those to be purified from the leprosy, was a type of the bread of the Eucharist, which Jesus Christ our Lord ordained to be celebrated for a commemoration of the sufferings which He suffered for the purging of the souls of men from all iniquity; and that at the same time we may give thanks to God, that He has created the world, and all that is in it for man's sake."4—Again, in the same dialog, " It appears that this prophecy (Isaiah), concerning the bread which our Christ taught us to offer (poieint), for a commemoration of His taking a body on account of those who believe on Him, for whose sake also He became a sufferer, and concerning the cup which He taught us to offer,5 giving thanks for a commemoration of His blood."

But we have Justin's sober account of their Sunday Service, Ap. II, p. 97, Colonize, 1686: " When the prayers are finished, we salute each other with mutual kisses; then bread and a cup of water and wine mixed [with it]6 is offered to him who presides among the brethren; and having received these, he sends up praise and glory to the Father of all things through the name of the Son and of the Spirit, and then makes long thanksgiving that He has counted us worthy of these things Himself. And having finished the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present assent, saying, Amen.... And the president having given thanks, and all the people assented, those who are called deacons among us give to each of those present to partake of the bread for which thanksgiving has been made, and of the wine and water, and carry of them away to those not present. And this nourishment is called by us Eucharist (thanksgiving)." Then after saying it was only given to Christians, he says, " For we do not take it as common bread or common drink; but even as by the word of God, Jesus Christ our Savior being made flesh, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so the nourishment for which by the word of prayer which is from Him, thanks are given, from which by change our flesh and blood are nourished, we have been taught to be the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus." He then repeats the account of the service: "that they meet, read the Scriptures, and the president preaches; after that we all rise together and offer prayers; and as we have related, the prayers being over, bread is offered, and wine and water, and the president according to his ability sends up prayers and thanksgiving; and the people assenting, say, Amen. And the distribution and reception of those things for which thanksgiving is offered, takes place with each, and it is sent to those not present by the deacons." Now there is not a trace of a sacrifice or the offering of anything to God, except bread and wine, and that by the people, not for them. It is not a question of doctrine, but recounting to the Emperor what passed at their meetings.

So Irenaeus. Lib. IV, 18 (34 Old Editions). God is not appeased by a sacrifice-we offer to God the first fruits of His creatures. And he then declares, that they are not common bread and wine, but composed of two things, the earthly and heavenly. Now that superstition as to ordinances sprang up rapidly in the church, I not only admit but insist on. But God not being appeased by a sacrifice, offering the first fruits of His creatures, and the Eucharist being composed of two things, sets aside the Mass and transubstantiation too. The conclusion Irenaeus draws from it is, that our bodies, being nourished by it, will rise. But the notion of a propitiatory sacrifice in the Mass is not to be traced in him or in Justin. From this last Father I must quote another passage which is positive to this purpose. He quotes the prophet, saying, God would not receive the sacrifices of the Israelites dwelling in Jerusalem, but did accept the prayers of the dispersed, and calls these prayers sacrifices. He had declared that God accepted no sacrifices but from His priests, and that Christians were the true priestly race, as God declared, referring to Malachi's prophecy, and that they offer the sacrifices in His name which Christ taught them-the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Then, after saying the prayers of the dispersion were agreeable when the sacrifices at Jerusalem were not, he adds, God accepts and calls their prayers sacrifices. When therefore prayers and thanksgivings are made by those worthy, I also say, they are the only perfect and acceptable ones to God. For these alone also Christians have received to offer (poiein), and in memory of them dry and moist nourishment wherein also are commemorated the sufferings which God suffered by God Himself. The last phrase is of a singular structure (en e kai you pathous o peponthe di autou o theos you theou memnetai).7 But it does not affect our question. If the Eucharist were a propitiatory sacrifice in which Christ Himself, " His bones and sinews," is offered by Himself, it is impossible Justin could thus speak of it. All Christians, priests; bread and wine the things offered; prayers and thanksgivings, the only true sacrifices acceptable to God, and in the Eucharist a commemoration of the sufferings which Christ suffered: no one who believed in the doctrine of the Mass could write thus. All Christians priests to offer bread and wine; then prayers and thanksgivings offered the only true and acceptable sacrifices; and these prayers God calls sacrifices. He is applying Malachi's prophecy. The sacrifices of blood in Jerusalem God had not accepted, but their prayers and thanksgivings He did, and so of those offered by Christians at the thanksgiving of bread and the cup (epi to Eicharistia). These statements of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus do not agree with the doctrine of the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice-could not have been used if that had been believed.

Cyprian affords us little help. He uses sacrifice for what the people bring as gifts. (De Of. et El. Pearson, 204.) He says they offered sacrifices for martyrs after their death (seemingly an allusion to heathen celebrations), and in a letter to Caecilius showing that there must be wine, not merely water. It does not seems to be His blood, he says, if it be water, and wine be wanting; he refers to Psalm Ito, and says, Who is so great a priest of the Most High as our Lord Jesus Christ who offered a sacrifice to God the Father, and offered the same that Melchisedec had offered, that is, bread and wine, namely, His body and blood. Here then is no reference to the Eucharist, but to what Christ offered. And, again, Nor is anything else done by us than what the Lord before did for us, that the cup which is offered in commemoration of Him is offered

mixed with wine. No trace of any propitiatory offering, nor even of transubstantiation. (Ep. to Caecil.: 64. Pearson, 148, 9.)

As to Tertullian, whom Cyprian owned as his master, he knows nothing of such sacrifices as the Mass. In his treatise against the Jews (5), in his book against Marcion (3, 22; 4, 1), in the last referring as all do to Malachi, he insists that it is by praise, simple prayer out of a pure heart, spiritual sacrifices, that Christian and true sacrifice is offered to God, and that in contrast with any external carnal sacrifice. So to Scapula he answers the charge of not sacrificing for the Emperor, that they did it as God had commanded them to sacrifice with a pure prayer to their God and his.

I will only quote one more, because he comes considerably later-Eusebius. Wherever the Fathers are speaking of the contrast of heathenism or Judaism with Christianity, they reject the material sacrifices of blood and incense, and insist on what is spiritual. Eusebius, in doing this, and after largely insisting on Christ's sufferings and being made a curse, and quoting Moses and the apostle in the Galatians, and that He thus offered to His Father for our salvation a wonderful sacrifice and most excellent victim, adds, " He instituted a commemoration for us to be offered instead of a sacrifice to be offered to God continually," mnemes anti thusias to theo dienekos prospherein, and subsequently, after quoting Malachi, as usual, states that Christians offer sweet incense and sacrifice to God, but in a new way, according to the new covenant, prayers, hymns, selfconsecration in holiness, quoting the Old Testament to prove they were better taught as they were, that they were more grateful to God than a great number of victims with blood and smoke and odor of fat, repeatedly saying it was a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice which He had instituted. The passage is too long to quote. It is found in Dem. Ev. lib. 1, at the end (p. 38-40, Paris ed. 1628).

Now I do not quote these Fathers to prove any point of doctrine whatever; I would not do so for any consideration. We must have what was from the beginning, the word of God. I quote them to show that the assertion that the Fathers held the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice is historically not true. But I will now also refer to a proof of the use of sacrifice applied to what the people brought which may seem strange-the Canon of the Mass which originates with the great pope Gregory, famous in such matters. You will see from it at once, that the offering of the people before the service is called ' offering ' and ' victim ' even, as we have seen it called ' offering' in the Fathers, and the bread and wine called creatures' after consecration, as they also do.

