

Acts - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Bible Treasury: Volume 18, Christian Liberty of Preaching and Teaching the Lord Jesus Christ: Part 2

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

Thus far then, in the first case, for speaking in the church. I advocate no system. I mourn over the departure of many of the comely part or parts, however, on which God set comeliness. These passages of the word I take as scriptural evidence that the confining of the edification of the church to nominal office alone has not the scriptures to rest upon. I speak not here of elders or appointed teachers, their value, or the contrary; observing only that grace, and grace alone, should be our standard of valuation, that in the arrangements of the Holy Ghost it is only the gift of God which gives any title to office in the church, or to its claims (nominal office merely as such having no claim upon any one). I speak simply of the one point—the wrongness of a Christian speaking in the church as such. One point—and that is a most important one—in this part of the subject remains to be noticed. If we are reminded of the dangers arising from all teaching, it is admitted at once; for it is admitted that here, if anywhere, mischief would spring up. But looking to scripture, we are not warned against it, upon the ground of its being wrong as regards office, nor because of its effect merely on others. And warning against it is given, as being one of the things in which, as evil will more or less have a tendency to show itself, so the remedy is applied to the spirit from whence it flows. “My brethren, be not many teachers, for so shall ye heap to yourselves greater condemnation.” Here again the warning itself shows that there was no such restriction of office as is now supposed, for thus it would have been, “You have no business to preach at all, for you are not ordained.” But no, the correction was turned to moral profit, not to formal distinction of pre-eminent office.

But the question becomes more important when considered in the second case, viz., as to speaking out of the church, because it precludes the testimony of the gospel by a vast number of persons who may have faithfully borne it to others. Let us inquire into the scriptural facts. In the first place, then, all the Christians preached: “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the word” (Acts 8:4); and those who were scattered were all, except the apostles. Some critics have endeavored to elude this plain passage, by saying that it is only speaking, which one not in office may do. But a reference to the original at once disproves the assertion. It is εὐαγγελιζόμενοι—evangelizing the word; and we read elsewhere that “the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:19, 20). Now, unless all the church were ordained (I think they are to preach, as far as they have ability), here is the simplest case possible, the case in point. The first general preaching of the gospel which the Lord blessed beyond the walls of Jerusalem knew no distinction between ordained and unordained. It had not entered into their minds then that they who knew the glory of Christ were not to speak of it where and how God enabled them. “And the hand of the Lord was with them.”

Paul preached without any other mission than seeing the glory of the Lord and His word; in a synagogue too, and boasts of it.¹ And he gives his reason for Christians preaching elsewhere, as it is written, “I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Cor. 4:13). Apollos preached; “he spake and taught,” “diligently taught the things of the Lord,” and of him it is said that when Paul would have sent him from Ephesus to Corinth, he would not go. Yet so far from being ordained before beginning to preach, he knew only the baptism of John. And Aquila and Priscilla took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of the Lord more perfectly. And then, continuing his labors as before, “he helped them much which had believed;” “and mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scripture that Jesus was the Christ.”

Again, at Rome, many of the brethren waxing bold by Paul's bonds, preached the word without fear. And here let it be added, for the sake of those who have doubts respecting this passage, that the word is κηρύσσειν heralds; which shows the character of the work. The same habits of wandering preaching we find in the 2nd and 3rd Epistles of John guarded not by ordination, but by doctrine. Nor in truth is there such a thing mentioned in scripture as ordaining to preach the gospel. We have seen that Paul preached before he went out on his work from Antioch. Now if any plead his being set apart there, still the question is not met; for, as before stated, I reason not against such setting apart, but against the assertion that Christians as such are incompetent to preach. But the case alleged, if it proves anything as to the question at issue, proves that the power of ordaining, as well as of preaching, was not specially connected with office, and nothing more. The only other passage which, though not commonly quoted, seems to me nearer the purpose, is the apostle's command, “The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). But the thing committed here was the doctrine, and proves tradition, if anything, not ordination; for it does not appear that they were ordained for the purpose.

I have now produced ample evidence from scripture to a fair mind. My object has been simply to show the general liberty of Christian men to speak, whether in or out of the church, according to the several gifts which God may bestow upon them, without need of the seal of human authority; and I say that the contrary assertion is a novelty in Christianity. I have abstained from diffusive discussions upon what has led to it, or the principles which are involved in it. I put the scriptural fact to any one's conscience; and I call upon any one to produce any scripture, positively or on principle, forbidding to Christians the liberty of preaching, or requiring Episcopal or other analogous ordination for the purpose.

And here I will advert to that which is commonly adduced upon the subject—the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. It is remarkable that those who rest upon it should pass by a case immediately preceding, bearing upon this immediate subject: that of Eldad and Medad prophesying in the camp, though they had not come up to the door of the tabernacle, because the Spirit rested upon them. “Would God,” said the meek man of God, “that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them.” That which was here typically proposed, the pouring out of the Spirit upon all, was in principle fulfilled in the Christian dispensation. Then, subsequently, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram acted not under the influence and energy of the Spirit in testifying to the people, but would have assumed authority—the kingship of Moses, and the priesthood of Aaron. This was their fault, which very outrage is committed by those who attempt to defend

themselves by urging the case before us: seeing that they are taking to themselves that kingship and priesthood which are Christ's alone, and setting up themselves as the only legitimate channels of blessing; and usurping His authority again on the other hand by excluding those who have the Spirit of God from exercising that which they have by the authority of God Himself.²

These things here spoken of were typical of our dispensation, as also the apostle states; and the conclusion is, that they make universal preaching desirable, and the assumption of priesthood a sin. To the same purpose is the argument of the apostle applied (Heb. 5): the exclusion from the office of priesthood, save by such call as Christ had; in which, in one sense, all believers are partakers—in another sense, He is alone, unaccompanied into the holy place. In a word, the claim of unrestricted liberty of preaching by Christians is right. The assumption of priesthood by any, save as all believers are priests, is wrong. This is the dispensation of the outpouring of the Spirit here, qualifying for preaching any here who can do so—in a word, for speaking of Jesus (for the distinction between speaking and preaching is quite unsustainable by scripture, as anyone may see if he takes the trouble), and in which Christ alone exercises the priesthood within the veil, in the presence of God for us.

This, then, is the force of these passages. The type of the pouring out of the Spirit in the camp with the gracious wish of Moses is the characteristic, the essential distinction of Christianity. Accordingly we find its primary presentation in the world, the Spirit poured out on the hundred and twenty who were assembled together, who therefore began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance. And Peter standing up explains to the Jews that they were not drunk, but that it was the thing spoken of by Joel, the undistinguished pouring out of the Spirit upon men of all classes—servants and hand-maidens, their sons and their daughters prophesying—the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh. This was the characteristic of its agency, and this we have seen acted upon in the subsequent history; to deny this is to mistake the power of the dispensation, and, I will add, to lose it. And what is the consequence? Irregular action goes on, and cannot be restrained; for kingly power cannot be assumed to such purpose, or they are taking the part of Dathan and Abiram.

But the power of the Spirit, in which God would give competency to restrain evil, has been slighted. And nominal office, which has been relied on, affords no remedy, unless the rights which the Roman Catholic system has assumed be attached to it, which is the assumption of power not given to the church at all. It is not for me to assert what is the evil of the present day. I am sure it is not the overflowing boldness of testimony against evil; and if evil exists, the remedy is not in seeking to hinder or to reject (for hindered it surely will not and cannot be) the title of preaching the word which the Spirit of the Lord gives to whomsoever He listeth, but the cordial co-operation of those who hold the truth, by which the common energy (and common energy is infinite energy in this matter) may be exercised against all which does not hold the truth, and for the “seeking out of Christ's sheep in the midst of this naughty world.”

One important advantage from taking God's order instead of man's is at once seen—that men will have their place and agency, whether within or without the assembly of the faithful, by virtue, not of nominal official situations formally set up, but of the gifts which God has given them: a most important principle in the difference between Babylon and the divine economy. In truth, there are few things more important to remember, and especially in the present state of things, when human prescription regulates everything in matters of religion, that for anything but grace to be our criterion of station in the church, save in the awful responsibility of the individual, “these sinners against their own soul” must be wrong. In the last dispensation there was externally appointed order independent of qualification; in the present the manifold grace and gifts of God in His church are the only means of adjusting and blending in true harmony the various parts and offices of the body of Christ.

With regard to one part of the work, evangelizing, it is clear that a large portion of those who preach officially are incapacitated for it by their own act, as being shut up within restricted limits, and universally without any reference whatever to their individual qualifications, whether teachers, pastors, or evangelists, &c., or to the particular necessities of the station in which they are to labor. To such it must be obvious that the deficiency cannot be otherwise supplied than by those who may be willing to allow God to appoint the field of their operations, and to do the work of the Lord wheresoever they shall be led by Him to labor for His name's sake (3 John 7), and who will be owned by Him though a Diotrephes may reject them. Nothing argues greater want of submission to Christ—greater proof of preference of man's authority to the Lord's, than for any to discredit the free and unrestrained bearing forth of the gospel of the grace of God, who have placed themselves in circumstances where they are obliged to stop short of the work, for fear they should be discredited themselves. It is a work which they cannot do, which they have themselves put it out of their power to do, at least without utter inconsistency; for in so doing, they would be acting in defiance of the authority which has placed them in their prescribed position. Such is their situation, that in following the Spirit of God in their work they would, in most cases, act unrighteously, for it would be against the authority which they recognize and act under.

Take a case, by no means uncommon, which illustrates the dilemma in which they place themselves. A large tract of country is destitute of the gospel.

One in whose heart God has put the desire and whose mouth He has opened to speak of His love, goes, preaches there, and is blessed—gathers out of darkness into light many souls. The district is already full of persons professing to hold office in the church of Christ, but who are not shepherds. What is the laborer to do? leave them for Socinians or enthusiasts to catch, or unheeded altogether? There is no godly righteousness in this. But it becomes a matter of faithfulness to Christ that he should preach to those who are ready to perish; yea, it is a necessity occasioned by the systems which sanction or have sanctioned the idol shepherds, by whom he is surrounded. Now which must an authorized minister, even though a Christian, recognize? He must recognize those idol shepherds, and he cannot recognize the faithful man of God; that is, he must associate himself with ungodliness because it is in nominal office, and not with the Spirit of God because out of it. But he has placed himself in a position in which he must be wrong either way. For if he did not own those shepherds, he would be acting in dereliction of his own responsibilities to the system to whose authority he has voluntarily submitted himself.

Hence also we learn the answer to the question, “Why not take the nominal office?” Because the source is so vitiated that many conscientious men cannot identify themselves with it; and a consideration which, to one who habitually waits on the Lord, is of no small account, that the work or the scene of his operations is not regulated by the Lord's guidance, and the varied exigencies of His service—exigencies which can be met only by entire and unfettered looking to the Spirit of the Lord, Who is the Spirit of true order, for doing the Lord's work according to His own time, place, and purpose—considerations without which His servants are but περιεργαζόμενοι, busy out of place, whatever may be the apparent result of their labors, and which in many instances amount to the acquirement of a positive disability

to fulfill the office to which God may have appointed the individual, as in the case of an evangelist.

I would make one further observation, suggested by the present question. In observing the infinity of contending interests with which the church is now filled, the "wars and fightings" amongst brethren, the restlessness of those who are spending their power and spirituality in defending one human system against another, the inquiry solemnly forces itself upon us whilst witnessing the surrounding scene of excitement—For what are we to contend? The apostle has answered the question: "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." Let the inquiry then be calmly proposed to all our minds, For what are we contending If it be for anything of secondary derivation, God cannot own it: the contention is for our own, and not for the things of Christ; for nothing since delivered is of His Spirit.

The preceding considerations do assuredly tend to show that opinions, supported by ever so fair an appearance of antiquity, are worthless, being deeply injurious to the glory of God, unless based upon His word. The end in view will have been fully answered if but one servant of Christ should be added to the field of labor; or the doubts removed from the mind of but one brother who hesitates to acknowledge as his fellow-workers those who have been called by the same Spirit. And let it be observed that in this, as in all things, the liberty of the believer is not the spirit of insubordination, but of entire subjection to the Spirit and the church of God, wheresoever they may be found; not the spirit of enthusiasm, but of a sound mind, of a mind at one with God, which alone gives righteous judgment. And let the people of God be waiting on Him for His guidance. It is a time in which those who act with the simplest purpose will carry the work with them (for it is a day in which God is separating realities from forms), as that which can alone stand the universal dislocation which every institution is undergoing, and which the Spirit of God shall, and can alone, go through unscathed, and that they are led by Him unmarred and unhurt.

May God work by His Spirit abundantly. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

J. N. D.

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"They that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

That "the word of the Lord may have free course" is a matter which few will deny to be of ultimate concern to the glory of God, though it be one which has in many ways been let and hindered by human perverseness; and in nothing more than by confining the preaching of the everlasting gospel within arbitrary limits of place and person, prescribed by man, but sanctioned in no way by scripture. To a single mind which has known the value of God's love, and which views things in the light in which they are put by that blessed knowledge, it would not seem that in the midst of a world lying under condemnation, yet visited by this love, aught beyond spiritual qualification was needed for anyone to declare to those whom he sees around him ready to perish the remedy, that Jesus has died for sinners. Man has been pleased to set up restrictions; but the point with the disciple is to know whether the Lord has done so, and what is the warrant for precluding any from full liberty of preaching to whom He has given His Spirit for the purpose: seeing that if He has been so given, there is infinite loss in the hindrance, and the Spirit of God is grieved. The same faithfulness to Christ, which will yield unqualified obedience to every jot and every tittle of His commands, will also lead us to search out every hindrance to His service, in order to its removal from ourselves or others. The present question is one of deep importance, for it is evident that if the restrictions be not verily and indeed ordered by the Lord Himself, or by His apostles, it comes to this, that in upholding them there is a loss on the one hand of much comfort and edification to the church by confining to the ministry of one that which should flow from the Spirit in many; and on the other the gospel which was "to be preached to every creature" under heaven is bound and fettered, and multitudes are shut out from the springs of life for want of the invitation which should be upon the lips of all who themselves have drunk of the living waters.

The point to be proved by those who are opposed to the unrestricted preaching of the word is this either that none who are not in prescribed office have the Spirit of God in testimony; or that, having it, the sanction of man is necessary. I do not purpose here a general investigation of the principles of the subject, but merely to inquire whether any of the church of God are not entitled to preach if the Lord give them opportunity, or whether there be any human sanction needful for their doing so. The following considerations are intended, by the Lord's help, to maintain that it is not needed; and that no such sanction can be proved to be necessary from scripture; and that no such sanction was therein afforded.

The question is not whether all Christians are individually qualified, but whether they are disqualified unless they are what is commonly called ordained.¹ I say "commonly," because the word as used in scripture does not in the original convey what it does to an English ear at present. I affirm that no such ordination was a qualification to preach in the days of scriptural statement. I do not despise order, I do not despise pastoral care but love it where it really exists, as that which savors in its place of the sweetest of God's services; seeing that, though it may be exercised sometimes in a manner not to our present taste or thought, a good shepherd will seek the scattered sheep. But I confine myself to a simple question—the assertion that none of the Lord's people ought to preach without Episcopal or other analogous appointment. The thing here maintained in few words is that they are entitled. The scripture proves that they did so; that they were justified in doing so, God blessing them therein; and that the principles of scripture require it, assuming of course that they are qualified by God. For the question here is not competency to act, but title to act if competent. Neither do I despise herein (God forbid that I should do so) the holy setting apart according to godliness to any office such as are competent, by those that have authority to do so.

Let us then try the question by the light which the word affords us upon the subject. There are only two cases upon which the question can arise: namely, as to their speaking in the church, or out of the church; amongst the "congregation of faithful men," for their common profit and building up in the faith; or as evangelists, declaring to the world, wheresoever God may direct them, the message of that "grace which has appeared unto all men." If these are admitted, all anomalous cases will readily be agreed in.

First then let us look into the, speaking of Christians in the church. And here I remark that the directions in 1 Cor. 14, are entirely inconsistent with the necessity of ordination to speak. There is a line drawn there, but it is not between ordained or unordained. "Let your women keep silence in the churches:" a direction which never could have place, were the speaking confined to a definitely ordained person. Quite another ground is taken; which implies directly, not that it is right for every man to speak, but that there was a preclusion of none, because of their not being in any stated office. Women were the precluded class: there the line was drawn. If men had not the gift of speaking, of course they would be silent, if they followed the directions there given. The apostle says, "Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." Does he then say none ought to speak but one ordained? No" Let all things be done unto edifying." This is the grand secret, the grand rule: in a tongue, by two or at the most by three, and by course, and interpret; the prophets, let them speak two or three, &c. "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted," "for God," &c. "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience."

