Romans - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Bible Treasury: Volume N3, Romans 8:18-38, Thoughts on

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This chapter began with “no condemnation.” It is the deliverance for the soul up to ver. 11; then the full and complete deliverance for the mortal body. Next is the presence of the Holy Spirit leading us across the desert into the liberty of glory. For as yet we have but the liberty of grace, not that of glory, because these bodies are still subject to vanity and other miseries.

We do well to consider the way God secures us now by the power that wrought for us; secondly, the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. For He is active in giving us the hope of glory, besides being the Paraclete who guides and strengthens us on our way.

Verses 1 to 11 present our position. Then we are shown how to distinguish this new life, and into what one is brought when one has this life. One learns from God what he is. The Epistle to the Colossians attributes to life that which in the Epistle to the Ephesians is assigned to the Holy Spirit. Both of course are quite true, and each is important. The indwelling Spirit gives me the consciousness of relationship, and witnesses with my spirit that I am God's son, when I say “Abba, Father.” This is the presence of the Spirit with me, giving the positive witness in myself of His indwelling.

Then we read in verse 17, “If children, then heirs.” The Spirit always draws consequences from God's own word, reasoning from a certain known blessing. Man under law reasons from himself; as to whether, if he does something, God will accept him. This is not the Holy Ghost's reasoning; for He ever reasons from God to man. “If sons, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.”

That we are sons is a settled relationship for those who believe in Christ. We are just as much sons now as if in heaven. But if we are sons, we are also heirs; and who is Heir of all? Christ Having received all things as man, He takes and associates us with Himself. Thus we are joint-heirs with Him: wondrous thought and the truth The world may not be so outwardly gross now as in heathen times; but it is more guilty and really worse, because of despising the Son of God and neglecting so great salvation. He has brought a new element into the world. Did He not come here below Himself, the Only-begotten Son of God, a man in the reality of flesh and blood, and now risen from the dead? He suffered and was tempted, He was rejected and crucified; but in everything He passed through, He was always Himself. And this is what we ought to manifest. For we have Himself as the new life in us though in earthen vessels. We have this everlasting element of Him, not of the world. By indulging the old man or the flesh, we give Satan a handle. But if He is our life, how can we mix with the world? It can never have one tittle in common with the life the Christian has with God. Whenever one has anything to do on common ground with it, the flesh comes in it, and not the Spirit.

Know you not what the life of Christ down here was? Ours is the same. Christ was not of the world but a stranger, and a man of sorrows. So are we, so must we be. The life I have as a Christian has its own character from Him. If we have seen what it was in Christ, it is the same in all Christians, however full of failure and inconsistency. It is the same path, and the same glory. If we are to be glorified with Christ, we must suffer with Him, not only (or perhaps) suffer for but certainly with Him. It is quite impossible the life of Christ in me can pass through this world differently from Himself. If we enjoy ease with the world, it is not the life of Christ. Mercies and comforts we are given by the way, This I do not deny or speak of, but of having to do with the course and spirit of the world. We are not of it, and have nothing to do with it as members of it. “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed unto us.” You have divine life in an earthen vessel, exposed to trials of many kinds. Therefore it must be a suffering life, and if not walking according to the flesh, conflict.

“For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Here is a most blessed passage where we find a whole scene depending on Christ, the First-born from among the dead, coming to bring many sons to glory. The world was ruined by man's sin; and all is under the bondage of corruption. The creature is subjected to vanity, man walking in a vain show. If God takes his breath, he is gone in a moment! The world is all one great falsehood, a painted system, gay outside, thoroughly rotten inside. Christ went down into death, came into the place of corruption, but never saw corruption. He was raised up, the victorious head of an entirely new system, and we are joint-heirs with Him. Thus the whole creation is associated with our deliverance and waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. Creation waits for us, because the grace of God has intervened in Christ and taken up man the worst creature of all, the one who brought in all this ruin.

“For it was the good pleasure of [the Father] that in him should all the fullness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens” (Col. 1:19-21).

God has taken up first the wicked race, and makes the believer in Christ a new creature. “Of His own will begat He us” with the word of truth that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. He takes up a distinct portion in the Second man. Meanwhile He leaves them in their bodies not yet changed, though associated with Himself, so as to have all the blessing. “If we suffer with Him;” it is always “with Christ.” The Holy Spirit constantly insists on this. Creation, looked at as a whole, must wait for us. How entirely associated we are with Christ! Scripture does not admit of any other thought. How will it be when Christ comes? For immediately we shall be with Him; we are as to the body to be identified with Him. And when He, our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory. Christ comes in person to fetch the joint-heirs. The rapture (as it is called) is not an isolated truth, but connected with all our relationship to Christ. It is impossible for a

person knowing Christ not to be looking for His coming for him. A link would be broken if Christ appeared without the saints appearing with Him. All hangs together on what our own place is with the Lord Jesus. While He is hid in God, so are we; when He shines forth, so do we. The liberty of grace is what we have now. “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith,” etc. We are as entirely free before God as Christ is, loved as He is loved; but we have not yet the liberty of glory. We wait for the redemption of our bodies, having the Spirit as the earnest of it. We have the first-fruits of the Spirit and of everything else, being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph. 1:13, 14).

When that day comes, the Holy Ghost will be poured out on all flesh fully. This earth will become a scene of righteousness and peace and blessing. Their hearts in the millennium will stop on earth because Christ will be King over it all and reign down here.

Why does the Christian go through a rent veil? Because his heart follows Christ where He is in heaven; but Israel will be blessed on earth. The first-fruits were given on the day of Pentecost. Ourselves have the first-fruits of the Spirit; yet even we ourselves groan within ourselves, because we know we are redeemed, and yet our bodies are not yet. We long for the glory, earnestly desiring to be there. Our waiting is connected with the creature, for the body is part of it; but we have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and conflict is the consequence of the certainty of the glory that awaits us. “For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope.” Many are hoping to manage Christianity with the world, trying to mix flesh and; but they cannot do it. Now I am a poor prisoner in my own inheritance; but if I do suffer, it is not selfish suffering. Because the Spirit takes part in it as a divine Person in us, He gives the character and tone of Christ's life. The groanings come from the Spirit, the expression according to God of all these sorrows. The very thing that tries me, the vanity I am subject to, brings divine love into the wretchedness of the creature. I do not know what to ask for. I see misery, and it makes me groan. In the case of Lazarus why should the Lord groan? Lazarus was dead, Mary and Martha weeping and the Jews making lamentations, but what could they do? They could only express the power of evil without one atom of power to get out of it. Christ groans when He sees the power of evil, and then comes in with power to deliver. We do not know what to ask for, but we have the Spirit making intercession for us; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit (same expression as at the beginning of the chapter). It is the spiritual mind, but withal the Spirit Himself at work in the heart of a saint. He has, as it were, taken part in all the sorrow pressing on the spirit.

It is the expression of sorrow and the voice of the Holy Ghost bringing down a blessing from God to one in the sorrow. Two sides of the Spirit's work we have seen, first, witnessing that we are sons, the Spirit of adoption, and second, revealing hope of glory. Thus, instead of being left in the sorrow and wretchedness the creature is heir to, we have the Spirit working in us, not only another thing working in us, but God working for us.

Inward work is no ground on which to stand: it is not a foundation, but a fruit and proof of being on the foundation. God is at work in us, but the work He has done for us is what we reckon on. We know God makes everything work together for good. We do not know what to ask for, but everything is working for good. The spring of all the work is God Himself. We get back to what God is for us, not only the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, but God for us (ver. 29). To be conformed to the image of His Son (ver. 30). “Called, justified, glorified:” not a word about “sanctified” here, because it is the work for us, and not in us. Like Noah in the ark, God shuts us safe in here. All is to be done for us, God does it all, God Himself carrying on all to conform one to the image of His Son. It is in God's mind to make me like Christ:

groaning, and rejoicing now. If God has called me, He has justified me; then “glorified” can be said. If God works in us, He looks for fruit as proof of His working in us; but He has done all for us. If He spared not His Son, He will give us everything; and no one can accuse of anything: nothing will be laid to our charge, why? Because it is God that justifieth. Who is going to condemn if He does not? Two things are taken up, God's relationship to us, and Christ's. Christ being for us, He enters into everything through which we pass. I cannot get into any place where I have not Christ's love, “nor height nor depth can separate,” and everything works together to show it out.

We would have had things different if allowed our own will. What! you say, am I never to have my will? Never, if you are one of the saved. Only think of God being at work everyday with such a heart as mine and your's with all its self will and foolishness, going on patiently breaking all down! It is impossible anything could happen to me without having to give thanks to God for it. If I do not see God in it, I may find it very hard often, as a father might appear severe in sending his son to a strict school.

God does act with most blessed tenderness toward us, but He works all for our good, in the smallest matters; not even a sparrow overlooked, the hairs of our head all numbered. We are not judges. Some little thing may influence the career of my life more than the largest thing. We cannot see to-morrow. All is changed; a year hence, and everything is different. If God has not met us in love, we can understand nothing; we have not got the key to anything without reckoning on God's love. If we so reckon, we have the key to everything that happens. All is sent in love (trying to be sure) because no chastening for the present seems good. Two things are needed, first, to believe in His love; second, to have the will broken. When the will is broken, we shall always be able to thank Him for everything, because it comes from Him: this is the key to everything, but ever to remember that this world is not our rest. Oh! when we look back and see the wonderful patient grace that has borne with us, what contrasts the object of God in His work for us (i.e. to conform us to the image of His Son), and our object to have our own will and comfort down here! May the Lord give us to trust His love in everything. J.N.D.

Letters 2, Moody's Work; Pearsall Smith; Testimony for These Days; Modern Evangelization; Setting People to Work; Revivals

We must look Moody's work, and Pearsall Smith's, in the face. It is one of the phases of the kingdom of God, like the revival in Ireland and Scotland some years back: the brethren went on all the same—some took part in it—nor did the work in result hinder or affect their testimony. A popular testimony such as theirs never could be deep or extend its influence save in its general effects) in Christians many years, and in this respect it does good. One rouses Christians from their slumber, and in respect of the poor dying world; and the other, as regards the state Christians are in. In this, I doubt not, God's hand is in it. But M.'s work, to say nothing of false doctrine in details, avowedly mixes up Christianity with the world and worldly influences, and uses them because it tells in favor of his work, and fosters worldliness and the evils of Christendom. And P. S.'s, while it recognizes the deliverance of Christians from the bondage of Rom. 7 to the liberty of Rom. 8, which Christians greatly need (and in this respect will be useful), mixes it up with the lowest doctrines, man's power and ability. Both do this, though I hear M. has got on. And it does not even possess the true ground of abiding peace with God. There is much evil teaching mixed with both; and man's power for good being their basis, all is based on experience, not really on Christ's work—and, I think, poor experience where

searched out, though beyond the state of Christendom, but tending to fix them at this low point. But if the brethren are devoted and unworldly, so that there is a practical testimony, their testimony remains where it was. They have to bring in these fuller elements of truth, and truer ground of peace. And if they are possessed really in faith, the rousing of heart and conscience will open them to them. If they have nothing better, it is no matter their being dropped in God's hand. They have; but they must possess it really, and have heart to use it for the saints of God.

P. S.'s is largely modified, and brought more to its full bearing, its real character, since even my little tract; and its true ground and meaning made clear. Its trusting to human power I have barely touched. I have not attacked it—save in one point, Christ's personal holiness, where it is on very sad and dangerous ground—but brought out the truth, in which it is wholly defective. M., I am told, has made progress; but when I knew him he denied openly all grace in conversion, denounced it publicly when fully discussed and held, and preached at Edinburgh that none were condemned for their sins, only for not believing—a pretty common notion now, and which is a salve to the conscience. The brethren have the truth of the word largely where these have not. Some have gone on to make Christ peccable. If they are faithful practically, they will, with their little strength, have an open door. All depends, I believe, on their being in the practical power of the Spirit of God. "To him that hath shall more be given." It is He that is holy, as well as true, that makes the promises for this time.

I am not uneasy or afraid, only if brethren are to have the testimony of God with them, they must have it, and be it, in themselves. The salt must have its savor, or what is it good for? What would be permanent in both these systems, when the impulse and energy of them is lost, would I think, tend to infidelity and evil doctrine. It is not the energy and impulse that is to be resisted, though excitement may accompany it, but this evil which is to be met by grace and energy in the truth itself. The mere excitement will soon be over, a matter to be talked of as past. But brethren have something that is permanent, and the word of God abides forever. Only they must live it.

Yours affectionately in the Lord.

February 15th, 1875.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 9, God for Us

THIS is the only passage in the epistle to the Romans that speaks of the purposes and counsels of God. The epistle takes up the responsibility of man, showing how grace has met it in the cross of Christ, and ends with exhortations founded upon this. Man is looked at as alive here on the earth, though justified, with Christ his life, and so dead to sin, and hence exhorted to yield himself to God as free. But in this one passage, which closes the doctrinal part of the epistle, the apostle gives us God's purposes.

In the previous part of the chapter he speaks of " no condemnation," of that which has been wrought out for us through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. For it is not merely forgiveness and the clearing us of all our sins, it is positive deliverance from the power of sin in our Adam standing; it is not merely that which met the righteous judgment of God, but that which delivers us and brings us in Christ into a new place. And to this is added the presence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who first " bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God " • and, secondly, " helps " us as we pass along the road, " malting intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered."

We are not in the flesh as to our standing before God, but our bodies are yet under the effect of sin, and being in the body " we groan within ourselves." Everything around us is in a state of confusion and corruption; we are redeemed in the midst of it, but we wait for the adoption, the redemption of the body.

The Christian, having thus the redemption of his sins, and the earnest and comfort of the Spirit, goes on to learn that God is for him. We do not know what to pray for as we ought. We have spiritual desires of good, and the sense of evil around us, though our intelligence is not dear enough; but He makes intercession in us according to God. We do not know what is the best thing to ask for: some things cannot be remedied till the Lord come; but, whilst we do not know what to ask for, we do know that " all things work together for good to them that love God." On this we can reckon with unfailing assurance.

Job is a wonderful book in this way. There we are given to see how these divine dealings are carried on. The throne of God is set up, and the sons of God come in before Him, and Satan goes in too. Then come God's thoughts about His servant; " for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." But we must wait God's time, and then we see " the end of the Lord," for God was looking on all the while.

It began, note, with God. He says to Satan, " Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man? " God had considered him. Satan says, Well, You have made a hedge about him, so why should he not fear You? Then God lets Satan loose at him. He lets him take all that he has, his servants are killed, his children too afterward, his fortune gone; and Job says, " The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Then Satan says, Skin for skin, a man will give anything he has for his lifel Then God says, You can have his body, but not his life. So Satan unites him with sore boils, so that he becomes both wretched, and the derision of his neighbors. His wife wants him to curse God and die, but in all this Job sins not; he has " received good at the hands of the Lord and shall not he receive evil? " So that I get this fact: all that Satan did against Job entirely failed, save that it entirely cleared him from Satan's accusation and the charge of hypocrisy. All that Satan could do he did, but could do no more than he was allowed to do.

But now we see how God was watching over Job. Job was full of himself. He was doing blessedly, but he was thinking of it too. Supposing God had stopped short here, what would have been the effect of it? Why Job would have said: Well, I was gracious in prosperity, and now I have been patient in adversity; and he would have been worse than ever. God had justified him from Satan's accusations, and his suffering had only prepared the way for closer dealings of God.

Job's friends come and tell him that he must be a wicked man, or such things would not have befallen him; that this world was an adequate witness of the government of God. Whether his pride was hurt by his friends, or whether it was their sympathy broke down his spirit, as sympathy often does, I cannot say; but now Job broke down. utterly, and cursed the day when he was born. It brought the flesh out. The loss

of the cattle and all that, had been nothing, but now the latent evil is laid bare. Still his faith recognizes the good in God, though his flesh breaks sadly out. " Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." So he says, If I could find God, He would not be like you. But his friends' work was done now.

Then Elihu comes and takes the ground of special providence in God's dealings with His people. He says, Take heed lest God does not take you away with a stroke. But when God comes in, Job says, not " when the eye saw me, it blessed me," but, " now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and I repent in dust and ashes." He knows himself in God's sight. And all that Satan has done was merely as the instrument preparing for the work that God was going to do.

Thus we get an exhibition of God's ways. This world is not now an adequate witness of God's government. On great occasions it may be sometimes seen, and indeed, if we have eyes, in small. At the flood it was; and at the destruction of Jerusalem Israel was made to taste it. But, even now, God has the upper hand, and makes everything work together for good. In the book of Job we are let behind the scenes. We see God teaching the man's own heart what was in it, giving him to feel his utter nothingness, and outward blessing followed. For such was the character of blessing as known in that day in the way of government.

The apostle looks beyond all this discipline-beyond the ways of God on the road, which are only the instruments to work out His purpose. It is Satan's world in a certain sense, though he cannot take things out of God's hand. He could go to the Chaldeans and say, Take the cattle; and how little they knew they were doing God's will all the time, and that the hand of God was in it! They are all the ways of God with a view to His purpose, making everything work together for good, " for whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." That is His purpose, and we are even now nigh enough to see and trace His hand-anyhow we shall see it soon, if we do not now.

He goes through the whole course of God's sovereign purpose till it lands us in the glory. It is well to notice that predestination is always to something; it is not the persons merely, but He has predestinated them to something. Then He closes it all in with, " What shall we say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us? " Not only am I cleansed so that I can stand before God, but I get this immense truth-God is for me. As, by Christ, I believe in God, my heart knows that God is for me in everything; " He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." The heart, in looking at God, can say as to every circumstance of the way, " God is for me." I may not always like what He does, but He is always for me. " Not a sparrow falleth to the ground," not without God merely, but " without your Father."

Job says, " Blessed be the name of the Lord," and it is lovely to see his patience and submission. But the apostle goes farther. It is another thing to " glory in tribulation." It is one thing to say, He is wise and good, and another to say, He is for me.

Another point, too, I would notice. When the Holy Ghost reasons with man, He does not reason from what man is for God, but from what God is to man. Souls reason from what they are in themselves as to whether God can accept them. No, I say, He cannot accept you thus; you are looking for righteousness in yourself as a ground of acceptance with Him. You cannot get peace whilst reasoning in that way, and I should be very sorry if you could. But " God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He loved us from no motive at all but what was found in His own grace. We do not know Him. The prodigal did not know his father till his father was on his neck kissing him. He was reasoning from what he was, and not from what his father was, as to how he would receive him.

The Holy Ghost always reasons down from what God is, and this produces a total change in my soul. It is not that I abhor my sins; indeed I may have been walking very well; but it is " I abhor myself." This is how the Holy Ghost reasons; He shows us what we are, and that is one reason why He often seems to be very hard and does not give peace to the soul, as we are not relieved till we experimentally, from our hearts, acknowledge what we are. As in the case of the Syrophenician woman, the Lord does not seem to listen, and so He goes on until she owns that she has no title to anything, that she has no more claim through promise than through righteousness, till she only pleads that there is enough goodness in God to give her what she has no right to; and Christ cannot say that there is not.

Until the soul comes to that point He does not give it peace- He could not; it would be but healing the wound slightly. The soul has to go on until it finds there is nothing to rest on but the abstract goodness of God; and then " If God be for us, who can be against us? " There are three things here in which He is for us: God is for us in giving; He has given the very best thing, Him who is one with Himself, His Son. If God has given His Son, surely He will give everything else. Of course He will! It is reasoning down from what God is and what God has done. I ask, Will He give me all I want? Yes, indeed; and not only all I want, but He will set me in the glory, and I certainly shall not want anything there. This is the giving part. If He have given His Son, He will certainly give less things.

Well, but what about my sins? This is the very place I learn how great the love is; where I get the answer, " Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Why, it goes up to God in justifying. It is not we are justified in His sight, but He justifies. Little matter who condemns if God justify. If I look at my sins I get this great truth, that " God is for me." It is through the work of Christ I am justified, but here God is looked at as the source of it all.

It is just as in Zechariah, when Joshua stood clothed in filthy garments. Satan accuses him, and what has he to say for himself? Nothing. And who takes up his cause? The Lord Himself! And can Satan begin again after that, or put the brand in the fire which God has plucked out? God takes away the filthy garments; He replies to Satan and puts him to silence as the accuser, and that too when Israel were wretched sinners, just come out of Babylon. He says, Give him a change of garments. And so He is ever about our sins. He is first for us in giving, and then in justifying. He does not leave us in our filthy garments.

" Who is he that condemneth? " ought to be in the previous verse.

Then arises the third point: shall anything separate us from this divine love? " It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God." He does not say God; we find God again lower down, but here it is Christ; and see how gracious this is. I get the love of One who has gone into all the difficulties, all the sorrows of the way.

We do not know much of them, but still there are trials, and what do we get in them? Divine love. Christ has tasted it all. God is for us in them. " It is Christ that died." He has been down even into death, so I need not be afraid of that. Oh, but then He is so high up now! Well, if He be, " He ever liveth to make intercession for us." He went through all these things that try and test the heart down here, and up there He lives for us. So " who shall separate us from the love of Christ? "

It does not say from Christ, but from His love. We certainly never shall be separated from Christ, but the point here is, that no circumstances by the way can separate us from His love. There are none that He has not been through. Perfect isolation in this world is perhaps the most trying thing a man can go through. Christ was absolutely isolated. As regards comforters here He had not one. At the very table where He told of one going to betray Him, they disputed who should be the greatest! The Holy God looks down upon us, and, in His love, counts the very hairs of our head as a Father; but here it is the love of Christ in that He has gone through the sorrows.

" Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution? " More perhaps than cares; it is the cross that answers to the crown.

Or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." So the apostle had the thorn in the flesh-that which to human eyes, and to his own, was a great hindrance to his preaching, making him awkward in his ministry; but he gloried in it. The me was put down, and it paved the way for the power of Christ. It was not that he did not feel it, but he says, " I glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me "; and in Rom. 5, " We glory in tribulations." I have the key to it all in knowing that God is for me and that " He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous "; so I can glory in it. It is more than submission. It is the apprehension of the ways of God through this world, and the knowledge that there is a perpetual care over us making everything work together for our good. Let Him work, though in trial; He wants to do me good in my latter end.

" For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." No suffering that can come to me through a creature can separate me from this love which is in God. It is a love which is divine in its nature, and which comes down into all my circumstances. God is thinking of me in the trial; He knows beforehand all about it. He did not pray that Satan might not sift Peter, but that Peter's faith might not fail. He had to be sifted. Why so? Because there was confidence in himself, and this must be broken down. But then there was the danger that he might despair, and go out and hang himself like Judas, and so the Lord prays for him. He must be sifted, like you and me, but it must be under God's eye that he may learn the perfect character of God's love to him in it all.

God is then for us in giving, for us in justifying, for us in caring for us in everything; even as with the children of Israel, He took care of their very clothes as they passed through the wilderness. God is for us through everything If death stare me in the face, well, Christ went through it. If evil powers be against me, well, I have a love with me that has been tried, and destroyed that power. I learn in these very things the perfectness of the love of God. It comes out in the minutest circumstances, in every little detail. I come up boldly to this truth, that " If God be for us, who can be against us? " There is nothing that can make me say, I do not know whether He be for me or not. If it be difficulties and trials, I say, Well, it just shows what pains God is taking with me.

And now, beloved friends, have you got to thus thinking of God? It may not be very pleasant, but certainly not a single thing can happen to me that is not the very best thing that God can do for me. Submission is all right, but it is " In everything give thanks." Can you do that? Are you near enough to God to give thanks to Him for everything? Our wills must be broken (that is quite true); but our hearts meanwhile give thanks. We shall feel the sorrow; God does not mean that we should not; it is not insensibility; but I get this blessed truth, that He who works all things according to the counsel of His own will is the One who is for me. Then I can so trust His love, my will being broken, that I can not only bow but give thanks.

The Lord give us so to know Him that we can say, I am but a poor vile sinner, but I have learned this, that God is for me. Amen.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 9, Deliverance

THE Epistle to the Romans, beloved friends, takes up the Christian, if we compare one aspect of his condition with another, on the lowest ground. If for instance we take the Ephesians, there we find the Christian spoken of as " raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus "; but you never get him there in the Epistle to the Romans. Though in the end of chapter 8 it is stated that he is predestinated in God's original purpose for the glory, yet we never get him as risen and in the heavenly places, but looked at as on this earth, and of course he is. We will see now a little, with the Lord's help, how He does look at a Christian on this earth.

Now thus looked at, though not sitting with Christ, yet Christ is his life. Here am I a sinner in myself, and my flesh has got no good in it. The whole Epistle develops very fully what the Christian is, looked at in this world, and the chapter I have read treats one special part of it, and that is his positive state and standing, not his guilt; as to his guilt, it has been treated very fully up to the middle of the previous chapter.

To begin with, the apostle says he is " not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." And then he goes on to show why it must be God's righteousness that is revealed-simply because man has none. God's law had come and required righteousness in man, which it could not find; but the gospel comes and reveals God's righteousness, and he is not ashamed of it because it is revealed in it. He shows us the Jews under law and the Gentiles without law, and proves " every mouth stopped, and all the world guilty before God." Instead of the law making it any better for the Jews, it only proved their guilt; and as to the Gentiles, that which might have been known of God in creation left them without excuse when they went to idolatry.