The priest with various rubrical directions begins by begging the Father that He will " accept and bless these gifts, these offerings (munera), these holy pure sacrifices which in the first place we offer to thee for thy holy Catholic church," etc. Then for the living-naming the objects of the Mass, and all who stand around, etc.-" for whom we offer to thee, or who offer to thee this sacrifice of praise for themselves, and all theirs for the redemption of their souls for the hope of salvation," etc. And further on: " this oblation of our service, but also of all thy family, we beseech thee, O Lord, that appeased thou mayest receive and dispose our days in peace, and snatch us from eternal damnation," etc. Then, " which oblation, O God, we beseech thee, thou mayest deign in all things to make blessed, imputed (adscriptum), sanctioned, reasonable, acceptable: [he makes the sign of the cross once on the victim (hostiam) and once on the cup], that it may become to us the body and blood of thy most beloved Son! " And then follows the prayer of consecration and the consecrating words, " This is my body," but as recited or said by Christ at the time of institution. And then the cup.

Thus we have the clear testimony that what are called gifts, oblations, and so offered and in the Rubric or direction to the priest, victim (hostia) is so called before it is consecrated, and the offering of the people (omnium circumstantium) referred to; and it is called, as by the Fathers, a sacrifice of praise. Further, after consecration, it is said, " Whence, O Lord, remembering the passion, resurrection, and glorious ascension into heaven of Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, we thy servants offer to thy illustrious Majesty of thy gifts and bestowings a pure victim, a holy victim, an immaculate victim, the holy bread of eternal life, and the cup of perpetual salvation." Then, " on which deign to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and accept, as thou deignedst to accept the gifts of thy righteous servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and the holy sacrifice, the immaculate victim, which thy high priest Melchisedec offered to thee." Then he prays that the offerings may be carried by the hands of God's holy angel to the altar on high, etc., and at the close: " by whom (our Lord Christ), thou, O Lord, ever createst, sanctifiest, vivifiest, blessest, and bestowest on us all these good things." And in saying this he makes at each of the three last words the sign of the cross on the host (hostiam) and the cup. Now the elements are positively called bread and the cup after consecration, and I ask if they really believed that it was Christ offering Himself, could they pray that God would deign to accept it as a pure and immaculate victim, and deign to look on it with a propitious and serene countenance as He had deigned to accept Abel's sacrifice? Could a believer thus speak of the acceptance of Christ's sacrifice when He offered Himself, or is it still in question? And further, at the end speaking of the host and cup, he says that God by Christ creates, sanctifies, vivifies, blesses and gives us all these good things, clearly holding the bread and wine still as creatures given of God.

The ancient form which is all confusion by the growing superstition which made the elements after consecration to be Christ's body and blood, but preserved the forms which treated them as bread and wine and as offered by the people,8 is turned into blasphemy by using language quite appropriate as applied to God's creatures created by Jesus Christ as if it referred to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. God by Jesus Christ creates, sanctifies, vivifies, blesses and gives to us all these things. Can that apply to Christ Himself? Yet, according to the modern doctrine of the Mass, nothing else is there. The preservation of the old form which treats them as bread and wine still shows the modern doctrine to be as modern as it is false.

It is evident that the Roman Canon of the Mass bears tokens of an earlier doctrine and usage on the subject, inasmuch as before consecration the priest offers it for the holy Catholic church; then speaks, in the commemoration for the living, of sacrifice of praise; and then, after the commemoration of the dead saints, prays that the Lord appeased may accept the oblation, and that He would deign to make it blessed and acceptable, that it may become to them the body and blood of His most beloved Son. Then he recites Christ's act and words, " for this is my body," and then adores the host, then consecrates the cup adding several words to what Christ said, and adores it, and then offers the host, but calling it God's gift- de tuffs donis et datis, and then, strange to say, begs God may deign to regard it with a propitious and serene countenance, and accept it as God did Abel's, which, if they believed it to be really Christ, would be nonsense or a blasphemy; and then prays that it may be carried by the hand of God's holy angel to His altar on high in sight of His divine Majesty.

But there is more than this, though this still shows marks of the corruption of a more ancient system which did not view the offerings in the same light. The Roman Mass stands alone among all liturgies. None attributes the transubstantiation, or whatever it is called, for the word though now used and the doctrine generally believed is not a formal doctrine of the Eastern creed, nor the word acknowledged in their symbols, indeed it seems many still reject the doctrine-we can speak of that when we come to the question; but the Canon, so-called, of all other masses or liturgies is wholly different in principle. What they hold to be the consecrating words are entirely absent from the Roman

Mass, and approach nearer to more ancient doctrine. The Greeks say it is absurd to suppose that the mere recital of Christ's words as spoken by Him can make the change-that there must be a positive looking to God to do it. So that after saying, " Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you, and distributed for the remission of sins," and " this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins," and subsequently saying, " In behalf of all and for all we offer thee thine own of thine own," and in that called of St. James, " We offer thee, O Lord, this tremendous and unbloody sacrifice "-they pray God to " send down the Holy Ghost... and make this bread the precious body of thy Christ... and that which is in the cup the precious blood of thy Christ, changing them by the Holy Ghost, so that they may be," etc.

I have chiefly copied St. Chrysostom's, so-called, but all are substantially alike. The change is professedly made by the invocation of the Holy Ghost, not by the words of institution, which have been already pronounced when they pray it may be changed. This invocation, which is found in all liturgies, is wholly absent from the Roman Mass.

It is sorrowful to think of the degradation to which, by the superstition of east and west, the blessed commemoration of the Lord's precious sacrifice has been reduced. In the modern service in Russia they prepare the bread and wine in a side chamber and on a separate table. They have a loaf or loaves, and a spear with a cross generally at the handle; the loaves are prepared with a certain seal or stamp upon them; the priest thrusts the spear into the right side of the seal, saying, " He was led as a lamb to the slaughter "; then into the upper part and into the lower with other words; then into the right side, saying, " For his life is taken from the earth "; then the deacon turning the loaf up says, " Slay, sir," and he slays it crosswise, saying, " The Lamb of God is slain "; then again turning it on the upper side, reciting what the soldier did; then mixes the water and wine, reciting John's account of the blood and water coming out of His side. Thus the elements are prepared; then with a procession they are carried to the altar; and the rest of the service already alluded to-invoking the Holy Ghost to make it Christ's body-goes on. They have no difficulty at any rate where to find the slaying of the victim, and at least have it accomplished before the memory of it is celebrated. For if it be a now living Christ, the slaying Him afterward by the priests eating the consecrated host, as Bellarmine states, is a perfect monstrosity. How either, degrading and degraded as it all is, can be called worshipping " in spirit and in truth," is hard for any to understand. But in the Greek form the whole must be taken as a shadow, for the Christ they thus profess to slay in figure is not yet, by the epiklesis, or invocation of the Holy Ghost, trans-elemented into the body of Christ. But how poor, when spirituality is gone, is the effort to work up by superstition some forms of imitative service!

D. But this is not the Catholic service.

N-. No, it is not. There it is done by chewing it in the priest's mouth. While deepening the darkness of superstition where blindly followed, it produces disgust and irreverence where it is honestly inquired into: as to spirituality of thought or worship, that I cannot say it has destroyed, it has no pretension to it.

R. I do not deny I am perplexed. It is clear the principles of the Roman Canon, and the more ancient ones of St. Chrysostom and St. James, are essentially different; the absence of the invocation of the Holy Ghost, whatever its effect, and which it cannot be denied was of very early date, is a very serious point. I am not of course a Greek and always took for granted they were wrong and schismatic, but thought that on this point they were substantially the same as we were, and so Roman Catholic writers declare and Dr. Milner would make us believe; but there is force in the objection of the Greeks, that the recital of the words of Christ can hardly operate such a change. And, as I have said, the invocation was ancient. But long habit and religious authority are hard to break with, and it is a solemnizing thought that we receive Christ.