It is undeniable then, that here we have distinction, not of ordained and unordained, but of those who from their character (women) are not permitted to speak, and the rest are; being also directed in what order to do so, and the ground of distinction stated. And this is God's plan of decency and order. For the rest they were all to speak, that all might learn, and all be comforted. Not all to speak at once, not all to speak every day, but all as God led them, according to the order there laid down, and as God was pleased to give them ability for the edifying of the church. I apply all this simply and exclusively to the question of Christians in general, having God's Spirit, using their respective gifts; and I assert that there was no such principle recognized as that they should not, but the contrary.

It may and will be said by many that these were the times of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. But this is a false view of the case; for do those who make this objection mean to argue that ordination did not begin as a distinctive title till after the departure of the Spirit of God? Moreover the Spirit of God does not justify, by systematic rules, breaking through His own order; it would be most mischievous to say that He did. But the case, let it be observed, was not one of the prerogative of spiritual gifts, but of order; for women had spiritual gifts, as we read elsewhere, and directions are given for their exercise; but they were not to use them in the church, because it was out of order—not comely. At the same time there was no hint that any or all of the men were not: but the contrary, because it was not out of order. Aptness to teach may be a very important qualification for a bishop, but it cannot be said from scripture to be disorderly for any member of the body to speak in the church, if God has given him ability.

Besides, though these extraordinary gifts, tongues, &c., may have ceased, I by no means admit that the ordinary gifts for the edification of the church, of believers, have ceased. On the contrary, I believe they are the instruments, the only real instruments, of edification. Nor do I see why, on principle, they should not be exercised in the church, or why the church has not a title to the edification derived from them. If the presence of the indwelling Spirit be in the church, it has that which renders it substantially competent to its own edification, and to worship God "in Spirit and in truth." If He be not there, nothing else can be recognized, and it is a church no longer; for no makeshift is warranted by scripture in default of the original constitutive character and endowments of a dispensation.

But in thus upholding, as one is bound, the common title of the saints, it may be supposed by some that the argument will be at once met by referring to the orderly way in which Christ originally gave His church, "some apostles, and some pastors and teachers," &c. Now, unless one man centers all these offices in one person by virtue of ordination, the objection will not apply, but on the contrary brings its own refutation. For we read, some were of one office, some of another; the head, Christ, "from Whom the whole body fitly framed together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." We read also that the members are set in the body, one the eye, the other the foot, the other the ear, that there "might be no schism in the body." And it is a thought which might well commend itself to our minds, that if we have indeed lost many and ornamental members, it is no reason why we should summarily cut off the rest—the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, and the like, of which there is assuredly some measure yet remaining in the church.

But if the attempt should be made to close the inquiry by silencing all discussion with the startling assertion that it is useless, for the Spirit of God is utterly and altogether gone out of the church, it at once brings on the question, If so, what are we, and where are we? The church of God without the Spirit! Verily if He be not there, all union between Christ and His members is cut off, and the promise, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," is of none effect.² But the word of God shall stand. "The world indeed cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him;" but let the disciples of Jesus know that He is with them; and that Wheresoever two or three are gathered together to His name, there, in proportion to their condition and necessities, His Spirit is with them, for every purpose of instruction and blessing.

(To be continued.)

Letters 1, Baptism; the Lord's Supper as a Sign of Unity of the Body, The Subjects of

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I suppose from your letter that your boys have never been baptized. If such be the case, it is clear to me that they ought to be. I baptized myself, a number recently converted at Stafford, very recently. I look in no way on baptism or any other ordinance as a matter of obedience. I leave behind me, as being simple ignorance to refer to it, all reference to John's baptism, which was before the death and resurrection of Christ, and as far as it went would have hindered His being put to death. I reject all notion of a testimony to what we have already received, because it is entirely contrary to scripture. As to obedience; not only is obedience to ordinances, in principle, legal and unchristian, but the language of the word is, "What doth hinder me?" "Who can forbid water?" -language wholly incompatible with the idea of obedience. I reject the idea of its being witness of what we have, because I find in scripture, "Wash away thy sins"—"Buried with him by baptism unto death"—not because you are washed, or are dead—"Wherein also ye are risen"—not because you are already. I see a command to baptize, none to be baptized; nor were the apostles baptized, save Paul. But I see it evidently to be the way in which disciples were received to Christ publicly and outwardly.

It is a mistake to think that it has to do with the unity of the body: for this Christ had to ascend on high and send down the Holy Spirit, and "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body"—but of this unity the Lord's supper is the sign, not baptism. This goes no farther than death and resurrection; what is individual, that the flesh is hopelessly bad. Men are dead to it in Christ and alive in the power of resurrection only, of which profession is outwardly made in baptism—not that we are so, but we enter in (outwardly) by this door, by dying and rising again, namely, in owning Christ dead and risen for us. There is no entering into the heavenly and eternal blessing but by the reality of this, nor properly into the outward establishment of it in the earth but by the sign of this. This is the confession made by baptism. This is, I am persuaded, the intelligence of it: as to your dear boys, this I am assured should be their mind, to do it intelligently. The recognition that if any man be in Christ, the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit life because of righteousness; that there is no mending, no remedy for the old man but death; but that in entering Christ we die and rise again in the power of a new life, in which alone we live to God. The Lord bless them abundantly, and keep them in the deep sense of the truth of this, and in much joyful confidence in the grace of God, the Savior, and our Father, and in Him who has called them in His love. How thankful I am to think of them as different from what they were when I saw them, though, I doubted not kind, good boys.

Yours.

1860.

Letters 1, What Christianity Is; Stephen Before the Sanhedrim

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*** The entirely new life of the Christian (1 John), communion founded upon known relationships in which we find ourselves with God, the absolute superiority of the Christian over all that he encounters (the experience of the Epistle to the Philippians), all these things have occupied me much of late. What a position is ours! What known relationships with God, in which we walk according to the new life in which we are accepted in Christ; a life which enjoys Christ, the measure of our acceptance and of our relationships—Himself also the life: happy everywhere (according to the will of God) because we are everywhere in Him, and, in this sense, always ourselves. Still, the tranquility in which we can enjoy Him is very sweet.

What a scene that is of Stephen before the Sanhedrim! Perfect calm; heaven opened; the history of man, who always resists the Holy Ghost, and trusts in a temple deserted of God; man filled with the Holy Ghost—himself the temple—bearing testimony which they resist. See him, while they are killing him, quietly kneeling down to pray for them, a perfect reflection down here of Jesus, while beholding Him on high. The whole judgment of man turns upon the testimony of this chapter; and his whole position in Christ is there depicted.

[1858]

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Critical 1, Ananias and Sapphira

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I see no reason for saying Ananias and Sapphira were not saved. The analogy of the apostle's reasoning, in 1 Corinthians 11: 30-32, would lead rather to suppose they were. But it is a mistake to call this dealing with the world. It is God judging in the midst of the assembly and that He surely does, even to death, as 1 Cor. 11, above cited, and 1 John 5:16, 17, and James 5:15 distinctly show. 1 John 5:16, 17, I think, teaches another truth—that there are cases where the charity of the Church is arrested in its outward gracious nature, and takes the form of indignation against evil. So with Christ: "he looked about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts." Perfect love, when forced to take its holy character, or rather to make its holy character prominent, is intolerant of evil, and especially of certain forms of evil, such as a base slighting of God, or pretension to deceive Him under fair forms, or heartless hindrance of blessing to others under the forms of piety. The action of God in this way within the assembly is judicial.

There are cases where discipline is in the course of progress, and might terminate (Job 36:7-12) in death, but where the intercession of the saints may be the means of blessing, and in the administration of God's government in the Church on earth, may avert the threatened evil. As regards this government, the sins would be forgiven and the life of the faulty person spared, the soul being set right. (Job 34:23, 24.)

But there are cases which are not such as can draw out this charity which pleads for the offender, but according to the Spirit, indignation against him as guilty of it. This was the case with Ananias and Sapphira. Peter speaks with just zeal and horror of what they have done, and the action of God, being full in the Church, was judicial on a sin which was unto death. God may and does deal sometimes providentially in judgment with the world, though it is not the time for making His judgment adequately express His sense of right and wrong. And yet it is the time in which, as regards His active full dealing with the world, His grace is in full exercise, and not judgment. Grace characterizes the epoch. But His relationship to the world has nothing to do with Ananias and Sapphira. Although the principles of scripture lead rather to the supposal that Ananias and Sapphira were not lost, yet the very principles we have seen laid down in scripture show us that the act took them out of the active exercise of the Church's charity. It is only in this the Church pronounces anyone saved. And when God's judgment thus comes in, the case is by it taken out of any thoughts of the Church in charity, and she has nothing to say.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Discourse of Gamaliel

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The next difficulty presented is in the discourse of Gamaliel, Acts 5. (Phases, p. 108.) Theudas, it is said, was after Gamaliel's time, instead of before Judas's; and appeal is made to Josephus, whose testimony is considered infallible and complete, because it is not inspired. Valuable and important as the information afforded by Josephus is, the accuracy of this servile worshipper of Vespasian¹ as the Messiah of an apostate heart is not so absolute as the author would lead people to suppose. But I do not see reason to call in question his account of Theudas. It happened (according to his account), as we learn by comparing the dates, in his childhood; and he mentions Cuspius Fadus as the governor under whom it happened; so that there is no reason to suppose that he was not well informed. But Luke is also an historian of extreme and undoubted accuracy. Few give such proofs of it by reference or allusions to a multiplicity of historical and geographical details or customs,² in which a stranger would betray himself.

Now Josephus mentions a Theudas who rose up after Gamaliel's time; Luke, one who rose up before it.

Mr. N. assumes that they are the same, and that it is Luke's mistake. He says, "Of both the insurgents we have a clear and unimpeached historical account in Josephus." (lb. pp. 108, 109.) The reader might suppose that there were two insurgents only in those days. The fact is, they hardly ever ceased for forty or fifty years. There were a multitude of them.

It has been shown that, between the death of the first Herod and the destruction of Jerusalem, there were three Judases and five Simons. Lardner makes, I think, four Simons in forty years, and three Judases in ten; one of whom, Usher is decidedly of opinion, is the Theudas mentioned by Luke, as to which I do not pretend to offer an opinion. Usher thinks the name the same. At any rate the name of Theudas was so very common, as well as the change and assumption of names, that an insurgent Theudas is the most easy thing to credit that possibly can be. A statement of "both the insurgents," as if there were only two, and the two Theudas the same, is, to say the very least, as unfounded a one as possibly can be made.

Remark further, that Luke, in his account of Judas, is thoroughly accurate. Though generally called Judas Gaulonitis, he was a Galilean; for so Josephus also calls him. It is supposed, that having the means of being thus accurate as to one, he is wholly inaccurate as to another fact, drawn from the same sources. When the whole difficulty is this, which is really none, that in a multitude of abortive efforts of the Jews against Roman power, Josephus has omitted one which Gamaliel mentions, we knowing that he omits many others, the name being a very common one indeed, as Wetstein has shown, and the fact being ascertained that there were five such efforts of persons having or assuming the same name of Simon, and three more assuming another within ten years; so that a second of the same name, and that a very common one, in fifty years, has not the smallest improbability whatever.

Further, the only circumstance to prove them the same is the death of the leader, and the dispersion of his followers; an event which probably occurred in every case in these vain and desultory efforts of partial rebellion. One point in which detail is given may be noticed, to show they are not the same; for Luke gives the number of Theudas's adherents as about four hundred; whereas Josephus says they were "a great multitude," τὸν πλεῖστον ὄχλον. Indeed, though much cannot be rested upon the word, the result was somewhat different; for in Luke they were "scattered," διελύθησαν, and brought to naught. Of those under the Theudas against whom Cuspius Fadus sent a troop of horse, many were slain and many taken prisoners, among whom was Theudas, who was beheaded. Now, though, as a general result, dispersion and coming to nothing might be stated, on the whole, the impression is different. And remark, that Luke has evidently accurate information here, for he is able to tell the number of his Theudas's followers as about four hundred. Yet he is an historian who is remarkably exempt from all appearance of pretension or exaggeration.

And here note, that I am not called upon to prove that Luke is right, but that the objection is an unfounded one. And I judge that what we have seen proves it not only to be unfounded, but unreasonable; and that the expression, "both the insurgents," is an unwarrantable assertion, to say the least.

The truth of the history rests on the general credibility of the historian; for I am not to suppose inspiration here, though the abundant independent proofs of that preclude all these questions altogether. The effort to show it improbable entirely fails. Perhaps the reader may suppose that this is an answer invented now to meet the case. Alas! all these objections have been made centuries ago. This one in particular by Celsus, some sixteen hundred years ago or more; and the Christianity these philosophical heathens tried to subvert then, as the philosophical deists, boasting of their greater spirituality, do now (borrowing their objections from the heathens, and their spirituality from the Christianity they seek to subvert)-this Christianity, I say, has subsisted after all their efforts, and saved millions of souls taught by it, as Mr. N. has admitted, the sympathy of the pure and perfect God with the sincere worshipper, in spite of the opposition, and in spite of the still more dangerous corruptions which have for the most part disfigured it. It has subsisted and produced an energy of love which "philosophical faith" never thinks of, not only because it is the truth of God, but because the God of truth Himself is in and with it, and has proved it in revealing Himself to the hearts of poor sinners saved and made happy by it. What has Mr. N. that he has not borrowed from it? He must not be surprised that we claim the feathers he has decked himself in. He may be assured that my heart would earnestly wish them to be livingly his own. Nor would I, if stripping him of what is borrowed, peck at himself. I would not spare his work, seeking as it does to deprive souls of what alone is blessing and life. I feel my feebleness in commenting on it. What I can I will do to show it groundless and unreasonable. But I add the proof how ancient this account of Theudas which I have given is.

Origen, who had read Josephus, and gives him the character of truthfulness of research, says, in reply to Celsus, "We say that there was a certain Theudas among the Jews, before the birth of Jesus, alleging himself to be some great one;" and again, "Judas the Galilean, as Luke has written in the Acts of the Apostles, chose to say he was some great one, and before him, Theudas." Elsewhere he says the same thing. Hence learned men have remarked, that the fathers here constantly refer to these two as the thieves and robbers who came before Christ, showing that they supposed Theudas did so. This merely shows that they accepted Luke's account as certain, in spite of Celsus's objection already cited.

Eusebius, overlooking all difficulty of date, takes for granted Josephus's Theudas and Luke's to be the same; he places him in the reign of Claudius, that is, seven or ten years after Gamaliel's speech, which must have been before the death of Tiberius, or in the beginning of

Caligula's reign.

Letters 3, Baptism of the Holy Spirit; What It Is to Be Filled With the Holy Spirit

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

The baptism of the Holy Ghost¹ was on the day of Pentecost. The Comforter came; He cannot come twice in this order of things, because He was to dwell forever. But He is given, says Peter, to all them that believe. Again: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Cornelius was a special case, God demonstrating that He would receive the Gentiles, when even the apostles would not as such. He was not previously baptized, which was the regular order. (Acts 2:38.) Samaria is nothing to the point, but to show how He was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands: so with Paul proving He had the same title. (Acts 19) The pouring out of the Spirit is what happened on the day of Pentecost (so Peter tells us), but individuals receive it on believing in Christ's work for the remission of sins. That giving of the Holy Ghost to the individual is the unction and the sealing, and becomes the earnest. Being filled with the Spirit is another matter. It is the Spirit which is in me, so taking possession of all my mind and faculties that naught else is there, and the things He reveals occupy the mind, and there is power from God in the soul as to them.

As to a person subsequent to Pentecost being baptized with the Holy Ghost, I should say he was introduced into an already baptized body, but by receiving the Holy Ghost by which he is united to the Head—Christ. I am not anxious as to the word baptism, but it is not generally employed as to the individual reception. Acts 11:16, 17 and 1 Cor. 12 are the nearest to applying it to an individual or individuals; but it is not actually used. But the receiving of the Holy Ghost is equivalent; they having what was originally treated as baptism of the Holy Ghost, and are looked at, as they are, as partakers of this same thing. The sum of the gathered disciples were baptized on the day of Pentecost. An individual receives the same Holy Ghost, and is a member of the same body, and is one, and is looked at as one of the baptized body. Acts 1:5 tells us when; but Acts 2:38 tells them, that on repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, they will receive this same Holy Ghost; so did Cornelius (see his case before). Thus they were incorporated, and were the same as those to whom the Holy Ghost was first given; and that continued when all the first were gone, for the Comforter was to abide forever. As to 1 Cor. 10:3, 4, there is a certain general analogy, but that was baptism with water, the sacramental assembly—not the body. It is only in verses 16, 17 we come to the inner circle of the body.