He next shows us how " God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," and applies that death to the past and the present, saying that it declared " God's righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." God had been forbearing with them, but there had been no proof of righteousness in His forgiving them one more than another; but now on the cross it is explained. And not only this, but He is " just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." There it is the present time, His righteousness is now revealed, and we stand upon the ground of this righteousness that has been revealed.

The place where it has been shown and manifested is in setting Christ at God's right hand. This is a demonstration of the sin of the whole world, because it did not believe in Christ; also a demonstration of righteousness, " because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more ": the Savior they had rejected they would see no more till He came again as Judge. Thus the gospel comes and shows us that He is seated there (besides being the Son of God) in virtue of the work of the cross. There is where God's righteousness is displayed for faith to look at. I see thus

the perfect love of God which sought us in this way. I had sins, but no righteousness; I have nothing but Christ to look to, and my eye rests through faith where God's eye rests; God is satisfied, and so am I through grace. I see the sins put away through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that there is no more question of sin, because my righteousness is Christ; He is " made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." All is perfectly settled once and for all, and I am made the righteousness of God through Christ-God's righteousness. What we rejected God accepted, and proved His righteousness thereby. All the fruit of the old man is done away, and we are in Christ accepted.

But now comes another question; not that of our sins being put away, but of our deliverance from the principle of sin. As we read, " As he is, so are we in this world." On the ground of what we are by faith all our sins are put away; but then comes the power of sin-this evil nature-what is in me, not what I have done. But can I in this world say that I am delivered from sin? that I am made free from sin?

Now this word " free " is often abused in English; it has two meanings. It is not here used in the sense that there is none in us, as I would say, " That horse is ' free ' from vice "; but it is in contrast to the word " captive." It means we are not captive to sin. He takes up the question of law as he took up the question of righteousness. Man had not made out righteousness either with law or without it; then God gave him Christ to be his righteousness. Now the question is whether, we having thus got righteousness, the law can deliver us.

Well, in chapter 8 it says, " What the law could not do." It is not guilt now, but the flesh is not subject, neither can be. He means it has a will of its own. We know we have a will of our own. Now a will of our own is the principle of sin: whenever I have got a will of my own, there is sin-self-will, just the same as Eve when she would go and eat the fruit. The law thwarted the acting of will, of course; it was " holy, and just, and good," so it must; but it did not take away, nor did it alter sin • but " what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh ": the law of course had nothing to do with that.

There are three things the law could not do: it could not give life, and, even supposing we got life, it does not give strength; and, another thing of the deepest moment for our souls, it does not give an object. But in Christ I find my life, my strength, and my object. " They that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit "; they have the true object. I get in Christ an object that is sufficient to delight God Himself.

For the fact of life will not do; we must have it, of course, but that is not sufficient. The old man is here yet: there are lusts. The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and " it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be "; therefore the law instead of delivering me brings me into captivity. It is just what we get in Rom. 7 Suppose a man quickened in this world, what will be the effect of the law upon him? It will give him the knowledge of sin • " I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment,, deceived me, and by it slew me." Yet the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good "; but it did not give anything of what we want; it was only the rule outside it, and gave us nothing to enable us to walk up to it. Here was a man in a kind of sleepy indefinite way going on quite comfortably, a man with a good conscience; I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." When the law came' it said, " Thou shalt not covet "; but it did not take away the lust; and he found at once another law warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. There was no deliverance. God allowed him to use every kind of effort to get the victory; but it all only went to prove not simply that he was guilty, and that he had an evil nature, but that besides this he had no strength; and that is an exceedingly miserable condition.

If we were to tell the world that they had no strength, they would say, Why, there is an end to all morality! Even a child has faith in its own powers; it says, Oh, I will be good tomorrow! But I say, I am going to punish you to-day-for what you are now! And this lesson of no strength is a great deal a more humbling one to learn than that of the fact that certain sins have been done in some past time of my life. It raises the question, not of what I was before I knew Christ, but of what I am now that I do. " They that are in the flesh cannot please God "; but the effort made to do so is very useful in this way, that it brings us to the discovery of what we are. If you have found this out, you have found out what Paul did: " to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not."

But now is there no deliverance? Of course there is- positive deliverance!

As I have been saying, the apostle shows us, besides the question of guilt, the question of state. I have been seeing what the state of bondage is of a renewed man under law, in contrast to the state of a renewed man knowing what it is to be risen with Christ. We are united to Christ risen, and, being thus, He brings in, not the death of the law, but our death. So that I have not got to hunt up things in my heart to see whether evil is present with me; this would be law, and the law cannot help me at all; but I have got Christ as my life, Christ risen and glorified too; and I am past death and raised up, though I do not go on to glory here, because it is a man here walking on the earth. I have got Christ to be my life, not Adam; I am not alive to God at all as born of Adam; we are " not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us." When I stood as a child of Adam before God, the law was applied to me on that footing. I have not got what meets it. As long therefore as I am in the flesh, I cannot meet God or please God, and I never can get free or happy with God. So much the better, that I may find it out.

Now the flesh never changes; " it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." When man fell, the world got so awfully bad that God had to destroy it; when God's Son came into the world, they crucified Him; when the Spirit came, the flesh lusted against it; and when it has gone into the third heavens, it puffs a man up-if there were a fourth heaven, it would only puff him up more: that is the end of it!

But there is deliverance! If there were not, I would not speak of it. Then where is it? In death! It is when Christ has died and has risen that He becomes the power of life in me; but in itself this does not put away the flesh. There is nothing for it but what is added: " God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh "; there is no pardon, no taking it away, nothing but absolutely condemning it. If I take the cross, the highest act of grace, I find that there God condemned sin in the flesh.

But then, beloved friends, this condemnation of sin in the flesh, what was it in? I cannot get away from this evil nature, and Satan too is against me. But Satan is nothing to the new man! Only " resist the devil, and he will flee from you "; but he is everything for the flesh, of course! The world is just a great system that the devil has built up round man to keep him easy without God. It began at once with Cain; he goes out from the presence of the Lord, and what is he to do? He builds himself a city in the land of the vagabond. God never made the world as we see it; of this world Satan is the prince. Cain built his city so as to be comfortable in the world; and there were the artificers of brass and iron, and there he gets Jubal with his music, and he calls the city by the name of his son, and there we see all the conveniences of life, and

harps, and organs, and then people ask, What is the harm of brass or iron, of harps or organs? None! I do not say there is any harm in music and instruments; but this I say, there was a great deal of harm in his making himself comfortable in them without God. We have got capacities for music and art and so on, and people take pains to amuse themselves with them because there is a famine in the land.

I find in the cross of Christ " the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world "; I find sin and the flesh condemned there. Condemned in what? In death! If the law condemned sin in the flesh, it only got to the lust; it was the ministration of death, and ministers condemnation. But what I get in Christ is death-the death of the old man. In His sacrifice I get death: He has not only been crucified for my sins, but I have been crucified with Him. Whilst He has become my life, His death is as available for the old man as His life is for the new. He not only died for our sins, but He died unto sin once; " in that he died, he died unto sin once "; not that He had any for Himself, but that He put Himself there for us; and then " likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord "; I have the full power of life.

" God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." I find sin a grief to my heart. Now, God condemned it in Christ on the cross; and as a believer I have death to sin just as much as I have condemnation for sins all gone. " He died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Well, now, that is where it comes out!-I cannot win the victory! But God is teaching me the whole thing is settled; it is, " I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is not simply that the old man is not there-that is not deliverance; nor that the combat is not there: but do you think it is the same thing if I am struggling with a man and I get him down with my knee on his chest, or if the man gets me down with his knee on mine? If I combat with Christ for me, I get my knee on him. Of course there must be combat, but meanwhile I am not saying I am captive to the law of sin, whereas what we see in Rom. 7 is a man who is: his soul is all right, but he cannot do it.

I get in the death of Christ this testimony, " Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God "; and as to ourselves, we are to be " always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." I am thus set free. It is not that flesh is not there; it was in Paul, but he had the thorn in the flesh to buffet him; he got it to keep something down. Well, that proved it was there; the thorn kept it down so that it did not show itself, but still it was there. If you fancy it is not there you lower your standard; but there is no reason why you should ever for one single instant let the flesh stir or show itself. And what has brought you to this is death; of course, you must have life for it, or else you would be dead to everything.

Now, you are never called to die to sin, because the old man has died in Christ and the new man cannot die. Have not you been baptized to death? Then how can you live on in sin if you are dead to it? Are you dead? And where? In the death of Christ. It is always a past thing; there is no such thought in Scripture as our dying; it is we " are dead." You have never any death for the old man but that of Christ on the cross. What faith gets hold of is this; I have died in Christ; then I am free. Therefore mark, beloved friends, what he says: " How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? " He brings in death instead of the law; he puts the flesh to death, to faith, of course; does not look for fruit from it; but he comes and kills the tree and puts another in its place, and that is Christ, and says, " Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace "; I am now free!

Well, you are free; and what are you going to do? Are you going to give yourself back to sin again? Why, " yield yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead." Of course He does not come and say this to unconverted men; but, the moment a man calls himself a Christian, I say, Now you are alive and free; to whom are you going to give yourself?

One word more. It is of great importance to grasp this complete redemption-the death and resurrection of Christ Himself become the power of life to us, so that we can reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. " What fruit had you in those things? " But now, he says, you have fruit- fruit to holiness down here; you walk in a path that you know has beauties-positive fruit of holiness in this world, and " the end, everlasting life."

But, I repeat, in this epistle you are perfectly in the world, and how are you to get power? Through death. Suppose for a moment that I always held myself dead, there would not be a movement-not a lust; therefore, John, speaking of it in an abstract way, says, " He that is born of God doth not commit sin." It is just as if all sorts of evil things were outside in my passage, and the danger lay in my opening the door and letting them creep in; you will find all these evil things in your room if you do not watch. What we are called upon to do is, not to die, but to put to death; " Mortify your members that are upon the earth "; that is, I have power to do it, so I am to put them to death. Christ is my power, of course.

But, now, are you content to be dead? Or would you like to spare some of your flesh? Are you content to have no more of the world than a dead man has? Constantly we shall find we have little chambers in our hearts that we do not like to open to God; we go on in our prayers until we come to that, and then we stop, and then God has to break the door open in some rude way. Practically you are saying, I would sooner have this idol than God; not in your soul, of course, or you would not be a Christian. But now, supposing you have not anything kept back from God, have you taken this ground with Him that you are practically dead? It is not perfection, because I know no perfection but Christ glorified. The only perfection that is before a Christian is conformity to Him in glory, and I am never satisfied until I am with Him in that glory. But are you free? Have you got real deliverance? " The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The first thing we want is forgiveness; but the second thing we want is deliverance, and it is there for us. I have my eye on that Man in the glory; I am going to be like Him; it is there I get the object that is before my soul.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, God for Us

Romans 8:31-39

In this portion of Scripture the apostle sums up the exercises of heart, and the work of grace; first in these exercises of heart, and then in the revelation of real liberty through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, which we enjoy as redeemed from all that we were in the flesh, from

sin and Satan and the world, and from law too. But then, having gone through all this, and having shown the way by which we, having the Spirit, are children of God and heirs, joint-heirs with Christ, and being conscious of the bondage and corruption which is still around us here, he closes the whole by showing how, before it, and in it, and above it, and beyond it all, God is for us. He brings out this great truth to show, not that Christ is in heavenly places, but that He is with us in the difficulties. He shows (and what a blessed thing this is, for by it Paul gets to God Himself!) though he goes into the trouble of time, that, before trouble was, and before you ever were, it is Himself that is for you; and if so, no matter what is against you!

After going through the exercises of soul before redemption and showing redemption as accomplished, he takes up the great truth that overrides it all and goes through it all; and this is not what we are for God, for we were condemned, and, as he says in the same chapter, enmity against God—not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be—but, by means of the process by which He discovered to me my misery, He has brought out the revelation of what He is for me. And the conclusion he draws from the whole is, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31). And you will find that, in the way in which he looks at it, he takes up every side of the question. He does not content himself with looking at the bare fact, though that is blessed in itself, but he takes up every side.

And it is exceedingly precious, beloved friends, to see the way in which God is for us. Not only can nothing escape Him, but He occupies Himself with everything that concerns us. Just in the same way, if a person were ill, a friend might go to inquire for him to know how he did; but if it were a child whose mother were occupied about it, it would have all her care and all her thoughts, for her heart is there. She is for it, and would give everything she has for it, and would not let you come into the house if you made a noise. Yet that is only a human mother, who may forget her sucking child. At the same time it is the character of that perfect love of God in its condescending character. Nothing can escape Him, and He neglects nothing. Surely we may say, “If God be for us, who can be against us? “

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32). First, I find here that God is a Giver. Well, I say, He has given His own blessed Son. I have God as a giver in the highest possible way, so that nothing is to be named after this. Observe the reasoning too: the apostle reasons from what God is and does to the effects on us, and not from the effects on us or from what is in us to God. If I reason from what I find in myself, I say I am a sinner: God will not have me. He must condemn me, though there may be a little hope. Still I drawn conclusions from what I find in myself, and then, though there may be some true thoughts of God, it is partly truth and partly mistakes. That is not faith, beloved friends. It is so far true—the soul knows that God is a holy judge; but then the real conviction of sin makes us feel that God cannot have us.

Take the prodigal son. He was converted; he came to himself; he knew his father's goodness; but he immediately begins to draw conclusions from what he was. So he resolves to say, “I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants” (Luke 15:19). He thought that this was a more proper condition to be in at his father's house. His confession of sin was all right, but the conclusions he drew were all wrong. This is what persons are doing now: It is perfectly natural and true also, if this were all that was to be known. But they mix up the truth with human notions, just as the prodigal mixed up his sense of sin, which was all right, with thoughts of his father, which were all wrong. When we thus reason, we have not met God; for when the prodigal met his father, he was on his neck, and the best robe was put on him. Till then he never got the father's own testimony to his dealings from what he was in himself.

Just so is the way the Spirit reasons when drawing conclusions for God. The soul may be thinking that it is humble, when reasoning otherwise; but it is only proving that it is not cast upon grace by an adequate conviction of sin. The apostle had gone through it all; and he says, God has given His Son, and I should like to know what He will not give after that. If I have got hold of this—God has not spared the very best and greatest in heaven—I must say, What will He not give with Him? If I have debts, I do not like to look at my books (if I am not honest); for I know what I shall find there. What is there presses hard upon me; but if someone comes and pays my debts, I am not afraid (when they are paid) to let my creditors see my books. I open them up; and if I find the great amount of them, the more I see of them the more I think of the man who paid them. So it is in redemption. The effect in me, when I see the greatness of what has been done, is to make me think more of Him who is for me; and so repentance goes on growing all a man's life. For the more I know God, the more I see the evil of sin. But first, I said, it is God giving. If He gave His Son, glory comes in as a kind of natural consequence. If I really feel and know what Christ is, the more I see this. Our being in glory with Him is His seeing the fruit of the travail of His soul; and if we are not in glory with Him, He is not seeing the fruit of His travail—that does follow.

But, further, the apostle says, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?” (Rom. 8:33). He is for me both about the sins in putting them away, and about righteousness. It does not only say, he is justified of God, but God justifies. So what matter if Satan accuse as he did in Zechariah? This is “a brand plucked out of the fire,” says the Lord. Are you going to cast it in again? We can triumphantly ask, Who can condemn us? We cannot, of course; it is absurd to think of it. That which is justification here is that Christ is my righteousness. I am in Christ who has glorified God, and is standing before God. As He said, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him” (John 13:31-32). The work on the cross has glorified all that God is; and now Christ is in the glory, and I am a righteous man in Him. Not only do I have what I was in Adam put away, but “as he is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

Then comes another thing; for we can expect everything after the gift of His own Son. Nevertheless in fact there are difficulties in the path; still it is the same thing, “God is for me.” But mark here how he changes the term, “It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (vss. 34-35). Why does he change to Christ? Of course it does mean the love of God in Christ. But why not say the love of God? Because we have to do with the One who has taken the place at the right hand of God, after being down here in the difficulties. We have difficulties on all sides: persecution in the family, not open perhaps, but that which is as hard to bear; Christ had it too. You say, They think me mad; Christ's friends wanted to take Him, they thought Him mad, too. And so the apostle brings home to us this very love of Him who came down: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Here I have found the divine love coming down to get the experience of what we are passing through. I want to know the sympathy of Christ. I do not get this when God is forgiving me. God has no sympathy with my sins; but in trials I do want to know that Christ suffered, being tempted. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? “Principalities and powers? Christ was tempted by them and overcame them for me; so they are no stoppage in the way. Life? He went through it too. He had plenty of sorrow in it; and so much the more sorrow we have, the better for us. But still He has said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:21). Life cannot separate me from Christ, for “to me to live is Christ.” Death? This cannot separate me; yea, it will bring me to Him: “to die is gain.” Persecutions? I not only triumph in them, but Christ is with me in them.

In all these things I learn to know myself as an unprofitable thing, and the faithfulness of Christ. I may know a man to be kind; but if I go on knowing him for thirty years, I get the experience of it; not that he is changed, but I know him better. I find One who got me out of the grand difficulty; He intercedes for me now. He does not repeat what He did at the first, but a kind of confidence grows with every day's experience; not that I ever learn that faith is not faith, but that I find Him unchangeably the same. I am ashamed of myself for my want of confidence in Him, and the communication of His grace gives me a familiarity of knowledge of Him (speaking most reverently) and a confidence, a happy confiding feeling. We are “more than conquerors,” for we are learning Him our everlasting portion, and ourselves that we want to get rid of. Creatures are all against us, but then they are but “creatures.”

God is for me; not here in the love of a sovereign who thought good for me when I thought not of Him, but it is the love of God in Christ—in Him who passed through all difficulties for us, life, death, etc., and for us met outrage, oppression, resistance, and persecution. Now I see that the very thing which would try me is that through which He passed for me, and it is a witness of the love which passed through everything for me—whatever concerns the person God loves and Christ cares for. In this way we have to pass on to the glory, to Christ if you please, in the consciousness that Christ has brought us into it. Else we are like the children of Israel in Egypt. When they passed the Red Sea, that was quite over. They had left Egypt. Redemption brought them out. Speaking of the work as done, redemption is behind us; in another sense it is not: the forgiveness of sins is, but that is not all of redemption, though included in it.

But we are taken out of the condition in which we were into another, just as Israel was. Though still in Egypt, they were not touched when the judgment came. But this was not all. He took their bodies out too. And so He takes us out of the flesh (I do not mean physically yet, though Christ is out of it in every sense). So the Lord brought the Israelites into a new condition altogether, into the wilderness. There they had the cloud all the way through and the manna. There, their garments did not grow old and their feet did not swell; everything was provided by God. They had to gather the manna, it is true; just as diligence is required by us in divine things. Next they crossed the Jordan where conflict begins, and then it is we find that the Lord comes to Joshua as captain of the Lord's host. When He thus comes as captain, the command is, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:5).

This is the character of the ways of God. It is not a question of redemption here. He has brought us to Himself; but, having come, that which weighs with us must be according to the holiness of God. Because we are called to fellowship with God, and fellowship means common happiness, common thoughts, common feelings. The Father's delight is in His Son; and we have fellowship with Him in that. Christ's delight is in the Father; and we have fellowship with Him in that. So our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Christ Jesus. “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 John 1:6). The apostle at once brings the character of God to bear on the person.

Thus the effect of redemption is to bring us to God. Being brought to Him, we can say, “Search me, O God.” For He does search, not that He should impute, but that He may cleanse; and therefore we desire that He should. And then it is a blessed thought, beloved friends, that while He has gone through all my difficulties here, He is suiting me for my place there. In every sense this is true, that, if the soul is not sufficiently brought to a sense of sin and to find Christ everything as regards righteousness, it does not understand grace. The Lord only give us to know (I am not speaking of knowledge now, but) in our hearts and consciences, that we have to do with God. Not as Israel had; for now the veil is rent from the top to the bottom, and we ought to walk according to the light because we have been brought into it. This is what I do earnestly desire for us all, that we may know perfect redemption, and have the consciousness that the effect is to bring us into fellowship with the Father and the Son, so that everything contrary to His holiness may be judged and put away.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 1, God for Us

Rom. 8:31

THERE is much to weary us, dear brethren, much to draw out our anxiety as to present circumstances here; and there is much as regards the natural mind which shrinks at meeting God. The natural conscience of a man, even while he is engaged in the things of this life, often testifies to him that all is not right: he may not always, perhaps not often, feel this silent monitor; business, pleasure, gratification, may dissipate the thought that there is something coming which he is not prepared for. But though unwelcome, the thought will obtrude, and weary him, and make him uneasy, particularly if he is externally seeking righteousness; he will be very weary to find he has not courage to meet what he knows he cannot avoid. Nay, even he who disclaims all outward regard to what is right, who is on the broad road of sin and ruin, delighting himself in abounding iniquity, even in his very heyday of enjoyment and sport, an uneasy thought will at some time or another be felt which tells him, This won't do, this is not the end for which I was made; there is something coming. Perhaps he may not experience this while in the very act of his jovial pleasures; but when alone, a word that has been dropped, either in a discourse or a conversation, or something he has read, or a passing circumstance, will force him to acknowledge, Well, after all, that is the truth, whether I believe it or not; this short life must end in a coming judgment, and I am not prepared for it.

This feeling of uneasiness and alarm will obtrude on the mind, whether we view the individual as seeking to justify himself at the approaching day of account, or whether we see him as delighting in the manifested wickedness of his heart. In the one case, he feels his wants, but is looking for strength where it cannot be found, and, making no progress, is very uneasy; and in the other, the very thought of a God who hates the things he is doing every hour in the day, is a thought fraught with alarm. Now I suppose there is no person who has heard the gospel preached, who has not, at one time or another, been made thus uneasy, whether he is seeking what he looks upon as a means of justification from himself, or whether he is seeking for what he esteems its own present value, present enjoyment in sin. This leads him to the consideration of one great thing which in some moment of time he experiences: Well, perhaps after all, God may be against me. It is this that makes the sinner alarmed; and he whose conscience is greatly troubled, who feels his weakness, and finds the difficulty by which he is surrounded, his secret feeling is, God is not at peace with me-He is against me. There is the great truth, the great cause of controversy in the conscience, there is no peace. No matter what are his circumstances, they may vary and change, but will make no change in what makes him thus uneasy: for it is the same calm unchanging God he has to meet, and he is conscious that that God is not at peace with him, and he cannot say, I know, come what will, God is for me.

It is this that makes the natural conscience tremble and feel uneasy. There are many under similar experience, even by the teaching of God's Spirit, and are deeply conscious of their not being at peace with God, and continue thus in suffering till God reveals Himself. But I am not now speaking of them, but of those whose natural conscience leads them to know that God is not for them. The Scripture tells us, and the conscience when once enlightened sees, that God met all this in a manner peculiar to Himself-that He met all that a man's conscience can make out against himself, and met it in such a way as to make a man conscious of possessing peace in the Lord Jesus Christ: and it is really wonderful-wonderful beyond our utmost limits of comprehension-when, amidst all our misery, degradation, sinfulness, and weakness, God is found to be for us.

" What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? " When a man sees God thus settling the question between them, suiting Himself to his peculiar circumstances, and proving Himself to be for him, he has a more realizing sense of God's love, and of God's favor towards him, than the angels in heaven who never sinned. When a man is brought to see God for him, there is a breaking down of all that before opposed itself to God: pride, the poor pride of man, is brought down, when once he is brought to the conscious acknowledgment, " God is for us." The soul then sees how completely everything is for him, if God is thus for us. The comfort of the soul consists in this, that God is for it, and that it is for God: then it begins to be conscious of other wants, of which before it knew nothing; it wants to know more of God, it wants to see Him as He is, it wants the glory. It is a comfort to know that that is what it wants. The soul is led to ask now, Why should God be for us? have we been for God? have we rendered God any service? have we acted by His mind? We have not. Why then should we plead, God is for us? It is for nothing in ourselves, for we have slighted His promises, despised His grace, lightly esteemed the more than ten thousand mercies of His daily favor.

We have been like the prodigal son, who wasted his very common blessings in riotous living. In all our circumstances we have forgotten Him, in our intercourse with the world we have been acting without Him, loving our ungodly companions rather than Him. 0, the wonder, if after all this we should find God was for us! Look at the state man is really in, as regards the trust he puts in man rather than God. If his neighbor should ask him to do anything, though his conscience may tell him God hates what his neighbor wants him to do, still, rather than disoblige his companion, he will sin against God. It would distress him more to refuse him, either in going to ungodly places of amusement, or gratification, or indulging in known sin. Sin was the cause of the rejection of Christ; and therefore every sin has this stamped upon it- the rejection of the Son of God. Our own conscience tells us that sin is against God, and there are few so hardy as to confess that they were for God by the commission of it; and yet, we may say, there is scarcely one among us who is not conscious of this sin, of (rather than refusing our friend or companion) doing what we know is against God. Seeing such to be the case, we see no reason why God should be for us. His judgments have been disregarded, His mercies despised, His name lightly esteemed, little or no notice taken of any temporal favor, except to abuse it; and must not this bring to our conscience the upbraiding thought, Why should we expect God to be for us? What has the world done for God? What has it done with its natural blessings? Sinned them away. With the law of God? Broken it. With the love of Christ and His coming? Rejected Him. With the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the work of Christ? Refused it-takes no pleasure in anything belonging to God, sees no glory, no loveliness, no beauty in Him, which just proves this one thing, that there is no real reason from us on earth why God should be for us, but, as far as we are concerned, every reason why He should be against us.