N-. If it was His dwelling in the heart by faith, feeding on Him spiritually, nothing more precious or important: but I cannot think the mere physical receiving what is material can add anything to what is spiritual. His words are spirit and life. But this we must look further into in speaking of transubstantiation, though it is hard to separate the two subjects.

R. Yes; they run into one another.

Bill M. But is all this pretended slaying of Christ before all the people, sir, among the Greeks?

N-. No, that goes on in a kind of side chapel. It is shown to the people when it has been consecrated on the great altar, as it is after consecration in the Roman Mass, as you know. And masses can be said without their being there at all.

James. Well, I certainly had not a thought of such unholy acting like a play. I do not know which is worst, Greek or Roman, but I am sure neither of them is of God. There is nothing of the simplicity that is in Christ. And it is quite clear that a real living Christ, glorified now, cannot even in a figure be sacrificed.

D. But allow me to repeat, Mr. N., that the Greek service (which I admit, though originally more simple and pure, is stuffed with a vast deal of unprofitable dialog and ceremonies) is not the Roman Mass.

N-. Quite true; I do not adduce it, of course, as such, but it-and not the Greek only, but all other liturgies, and they are more ancient than the Roman Mass-condemns the Roman Mass in the very essence of its doctrine and structure. The words of Christ at the institution of the last supper do not, according to these liturgies, transubstantiate the bread and wine; that is subsequently sought in the invocation of the Holy Ghost. And you must remark here, that I am not setting one liturgy against another as better or worse one than another. What I say is, that all the ancient liturgies, called by the names of St. James, St. Mark, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and others derived from them, all entirely condemn the Canon of the Roman Mass; so that, if these are right, that is, the universal liturgical tradition-and there is little doubt that these in some form or other were the origin of the Roman liturgy itself- there has never been a really consecrated host in any Roman Catholic Mass at all. If transubstantiation were true, there has been none, no true body and blood of Christ.

R. What do you mean? what a strange statement!

N-. It is very simple. That to which all ancient liturgical services attribute the consecration and change in the elements is not in the Roman service at all: the invocation of the Holy Ghost. And Rome is quite aware of this, for, when she has won some who had these ancient liturgies, she has changed her services. The Maronite service I do not know; but for the Abyssinians and Armenians, she has changed them, and not gained much that I see after all. She has retained the invocation of the Holy Ghost for them-I suppose not to scandalize them, and in the Abyssinian has added ' consecrated.' Instead of saying, ' make this bread the body of Christ,' she says, ' make this consecrated bread the

body of Christ.' But this makes the matter worse, because it is avowing that what she calls consecrating, all she has in her own Mass, leaves the bread still not the body of Christ. It has still to be made so, so that in her service it is never made so at all. In the Armenian she has been a little bolder, and, instead of ' make this bread the body,' says, make this bread, to wit (videlicet) the body of Christ to be,' etc., for blessing, that is, to the communicants. But further, this change by the invocation of the Spirit is according to patristic tradition also, though the Father's use of it denies transubstantiation altogether. We have seen Irenmus declaring that after the invocation there were two things, earthly and heavenly, denying positively transubstantiation, but making the change he did believe in, the consequence of the invocation. I rest my faith wholly on Scripture, but the antiquity you so rest in, in its ancient liturgical services, condemns this Roman Mass. If we are to believe Gregory the Great, the only prayer at consecration was the Lord's prayer. The Roman Catholic commentators seek to get rid of this, but so he says.9

R. It is very perplexing, and tends to make one doubt of everything.

N-. To doubt of what rests on tradition, but it does not touch what was from the beginning, the inspired word of God able to make us wise unto salvation. There we have divine authority and divine certainty, the truth itself, not human traditions. It is a common effect of gross superstition connected with the profession of Christianity, and all taken as true together, that when the falseness and absurdity of the superstition, of what man has added, is seen, all is rejected together. Infidelity is its natural fruit when the mind begins to work. The word has never had its just authority, and men do not separate what is human and divine. Without the word man believes as he has been taught, that Jesus is God, and that the wafer is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. He finds the latter a delusion and, not resting on the word which teaches one and not the other, but as to both alike on human tradition, he throws up both and is an infidel.

When we examine the question of transubstantiation, we shall see that the most famous doctors of the church denied that doctrine five centuries later, and that it was never settled as a defined doctrine till 1215, nine centuries later, so that the Mass was impossible. For if the element be not really the body of Christ, such a sacrifice is impossible. I rest on what is said in Heb. 9 and 10, which chapters not only teach what is inconsistent with it, but formally contradict it in every part. That Christianity has a sacrifice is a fundamental truth, but that Epistle teaches that it was one, only one, offered once for all upon the cross, never to be repeated, and its not being so repeated essential to its nature and value.

Bill M. Well, what do you say, Mr. R.? For me I confess it is plain enough that, if there was to be no more sacrifice for sins, the Mass cannot be true. What made me like it was that there was forgiveness and a present offering one could think of as offered when we were uneasy in our consciences. But I see God will have us not get our consciences made easy from time to time; but come to Christ and have all we are and have done manifested in God's sight, and be reconciled to Him through that one sacrifice Christ has made of Himself in wonderful grace on the cross. It goes a deal deeper into one's soul in the conviction of sin. Of the peace that follows I cannot say much yet, but I see the word of God speaks of it plain enough, and I hope I will find it; but I know that sin is a very different thing when you have to bring it all out before God, and get cleansed there, and when you get your conscience quieted by absolution and receiving at the Mass. It is another thing to be a sinner before God.

James. What to me is so dreadful is that the blessed efficacy of Christ's sacrifice is set aside-that which was done once for all at such infinite cost and suffering to Himself, the dreadful cup He had to drink, and the truth that it is done and finished once for all, and accepted of God, so that He sits at God's right hand when He had made purification for our sins and obtained eternal redemption. They may talk about its being the same sacrifice repeated; but then it is not finished and complete; something more is needed to put away sins. To have a sacrifice for sins still is to say the whole work is not finished on the cross; and it unsettles too all our peace before God. And Christ cannot suffer now. It denies the efficacy of the cross and Christ's glory in it, and the sure foundation of our peace and rest, and God's glory too, for all is still unfinished. And what is said in the Hebrews is plain enough. I wonder how persons calling themselves Christians could dare to go so plainly against God's word.

D. You seem to make nothing of the teaching of the church, but take your own crude and rash opinions as a warrant for a dangerous self-confidence.

James. Excuse me, sir. I do not take up any opinion at all. I trust God's word as the truth through grace. An opinion is brought to me which contradicts it, and I do not receive it. As to confidence, such grace as was shown in the gift of God's blessed Son does give confidence in God, and the work of Christ when believed in, gives peace to the conscience. Confidence in myself would, I know, be as wrong as it would be foolish and dangerous; but it is not in myself, but in God's love and His word, and the work that Christ has accomplished. Will you forgive a poor man if he asks you humbly, Have you got this peace? " He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

D. I am not accustomed to give an account of my own feelings. The privileges and graces given to the church, I know, are very great, and so wonderful that I feel it presumptuous to appropriate them to myself; but I trust, being found within her pale, I shall have the benefit of the grace conferred upon her through His sacraments and the promises made to her. God alone knows how far we have profited by them, and the day of judgment will make all manifest.