Abundance of scriptures show that it was not merely for testimony the Holy Ghost was given. It is the Spirit of adoption: the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. I know that God dwells in me by it, and I in Him; that I am in Christ and Christ in me; the body is dead, and the Spirit is life. A thousand precious things concerning my state with God and the Father depend on the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, and my consciousness of these things abounding as life through Him. He is the Comforter come down withal, on which all our condition depends. He is sent by the Father in Christ's name, and by Christ from the Father—one giving conscious relationship as sons, the other knowledge of Christ's glorifying and its consequences; and a great deal more than all this, for He is the power of all good here. No doubt, therefore, He is the power of testimony, and so the Lord plainly declares. (Acts 1) The word itself is the sword of the Spirit. All true power and wisdom so flows into us. All truth is revealed, communicated as revealed, and received by the Holy Ghost.

As to 1 Cor. 12:12, 13, it is the aorist (ἐβαπτίσθημεν) and therefore says nothing of continuity: it is continuous, if we speak of individuals receiving the Holy Ghost. But people look for a re-giving of the Holy Ghost, as if He did not abide forever; and the thought of re-giving denies that, and also the responsibility of the church consequent upon it, which is a great evil. Asking that an individual who is not free—is not sealed—may receive it, is quite another thing.

Asking in general for the Holy Ghost, for the church, says He is not here, which is wrong; yet I doubt not, where sincerely desired, though expressed ignorantly, God has answered the desire, and blessed. But that leaves the ignorance; and the conscience is left unmoved as to the responsibility in respect of a present ever-abiding Spirit. It is not accurate language I look for, but faith working in the conscience.

[1878.]

Letters 1, Hades and Sheol; the Death of Judas Iscariot

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

As regards Acts 1:18, 19, and Matt. 27:3, &c.; I take Acts 1:18, 19 for a parenthesis of Luke's. The passages have been much discussed. The field was looked at as Judas' field, being purchased with his money; as some even say, he having bargained for it, the priests completed it, and appropriated it to this purpose: he got a field as the reward of his iniquity, his money being employed for this. We have not details enough to connect the two accounts of his death. Some think, being hung he fell down, and thus the catastrophe took place. But I do not reject your thought of the association of Judas and the priests. The account in Acts supposes he went and fell headlong at first—at once—so that the passage does not imply that he got regular possession by contract himself. It is very possible that "purchased" is too definite; he got a field—with Matt. 27—is bought, purchased. It was probably some poor waste ground, and Judas having thus gone and hung himself there, they bought it formally and appropriated it to this use. It is supposed he fell down on his face when he hung himself.

I do not take ψυχή (Acts 2:31) in any other sense but soul.

His soul was in hades, His body in the grave: but I do not see how it separates His soul from His Person; the divine nature has nothing to do with place. His soul was separated from His body, but both held by divine power, so to speak, for His resurrection and glory. I do not think

leaving out ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ makes much difference, as it is in the psalm and quoted before. But I see no difficulty in the statement, for His soul was in paradise, His body in the grave; ἄδου is merely the invisible place of departed spirits without more.

There are many statements as to facts we cannot explain because we have not the connecting link-as supposing the field was on a rock, an easy thing at Jerusalem, and he fell from the hanging place down it. I have no particular notion it was so, I use it as an illustration. If we knew such a fact, the statement is very plain. In doctrines many things are difficulties, because beyond sight we know so little.

Your affectionate brother.

1864.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 9, Christ in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit Sent Down

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

THIS passage brings very definitely before us (Christ having been exalted as man by, and to, the right hand of God) how consequently the disciples received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. This runs through all the instruction given here. The place of Christ, having finished redemption, is to sit now at the right hand of God, " expecting till his enemies be made his footstool," Heb. 10:13. He has not yet taken His own throne at all; He is seated on the Father's throne. " To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," Rev. 3:21. Thence He will " come again," as He says in John 14, and receive us unto Himself.

Christianity is not the accomplishment of promise. Of the earthly part the Jews were the center. But God meanwhile " hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ "; and then, till Christ comes again, He is sitting on the throne of the Father, and has sent the Holy Ghost down.

The Christian is one in whom the Holy Ghost dwells between the accomplishment of redemption and His coming again. The thought and purpose of God about us is that we should " be conformed to the image of his Son." The Holy Ghost is given to dwell in us meanwhile, to dwell in us individually- collectively too, but I speak now individually. That is what the Christian is: Christ is his life, his righteousness: it is a ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit. " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his " (Rom. 8:9); it does not say, " If he is not converted," though that would be true, of course. You see so many saints everywhere who are not settled in their relationship with God; the present power for this is the Holy Ghost come down.

The coming of the Lord Jesus is not simply a little bit of knowledge which we may add to the rest, but it is the hope of the Christian. If we die we go to Him, but what is held out to us is that the Christian is waiting for Christ. " So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation," Heb. 9:28. If we die we go up to Him, and blessed truth it is too; but that Christ shall come, this is the hope of the Christian, the only full hope. " To depart and to be with Christ which is far better," true this is not the purpose of God for us; the purpose of God is that we shall be like Christ. I do not want to be like Christ with my body in the grave, and my spirit in paradise: the expectation of the Lord's coming makes the person of Christ to be so much before the soul. I am going to see Him and to be like Him. Scripture does not talk of going to heaven; " Absent from the body, present with the Lord," 2 Cor. 5:8. " To depart and be with Christ which is far better " (Phil. 1:23), always the thought is going to Christ. That is what we all want personally, that Christ should have a larger place in the heart: " Rooted and built up in him " " To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." " Christ is all," and He is " in all " as the power of life; having become our life, He is before our souls to fill them.

Christ is the motive for the Christian for whatever he does, whether he eats or drinks; and his desires are never satisfied, and never can be, till he be with and like Christ. Therefore he is always waiting for Him. The Thessalonians were converted " to wait for his Son from heaven," 1 Thess. 1:10. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of being a little bit of prophetic knowledge, is interwoven with all the thoughts and condition of the Christian. Grace has appeared teaching us (Titus 2:11, 12), and the grace that has appeared is the grace that saves. When the Lord went up on high the Holy Ghost came down, and through the Holy Ghost we have not only the knowledge but the fruits of the place He has given us. The seal of the Holy Ghost is put upon us: the presence of the Holy Ghost is that which gives the full knowledge of our place and blessedness. Redemption, which brings us to God, is finished; we are exercised afterward-all that goes on, but our relationship is never in question. I believe the government of God is most important when we are children; He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous," Job 36:7. This is most important and blessed in its place • but the great thing is first of all to get into the place where God has put us.

The very names of God go along with this. To the patriarchs He was God Almighty," when they were strangers and pilgrims to Abraham He said, " I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward " (Genesis is); to Israel He had given promises, and He takes the name of Jehovah, the name of One who, having given promises, never rests until they are fulfilled. Then in the Revelation He speaks of Himself as the One " who is, and who was, and who is to come," Rev. 1:8. All that was concerned in a certain sense with this world; but it is not so with us. We are called to suffer with Christ, because Christ has been rejected, and this with the full knowledge of redemption. " And I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them," John 17:26. God has another name, " Most High." You never find the name " Father " from Psa. 1 to 150. " And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John 17:3. " Life and incorruptibility " have been brought " to light through the gospel," 2 Tim. 1: to. The name "Almighty" does not carry eternal life. "Jehovah" fulfills promises, but does not give eternal life, but the Father sent the Son, " that we might live through him," 1 John 4:9. " For the life was manifested and we have it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us," 1 John 1:2. "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in the Son," 1 John 5:11. When we receive the Son, we get into the place of children; it is the force of the expression in John's Gospel. " But as many as received him to them gave he right to be called children of God," John 1:12. The Son is there, and we are associated with Him completely and fully. In Matt. 3 the Holy Ghost comes down upon Him, and the Father's voice says, " This is my beloved Son in whom I am

well pleased." There the full revelation of the Trinity is Christianity: we have the Son as man, the Holy Ghost coming down in bodily shape like a dove, and the Father's voice, in that wondrous scene of Christ taking His place publicly as man. " I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God," John 1:34.

The Old Testament saints were quickened surely; but if you take Gal. 4, you find they were not in the condition of sons. " The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all," chap. 4:1. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father " (v. 6). That had not been the case before; they were ordered to do this and that under the law.

" Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit," John 12:24. He was totally alone, a true man in His relationship with God; even when He declared His Father's name to His disciples, they did not understand a bit of it. Then you see redemption brings us into this place.

Let me turn back to the basis of all this. Here am I a child of Adam, with an evil nature and sins; Christ bore my sins, and that is all perfectly settled forever-if it is not, it never can be; but it is " once for all, forever " • there is no other application as regards the putting away of? my sins in God's sight. He does not impute them for the simple blessed reason that Christ has borne them, and He is sitting at the right hand of God, because it is done. Many a true honest soul sees only past sins put away, but what about sinning afterward? Go to Calvin, and he will send you back to your baptism, while the evangelicals go back to the blood. " For the law, having a shadow of good things to come... can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the corners thereunto perfect," Heb. 10: 1. " In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience," Heb. 9:9. If I go into God's presence, I have not the most distant thought that He imputes anything to me as guilt: that is what is wanting to so many souls. Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins," Heb. 10:2. He does not say sin: the old stock is there. " But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year," Hebrews to: 3. I go into the presence of God now, and I see Christ sitting, because by one offering He has settled everything. " And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool," Heb. 10:11-13. He sits at God's right hand, because He has finished that work perfectly. " For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified " (v. 14). He has set them apart to God, and He has perfected forever their consciences.

" The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing," Heb. 9:8. Now we have " boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." The thing is done; it was prophesied of before, but now it is done. " Forever " here means never interrupted. If I come to God, Christ is always there, and my conscience is always perfect. I may go and humble myself in the dust if I have dishonored Christ: it is in the holiest that I learn how bad sin is. I could not be before God in the light until the veil was rent, but " by one offering " Christ has perfected my conscience. When I go to God I find Christ, who bore my sins, sitting at the right hand of God because He has done it. This will make me see sin a great deal more than anything else. I have got a new nature, and I am in the light as God is in the light.

This turns the question from righteousness to holiness. So long as I am connecting it with a question of acceptance, it is righteousness that I want: suppose righteousness is settled, then I abhor the sin because it is sin, for itself. " Well but," you say, " without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." That is quite true, but you are looking for righteousness, not holiness. The clearance in that way is absolute; but there is another thing which gives my soul its place before God. Not only Christ died for my sins, but I died with Christ; the tree is bad, not only the fruit: then I reckon myself dead. In the first part of Romans we get nothing about experience. Suppose I owed Liao and that it was paid for me, no experience would be in question; but suppose I say to you, " You are dead to sin," perhaps you would say, " Indeed I am not, it was working in me this morning." Till you are clear about that, you are not settled in your place. The old tree has been cut down, and grafted with Christ. In Rom. 6 I reckon myself dead:

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin " (chap. 6: 11); in Col. 3:3 we get, " For ye are dead " and in 2 Cor. 4:10, ' Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.' We find God's estimate and faith's estimate • and in Gal. 2:19 we have the summary of the whole thing, " For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." When I find a nature working in me contrary to Christ, I say it has been crucified with Christ, and I do not own it. " What the law could not do... God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," Rom. 8. He has forgiven the sins and condemned the tree that produced them, but the tree that was condemned has died in Christ.

I have to learn thus, by the power of the Spirit of God, not merely that what the old tree produced has been blotted out, but that Christ is my life; " I am crucified with Christ," and sin in the flesh has been condemned. Where? Where you died with Christ: when Christ was there for sin, sin in the flesh was condemned, not forgiven; it died, for faith, where it was condemned. " O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. 7:24, 25. Looked at as in that old man, I died in Christ. The moment we believe in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, then we get the sealing of God. Because the blood of Christ is upon me, then the Holy Ghost comes and dwells in me. They received the Holy Ghost on believing the forgiveness of their sins. In Acts 10 we find the same thing faith received the forgiveness of their sins in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then the Holy Ghost came on them. As in the figure in the Old Testament, we are washed, sprinkled with blood, and then anointed with oil. The Holy Ghost comes, then I know where I am, that my standing is in Christ: " There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. 8: 1. " In Christ " is my standing before God; the Holy Ghost is the present power of it all; the work is Christ's.

I get the other point, knowledge of salvation, and knowledge that I am not a child of Adam but a child of God. " To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins," Luke 1:77. " Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost," John 1:29, 33. He could not baptize with the Holy Ghost till He had died, and was risen and glorified. I know the place I have got into: the treasure is in an earthen vessel, but I have got the knowledge of salvation. " Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," 2 Cor. 3:17. It is that which enables me to say with truth, " I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." There I get first the accomplishment of redemption; and Christ sitting on His right hand; and the purpose of God, as the blood on the lintel and door-posts made the Israelites free, and they were brought from Egypt to the Red Sea, out of an old place into a new, so that Moses could

sing, " Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation," Ex. 15:18. " Thou shalt bring them in " (v. 17). I get these two things, complete redemption is one; the other I have not got yet; Christ has entered as our Forerunner, I have not entered yet, but the Holy Ghost is " the earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Christ " endured the cross, and despised the shame," and He is set down as man at the right hand of God. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. " Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," Rom. 5: 1, 2. I 'mow by the Holy Ghost that I am in divine favor. We have these three things.

We are justified, and have peace with God.

We stand in present grace, in divine favor.

3. When Christ comes again, we shall be in glory with Him. " That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me," John 17:23. It is " That the world may know," not believe: this ought to be now, but it is very far from it. When it sees us in glory, it cannot help knowing; when we appear in the same glory with Christ, people will think, " Why these people that we trampled underfoot are in the same glory with Christ! " We do not wait for that: the world will know when we are in the same glory with Christ, but now we know by the Holy Ghost,

That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them," John 17:24. Beloved friends, just think of that: your hearts ought to have the consciousness that He loved you as He loved Jesus 1 A child might say, " I am a foolish child, I think little about my mother "; but he has no uncertainty about his mother's love to him. We never apprehend all God's love to us; still we know we are children and sons. It is no uncertain place: I know I am loved as Christ is loved; we have poor wretched hearts, that is quite true. A true child does not measure its mother's love; I am sure it could not, but it knows and is in it.

We have got " the adoption of sons." " Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." I have got the consciousness of it; I know my place. We know God as our Father. The soul that has the Spirit of God dwelling in him knows not only the clearing of the sins of the old man, but that he is in the second Man, and knowing it, he cries, " Abba, Father." " For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," Heb. 2:11. They are " all of one," one set, as it were. What is my life? Christ. What is my righteousness? Christ. He is not one with the unconverted world; there is no union in incarnation. He stood for us in the cross, but He has united us with Him in glory. If I take the Father's relationship with Christ as man, He is not ashamed to call us brethren. In Psa. 22 He says, " Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare thy name unto my brethren." His work was finished: as soon as that was done, He comes out in resurrection, past the power of death and of Satan, and He sends this message to His disciples: " I ascend unto my Father and your Father: and to my God and your God," John 20:17. He had never said that before, though He called them " sister " and " mother " and " brother " in a general way. Beloved brethren, what we want is to see how Christ has united us to Himself; to see the way God has brought us into the place of the second Man, as sin brought us into the place of the first man.

One point more, our connection with Christ: " And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter."

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Ah, it is a terrible thing that saints are so far from scriptural ground as to say we cannot know! We are in Christ, " accepted in the Beloved," and we have the Spirit of adoption. One thing more, besides the point I am on: Christ is in us. You cannot live on in sin, you are dead; that is where the Christian's responsibility is, not in connection with his acceptance (" By one man's obedience many shall be made righteous "). I know He is in me, having bought me at all cost, and there I see responsibility. I get the two things in Rom. 8 " No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." You have been delivered, you have redemption in Christ, and you have been sealed with the Holy Ghost. I own nothing as life in the Christian but Christ: the whole of our lives should be the expression of Christ and nothing else, our " speech always with grace, seasoned with salt." Only one other thing, beloved friends; God is love, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts: therefore we get in the Epistle of John, " He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him " We have the Person of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, so our bodies are temples: God is there in the perfection of His own nature; we have to watch not to grieve such a guest. It is through the Holy Ghost that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts; that is the key to everything. " And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also " (Rom. 5:3); it is the key to everything; I want it, and He sent it. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost comes down giving us the consciousness of the present relationship in which we are to walk.

" Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children," Eph. 5:17. How are we to imitate God? Was not Christ God? I earnestly desire that all our hearts may get hold, through the power of the Spirit of God, of the place we are brought into, that we may have the consciousness of this, the knowledge of it through the Holy Ghost until we go to be with Him. The Lord give you to have this consciousness. Why, beloved, to think of the Father's love at work, and the Son of God having gone down to death for you, it is not much to expect!

The Lord give us to feel what we owe Him, that our whole desire may be to glorify Him.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 4, Acts 2, Meditations on

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

The Coming of the Holy Spirit.

But the great event of which we have spoken now claims our attention—the immense fact of the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell with the disciples of Jesus, in each, and in the midst of all together. Thus, in 1 Corinthians 3:16, the church as a universal assembly is the temple of God; and then, in Corinthians 6:19, the body of the faithful is the temple of God. All those who, steadfast in Jesus, habitually gathered

together were thus assembled on the day of Pentecost. We have seen (Acts 1: 14), that they continued with one accord in prayer while waiting for the Comforter, promised according to the word of Jesus.