In this state of entire alienation from God, neither seeing nor desiring to see His glory and loveliness, there can be no love in the soul, as long as that soul is living without God, and it has manifestly no interest in the things of God. Being in this position, there is one terrible evil necessarily evident: that if we are living without God, and not following Him, we must be followers of Him who is the enemy of God and of our souls: who is the great deceiver of mankind, and, though he never shows himself, drags his victim down to ruin, and then mocks at his calamity. This is Satan, that arch-deceiver, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning; who casts out his bait to decoy man, showing him that, but carefully hiding the hook, that he may have his unresisting prey in his clutches; and man rushes to take the bait, willingly selling himself to Satan, though he is morally conscious that he is not acting according to the commandments of God. And this is not said of any one particular class of character or order of men, for all are included in it: " All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." There is nothing that can meet the glory of God in all this.

There is one great thing as regards unrenewed man: he stands in dread of the holiness of God; he cannot contemplate God's glory with delight, but in that glory he must stand if ever he is saved; he may be changed, and he must be changed, if ever he meet it with joy; but that glory changes not. The sun is just as bright when earth obstructs our view of it, as when we behold it; clouds may intervene and hide its glory, but when the clouds are taken away, there is the sun just the same, just as bright, as warm, as glorious as ever; and the moment the veil is taken away, we see it as such. Where is the soul that can stand in the presence of the glory of God, and contemplate that glory in his sullied and natural mind? " Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? " A child, in order to see the natural light, must previously be brought into life; and so must we, for God cannot change. Were it possible for God to give up one atom of His glory, or one particle of His holiness, the effect would be that there would be no place where sin would not enter. Who can tell what would be the consequence if God could suffer the least diminution of His glory? Where is the spot that would then be sacred? where would be the place of unfading glory? But God's glory cannot be lessened or diminished, and what secures it is the unchangeable nature of God Himself. It is this, and the consciousness of it, that brings uneasiness and alarm into the soul unchanged by grace; for it is conscious of its unfitness for that glory, that this glory is far removed from what he loves, and that therefore we must feel convinced that God is not for us. If it be really true that God's glory cannot change, who then can be saved? The believer sees it an unchangeable glory, and it delights him. The unbeliever is conscious it must be so, and he is angry: If God be thus, he thinks, why should I have anything to do with Him? He struggles, but unavailingly, to get away from God; he would be glad then that there had been no God: he has no objection to receive God's earthly favors and blessings, sending rain on the just and on the unjust; but, provided he could have what he likes on earth, and the enjoyment of it, he would not care ever to see God, or His glory either.

It is not, it cannot be, pleasant to the natural mind to contemplate the judgment. No man likes to be judged; it is not natural to man; he does not like to have this sounded in his ears: " It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment ": that is the fact, and therefore he is always putting it off. Putting what off? God's presence. He does not want to see God; and is not this practically testifying that he is not at peace with God, that there is something which keeps him still desiring to be kept from God?

It is sorrow, brethren, it is grief, to dwell so long on this subject. There is no comfort in it, did we see nothing further than this. It is sorrow to have to dwell on it; but it is the truth, it is God's truth, that we are sinners, and, as sinners, are averse to God's glory. But, brethren, it is another and a blessed truth that is brought home to the heart of a sinner, when, notwithstanding all this, he finds to his joy and comfort that

God is for him. Adam sinned and left God, because he thought more of what Satan offered him; he thought the devil a better friend to him than God: but he has since found out to his cost that the devil was a liar: that he never had the power of giving him what he promised; and that by catching at the devil's baits, he has received his hook, and that " the wages of sin is death." This is what man has done. But, oh! the blessedness of the consciousness that, in spite of all we can do, or Satan devise, the blessing is ours, the glory is ours! We come to see the truth that has risen out of this great truth.

The fact turns out quite a different way, when the Holy Spirit is bringing home to our souls that all the time God is for us. 0 what blessing, what wondrous blessing, is thus brought home to the poor, aching, harassed, anxious soul, when it is given to see that that God whom it despised, that Jesus whom it crucified, that Spirit whom it resisted, are for it! 0 what gladness to receive daily proofs, that it is one upon whom God is looking in love, in pity, and that He is for it! as the Lord, speaking of the children of Israel, says, " I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, and I am come down to deliver them! " 0 what wondrous extent of love! nor height nor depth can reach or fathom it! We are frail men, and Satan exercises his subtlety on us; he knows what to lure us with, and therefore he puts suitable pleasures in our way, and within our reach; he throws his baits most skillfully; he knows the bait that is most seasonable, and he presents it just in the time and under the circumstances most likely to take effect. He knows what our natures like, what they are going after; and so he presents the very thing which, if continued in, must lead to destruction. All this is terrible, dear friends; but under all this there is comfort-the everlasting comfort, if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, that we have seen and found One who is able to bear us through all this, and set us free from the power and dominion of Satan, making us children of the living God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

In this blessed privilege ends all the argument which Paul brings forward in this epistle; he shows them what they are by nature; they did not like to retain God in their, knowledge, and so God gave them over to a reprobate mind (that is, a mind incapable of sound judgment in the exercise of what was right or wrong), and the consequence was, they committed all uncleanness with greediness. But " in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Dear brethren, this is the thing that brings comfort and peace and joy to the soul; this is what sets the devil aside; this is what brings a man to cease from loving to sin against God, from rejecting Christ, or refusing the testimony of the Holy Spirit. This is the effect of having this blessed knowledge brought home to the soul; and what a relief it is, after many sad experiences of deeper and deeper misery in the consciousness of sin and anxiety, to be released from it.

An individual under a sense of his own unworthiness looks upon others whom the Lord has enabled to act for Him, with a kind of jealousy, and he says, Oh, if I were like such a one, if I acted as consistently and godly as he does! I do not know how he does it; but it is not so with me: I cannot act as he does. God is just bringing him by all this to acknowledge, I am ungodly; and then God says, Yes, you are ungodly; but " in due time Christ died for the ungodly." How, in due time? It was just in due time for us, for we were lost, ruined, had sinned away our blessings, and were without strength, and then Christ died; yea, Christ died for the ungodly. 0, what blessed intelligence for poor sinners! " God spared not his own Son "; He gave Him up for the ungodly, for sinners; for those who have no strength, who are without knowledge. Then none are excluded from the privilege, who will plead they are the ungodly; and this is so simple as to be as intelligible to the poor and ignorant as to the rich and wise, and perhaps even more intelligible, and for this very reason, that they are poor and ignorant, and that they are dealing with God in their consciences only, and the others are endeavoring to deal with Him by their knowledge. But God, who is rich in mercy, can bring to nothing the wisdom of the wise, and make them see their want of wisdom.

When the Spirit of God brings to the soul of a sinner this conviction, that he is ungodly, and that he has an interest in the death of the Son of God, he is conscious of being in Him also as a risen Savior, and has therefore ample encouragement to look to the future. He sees One by faith come down from heaven; he sees God determined to save him, and in such a way as comes home to his heart, by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. By faith he is witnessing what Jesus was doing here, and how He was used. He had a purpose, a holy purpose of love, which He came to execute here, and nothing could divert Him from that purpose. He was pledged to perform it, and therefore on He went, amidst all scorn, reproach, poverty, and contempt. The settled purpose of His heart was to save the ungodly, and so He despised all that was in the way of its accomplishment; He despised the cross, enduring the shame. The laugh of man, the scorn of sinners, was against Him; but what was that to Him? The one thing for which He came down was before Him, and so He went through all, perfectly sinless, and yet unjustly accused; and not only accused, traduced, ridiculed, and spit upon, but brought into the very dust of death. When once the believer enters into the spiritual apprehension of these acknowledged facts, then does he learn that this holy and much-dreaded God is for him-is on his side-has taken his part; then the spring of hope is lifted up in his soul; then he sees it is God for him, and not against him; that it is God, and not man is for him. It was God did all this, and He is for me. He is now no longer too proud to be a debtor to God; the arms of his rebellion and enmity are laid down; he becomes a suppliant; he no longer need dread, as a sinner, to appear before God, knowing, as he does, God's loving-kindness in Christ Jesus; he no longer need fear the day of judgment, nor be troubled, for his cause is made out, and he stands acquitted.

This is the great truth that brings joy, peace, and comfort, that in all these things God is for us! 0 what rest, what happiness for the poor soul, when he sees he has to do with One who has conquered all enemies for him, and in whom he has treasured up all glory for him! Before he came to the consciousness of this, the book of his daily transgressions appeared to ascend up before God, black with the catalog of his offenses, on every leaf of which was written—Sin, sin, sin; but now these blackened characters are effaced, and on each page is transcribed in letters of blood, in the blood of God's dear Lamb—Love, love, love. All the dark spots are now obliterated, for He who is for us has triumphed. He took the load of sin from off us, and suffered the punishment due to the commission of it, and this silences all Satan's accusations. Satan says to the soul, Oh, you are a sinner, you have broken God's laws. The Lord Jesus Christ acknowledges this, takes the sin, and bears the punishment of it unto death. Satan requires the right of judgment to be passed against us, that the Lord in justice ought not to let the sinner go unjudged; he accused him. But " who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth." Christ has taken the sinner's place, borne the punishment instead of us, poured out His soul unto death, and thus put away sin. He now is risen, and has ascended into heaven. Thus is sin expiated, and His people clear; thus is Christ proved for us.

To enter into the full perception of this blessedness constitutes the enjoyment of the believer. Here he finds a resting place from the buffeting waves of the world, when he thus sees that, as sinners, God has proved Himself for us, and in the very act He commends His love towards us; for it was while we were such sinners, " while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." We see just two things in this-that the sinner is without strength, without riches. Like the poor prodigal, he has spent all he had, and now he comes to himself, and is about to return, he has nothing to bring with him. Like a shipwrecked mariner, all is thrown overboard, everything going adrift, and he himself, struggling with the dark billows, is just cast ashore, wearied and poor, having nothing! but, blessed be God, if we have got to shore, God is there, and He is for us; and

this is the mighty point gained, and we know we shall not be cast out again, and that we may lay claim now to all things that God can give. " He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? "

Then, brethren, let us trust Him more; let us seek to get more from Him; we cannot look for too much of His favor who has not spared His Son for us: and this, dear brethren, will not lead to presumptuous expectations, but a sense of the greatness of His gifts will keep us humble; and the more deeply we are humbled, the more we are in a state to see and feel how God was and is for us, that Christ bled and died for us as enemies, and that the Father gave His Son for us when we were ungodly. 0 brethren, this is a blessed sight for faith, and nothing but faith can see it, and seeing this we can see everything is ours. Having Christ, we have all. " How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? " God has bestowed unnumbered blessings on man; but there was one thing which He had in heaven greater than all His other gifts: that one gift He gave, and having given this, shall He, or can He, refuse us anything else that is for our good? Christ is ours, and then it follows, all is ours; " for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." God, therefore, gives us all things with Christ; not as man gives, for God gives freely-" He freely giveth us all things." The difficulties in our way may continue. Satan may still endeavor to distress and annoy; but we may be well assured, that if God has given us His Son, He has given us all things that will bring us through.

He has fitted us for the undertaking, and when once put in order, set off, and set a-going by the power of God, we may be satisfied as to the issue, for Christ has engaged to see us through; we must arrive safely, for God, who has brought us thus far, is still for us; and who shall separate us from His love? " Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? " Shall the deceitful pleasures of a false world, or the alluring baits of Satan tempt our souls to destruction? Nay, brethren,." in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." Be our way dark or thorny, be it difficult or dangerous, be it in the midst of temptations or cares, the same God is for us, and we know that He went through them before us. Christ suffered, He was tempted, upbraided; wept and made supplication, and brought us through them all, even with groanings and tears, to look up to God as our Father, and heaven as our home: what have we to do with fear then?

Brethren, beloved of the Lord, seeing that our God has done such great things for us, we know that God is for us, by the love of Jesus, in going before us in all tribulations, so that nothing should separate us from His love. If you are tempted, dear friends, remember He was tempted before you; if your friends forsake you, remember that Christ is a " friend that sticketh closer than a brother "; the world may leave you, but it is not your friend, but your enemy, " for the friendship of the world is enmity with God "; and you are no longer debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh, but you live in the Spirit, and therefore should walk in the Spirit, in the same mind that was in Jesus. Whatever temptation you are under, be persuaded, with Paul, of this one thing, that " neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What the devil did was to undo our confidence in God: what Jesus did is to show us that we may trust Him. And when the believer sees not this, he is looking to the devil and his temptation more than to the love and power of Christ, who has conquered all his enemies for him; but when our eyes are off all other objects, and on Christ, then, and then only, we can have peace.

Now, dear friends, I would just, in conclusion, ask you, Have you been led to come, as you are, ungodly sinners, to God? not to bring your own righteousness, which is nothing but filthy rags; but have you come pleading the blood-shedding of the Lamb of God? If you have, assuredly there is peace for you, for that is a sure token that God is for you. Or have you been acting against God all your lives, and have never found peace? Are you still tormented with a guilty conscience, and are you still rejecting and refusing the way of salvation? I would earnestly beseech you to consider the danger you are in, and I would ask you to look before you, and see where you are going, and what you are doing. You are wandering in the midst of the wide sea of this world, you are toiling through its waves without a prospect of deliverance; and if persisted in, you will, ere long, sink down into the sleep of death, to wake in eternal misery. Should you be found thus when Christ comes, you will feel, to your shame and grief, that there is One against you greater than Satan, who can destroy both him and you.

But be of good cheer if your hearts are set on Christ: there is your stay, the anchor of your soul. If He is such, dear friends, stand forward for Him; be not ashamed to own your relationship to Him, your dependence on Him: be decided, cut short all expedients for deferring the bold acknowledgment of your being His; confess Him before men, and act for Him, and live for Him in an ungodly world. He is not ashamed to call you brethren and will you be ashamed to confess Him as your Lord and Master in the face of all the world? Be not debating within yourselves, when you shall avow yourselves; do it at once, decidedly. Make the plunge, and trust God for the consequence. I know it by experience, that an open bold confession of being Christ's is more than half the struggle over. I know the devil tempts, and says, 0 do not be too hasty, you might ruin the cause by over-forwardness; this is not the time to confess yourself openly, wait for another opportunity. But I say, dear friends, as one who knows, that if a man, in the strength of the Lord, is just brought to say to his companions and friends, I am Christ's, and I must act for Him- that he will not suffer what others will feel who are creeping on fearful and afraid to avow Him whom they desire to serve. Believe me, my friends, it is as I say: by this decided and open opposition to the world he may at first be laughed at and mocked; but what of that? Christ was served so. But soon, when his companions find him resolute, they will give him up as a bad case which they can make no hand of, and they will leave him comparatively free from ridicule.

Are there any of you who are thus halting between two opinions, and afraid to confess your obligations to the Lord? Oh! I once more entreat you to be candid. Be open, be decided, confess Christ's name on earth, and He will not be ashamed to confess your name before the whole assembled universe.

Christian Treasury: Volume 11, Deliverance for a Groaning Creation

Romans 8ROM 8

J. N. Darby

This creation awaits its redemption, but it cannot be delivered and restored until the children of God, in the glory of the kingdom, are ready to take possession of it as joint-heirs with Christ. Christ sits at the right hand of God until these joint-heirs are gathered.

It is a blessed thought that as we have brought the earthly creation under the bondage of corruption, so now it must wait for our being glorified, to be restored and delivered from this bondage (vs. 19). It is not the will of the creature that subjected it to this bondage; we have done it—but in hope, for this condition will not continue always; the creation will be restored. God, however, in the counsels of His grace..begins with the guilty, with those who are most alienated, with those in whom He will in the ages to come show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7; compare Col. 1:20-21).

Creation, inasmuch as it is only physical, could not enter into the liberty of grace; it must await the

liberty of the glory of the children of God. When they are delivered, and their bodies which belong to this creation are changed and glorified, and when Satan is bound, then the creature also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption in which it lies enthralled. For we know—we that are instructed in Christian doctrine—that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. We know it yet more because we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, and "we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Thus we wait to possess that which is saved in hope; not only to possess eternal life as life—that we have already—but to be glorified by our bodies, which belong to this creation, being changed and we made like unto Christ the Lord, according to the power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3:21).

Thus peace is made; our sins are put away, we have a new life, possess the earnest of the Spirit, the glory lies before us in hope, and we shall be like the Lord. But as long as we have not reached the glory, we groan with the creation. For while realizing our glorious hope, we feel the sad condition of the whole creation being connected with it as fallen, by our bodies. Free before God, free from the law of sin and death, filled with the hope of glory, we are led through the knowledge of this glory and of the full deliverance of the creature to groan, which is the expression of its groan to God.

Our groaning is not a complaint, the fruit of discontent, but the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart. The Spirit directs our eye to the glory where we shall have no more occasion to groan, and leads us to feel according to the love of God the suffering of a creation under bondage. We at the same time feel it, because by our bodies we still belong to it. The Spirit of God, which dwells in us, forms these feelings according to God. God searches the human heart and He finds this operation of the Spirit in the heart of the delivered Christian. The Spirit Himself is there, the source of divine sympathy with a groaning creation (vs. 27).

The eye of the Christian will be, by the indwelling Holy Spirit, directed above to the glory and the rest of God where all is blessing. With joy he realizes what is before him. But as he is still in the body, he feels so much the more the condition of a fallen creation, shares its groans, and thereby becomes the voice of a creation groaning before God. But his groaning is in the spirit of love according to God, because in his relationship with God he is perfectly free.

With regard to his condition, he is saved in hope; but before God his heart is free in the consciousness of His love. He can rejoice in hope—the hope of glory. His conscience is perfect; the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. And thus, according to this love, he can sympathize with the universal misery around him. He knows not, it is true, what remedy he ought to look for in his prayers; perhaps there is none. But love can express the needs, and does it according to the operation of the Spirit. And although the Christian does not know what he should ask for, He who searches the hearts finds the mind of the Spirit in his groans, for it is the Spirit that in the depths of the heart gives expression to the feelings of need.

Being ourselves still in the body, and as to our own condition forming part of the groaning creation and awaiting the redemption of our bodies, our sympathy is the more heartfelt. Although we know not what we ought to pray for, yet there is what we know with perfect certainty, namely, that God makes all things work together for good to them that love Him, whom He has called according to His purpose.

What privilege is ours through grace—privilege that we enjoy by the Holy Spirit! We are children of God; we know our relationship with God, and can realize it by the Holy Spirit; we cry, "Abba, Father." We are children, therefore heirs—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. The Spirit reveals to us our inheritance, and gives us to understand what it is. We shall be like Christ in the rest of God and in His own rest—perfectly to the glory of Christ, and we shall reign with Him over all things. As men upon earth we lift our eyes to the glory of God which is our hope and which we shall share with Christ, there where all is pure conformity to the purity of God.

Looking at this poor world, our hearts are filled with the love of God, in which we share the sufferings of an undelivered creation and that according to God. So that He who searches the hearts finds therein the mind of the Spirit who produces in us this sympathy with the sufferings of the fallen creation in order that we, in our groans, may become the mouthpiece of the creation before God. And as from our lack of intelligence we do not always know what we should pray for, the Word of God comforts us with the assurance that God, according to His own will and love, makes all things work together for our good.

Grace has no limits, no bounds.

Be what we may (and we cannot be worse than we are),

in spite of that, God towards us is LOVE.

Letters 1, Deliverance; Exercises and Ground of Peace

You will perhaps recollect one who went up in the train from E. to D., now about a year ago, or not far from it, and be surprised perhaps to receive a letter from him from Canada. But though I have been much occupied -as you may suppose I did not cross the Atlantic for nothing- I have not forgotten our conversation in the train, and I crave to hear how you are getting on. We have had here the Governor of the Jail1 fully brought to the knowledge of salvation, and to walk with the saints of God, as he still does. (He would still like another place, but awaits the Lord's leading to find him something.) His dear wife, already a believer, was led to see she ought to be more entirely separate from the world and live more devotedly, and so she did thoroughly, and the Lord has taken her. She expected it, and was longing to go. No cloud came over

her peace and joy. She suffered dreadfully and long, but no impatience was shown; all was bright and all peace. She left four children, charming little ones; we had them in the house where I was, to spare the nurse while she was ill. She saw them, gave them her blessing, and bade farewell, but it raised no lingering look behind. Another dear old man, only six months converted, died just after, rejoicing with all his heart. We buried both not far apart in the deep, deep snow, which indeed kept the earth soft enough to be opened (for sometimes they cannot bury), committing them to Christ till the resurrection.

And now how would it be with you if thus called? Is all peace and right with God? You know yourself that you need it. You know that Christ is the only way to have it. Let me add a few words as to the fullness of it. He appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. That work is finished. It can never be added to, nor taken away from. Its value does not change. But the Spirit of God works in us to shew us our need of it, makes us see that we are sinners, that we are lost in ourselves, leads us (perhaps by deep and painful convictions) to the sense that there is no good in us, that when even to will is present with us, how to perform that which is good we find not. We find not only that we have sinned, but that there is a law of sin in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin in our members. But when-really humbled about this and convicted in our own hearts, removing all pretensions of righteousness in ourselves—we turn to Christ, we find that He has died for this, that He has been a sacrifice for sin as for the sins that burdened us—has been made sin for us, has put it away for us by the sacrifice of Himself.

Thus we get peace and liberty of heart before God, because the sin is put away between us and Him; Christ has made a full expiation. Sin does not exist as between God and us. When He looks on the blood of Christ He cannot see sin in the believer, because when Christ shed that blood He put it away. Thus we get liberty and power too, because submitting thus to the righteousness of God, having Christ for our righteousness, we are sealed with the Spirit, which gives us power and shows us Christ, so that we get strength and joy, and are able to glorify Him.

How is it then with you? Are you still a worse prisoner than those you are watching over, or freed by the redemption that is in Christ? Have you been brought to see, that if you refuse life through His name you must perish? Do you seek that you should know Him, or are you joining with His enemies—hail-fellow-well-met with the world that to its judgment and ruin crucified Him? If we have His Spirit we know that we are in Him, and all is peace and joy too, because we know the Son of God and abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. I shall be glad to hear from you. May the blessed Lord in His grace direct your eye fixedly on Christ.

Ever truly yours in Christ.

I am here for the Lord's work, and have found a great deal to interest me. The Lord willing, I shall be back some time in summer.

Toronto,

May, 1863.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 1, Why Do I Groan?

Romans 7-8

There is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of grace, to continue practically conscious that “we are not under law, but under grace.” It is by grace that the heart is “established”; but then there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fullness of grace — that “grace of God wherein we stand,” and to walk in the power and consciousness of it.

It is only in the presence of God that we can know it, and there it is our privilege to be. The moment we get away from the presence of God, there will always be certain workings of our own thoughts within us; and our own thoughts can never reach up to the thoughts of God about us, to the “grace of God.”

It is quite impossible for us to draw any right conclusion about grace, until we are settled on the great foundation of grace — God’s gift of Jesus. No reasoning of our own hearts could ever reach up to “the grace of God,” for the very simple reason, that in order to be such it must flow directly and freely from God. What I had any, the smallest possible, right to expect, could not be pure, free grace — could not be this “grace of God.”

But then, even after we have “tasted that the Lord is gracious,” it is quite natural for our own thoughts to work as soon as we leave the presence of God; and the moment they do so, whether it be about our sins, or about our graces, or anything else that we are occupied with, we lose the sense of grace, and can no longer reckon upon it.

This getting out of God’s presence is the source of all our weakness as saints, for in God’s strength we can do anything: “if God be for us, who can be against us?” The consciousness of His realized presence with us makes us “more than conquerors.” Whether our thoughts be about ourselves, or about circumstances around us, everything then becomes easy. But it is alone, when in communion with Him, that we are able thus to measure everything according to grace.

Are our thoughts about ourselves? When in the presence of God we rest on His grace, nothing can trouble us. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” “Who is he that condemneth?” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” But the moment that we get out of God’s presence, we cannot any longer rest on His grace as when in communion with Him.

Again, are they respecting the condition of things around? He may have sorrow of spirit on this account, as conscious of the evil, misery, and ruin in which everything is (as Jesus, He “groaned in spirit, and was troubled”). But it is impossible, when we are abiding in the sense of God’s presence, for anything, be it what it may, even the state of the church, to shake us; for we count on God, and then all things become but a sphere and scene for the operation of His grace.