N-. But this is an unhappy state of uncertainty, Mr. D. How can you invite others to come to Christ and they shall have rest, when you have not rest yourself? Either (and God forbid such a thought!) what Christ has said is not true, or you have never come to Him. And Scripture is quite plain, saying, " We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, crying, Abba Father." The Spirit of adoption, which is the practical condition of the Christian, cannot exist if I do not know I am a child. In your state you cannot say, Abba Father. I speak only from what you say yourself. " I write unto you, little children," says the apostle John, " because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."

D. What do you mean? that I cannot preach the truth if I am not sure of my salvation?

N-. You cannot preach the gospel as Scripture presents it, and the Lord Himself. You may repeat the words, but you can announce the gospel with no personal consciousness that it is true, so as to preach it yourself with conviction, so as to have truth and heart in your preaching.

D. But I am not preaching to heathens, but to Christians.

N-. I admit the difference, and in some respects important difference; but they, or at any rate the mass of them, and yourself too, have not peace, have not the rest of heart and conscience which Christ promises. Neither you nor they are where the gospel sets a man, where it has

put James, and, thank God, many others who have found what Paul declares to be true, " Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access into this grace [or favor], wherein we stand." Besides, let me ask you, Can the church answer for you in the last day?

D. No; but in following her directions, I shall be able to do so.

N-. Have you followed her directions hitherto?

D. Well, we follow badly the blessed guidance that is for us; still I have as far as I could, faithfully done so, and hope to be able to do so.

N-. And if you were taken away now, you do not know if you would be accepted or not; and when once you leave this, the church can do no more. It has not given you peace, and purged your conscience here, and cannot answer for you there. Conscience must be individual, pardon must be individual, a new life must be individual. Each one must give an account of himself to God individually; and a church and its system which quiets the conscience here, but gives no peace, nor purges it, and cannot answer for us there, is a poor substitute for the perfect and ever-subsisting efficacy of Christ's one sacrifice, by which the believing soul born of God has peace and constant peace. The conscience, really purged before God, and receiving the Holy Ghost, walks in joy, possessing a power in a living Christ, which destroys the dominion of sin. Do not suppose I think the true doctrine as to the church of no moment. It is most blessed and important; but the word of God always puts the individual relationship with God and the Father first, and then the truth as to the church after; because my personal relationship with God must be settled, bringing me into the privilege of a son, before I enter on our union with Christ, or God's ways in dwelling in the assembly by the Holy Ghost. And your doctrine of the Mass sets aside the full abiding efficacy of Christ's blood, hides the love of God, brings uncertainty into the conscience, and fear into the heart; denies the most precious truth of God, and just gives the carnal mind quietness from time to time, without being really turned to God, leaving the heart practically in the world where it was; takes peace from the believer, and gives a quiet conscience to the unbeliever in heart, who has no thought of walking with God. I do not seek to use hard words, but Masses, as you have acknowledged, are really blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.. There is no sacrifice of Christ but one, and once for all.

R. I do not complain of your language, because I know it is only a quotation from the Articles of the Established Church. But do you not think this confidence you speak of is dangerous? Does it not tend to destroy humility?

N-. We spoke a little of that already; still it is so common an objection that I still reply. I know your teachers do and must object to it.. It would take the whole matter out of their hands; people would not want them. But a vast body of Protestants too resist it.

But I take the matter up broadly, and say, The scripture never recognizes a person uncertain of his salvation as in a Christian state. Certainty or uncertainty has nothing to do with humility. If it be uncertain whether a child be really the child of his parent, this has nothing to do with his humility; he may not have the shadow of a question as to his being such, and be a humble obedient child. But true divinely given certainty brings us into the place of humility, because, where real, it brings us into the presence of God through the rent veil of Christ's sufferings to walk in the light as God is in the light. There we feel our own utter nothingness, how far we are from having reached the mark; and all is seen in that light. Yet we have confidence, because grace has brought us there, and we know God is love and loves us infinitely. It is said, the love wherewith He loves Jesus, and that He accepts us because of, and by, and according to, the value of the perfect work of Jesus, who appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Through His offering we have no more conscience of sins-perfected forever as to acceptance by His one offering. The Lord has given us the picture of this uncertain state in the prodigal son. When he had not yet met his father, though his 'heart was turned by grace towards him, he says, " Make me as one of thy hired servants." There was no certainty or enjoyment of the relationship. When he met his father, there was no such word uttered. What his father was to him was known because he had met him; the thought of being treated as a servant only proved he had not met him yet. There is a new nature in him who is born of God which loves holiness, but there is no true development of holy affections until we are at peace with God. And the Mass denies the ground of our relationship with Him, the holy and righteous God, and the true scripturally revealed value of Christ's work.

R. Well, Mr. N., you have given me something to think of. I see some have a peace I have not. I do not profess to be convinced, but certainly Heb. 9 and to, to a plain mind make the doctrine of the Mass extremely difficult to receive. But Protestants I meet have not that peace which such a statement, if believed, would seem to give. I do not mean now careless men of the world, but serious men. It is a serious thing to give up the doctrine and authority of the church. But I have got subjects for inquiry.

N-. Be assured, dear sir, in looking to the Lord, He will give you light and understanding; only give His word its just authority, I entreat you. We own it all, you as well as we, as God's word; and let men say or claim what they may, if God has spoken, we are responsible to hear and bow to what He says. He, though patient in grace, will hold us responsible for it when fie judges the secrets of men's hearts, when no priest or church will be of any avail.

R. But we are taught to bow to and avail ourselves of them here.

N-. But they cannot answer for you there; and if God has certainly spoken, and in grace too, we are bound to hear. It is true that multitudes of Protestant Christians have not, nay reject that peace; but I do not ask you to listen to them, but to the word of God itself.

R. We have not touched on transubstantiation yet, which is indeed closely connected with our present subject; and I have been sufficiently interested in what has passed to be glad to enter on that too if it were possible. I really desire to know the truth.

N-. I do not doubt it in the least. I think our friends here who first led us into all these questions desire to hear it too; and I dare say James will still let us make his house our place of meeting.

James: With pleasure, sir, and much obliged to you for coming: and Bill M. of course may be here, and will, I know, wish it.

N-. Well, then, it is understood.

R. I-will now then say, Good evening: and we are much obliged to James for his kindly receiving us.

James. It is quite a pleasure to me. Good evening, sir.

R. Mr. D. I suppose, is coining. I wish you all good evening. Good evening, sir.

Bill M. I see more into all than ever I did, and what true Christianity is-how Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. But I dare not say much yet:

N-. Carry it all to the Lord, M. There it will all be clear with Him.

Bill M. But many pious people do not see all this clear. I did not see it at all, or so understand it, for I was not pious before I turned Roman Catholic. But I did not hear of it either.

N-. No, as Mr. R. said, many, even pious, Protestants do not at all see the holy place where grace has set them. Hence too, they are so mixed up with the world. But, thank God, it is clear in the word: only divine teaching must be there to possess it really. But now I too must say, Good evening. James and Bill M. Good evening, sir.

Bill M. Well, Jim, what do you say to all we have heard? What I think I feel most is, how awfully I was in the dark, and how sad to think how little the true love of God and work of Christ is known and preached! And glad I am to have heard what I have. I think it is over with the Mass, and all that belongs to it, for me.

James. Well, Bill, I am thankful more than I can tell you, having found peace with God and the salvation of His grace, and surely sovereign grace to me, has brought; thankful too, to have escaped the snare I was just falling into. And it is such a comfort too in the house, and my missus was sorely tried about it. And now we can get on happily together, and look to God together for the children. I do not mind so much now about the rest, because I am all clear myself, but glad to hear.