Suddenly an impetuous wind is felt, filling all the house where they sat, as the cloud filled the tabernacle, so that the priests could not enter there (1 Kings 8:11). But now men themselves composed the tabernacle where God disdained not to dwell. The blood of Jesus had purified them, and rendered them fit to be the habitation of God through the Spirit (or in Spirit) (Eph. 2:22). Marvelous truth, fruit of accomplished redemption, and blessed knowledge, that a Man, much more than a man, sits at the right hand of God (John 7:39). But how beautiful is the truth, this divine fact, that—such is the effect of the death and of the blood of Christ, and of our reconciliation and purification—instead of driving away the priests by His presence, God, in grace, makes us His habitation! What a contrast between the law and the gospel!

But, besides this, a marvelous testimony is found in this fact to the grace of God. The presence of the Holy Spirit depended on the sitting of the Man Jesus at the right hand of God; demonstration and fruit of the accomplishment of the work of redemption. Now this could not be limited to the Jewish people. This presence was in itself a testimony to that accomplishment, and the earnest of our inheritance, Christ being dead for all, and ascending into glory. For the moment, the patience of God fulfilled the work of grace among the Jews, people of the promises; but the gospel which should be preached was for the whole world.

When the judgment of God fell on man at the tower of Babel, it dispersed them, confounding their speech; but God took Abraham, separating him from his country and from his father's house, to have a seed and then a people for Himself. During many years God endured the iniquity and unfaithfulness of this people, sending prophets, till no further remedy could be found; at last He sent His own Son, and they, as we know, rejected and crucified Him. Then the nation is put aside till the sovereign grace of God—His church, the fullness of the Gentiles, being gathered out—commences anew on the footing of the new covenant, and of the presence of the Messiah on the earth.

In the meantime He gathers together the heirs of Christ, the heavenly assembly. Thus—although for a moment the Spirit had separated in the midst of the Jews, spared as a nation by the intercession of Christ on the cross, till they should have rejected a glorified Christ in the same way that they had a crucified Christ come in humiliation: and also to gather together all those among this people that had ears to hear—it is shown by the Spirit how the God of grace was ready to overstep the limits of the chosen people and surmount the judgment of Babel, speaking to all the people in their own tongue—highest testimony of grace towards the world!

The barriers remained, but God surmounted them—passed over them—in order to announce the Savior's grace and salvation unto the whole world. We also see this special gift every time that God intervenes anew, as in Samaria and in the house of Cornelius. In fact, it was impossible that a glorified Savior should be only the Jewish Savior. The history of this people, when they had rejected the Savior, was finished, save by grace: and the eternal redemption of God could not be for the Jews alone.

The visible character that the Holy Spirit takes corresponds to this work. When it descended on Christ, the Spirit was like unto a dove, symbol of the meekness and sweet tranquility of Him of whom it was written, "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory" (Matt. 12:19-20). But to the disciples He said, "That which I say in the darkness, tell it in the light; and that which ye have heard in the ear, proclaim it on the house-tops."

The Spirit came then as an impetuous wind, filling all the house, and as cloven tongues of fire. The partition was symbolical of the diverse languages, the fire of the penetrating power of the word of God, discernor of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. It seems to us, that not only the apostles, but all the one hundred and twenty, were invested with this power. They were all together; and the explanation given by Peter of the prophecy of Joel confirms the matter (Joel 1:14-15; 2:1,17).

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in strange tongues, according as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now, at Jerusalem, men of all countries were present, and the rumor of what had happened brought them together. This great crowd was astonished to hear each his own dialect, speaking together and saying, "Are not all these Galileans? How then do we hear each his own tongue?" They were in doubt, saying, "What meaneth this?" Others, caviling, said, "They are full of new wine." These were, especially the Jews, always prone to incredulity.

To them Peter replies, speaking firmly in their mother tongue, and makes them understand that this was what Joel had said, prophesying that these things should happen in the last days. It is clear, on reading Joel 1 doubt not, that the Holy Spirit will be poured out anew when Israel is re-established in its own land. It will then be the rain of the latter season. Remark that verse 30 of Joel 2 should come before those preceding. These things will happen before the terrible day of the Lord comes: but the blessings are after that day. Peter says, in a general way, "in the last days," and speaks of judgment as yet to come, as in fact was the case.

But what is important in his discourse is the presentation to the conscience of the Jews of their actual position: because, whatever the case may be, God is always clear and positive in the declaration and in the setting out of the sins of those souls where grace works. In short, this was their position; they had outraged and crucified Him whom God had set at His right hand, His own Son. Him they had put to death, and God had raised Him up, besides what had been demonstrated by the power manifested in His works. Horrible position! and we say it not only for the Jews, but for all men. Their Messiah, foundation of all their hopes, rejected; the Son of God put to death—a rupture which seemed irreparable between God and man; and on man's side, it was in fact irreparable.

All was lost. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and mankind had refused it. Sin was there, transgression against the law was already there: God had come in grace, and man had not received Him. Now He had gone back into heaven; but, blessed be His name, the counsels of God were not frustrated: far from that, they were accomplished. Grace had won the victory; and where man had manifested his enmity against God, God had manifested His love towards man, and accomplished the work for the salvation of believers in Christ. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by hand of lawless men have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).

God has made use of the iniquity and enmity of man to accomplish the work of redemption. The enmity of man and the love of God were contrasted in the same fact on the cross, in the glorious manifestation that His love surpassed and surmounted the enmity of man. Woe to him who neglects and refuses this immense grace, this work alone efficacious for salvation!

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Paul's Preaching of a Glorified Christ, Peter's Witnessing

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

The next point noticed is St. Paul's preaching a glorified Christ, not a lowly One. It is quite true: and equally true that he was not called to be a witness of Christ's oral teachings. So it is declared in his mission as distinguished from that of the twelve. He was to be the great witness of that part of truth which put Jew and Gentile on the same footing in a heavenly way, which could only be in connection with a glorified Christ. But if that be supposed to mean, that he attached no importance to the history of Christ's humiliation,¹ nothing can be more false; only he takes it up, as he does all else, as a part of the vast counsels and plans and purposes of God.

The following passages, not to speak of unnumbered ones which speak of the cross, will prove what I say. In John 15:26, 27, it is said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." They were eye-witnesses of His life down here. As to Paul's ministry, it is said, Acts 26:16, "But rise and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Here we have the two commissions clearly stated.

So Peter calls himself a witness of Christ's sufferings, and a partaker of the glory to be revealed. Paul not only speaks of "the gospel of the glory," but says, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" his Lord; and, instead of speaking of himself as a witness of the sufferings and partaker of the glory, seeks "the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings." He descends, so to speak, into the sufferings, because of the glory, and as the way to his high calling above. He does not speak of waiting for its revelation. And this was so very distinct, that Peter proposes, in Acts 3, to the Jews repentance, that Christ may return to them; Paul never. Peter's testimony had been rejected, and Stephen killed and received on high; and there was no thought then but receiving Jew and Gentile through the ministry of him whom grace had called away from Stephen's martyr-ground, and from the apostleship of Jewish hatred, to Christ, to be the witness of heavenly things connected with that glorious Christ, by the vision of whom on the way to Damascus he was arrested, and his pride laid low. The Holy Ghost also opened his spiritual eye on the Lord, leading him to preach Him whom once he destroyed.

Hence he boldly declares, after speaking of the "gospel of the glory," that he does not know Christ in the former or Jewish way, after the flesh; and that if any man was in Christ, there was a new creation—he belonged to what took him out of Jew and Gentile; as it had been said to him by Christ, when He appeared to him by the way, "Delivering thee from the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee." But this only fills up the perfectness of the gospel revelation in its place. And the humiliation of Christ takes, in Paul's view, all its immense and vast importance in the counsels of God, and is not a mere personal history, perfectly interesting and divinely instructive as that is in its place; for the gospel has a thousand aspects in one divine truth.

Paul was eminently the vessel of the counsels of God in Christ. Does that make the personal history of Jesus less interesting, less profoundly, divinely, though humanly, instructive? No; the heart goes back to study in every detail, One who in every detail was divine love and holiness, near enough to man's eye to study it for himself. But how does Paul speak of this? See the sweep of truth with which he brings Christ's humiliation in: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." What a place does His humiliation fill here! Again, take His, so to speak, official exaltation: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

Thus the history of Christ's humiliation was looked at by Paul, through the Holy Ghost, not in the touching detail of Christ's individual life, of which he was not witness, but as one immense fact, and a cardinal one, in the vast scheme of God. This was exactly in its place, and in keeping with the service for which he was employed. John gives us the divine nature; Paul, the divine counsels; Peter, the walk of him who has a lively hope through the resurrection of One whose walk he had known and followed in its bright display on earth, towards the heaven into which resurrection is meant to introduce us (all founding the accomplishment of blessing on the redemption which He has wrought out for us).

Mr. N. next complains of Paul not affording us the grounds on which he believed the facts as to Christ's resurrection.²

I have, in principle, answered this. The business of a revelation is to afford the objects of faith in such a full display as makes the evidence of it, not to discuss the logical grounds of its reception. Nothing can be more absurd, more demonstrative of the petty narrowness of mind which cannot discern the true character of what is before it, than the claim of such a logical discussion in scripture. Moral appeals of the most touching character to all, the evidences given and slighted, are indeed found. That we can understand. But I venture to say, there is not a right-thinking man in existence, who would not (if he had found in the New Testament a discussion on the logical grounds of evidence) have at once concluded that it was not, or at least that such a portion formed no part of, a revelation of God.

Even as to logic, I must beg to be entirely exempted from partnership in that of Mr. N. "Our" is a very comfortable, comprehensive word; as if his reasoning were the universal grounds of enlightened modern conviction. I must beg to think, poorly as I esteem men's competency in such matters, that is far from being the case: Take the example Mr. N. appeals to Paley. He has examined all these subjects with a clear and accurate mind; he has come, and written to show why he has come, to the full conviction of the authenticity and divine authority of that to

which Mr. N. denies both. What kind of logic had he?

("How different was the logic [Paul's] from ours! To see the full force of the last remark, we ought to conceive how many questions a Paley would have wished to have asked Paul; and how many details Paley himself, if he had had the sight, would have felt it his duty to impart to his readers." (Phases, pp. 181, 182.))

But let us ourselves examine the evidence St. Paul affords in writing to the Corinthians. The question was, Will the saints rise again? The proof of the resurrection, insisted on as evidence, is the fact of Christ's resurrection; for if there be no resurrection, then Christ is not raised; and the whole gospel, which is really founded on it, falls to the ground. Besides, therefore, a doctrinal statement (to which the evidence of his own mission, already afforded, gave authority), he appeals to historical proofs. And what are they? Some one apparition to an excited individual, whose imagination may have misled him? No; different and repeated manifestations of Himself by Christ to persons who very well knew Him. The apostle states (besides these manifestations of Christ taking place often to those who were intimate with Him) on one occasion He appeared to some five hundred persons, of whom the apostle takes care to say that the greater part are still living to testify, if needed, to the truth of the statement. Now what so good evidence can you have of a person being actually there, as being repeatedly seen by those who knew him well, his daily companions; and (if prejudice or feeling may be alleged as leading a dozen of them to concur in and continue a most elaborate falsehood, and suffer for it) having the certainty of the truth confirmed by His being seen by above five hundred persons at once, who were then most of them living to tell the story? It is difficult to imagine what "our logic" could have, in the way of evidence, more convincing.

St. Paul, it is true, does not discuss its validity; but he produces what is valid; and that is just what he had to do. We are discussing it now; we do not want St. Paul for that. When he wrote, they were living to be examined who had seen Him. What other kind of evidence would Mr. N. require? What other could he have? Would he require some palpable proof of its being real? Christ eats and drinks with them after He arose from the dead. Is he still unbelieving? Thomas, happily for us, had the same skepticism; and Christ's wounded side and pierced hands extorted the acknowledgment of the fact, and of the divine person to whom such a fact testified.

And remark here, we are discussing the nature of the evidence afforded.³ It will be said, "You should bring the proof of enemies as well as friends." Were such adduced, it would have been equally alleged, they would not have known Him; and if convinced, were they to be excluded as witnesses, because they were honest enough to become friends? Must a man be necessarily a skeptic to have truth and sense? I judge a man more honest who avows his convictions and suffers for them. I can produce thousands, ay, millions, of skeptics, who are constantly making profession, for their ease' sake, of this and many things besides, which they do not believe. This was certainly not the course of those who received and professed the testimony of Jesus. But I do bring the best proof of that kind (that is, of thousands of enemies thoroughly convinced by the evidence they had where the facts occurred, so that they embraced and suffered for the truth of it).

Among them was St. Paul, who, not for his conviction but that he might be an eye-witness, did see Him when he was an enemy. He very modestly introduces this, with the expression of the sense of his own unworthiness, but declares expressly here in Corinthians, as he does elsewhere, that he saw the Lord. St. Paul then produces five hundred witnesses, and declares they are alive. The simplicity of the proof needed no comment. It has the dignity of a plain, unanswerable testimony. It wanted no "extravagating,"⁴ no "reveling" in it. It carried its own weight. He adduces his own testimony in the same simple way-" Last of all he was seen of me also."

Mr. N. asks, "Did he see Him as a man in a fleshly body, or as a glorified, heavenly form?" (Phases, p. 182.) There was such a manifestation of glory as left no mistake with any present, though they were not intended to be eye-witnesses of Jesus, nor to hear His voice. The general blaze of glory and the sound from heaven confounded them, and they fell to the earth. Paul, to whom the Lord meant to reveal Himself, then saw the glorified Lord, and heard His voice speaking to him-answered Him, received His reply at large and in detail. He made no mistake as to the glorious light; and when One who gave such plain proof of glory, and whom he saw in a glory which surpassed the sun's brightness, declared to him Himself that He was Jesus, Paul believed the glorious One he saw from heaven. Perhaps Mr. N. might not have done so, might have been "disobedient to the heavenly vision;" but I know not that he would have proved his wisdom in his disobedience. And, though Mr. N. does not like threats, there certainly is a day which will declare it, or the grace (as the Lord grant it may be!) which has forgiven it.

But this was not all the evidence Paul had, nor all he refers to. A godly, sober man, well reported of by his enemies and the truth's, but whom he did not know, comes to him unsent for, and declares to him that he has had a vision, and that he has been sent to him by the same Jesus who had appeared to him by the way; and not only this, but that he had been sent to give him back his sight, which accordingly took place, and moreover that he should receive the Holy Ghost. Accordingly we find Saul, previously astounded by the vision, and the immense revolution it must have produced in his mind to find he was fighting against the Lord of glory, and that all the heads of his religion were the bitter enemies of the glorious Christ of the God they professed to serve-we find him, I say, boldly, with great force and conviction, proving that the Jesus whose disciples he persecuted was indeed the Christ, and soon naturally becoming himself the object of persecution, but persevering to the end.

Now was the glory seen by all-the confounding voice from heaven-the vision of His person by Saul-the detailed conversation in which he was convinced and his mission given to him, confirmed by the independent evidence of Ananias the righteous Jew-his receiving his sight and such spiritual power as confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus-all confirming the reality of the positive declaration of One whom he saw in glory, that He was Jesus-evidence which changed the man's whole life -of such a character as proved a man had "lax notions of evidence,"⁵ because he was convinced by it? I apprehend that when he had himself seen the Lord, talked with Him, received from Him sight and power, he did not think much about notions of evidence, because he had a full revelation for himself. He might leave it easily to skeptics, and wonder at their notions, well convinced that "if his gospel was hid, it was hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." He had seen that Just One and heard the words of His mouth. He had told him who He was. All was confirmed by signs of power and holiness and truth. What needed he more?

And remark here, that all the testimony of the apostle bears the stamp of this for some thirty years after. His gospel is "the gospel of the glory of Christ." He knows Him only in this way, knows Him for himself-his doctrine, the union of the Church with Him who said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest"-the deliverance from Jewish habits of thinking in so remarkable a way-the very hatred of the Jews perpetuated to

this day-all bear the stamp of the origin of his mission by this vision of Christ. As to the character of his testimony, Mr. N. does not deny it; but effects show, more or less, their cause. And then here it was exactly what was needed, if it be true; just the point of progress at which Christianity had arrived. The Jews who sent Saul had denied and rejected it. The time was come to bring out the Church as such, and the Gentiles into a place common to them and to the Jews, dropping the privileges of the Jews (forfeited by rebellion persevered in against mercy); for they had "filled up their sins, and wrath was come upon them to the uttermost." The doctrine of Paul (of the reception of the Gentiles, and the building of the Church in union with its Head, Christ in glory) all flows naturally and necessarily from the vision on the way to Damascus; the sovereign grace which gave it to a Saul, stamped its character throughout.