Nature never counts upon God's grace; it may count upon God's mercy in passing by sin, but only because it imagines either that He is indifferent about it (attributing to Him its own low estimate of sin), or that He has no right to judge it. Grace, when understood by the soul, is seen to be the very opposite of this — to be founded on a just sense of the tremendous evil of sin, on the part of God. And when we have learned in our measure to take God's estimate of sin, we are filled with amazement at that grace of God which can blot it all out — which has given His own Son to die because of it. What the natural man understands by mercy is not this — God's blotting out sin by the blood-shedding of Jesus, but His passing by sin with indifference. This is not grace.

When the conscience becomes awakened, and there are thoughts of responsibility, without the apprehension of grace, the first thing it seeks to do is to put itself under the law; it cannot do otherwise. And the natural man even often does this; he knows of no other way of pleasing God than obedience to the law; and this, being ignorant both of God and himself, he thinks he can render.

But the having very simple thoughts of grace is the true source of our strength as Christians; and the abiding in the sense of grace in the presence of God is all the secret of holiness, peace and quietness of spirit. There are two things which may hinder our peace of spirit, and which, being frequently confounded and mixed up together, create a difficulty in the minds of the saints: Firstly, a troubled state of conscience respecting acceptance and salvation, and, secondly, a groaning of spirit, similar to that mentioned by Paul in Romans 8:23, because of circumstances around which distress and try us. But these are quite distinct. The trouble and exercise of spirit which the saint may and indeed will have, while living in this world, because of circumstances around, is altogether an opposite thing to that trouble of conscience which is respecting pardon of sin.

Where there is that trouble of conscience, love is not in exercise, but self is the center. But when the trouble is because of the state of things around us, the contrary is the case. How deep the trouble of soul of the Lord Jesus! but it flowed from love and from a perfect sense of what the grace of God was. When grace is fully, that is, simply known — when we are resting upon God as being for us, and know that He is love, there can be no mistake between these two causes of disquiet; but if we do not understand what grace is, we shall be apt immediately to confound them.

If there be in us any anxiety of conscience as to our acceptance, we may be quite sure that we are not thoroughly established in grace. It is true there may be the sense of sin in one who is established, but this is a very different thing from distress of conscience as to acceptance. Want of peace may be caused by either of two things; my never having been fully brought to trust in grace, or my having through carelessness lost the sense of grace, which is easily done. The grace of God is so unlimited, so full, so perfect, that, if we get for a moment out of the presence of God, we cannot have the true consciousness of it — we have no strength to apprehend it; and if we attempt to know it out of His presence, we shall only turn it to licentiousness.

If we look at the simple fact of what grace is, it has no limit, no bounds. Be we what we may (and we cannot be worse than we are), in spite of all that, what God is towards us is love! Neither our joy nor our peace is dependent on what we are to God, but on what He is to us, and this is grace.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil that is in us, and is the blessed revelation that through Jesus all this sin and evil has been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins — nay, than all the sins in the world — are to us; and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what we are, all that God is pleased to be towards us is love! It is vain to look to any extent of evil: a person may be (speaking after the manner of man) a great sinner, or a little sinner; but this is not the question at all: grace has reference to what God is, and not to what we are, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does but magnify the extent of the grace of God. At the same time, we must remember that the object and necessary effect of grace is to bring our souls into communion with God, to sanctify us, by bringing the soul to know God and to love Him. Therefore the knowledge of grace is the true source of sanctification.

If grace then be what God is toward me, and has nothing at all to do with what I am, the moment I begin to think about myself as though God would judge me because of my sins, it is evident that I am not then consciously standing in grace. The heart naturally has these thoughts; and indeed it is also one of the effects of being awakened, for the conscience then begins directly to reason about what God thinks of it; but this is not grace. The soul that turns back upon itself to learn God's judgment about it, and what His dealings with it are likely to be, is not leaning upon what God is — is not standing in grace.

I have said that there are two things which, though quite distinct, are nevertheless frequently confounded in the minds of the saints — a bad conscience, and the groaning of the spiritual man because of evil around. The moment we get a little away from the sense of grace, we shall be in danger of confusing these together. Suppose for instance that I, as a saint, am sensible of the terrible weight of evil which is all around me, and groan about it, soon (unless it be guarded against) this will mix itself up with trouble of conscience; I shall lose the sense of God's love and put myself under law. But a saint may "groan" thus without at all losing the consciousness of love, nay, for the very reason that he has it.

When the Lord Jesus "groaned in himself" and wept at the grave of Lazarus, His deep sense of the sorrow which sin had brought into the world did not affect that of His Father's love. We find Him using at the same time the language of the fullest confidence in that love — "Father, I know that thou hearest me always." And so a Christian may be sorrowful, but should not on that account feel as though God were not love, or lose the sense of His grace. Love to others combined with a spiritual perception of evil will cause us very much sorrow. Jesus felt this infinitely more than we can ever do, because the power of love in His heart made Him so much more deeply sensible of the dreadful weight of evil which was pressing on the hearts of others. He felt the miseries around Him in proportion as He knew the blessedness and love of the Father's presence.

We have "suffering," "groaning" and so forth, spoken of in Romans 8. Paul groaned within himself from the consciousness of infirmity, from distress, trials, and so forth, but this raised no question in his mind about the certainty of God's grace — quite the contrary. The more conscious we are that the Spirit dwells in us, the more we shall "groan." The more certain we are of blessing, the more we realize grace; the more we know of God's love, and the effects of that love, the more shall we "groan" at all that is at present around us; but not as though these things brought the smallest cloud over divine favor.

Paul is spoken of as groaning in spirit, and why? He realized the result of the grace in which he stood. Through the power of faith being made conscious of the blessings which are his, he groans within himself after them; but never as if there were the slightest doubt respecting his

salvation. Delivered he is from all uncertainty as to the fullness, the freeness, of divine favor towards him; and in the consciousness of this he groans within himself, “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

The end of chapter 7 describes quite another sort of groaning, though, as before remarked, the two are often confounded together; because, as sin is still dwelling in us (in our flesh), those who are not really established in grace do not discern the difference between them. The whole chapter is full of what people call experience; not of that which is (properly speaking) Christian experience, but of the thoughts of the mind within and about itself. The state described is that of a person, quickened indeed, but whose whole set of reasonings centers in himself. I could not venture to say how many times he says “I” and “me”; the whole chapter is full of it.

Observe the difference of expression in verse 14: “We know that the law is spiritual”; all Christians know that; but then does he say, We know that we are carnal, sold under sin? No, “I am carnal, sold under sin.” He turns back immediately to self and to the judgment, which, being quickened, he had formed of himself by his own experience, as under the law, and begins to reason about what he is before God, and not about what God is towards him; and the consequence is that he exclaims, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” So it is with us; directly we begin to reason about ourselves, we can only say, “O wretched man that I am!” what shall I do? I hate sin, I wish to please God, I confess that the law is good; but the more that I see it is so, the worse it is for me — the more miserable I am!

Is there a word of grace in all this? No, not a word. When he brings in Christ at the close, then he is able to thank God: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This chapter is full of a great deal of truth, in the experience of the individual mentioned; but it is truth stopping short of grace, of the simple fact that, whatever be his state, let him be as bad as he may, “God is love,” and only love towards him. Instead of looking at God, it is all “I,” “I,” “I.” In verse 15, six times over does he speak of himself, his own thoughts; and though some of these were spiritual, yet it is, “What I hate, that do I,” “When I would do good, evil is present with me!”

All this may be very profitable experience to bring us to the conviction of our utter hopelessness in ourselves. Still let us put it in its right place, and remember that it is not, properly speaking, Christian experience; but that it only describes the feelings of a soul that has not yet fully and experimentally known the simple fact, that “when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”; or else that of one who, through the workings of the flesh, has slipped back to looking at himself, and at what he is, instead of looking at God — at grace.

Faith produces many effects in our hearts always suitable to the object at which it looks. If for instance faith looks at the law, it sees its spirituality far more clearly than nature can; and then, seeing the flesh too in its real vileness, if it looks no farther, but judges of itself according to this spirituality of the law, the effect must be to bring us under condemnation of it (I mean of course as to our feeling) — under the consciousness of guilt and weakness. We shall hate, and seek to separate from evil; but that will be all; it will leave us crying out, “O wretched man that I am!” With increased light there will only be increased misery.

But if faith looks at God as He has revealed Himself in grace, it judges accordingly. It never then reasons upon the fruit produced, it rests in the revelation God has given of Himself — grace. The fruits of grace are to be looked for of course; for if there be life in us, the “fruit of the Spirit” will be manifested. The saint, for instance, knows that “peace” has been “made through the blood of the cross.” The effect is, that love flows forth. He feels that he is called unto blessing, and therefore has his feet “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace”; drinking into his own soul the love of God, he becomes as a river of love flowing forth to others (John 7:38). But though these fruits are produced, faith never reasons on its own fruits; it can alone rest in the revelation God has given of Himself as “the God of all grace.” This is its own and only proper sphere.

The natural heart ever reasons about itself, and in a Christian it is always judging by fruits. This must necessarily bring disquiet, instead of peace. In itself it can see nothing but sin; and as to any fruit I have even been enabled to bear, this is so mixed with imperfection that it can only be a subject for judgment (though it be the Father’s judgment) — it cannot give me peace. That can only be found in what Jesus has wrought, in “the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

What then is the position in chapter 7? First of all the apostle establishes the great principle that the believer is “dead to the law.” Then he describes the workings of a quickened soul, which, knowing that the “law is spiritual,” still feels “under the law,” and is therefore compelled to exclaim, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Whom is he thinking of in all this? Himself. Now, dear friends, let me ask you, Am I or is my state the object of faith? No, surely not! Faith never makes what is in my heart its object, but God’s revelation of Himself in grace. If we stop half way, and see nothing but the law, it will just discover to us our condemnation, and prove us to be “without strength.” If God allows us to know enough of the law and of the experience described in this chapter to show us what is our true state, that is just where grace meets us.

It is not that the conflict here spoken of will not continue: grace could not be known at all where conflict is not known; the unconverted only are without it. But that which will not continue when grace is fully known is that bitterness of spirit in which, while the conflict is going on, the person judges himself, seeing the law to be “spiritual,” but himself “carnal, sold under sin.” The love of God is not realized as his own, and therefore this causes him to cry out, “O wretched man that I am!”

It is quite clear that, while there is this experience felt, there is not simple faith in God’s grace; there is not a clear view of what God is towards me in Christ; for when the soul apprehends that, when the faculties of the new man are exercised on their proper object, there is perfect rest. And though there is still conflict, yet the soul is at peace: “the battle is not ours, but the Lord’s.”

But how am I to know what is God’s mind towards me? Is it by judging of it from what I find in myself? Surely not! Supposing that I even found good in myself, if I expected God to look at me on that account, would it be grace? There may be a measure of truth in this kind of reasoning; for, if there be life in my soul, fruit will be apparent; but this is not to give me peace any more than the evil that is in me is to hinder my having peace. That too is true reasoning where the apostle says, “the law is spiritual, but I am carnal”; “O wretched man that I am!” but there is nothing of grace in it.

But does the certainty of grace take us out of all trouble? No; I am not at all denying the fact that there is, and while we are in a sinful body that there ever must be, conflict going on between the flesh and the Spirit. But then to have this conflict going on in the conscious certainty that God is for me, because I am “under grace,” is a very different thing from having it in the fear that He is against me, because I am “under law.”

If in evil I see myself (and this I always shall while here, in the root, even if it be not manifested in its fruit), and if I think that God will be against me because of it, I shall have no strength for conflict, but be utterly cast down, groaning as to my acceptance. But if certain that God is for me, the consciousness of this will give me courage and victory, nay, even enable me to say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” In the confidence of the love and grace of God I can ask Him to search out all my evil — what I otherwise dare not do, lest it should overwhelm me with despair. God is my friend — for me, against my own evil.

The apostle speaks (ch. 8) of the “carnal mind” being “enmity against God”; but then God in the gift of Jesus has brought out this blessed truth, that when man was at enmity against God, God was love towards man: our enmity was met by His love. The triumph of grace was seen in this, that when man’s enmity had cast out Jesus from the earth, God’s love brought in salvation by that very act — came in to atone for the sin of those who had rejected Him. In the view of the fullest development of man’s sin faith sees the fullest manifestation of God’s grace. Where does faith see the greatest depth of man’s sin and hatred of God? In the cross; and at the same glance it sees the greatest extent of God’s triumphant love and mercy to man. The spear of the centurion which pierced the side of Jesus only brought out that which spoke of love and mercy.

The apostle then goes on to show that those once at enmity with God are now become His heirs; and that the knowledge of this is founded on the knowledge of grace: “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again,” and so forth. Grace first makes us children of God, and then gives us the knowledge of it, and that we are heirs of God.

But what is the extent of this grace towards us? It has given us the same portion that the Lord Jesus has. “We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” It is not only certain that grace has visited us, has found us when we were “in our sins,” but it is also certain that it has set us where Christ is; that we are identified with the Lord Jesus in all but His essential glory as God. The soul is placed thus in the consciousness of God’s perfect love, and therefore, as it is said in chapter 5, “we joy in God.”

I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God’s love. I shall then be saying, I am unhappy, because I am not what I should like to be. But, dear friends, this is not the question: the real question is, whether God is what we should like Him to be, whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are, of what we find in ourselves, has any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. The immediate effect of such consciousness should be to make our hearts reach out to God and to His grace as abounding over it all.

But while grace thus gives us perfect peace in our souls, it does not save us from sorrow. Even as the Lord Jesus so perfectly entered into the sorrow and groaning around Him when here, and was therefore a “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”; so in his measure ought the saint to take up the sense of the weight of evil that is in the world, and thus become a man of sorrows also. Just as we abide in grace, shall we have in proportion a sense of the weight of evil that is all around, and groan in sympathy with a groaning and travailing creation; and not only so, but being ourselves in the body, we shall “groan” likewise “within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.”

But is there any uncertainty as to our salvation in this groaning? No, quite the contrary; it is the very certainty that “all things are ours” which makes us “groan.” Having the certainty and foretaste of glory everything here is made the more painful by contrast. That which the saint is entitled to is so very different from all that is actually around him, that the more he knows of the joy of dwelling in the presence of God, the larger understanding he has of God’s love and grace; the more he realizes the blessedness of his portion in that glory to which he is predestinated, the more will he “groan”!

How different this from the groaning of an uneasy conscience! Let us not mistake, dear friends; let us not confound the two: this groaning of one perfectly free from the sense of condemnation described in chapter 8, and the groaning of conscience, the “O wretched man that I am!” of chapter 7. Carelessness of walk, and through it losing the sense of grace, may indeed expose him who has once consciously stood in the power of redemption to the fiery darts of the wicked one. But this is not, as before remarked, true Christian experience. When the heart is made full with the rich blessings of Christ, it will not turn back to gnaw upon itself.

It is our privilege as saints to know that “there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus”; that “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” But we must not stop simply here. There must be the going on to know what we are as sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, the Spirit bearing witness to us of it. God “hath established us in Christ,” “hath anointed us,” and “given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” Having thus the fullest knowledge that God has thought about us in love, and predestinated us to be conformed to the image of Jesus, and to share His glory, understanding what His love is now about in His dealings with us, and not being yet in the glory but still in the body, and in the midst of evil and groaning all around, we shall therefore groan. “Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” The very reason of our groaning is because of our having the firstfruits of the Spirit, not at all because of a bad conscience; it is the Spirit of Christ groaning in us.

And then this groaning is always accompanied by confidence in God. As with Jesus, when “He groaned in the spirit and was troubled” at the grave of Lazarus, He said, “I know that thou hearest me always”; so is it given to the saint to have the like confidence (see 1 John 5:14-15). Nor should this confidence even fail, when we “know not what to pray for as we ought,” for it is added, “but we know that all things work together for good,” and so forth. I may see evil in myself — in another saint — in the church, and seek to pray about it, but yet not have sufficient intelligence to know what would remedy it; the Spirit will help my infirmity, and groan within me. God does not regard my ignorance, but answers according to “the mind of the Spirit,” who always “maketh intercession for the saints according to God.” I ought to be so confident of God’s directing all things, as to be able to say, I am certain all things work together for good. Is a soul in this state? Come what may — trouble, sorrow, disappointment, grief, whatever it be — all is peace, for it is resting upon God, and not (as in chap. 7) looking at itself.

Our very griefs then flow from the knowledge of God’s immense love, and from the consciousness of all that belongs to us in Christ. Jesus fully knew, as none other, what the presence of God, what the enjoyment of His favor, was, and “groaned,” because, coming from the presence of God, He found man out of it. The life which I now have identifies me, not with responsibility as “under the law,” but with Christ, who has borne the judgment of a broken law for me. Instead of being wretched and miserable because looking at myself as under law, I enjoy the consciousness of redemption, rest in grace, and “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” But the moment we get a glimpse of the glory of Christ as ours, this world becomes to us a scene of misery and bondage.

This groaning on account of evil always associates itself with love. If for instance I see a saint sin, it leads me at once to the love and grace he is sinning against. It is the consciousness of divine favor which I have towards that saint which makes me anxious about him; and while I grieve at his sin, I have joy in God in the midst of my sorrow.

Well, beloved friends, if these things be so, if this be the place in which grace sets us, let me ask, Is it so with you? If God be pure love — nothing else than love to us; if there be no mixed feelings in Him, then if you have not full joy, if there is any hesitation in your souls as to your standing before Him, you cannot be simply resting in His grace.

Is there distrust and distress in your minds? See if it be not because you are still saying “I,” “I,” and losing sight of God’s grace. You may indeed have faith, but you want simplicity of heart in looking at God’s grace. It is better to be thinking of what God is than of what we are. This looking at ourselves is at the bottom really pride — a want of the thorough consciousness that we are good for nothing. Till we see this we never look quite away from self to God. Sometimes perhaps the looking at our evil may be a partial instrument in teaching us it; but still even this is not all that is needed. In looking to Christ it is our privilege to forget ourselves. True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves as in not thinking of ourselves at all. I am too bad to be worth thinking about. What I want is, to forget myself and to look at God who is indeed worth all my thoughts. Is there need of being humbled about ourselves? We may be quite sure that will do it.

Beloved, if we can say (as in Rom. 7) that “in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,” we have thought quite long enough about ourselves. Let us then think about Him who thought about us with “thoughts of good and not of evil” long before we had thought of ourselves at all. Let us see what His thoughts of grace about us are, and take up the words of faith, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Letters 2, Nature of Christ; Life Laid Down and Taken Again; Humanity of Christ, The Danger of Discussion on the

I return -'s letter. As to his statements, I know of no brother who holds that Christ had a life distinct from His communion with God, a life to which sin and death belonged: such a Christ would not be the true Christ at all. It is utterly false doctrine, and I know no one who holds it; and, unless abandoned, should think such a person ought to be excluded from communion. That sin attached to the life He had when on the cross, in the sense that He bore our sins, and was made sin for us, is a fundamental doctrine of scripture; but it was He who knew no sin who was made sin, taking it on Himself, or rather having it laid on Him by God, and, as so, bearing it, He laid down His life, or died; this also is fundamental. Further, that He took life again in a different condition afterward is stated in scripture-"Being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Lim." It was not different as to sinlessness, sinless He always was; but He was "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death:" now, as Man, He is exalted above all principality and power, and cannot die. Before, He could, for He did, and took manhood to do it-for the suffering of death; took flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death-but He was always in relationship with His Father, and in perfect communion, save as drinking the cup on the cross, when He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? "-yet never more perfect than then. If brethren held what he states, I should not blame him for leaving them....

Christ making His own generation is dark enough: He was "made () of a woman," but miraculously that there might be no sin; but "of the seed of David according to the flesh," and carefully traced up to Adam in Luke. But when he talks of a generation of light since Seth, and in consideration of their being flesh and blood, Christ took it, he is again away from scripture; for the saved were "sometimes darkness," and then "light in the Lord": there is no generation of light but by grace. Here, though obscurely stated, I am afraid there is something radically unsound. In Colossians "the beginning" is connected with resurrection. That Christ had eternally both life and quickening power I do not doubt, and so when here, and that it was a holy thing that was born of the virgin Mary. That Christ had no connection with the sin of human nature, but was as really a man come in flesh as we are, is fundamental as to the truth. That has allowed his mind to act on scripture, and got away from divine teaching, is quite plain, and is in danger of denying the real humanity of the Lord; and as to this generation of light and the like, his mind is dangerously at work, instead of being subject to God. But gracious communicating might restore him: he studies scripture, but trusts his own mind, and that will not do in the things of God.

It may have been anxiety for Christ's personal glory but there is enough, to say the least, unclear, as to the Lord's true humanity, to make one inquire fully what he does hold.

Affectionately yours.

Bible Treasury: Volume 3, Romans 5:18-19

“As by one act of offense [it was] unto all men for condemnation, (i.e., it was unto all men to condemnation,) even so by one accomplished righteousness [it was] unto all men for justification of life.” So it runs literally. The meaning may be thus explained. Supposing you had only the one act of Adam by itself, it would have plunged all men into condemnation. On the other hand, the work of Christ in itself would have brought complete deliverance unto all men. But that is only the tendency towards or unto all men, not the actual effect upon them. Here, in this chapter, we have, in verse 18, the tendency; and in verse 19, the effect. “As by one man's disobedience [the] many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall [the] many be made righteous.” “The many” who had to do with the one man that disobeyed were all men, because all were children of Adam; so by the obedience of Christ shall “the many” —His class—be made righteous. the first clause, therefore, “the litany” means all men; in the second, it means all saints. You could understand in the first clause “all men” but not in the second.. The respective families of Adam and of Christ are instanced. “Therefore as by one offense [it was] unto all to condemnation, so also [it is] unto all to justification of life.” It is the aim a thing would reach if unimpeded. If all had submitted to it—Christ's death and rising again—they would have been justified; that was the tendency. But in verse 19, we have the positive result.

By the obedience of one shall [the] many [those who have to do with Him] be made righteous.” headship, first of Adam, then of Christ, is the great truth brought out here. “Justification of life” is the actual condition of a Christian. The life he now possesses is the life of Christ risen. And as there cannot be a question against Christ risen, so there cannot be one against the Christian.

Notes and Comments 6, Fragment: Romans 5:21

NOTE.—Not only is it impossible that God could do anything that sin may abound, but, in Rom. 5:21, if He had said where the offense abounded grace did also abound, it would have confined it to those under the law. But He was showing the contrary—that Christ's work reached out beyond, to Adam's in aspect and efficacy. Grace overrode the whole, though it might be rejected.

Notes and Comments 2, Peace

The connection and place of peace in Luke, and as to the last or application to us, in John also, is, extremely interesting. As soon as Christ is born, the unjealous delight in the divine glory in man's blessing celebrates His birth. They pass over man's fault in putting the Savior born into the manger, and, filled entirely with the divine thoughts in fit, celebrate His praise. And what was this? “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good pleasure in man." That was the result in its own nature of the birth of the Savior. This presence of the Lord, the fruit of infinite grace, was in itself, if received, peace and blessing-carried it necessarily in what it was in itself—and will produce it finally.

But the Lord was rejected, and as some received Him, He had to say, “Think ye that I am come to send peace on earth; I tell you Nay, but rather a sword. Five shall be in one house, two against three, and three against two."

In the end of Luke, the Kingdom is celebrated, which will indeed bring in peace on the earth. There it is said: “Blessed be the King that cometh. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." All that God had done on earth had been marred and spoiled by Satan, and as long as these wicked spirits were in heavenly places, thus it must be. But there is war in heaven, and the devil and his angels are cast out, and there is no more place for them. Then there is peace in heaven—Satan is bound. Now there can be peace on earth, and under the Lord's rule there will be peace. But between these two we stand. And in that same Gospel of Luke, the Lord comes after His resurrection and pronounces “Peace" on His disciples. But this was a peace of a far deeper and fuller character, not peace on earth, governmental peace, but peace made with God. He had made peace, perfect peace, so that the soul might enjoy cloudless communion with Him-all that is of the world or of this scene, as alive in it, being shut out. He had brought them, or had done what brought them into this peace by His death, and now He pronounced it. And if we turn to John, this will shine out with the brightest evidence. The Lord had warned His disciples that He did not come to bring peace, but a sword; so that the peace on earth was not there, but the fire already kindled. But He had ineffable peace of soul as not of the world—He was in, and His soul in the unclouded light of His Father's countenance. It was a link—between man and God, infinite in blessing (in Him in every sense infinite, and in us objectively and as regards the power of the Holy Ghost, and as being in Him and so in cloudless light, with God) no matter what the circumstances. Now Jesus through His death, and as being in Him and He in us, brings us into this blessing—"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you." This is unspeakably blessed.

The peace of the Christian is not the same as being justified—"Being justified, we have peace with God." This must be according to His nature; hence completely what He is, which makes it very blessed, and though in us connected with our being alienated and enemies by sin, yet in itself is only measured by what He was before sin existed—the outgoing of His own nature in itself—before sin, and we in absolute harmony with its full display and proper nature. Sin has been the means of bringing us to know what holiness, righteousness, love are, but they are all in God—the last is His nature. Thus in seeing what Christ says, we learn what it is. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Now His peace was consonance in every way with the divine nature, and the consciousness of communion with it—that it rested on Him unclouded, but that was not by sin put away. It was in itself divine and, though now in a Man, eternal consonance. Now for us, of course, it had to be made—"He has made peace by the blood of the Cross," and this was so perfect, as to the whole nature and character of God, that He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father—is glorified with God in virtue of that work in which He glorified God perfectly and in respect of what we are as sinners, but glorified God perfectly.