Bill M. I do not so much mind either; but then it is a great thing with the Catholics, and very hard to get them out of it, because they think it is the very body and blood of Christ; and when they receive, that they receive that, and that they are all perfect-like. So I shall be glad to hear. But now, Good night.

Letters 1, Communion With God; Peace in World Confusion; Revivals; Grace and Legality in Service; Weariness in Service; the World and the Christian

I HAVE owed you a letter for a very long time, my very dear brother, and have thought of writing, but being continually traveling, at conferences, and pressed by chamber work, your letter has remained among the unanswered ones. At length I take up my pen, and be assured that my silence has not been from want of good-will or of interest, for indeed your letter interested me much, as news of the brethren always does.

My stay of two or three days here, after a conference, gives me a little time to answer you. I know something of the "dolce far"—but of the "dolce far niente"—little comes to me. Still there is rest in God, and we do not fail to enjoy it, and there one has nothing to do but to enjoy; this gives strength, too, for work.... Be of good courage, dear brother; in God's appointed time we shall reap, if we faint not, for His strength is made perfect in weakness. Our brethren at—have a good deal of independence, but I have always found that with a little affection one could make one's way happily with them. One could wish that there were a little more order sometimes; but there is a good foundation. However, it is Jesus who can do all, and His grace that does it.

... In connection with your work, dear brother, seek the Lord's face and lean on Him. When the body is not robust one is in danger of doing it as a task, as an obligation, and the spirit becomes a little legal; or one yields to weariness, and is discouraged before God. Work is a favor which is granted us. Be quite peaceful and happy in the sense of grace; then go and pour out that peace to souls. This is true service, from which one returns very weary, it may be, in body, but sustained and happy; one rests beneath God's wings, and takes up the service again till the true rest comes. Our strength is renewed like the eagle's. Ever remember, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." May communion with God be your chief concern, and the sweet relationships in which we are placed with Him. All is well when we walk in them; then we discern and judge everything, day by day, which hinders communion, and so the heart does not become hard nor the conscience blunted, and we readily enjoy those communications of grace which give strength. Yes, seek, above all, personal communion with the Lord.

As to your Italy; truly, dear brother, everything is very dark, and not for Italy alone, but for the whole earth. The world will soon no longer be enough for the ambition of man; but that will be checked by Him who has the right to do it. England, hitherto so prosperous, is in difficulty, like all the other countries. American affairs tend to her destruction; with France it is still more so; and also in Austria, Poland, and Turkey. Here the artisans are out of work. Then enormous preparations for war are being made everywhere. What a small thing is the wisdom of man! But what of that? The Lord is coming, and we belong to heaven. In the church there is neither Greek, barbarian, nor Scythian. We are Christ's servants, sure of our Master's victory, a victory which will give peace to the whole world; meanwhile—in the place where He has set us, witnesses to the peace which God gives even now. The love and grace of God which set us in close connection with heaven, fill our hearts, and we know how to carry to distracted and suffering souls that calm and peace which nothing in this world can destroy. We are not of the world, as Jesus was not of the world. Our life comes down from heaven and returns thither as to its source. Abide there, dear brother. It may be that in the world we shall have tribulation, but there is One who has overcome the world. May God in His grace keep all the brethren in this mind, so that at the least some may know how to bear the impress of peace upon their faces, because it reigns in their hearts, in the midst of this world of trouble and care for so many. Everything that comes to pass, comes to pass under God's hand; not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him; He forgets nothing, nothing escapes Him. Then, too, the Lord is coming. Oh that His children thought of this!

I believe that this truth has more practical power in the hearts of our brethren in England; God be praised for it. Conversions are still frequent, the meetings increase, and fresh ones are formed; there is a little more devotedness, and, I think, a good spirit and unity. There are some meetings which are ten times more numerous than they were last year, and others twice as numerous; and though there is more activity, and there was a time of peril for some who were in danger of being drawn into the current of the Revival, I believe the principles of brethren are dearer than ever to them. There is much which is superficial in this revival; more here than in Ireland, but many true conversions besides.

Your very affectionate brother.

Elberfeld,

October 30th, 1861.

Helplessness, Helplessness

“My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

My faith looks up to claim that touch divine,Which robs me of this fatal strength of mine,And leaves me resting wholly, Lord, on Thine.

Yes, make me such an one as Thou canst bless,Meet for Thy use through very helplessness;Thine, only Thine, the glory of success.

The path of strength . . . is the being made sensible of our own weakness, so that divine strength, which will never be a supplement of flesh’s strength, may come in.

That self should feel itself nothing . . . is a most divine work.

Where shall we find strength for practical separation to God, unless in God Himself?

The nothingness and incompetency of all flesh must be felt where it would be disposed to think itself competent. It must find its pretensions arrested and set aside when it has . . . such; it must find itself consciously weak where it might hope to be strong or capable of something. As to what self would lean on, it must find itself a hindering flesh where it would pretend to be a helping one. . . . We must be humbled when we are not humble or in danger of not being so.

Our very helplessness is our resource. We find that God Himself must come in because we can do nothing.

We need God’s power to be little.

He refreshes the spirit and raises above weakness and pain. . . . Think much on Jesus (I do not mean as if you could think much in your weak state, but looking to Him), and lean on Him as a sick child lies in its mother’s arms, because it has no strength — not because it can do much.

It is a great deal . . . to get the knowledge of self — one’s total want of strength . . . to know enough of “I” to be glad to get rid of it. This is the process of Romans 7. Peace by progress . . . so as to be content with self is found to be impossible. . . . In the following chapter the way of deliverance is unfolded. Here only the Deliverer is named, and the truth is brought out that the deliverance is complete and immediate, and only thankfulness remains for us. . . . “I thank God”: a deep and wonderful change . . . the soul occupied with God instead of self and occupied with Him in thanksgiving.

How hard it is to receive that the work of God and of His Christ is always in weakness! The rulers of the people saw in Peter and John unlearned and ignorant men. . . . The thorn in the flesh made Paul despised, and he conceived it would be better if that were gone. . . . It is God’s rule of action, if we may so say, to choose weak things. Everything must rest on God’s power; otherwise God’s work cannot be done according to His mind. . . . For the work of God we must be weak, that the strength may be of God, and that work will last when all the earth shall be moved away.

I am accused of letting things take their own course too much. Still, it seems to me that I trust in God that the work is His own. If I can help in that work, it is a favor which He confers on me, but I think that often, when we wish to guide and govern too much, faith is wanting.

H

Letters 2, Discipline Not Merely for Restoration; Separation Because of Difference of Judgment; Sin in Case of Restoration Not Exposed; Dissent in Cases of Discipline; Sin Before Conversion

Discipline is not merely for restoration, though it be one object. It is to keep the Table pure. It is sometimes a very delicate question to settle whether the individual is so thoroughly restored as that the conscience of the assembly is not engaged, and that specially in a recent case. An old case, where I was thoroughly convinced the person was, I should not bring up, and clearly not where it was before conversion, unless in some special circumstances.... If 'there were serious evidences' against genuine repentance, clearly these few should not have taken it on themselves. There seems to have been effort in this case all through to conceal it—a bad sign. Bringing up evil needlessly is a bad thing, it defiles: but without—at this distance, or hearing those concerned—pretending to judge the case, I confess there seems here to have been, where the consciences of many were engaged, an effort to screen more than to purify. The assembly remains pure, as it has not been engaged in it. If it has cognizance of it, it has to decide if it be satisfied with the report of these four. If not, it must take the case up. Bringing out sin is neither grace nor purity, but slurring it over is not the way of blessing to an assembly.