My business is not with the logic of the apostle, but with his truth, with his testimony. I may look for it in Mr. N.; and his reasonings, which expect logic from a witness instead of his testimony, are as illogical as they are narrow and petty in their scope of apprehension of the character and effect of the evidence.

Mr. N. says, "Peter does not attest the bodily, but only the spiritual resurrection of Jesus." (Phases, p. 184.) I can only say to this, that Mr. N.'s views of Greek are as narrow as of logic. Indeed, he must be a hardy man, and have very "lax notions of evidence," who could allege Peter as one who attested only the spiritual resurrection of Jesus. He it is who declared the twelve were witnesses of it, having eaten and drunk with Him after He rose from the dead. They preached Jesus and the resurrection- that neither did His soul remain in Hades, nor His flesh see corruption. He it was who proposed that one of those who had constantly accompanied Jesus should be with them-a witness of His resurrection.

But will Mr. N. say that ζωοποιηεῖς πνεύματι or τῷ π. means simply that His spirit was raised and not His body? Is that the simple force of the dative in Greek (viz., to be the direct object of the active power of the verb)? Mr. N. knows just as well as I do that it is not; and that his remark has no solid foundation whatever. For if Mr. N.'s remark has any weight, it is that ζ.π. meant that His spirit was made alive. On the face of it this would be absurd, because the only thing put to death, if we so take it, was the flesh; for it is said, θανατωθεῖς μὲν σαρκί. The inquiry as to the Messianic prophecies remains.

General Remarks

Letters 1, Philip's Four Daughters; Woman's Place in the Work

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

*** The word of God teaches very clearly that the woman ought to keep silence in the assemblies. If it is only a question of conversation, a gathering of friends, of an evening spent together, the woman, with due regard to the modesty of her sex, is as free as another. She may exercise her gifts (for there were prophetesses) freely, according to the word of God; but in all that really takes the character of the assembly, that is to say, of souls gathered corporately in the name of Jesus, the woman is to be silent: whether we are taking the Lord's supper, or not, she is to be silent in the assembly.

Our dear sister... has knowledge, and a facility for communicating it, and she may, without doubt, make use of these gifts in private; for in the epistles we see many women who labored in the work, and who helped the apostle Paul himself, so that he makes mention of them in his letters, or rather the Spirit of God has honored them in this manner. May God preserve us from not taking account of it in the present day. But the order of the house of God is always the path of blessing, and no expedient for filling up the gaps which in fact there are can be blessed in the long run, though it may at the moment seem to be useful.

The directions given by the apostle as to the deportment of a woman who prays, or prophesies, in nowise alter the instruction, "Let your women keep silence in the assemblies." In 1 Cor. 11, it is only with verse 17 that the directions for the assembly begin.

The case of the daughters of Philip shows that these gifts were exercised elsewhere than in the assembly.

1851.

Letters 1, Combining an Occupation With Service; Exercises to Fit for Service; the Lord's Work Combined With Secular Work

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

Dearest Brother,—I was glad to hear you were occupied and found openings. I judge any occupation, such as commercial traveler (which I mention because some one said you thought of it), would engross you, and lead you where divinely-given work might not be. All I should think of, supposing your time was not fully occupied, would be to do something which would fill it up, which you could relinquish when service called. In a wild country this is even easier than in an old one, only it requires a little faith and energy. If you found you were not called in your heart to work, that is a different question. It depends on our love to souls. God draws out our hearts after them when He moves us to serve Him in these things. Then it is a great matter to follow the Lord's leading where His Spirit is working, and, above all, self-sacrifice and devotedness: this, above all, I feel to be the great matter.

There is another thing that you will have to consider, that is, that true work is not like ordination to an office where a routine is to be gone through, and, if blessing comes, it is all well. There are exercises of soul; there is, even when we have the truest desire to serve, so much in us that has to be exercised to fit us for service. You might say, did not Paul preach at once? Yes; but he was then set aside for some years till Barnabas went to seek him. Moses was forty years thus set aside. Now I do not say that every one is thus, as to the form of it, set aside; but

as to the flesh-making nothing of us-it is true. It may be by, as to men, a little valued exercise as to ministry, so as to be cast on the Lord, and our motives purified; or, where more-exercised gifts are, so that, though we may work with blessing in less conspicuous spheres, notice is elsewhere. This is not a question of gift exactly, but that maturing of the vessel which connects gift with the state of soul, so as to give on the one hand subjection, earnestness, and seriousness; and enables the laborer to connect truth with the souls of his hearers. Now when the Lord calls us and exercises us thus, we may often be occupied partially with other occupations, as not having our time filled. I should not feel happy at the thought of seeking one's mere livelihood, if called to serve the Lord, through anything like a want of faith. It mars faith for the work itself, just as mere worldly occupation or attention to men, however amiable. We are not our own; "occupy till I come" is the word. All I look for in the last case I have put s where work does not call. It is healthful not to charge the church. It is not healthful to neglect work where it does call, not healthful even to our own souls. Our heavenly Father knows we have need of all these things. We have also to consider the difference of gift. All is not public speaking; visits, reading meetings are as important in their own way as public discourses, sometimes work when other work cannot be done....

My earnest hope would be that the Lord has called you to work. But suppose (I do not in the least judge so, or the contrary) the Lord had given you more of a pastor's and teacher's work than an evangelist's, this naturally requires more maturity even for the teaching, still more for pastorship. During the process we might, in a measure, spare the burden to the church: if it dragged us out of the exercise of the gift or the service which matured for us, it would be a great pity. In a certain sense I believe I was put into official ministry immaturely; but I know God makes all things work together for good to those who love Him. You are perhaps as happily placed for growing up into ministry as may be. If anything which leaves you free you could do, as I said in my last, it would be so far a testimony. Elders (Acts 20), though counted worthy of double honor, are exhorted to labor for their temporal wants. A moving evangelist would find it very hard unless he had a Paul's energy. If brethren are scattered, not having a home is an advantage: one does not waste just half one's strength in returning to it. It greatly facilitates the work. I have largely worked in this way. If the work is local, save occasional visits to a distance, where one may stay a night, it is better to have one, a gift of some sort.

I trust the blessing continues at Hamilton, but there are first last, and last first. May He keep us doing "this one thing" and walking with Him.

Affectionately yours, dear brother.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Miscellaneous 3, Acts 20:28

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

As regards the translation of the Greek in Acts 20:28 ("with his own blood," A.V.), I have not much to say. As to the fear of its touching the divinity of Christ, a person must be very ill-grounded in that fundamental truth to have any such feeling; the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ, His being truly God, Jehovah, I AM, is too inseparably a part of the whole texture of Scripture, too plainly stated in Scripture, and still more strongly proved, if possible, by the way it is supposed or assumed and implied in passages where it is no direct subject of revelation. Nothing could be more mischievous than the resting the divinity of the Lord Christ on this passage—a passage tortured by critics, no two of whom hardly can agree upon it. With the exception of Scholz, hardly any noted critic has simply 'God' in the passage at all. Indeed, as far as I know Mill is the only one; the principal ones have not 'God' at all, reading 'Lord' instead. Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, all read the Church of the Lord '-Matthaei, 'Lord and God,' which Middleton approves, and Alford and others of more weight than he reject as perfectly untenable. Afford read 'Lord' in his first edition; and saying, that as B in the Vatican has it by the first hand, the evidence of manuscripts is balanced; but on internal evidence he reads 'God' in the second. To me it remains uncertain if it be by the first hand, for the transcript of the MS is not to be trusted. Wetstein prefers 'Lord.' The new Codex Sinaiticus reads 'God.' But A C D E and many others read 'Lord.' Many more, but modern read 'Lord and God.' It would be monstrous to rest a vital doctrine on a text evidently tampered with. Even in Athanasius to Seraphion (t: 522), the printed text has 'God,' but other MSS 'Lord' or 'Christ.' I suppose we may account Athanasius as a sufficient champion of the true divinity of the blessed Lord. Of all ancient writers he is known to be the undaunted and suffering defender of this truth against the whole body of Arians, the Emperor and all, and died an exile for this truth. Now, not only in the passage quoted by critics he declares that the blood of God is never used by itself, and that it is Arianism; but the argument of his two books against the Apollinarians, particularly the second book, is based on this. It forms, I may say, the whole point and subject of the second. He denounces as Arian such language as saying, 'God suffered,' or speaking of His blood flowing. He treats it as the madness of the Arians. He says that if it be said that God suffered, "in flesh" even, then the Father and the Comforter have suffered, for they are all one'; and concludes, 'The Word is God, if you look at His immortality (athanasia) and incorruptibility and immutability; but man, in His nailing to the cross, and the flowing of His blood, and the burial of His body, and descent into Hades and resurrection from the dead. Thus the Christ is raised from the dead, and being God raises the dead.' He says we are to be content to say, 'Christ has suffered for us in the flesh.' I cannot quote more here: it is, as I have said, the argument of the whole second book. The reader may find a multitude of the Fathers also object to the expression too. They may be found in notes to critical editions. Wetstein gives many of them. At any rate, speaking of the sufferings of God or His blood-shedding is denounced as being Arianism by him, who best knew what Arianism was, and the greatest champion for the blessed truth of Christ's divinity who ever lived. The Arians and Apollinarians did so speak; because the Arians did not hold that Christ was of one nature with the Father, and the Apollinarians held that Christ had no human, intellectual soul, but that the divinity took its place in the Christ. Hence, the former had no difficulty that what was a creature, however elevated, suffered; and the latter must have made God suffer as the mind in Christ, or else He must have ceased to be. Hence, Athanasius opposed them so energetically, and said it was running into Arianism; and hence we can easily see how he rejected an expression such as the one we are considering. Now I admit it was reasoning, not criticism. If I found it in Scripture, I should certainly not mind Athanasius, but take it as what is called *koinonia* idiomaton, dangerous and slippery as that ground is, if it ever be justified as to the natures of the Lord. I read, "the Son of man who is in heaven"; but that by His Person passes into His divine nature. But I do not believe the natures are so spoken of. They are not to be confounded any more than the Person divided. I do not want to speculate on such subjects. I only say this to express my subjection to scripture language, if such there be. But it is ridiculous to make a matter of orthodoxy, as a fundamental proof of Christ's divinity, what Athanasius denounces as denying that divinity, and being Arianism.

Now for my own part I believe-have always thought-the reading ' the church of God ' to be right. If dia you idiou haimatos was the reading in this place, then " the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood " would be the only right translation; and so the English translators read it. But I confess I agree with Athanasius that such language is not according to Scripture analogy and its expression of the truth. It is not a question of the divinity of the Lord, one way or the other, but of the fitness of speaking of the blood of God. I do not think such an expression scriptural. I do not accept the title even of the Mother of God. I believe it revolts just and divinely-given thoughts in the mind, and turns away from the true, eternal divinity of the blessed Lord. He who was God had a mother, and He who was God shed His blood; but I do not think Scripture speaks of God's shedding His blood. I think it revolts the mind as wrong, unseemly-I will say, profane. I know what a person means and I bear with it, because I delight in his holding the true, essential deity of the Lord. But I agreed with Athanasius, when I had never read him, when I examined the passage in this view, in thinking such expressions contrary to the analogy of the faith. As regards the translation of ' dia you haimatos you idiou ' " by the blood of His own," that it is Greek is I judge beyond controversy, in spite of the confident pretensions of some, and the slighting remarks of others. In John 15:19, we have this usage, which anyone may find in a dictionary. " If ye were of the world, the world would love its own "-to idion ephilei.' It is an unquestionable Greek usage. Of course, it can be translated, " by His own blood." The question is, which is right. ' To idion ' is that which is specially near and identified with any one, as our word, " own." Hence it is said, " He spared not His own Son." God has purchased the church with that which was His own, nearest and dearest to Himself: a thought as apt and beautiful as possible here. Of that there can be no question. The singular seems to me more intimate than the plural, but I could not here give any proof that I am right. At all events, no expression would be more appropriate, hardly any, it seems to me, so strong. God purchased the Church with that which was most near to Himself and most dear to Himself. This seems to me a most forcible expression, peculiarly expressive in the circumstances-more so, it seems to me, than that which would have expressed the relationship of the blessed Lord to His Father, whatever the essential importance of that may be in its place. The force of the sentence is in the word 'idion' (English own), which is to me a deeply touching expression.

Since I translated the passage, I have found the first biblical scholars, dead and living, discussing this translation without the smallest idea of its not being sound Greek. Doederlein proposed it. Michaelis suggests this rendering. Meyer says the text was changed from ' you haimatos you idiou ' to ' you idiou haimatos ' because the latter, which is admitted not to be the true reading, obliged men to translate it, ' the blood of God ': allowing this, that with the true reading it is not necessary to do so. The, only other translation is the one I have given. I am thoroughly satisfied that all the tampering with the text, which for so short a passage is almost unexampled, arose from not simply taking it as I have done. For my own part I think that you haimatos you idiou ' applied to God, is unnatural and objectionable. This use of ' idios ' after a substantive is rare in the New Testament, just because it has a contrasting and emphatic force. When it is used with haima ' elsewhere, it is put before. Heb. 9:12; ch. 13: 12. When idios ' is put after, it is contrast or special emphasis. Of Christ it is said (Mark 15:20), they took the purple off Him, and put on Him His own clothes (' ta himatia ta idia '). Judas went eis ton topon ton idion'- " to his own place," not meaning that which was naturally his, but as could be said really of no other man, one appropriate to himself. Any man may go to his place (eis ton idion topon) but eis ton topon ton idion ' raises the question, why is it so peculiarly his own? It is to that place which was peculiarly his own. So He spared not His own Son 'you idiou huiou,' not 'you huiou you idiou,' 2 Tim. 4:3 their own lusts ' tas epithumias tas idias,' their own proper lusts in contrast with God's will, which they ought to have done. When it is simply the fact, it is (James 1:14) " his own lust " (tes idias epithumias). I have given all the cases, I believe, in the New Testament of this emphatic use. It is the general force of an adjective so placed after with an article. Now I confess this seems to me to make it singularly inapposite to be applied to the blood of God, that blood which was peculiarly God's own in contrast with all other. I would not fail in reverence in speaking on such things, but it does seem to me that such a contrasted use of God's blood as distinguished from all other is irreverent and somewhat shocking. The question is not on the divinity of the Lord, I repeat. Athanasius even charges such kind of language with being Arian. It is whether we are authorized (again I dread irreverence, but it is not mine but theirs who would insist on it) to speak of God's own blood as God, for that would be the proper force of it.

Of the genitive ' idiou ' after a noun, there is no example in Scripture. For my own part I am perfectly satisfied that " by the blood of His own "-that is, what was more than our words of 'near' and 'dear' can possibly convey, it was God's own dear and beloved Son—is the true translation.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Cures Effected by Napkins

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

The reason why napkins from Paul's body¹ had an importance, that pocket-handkerchiefs dipped in martyrs' blood had not, is as simple as possible. In Paul's case God was confirming the word preached by Paul by signs following; in the other case He was not. I must say, if a person has not some more sensible objections to make, it is hardly fair to waste rational people's time with such as these.

Bible Herald: 1877, Meditations on the Acts of the Apostles: Chapter 17:16-31

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

Translated From the Italian of J. N. D.

Now at Athens the sight of the idolatry ardently practiced in that city pressed heavily on the spirit of the Apostle. He reasons in the synagogue with the Jews, and daily in the market with them that met with him. Athens had been a city famous for the glory of its arts and of its arms, and for its schools of philosophy, Having succumbed to the Roman yoke, it had lost its importance, and lived in idleness, seeking for some new thing, still philosophizing, and boasting in the memory of its ancient glory in pagan philosophy, surpassed perhaps by that of Alexandria and Tarsus (where Paul himself had been educated), although where the leaders of Roman society studied. The fruit was not great in this vain and idle city, but the instruction for us is precious.

The Apostle's discourse at the Areopagus was not the preaching of the Gospel. It was his apology before an ancient tribunal whose decisions had, in times gone by, possessed great weight, but which then, though still allowed to exist, no longer retained its ancient importance. But the fact that the Apostle was obliged to present himself before the tribunal, gave him the opportunity of manifesting the wisdom and grace he possessed through the Spirit of God. As we have seen he preached in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. In the market-place, where the philosophers and town's people met together, he announced Jesus and the resurrection, His person, His victory over death, the testimony that God had accepted the sacrifice of Christ; and moreover that in Him we are admitted into a new creation (a position which Adam, even in innocence, never occupied) the kingdom of the second, of the last Adam.