Hence we are brought into this-" Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God." It is in the midst of evil no doubt, conflict and warfare around, so that it has the character of peace. Still it is, and this makes it specially to be so, "Peace with God." Not as to the circumstances-that is the "Peace of God keeping our hearts"—a blessed thing, but not so deep and direct as this. This is with Himself-our secret with Him, His with us. I think it will turn to delight in His own glory in heaven, to which it ministers now. But here it has the character of peace with God.

Then we must remember that it is a state of mind in the unclouded consciousness of what God is (but necessarily according to His nature) to us according to the value of Christ's work, and in Him.

There is another order of peace from the conformity itself to this nature—a subjective peace, "The mind of the Spirit is life and peace."

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

Letters 3, Force of Terms Employed as to Righteousness

As to Rom. 5:17, it is not the same as Rom. 8:4. There it is the fact that, in walking in the Spirit, the sum of the requirement of the law (and so only) would be fulfilled, the . Much more, perhaps; but as the flesh was not subject to it, that , could not be accomplished when in the flesh.

But, living in the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ living in us, the body dead, the sum of the law's requirements, so walking, was fulfilled. Against the fruits of righteousness there was no law. The Christian has a higher rule-to be an imitator of God, as manifested in man in Christ (Eph. 5:1, 2); but as people were looking for legal righteousness, what is in verses 2, 3, was the way of getting it.

Chapter 5:17 is , the abstract thing righteousness given to us, and though taken abstractedly, that thing in its nature and quality; yet as being free gift (), and that of God, according to grace, goes much farther than the requirement or . of the law, which, if fulfilled, was no more than man's righteousness.

Verse 16 is .. But it is not : that was measured by the requirement of the law. Here it is of many offenses to a sum of recognized righteousness: it is a —a gracious gift of a sum of adequate righteousness, judicially estimated and satisfactory. Keeping the law makes that out as a requirement from man: it would be his righteousness as rightly measured by it. But here it is ; came upon men to : it is now a dealing with many offenses, and so giving us, according to God, an adequate judicial righteousness, but now, according to God's free gift, not man's responsibility; the of the law and God's are different. We have hardly words in English to make these differences, but is the sum of requirement, the thing righteousness; so 1 Cor. 1:30. Hence, in Rom. 4:23, it is ; is .

These words in - are the quality. Then the persons of the perfect passive, as a rule, give the thing done, the doing, and the doer:, , , . We have not ; it is not an office like but . (Rom. 3:26; 4:5.)

Letters 3, Courage; Denominations in the Camp, The Need of

"What I think serious in the state of all these bodies is, not one is really outside the camp. God has opened out much truth from His word, that is widely spread outside all gatherings; but there they do not move, and spoil it; but the loose brethren have generally lost it. For my own part, I feel what I have to do is to minister Christ to the want of the soul with which I have to do. As to a public testimony, though we may be humbled, the Lord is wise. If it were merely a question of New Zealand, Canada was worse till R. Evans went there. He was decided, and only one brother would let him into his house; now such a thing as a loose meeting is hardly known, and blessing has spread very widely. Christ suffices for the present state of the church, as for all. But one man in Israel's history went up to heaven without dying, and the state of Israel was such that he could not find a faithful man, though God knew such. There is no epistle where the apostle so much insists on courage as in 2 Timothy, when all was gone to the bad. My own deep conviction is that the church failed immediately the apostle was gone, just as Adam, and Noah, and Israel in Sinai, and the priesthood. The church as an historical body never knew what it was to be perfected forever, and did not continue to own the Holy Ghost. God has taken us back to the Scriptures, to the word of God, and faith rests there owning the Holy Ghost as present till the blessed Lord takes us away. The standing of the Christian and of the church was lost at once with those to whom it was revealed, save as consigned to the written word. There I turn, owning the need and power of the Holy Ghost, while perfect acceptance in Christ is the starting-point for all our service as for all our hopes.... But I must close, casting myself on the Lord for all our service. The more we know of Him, the more we know He is everything. All else passes but He abides forever, the Son of the Father's delight, and we associated with Him-wondrous thought! but God's purpose, and now due to Him who has suffered that He may see the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied—satisfied in having us with and like Him. What infinite blessedness, and all to the glory of God forever and ever. Must not our hearts be filled with it, and His love is our present joy!

Your affectionate brother.

Letters 3, Blood and Water; Righteousness

Your result in the tract paper,1 that is, fourth paragraph, is all right; but the third seems to me to confound a little the water and the blood: we have both in Christ. Living cleanness is practical, but does not cleanse from guilt, though the two cannot be separated because Christ is both and cannot be the one without being the other. But one is not the other; and if an exercised and troubled conscience had to find the living cleanness quite white, in order to know forgiveness, that is, non-imputation, the soul of such an one might be perplexed and cast down, as is often the case. It is mixing internal and living righteousness with non-imputation. Being quickened with Christ, I have part in the righteousness in which He is before God, but the working and effect of that life is not the measure of that righteousness before God, nor for peace of conscience. Conscience will be exercised where the Spirit is, as to the living righteousness; but it rests on Christ as its unchanging righteousness before God. We are righteous by faith objectively before God, not subjectively by experience; though there will be experience according to the working and judgment of the Holy Ghost in him who is righteous by faith. The Holy Ghost witnesses to one and works the other in us, or refuses inconsistencies contrary to it. But it carries on this moral discipline within in those that are at peace through the other; otherwise judgment of practice always puts us and must put us under law.

“Now ask any one that is anxious to please God, and whose sins are a real trouble to them, whether this is not so. Is it not, therefore, a poor remedy that never brings a surer cure?

“But if the walls of your cabin had a pure and living cleanness in them, would they not be freed continually from this growing dirt, and be purified continually?

“So it is with the heart that receives Christ into it by faith, and loves to have Him there, that looks to Him as the true and living righteousness given to us freely of God. Such a one shall find a living cleanness springing up in their heart, purifying them continually, and they rejoice in Him who bore all their sins.”)

Whenever we believe on Christ, or on Him that raised Him up, righteousness is imputed to us. It is not a question of progress, it is always simply true of the believer as such. It is God's judgment on his behalf of the value of Christ's work and His position as risen before Him; but grace reigning by righteousness is the principle on which the whole matter rests. It is the principle of Christianity.

Righteousness does not reign: it will in the day of judgment. Grace reigns yet. God cannot but maintain and require righteousness, but Christ has accomplished it in a divine way and it is settled forever in heaven, and this not for any temporal blessing or particular promise but for eternal life. Grace reigns. Sin has reigned through man unto death: had righteousness thus reigned, it was everlasting ruin. Now God who is love has had His work; and grace reigns and righteousness has now been established, divine righteousness through Christ. "Him that raised up Jesus" is not merely a confidence in power to be employed as Abraham, but in power already employed in deliverance, already accomplished in the very place and matter of our bondage, and in a God of love who has come down in such sort in power to our estate to take us out of it in Christ. God acts in love and power and the work of deliverance by it is accomplished. But death for offenses and resurrection for justification is not a stage past; it is a work done outside us of eternal efficacy, [by] the grace that reigns through it. For now righteousness being accomplished and established for us, love is no longer straitened, as it was till God's claim of death was satisfied, and Christ baptized with that baptism. And grace reigns through righteousness; and all blessings even to the fullness of glory, flow from and are dependent on this; but Rom. 4 gives us the same basis. Only here we have the source and principle which was at work and has triumphed so as to have all its own way in this time and forever in them who are brought in by it. God and His work has taken the place of man and his, as the ground of our relationship with God. Hence, of course, all blessings flow.

Letters 3, Being in Christ; Justification of Life

As to "justification of life" (Rom. 5:18) it is that justification we have as being alive in Christ; that is, it goes beyond mere forgiveness of sins as in the old man which are put away. It is the clearance of all imputation which we have as alive in Christ. But the passage gives us something more specific, it refers to verses 16 and 17. Verse 16 is "of many offenses unto justification," which of itself goes further than clearing the conscience of sins. Verse 17 further adds that they who have received "abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life." This, while based on the clearing, brings us into the new place in life and reigning in it. Hence we have "justification of life": "by one offense towards all men to condemnation... by one complete righteousness [] towards all men to justification" (ver. 18); but then "in life," a new life in Christ—not merely, that is, the old sins cleared away negatively, but in the new place by a work of Christ which God had fully owned. He had finished the work which His Father had given Him to do, and was in virtue of it in a new place as Man in life. Life (in us) and justification went together.

I do not know if I have made myself plain. It does not go quite so far as the "in Christ," but it does identify our justification and a new life in Him.

[1881.]

Letters 2, Salvation and Preservation

I do not know that there need be much difference of thought in the statements1 you make. The argument is the a fortiori argument which the Holy Ghost always uses—rather, the way He always reasons downward from what God is and has done. Besides, there is the contrast here of our state: when we were enemies He reconciled us, being reconciled He is not going to reject us then. His life does save us then along the pathway, but to the full result of salvation. His death, a thing outside us in grace, reconciled us to God; then in living actual power He secures our salvation. We have to be kept by God's power along the desert road and against the snares of the enemy. He ever lives for us as He once died for us, but then it results in the final salvation. To have us saved to the end in glory, He must keep us along the way, hence I say I do not know that the difference is very great.

Letters 1, Courage; Dead With Christ; Service of Evangelizing; Our Place as Christ's Servants, The Need of

The meeting at——seems to get on solid ground. I mean as to those who are out being clear in their convictions, and that is a great advantage. The numbers have so very greatly multiplied in England, I hardly know whether it could be said of all. But they are going on, thank God, happily. In Ireland and Scotland it is spreading, and the number of laborers is very considerably increased. I have had a tour from London to York in the north, and then down to Taunton, south-west, and had through mercy a good time, the precious Lord with me, and scripture opened. In central England we had a very nice general meeting for two days, and the other two, York and Taunton, were very useful. As to doors for work, there is no lack of them. In Germany, too, the work has greatly spread, and they claim a visit.

I feel, dear brother, more than ever that all is vanity, but what is forever. We all know it, but how foolish all else will seem when we meet the blessed Lord! Yet you have no idea how poor a workman I feel myself to be. It is not false modesty. I have no doubt of the truths I hold, and feel the word of God daily clearer. But I see so little courage to deal with the mass around me, which yet heart and head in a measure goes out after-so little dealing with men, so much with truth, precious truth, Christ's truth I know, and what the church wants; but I feel those who go evangelizing so much my superiors, and yet I see so much, when I see the work, that is hardly like Paul's. Yet God overlooks want of completeness in it where there is earnestness. However, I am His servant, but when I see the courage and zeal of such as are as Paul, I am ashamed of myself. I do not think of authority, but the courage that animated him, and the single-eyedness to Christ; teaching is constantly claimed from me too, and often when my heart would be at work with souls, with souls that have not Christ. I am happy enough in the sense of His love, but I am not serving as I ought. Yet the church needs building up, and truth, getting back to "that which was from the beginning"; and I am drawn between His people and their state who know Him, and those who do not. They are all His. Sometimes I think I do not draw myself enough from claims on me, to serve directly from Him as He may send. However, we are His servants, and can count upon His love ever gracious. The having died with Him occupies a large place in the mind of faith to me just now. It is dying for our sins so as to be forgiven and justified; but then our dying with Him and alive through Him was not to be forgiven, but delivered, and then also in Him before God. Rom. 5:11, 12 being the great division of the two former points- chapter 5:1-11 The blessedness of one, chapter 8 the blessedness of the

other. Then I add Colossians as risen wall, then Ephesians, sitting above in; but enough.

I have had such attention, and earnest hearers (as I think) now, and in great numbers. That work I am happy at, anything for Christ's people. I have been unspeakably happy lately, yet as making me nothing in the thought of being the object of God's love: I had been seeking right affections towards Him-all right-but the thought that He loved me flowed in on me in joy and peace; and peace is a very deep thing, like a river. Yet I have a sadly cold and dull heart.

Give my kindest love to all around you. My absence from America has only made me feel how much I am attached to and interested in it and the beloved ones there. Peace be with you, beloved brother, and may He bless you in your family too.

Your affectionate brother in our blessed Lord.

[October] 1868.

Letters 1, What Death Is to the Believer; Request for the Holy Spirit; Exercises and Ground of Peace

As I am going to the other side of England, and hear you are very bad, I come to pay you a visit with this little note, as I had the advantage of talking with you when I was at; yet I have but few words to say to you, as what God has graciously set before us is very simple; and thankful we ought to be that it is so. And what is deepest is simplest, that is the perfect love of God. Our difficulty is to reconcile our state, sinners as we are, with His loving us. Now that is exactly what the gospel shows us. Through that unspeakable fact of the death of the Son of God, His love has been shown to us in what He did for our sins. He commends His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us—His love brought quite near to us where we are. Hence it is that it is only when we know where we are that we understand this love; that is, when we have learned by divine teaching that we are mere sinners in ourselves, that in us (that is, in our flesh) dwells no good thing, we find that Jesus in this love has come to us there, and, though the Holy One, has been made sin for us. Oh, what a thought that is! How it opens the heart to guileless confession of what it is, and all the sin that is in it, so that it gets rest and peace with God.

I trust you enjoy this rest of heart. The work of Christ is perfect: He knew all our sins and all we were when He gave Himself for us, and has put all away, made us, if our sins were as scarlet, as white as snow. Think of your being really as white as snow before God, and you are bound to believe that, because it is the sure and revealed value of Christ's blood. Death has put an end to all we were in God's sight. And now, trusting you have this peace, and assured that it belongs to you, let me speak of another thing, the love of Him who has done this work for us. Think of Him, of His love, of His becoming a man for us, of His going willingly to death for us, that we might escape: how He must have loved you to do it! Do you think He loved you so as to do it? What a wonderful thought that the Son of God should love a poor thing like you, and want (He who wants nothing) to have you with Himself for your happiness and as a part of His own, the fruit of the travail of His soul. See what a difference this makes of death; it is not dying as some think it; it is going to Him, to One we love, to One we know, to One who has loved and loves us; it is departing and being with Christ.

If your soul has peace, think much of Him and His love, and may He be very near you. He refreshes the spirit, raises above weakness and pain to think these are but outward things for a little moment, and what we are going to lose is only sickness and what is mental and perishable, to be with One who has loved us in spite of all, and takes us to be with Himself. Think much on Jesus—I do not mean as if you could think much in your weak state, but looking to Him—and lean on Him as a sick child lies in its mother's arms because it has no strength, not because it can do much. Peace be with you, dear, and much of His presence, the true source of joy and strength. If you go a little before us to that blessed One it will surely not be your loss....

Your affectionate servant And brother in Christ.

1860.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Critical 1, Bearing of Romans 5:12-21, The

My dear Brother,

The division in the doctrinal teaching of the Epistle in Rom. 5 at the beginning of verse 12, the verse you point out, has been already noticed in tracts which are in print. The former part deals with what we have done, as God's question to Cain; the second with what and where we are, as God's question to Adam, the state of Adam being confirmed and made plain by the judgment pronounced on him. " He drove out the man." Rom. 1:19 to 5:11 deals with what we have done, and Christ's propitiation as the remedy, adding His resurrection as the great seal of it. From verse 12 it deals with what we are. He speaks of state, not guilt, though of course guilt is there.

The " wherefore " ( ), of which you first ask, is a gathering up of the whole teaching of the previous part of the epistle, which taught, not Judaism and a called people, but wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of them who hold the truth in unrighteousness, Jew and Gentile. All were under sin under different circumstances, but alike come short of the glory of God; and every mouth stopped, those that had law, as well as reckless Gentiles sunk in evident depravity. It was the condition of the whole race of man, as man, before a revealed God, holy in His nature. There is, however, an additional special ground of the " wherefore," which will not be fully apprehended till that is introduced: a living Christ securing blessing where a man is justified from the old sins, and reconciled, having been an enemy. Christ's death would secure him through, and save him from wrath. This so far brought in, not only the clearing the guilty by the work Christ had wrought, but a new standing in life. By the righteousness of one the free gift came to all for justification of life. This was a new position of man, not indeed yet the glory or resurrection with Christ and union with Him, but a new position and standing; not merely the clearing away the sins a man was guilty of in connection with his old standing, but a new standing in life, a justification of life.

This clearly brought in a new state, not mere justification from the evil he was guilty of, but a condition into which he was brought; hence too, though recognizing it, it reached out beyond the whole nature of Judaism. This the apostle sums up in chapter 5: 12-21 with the connecting word " wherefore/' taking the whole scope of thought which precedes, and resuming it in his own mind, as is his custom, as a causative point of departure in his reasoning, as he often does too with the word " for " (yap). The sense of what had been said led to this, "as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." This brings us to ' .

with a dative is primarily " upon," as , " on a dish"; hence is used for " besides," something added, , in addition to all this, or above. Hence also as , , but with the idea of actually touching. It is then used morally for a ground, motive, object, what characterizes an act. We use " upon " so, but with express words: I did it upon this ground, upon this condition. Greek uses it by itself, something which is, not the cause, but is supposed; without which the thing would not so be as we say it is. We are called not under a supposition of being unclean persons when so called. , three witnesses were the condition of carrying out the judgment. Any necessary or true condition: " man shall not live by bread ' ." It was not the cause of life, but his life was involved in it; so . We say "tolive upon." This use of is very common; ' . It was no cause of plowing; still the plowing was not to be without it. , the reception of the child is characterized by that as a motive. In English we must translate it variously, but it is easy to understand in Greek something supposed and viewed as involved in a thing happening, without which it would not be what it is, but not its cause.

Thus here, the origin of death amongst men, or cause of its entrance into man's world, was Adam's sin; but if we could suppose (what could not be save by this acting of God, as in the miraculous birth of Christ) a man born without sin, he would not be brought under death. Hence each person's sinning is supposed in its passing upon all: it is vorausgesetzt; death comes moyennant. It is ' , " inasmuch as," or " for that " as in Authorized Version, not " because." A man was condemned because of his sin, or an elder judged; but it was , that was a regular condition of his being condemned. The sinning exists as a fact connected with the dying: they do not die without it. The origin of death in the world was Adam's sin. It is not a condition set out a priori, as if it was uncertain whether they would, but a fact which comes in for those involved in death.

I do not think children enter into the question here-no more than when the apostle says, " all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." They really begin to sin as soon as they begin to live: though it be undeveloped, their will works. I do not doubt they go to heaven: Matt. 18, I think, shows it, and the ground; but the apostle is looking at man manifested as man, that is, what he is and does. Children are saved, not by innocence, though practically an expression of it, but because Christ came to save what was lost. This question then I dismiss; I refer to it merely as an objection which might be made.

I do not think ' has the sense " whereunto,é: if it were the object in its extent, it would be, I conceive, the accusative, if so used at all. What follows, to the end of verse 17, is a parenthesis, bringing in the question of law's place and bearing, and insisting that grace which met sin could not be narrowed up to law, though it met transgressions under it. And first it is asserted that sin was in the world when the law was not. True, a sin could not be reckoned as so much to an account; but death proved its reign over those who were not in the case of Hos. 6:7. Israel, like Adam, had transgressed a positive covenant; but sin was reigning in death over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. And Adam was a figure of the second Adam come in grace. Now though transgressions or offenses, as verse 16, had to be met, yet the condition and state was the great point here, the many connected with him had been constituted sinners by Adam's disobedience; so the many connected with Christ were constituted righteous by Christ's obedience; but this was state and standing, not properly guilt as to things done. Sin was in the world before the law came.

As to , it is not , " was accounted " (as righteous). The word is only used elsewhere in Philemon. It is not a person accounted righteous on whatever account, but a particular act or debt owing-put into an account. When there was no specific prohibition, there was no specific transgression. Sin was there, but there was no transgression. This requires a law to transgress. But the evil tree bears its fruits and proves what the tree is, and men are judged according to their works. But there was not as under the law positive transgression, which the government of God could deal with as so much to be reckoned to a man in that government. When God judges the secrets of men's hearts, their works will come out in the books, a witness of what the state of their hearts was, and all will see the light. The apostle speaks here as of the present condition of the world: you could not say you have transgressed here, broken the law there; but the reign of death proved that sin was there. But Adam was the figure of Him to come.

Shall the bearing of man's offense be greater than that of God's gift? Death was reigning outside the law; but by the offense of one many were dead: should not the grace of God much more abound to the many who labor under it, and not be confined to the Jews who claimed it? The state of sin was universal through Adam, the grace must be as wide in its address. Again, as by one's sinning came the charge or guilt leading to condemnation, should not the free gift be thus too? Yea, more, the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift, with many offenses to meet, to justification; vs.16. The first phrase is by one having sinned; the second " by one " is abstract, , of one [thing or person]: of one-that is its general character; then the free gift is -had that as its character. The first statement in verse 15 declares that as to the objects the sphere must extend to the many, since by the offense of one the many died. Grace must go out as far and brings in the man Christ Jesus, the last Adam, of whom the first was a figure, the thought necessarily involving it. The comparison to prove the extent in verse 16 is between the acts, as 15 between the objects. The guilt which led to condemnation was , a unity; the free gift being of God was of many offenses. So as to the effect: by the offense of one, death reigned by one; much more the grace would triumph on the other hand, and they that received it would reign in life. In these three aspects grace in God triumphed over sin in man, and that by one man, not by every man for himself, the principle of law and individual judgment. As far as offenses went, they had been multiplied, and grace could meet them.

Verse 18 resumes the general principle from verse 12, and is as abstract as possible. As by one offense towards all for condemnation, the direction and tendency of the one offense, so by one righteousness or righteous act accomplished towards all for justification of life; for it was in the risen Jesus they got it, from having been under death, and now justified if they had Him in life. For as by the disobedience of one the many connected with him were constituted sinners, put into that place; so by the obedience of one the many connected with Him were constituted righteous. The is looked at as the whole principle of Christ's life, including as to its character, and proved by, obedience unto death. There was a disobedient man, proved in eating the forbidden fruit: he disobeyed God's will. There was an obedient man: He obeyed God's will. The character and measure of the obedience all through, as proved by it, was obedience unto death, the death of the cross. This had nothing to do with law.

There are, as the whole passage teaches and has for its object to teach, two heads of races, natural and spiritual: two persons, one in whom sin, the other in whom grace, came; and, further, that the law was a " moreover " (), which came in by the bye, , but that you could not shut the grace up to that, but must go to the two heads of sin and grace. The law merely came in that the offense might abound, but it was not only when offense, but when sin, abounded that grace abounded over it. Had righteousness replaced the reign of sin, judgment and condemnation only could have been the effect. But grace reigned, yet through righteousness, (on the principle of divine righteousness, fully established), and that to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord: a complete summary of the whole ways of God. Death is looked at as death here reigning by sin; condemnation was out beyond that.

I turn to look at some of the words inquired of.

is positive transgression of a law which exists. , though applicable to transgressions, is a more general word and with a different sense.

goes beyond and transgresses an actual law or barrier set us by God. Hence there must be a law. fails or falls from the right condition in which we should hold ourselves. Transgressions do this, but every fault and failure does. This can be without a law. A Concordance will easily show this. I am not aware of any case where is used without direct reference to law (or tradition), unless the verb in Acts 1:25. (Judas), and a case where another reading is preferred.

, , require a keener, finer sense of shades of meaning to distinguish.

is the gift, the fruit of grace in the person giving. So far there is a shade in the way the same thing is given. I say such a thing was a gift, a free gift; I did not earn it. How came you to have it? It was pure grace (a) in the person who gave it me. One leads me to think of it as freely given, not earned, and given without condition or price, the others to what moved the person to give. The gift of righteousness is not by working or labor, or acquired fitness, or anything on my part. It is a free gift, , but the is . God's divine favor and grace were the origin of this gift; so in verse 16 his mind goes up to God as a source; it is therefore in the beginning of the verse. And it is a gift-the fact simply; but is it not to be as large as the evil? It is a of God; this cannot but be. Whereas in verse 15 he is contrasting abstractedly man's fall and offense with God's giving: hence it is .

As to the difference of and , the former word is used but twice, here and in James 1:17, where the mind rests in the thing given, in in its quality. In English we use "gift" for both. " What did you give for that?" "Nothing; it is a gift. I have it as a ." " What is your gift? " "It is a beautiful Bible, a ." So we use " hope " for the thing hoped for and the quality. That is the quality we see when adverbially used, , . then is the general word which characterizes what I get. You may remark that all the words in verse 16 have this form, that is, are objectively looked at as a complete subsisting thing: , , -, . In James 1:17 we have and .

As to these forms, and so in -, many of your readers may be, but perhaps all are not, aware that the ordinary rule is, that words derived from the perfect passive have their force according to the person. The first person is the objective thing or act, the second the doing, the third the doer, -, -, -: as the judgment pronounced, the thing itself imputed; judging as an act; the judge. So is properly giving, a giver.