I copy a letter just sent me, written to a brother at Lyons many years ago. 'In sin is very vague. One who is disciplined for fornication is not engaged in the sin when they excommunicate him. He is always in the sin he has committed until he repents and confesses it. There lies the whole question. If there be a long time since he sinned, and the state of his soul is entirely changed, I should not bring up the sin again. The question is, has he really repented; otherwise, the time that is passed makes no difference, be it two days or two years. If the sin was committed before his conversion, his state is totally changed; if since, then it is that of which the assembly has to judge. If the assembly leaves the sin unjudged when it knows it, it makes itself responsible, and is identified with the evil doer. This 1 and 2 Corinthians shows very clearly, and it seems to me of all importance... to have a firm hand as regards this sin—love towards the sinner surely—seek his restoration; one ought to do so, and there is sometimes failure in this—but the holiness of the table of the Lord must be maintained. To separate because

there is a difference of judgment is to break the unity of the body. If the assembly cannot come to any decision, it is a proof that its spiritual state is bad, and then it is well that all should humble themselves together; but if there be a determination to allow the sin (in any one), God will judge them if they separate.'...

[Date uncertain.]

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 4, Account of the Proceedings at Rawstorne Street

Part 3: The Principles Involved.

AN important general principle yet remains. In page 12 of the "Reasons," we find the following: " It is well known that we have always refused to acknowledge that the scripture recognizes the whole body of assembled saints, as invested with authority and capacity to examine witnesses and debate1 their verdict. This the church does, we believe, through those of its members capacitated by God for such service. It is in the sense just defined, that we have always denied that the congregated church is a deliberative assembly. Thus we have always maintained a testimony against the principles of the dissenters. If therefore from the period of our first gathering together in this place until now, we have steadily and invariably acted on this principle, can it be expected that we should depart from it in this matter? " It is evident this is of all importance.

And first, let me recall the fact, already noticed, that these four persons (who are quietly telling us what they did from the beginning) were not there in the beginning. Mr. S. was not converted till years after; and Mr. B. and Mr. D. joined years after; Mr. C-w earlier, but a considerable time after, and he, for a very long time certainly, did not " addict himself to the ministry." That is quite a new thing. So that " we" may pass with those who know nothing of Plymouth; but with me, who was there before the beginning and at it and after it, their putting themselves in such a place bears a very strange aspect. And there is another thing somewhat strange.

These four were the persons charged, not indeed with the particular points of untruth-but they were involved in all that which was connected with them, led to them, and followed them, and as to which these two charges of honesty were merely collateral. If the reader is not sure of this, I beg him to refer to page 1 of the "Reasons": " The main bulk of the charges affect us as much as they do him "; nay, as to the whole case, they say more," We are, and we wish to be, closely identified with our brother in his present position." They spoke too of the accusations, personal and others, as being made against them all, in their first letter to the four brethren who invited them to the London meeting, which was held in April last; alleging these accusations as a ground for not coming up and joining in it. And the fact is, at the time in which in these "Reasons" they profess to have been inquiring-that is, as we have seen, while the brethren were down at Plymouth to do so-these four appeared before them as associated with Mr. N. If I am not misinformed, he did not and would not appear without them. This inquiry included the charges of untruth. Is it not a little singular that persons, as to the bulk of the things charged, implicated as much as Mr. N.-and, as to all of them, then associated and now closely identified with him- should be the persons who were solemnly to investigate these very charges, so as to bind the church of God that it could not even debate its verdict? And let the reader note who it was that asked them. They state, and Mr. N. confirms it in letters already given, that he did. Everybody knows, that with the exception of certain particular untruths, they were involved as accessories in the charges; nay, as to the letter on which one of the charges was made, one of them, Mr. C-w, had got it written to himself, and got it printed (having been at the April meeting too, of which it gave an account); and Mr. D. declared that he got Mr. Newton to put the addition complained of in the charge as to the other printed letter; and that they had gone down to Mr. R-e's, and had it added while the letter was in the press.

Are not these strange persons to pronounce a verdict on the case, which the church cannot even debate? Would any worldly man recognize such a proceeding? What would an upright worldly man say of those engaged in it? All I can say is, I sorrow to the heart's core for some of them: I trust as a Christian for all. Where was Mr. H.? Where were R-e, S-s, R.H., or other brethren needless to name, who had certainly as much competency as some of them, and even addicted themselves to the ministry?

But now as to the principle. I deny unqualifiedly that such was the method from the beginning; and I was conversant with it a long time before even Mr. Newton himself; who, though there indeed in the vacation and taking part, remained a fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, a considerable time-I cannot be precise as to how long. It is quite true that verdicts were not always, nay, very seldom debated, never debated that I know of. There was most happy confidence in those laboring; and, the Spirit of God working in them and the body happily, their judgment commended itself habitually to the consciences of all; and the cases of discipline were simple. But such a thought never was entertained (I cannot answer for Mr. N.) as imposing a verdict on the body, which it could not debate.

And here I would indeed remark, that Mr. Newton avowed to me, both alone, and as it has been recalled since to me, in the presence of Mr. Edward W-d of Kendal, that his principles were entirely changed as to those very points of ministry, rule, and government.2 How then can those who now adopt his present ones have had those of the body from the beginning? But the fact is, the laboring brethren did habitually inquire, for to them the cases were constantly brought; and they used to meet on Friday; and all this seems very blameless and desirable. But they always communicated the result of their inquiries to the body, and their convictions, or the conclusion they came to; but as to imposing it as an undebatable verdict, it is wholly false.

I remember two cases of discipline. In one, a brother rose, and said he thought there had not been proper inquiry, and that there was a feeling against the person. The brother who communicated the case said, he thought the brother who rose could hardly be acquainted with the facts and say so. The latter at once felt himself alone in the meeting (as indeed, the case was a dreadful one, and most patiently investigated), and he sat down at once. In another case, a godly grave brother said, there was a want of clear information on one part of the case, or a deficiency of it, which could be supplied, and the case was suspended and nothing done. I repeat, the imposition of a verdict was never thought of. General acquiescence was true in fact; and it is happy when it is so. Indeed, most cases are known and simple, and have only to be communicated to the body, and there can be no question with any, if they believe the testimony of those who have taken it up. At Plymouth, those who labored had confidence in the Lord, and in the body, and acted towards it with confidence, and hence the body had confidence in them. That this may have been abused by Mr. N. to the assumption of unscriptural authority, when he had driven away tTie counterpoise of others, is very likely, and, to my mind, an undoubted fact.