I do not say that all these points were unfolded, but the Apostle announced the grand foundations on which all these truths are built up. He did so according to the need and capacity of his hearers; and nobody is so incapable as a philosopher, and those under his influence, and who walk in the vain thought of being something, when in reality they are nothing; and such was the true character of the Athenians. Knowledge is blinding. Human intelligence does not know God. God enters the conscience when he speaks in order to make Himself known; and in proportion to the pretension of the human mind to intelligence, is the hardness and inaction of the conscience. It is as though dead, and man as though he had none, and therefore no capacity to receive the truth whereby he may know God. These wise men thought that Jesus and the resurrection were gods, so far were they from the truth. The mind of man, and the activity of his intelligence, when it is a question of morality and of God, can do nothing but always drive him farther and farther away. He finds no basis for morality, and consequently no true rule; and when God is submitted to the human understanding, He is no longer God in any sense. God does not present Himself to man in order to know what he ought to be. Conscience and faith put God in His own place, and man in his true relation to God; and the Word is the means of doing so, the Word in which God reveals Himself, and shows what man is.

Some mocked the Apostle, saying, "What will this babbler say?"

Ridicule is often a means in the hands of the enemy to turn away souls from the truth, because men are afraid to identify themselves with what others despise. Conscience and moral courage are the very last things to be found in the heart of man; grace awakens conscience, and gives strength to follow it.

Still here was something new; and that was always enough for the Athenians, fatigued by the nonentity of their existence. Accordingly they lead. Paul to the Areopagus, once honorable and honored, in order to know what this new doctrine might be. Because however frivolous philosophical opinions may be, they cannot quietly endure either truth or Christ.

One human opinion may be as good as another; but the testimony of God operates on the conscience, and demands the heart.

Paul, surely taught by the Holy Ghost, replies in the Areopagus with admirable wisdom, and a calm love which lays hold on the sole circumstance to which he could attach the truth he desired to communicate to them. His practiced eye had observed in the city the only little remnant of truth by which he could lead them to recognize their true position.

It was not simply a declaration of the salvation of the soul, which had already occupied him in the synagogue and public marketplace; here he explains the true character of the religion of idols, but with perfect delicacy; and seeks to bind that remnant of truth which the enemy had not been able to destroy, with truth more positive, with the name of Jesus, and with that which appealed to the conscience.

The people of the city, idle and at heart skeptical, were given up to idolatry; and the circle of the gods being exhausted, they had dedicated an altar to the unknown God. It is said that in former times a fatal malady had reigned in the city; and that the inhabitants, having prayed in vain to all the gods to remove the plague, had consulted an oracle, who directed them to dedicate an altar to the unknown God. It is unnecessary, however, to seek for any special source of this worship. At the bottom of all idolatry there is the idea of God, corrupted, and taken possession of by satan, so that men may worship demons; but the idea cannot be eradicated from the heart of man. Infidels seek to do so, but it always remains at the bottom of the heart, in spite of all their efforts. It is born with the birth of man, and creation bears witness too clear and too strong to allow the heart to believe that everything was made by nothing. And then conscience speaks too loud to allow it to be unharkened to. Man does not want God, and tries to forget Him; he reasons, and seeks diversions, but the thought always returns, and possibility makes itself felt. He endeavors to get rid of the thought by every means, but still it is always there; and the thought of God always makes us feel guilty.

God is to be found in all idolatries, neglected and forgotten, it is true; but He exists in all mythologies, and is found in the conscience when awakened by fear. When men are in agony (so says a Christian of pagan times) they do not say, "Oh, immortal Gods," but "Oh God, a proof, I would add, of a soul naturally Christian." They made great gods and little gods, placed a god or a goddess at fountains, in woods, and everywhere they could see the operations of nature; but behind everything remained the deep feeling that there was one only and all powerful God. Thus among the Brahmins in India, in Egypt, among the Sabeans, among the Scandinavians, there were gods without end, but one God not worshipped, but owned as the source of everything. This God, the author of all, rested in darkness. In India not a single temple was ever dedicated to him, but still He exists and is the source of everything. Among the Sabeans, the ancient Persians, there was another kind of pagan religion which recognized Ahirnian and Ahrmasda, a bad and a good god, and in which God was worshipped in fire, and which had no idol; there was another god as the source of these. I say source, because a creation was not owned among the pagans. (See Heb. 11:3.)

The imagination, under the influence of satan, created gods everywhere, but at the bottom the idea of God was there. And yet this God, the true, was unknown—deplorable state of mankind, deprived of God, of whom they stood in such deep need; thus enemies to His true knowledge, because the conscience, which makes responsibility felt, could not endure His presence, because the heart desired things which the conscience in the presence of God condemned. They made gods who would help men to gratify their passions. Man cannot suffice to him, self; he has lost God, and fears Him; his heart stoops to that which is more degraded than himself. He seeks, but in vain, to satisfy the need of his heart by means of objects which degrade him, and make him forget God, of whom the thought is anguish to his heart.

God, the unknown God, now reveals Himself; and the Apostle, laying hold, with great happiness of thought, of the inscription on the altar, announces the true God, whom they did not know. This is not the Gospel; but he identifies the God he had already preached in the Gospel of

Jesus and of the resurrection, with the truth they themselves admitted, and defending it, speaks to the conscience. The unknown God would judge the world by this Jesus, in that He had raised Him from the dead. This truth he applies to their conscience and to idolatry, under the yoke of which they were subjected. By the power of the Spirit in Paul they stood accused, convicted of having falsified the idea of God and denied His glory, the glory of the only Creator, for they had only recognized Him by the confession that He was unknown.

Here was what was done by the apostle, He announced to them clearly this true God. He had manifested Himself in the gift of life, and in the things necessary to sustain that life. Through the conscience, He was then not far from each of them. During the times of ignorance, God had borne with the wanderings of man; He had passed them over, without judgment. Now He was calling to all men everywhere to repent, because a day was appointed in the which He should judge the world (this habitable earth, for he speaks of the judgment of the *οἰκουμένη*) in righteousness by the Man whom He had ordained; whereof He had given assurance unto all men, in that He had raised Him from the dead. In this way He reveals by the power of the Spirit the one true Creator-God, the Sustainer of all things, the knowledge of whom had been lost in the folly of idolatry, into which man had been deluded by the enemy, who, by means of the passions of deceived beings, had made himself God. Then he declares the approaching judgment of this world by Jesus, the risen Man, but that grace, in the patience of God, invited all men to repent.

Such was the Apostle's defense; not of himself, truly; but he brings his hearers into the presence of God, and sets forth that which the conscience could not deny, and that this was what they ought to have known (Rom. 1:19,20). Then he reveals what was new, namely, that judgment was approaching, that it was to be executed by the Man established by God, of whom He had given assurance, in raising Him from the dead, as the public proof of His ways and power, which ended the path of man on earth, and enfeebled the power of satan. The accusers receive their own sentence. To the existence of God they say nothing, but many mock at the idea of resurrection.

It is the present exercise of the power of God that man cannot receive; let there be a God, and it is well; but let Him do something, let Him intervene presently, and man cannot willingly receive it. But the mighty word of the Apostle touches some hearts even among this frivolous people. The harvest is small, but God does not leave Himself without testimony. A few, believing the Gospel, join themselves to the servants of God; but the testimony being rendered, the Apostle remains there no longer. Philosophy and frivolity united, as is always the case, give a high opinion of self, are bad soil for grace, and do not deserve that God should wait long for the good will of vanity. Grace can be effective everywhere; but here judgment and testimony are given against philosophy and the pretensions of men.

Everlasting Glory.

Letters 3, Full Gospel; Gospel Preaching; What Preaching Should Be, The Effect of a

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

I do not know if you were at the meeting, and at any rate I can answer your questions undistracted here. Both sides of the gospel ought to be preached, and personal conviction of sin too, or repentance only founded on grace "my name." As regards saint and sinner, a great many saints want a clear gospel, and at any rate rejoice in it, if they possess it. If sinners come, there ought to be a gospel for them. But a full plain gospel is good for both.

There is what I have called a teaching gospel, say, like Heb. 9 and half 10, 2 Cor. 3, and other places. The facts are generally known, and much gospel preaching must be on the worth and bearing of facts, and that on heart and conscience, but the more the facts are insisted on, the more power I believe there will be. Christ, and what He has done.

Dwelling exclusively on meeting the sinner's need, though true, and revealing God's love, always sweet to the soul, lays a narrow basis for after-growth.

As regards the arrangement. If there is a desire in the assembly to have the gospel, and there is an open door, both being most heartily to be desired of the Lord—and there is no evangelistic gift in the assembly—I know nothing to hinder, without a dream, their saying "Come over and help us." The individuals being employed to seek one to come, is merely that the whole assembly cannot do it, and get one they trust to do it for them, and it is to be supposed that he does it in fellowship with the assembly; but except the moving spring of love to souls, the assembly merely furnishes the external opportunity, as I might open my house for the same purpose. He who comes to preach does it in the free exercise of his gift in his own responsibility to the Lord; for such ministry is directly from the Lord, and to be exercised in responsibility to Him.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Letters 2, Devotedness; Work and Its Fruits; Testimony

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

Positive work must be looked for in order to have fruit; and for the moment, unless God shews an open door which would lead on, the part of laboring brethren seems to be to look for growth and establishment in the centers where they are at work, pursuing it earnestly and steadily, so that there may be a solid nucleus of testimony according to God. It is a great thing to follow God in His work. The apostles were forbidden to preach the word in Asia, and then only going to Ephesus, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord." I do not mean that we are to give up any place, but to work patiently and fully where God is working. So Corinth, so Ephesus, so Antioch. If there is an efficient work, God Himself spreads the testimony. We must pray that the Lord raise up laborers for His harvest, and look at it as His work. God has blessed,

and is even now blessing, but I think the brethren are in a critical moment. How far, as a body, they are in a state to maintain their testimony, I do not know. There is occasion for much prayer, for the light they have received has spread out beyond them, and is held by those who do not walk with them. If their separateness and devotedness be made good according to Christ's heart, they will stand; if not, I do not see what good they are. What I fear is, their thinking well of themselves; but my trust is in the Lord. That the testimony confided to brethren was the truth of God for these days I have not a shadow of a doubt. Their maintaining it requires lowly and constant application to God.

Here the testimony is distinct, and has gone on. The opposition is very strong, but that we must expect. May the Lord keep us in earnest prayer, that He may maintain a true testimony to the glory of His own blessed Son, in times which He has taught us to look upon as perilous! In all my recent journeys the Lord has blessed, and given peace and growth - I mean in America.

[1877.]

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 4, Episcopacy: What Ground Is There in Scripture or History for Accounting It an Institution of God?

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

WERE it merely a question between one form of church government and another, no one would hear a word from me about it. If man forms a government, others will judge of it according to their habits of thinking, their early prejudices, or natural dispositions. But the establishment of episcopacy led on to popery, and was closely connected with the progressive corruption of Christendom. In modern times the same system is leading to the same result and associated with the same degrading superstitions. The system might sleep, but, awoke up, that is its universal path. It is well therefore to ascertain what true scriptural and historical ground there is for the episcopal system. Respect for position and authority is no unholy feeling, nor to be despised even as a natural one; but if the prestige of position is used to resist the truth and lead into error, as in the case of the high priests, we must not give up God's authority over us and the truth that sanctifies us for pretensions that after all have no real ground in scripture or history.

It cannot be expected that the great body of Christians should be able to search out in Benedictine tomes the facts of the case. I have given them here so that any one can judge of the claim that episcopacy has to be an institution of God. I am not aware of any historical testimony in its favor which has been omitted. I do not go into the gross corruption which rapidly sank Christianity to the level of heathenism. My object is the original title of what now professes to be the necessary channel of all spiritual grace and authority. No one denies that at the end of the second century the episcopal system, not the diocesan but one superior president of the principal local churches, was generally established. Our question is its origin; who established it?

First, it is perfectly clear that in scripture bishops and elders are the same thing (Acts 20; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). In Philippi Paul adds, to all the saints, "bishops and deacons"; and this, note, when he was in prison very late in his ministry, the last period of which we have any definite history, where we might have expected a bishop according to the later acceptance of the term if anywhere, now that the church was in a certain sense left to itself. So in Acts 14 he appoints for them elders in every church. The inspired author, in the formal constitution of the church, had no idea of any higher authority established by the apostle. Thus we have distinct and formal evidence of every kind: original constitution, Acts 14; address at the close of his life, Phil. 1:1, and those to whom he commends the church, Acts 20, when he thought he should see them no more.

That Paul knew no such thing as a prelate in the church, he neither institutes them nor recognizes them. If such there were, he treats them with absolute neglect, takes no notice of them, but charges others with duties which would have been incumbent upon them. The modern notion that Titus and Timothy were bishops has no ground in scripture whatever. They were personal companions of the apostle, whom he deputed for special services, and recalled them when it was done; and they stayed with him, or he sent them elsewhere. Peter knows no more of any such order than Paul, though we have fewer details. Elders were the usage among the Jews; all we have from him is "the elders which are among you." This utter contempt of the principal authority in the churches, if such there were, is utterly inconceivable.

There could not be stronger evidence against an individual superior authority in the churches, against episcopacy, than that which scripture affords. The only semblance of anything of the kind is James at Jerusalem: we find him closing the debate in Acts 15, and saying, "Wherefore my sentence is," etc. Peter, when delivered by divine intervention from prison, says, "Show these things to James, and the brethren," Acts 12:17. So Acts 21:18: "Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present." So in Gal. 1:19 he saw besides "James the Lord's brother." So chapter 2:12: certain came from James who made poor Peter afraid to eat any more with the Gentiles. We have thus clearly one who had great influence amongst the Jewish Christians, not always a happy one. It led Peter into dissimulation, Paul into the temple, so that his public ministry, as far as scripture goes, was closed. God may have overruled their effects and shown perfect and blessed grace-assuredly He did; but so it was in fact. But in his history there is no trace of episcopal care.

James' position in Acts 15, which seems to look most like it gives a clue to his local influence, which there was of the greatest importance. But it is quite inconsistent with a bishop's place. Either he was the apostle James, son of Alphaeus, or he was not; if he was, he gave his voice as such after the others, and as the most Jewish of all; and the very leader of Jewish thought and feeling, as Gal. 2:12 shows, and the other passages confirm, to say nothing of his being the Lord's brother, which it appears he was. His voice in such a case as the Jews compelling Gentiles to be circumcised was all-important and would naturally close the question the assembly had discussed. Peter and Paul had declared God's ways in their active ministry, and now James, the vessel of Jewish thought, brings in the conclusion of the matter.

Now all depended on the Jews accepting this: hence God had not allowed Paul to settle it by apostolic authority at Antioch. Had he done so, we should have had a Jewish church at Jerusalem, and a Gentile one at Antioch, rival and hostile centers. The Jews under grace must decide for Gentile freedom; and all was right; and so it was through God's gracious handiwork. If he was not an apostle but a bishop, then we have a bishop deciding over the heads of the apostles who were there and spoke, and, if this ground be taken, they spoke as inferiors.

We hear in history exterior to the Bible, that he not only had this influence over even unconverted Jews, but Josephus attributes the destruction of Jerusalem to their killing him. He had acquired the name of James the Just. His influence scripture does tell us of. (His epistle is to the twelve tribes, though with the faith of Christ the Lord of glory.) It neither gives him this or any analogous name, nor gives a hint of any episcopal service. Paul among the Gentiles, as we have seen, neither established nor knew such. And this his contemporaries, as far as we have them, confirm.

Clement gives us the same evidence as scripture, as far as he goes, and as history it is important; his epistle is universally received as genuine. He addresses the church; he knows no episcopacy there but that of the elders. As was just said of Paul, it was treating the bishop of Corinth with utter contempt if there were any such; but the evidence is positive: he knew of no such thing, but the contrary (C. 42). We read, "and thus preaching through countries and cities they appointed the firstfruits of their conversions to be bishops and deacons over such as should afterward believe," quoting Isaiah, right or wrong, for the purpose. So 44: " So likewise our apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ that contentions should arise on account of the ministry, and therefore having a perfect knowledge of this, they appointed persons as we have before said, and then gave a direction (epinomen, a difficult word if the reading be right) in what manner, when they should have fallen asleep, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry." And then he fully speaks of them in the plural, closing by saying, " blessed be those elders," etc. Clement's testimony then is perfectly clear on the subject. The apostle appointed elders, several, in a church; he arranged further succession; but of bishops, so-called now, he knows nothing. His statements contradict their existence.

Polycarp affords us the same testimony; he writes to the Philippians, desires them to be subject to the presbyters, but wholly ignores any so-called bishop, and speaks of the elders that were with him. Ignatius addresses him as bishop; and there is no doubt that Ignatius recognized the office. He does not in writing to the Romans or Ephesians in the Syriac; but the bishop is mentioned apart from elders, and no doubt there were such-not diocesan, which were very much later-in local churches. Ignatius uses them only to urge a spirit of subjection and so of unity. If the Greek epistles are nearly of this date, as some allege, it would be a proof that it was a new thing which, from the coming in of disorder and heresies, led the forger of them, finding that Ignatius had once so spoken in his letter to the Ephesians, to urge submission to the bishops and elders with a gross and offensive elaborateness of repetition, using Ignatius' name to give it currency. At all events we have no trace of a bishop till near the end of the first quarter of the second century, all previous testimony positively contradicting the existence of such.