It may be added here that compounded with a word gives intenseness to it, as to have, , to hold, hold fast, take and keep fast; , , to use as a possession what belongs to me. These become modified in use. is the thing of which I am accused and for which I am judged. Christ's was put on the cross, what He was condemned for; it is the thing imputed to me. is actual condemnation.

Thus also would be the objective sum total, which being accomplished gives me righteousness as far as that sum total goes: hence an ordinance, or such a fulfillment of required righteousness as makes my righteousness complete as to that. If it is before God, it must be according to God and absolute. Hence we have the of the saints. Zacharias kept the of the law blameless. It is the sum total of what is required. is the abstract idea or the quality, the thing righteousness. is what any one is; - is that thing which having he is . Christ is made unto us . I have this character before God; but the of the law is to be fulfilled in us, the full requirement of the law. So verse 16 speaks " of many offenses,é to , to the full requirement of what must be for me to be before God. It is not to justify me (however true before God), but the full sum of that needed for my being accounted just. Justification of life is , the act of justifying, but being in the new place or state beyond death, it is in life as Christ is risen. In verse 17 I have the gift of , that is, the state God sees me in or has given to me in Christ. But the one is the full required total, the act which met the whole requirement.

I believe I have answered, I hope rightly, all the questions you have put to me. The English mind is little used to the niceties of Greek language; still they are often of value to one that studies, and result in greater general clearness of statement. Some of the verses of this passage are as badly translated as any in the New Testament, or worse, as especially verse 18. Those in the parenthesis (15, 16, 17) are all much clearer, I think, if put as a question.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 1, Christ's Cross and God's Due Time

Rom. 5:6-8

IN the last verse of this chapter we have, in fact, the summing up of the great principles and ways of God's dealings with man in this principle of the gospel, " grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

The result of what the apostle has been speaking of as to God's dealings, dispensational and personal, is, that all is grace. " When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly," v. 6. " God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," v. 8. It is grace that did everything; v. 15-21. " By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," and they may have gone on sinning and setting aside the authority of God; but by Christ's obedience " shall many be made righteous." " Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." And in the sum of the whole matter grace reigns.

That which gave the apostle so much confidence in this was, that it was consequent upon the discussion of the whole condition of man, as looked at in every way and in every shape. The blessed result was, not something that came in, and the discussion after; but after the discussion of the whole condition of man (that having been gone through), God takes His own place, and manifests what He will be and is

towards the sinner in Jesus Christ. Now that is properly speaking the gospel. The gospel is not what man is, or what God requires from man, but what God is after He has thoroughly revealed what man is. When received in simplicity it leaves no possible question in the mind. It is the revelation of God made after He has estimated all our need. The gospel, we repeat, is the revelation of what God is, when what man is has been thus fully revealed. " When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Peace of soul is constantly hindered through our not recognizing that God has taken full cognizance of what we are. The gospel begins consequent upon His having made a full estimate. He knew from the beginning what man was and would be; but after, in his history, He had brought out and demonstrated in ways and conduct what man was under all the possible circumstances in which he could be placed-when He had demonstrated him to be entirely lost, and that He could not trust him in any way or in any measure, He begins, and says, I cannot trust in you: you must trust in Me. Hence the reason there is often a long and painful conflict, because of our not being brought down, in conscience, to the point where the gospel begins. A man may acknowledge himself to be ungodly, but then he hopes to cease to be ungodly; and God perhaps lets him struggle on thus for some time, until in his own soul he is brought to the place where the gospel begins. It is not that the gospel is not simple, but that in conscience we are not in the conditions where the gospel sees us. The work must be in the conscience. We read (Matt. 13) of a man hearing the word, and anon with joy receiving it, yet of his not having " root in himself "; evidently no work in the conscience (it is not that he is insincere) but only in the intellect; he has never been brought in guilty before God; " for," it is added, " when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by-and-by he is offended." Whereas, if he knew that his own soul was lost without Christ, surely he would say with the disciples, " Lord, to whom shall be go? thou hast the words of eternal life! " (John 6:69). It is a great deal harder to believe that we are " without strength " than that we are " ungodly." Many a soul believes the one, that has not as yet been brought to believe the other. God has given us His history of the world from Adam to Christ. There was a " due time " for the death of Christ, a " due time," that is, in the history of the world. So is there the " due time,"1 of the individual heart; not that the same feelings pass through the minds of all, but each must be brought to the result given us by the history of man previously to the death of Christ.

It is true, many a person admits himself to be ungodly that has not been brought to feel the full meaning of the word. It is wonderful how our moral distance from God has rendered us incapable of judging of this. If a man say that God is holy, and that he is a sinner, as judged of by his natural conscience, yet not admit that he is shut out from the presence of God, but reply, " Oh, I hope not," he has not the power of apprehending His presence. On the one side God is " of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," on the other man is a sinner; but he has no sort of conscience or consciousness that he is in the presence of God. There is not a single individual that would not put off being there. Our conscience can never naturally bear it; the whole secret of their hopes is, that we have never been in the presence of God. In one sense we are always in His presence, but I speak now of being brought near in conscience. A man may be living absolutely without God, and yet be accounted a very good man after all. If he hurts his fellow-man it is another affair. In judging of right and wrong in the world God is always shut out. There is no surer proof of the way man has cast off God than his judgment of right and wrong; he calls " wrong " that which injures man, but the divine presence and claims are shut out. It all show this first great truth, that men are " without God."

But there is another truth stated here-they are also " without strength." When a man is really brought to himself, it is always a question of present standing. An ungodly man will think (it is the natural thought) of meeting God some time, of what He will be in the day of judgment. But if His presence be revealed to the heart, it is His presence now that occupies it. Whilst there is merely the thought of going to God, there is another question: man thinks about how he can make up with God-time is before him, in which he can make his peace with God. He is either unconscious of the state he is in, or is looking to something by which he hopes, at a future day, he may be able to stand before God. He has no real thought of God but as a judge. Now hoping for mercy so, is no more than saying (and many mean nothing but this), that God is not of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, that He can let a little pass.

As to the first point, the state of the Gentiles was thorough ungodliness; Rom. 1 The apostle, after looking at man in every way (proud as man is of himself), brings all in guilty. But men have a natural conscience, and they are afraid to do in the light what they do in the dark. When in the outward darkness of Satan and ungodliness, they " work all manner of uncleanness with greediness " (Eph. 4:17-19), worshipping stocks and stones, etc. Christianity makes men ashamed to do in the light what they did before in the dark (the profession of it, I mean; in that sense, it is borrowed light). Being in this condition, his own lusts are his springs of action, the slave of Satan and of his own lusts, gratifying his mere natural wicked inclinations, that was a clear case. It did not become a holy God. It was plainly ungodliness.

But besides this, there was another thing. God singled out a nation, to which He showed great kindness, and gave (as His people) a rule. And then the question was whether there was strength in man to walk by this rule. He spake the ten commandments with His own voice on mount Sinai, and added, " Cursed is the man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." After all the will of man was that which wrought in his heart, and he was a breaker of this law.

But this went much farther. I may have my mind open to see and estimate the spirituality of the law, and not be merely a carnal. Jew: where does that bring me? Into the consciousness, not merely that I have failed, and broken the law without, but of a principle within-a " law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," Rom. 7:23. If I am put under a law, the better that law, the worse my case. It may be said, " Why then did God give the law? " " It was added," we are told, " because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made," Gal. 3:19. To what end? " The law entered [perfect as it was] that the offense might abound." What could the law enter for, to man already a sinner and having this law in his members? " The law entered that the offense might abound, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful," Rom. 7:13. This was the way God took to convince man that he was " without strength." And in that sense it was mercy. What is more difficult than to convince man of this? The judgment right and the affections right, still there was this law in his members; and the law, while it discovered and brought out this, imparting no strength, added to the character of the sin. For then was another thing; it made every act which was the result of this evil of our nature " transgression "-a thing done in despite of His authority. " Sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful," Rom. 7:13. Now clearly a thing that makes sin " exceeding sinful " is not the way to make me a, sinner, have any righteousness before God!

What is man without the law? what with it? Man without the law is out of the presence of God; with it, he has failed in responsibility, and is a breaker of the law. And when Jesus came, the witness of the goodness of God, he rejected Him; John 15:24, 25. Man has been tried in every way, and found utterly wanting. Wherefore? Was God ignorant of his condition? No; law was for the discovery of it to himself. God is now bringing home to his conscience that which He knew from the beginning; Rom. 3:19.

A word here as to the triple form the law took. First, there was the perfect standard of what man ought to be; secondly, the prohibition of what man was disposed to, a positive standard of what God required, and the prohibition of that to which man was inclined; and, as a third thing, an adjunct of certain ordinances and ceremonies " imposed until the time of reformation," Heb. 9:9, 10. What did God do all this for? On the one hand, to demonstrate that man was not righteous; and, on the other, to point out One who (holy and righteous) should suffer " the just for the unjust."

What did man? He took, to make out a righteousness for himself before God, the thing God had sent in to demonstrate him a sinner; and then, in order to fill up the gap in his own heart, sought to eke out his righteousness through these ceremonies-types and pre-figurings of Jesus, the substitute for the sinner.

The moment there is spiritual understanding, when grace is not understood, the only effect is to make the soul miserable- it finds no strength. The more it understands the law to be what it should be, the more it feels justly condemned, and incapable of fulfilling it, or of delivering itself from its condition. " 0 wretched man that I am! " is its cry, and " Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? " (Rom. 7:24). All that is merely the question, " What is man? " Man is ungodly and without strength; and his history is summed up in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well now, have we been brought to the acknowledgment of the result of this history? Had we simplicity to receive by faith what God shows us man to be, we should have no thought of his being under a state of probation. For four thousand years man was under a state of probation, and, as the result of the trial, no good is expected from the bad tree. The gospel is come on the ground of man's being no longer under probation of God. He has given up looking for fruit. " A sower went forth to sow," etc. (Matt. 13). The natural thing was for Jesus to seek fruit; but there was none there: all had become verjuice.

Man having been put to the test, now God comes in. It is quite evident that, unless it be for everlasting condemnation, we must give up the thought of appearing before God as a Judge; Rom. 3:19, 20. " Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." The more I know of myself, the more I know that. The love of Christ only puts me into a darker judgment of myself. Is God to pass by judgment, as if there were no difference between good and evil? Impossible! There is just the beginning of wisdom. We cannot stand before God: what is to be done? A man must, in that sense, have done with himself. I cannot trust God in anything I ever have been, or can be; God cannot trust in me r: now can I trust in God? What God is was before sin. If I begin to reason, I am under law; I cannot reason about God being grace to me: if I could reckon on it, it would not be grace.

Where shall I find the revelation and testimony of what God is? In Christ. What was this blessed witness for God here? Never anything but grace. With the Pharisees He showed that their righteousness was only the adding of the sin of hypocrisy to their other sins. But whenever a man was before Him without any pretense to righteousness, let him be the vilest of the human race-a thief, an adulteress, a woman of the city, who was a sinner-whatever else, He was grace and nothing but grace. I want to know what the God with whom I have to do, as a sinner, is; and what is He? Grace. Perhaps I say, If I go to Him, I shall find Him gracious; but that is not all the testimony. Jesus came to us. " In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John 4:9, 10. In the coming of the Son of God, I have the positive certainty of what God is to me, assuming that I believe Him to be the Son of God; I have the perfect certainty of His love. " When we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." From His mouth (if I am to take His testimony) I shall never hear anything but " Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace." If I am in the truth of my sins, I shall find Christ in the truth of His grace.

God has right to be sovereign, and there is the reign of grace (v. 31). But God is righteous; and therefore grace is to reign " through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." In the grace of God reigning, He has given His Son to be the proof of His love; but then God is righteous, and could not introduce the sinner in his sins into His presence, and therefore He gave His Son to bear the sins. God's righteousness is displayed in all its truth and power. The Lord Jesus died for the ungodly. He was obedient at all costs: He bore everything, and went down into the dust of death, man's hatred, God's desertion, and Satan's power; we find Him there at the cost of everything. Everything that was against us was done away. By one man's obedience many are made righteous.

God's righteous wrath against sin has been exhibited. Where do I learn it? In the cross of Christ. Was it in holily sparing His Son? No! I see the wrath of God against my sin executed in that cross. The judgment of God against sin, the thing I dreaded, is now my salvation: " Out of the eater has come forth meat, and out of the strong, sweetness "; the head of Goliath, so to speak, has been taken off with his own sword. The Lord Jesus Christ has risen again as having borne the judgment. But more, He stands in living righteousness before God. Righteousness is there forever under the eye of God.

The blood of Christ shed in death-death as the wages of sin-is ever under the eye of God. I do not say that it is ever under my eye, but it is under God's eye. He is the Judge. Never shall we feel about it as we ought; but sure I am He feels about it as He ought. He sees the blood. " When I see the blood, I will pass over." The blood is of infinite value with God. But there is another thing, He Himself is there-" Jesus Christ the righteous." He who has obeyed, who has accomplished all, is there. There may be chastisement from the Father (Heb. 12), and a great deal of painful discipline for our good; but righteousness is ever there, the righteous One in the presence of God for us.

The Holy Ghost was to convince the world of righteousness, because Jesus had gone to the Father; John 16:7, 10. Righteousness is to be found in the presence of God, and it is He who has borne my sins.

And let us remember that this cannot be a question of hope. My soul may be looking to Jesus and hoping that He will speak a word of peace; but I do not hope that Christ will die for me; I do not hope that Christ will rise again for me and accomplish this righteousness; I believe. It is a simple question of the value of the Person, and blood, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to the Christian life. The first thing is to begin our conduct with God. Do not let us talk about what we shall be. If we come to God with our present in our hand, the first question is, What are you? Man is a sinner, and no present in the hand of a sinner is accepted. Where there is really truth in the heart, the conscience takes notice of its present condition, and will never dream of putting off. It is, I have seen Thee: what shall I do? Job was a godly man, but a reasoner; yet the moment he sees God, he says, " I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." He sees God, and that ends the whole question.

There is another point. It is not merely the efficacy of the work as regards the past, so that I stand before God without fault, but I am there in Christ. I bless God for many means in helping me on in my walk; but as for my standing with God, were there anything whatever needed, it would be saying, I was not already perfect in Christ. Faith says, Christ has presented me in the presence of God, according to the mind of God, and I have nothing to seek. This is what the apostle means by " holding the Head," Col. 2:19.

Another thing flows from this: as grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, realizing my position by virtue of being united to Him, the life in which I am one with Christ will show itself down here in my living to Christ. The principle of the Christian's position is just this:-You have died with Christ, and, to be living as those who are " alive from the dead," you cannot have a single principle in common with the world. I am one with Christ (if I am a believer), and consequently as Christ before God, " I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20. So again, " Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal body," 2 Cor. 4:10. It is not the demand of a certain amount of human righteousness, or the removal of certain evils that hurt the conscience and offend society; it is the living display of what Christ is before men. We should never be content when we fail to display Christ before men: as Christ is righteousness for me before God, so is He the example and standard of righteousness before, men: as Christ is for me before God, so ought I to be for Christ before men. This is the way for the Christian to judge of right or wrong. We may be humbled because of failure, but we must not lower the standard.

Fragments Gathered Up, Romans 5:21

Not only was it impossible that God could do anything that “sin” may abound, but if He had said where “the offense” abounded, grace did also abound, it would have confined it to those under the Law. But He was showing the contrary: that Christ’s work reached out beyond to Adam’s [race] in aspect and efficacy. Grace overrode the whole, though it might be rejected. J.N.D.

Letters 3, Greek Translated "Come Short"

The remark is right as to the ambiguity of the English,1 because 'come' is also the participle 'have come,' and the natural connection is, "sinned and come short." But it seems to me that does not refer to exhibiting. With a genitive, and particularly in later writers, it has the sense ‘destitute of,' ‘wanting,’ ‘failing to have.’ Now that sin has come in, we must meet the glory of God or be excluded by it. In a state of innocency man enjoyed favor, and the question of consistency with the divine glory had not been raised. Now, we say, "All have sinned, and do come short of [fail in meeting, or standing in the presence of] the glory of God." Christ, as Son of man, has glorified God on the cross, and human nature has a place in the glory; , and so we in Him. This point of meeting the glory I believe to be an important one, and to run through the gospels. John 13 specially treats it with immense depth, though briefly. I add that , the aorist, is the historic fact, which is the ground of the present state expressed in . We have sinned, and are outside of, away from, morally wanting in what meets and gives us a place in, the glory of God.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 7, Hebrews 6: Perfection

Nothing seemed to be a greater burden on the heart of Paul than to keep the saints up to their privileges. The Hebrews saw that Christ had died for them, though this had not the power over them which it ought to have had; but they were risen with Him also. They were in Christ in heavenly places within the veil, and the question was, were they realizing that?

There is great force in the expression he uses in chapter 5: 12, " ye are become, such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." " Are become " marks the process by which they had reached the state they were in.

Freshness of affection, and quickness of understanding go together. There is less spring, less apprehension, less clearness when our hearts are not happy. On the other hand, my judgment is clear when my affections are warm. Motives that acted before cease to be motives when my affections are warm. Freshness of affection being lost, the Hebrews were " dull of hearing "; and so were " become such as had need of milk, and not of strong meat." And then the apostle explains that those who use " milk " are unskillful in the word of righteousness and are babes; while " strong meat " belongs to those, not who have made great progress, but who are of full age-men in the truth in opposition to being children or babes-and who have " their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

But how can I separate the " knowledge of good and evil " from the knowledge of Christ? If I were to try to separate between them of myself, shutting Christ out, how could I? He is my standard of good; and it is what I find in Him that gives me power to judge what is evil. How can I walk as He walked without Him? " Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ [or, the word of the beginning of Christ], let us go on to perfection."

Instead of wasting your time with what has passed away, go on to the full revelation of Christ. Be at home there, and understanding what the will of the Lord is. For how can I walk as He walked without Him? I know not how to attempt it. The secret of everything is found in that truth, " Ye are complete in him." As Christ Himself also has said, " At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me." But what is that? and where is Christ now? In heaven. Then I am there too, and my affections should be there also. My hope is to be thoroughly identified with Him. For the portion I have is what He has-life, glory, all that He has risen to-and all my associations are with Himself. There is the difference between " the principles of the doctrine of Christ " and the full perfection. Of Christ Himself it is said (chap. 5: 9), " Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."

Now He was not made perfect down here, but in being glorified in heaven. He went through the experience down here; as it is said, " He learned obedience by the things which he suffered," and then went into heaven to be Priest, because our blessings and associations and hopes are all up there. He is " made perfect " as our High Priest in heaven and not down here. He had not reached that point in the counsels of God in glory, when He was down here. Now He is there He has associated me with Himself in that place. I can see that Christ has been through this world so as to be able to sympathize with me in all my sorrows and all my trials; and He has also borne my sins in His own body on the tree. But where is He now? He is in heaven; and I am there too in spirit, and He will soon bring me there in fact. Where He is, is His being " made perfect." The work is done, and now He is showing me the effect of its being done; and is teaching me the walk that belongs to the redemption He has wrought out. He has taken my heart and associated me with Himself, and He says that is the perfection I am to go on to.

Where did Paul see Christ? Not on earth; for long after He had left the earth Paul was a persecutor; but he saw Him, as we all know, in heavenly glory. His only knowledge of Christ at all was of a Christ in heaven. His course on earth he might learn; but the revelation of Christ that brought his soul into the presence of God in the power of an accomplished redemption, was the revelation of Christ in heaven and in glory. Hence he says, " Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." The Christ he wanted to " win " (as he says in Phil. 3) was a glorified Christ. It may cost me my life, but never mind. That is my object; after that I am reaching. I am alive from the dead, because Christ is; and I want to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. I am not in the flesh, but in Christ. I have the consciousness that this work of Christ has put me in a new place (not yet glorified in body, but) in a new place as to my life and associations and home; and this is the perfection we are to go on to.

It was this that ruled the apostle's affections, as he says, " that I may win Christ." This was his object, to " bear the image of the heavenly." His mind was full of it. The Holy Ghost has come down to bring all these things to our remembrance. Believers are united to Christ in glory. It is never said that Christ is united to man; but believers are united to Christ. Then the apostle was living by the power of the Holy Ghost; so that one may conceive what a trial it was to him to see these people going back to the first principles. They were all true, but if people stop there they stop short of a glorified Christ. To the Galatians he says, " who hath bewitched you? " speaking of himself he says, " I know a man in Christ." " A man in Christ " is a man risen out of all that connects itself with the law and ordinances, as well as with sin and death, and all that is sorrowful or attractive in this present evil world. His spirit is broken to find the saints resting with things on earth about Christ. The Holy Ghost was come from heaven to make them partakers of a heavenly calling; to associate them in heart and mind with Christ, and to show them things which would not only keep them from " the evil which is in the world," but from the world itself.

The Hebrews had a temple standing when Paul wrote, where Christ Himself had been. Why, then, should they have left it, if Christ had not judged the flesh, and shown that " they that are in the flesh cannot please God "? " The middle wall " had been put up by God Himself; how should they dare to break it down, if God had not done it? If God had not said that He would not have to do with flesh any more, how could they dare to leave the camp, and go outside? Christ glorified is the end of all the first principles, and we have to go through the world as strangers and pilgrims. The only thing God ever owned in religion was Jewish, which had to do with the flesh-with men here in the world-but that is gone by the cross. All is crucified; " the handwriting of ordinances " has been blotted out-" nailed to the cross "and thus taken out of the way; and in a glorified Christ we see the end of all that is abolished. Henceforth our life, our home, our associations, are all in Christ.

But the doctrine of the beginning of Christ was not that.

What do we find as long as Christ was upon earth? Why, the testimony of the law and the prophets, which taught righteousness and called the nation to repentance and faith. Christ Himself also speaks of a judgment to come, which they believed. The Pharisees believed in a resurrection of the dead. Baptisms or washings, and the laying on of hands, they had them. They constituted the elements of a worldly religion, and were sanctioned by God until the cross. The Messiah coming on earth is the " doctrine of the beginning of Christ "; but now I leave that and go on to perfection. I do not deny these things, but I go on to the fuller revelation of Christ. These first principles are all true, but then I have other and far better things.

Saul might have been the brightest saint living under the old order of things, but not knowing Christ. But supposing a person got into the heavenly things and was " enlightened " and had " tasted the heavenly gift, and was made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and then gave it up-what could he do then? What else was there to present to such an one? There might have been a going on from faith in an humbled Christ to a glorified Christ, but there is nothing beyond. For it should be observed there is nothing of life signified here. The expressions do not go beyond the indication of truth that might be received by the natural mind, and the demonstrative power of the Holy Ghost, which persons might partake of, as scripture shows, without being participators in eternal life.

There may be light in a sense without the smallest trace of life, of which Balaam is an example. Of the stony ground hearers also it is said concerning the word that " anon with joy they received it "-they " tasted the good word of God." Moreover, Judas could cast out devils as well as the rest: he was a partaker of these " miracles of the coming age." And Christ had said (Matt. 7:22), " Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? " Still they are disowned of Christ as "workers of iniquity."

But there is this farther in the case supposed: " They had crucified the Son of God afresh," by turning back again from these heavenly things, and therefore could not be renewed to repentance. The nation had indeed crucified Christ, but they did not know what they were doing. This could not be said of those of whom the apostle is speaking. This was not ignorance, but will.

There is a great difference in what is expressed by " anon with joy they received it," and the word plowing up the soul, giving the sense of sin and bringing into subjection to God's redemption. The result of life is seen in fruit, not in power. In the parable of the sower the seed received into good ground " brought forth fruit." In the other cases there was no " fruit brought to perfection." If there is any fruit, the tree is not dead. Hence the apostle says, " We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation." These were not power merely nor joy; for these might exist and there be no life. Judas could cast out devils as well as the rest; but Jesus, said, " Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." The connection of your heart with Christ-the consciousness of God having written your name in heaven is the blessed thing. The fruit which the apostle takes notice of in verse 10 is love to the brethren. This was there, and showed itself in the active ministering to the saints, out of love to the Lord's name; while full assurance of hope to the end

was to be desired. There might be working of miracles without knowing or being known of God; but fruit-bearing in grace is the token of being branches of the true vine.

In the example of Abraham, the apostle presents an encouragement to their faith, which needed to be strengthened. Abraham had the promise of God, and he believed it; he had His oath, and he trusted it: but we have more. It is not to us that God presents a promise of future blessings, and adds an oath to assure us of their accomplishment; but He has performed all that He calls us to believe. We have a redemption now in the presence of God. Christ, having wrought the work, is sitting down in the presence of God, and in spirit has brought us there. But we have more than that; for, in hope, we are partakers of all the glory which belongs to that redemption. We have life, redemption, the Holy Ghost as the seal, and more. The forerunner is gone in, and the Holy Ghost gives us the consciousness of our union with Him, and not merely that our sins are put away through the blood-shedding of Christ. We have the Spirit in virtue of Christ's redemption, and He is come to tell us that we are in that Christ, who wrought the redemption, and is now in the power of an endless life within the veil.