Further, I recognize that guides, elders if you please in principle, can inform and clear up the consciences of a body of Christians. No doubt, if by reason of use they have their senses exercised to discern good and evil, and are deeply acquainted with God's ways in the scriptures and with the human heart, it is just their service in such case, and, I believe, God's order; and saints will be always thankful for it, as far as I have seen. One may have spiritual discernment to suggest what all may have spirituality enough to see is right when suggested, but never would themselves have thought of. An engineer makes a road of which every wagoner understands as well as he the goodness when it is made, though he could not have made it. But it is by no means necessarily a teacher that does this. I know brethren who never teach, whose spiritual judgment I would far rather have than that of any teachers I know. It used to be the effort, I well remember, to insist strongly against the absorption of all gift into the teacher and teaching, as may be seen in the " Christian Witness "-a book Mr. N. justly designated for his purposes the most mischievous book that ever was written. But to impose a verdict which cannot be debated is the most monstrous thing that ever was heard of. It is pure unmasked popery-the clergy dictating to the conscience of the church, which can only register and give their weight to its decrees. Is the conscience of the church to be disposed of thus by others, be they ever so wise? A thing may be urged on the church, insisted on; let it be that rebuke be given; but it is always to bring the conscience of the church up to the right level. This Paul did with Corinth, where, note, elders never appear at all; but he never acts for them without it. " You have proved yourselves clear in this matter." This is the principle the apostle goes on. No doubt he could guide and rebuke them too, and tell them that he had judged the case already; but to impose a verdict on their consciences3 they could not debate, not an apostle even attempts. How could that be proving themselves clear? It is monstrous. No one who reads scripture can question, however weak we may be now, that there were guides, leaders, who watched for souls as accountable to do it, men of reputation, and at that time appointed elders. But it is a very different thing to govern, or rule, or guide the church, which is scriptural, and to govern instead of and for the church, which is popish (and this is the claim these principles very distinctly set up), and then call the scriptural principles democracy. And even so the apostle declares he was as a nursing mother with the saints. And the government of the church is not a setting of points right, but of souls right, and therefore nothing is done unless the conscience of the church is carried into the act. It is evident that the apostle did bring the whole church round to separate from evil which he had already judged himself. Had he not done it, the Corinthians would not have been set right at all, they would have remained associated with the incestuous person. Had their consciences not heeded his appeal, he might in the exercise of apostolic authority have used severer means, and come with a rod. But he is anxious to show, that whom they forgave he forgave; and if he forgave, it was for their sakes, so that they might act together, and Satan get no advantage over them by dividing them from him about a point of discipline.4

(* It may be said this is what failed of being done at Plymouth. I have noticed this farther on.)

And now as to the dissenters' principle. I do not doubt many dear conscientious saints, from whom we might learn much, are amongst them. But the principle here alluded to, I believe should be utterly and entirely rejected, for the same reason that I reject that here proposed, namely, that the presence of the Spirit in the body is not owned by it. Among the dissenters they vote, and though there may be happy unanimity, and the Lord guide them, as I doubt not He often may, yet they do vote on the questions, and a majority determines the matter. Now it is quite evident a minority may be the most spiritual. In the case of Corinth all, as far as appears in public, were gone wrong, and allowed, and were puffed up about, evil. A majority, judging as such, cannot be said to have the Holy Ghost guiding them, because they are a majority.5 This is quite manifest. It is a mere human principle, such as the world is obliged to act on, because it has no other way of getting out of its difficulties. But the church of God has. It has the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost. The dissenting principle (for I doubt not in practice they are often guided by the Spirit according to the grace of the gospel), their principle, I say, denied this presence and guidance; they acted on another. The brethren believed this guidance of God could be reckoned upon. Hence they denied the necessity of the other human extreme-the popish one of a clergy settling the matter among themselves, and announcing it publicly, and the church having nothing to do but add its weight by its acts to a decision pronounced by the authority of others, which they were bound to receive implicitly, and as a conclusion arrived at for them, which could not be debated.

The brethren denied the necessity of this alternative. They affirmed that the presence of the Spirit of God was in the church, and that He would guide them in the faithful love of Christ to a right mind; that it might require, especially in the present state of things, patience, humble waiting upon God in the sense of weakness, a working out as in the absence of apostolic power, with fear and trembling; but they believed that it could be because GOD worked in them to will and to do. They did not deny in the least that there were those among them, who through greater spiritual wisdom and maturity could help and guide them in this-it would have been quarreling with their own mercies; nor would they refuse the help and godly assistance of any brother of spiritual attainments and wisdom from elsewhere-it would have been resisting the unity of the Spirit and body, and God's authority in the church, and the common comfort of the saints, the increase of God by what every joint supplied. They might not see clearly all at once, and they would have to wait in any given case; but they believed in the faithfulness of the Lord to guide them. Their being obliged to wait might show them the failure of their own state of conscience in spiritual power and do them good. Now the principle of these Plymouth leaders denies all this. It declares positively and openly here, that this is the alternative, either the dissenting principle of debating, voting, and majorities, or a verdict imposed by the clergy without any debate at all. That is, they entirely deny the guidance of the body by the Holy Ghost-His practical presence there-the very point as to this, which the brethren were called out of God to bear witness to, alike against the dissenting and popish principles.

It is vain for them to say that they do not deny it. We have, not the honest confession of it in terms, it is true, but we have the thing itself, and in their own statement. The guides pass the verdict; the body are to register it without a debate. The judgment of their consciences is in the hands of a self-appointed clergy. I can well suppose this reply to the plain and evident truth as to the state of the case: " We do not deny the presence of the Spirit in the body. But, God having put this office into the hands of those who have addicted themselves to the ministry, the proof of the Spirit being in the body is their submission6 to the judgment of those whom God has placed over them. And thus the verdict is the verdict of the body by the Spirit." This is what is claimed (page 12), " This the church does: it debates its verdict, we believe, through those of its members capacitated by God for such service." Now this is exactly popery. The verdict there is alleged to be the verdict of the church, and the body are called upon [" required "] to act, and do act, as a body upon it. But it is arrived at by the clergy. It is in vain to say that it is presented, on these new principles, to the body when arrived at, which the Roman clergy do not. Even admitting this, the body cannot debate it. In this particular case, in tea-meetings in private,** they were allowed to question Mr. Newton. And this is called in to screen the flagrancy of the principle. The exclusive nature of the meetings is too barefaced to call it the action of the church. Were it so, the principle is wholly abandoned. The church question and examine Mr. Newton; and suppose someone had said, "Well, now we should like to hear the other side too; let us call Mr. Darby, Mr. H., and Mr. R-e, and Mr. S-s." "Oh no," is the answer, " the church cannot hear witnesses, and debate its verdict." Would not any honest man in the world be ashamed to be associated with such a transaction? Would not any spiritual one have revolted against calling such a thing the acting of the church of God, as an insult against God Himself? I have been obliged to notice this,

because otherwise it would have been alleged that it was brought before the saints in the right way. Now, either they were forced to hear one side only, and there was liberty only for that, or they would hear witnesses; and this is what is refused them. Besides, after all, they must not debate their verdict. They must take what is given them. For, supposing that they are dissatisfied with the verdict stated, what can they do? Debate it before they make it theirs? No, this is positively refused. Examine witnesses? No, this is denied them. What then? Submit, or leave.7 The answer will be, " But God is with His church; and He will guide the leaders into a right judgment, and they will only propose clear evident cases." That is, the clergy are not only to be guides but infallible guides, for they have come to the conclusion, which is to be taken to be by the leading of God Himself. If the verdict be undebateable, it certainly ought to be infallible.

Is debate8 to be desired then? It is just this alternative which is denied. The conscience of the church must be satisfied, for it to act for God and before God. If it is not, the conscience of the body is not clear. It may be gracious to do some act not yet done. It may be right, at the suggestion of some, nay, one godly brother, to prosecute the inquiry farther by the persons who originally inquired, as I have seen done at Plymouth. God is in the assembly without having any debate at all. 9The Holy Ghost may there suggest some step not yet thought of, the neglect of which would destroy the weight of the judgment, even if a right one. It is specially when speaking of discipline, and looking to the Lord for producing the unity of mind of two or three, that the Lord says, " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." '

The result was not produced when I was down at Plymouth. Assuming that the evil existed, the conscience of the body was not brought to judge it. This may have been from two causes- want of spiritual power in me in acting on the consciences of the saints, or a denial of the principles on which their consciences could act. Now I do not pretend there was no want of spiritual power in me; I do not doubt there was. But while I concealed for months (till the saints demanded an account from me) the personal charges against Mr. Newton, I brought before the whole body, and pressed on their conscience, what involved the principles and the godly action of the whole body, and which was avowedly required. They would not stir. My having done so was said to be a dissenting principle. I judged therefore, that the principles of the gathering were gone and denied; and I left without saying a word of Mr. N.'s personal evil10 (and this is now unworthily, I think, turned by some to my reproach). Sir A.C. has confirmed, in the plainest manner, the fact that they were denied. Others bore testimony of it then to me, whatever silence they may keep now. Lord C. fully admits it now; and it is at last put beyond all controversy by the printed avowal of the leaders themselves.