This is the broad fact, and Polycarp's not calling himself so, when so called by Ignatius, just proves the earnest purpose of Ignatius to use it as a means of unity. A later tradition may connect itself with this, but scripture directly contradicts its existence, as does the earliest history. Barnabas-a very early writer at any rate, if not the true Barnabas-probably the earliest and with more personal faith, does not speak of it. And Hermas, who came thirty years or more after Ignatius, does not speak of any episcopacy, but makes the angel to desire Hermas to tell the presbyters what was said. But no bishop appears; yet he does blame the way presbyters sought to be first or chief. At the close of the second century their existence as presidents of churches in a city was general.

The country was still largely or chiefly pagan, the word meaning a villager. But for some hundred and twenty years, not only is scripture, which has final authority, most clear, giving another system than episcopacy, but, after this, history confirms the same as existing, and that by unexceptionable testimony, where it is recognized as a fact without any motive to lead to it but the existence of the fact; whereas the motives of the earliest testimonies to the existence of episcopacy betray an anxious, earnest, desire to maintain it. Justin Martyr even speaks of no bishop; but his testimony can hardly be cited for any system, as he only speaks of the earliest meeting of an assembly, and of one that presides in it, and of deacons. Were this all the testimony of nearly the first hundred years after Christ, it is clear against episcopacy, the scripture establishing formally another system which excludes it. But testimony to the contrary is alleged, especially from Irenaeus, but also from Tertullian; and we may add Hegesippus, an old historian in Eusebius. Now that there were local (not diocesan) prelates in their days is unquestionable.

But these ancient writers are alleged to show lists of prelates back to apostolic times. We have seen positive contradiction of this from earlier unquestionable authorities; we may now see that these have really none, and that ecclesiastical tradition of the kind is a most uncertain and unsatisfactory guide-may be perhaps trusted if writing of what was under their eye, but no more, like old Herodotus.

Irenaeus was a Christian worthy of respect, though, not sound in the faith after all, but our question with him is as an historian. Now the first point to be remarked is, that he had a controversial object in his facts, which alters the force even of his testimony: but we shall besides find that he states on the subject what certainly is not the fact. I do not doubt he believed it. He was tormented, as was the whole church, with Gnosticism, which denied that the true God of the Christians was the Creator, and he appeals to the universal faith of the churches everywhere, and specially of Rome, to prove that such a notion was never held amongst Christians. And he traces back the list of prelates, particularly at Rome, to prove this, that it was handed down by these worthy men from the beginning. He appeals to the scriptures, but, the heretics caviling and appealing to tradition too, finding himself baffled by their cavils (instead of doing as the Lord did when Satan quoted scripture to Him, answering by another plain scripture), he turns to the common faith of the churches, and what the most esteemed leaders of the church had held, and hence gives their succession; but I am sorry to say, he himself was, what Rome and all orthodox persons would call, a heretic. But his appeal is really to meet the use of it by the Gnostics who pleaded, as Rome does now, that there were doctrines known by tradition, not contained in scripture.¹ He answers, None of these successors of the apostles had such as you allege. What I have just said as to his testimony to tradition is clearly stated, lib. 3, c. 2, 3** We have only a very bad translation of most of Irenaeus' works.

(**I have not the least doubt that *potiorem principalem* was in Greek *archen*, and meant " origin." The context proves it, I think. It is a famous passage with Romanists.)

But it is as an historian we have to do with him: how little his statements can be trusted, a few instances will show. First he states that Christ Himself continued on to be an old man, which he reckons as forty or fifty years, sanctifying old age as well as youth, as he tells us the Gospel and all the aged men who conversed with John testified (Lib. 2, C. 22). The Gospel we can answer for; the tradition of John, Irenaeus and the aged men must answer for. Whom, he adds, are we to believe most, those who had seen, not only John but the other apostles and heard these things from them... or Ptolemy, who had seen none of them? Massuet says, Perhaps he heard it only from Papias, who, says Eusebius, was a foolish old man. But, as Massuet observes, Irenaeus makes Christ not teach immediately after His baptism but wait till He was of full

age, at thirty being only a youth, and so die an old man-diametrically, as he says, opposed to the plain testimony of scripture. But so much for tradition.

But we have another case directly to the point, as the commencement of the passage which is quoted to prove that episcopacy dates from the apostles' days and was established by their authority. " Now Matthew," says Irenaeus, " brought out amongst the Hebrews in their own dialect the written gospel (ten graphen euaggelion) when Peter and Paul were evangelizing in Rome and founding the church." I will add what the Benedictine edition remarks on this. All the Fathers hold Matthew to have first consigned the Gospel to writing; but how reconcile this with what is said of Peter and Paul, for Paul could not have been there before A.D. 64 or 65? Either, therefore, the other Fathers are to be abandoned or Irenaeus; either are alike inconvenient. The securest thing to say in so obscure a matter is, that nothing can be defined (c. Harr. lib. 3, c. 1, Benedictine edition [Massuet] 174). Eusebius follows his account (H. E. 5: 28). Not only so, but this account which Massuet admits to be untenable and contradictory to all the statements of other Fathers, is the basis of all Irenaeus says on the succession, and of papal pretensions too.

I may add, though our business is with Irenaeus, Eusebius (2: 25) quotes from Dionysius of Corinth the statement that Peter and Paul planted together the church of Corinth, and then went on to Rome, taught in like manner, and were martyred. Now that Peter and Paul may have been taken to Rome and martyred together, passing at Corinth together too, is very possible, though we have no account of it; but what is said as to the foundation of the church at Corinth or Rome is unquestionably false. Paul, we know from the Acts and his Epistles, founded that at Corinth, Peter having nothing to say to it. And even Paul did not found that at Rome more than Peter, as his Epistle to the Romans shows: Christianity preceded them both there. The Roman church, so far from having a potiore beginning, was not founded by an apostle at all.

But this famous proof of episcopacy leads us to another passage of Irenaeus (3: 14, 12). He is arguing against the Gnostics, that Luke was the constant companion (which itself he states in a manner contrary to Luke's, to make him always his companion, whereas this only began at Troas), yet he never puts forth these Gnostic notions, and then adds: not only to those with him, but he (Paul) made himself clear to all, for having called together in Miletus the bishops and presbyters which were from Ephesus and the other nearest cities, and then he gives Paul's discourse. That is, he falsified the plain statement of the passage to get up his traditional testimony with episcopal authority attached to it.

Now he gives us in this book (3) a list of bishops at Rome as serving for all such; and this is the authority for bishops going back to the beginning. Now, untrustworthy as we have seen him to be as to his historical statements, this, as far as it goes, plunges us into utter obscurity, suggesting that there were not any bishops really there. The list is (lib. 3: 3, 3) Linus, Anencletus, Clemens, Evarestus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, Eleutherus, who was in Irenaeus' time. Paul and Peter, he says, committed it to Linus.

Eusebius as usual follows Irenaeus, but he gives the dates: Peter to 68, Linus 68-80, Anencletus 80-92, Clemens 92-101. Here we stumble, after three or at any rate two others his predecessors in the see, on one who, as we have seen, owns no bishop at all but states, and justly, entirely another order of government as established by Paul. Tertullian (de Pray. 32) puts Clement as the one put in charge by Peter. Eusebius (3: 2) states positively it was after Peter's death Linus was put in, and Clement is twenty-four years afterward. Ruffinus, says he, does not deny that Linus and Anencletus were first, but Clement was appointed while Peter was alive. Some indeed say Clement was named first but would not be from modesty, but was obliged after the death of the others. The point with Tertullian is security of doctrine by succession, but he contradicts Irenaeus plump as to who was the person it was committed to Optatus Mil., who leaves out two, puts Peter first, then Linus, then Clement, and then Anencletus.

Now all this shows how totally uncertain these traditions were, that they could only be varying memory; whereas he who was specially wheeled about as to his place, being placed first, second, and third, Clement, knows nothing of any such place at all. My own conviction is they were all there together and that Clement has given the clue to it. None of them were bishops; practically one or another may have presided. There is just the same disorder found at Antioch, betraying the same origin of prelacy. But we have more as to this episcopacy, which helps us on to trace this clue. The deacons were setting up to be a great people at Rome, and Jerome, the most learned Father of the ancient church, knowing East and West, thus writes (on Titus 1:5): The presbyter is therefore the same as the bishop: and before that by the instigation of the devil parties were sought to be made in the church, and it was said among the people, " I am of Paul," etc., the churches were governed by the common council of the presbyters; but after each sought to make those whom he had baptized his own, not Christ's, it was decreed in all the world that one chosen from among the presbyters should be set over the rest to whom the care of the whole church should appertain.... As therefore the presbyters know that they are subject by the customs of the church to him who may have been set over them, so let the bishops know that they are greater than the presbyters more by the custom of the church than by the truth of any ordering of the Lord, *veritatem dominicce dispositionis*. And he declares that while the only thing a presbyter could not do was to ordain, yet in Alexandria till Heraclas' time, when the bishop died, the presbyters themselves established another from among themselves in his stead (Ep. 146 ad En).² And even Cyprian, the greatest founder of the power of the primitive episcopacy, says almost everywhere there must be prelates to do it. So Augustine says (Litt. 72: 33); Although, according to titles of honor which the practice of the church has made valid, the bishop is greater than the presbyter.

If the reader desires to see more as to the change made as to ministerial order, and a positive historical statement of the substitution of episcopacy for the government of presbyters- one presiding as the senior, and another succeeding him, as it produced scandals often, the successor being worthless-he may consult the commentary on Eph. 4:12, published at the end of Ambrose's works (said to be by Hilary); who states also, that the presbyters ordained the prelate of Alexandria. According to him the system was changed for prudence' sake, adding *providente concilio* (whatever that may mean), a council making provision in the matter. (Supplement to vol. 11, page 243, Bened. ed.)

Thus, for some ninety years after Christ's death, there is no episcopacy on record; but after that, we hear of it first pressed

* He adds, " Does any one think that the judgment that a bishop and a presbyter are one is ours, not that of the scriptures? let him read again!" and quotes Philippians 1; Acts 20; 1 Peter 5; also Heb. 13:17. See also epistle to Oceanus (ed. Vall. 69: 416) to Evangelus (old ed. Evagrius) 146. The same difficulties occur as to Smyrna, if we listen to Apostol. Const. Pope Urban in a very numerous council declares (A.D. 404), " It is read that the primitive church had them (presbyters and deacons) alone; as to them alone we have precept of the apostle." for the sake of unity by Ignatius; then, on account of false doctrine, by Irenaeus and Tertullian. In the latter part of the second century it prevailed; only presbyters appointed, and (it is said) ordained, their prelate in Alexandria; and he was recognized by all as a true bishop.

Clement of Alexandria says that John after his release from Patmos went in some places establishing bishops, in some arranging whole 'churches, in some the clergy (klero) putting into that place (kleroson) some one of those signified by the Spirit. (Quis Dives Salv. 42.) Tertullian says the order of bishop, counted to its origin, will stand on John for its author. (Adv. Marc. 4: 5.)

I do not enter on proofs of the wretched uncertainty of the traditions of the Fathers. Were we to believe them, Christ Himself made and ordained James bishop of Jerusalem; another, that Christ and the apostles did, and that He committed His throne on the earth to him; that John and James and Mark were high priests. (Bingham, 2: 9, 5; Euseb. 5: 24, as to John from Polycrates.) James, as I have already said, had a special place and influence from his character and being the Lord's brother. It is related that on his death some meeting of the remaining apostles and others replaced him by Symeon, another in the same relationship with the Lord.* But it is never hinted that James was a bishop; and, besides what I have already said, the address of the letter to the churches proves he was not. It is addressed from the apostles and elders and brethren. Why, if he was a bishop and spoke as president, is he left out? It cannot be said because the apostles are spoken of, because the elders are distinctly noticed, and they delivered to the churches the decrees of the apostles and elders.

The result is, first, that scripture refutes episcopacy and established another kind of official authority, which this sets aside, just as much as if a republic was changed into a monarchy: the monarch is not added, the state has ceased to be a republic. I do not say the church was a republic or that authority came from the people-I do not think so; what I say is, that the addition changed the government which was scriptural. Episcopalians and Puseyites do claim for the church the title to change its government. I do not agree, but I do not discuss it; I only say that the episcopal government is not the scriptural one, but sets it aside. Further, ecclesiastical history confirms the fact and does not recognize episcopal government; and we have the most learned Fathers of the church declaring presbyter and bishop were the same at the outset, and that church-custom only had made the honor valid. I conclude with Jerome that episcopacy does not come from veritate dominica dispositionis.

I have gone through the traditions which are alleged for it, I believe fairly, and admit the system was generally established in the latter part of the second century; but it was not established by God.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 7, Death for a Christian

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

Dear Sister,

Yes, doubtless, the loss of your dear daughter will be a sorrowful blow and a great gap in your family; but in one way or another I have for a long time accustomed myself to death in Christ; and, as far as Christians are concerned, to my mind it comes with smiles-in itself a terrible thing, I fully own, but now a gain. God will have us in the perfect light. For Christ, because of us, the way of life was through death. It is not necessarily so for us, because death is completely overcome; but Christ, who has overcome, is there with us, if we have to take that way to get out of evil and defilement, to enter into the light and perfect joy of His presence. If there is something that has not been settled with God, there may be a painful moment; for the soul must respond to the joy which is prepared for us. But in itself death is only the unclenching of that which is mortal and the passing of the soul into the light, into the presence of Jesus. One leaves that which is defiled and in disorder: what a joy that is? Later on the body will be found again in power and in incorruptible and immortal glory: we have but to wait a little while.

Salute with much affection all your children. I feel truly for them the loss that they are about to sustain. Your dear daughter would have been the joy of any family where she might have been found; she is going to be the joy of that of Christ, for we are entitled to say this. It is a comfort for those who are still journeying here below. God prepares us for heaven by cutting little by little the ties that still attach us, as children of Adam, to earth. Christ takes the place of everything; and thus all goes on well and for the better. May God deign to bless to the whole family this so real sorrow of heart, in which God ever good has mingled with the bitterness of the cup so much of that which is compassionately sparing and gracious.

I send this short letter for your daughter; I have been afraid it might be too long; but I feel sure that through the goodness of God she will enjoy this little word, reading it at leisure and when her strength allows of it. She will think of Christ and be refreshed. May God bless you and make you feel His goodness even in this loss.

DEAR M——(No. 2)

I would have much liked to see you once down here before your departure; but He who directs all things with perfect love has ordered it otherwise. You go to heaven before me. Death is not an accident that happens without the will of God; it has no more dominion over us: the risen One holds the keys of it. How immensely blessed to know that He has won a complete and final victory over death and over all that was against us, so that there is entire deliverance! We are delivered, save as to the body, out of the scene where evil has its power, and transported where the brightness of God's countenance ever shines in love, where there is light and love only, where God fills the scene according to the favor that He bears to Christ as to the One who has glorified Him in accomplishing redemption, according to the perfections which were shown forth through that work.

There was a need for God to be manifested in these perfections in answer to the work of Christ; it was due that He should respond to the work of Christ in love, in glory, in the expression of the delight that He found in it. The name of His God and Father in love was unfolded in all its splendor; "Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. He then declares that name to His brethren, and Christ praises Him in the midst of the congregation.

This is where I wanted to bring you by these remarks that might otherwise appear somewhat abstract. All this favor shines upon you: what God has been for Christ as man, because Christ glorified God as regards sin that dishonored Him-what God has been in bringing Christ into

His presence in glory, that He is for you, who are the fruit of the travail of His soul. Think of that, dear sister. Moreover, Christ has become infinitely dear to us because of what He has done for us. He gave Himself because He loved unboundedly. There is nothing in Christ that is not yours; He cannot give more than Himself, and what a gift this is!

I wrote to you, some time ago, that it is in thinking of Him—of Himself—that one has joy. You are not a joyful Christian. I understand it, I know it: there is discipline in that! Christ has not had the place He ought to have had in your soul. You see, I hide nothing from you. But that is not all: you have not confidence enough in His grace. Own all that might be a cloud between your soul and His love. You do it, I know; but the grace, the deep perfect love of Jesus, the love which is above all our faults, and gave itself for all our sins, the love which took occasion of our very weaknesses to show its own perfections—of it you do not think enough. That love divine but also personal of the Savior will fill your heart: Jesus will fill it; and you will be then not only in peace but joyful. I attach more importance to peace than to joy. I would wish to see you habitually in a joy more deep than demonstrative; but if Jesus is in the bottom of your heart, that Jesus who has blotted out all trace of evil in us, in whom we live before God, then your joy will be deep. May it be so.

Oh! that your heart may be filled with Jesus Himself and with His love, and with the sense of His grace. He has saved you, He has washed you, He has become your life, in order that you may enjoy God. What could you have more than Himself? You can see His goodness in the peace that He gives you and in the way in which He surrounds you with such care and affection.