But what is the practical consequence of all this? Why, if the glory He has is mine, and I am going on after Him, then all the world is but dross and dung in my esteem. This will be faith's estimate of everything in the world, when Christ is filling the heart's affections, and when the soul is pressing on after Him, in the certain hope of being forever with Him. One moment's real apprehension of Christ in the glory is sufficient to dim the brightness and glitter of every earthly thing; but the soul must be occupied alone with Christ for this.

If our affections and desires are lingering on earth, or stopping short of a glorified Christ in heaven, as the one in whom our life is hid, and to whom we are presently to be conformed in glory, and that in the glory where He is, we shall find soon that earthly things are something more than dross and dung. Leave a stone on the ground for a time and you will find that it will gradually sink into it. And our hearts, if they are not practically in heaven with Christ, will soon become attached to earthly things.

There is a constant tendency in earthly things to press down the affections. Duties are more apt to lead away the soul from God than open sin. Many a Christian has been ensnared by duties, whose heart would have shrunk from open sin. But we have only one duty in all the varying circumstances of life-to serve Christ. And we should remember that if things on earth are dark and the heart is tested in journeying through the world, all on the side of God is bright. " Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Critical 1, Scriptural Criticisms

I.

DEAR SIR,

I would renew my purpose to take notice of any passages in which it would appear to me more light might be thrown on the word, as read in English; which I conceive would be a valuable thing to many interested in the study of the scriptures. Often on an isolated expression much chain of argument depends; and again, a single expression often contains a head of argument which clears and satisfies the mind as to its bearings. I do not attach any extraordinary importance to the observations; only I feel that whatever clears scripture to the ordinary reader is of importance-I will add, of importance to God in His loving- kindness to us. I will, trusting to the Lord's guidance, advert to one or two passages in the epistle to the Romans.

First, Rom. 1:18: " For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." It appears to me, that the ordinary punctuation here mars the sense. Its force I apprehend is this, " all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men that hold the truth in unrighteousness "; and this is a most important distinction, for it brings in the whole Gentile world guilty; as the apostle afterward proves. God having been revealed in Christ, wrath is revealed against all ungodliness without exception, because it is such, and as ungodliness, . Your Greek readers will remember that worshipping Gentiles are called by the opposite word to this, that is, , or " devout." Hence we have two great classes-ungodliness universal; and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

I would add another remarkably beautiful circumstance of the most accurate word of God in this passage: wrath is not revealed in Him. In Him, or therein, the righteousness of God is revealed; but there is no " therein " or " in him," when the wrath is spoken of. It is universally revealed. What we have revealed in Christ is, " that he died for the ungodly " (the same word), and of God, that in and by the gospel He justifies the ungodly.

There is another expression which often puzzles the reader, which seems to me very plain by attention to the use of the words of the original-" revealed from faith to faith "; . Now I believe that (the word here translated " from ") always, when thus used with an abstract word, means the character, or order, or manner, of the thing which is spoken of. Thus salvation is here, " from faith," as we should say, " faithwise " (a form retained in many common words). This is its manner, order, the dispensation according to which salvation comes. The literal meaning is its source, " out of," which very readily in an abstract word is used in the sense of its order or dispensation. Even in English the expression is not unusual; for example, " It is out of kindness he does it," as we might in a similar sense add, " not through severity." Now I believe this to be the uniform sense of the preposition used abstractedly, or in its moral sense, and hence also especially when it is used without the definite article in Greek following it. Applying this to this sentence, of which I will give further instances explanatory of passages in this book, " The righteousness of God is revealed from faith "; that is, according to the principle of faith, or a dispensation of faith, in this order or manner-" to faith," therefore, which is the recipient power consequently in man. The statement is a most perfect abstract of the character of the dispensation: a revelation; the subject of that, " the righteousness of God "; the character of the dispensation by which it is revealed, , and, consequently, that to which it is so revealed, " faith."

The following may be taken as instances: , " uncircumcision by nature "; and in Rom. 2:29 we have an instance of the remark as to the leaving out of the article, , that is, " human praise "; that is, the character of their praise: expressions, in this instance, adequately represented by the English of them.

Again, chapter 3: 20, , "by the works of the law," that is, in this way. And hence we have the plain sense of another passage in this book, which has perplexed English readers: " justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith "; ... . The circumcision had been seeking justification, but they had been seeking it , in that way, the wrong way-by works of law. God would now justify them, not in that way but in another way, that is, , " by faith," according to that principle or dispensation. But, inasmuch as it was upon this principle, the same God would justify, must justify, him who had the principle; and therefore a Gentile who had this faith (God's gift) would be justified through or by it, . The former being the principle of the dispensation, which involved justification, when the thing existed, the person who had it was justified necessarily upon this principle; and therefore by the same God the believing Gentile was necessarily admitted. It was therefore , for the obedience of faith to all nations for His (Christ's) name, the object and subject matter of faith, in whom the Lord requiring the obedience was revealed.

So, in chapter 4: 2, , "justified by works," that is, in that way. So — — . I have given instances sufficient, I believe, to explain what I mean; were I to adduce all the proofs, I should quote every place where is used without the article. I would only remark, sir, that it is not a hasty observation, though of course liable to correction, for I have held it in the use of scriptures these nine years, but had not the opportunity of your journal to express it thus.

I have alluded to the use of the article or its omission; and it seems to me a most important point in the use of the Greek Testament. My observation has led me (and in these things we are as dependent on the Lord's guidance, and as much debtors to His mercy as in anything) to this conclusion that, whenever the article is used, it denotes a or the substantive object of the sentence; and where it is not used, the word is always characteristic; and that this rule holds good in all circumstances, though more difficult of discovery, to a mind not accustomed to abstract, in some cases than in others. Granville Sharp and Bishop Middleton have elaborately treated the article, and with great value in many respects; but I believe the above simple rule involves the true decision of every case. Bishop Middleton makes all prepositions an exception; I believe them none. The principle is recognized distinctly in a formal proposition: that is, the subject has, the predicate has not the article; so much so, that if it has, the proposition becomes what is called reciprocal: that is, the terms are so identical in extent, that either could be affirmed of the other. I would note, before I pass on, an instance of this, the mistranslation of which I believe to have been a cause of as much error in the Church as any one thing: , " sin is the transgression of the law." The apostle states no such thing. Sin is lawlessness; or lawlessness, that is insubordination, is sin. Disobedience is sin. This may be proved in breaking the law in a given instance: that is, transgression of the law is sin; but sin is not the transgression of the law, for, . Yet I suppose upon this false translation half the formal judgment of the Church upon what sin is has been founded; but it is not my business to reason upon this here. It is exceedingly interesting from its connection with 2 Thess. 2:3, 7, 8, where we have the man of sin; and then the mystery of iniquity (the two terms of the reciprocal proposition above), concluding with the wicked one; and I believe it to assist much in the solution or understanding of that passage. I believe there is a much higher characteristic of sin than the breach of a commandment-the spirit of disobedience.

The rule destroys the folly of many Socinian comments, easily else destroyed, such as Wakefield's and the like. " In the beginning was the word," &c.; . here is the predicate of , and if it had had the article, it would have proved that there was naught else at all God but the Word-that the extent of Godhead was equivalent to . It has nothing whatever to do with any emphatic sense of , a sense which I believe never can be proved to have.

Take another illustrative instance; Rom. 1:21: , -not clearly as a subordinate God: the apostle's argument is directly the other way. But when they knew God, the Person, the one God, the object of reverence, they glorified Him not in that character. Had the other notion been right or in any instance true, this passage would have no force, unless it were . I believe then, in every instance where the article is omitted, the noun is characteristic, adjectival in its character; where inserted, it presents the substantive object of thought.

The observations of Granville Sharp quite fall in with this, but are only an instance of it. Thus in , the belongs to -all the rest is characteristic of Jesus Christ, " the only [master] God and our Lord Jesus Christ." The rule has been drawn of old from the reading of the New Testament. If any student of it would take the first seven verses of the epistle to the Romans-a book in which the observation has peculiar value from the character of the reasoning-I think he will find the light it throws on the subject, and be recompensed through the whole of the rest of scripture for his trouble. I am aware it may be found to militate against many reasonings of individuals, with whose results at the same time I may fully agree. I have no doubt myself of its universal applicability and use.

The undoubted truth of it in the case of a preposition is a strong argument for the truth of the principle. To take a single example, Rom. 1:3, , this is the substantive object of that sentence. In the next, His identification as Jesus (whom we have known as man) is so. Hence we have , that is, — , this is what He is. Again, . Now this might perhaps, with almost equal (I do not say equal) force, be , though it would then be ; but it states here the manner of the determination, not the fact by which it is declared, therefore it is simply . So in English we might say " by resurrection," or again, " by the resurrection "; both would be true, their force would be different.

The application of this rule is of most extensive, and consequently immense importance, remembering it is applicable to scripture. I have myself no doubt of its universal truth, but I should feel obliged by any of your correspondents suggesting any passage, if there be any, which falsifies it.

One instance destroys a principle, not a human custom; where there is only one distinct act, the insertion or omission makes no difference in sense, only in force; and hence some apparent difficulty, which for this reason alone I notice.

Thus, in an instance I take casually, . (Heb. 9:26.) The point was His often suffering; the other was a necessary, not the substantive part of the sentence. On the matter it would have been equally true , but the sentence would not have carried the same quantity of moral truth. It gives the characteristic of the period, not the period itself. As in vulgar English, often more pregnant with force than what is accounted refined grammatical language, we say " in kingdom come," it would be much less expressive to say, which is all I am now concerned in, " the kingdom to come "; it would state the same fact, but would not in the same way apply the character of it to the subject of conversation. So again, . Here again the whole force of it arose from this being one of the characteristics of the suffering (indeed that suffering had an essential characteristic from it); whereas if it had been put merely it would have lost much of its force; for there were specific ages, the closing of which as definite things constituted the object which characterized the appearing of the Lord. Thus we shall find the apparent difficulty highly illustrative of the principle.

I believe many an effort at a various reading has arisen from a want of understanding of the sense, and I confess that learned criticisms have often proved to me children playing with toys. I do not despise their value in their place; but no one unspiritual, no one untaught of God, is fit to be a judge (he may be a servant) in the interpretation of the divine word.

I would instance in this Bishops Horsley and Lowth, because of their eminence; men, masters in criticism confessedly, and to be used as such it may be; but in interpretation founded on it by using it alone by intellect, the well taught reader of a mere English Bible would be more to be trusted in all the sense of the scripture writers than they are.

I am well aware of the opinion which would be formed of such an assertion, but I do not make it lightly; and while I would be thankful for their service, as for a grammar or a dictionary, or for their intellect as God's gift, judgment and deference to it I believe to be so far ruin to the Church. I do not say they were in nothing taught of the Spirit: so far as they were, they will be blessed; so far as not, they will be confusion and bad guides to others, so that both would fall into the ditch. I am quite willing, and desire, any remark I make to be subject to the same rule; I need not say that as mere grammatical critics, though not bound by them, I should be content to learn from them, or those far indeed below them.

I add another passage of which the mistranslation is apparent, and its application mischievous in the study Of the divine mind. It is one of the very few passages in the wonderful, though human, translation we have of the New Testament, in which I confess I believe the translators judged of the translation from the sense, which I am perfectly satisfied they, if it be so, mistook. It is Rom. 11:31, , , so these have now disbelieved your mercy (that is, the mercy to the Church or the Gentiles), that they might be objects of mercy. That is, Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, and that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy; but they, having rejected Christ as mercy to the Gentiles, forbidding to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved, have now lost this ground, and stand upon mercy themselves; and yet God's faith abounding over their lie shall make His promise good, yet so as it shall be mercy. This marvelous wisdom of order and dealing it was which made the apostle cry out " O the depths of the wisdom," &c. The present English translation destroys all this, and mistakes the purposes of God. His mercy they will have; but it is indeed mercy to them now where the Gentiles otherwise once were, now they, . And thus ignorant of this mystery, the Gentiles-the Church- has become wise in its own conceits, subject, in the true judgment of God, to he cut off.

I add, in Hebrew, one which is to me of great interest in Psa. 89 The Holy One of Israel, and the Holy One, are both spoken of, but the words in the original are quite different; in verse 18 it is åÀìÄ÷ÀãÉåùÑ éÄùÀÒøÈàÅì, in verse 19 it is éêÈ, a word which I believe will be acknowledged ordinarily to mean goodness or mercy. What makes it interesting here is, that it is the same word as is used in verse 1, " I will sing of the mercies of Jehovah forever." It is a concentration of the mercies of Jehovah in the person of the man chosen out of the people-David His servant, one able to sustain all the attributes of Jehovah, spoken of before as the medium of, and making them all, mercy towards His people. It is the same word in verses 24, 28, 33. The whole seems to be the presenting Christ as the sustaining person of Chesed, and the consequences towards those with whom He is united. The same word is used in Psa. 16, when the resurrection of our Lord is spoken of.

I have a strong conviction that the words abstractedly might be applied to either; yet that, when they have a definite formal application, Chasidim applies to the Jewish, Kedoshim to the Gentile or Church saints; but the thing cannot be taken as a simple general rule without more understanding of the subject.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

D.

Bible Treasury: Volume 11, Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Rom. 1:16

The apostle had met with many trials and difficulties; “in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft!” &c. He had known privations more than most for the gospel's sake; yet he says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel.” There was an energy and a power in his own soul that brought home to his conscience the truth of what he was about, that amidst disagreeables made him bold to persevere, as he says, “I was bold at Philippi to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.” There is nothing more shameful in man's sense than to be beaten and flogged, but he says,” I am not ashamed.” The reason is that “it is the power of God."

The message that he carried about is what souls want—to be forgiven their sins and to be delivered from sin. It is a bitter and evil thing to forsake the living and true God; and this is what man has done and is doing. He is hewing out to himself broken cisterns that can hold no water; he seeks happiness, and, if he gets any signs, puts all into a broken pitcher. But sin stings like a viper in the end. This may be found out with sorrow and regret. Power against it is wanting. It is a sorrowful thing to see sin mastering a soul. Man is a slave of his own lusts, as well as of Satan. Sin is degrading, and for all that there is no power. Man is lying under it. A child may have been carefully guarded by a loving parent from the indulgence of its natural propensities; but what sorrow for the parent, when the guard is removed, to see them break out in full energy, the will at work and no power against sin! Unconverted persons know they love the things that are not of God. Whence does it all come? From a heart that is contrary to God—a nature at enmity with God. The heart loves the things that suit its own lusts. We all by nature turn away from God; and all are alike in this, those who have been most restrained by natural checks, and the most vicious; there may be least care about it in the least vicious, because a very vicious man would be glad to be out of the scrape.

When the prodigal left his father's house, he was as wicked as afterward; he was glad to get away from his father and to do his own will. There may be a desire to please the father from natural affection; but there is the wish to have the opportunity to do one's own will, and that was all the prodigal wished. What can we say of such a heart as that? The prodigal son was as guilty, though not so degraded, when he crossed his father's threshold as when eating husks in the far country.

Then there is another thing brought out in testifying of Christ to the sinner. Present Christ to the heart, is there any inclination for it? No; the mere absence from God makes a man set up for something in himself. When in His presence, man shrinks and would get behind a tree if he could, as Adam did. To get mercy from the grace of a Savior does not suit him. “I never transgressed.” There is the natural self-righteous man, whose pride makes him reject the presence of the father, and so puts him farther off than the vicious man, though both alike would be right glad to have nothing to say to God. And is there never to be any remedy? It is plainly shown now. Now there may be an end put to sin. There is a remedy given in the cross of Christ. The time is hastening when He will come as it were to see, and then execute judgment. When God left man to himself, in a sense, there must come the deluge. So afterward the land spews out the inhabitants thereof. Do you say the law of God is broken and it is no matter? God's authority is no matter? His power in government is no matter? His wrath must come. Is sin to go on and no wrath on God's part? The law to be broken and no wrath? The Son of man to be smitten and slain and no wrath? Impossible! Wrath must come against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of man. All had been done to try man when Christ died. “Now is the judgment of this world.” The very fact of the cross closes up the scene towards man as a sinner. The wrath is revealed from heaven (not as under the law, for He is not now come out of His place to punish): the very speaking of wrath thus beforehand is grace. It is not come, but plainly revealed that it will come. Are you then despising the warning of that wrath which is coming? Do you not know that you are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, not by committing the sin, but by rejecting the testimony of God's Son?

You all know (I speak to the unconverted) whether you have peace with God, whether you are in the state of the prodigal or the elder son, whether you are within or outside. God will not take your thoughts of yourself, but He will judge you by His thoughts of you—by the word Christ has spoken. You may think yourself all right as the elder son did; but God does not unless you have come within and are at peace with Him. See the activity of love to those to whom wrath is revealed. They are children of wrath, natural heirs of it; yet though the wrath is fully proved to be due and the vineyard given up, He sends His Son and shows grace to the sinner; He gives up seeking fruit and provides a marriage supper for His son, furnishing Himself everything that is needed. The prodigal was perishing. It is not only that there was a famine—the man feels and would get what he can; but he is perishing and nothing is to be got. Satan has not life to give in his country, though he may sell things to keep from dying. The world may get pleasures and vanities to feed its lusts, but nothing more.

You who are not converted, you who have not eternal life and are indifferent about it, you are totally away from God. You must be either indifferent or miserable, because you do not know that you have it. Whichever state you may be in, you are talking about something that we have and you have not. Yet the gospel of God is sent for you. The activity of God's own love was shown you when you cared nothing about it. If you struggle to get it, you will find it hard. Conscience cannot master itself. Conscience talks a good deal, and it talks to itself. When conscience is at work it feels that one ought to confess the evil, to judge oneself, not only the sin but the guilt. Conscience will say, I cannot get rid of this; and more, I do not wish to get rid of this. Conscience knows it should be in the presence of God, though the more it gets there the more terrible.

The gospel that is preached is what God has Himself done for you. A person may say, I must get power over my sin; but he cannot. He may seek the power, but he cannot do it himself. What can you do then? You must be brought to this—I can do nothing. The truth brings out what you are, and what you cannot do. In Rom. 7, it is not, How shall I get strength against myself—this “wretched man,” but, I want a Deliverer; not strength for tomorrow, but pardon for today (though I shall want that). You need mercy; and if you want anything else, you are not yet brought to own what you are. The gospel will give power, but first of all what is wanted is God's righteousness, and it is this which is revealed in it. Are you going to add to His righteousness? Has God only half met your need? He puts the soul as a sinner into His own presence, but reveals His own righteousness in the gospel to him that believes. He has met the poor prodigal all in his rags and He Himself has clothed him in Christ. I have nothing short of the righteousness of God. In learning this I have found God for me.

Thus another precious fact in Christ is come in—God must be and is love to have done this. I am accepted in the Beloved. There is abundant help given for living the life of the Christian; but we are now speaking of standing in the presence of God, with no sin to disturb His eye, and therefore I can stand in perfect rest before Him. His eye rests on Christ, who has perfectly glorified Him, and He is perfectly satisfied: His glory can ask nothing more. God is now glorifying Christ, and as a believer I can rest in conscience in His presence. It is all a settled and accepted work; and it is thus revealed on the principle of faith. So from Abel downwards all born of God have believed; and I too believe. Then can I add anything to Christ? No; I bow before Him. I believe in Him, and rest in Him. I cannot believe the gospel if the righteousness of God is not revealed in it. But as the gospel is true, so God's righteousness is perfect, and faith takes it as He gives it in full grace. Therefore the just shall live by faith.

Then God is for me; and what shall separate me from His love? I want spiritual strength; I need temporal mercies; hew shall I get them all? Because God is for me. He seals me by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost cannot seal the fruits without having produced them. We are sealed when we have believed. Those are sealed whose souls have bowed to Christ in God's presence, and to whom this righteousness has been revealed. Do you say that you are striving? Your striving will do nothing for you, unless it be to discover your powerlessness to you. You are one foot in and one out all the time, until you find yourself utterly needy and helpless. It is only God can attract the heart to receive that which the activity of His own love has provided.

The Righteousness of God, Righteousness of God, The: Answer

Rom. 1:16, 17.

What does the expression " the righteousness of God," mean? It is evidently of the very essence of the Gospel; yet the common explanations are to me most unsatisfactory. The obedience of Christ in his life (blessed and perfect as it was) could not have saved sinners from the wrath of God. Will you, Mr. Editor, kindly give your thoughts upon the subject? "BETA."

"The righteousness of God" embraces the entire display of God's ways in Christ, one of the least of which, if we are to compare things which are all perfect in their place, was His accomplishment of the law here below. For the law was not intended to express fully and absolutely God's nature and character. It stated, if we may so say, the lowest terms on which man could live before Him. It was the demand of what God could not but require, even from a sinful Israelite, if he pretended to obey God. Whereas, though the Lord Jesus was made under the law, and submitted in His grace to all its claims, He went much farther, even in His living obedience, and infinitely beyond it in His death. For the

righteousness of the law threatens no death to the righteous, but necessarily proclaims life for his portion who magnified and made it honorable. God's righteousness goes immeasurably deeper as well as higher. It is a justifying righteousness, not a condemning one, as that of the law must be to the sinner who has it not. Hence the Lord Himself established the sanctions of the law in the most solemn way, by suffering unto death under its curse: He bore the penalty of the ungodly, of which substitution the Ten words knew nothing because they are law, and so to die is grace. There was no mitigation, much less annulling, of the law's authority. Divine righteousness provided One who could and would settle the whole question for the sinner with God. Nor this only; for God raised Christ from the dead. He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; His moral being, His purposes, His truth, His love, His relationship, His glory, in short, was at stake in the grave of Christ. But God raised Him up, and set Him at His own right hand in heaven, as a part of His divine righteousness; for no seat, no reward inferior to that could suit the One who had vindicated God in all His majesty, holiness, grace, and truth, who had, so to speak, enabled God to carry out His precious design of justifying the ungodly, Himself just all the while. Thenceforward, to him who has faith, it is no longer a question of the law or of legal righteousness, which rested on the responsibility of man, but, Christ having gone down into death in atonement and thus glorified God to the uttermost, the ground is changed, and it becomes a question of God's righteousness. If man has been proved by the law to have brought forth wrongs, and only wrongs, God must have His rights, the very first of which is raising up Christ from the dead, and giving him glory. Hence the Holy Spirit is said, in John 16, to convince the world of righteousness; and this, not because Christ fulfilled that which we violated, but because He is gone to the Father, and is seen no more till He return in judgment. It is not righteousness on earth, but its heavenly course and character, in the ascension of Christ which is here spoken of. So, again, in 2 Cor. 5, it is in Christ glorified in heaven that we are made, or become, divine righteousness. It is plain, then, that the phrase, though no doubt embracing what Christians mean when they speak of Christ's righteousness imputed to us, is a far larger and more glorious thing. It includes not only that which glorified God on earth in living obedience, but the death of the cross, which, if it met the deepest need of the sinner, broke the power of Satan in his last stronghold, and laid the immutable foundation for God's grace to reign through righteousness. Thus, in Rom. 1:17, God's righteousness is said to be revealed in the gospel in contrast with man's righteousness claimed in the law; and being revealed, it is " from faith," not from law-works; that is, it is a revelation on the principle of faith, not a work to be rendered on the ground of human responsibility. Therefore it is to " faith." He that believes gets the blessing. In Rom. 3:21, 22, it is formally contrasted with anything under the law, though the law and the prophets witnessed respecting it. It is "God's righteousness without law," by faith of Jesus Christ, and hence " towards all men," in native tendency, but taking effect only " upon all them that believe." It is here in special connection with redemption, and therefore it is added that God has set forth Christ a propitiation (or mercy-seat) through faith in His blood. See verses 24-26. In Rom. 10, it is shown to be incompatible with seeking to establish one's own righteousness, God's righteousness being complete, and the object of faith in Christ has to be submitted to, or we have no part or lot in it. 2 Cor. 5 rises higher, and shows what the saint is, according to the gospel of the glory of Christ—made divine righteousness in Him risen and glorified. Hence, in the latter epistle to the Philippians, that ripe sample and development of Christian experience, Paul, transported even to the last with this new and divine righteousness, shows us that, compared with it, he would not have the righteousness of the law if he could. For what was of the law had no glory longer in his eyes because of the glory that excelled—that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God through faith. (Phil. 3) Far from superseding practical godliness, this righteousness of God in Christ strikes deep roots in the heart, and springs up in a harvest of kindred fruit, which is by Jesus Christ to God's glory and praise. (Phil. 1:11.)

It is a singular fact that, while God used Rom. 1:17 to Luther's conversion, and we may say to the Reformation, neither he nor his companions, or their followers, ever apprehended the full truth conveyed by this blessed expression—" righteousness of God." Hence it is habitually mistranslated in Luther's German Bible, where is rendered "the righteousness which is available before God." This, evidently, is far short of the truth; for a legal righteousness, if accomplished by man, would have availed before God. But God, in His grace, has accomplished in Christ and given an incomparably higher, i.e., a divine righteousness, and nothing less than this are we made in Christ. Perhaps the imperfect view entertained by the great German Reformer may account in large measure for the fluctuations in his enjoyment of peace. The same thing applies to most Protestants up to our day, even where they are devoted Christians, and perhaps from a similar cause; for they have advanced little, if at all, beyond the light on this head possessed by Luther 1 Cor. 15:29. What is meant by being "being baptized for the dead'?"