Those who have been where I have been lately may have seen, in a very trying case, a body of brethren, without any debate (and yet, when it was felt necessary that every conscience should have full exercise for itself) act in full patience and grace, and defer to the feelings of a very small minority who desired an act11 which (though the judgment of all the rest might have proved greater strength in the Spirit, if it had carried all with it, yet) was rightly deferred to as that feeling existed, and will never be regretted, I believe, by one. Under the circumstances God's guidance was in it, and entire and happy unanimity preserved. They have seen, on a subsequent evening (when, as I undoubtedly judge,12 Satan made a seemingly overpowering effort to upset all they were doing, and hinder, by distracting and speaking them down, their acting on what they had been led to), that the same brethren, after listening to all those who came thus to interrupt them from other places (proving they rejected none), could adhere, as led and guided of God, with firmness to that which they had been led to by Him; and could prove, when thus put to the severest test, with little or nothing really to help them from without, that God's blessed presence in their weakness could give patience and grace, and deference to the weakest within, and resist the noisiest and most clamorous13 from without: nor was there the slightest idea of rejecting the help, and assistance, and spiritual wisdom, of those whose experience and faithfulness they trusted in, but the glad acceptance of it; as such as bore more or less that character acted just in setting the matter before their conscience. I allude (that there may be no mistake) more particularly, though not exclusively, to Mr. D-n here, who, though now at Reading, had labored for years among them, and was now in London, brought up by another in reference to this.14

I have now, in three parts, recorded briefly the facts and correspondence which took place. I have shown that the "Reasons" and "Defense," which were sent up as proving an acquittal of the charges, so as to preclude farther inquiry, do not touch at all, nor treat of, the body of those in the " Narrative," which were in question here:15 the transactions at Plymouth, which they allege as conclusive, not having reference to the greater part of them. I have given, as to those which were investigated at Plymouth, an answer to the defense set up-a thing I could never do before, as it was never printed; and the rather, as the certificate of acquittal given by Mr. R., in his own name and that of Messrs. R-s, M-s, and M., is professedly based entirely on this "Defense," and desires its publication, that others may be satisfied by it, as " affording," they say, " the reasons of our arriving at the conclusion above stated."

You have thus the grounds on which they came to it; and you can judge how far the "Defense" is of any force as to these, the two charges therein treated of. 16The acquittal by these brethren in letters given in the "Reasons," is merely their estimate of the validity of this "Defense," which you have. As to the other charges in the "Narrative," besides these two, no answer is attempted to be given whatever.

I have taken up, lastly, the great principle of church discipline now avowed in a tangible shape. A vast body of facts as to the general course at Plymouth are not entered on here. It would have been repeating the " Narrative." But you have an account, as far as was called for by the "Reasons," of what related to the alleged investigation and acquittal both by the church of God and the brethren from afar, and these are the other grounds alleged to preclude inquiry. It will still be remembered that these relate only to the two charges made and inquired into at Plymouth, and two alleged charges which

I do not admit to be charges at all, and not to any others. I may, in so long a document, drawn up in two or three days, have omitted some point, but I do not think I have any material one. I must leave, to those who read this, the judgment which it becomes them to give upon a document such as the "Reasons," when they have read this examination of it.

Charity demands that I should make this one remark. As regards the individuals (whatever may be demanded as to what I may call official relations), I repeat, I have no doubt that a proper, positive, work of Satan has been going on, with far deeper principles and power than anything that has come out in public evidence even as to sectarianism.17 Under this, I doubt not, whoever the human instrument, conscious or unconscious, may be, those, whom I believe to be beloved children of God, have fallen, and I do not attribute to them as individuals as deliberate acts of sin what they have so done. This makes me more determined in the stand I make-I have no terms with what is going on-but more reluctant, and even to refuse to attribute to them as properly a matter of evil conscience what they have thus been led into.

God, I believe, has directed you, beloved brethren, in London, in acting in clearing yourselves-in acting in the sphere in which you were responsible to Him. There you were bound in love to the saints to act to make a barrier. It may require much spiritual competency to discern between those who are ensnared and those who are guilty in this matter. Many even of the most active instruments have already been delivered. Others may be, and shine out again as dear children, and, I trust, servants of God. We have to wait, and, while decided and faithful in our sphere, not to step beyond it; not in anything to act beyond the light which God has given us for duty, passive or active. There we have to be firm and earnest if called on. I believe people will be blessed according to their decision, and insecure in proportion to their hesitation; though we may hope the help of our God as to such, if it be in humbleness of heart and uprightness.

Further, let us not suppose, if there be such a power of the enemy, that we can cope with it out of the path of duty, and adventuring ourselves under its influence, when God does not call us there. In His ways we have all security against it; it cannot touch us: out of them, we are sure to fall into the temptation as Peter did. Honesty of intention is no security here. I have seen this in Irvingism; I have seen it, I judge, in this case. I distrust the constant desire to get people to Plymouth. I have known scarce one who inquired beyond the first half-hour, or who inquired beyond one side, who had volunteered to do it; though God kept a few little ones brought there unwittingly. If the judgment I have formed of these "Reasons" is just, they must be wicked people, or blinded people. Now I do not believe as to several of them (I speak generally of those more or less active in it), that they are wicked people. I feel certain then that there is a direct influence of the enemy, and I warn solemnly the saints against it. I think I can discern in many cases how and why several have fallen under it. It might seem presumptuous in me to state it, and I refrain, though free to do it when charity calls for it, if permitted for their good. I am sure if I and you, reader, have been spared this, or perhaps worse, it is sovereign grace alone which has kept us; and, perhaps our carelessness has helped on the evil; but God is good and faithful. I am thankful for having the conviction I have stated above, because it enables me to maintain in my heart unhindered love towards several persons whom, otherwise, I really should not know what to think of, and to hope for others too. But it should evidently mike one firmer as to the stand one makes, and one's determination in it. We have all to be thankful for being kept, for very abundant mercy in this matter, and to humble ourselves, and myself above all, for little power in being able to keep out the evil, or to deliver others from it. While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares. Let us look to our God, and He will help us to the end of the sorrow, and restore the fellowship of many who are separated by it. I am sure my feeling is (well may I say it!) that He has been most good to us in it.

I have only to add (while repeating that I dare say inaccuracies of detail may be discovered, as would be to be expected in a narrative reaching over near a year and a half of anxious work) that, after the sifting given by recent circumstances, the "Reasons," the "Defense," and all the rest, I have nothing at all, that I know of, to retract. The only definite attempt to impugn has resulted in distinct confirmation. The "Reasons" would add serious-very serious-ground for additional charges; but these I refrain from making. I think them considerably the worst thing that has yet come out. The reader can, on several points, judge of the matter himself, when he has examined the answer to the "Reasons"; but there are many, if they spoke out, who could answer the detail far more fully than myself.

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