For me, it is only a member of the family going a little before where the whole family will soon dwell. Anywhere else one is only en passage. Soon all will be over for us. How blessed, when every trace of that which has kept us bound in some way or other to this world of misery and evil will have completely disappeared, and when we find ourselves in that light where all is perfect! Therefore trust yourself to His love. I repeat, that He has completely overcome all that is between us and the pure light, as He has perfectly blotted out in us all that which did not suit that light. How good He is! What grace! And you are going to be with Him! How blessed!

Rejoice therefore, dear sister; soon we shall all be there. Yet a little labor and all will be over in the pure glory and in love. You go before us, and in heaven you will have to wait, while the others wait and fulfill their task upon earth.

God be with you. May the presence of that faithful and all good Jesus sustain you and rejoice your heart; I trust that such a long letter will not have tired you. I could say many more things yet to you: soon you will know them better than I do; it is a great cause of joy and an immense grace. Peace be unto you. I ask God to bless you, and that does good to one's heart.

(No. 3)

DEAR SISTER,

So your dear daughter is already in heaven! I thank you, dear sister, for having given me these particulars. Not only did I love her very sincerely, but I also see in her so true a picture of the work of the Spirit in connection with her whole life. When I say "true," I mean that it was not feelings only, such as friends reproduce to enhance the piety of a deceased person, but just what shows a genuine work of God, such as He produces in a soul with the real experiences of that soul. That is worth much more than a few artificial flowers spread over a grave. I feel indeed that the death of your dear daughter will make a great gap in her family, for you and for all. But God disposes of all, and He does all things well. And she is going to be laid (at least, her mortal remains) by her father. Well, they will be raised together. We shall not go much before one another in leaving this world: we shall all be together, blessed be God, when we are raised from the dust. With pleasure I think of that dear brother, that he will awake where there is no care and no pain. He will be near his Savior, then his daughter with him, and then all the rest, on whom the grave has closed and who have disappeared from this troubled scene.

It seems to me that there is a certain change in my way of feeling touching those who die younger perhaps than I am. There was a time when I used to say to myself, Why, it ought to be your turn, since these go. Now I have more the sense of being dead and of seeing them file off before me to reach the Lord's presence; young or old, what matters it? And I remain here to serve, perhaps until the Lord comes, poor in service (I own), but giving my life to it, and to it alone. Immense privilege! if one only knew how to realize it, a privilege which makes us to be strangers everywhere, and that is, on the whole, a true gain even for the time being.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Miscellaneous 3, Cleaving to the Lord, A Word on

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

Acts 11

It is worthy of remark, that in this chapter we have the first account of Gentile converts: of the receiving, in sovereign goodness and grace, poor sinners who had not even the promises to boast of which God had given to the Jews. To such it is, too, that Barnabas comes with the earnest exhortation contained in verse 23: "That with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord." What Peter was taught here as to the Gentiles we all have to learn as to ourselves. When the blessed news of grace and pardon first reaches a sinner's ears and heart, he rejoices in the thought of pardon and forgiveness. He does right. Jesus, the blessed Son of God, has met him in mercy with His precious blood. But with this the light enters into his soul. When there have been deep discoveries of sin before the soul has become happy, the peace of the soul is more settled. The sin to which grace is applied is in a measure already known. But when, through the proclamation of divine pardon, without previous convictions, the soul has suddenly received joy, though there is always the discovery that we are sinners, the knowledge of the depth of sin in the heart, and what has to be forgiven and cleansed, is very small. The consequence is, that, after God has called us, and the divine light has broken into our souls, we feel disturbed and uncertain, and even begin sometimes to doubt the fact of our being cleansed. This is wrong. The deeper discovery of sin and the knowledge of our own heart is useful. If we walk humbly and near to God, this knowledge will be made, comparatively speaking, peacefully; if not, in humiliation and failure. But you may not call unclean, what God has cleansed. God

has brought cleansing and pardon to us down here. We have not to wait for it until we go up there. God has cleansed you. You are clean now. But I desire to lead you to some further exercise of heart upon it, and clearer apprehension of God's ways: a fuller exercise of conscience, that your peace may be as solid as your joy was genuine when you first heard of grace and forgiveness.

In Luke 15 the great principle set for this, that it is God's happiness when we are brought back to Him. Of course the joy of the restored one comes in, but is not the primary thing. The object of all three parables is not to show our joy, but the joy of God in our restoration. The three parables all teach the same grace, but we get, I believe, the joy of the Son, of the Spirit, and of the Father. But remark, that in the two first we find a grace which finds and brings back what was lost, without any further question of the state of the soul. In the third we have man's departure even into the lowest degradation of sin, and what passes in his soul on his return, till he is clothed in divine righteousness, with Christ in His Father's house. God has foreseen and provided for the whole case of the sinner. The younger son was as really a sinner when he left his Father's house as when he was eating husks with the swine. He had abandoned God to do his own will. But the Lord pursues the case to the full degradation of sin, for sin degrades man. The young man comes to himself, turns back towards God, is converted; but he has not yet met God, nor has he the best robe on him. He did not know in his conscience divine righteousness. When he really meets his father, not only is he in tender love-only the more shown because he has been lost-received when in his rags into his father's arms, but he is made righteously fit for the house, clothed with Christ. His father was on his neck when he was in his rags, but he was not received into the house in that state; he could not have been. But God has provided for the sinner what Adam in his innocence had not. He has provided Christ. Grace reigns through righteousness. The best robe, no part of the son's portion before he left, is now put on him, and he is fit for the house to which that robe belonged. All the extent of the soul's departure from God has been weighed. The soul may be exercised about it, and will till self is wholly given up as a ground on which we can stand with God: no going in legally as a hired servant. Before God it is rags and exclusion, or the best robe and joyful admission. All true experiences lead to that emptying of self, and Christ all, and we in Him before God. Then, as I have said, our peace is as solid as the joy of the thought of forgiveness was blessed, and the joy itself deeper, if not more genuine.

Another truth is connected with this. God having perfectly cleansed us by the blood of Christ, the Spirit dwells in the cleansed heart. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The Spirit gives us the consciousness of our relationship as dear children. "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." What manner of persons ought we to be, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost, we may well continually ask ourselves. But do not let failures make us doubt that we have it. Low and wretched as was the state the Galatians had fallen into, they never doubted they had the Spirit of God; but they were getting wrong as to the ground of their standing, as to how they received it; so that the apostle had to ask them, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2). We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. We have life as truly as Christ is alive; but we are not yet in heaven. The thief, indeed, was privileged to be taken directly home, believing only to-day, but to-day the first companion Christ had in paradise. We do not look for such immediate departure, but our ground is the same; we are as truly saved, but not so soon to be in heaven. Rather have we to go through this evil world: to go through it as crucified with Christ, dead indeed, but risen-to go through it with His Spirit dwelling in us. Be careful lest you grieve that Spirit. You have to go through the world, bearing the name of Christ upon you. See that you bring no reproach upon that blessed name by being inconsistent. The world will be sharp to exclaim, There are your Christians! You will have to go through the world with God dwelling in you; to carry this treasure in an earthen vessel: entrusted with this treasure, an habitation of God through the Spirit. Of course it is only through His grace that you can carry such a treasure through an evil world; but there is power in Christ, there is sufficiency in Christ for all He would have you to do or be.

He exhorted them that they should cleave to the Lord. Depend on Him. Some are allowed to have a long season of joy on first believing, but God knows our hearts, and how soon we should be depending on our joy, and not on Christ. He is our object: joy is not our object. Do not let your joy lead you to forget the source of it, and then it need never wane. This joy is right and beautiful in its place; I am not saying a word against it-God forbid. But I warn you against resting in it. Do not lean on it for strength. There is danger of joy, however genuine, making you forget how dependent you are every moment. Depend upon Him: cleave to Him with purpose of heart. Do not be content with being happy (may you continue so!), but with Paul, forgetting the things which are behind press on, etc. (Phil. 3). I have seen many Christians so full of joy that they thought there was no such thing as sin left. It is true sin no longer remains on you; but the flesh is in you to the end. The old stock is there, and you will find that, if you are not watchful, if divine life is not cherished and cultivated in your hearts by looking at Christ and feeding on Him, it will be putting forth its buds; if it does, they must be nipped off as they appear. No good fruit comes off the old stock. It is the new that bears fruit unto God. But though the flesh is in you, do not be, thinking of this, but think of Christ-cleave to Him; and may your souls be maintained in this truth, that Christ is your life-aye, that Christ is so your life that Christ must die (the thought of which is blasphemy) before you can perish. And as He is your life, so is He the object of that life. "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. As you grow in this knowledge of Him, a joy grows deeper than that of first conversion. I have known Christ, more or less, between thirty and forty years, and I can say that I have ten thousand times more joy now than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down from a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise; but you will find the water that runs in the plain is deeper, calmer, more fructifying.

Observe, they are exhorted with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord. A distracted heart is the bane of a Christian. When my heart is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of the world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be the question, What harm is there in this, or that? rather, Am I doing this for Christ? Can Christ go along with me in this? If you are in communion with Him, you will readily detect what is not of Him. Do not let the world come in, and distract your thoughts. I speak especially to you young ones; we, who are older, have had more experience of what the world is, we know more what it is worth, but it all lies shining before you, endeavoring to attract you. What else does it fill its shop windows for? Its smiles are all deceitful, still it is smiling upon you. It makes many promises it cannot fulfill: still it promises. The fact is, your hearts are too big for the world, it cannot fill them; they are too little for Christ, for He fills heaven; yet will He fill you to overflowing.

Observe again, it is to the Lord they were to cleave: not to duty, or law, or ordinances (though these are good in their places), but to the Lord. He knew how treacherous the heart was, and how soon it would put anything in His place. You will have to learn what is in your heart. Abide with God, and you will learn your heart with Him, and under His grace; else you will have to learn it with the devil through His successful temptations. But God is faithful, and if you have been getting away from Him, and other things has been coming in and forming a crust round your heart, and you want to get back again, God says, What is this crust? I must have you deal with it, and get rid of it. Remember, Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, and not the world's. The denial of this fact is an artifice of the devil. Do not let the

devil come in between you and God's grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, return to Him: doubt not His joy in having you back; count upon His love; look at the sin which led you away with horror, but do not wrong Him by distrusting His love, any more than you would an affectionate husband or wife, by throwing a doubt on their love if you have been for a moment ungracious. Hate yourself, but remember how He has loved you, and will love you until the end. Mistrust not His work: mistrust not His love. God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (v. 18). All is of God.

I would have you carry away in your minds three things which by grace are given you. First, cleaving to the Lord; second, perfect forgiveness; third, a purged conscience. To illustrate this last, take the case of Peter. He denied His Lord—denied Him to a servant-maid; but the Lord had turned and looked on him, and he had gone out and wept bitterly. A few weeks after this (Acts 3), he could say that they were a lost and ruined people, because "they denied the Holy One and the Just"; the very thing he had done himself, in a worse way, too, for he had been with Him as His friend for three years. But his conscience was purged; he knew he was forgiven; and now he could turn round, and fearlessly charge others with the very thing he had done himself.

One word more. Talk with Him. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of near intercourse with Him who has loved you with such manner of love!

Letters 2, Baptism; House Still Till Judged, The Subjects of

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I must repeat what I said to you, that I have not the most distant wish to persuade any one on the subject of baptism. I believe it is a rite established at the beginning; but I was not sent to baptize, nor was Paul. (1 Cor. 1:17.)

It was not abrogated. The circumstances of my own baptism, though done *bona fide*, and in the main with right intentions, were not such as I should wish, but I do not think it can be repeated. And while Paul gets a special revelation as to the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26), though already long instituted and in use (he being the minister of the church and the teacher of the unity of the body), he is not sent to baptize, which was the introduction into the outer circle of public position as a Christian. What is special to brethren, so called (for the foundation of salvation, even if made clearer, must in itself be the same everywhere, where it is true), is the presence of the Holy Ghost forming the unity of the body *clown here*, and gathering saints into this unity out of the great baptized mass. If any such have never been baptized, I apprehend they ought to be, as Quakers, grown-up Baptists' children, etc.

What I see in baptism is admission into the professing body or house. It has nothing to do with the body of Christ; hence, if one had received the Holy Ghost, as Cornelius, he had to be professedly introduced. (Acts 10:46-48.) God not only converts souls, giving eternal life, but has established a dwelling-place consequent on redemption, where His blessings are. So with Israel. He came and dwelt there. (Ego. xxix. 45, 46.) So "what advantage hath the Jew? Much every way." He had the law and the covenants and the promises, and even Christ, as concerning the flesh. Not that all were Israel which were of Israel, but these blessings were distinctively theirs (Rom. 9:1-6), not amongst the heathen. So now, the Holy Ghost and all other christian blessings are found within the christian calling—not amongst heathens, not amongst Jews, not amongst Mahometans. The gospel may be carried to them, but christian blessings are not among them as such; they are among Christians: the basis of the truth is there. The state of things may be awfully corrupted, and is so, but till God judges it (like Judaism) it remains the place where His blessings are found. Baptism is the formal admission into this—it is christening. The person is received outwardly into the habitation of God, as set up in this world. (Eph. 2:22; 1 Tim. 3:15.)

It is the act of the baptizer, not of the baptized. The latter cannot do it for himself, he is outside, and cannot receive himself in. So it is written, "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48.) Hence there is no trace of the one hundred and twenty being baptized at all. Where was the place they were to be received into? or who was to do it? They were made the place, and in this case the body too, by the descent of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:1-4.) It is not obedience; first, like the hundred and twenty, man could not obey; he cannot baptize himself: but more, Peter says, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" and commanded them to be baptized. It was a privilege conferred. Who could refuse to receive them, seeing God had put this seal upon them? So with the Ethiopian—"here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized." You are aware probably that the verse following—that is, Acts 8:37—is not genuine, and has been foisted in, though long ago, by those who thought confession of faith needed. No such confession, or examination if it was with all the heart, was ever made in the apostolic times. The Lord did take care it should be pure at first—added such as should be saved (Acts 2:47), sealing them with the Holy Ghost. Nor is baptism the sign of what we have received. People are baptized to something, not because of their having it—to (not into) Christ's death, to Moses, to John's baptism, buried to death, to (it is the same word) the remission of sins. Hence it is always, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16), not because the sins have been: to Christ's death, not because they have died: "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us... by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21.) Hence, when one entered believingly, he got the blessing, as far as forgiveness went, administratively here below, and was thereupon sealed by the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2) It is not a testimony to others (though it may turn to such) as the case of the Ethiopian shows, nor is it ever spoken of as such.

When I come to the history, it is very peculiar, as if God had meant to make us feel we were in the last days in a corrupt Christendom, not founding it. The only commission to baptize is to go and discipline the Gentiles (the command from Galilee with the remnant, not from the ascended Christ), baptizing them, etc. There was no command to baptize the Jews nor known believers. I do not doubt they were baptized, and accept it as an apostolic fact. But this commission was never carried out. In Gal. 2, Paul having been expressly called and sent to the Gentiles (ver. 7), "to whom now I send thee" (Acts 26:17), the apostles at Jerusalem agree that he should take up this mission, and they go to the Jews, and so it was. They had stayed at Jerusalem when the assembly was scattered (Matt. 10:23), whether rightly I do not say, only God took care that unity should be preserved by Cornelius, and Acts 15

The subject of baptism is death, as Rom. 6 shows—that is, Christ's death and partially resurrection in Col. 2 Perhaps, but other words are added there. The person enters into the christian circle (analogous to Israel) by it (see 1 Cor. 10), where the sacramental position is carefully distinguished from personal safety.

As regards children, my object is not to argue, but to show the nature of baptism. I believe that 1 Cor. 7:14 especially authorizes it, not to speak of Mark 10:14. (Compare Matt. 18 and Eph. 6:1.) The boundaries of the assembly of God and the world have been so broken down and both intermingled, that the fact of the Holy Ghost being in the assembly (not in the individual here), and Satan in the world, is eclipsed by the state of things; but it was not so at the beginning, and the word of God abides. The question as to children is not are they converted, but are they to be left in the devil's dominion, or brought where the Holy Ghost dwells, to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? But assuming it to be done bond fide, done according to the "one faith," I should leave every person to his own conscience. It is sometimes argued, Why not give them the Lord's supper too? The answer is simple, It is the sign of the unity of the body, and it is by one Spirit we are baptized into that. (1 Cor. 12:13.) The Lord's supper gives the sign of that unity, as spoken of in Eph. 4:4, as baptism of outward position in Eph. 4:5.

The root of the question as to baptism is, Is it the act of the baptized individually, or reception into the public assembly? On this point scripture leaves no doubt on my mind. And, is there (besides individual conversion) a place or system which God has set up on earth where He dwells, and where His blessings are placed? which He set up right at first, and has been utterly corrupted, but which has to be owned in its responsibility and character until God judges it—just as the Lord called the temple His Father's house, though it had been made a den of thieves. (Matt. 21:12, 13.)

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