For the due understanding of this verse, it is necessary to bear in mind that a parenthesis extends from verse 20 to 28 inclusively. The connection therefore, of verse 29 and seq. is with the reasoning which precedes that parenthetic revelation.

Now the apostle had already shown that "if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins: then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished," closing with the further word, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (verses 16—19.) Having thus proved the extreme gravity of denying the resurrection of dead persons, as overthrowing the foundation of salvation for the saints alive or dead, and neutralizing that hope which sustained those who now suffer for and with Christ, he interrupts the thread of argument by positive statement, "but now is Christ risen from the dead." Then he draws out the glorious consequences of His victory as man—resurrection after His 'own pattern for those who are His at His coming, and a kingdom which He will not deliver to the Father till He has put all enemies under His feet, till the wicked dead are raised for judgment, and death is destroyed. "And when all things are subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." For it is not here a question of His divine glory, but of a special authority vouchsafed to Him, as the exalted man, for a given purpose and time; this over, God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) is all in all.

Having terminated this most instructive digression, which flowed out of the statement of Christ's resurrection, the apostle takes up the argument he had dropped, and referring to verse 16, he urges, "else what shall the baptized for the dead do?" "If dead [persons] rise not at all, why also are they baptized for them'?" And if he puts this case more strongly than in his first allusion to it, if he exposes the absurdity of people following the steps of those who are supposed to have perished, he in the next verses develops our present misery as Christians, and his own especially, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ." Whether dead or living, the saints would be badly off indeed.

" To be baptized for the dead," then, means to begin the Christian career, as the successors of persons whom some of them held to have died never to rise again. To be baptized for such, with any view or reference to them, was folly, if they were not to rise. To stand in jeopardy every hour, to die daily, to pass through such a conflict as the apostle had had with his Ephesian enemies, was to persist in madness, " if the dead rise not." But if the dead are to rise and reign, if all outside them are merely enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season, which will give place to sure and stern and eternal judgment, the only wisdom was to enter their ranks, come what might to mow them down or harass in this life. God is only rightly known as the God of resurrection. Sin—this present evil world—tends to confuse and falsify all just thoughts of God, of His character, and His counsels. Resurrection, as revealed of Him, puts everything in its true place and light, and amongst others the suffering

place of the Christian, from its commencement to its close here below. Resurrection is its key, its encouragement, and its reward.

Letters 2, Assembly Action and Conscience

Very dear brother,-I have followed all that is going on in—with unfailing interest; but my part in this painful story has been rather to be with God than to busy myself with men.... Unless called by God, I would not directly enter into the difficulties of assemblies; I think this is done rather too much, while it is a question of arousing the conscience of the assembly which is disturbed. I grant that an assembly may avail itself with advantage of the advice of a brother more experienced in divine things, and I fully recognize that we are all one, and that if one suffers, all suffer with him. What I fear is lest individual influence should take the place of the awakening of the conscience. of the assembly. I have full confidence that this painful commotion will turn to the profit of the brethren. God's hand will be recognized, and there will be more seriousness. Truths which have been a little neglected will come to mind, worldliness will be judged-everything by which the Holy Spirit has been grieved-dependence on the grace in which we stand will be more felt. What one has to look to is that souls do not lose their way in the conflict, and leave the Lord's path.

I have heard that there has been a separation at-. Grace, patience, and firmness will be needed to meet it; firmness, especially in the walk of those who, I believe, left the meetingroom, and are not under the influence of -; firmness too with regard to those who have retained the room; but expres3ion of sorrow towards those who are led, and meekness and patience with all. It is plain that the separation is an evil, and this offense has been committed under the influence of those who were not of the assembly. Rom. 16:17 clearly shows us our path in this case, and 2 Thess. 3:10 shows the spirit in which we should act, in order that all may be brought back, and that not one may be misled altogether, and in a permanent way. But all this, in whomsoever it may be, is not of.yesterday; and there has been too much weakness, too little spirituality in general, for, it to be a matter of astonishment if God should chasten. This is why those who suffer from it ought to be before Him, owning His hand; and He who has wounded will heal. The Lord did not take the cup which He had to drink for us from man, nor from Satan, but from His Father's hand. This, in what concerns us, sweetens the bitterness and sorrow, and also makes us more humble and more serious; then we can pray for others. I have confidence in the Lord that He will restore order and peace: for some, this may not be just yet; but in order to this, those who are right must carry themselves graciously, considering that it is the hand of God, but with firmness in rejecting the schism, and making those who caused it feel that it is no light thing to have done. I have already said that this should be done with sorrow of heart, a thing far removed from haughtiness and hatred. May God Himself work by His' grace in your midst....

October, 1876.

Letters 2, Last Days; Occupation With Evil; Progress of the Power of Evil; Responsibility and Purpose; Translation Work; Appreciation of the Word; the World and the Christian, The

Very glad indeed was I to get news from New York, and thank you much. The work in America I have much at heart, and N. Y. had much exercised me, but I fully trusted the Lord, I think I may say, and He has brought evident good out of evil. I always feel my work a very poor imperfect one: I sow great principles, truths of God's blessed word which I know to be truths and infinitely blessed; but I am no wise master-builder. indeed, in these last days I believe it is not the time for it, but for establishing the saints in those truths, and that separation from the world, and a worldly church, which places them in right testimony where Christ would have them. What a blessing that is! If it is where He would have them it is the right place. And after that we must labor, and labor with Him.

I do not think any one can have a deeper sense of the evil than I have, but we must not be occupied too much with it. It is very possible that it has made progress at N. Y. since I was there, for it does so, and rapidly everywhere. The clergy are at their wits' end in Europe through the boldness of infidels among themselves, yet cling together that there may not be a division in the church, so-called. When the world is separating into Romanism and infidelity, Christians must have their place, and keep their eye steadily fixed on that: " simple concerning evil," says the apostle, "wise concerning that which is good." I do not want saints to be unconscious of what is going on all around them; they are warned, but not to be occupied with it. The passage I have quoted is of every day walk, but there is a principle in it. Two things we need to have-what Christ has in the world as perfect as possible, and to be looking to Him constantly for it. He can give: and He loves the church. Oh! that we might have more of the spirit of intercession, that He might be glorified. It is of every importance that those who do walk, should walk in unity and in power. God has been most gracious in N. Y., and I trust the work will yet go on. Only stick close to the Lord....

I not only have undertaken a corrected version from Hebrew of German Old Testament, but have finished the prophets within a day or two's work, I trust with satisfaction. I feel the Lord with me in it, but tied up by it, and sometimes say will not the Lord make it soon useless. But the church needs the word above all now. I find it wonderfully clear, and daily all clearer. This dead with Christ, well weighed, opens by practical truth, the truth as it is in Jesus far and wide—God's ways putting responsibility and purpose in their place—but goes deep into the conscience. I am very hard worked, the rather as I am anxious to finish and be at other labors.... One thing I do feel, the word of God is everything under grace: the church here below a judged thing, the word light from God.

May the Lord keep and bless you, and keep you very near Himself.

Affectionately yours.

Elberfeld,

January 3rd, 1870.

Christian Truth: Volume 25, Christ — Unselfishness: The World — Selfishness

One thing impressed my mind most peculiarly when the Lord was first opening my eyes—I never found Christ doing a single thing for Himself. Here is an immense principle. There was not one act in all Christ's life done to serve or please Himself. An unbroken stream of blessed, perfect, unfailing love flowed from Him, no matter what the contradiction of sinners—one amazing and unwavering testimony of love, and sympathy, and help. But it was ever others, and not Himself, that were comforted; and nothing could weary it, nothing could turn it aside. Now the world's whole principle is self, doing well for itself (Psalm 49:18).

Men know that it is upon the energy of selfishness they have to depend. Everyone that knows anything of the world knows this. Without it the world could not go on.

What is the world's honor? Self. What its wealth? Self. What is advancement in the world? Self. They are but so many forms of the same thing. The principle that animates the individual man in each is the spirit of self-seeking. The business of the world is the seeking of self, and the pleasures of the world are selfish pleasures. They are troublesome pleasures too, for we cannot escape from a world where God has said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground"; etc. Toil for self is irksome; but suppose a man finds out at length that the busy seeking of self is trouble and weariness, and having procured the means of living without it, gives it up—what then? He just adopts another form of the same spirit of self and turns to selfish ease.

I am not now speaking of vice and gross sin (of course everyone will allow that to be opposite to the spirit of Christ), but of the whole course of the world. Take the world's decent, moral man, and is he an "epistle of Christ"? Is there in him a single motive like Christ's? He may do the same things; he may be a carpenter as Christ was said to be (Mark 6:3), but he has not one thought in common with Christ.

As to the outside, the world goes on with its religion and its philanthropy. It does good, builds its hospitals, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and the like; but its inward springs of action are not Christ's. Every motive that governed Christ all the way along is not that which governs men; and the motives which keep the world going are not those which were found in Christ at all.

The infidel owns Christ's moral beauty, and selfishness can take pleasure in unselfishness; but the Christian is to "put on Christ." He went about doing good all the day long; there was not a moment but He was ready as the servant in grace of the need of others. And do not let us suppose that this cost Him nothing. He had not where to lay His head; He hungered and was wearied; and, when He sat down, where was it? Under the scorching sun at the well's mouth, while His disciples went into the city to buy bread. And what then? He was as ready for the poor, vile sinner who came to Him as if He were not hungry, neither faint and weary. He was never at ease. He was in all the trials and troubles that man is in as the consequences of sin; and see how He walked! He made bread for others, but He would not touch a stone to make it into bread for Himself.

As to the moral motives of the soul, the man of the world has no one principle in common with Christ. If then the worldling is to read in the Christian the character of Christ, it is evident the world cannot read it in him; he is not a Christian; he is not in the road to heaven at all, and every step he takes only conducts him farther and farther from the object in view. When a man is in a wrong road, the farther he goes in it, the more he is astray.

Letters 3, Judgment Seat of Christ, The

It is important to bear in mind that, whatever1 may be the display and power of grace, the principles of righteousness are in no way set aside, but, on the contrary, maintained thereby. The day will declare that God renders to each according to his works. Life eternal He will give to those who, by patient continuance of good work, seek for glory, honor, and incorruptibility. He will give this, I say; because here eternal life is viewed on the side of glory, not as a present thing, as St. John does; and hence it appears as the issue of a holy, fruitbearing course. On the other hand, to such as are contentious and disobedient to the truth, but who obey unrighteousness, there shall be indignation and wrath, tribulation and distress, on every soul of man that worketh evil etc. (Compare John 5:29; Gal. 6:8.) Mark the two-fold truth. "Each of us shall give account of himself to God." Yet shall the believer not come into judgment (John 5:24)—not into condemnation merely, but judgment. Doubtless, in the unbeliever's case to give account of himself will be, in effect, both judgment and condemnation. But neither is true of the believer. Nevertheless, it is certain that the believer will be manifested (not judged) before the judgment-seat of Christ. All must be manifested there, in fact, whether saint or sinner; that each may receive the things done in (or by) the body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or evil. Even for the believer, all his ways are far from being the fruit of righteousness by Jesus Christ. As for the laborer, there might be work done with sorry materials, and this will have its consequences in glory, though the person is supposed to be saved.

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:12.)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or BAD." (2 Cor. 5:9, 10.)

"But he that doeth WRONG shall receive for the WRONG which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons." (Col. 3:25.)

Note the last passages in reference to "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," and Heb. 10:17.')

It is just the same principle in the last passage, as indeed in a crowd of others. 1 John 1:9 does not modify, much less contradict, this. It is involved in repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor does Heb. 10:17 clash either, as some might think. No sin is remembered as a question of pardon; nothing is forgotten as a question of divine vindication and retribution. We shall know as we are known, and God be magnified in all His ways.

Letters 3, Kingdom of God and of Heaven; Red Sea in Type, The

The Presbyterians profess to hold new birth by baptism in a worse way than English Episcopalians, though they have no formulary to bring it under the eye. It was held by all the Reformers. But where sacramental grace is held, the root of Popery and ecclesiastical hostility to the truth is always found.

As regards the kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of God, only dispensationally spoken of, and is the kingdom of God when the King is in heaven. But "kingdom of God" is a more general term; we have "it is not meat and drink," etc. "Kingdom of heaven" is only used in Matthew in contrast with Messiah on earth. John never speaks of dispensations, but of the reality of things, God being revealed: and so "kingdom of God" is used here, John 3

The Red Sea I believe to be Christ's death and resurrection, and thus redemption by which we are brought to God, as is there said. You have not the saint raised in Romans; he is looked at as we are, a man living on the earth, but having Christ as his life, forgiven and justified, and reckoning himself dead, and giving himself up to God as one that is alive in Christ from the dead. The Red Sea redeems, not from enemies, but out of flesh, and so sin and Satan's power. Pharaoh was not an enemy, but an oppressor. Jordan is death experimentally, death with Christ; then after being risen, fighting begins.

London, November 19th.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 7, Judgment Seat of God and of Christ*

I AM not aware that this expression, " the judgment-seat of God " or " the judgment-seat of Christ," is found anywhere else than in Rom. 14 and 2 Cor. 5 in the first of these two passages with a view to prevent individual judgments; in the second with a view to provoke to do good. The subject in itself is one of the most solemn and at the same time most blessed, and this so much the more as we understand it rightly. I believe that each act of our lives will be manifested then before the tribunal, according as the grace of God and His ways with us in connection with our own acts will be known then. We read (Rom. 14) that " every one of us shall give account of himself to God "; and the word, in this passage, mentions the tribunal in connection with the exhortation to brethren not to judge one another in respect of days, meats, or any other such thing.

I am disposed to think that the acts alone will be subject to manifestation; but all the private acts of our life depend so intimately upon our inward feelings, that it is, in a certain sense, difficult to distinguish the acts from the simple thoughts. The acts manifest the power of the thought or of the feeling. I believe that the whole of our acts will be detailed there, before the judgment-seat, not for us however, as if we were in the flesh, and thus to our condemnation, but to make evident to our own eyes the grace that occupied itself with us-regenerate or unregenerate. In the counsels of God I am elect before the foundation of the world; hence I think that my own history will be detailed before the judgment-seat, and, parallel with it, the history of the grace and of the mercy of God toward me. The why and the how we did this or that will be manifested then. For us the scene will be declarative, not judicial. We are not in the flesh before God; in His eyes by His grace we are dead. But then, if we have walked according to the flesh, we must see how we lost in blessing thereby, and what loss we have incurred; and, on the other hand, the ways of God towards us, all ways of wisdom, of mercy, and of grace, will be perfectly known and understood by us for the first time. The history of each one will come out in perfect transparency; it will be seen how you yielded and how He preserved you, how your foot slipped and how He raised you up again, how you were drawing near danger and shame and how He by His own arm interposed.

I believe this is the bride making herself ready, and I consider that moment as a wondrous one. There will be no flesh then to be condemned; but the new nature will enter into the full knowledge of the care and of the love, which, in true holiness and in righteousness and even in grace, have followed us step by step all through the running of the race. Some parts of our life, till then entirely unexplained, will be fully disclosed and become altogether plain; some tendencies of our nature, that perhaps we do not judge to be so pernicious and deadly as they are, and for the mortification of which we are perhaps now subjected to a discipline that we may not have interpreted aright, will be then perfectly explained; and, what is more, the very falls that plunge us now into such bitter anguish will be seen then to be that which God used to preserve us from something more terrible. I do not think that until then we shall ever have had a full knowledge of the badness of our flesh.

How blessed for us to know that then it will be not only all over with the flesh in the counsel of God, but that the flesh will no longer be attached to us! On the other side, I doubt not, the manifestation of God's grace toward us individually will be so magnificent that even the sense of the perversity of the flesh that we had, if it could possibly enter there, would be excluded by the greatness of the sense of divine goodness. Why do we not deny and mortify the flesh when we think of that hour? The Lord grant that we may do so more and more to the glory of His grace. This great subject of the judgment-seat brings the soul to a very full knowledge of our individual standing.

Letters 2, New Creation; Human Laws Not the Measure of Christian Judgment; Marriage With a Deceased Wife's Sister; Romanism, The

As to the main point on which you wrote to me, I have not an instant's doubt, nor any desire to hold back my judgment—on the contrary. I recognize, as every consistent Christian does, that the Christian is to be subject to the powers that be. But to make the law of any land the rule or ground of spiritual judgment, is to deny the authority of the word and Spirit. "We ought to obey God rather than men." Supposing I was bound by law to send my children to a school where infidelity was taught, do you think I am to do it? Suppose all meetings to break bread are forbidden, am I to give them up? You will say, But there it is confessing Christ; but he who confesses Christ must obey His word, and if that word tells people not to separate, I am setting aside Christ's authority in doing it.

Supposing two persons were perfectly married according to English law, living in England, Protestants from childhood, are bona fide married in church by banns, or elsewhere, but by legal connection belonging to a Roman Catholic country, and are within prohibited degrees which go to being godfather and godmother to the same child: if they go to their own country (legally in this country, too) their marriage is not accounted such; it is concubinage: are they to separate because of popish law? They cannot be married then at all: they have been married in England, and it goes for nothing, and the same as to every country. Again, put the case in this country. A person marries, and his marriage fully recognized for years: he commits some crime which involves infamy; his marriage is dissolved and annulled. Is he to hold his wife as not

his wife, and the woman be free to marry someone else?

But in principle, to make human laws the measure of christian right and wrong is in my judgment a total subversion of Christ's and the word's authority. There may be extreme cases, but if the principle be true it is true everywhere.... You cannot make a bond fide marriage before God vary with the law of the land. A Swiss is married with his wife's sister: it is legal. In this country it is null (if they belong to this country): is the marriage different in itself as entered into before God? There, were three kinds of marriages in pagan Rome. Suppose Christians married before the church of God: is it not clear that the church would recognize them as married before God, and, if unfaithful, treat it as adultery? The marriage of parties before God does not depend on the State recognizing it. The truth is, that while I should look for a Christian bowing to the powers that be more than most, I do not understand a Christian taking civil law as a rule or standard for christian obligation in any way or in any respect. I obey. Why? Because the word of Christ tells me to do so; but I know of no other rule, no other ultimate authority for one born again. I know no rule but God's will expressed by Himself. Any other principle seems to me to be a fatal one. The question, and the sole question, is, Does the word of God pronounce it valid? I should hold a marriage before the church of God, if according to God's word in itself, valid before the church of God.... I think it a very alarming principle to make human law in any way the source and measure of Christian obligation.

Unless naturalized abroad, so that England is formally given up as their domicile, no Swiss marriage could annul an English law, and, at best, it is conniving at low subterfuge, such as would make me distrust a Christian who had recourse to it.

Pau, 1879.

Letters 1, Baptism; the Last Days; Devotedness, Other Points on

I was very glad to get your account of the work, and so happy a one. I am sure true devotedness is the secret of power, and specially in these days; and that the value of brethren can only be if we so live in service for Christ, and for Christ specially among the poor: , not "condescend" as so falsely translated in English. (Rom. 12:16.) We must remember that we are in the last days. Things are even going very fast, but the Lord is above all: He gathers together the tares in bundles. Patient continuing in well-doing is our path.

As regards your difficulty as to baptism, I am sure patience is our path there too. I can conceive nothing more false than a baptism testimony-more poor than a baptism church: the whole thing is a mistake. We are, according to 2 Tim. 2, purging ourselves from evil in a great baptized mass, thinking to begin and found, as with heathen, in a false position. But there has been such confusion and abuse that one must have patience with those thrown on these ordinance-ways of correcting them. They do it conscientiously. I should not stir my finger to hinder their own acting for themselves. If it was made a part of the testimony of the assembly as such. I should not go to it. I should not make any fuss, but keep my own place. Dear——assumed this position in that they baptized believers (himself the most inconsistent of men as to it) but admitted others. I said at once I could not go in that case: I went in the unity of the body, not on sufferance to a baptism meeting, and the thing was withdrawn, and said not to be meant in this way. Nothing would induce me to go to a baptism meeting; I would as soon go to popery. I should have objected to giving up the prayer meeting, and any public declaration of its being a part of their testimony; their private view of it, of course, they are free in. But we are called to peace. They attacked me once about it at—-—-, and I found they could not answer at all from scripture. The person who attacked me was convinced, I think, that they were wrong; certainly they had no answer from scripture. But I would not trouble one of them: I do not admit their baptism to be really such at all; but they do it conscientiously, and believe it such, and I am content, as I accept the ordinance as Christ's. They must leave my conscience free, too; I can bear with, but cannot bind my conscience by their ignorance, and I am sure it is. If the assembly takes the ground of being baptisms, of course I should not go But, I repeat, we are called to peace, and no individual (o. multiplied by many) expression of opinion would move me at all. It always does mischief where it is held, and narrows that spirit; but when the assembly is not formed on it, I am free. Seek peace and pursue it. And the Lord give you peace always. by all means.

Here the Lord blesses: numbers are a good deal increased. I have been in the States. Everywhere a growing sense of the worldliness and low estate of so-called churches, and spiritual persons ill at ease; but there must be faith to act. I am off to New York, where the Swiss have called me. And then after Philadelphia, for a visit to Massachusetts, where there is testimony. The Lord has graciously helped me hitherto. I must close. Hold to what is essential and keep close to Christ; of your own thoughts be distrustful Ever affectionately yours.

Canada,

September, 1863.

Notes and Comments 4, Fragments: The Rapture

The only attempt to prove the non-rapture of the Church which might seem to have Scripture to warrant it is that founded on Rom. 11:25, that blindness happens to Israel till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. But it proves nothing whatever, save that blindness is on Israel till the Church be complete. Then Israel's judicial blindness will cease. What the process is by which they are brought to be ready to own Christ, so that He comes (for He does not, till they are) is not spoken of. Other passages enlarge upon it—the sorrows, exercises, awakenings, pleadings which take place before the answer of grace, in the personal return of the Lord, comes. With these passages it proves the contrary of non-previous rapture, for, till the Church is complete, there is blindness, and these exercises of the heart according to Scripture are the proof that blindness is taken away, though the answer be not yet come. ‘All Israel,' I think, results naturally enough from the fact that he speaks of blindness unto Israel.' In grace he had spoken only of branches broken off from the stock of promise, but, in fact, the nation, as such, was in outer darkness, for a time blindness was on it, the veil on their hearts. When the fullness of the Gentiles should be in, then this, as to the national condition, should be changed.

Notes and Comments 2, Mystery, The

WE may, I suppose, put aside some passages where this word occurs, as furnishing the explanation in themselves, and giving its application to something special.

1 Cor. 15:51

"Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This may have place at the summing up and accomplishment of the mystery of Christ, but it is a special mystery revealed; so 1 Cor. 4:1, "Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." So Babylon is called "Mystery"; and the "mystery of iniquity," though it has its connection with the mystery in way of contrast, evidently is another thing apart.

1 Cor. 2:6, 7

There is nothing very precise here-it is the character rather of his testimony, and the wisdom which he spake; it was not the public, common-place wisdom wrought out of man's wit, but the wisdom of God in mystery-things which never would have been known but for God's communicating them, and which were of His counsels in Christ, hidden, while His government even was of this age, for a time but revealed by the Holy Ghost to those who are based upon the risen Man, whom God has made the Center of His counsels and of the mystery. It is this wisdom of this place, these counsels of God before the worlds for our glory, known therefore only by revelation and by the Spirit, and this is what he goes on to speak of to the end of the chapter. Here then "mystery" is not the subject of the revelation, but the character of the wisdom which the Apostle by the Spirit spake.

Rom. 11:25

We may also put this aside-it is the special mystery, ancillary to the prosecution of the great mystery, of setting aside Israel as blinded for a time, " in part," until the fullness of the Gentiles was come in. This was a peculiar plan of God, which was not exactly the Church nor the kingdom, but a temporary displacement of the earthly part, not its establishment under the new covenant, nor Messiah, but the setting aside of Israel in part, under blindness, until the fullness of the Gentiles should be come in. Then this preparatory thing being accomplished, the blessing of Israel, as such, would take its course according to the enlarged scope of the counsels of God, which embraced the heavens also. It was a subordinate special mystery, for naturally Israel would have been continued placed under the new covenant, and the Gentiles blessed with God's people; but all this is for the moment set aside, that the Gentiles, as a special thing, according to the counsels of God, to whom all His counsels are known from the foundations of the world, may come in. This then also is a special mystery, though serving in its place to the development of the great mystery of God's will in result.

Rom. 16:25

We have here the mystery without being told in what it consists, " The preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of (the) mystery, as to which silence was kept in all ages " (in the times of the ages) " but now manifested, and by prophetical Scriptures according to the commandment of the eternal God of ages, made known for the obedience of faith to all the Gentiles; the only wise God through Jesus Christ to whom be glory for the ages. Amen."

Here however we have much, as suits the Epistle to the Romans in which is revealed that " there is no difference, for that all have sinned," that Christ is set forth as the mercy-seat through faith in His blood, the righteousness of God being the only one for all, and upon all that believed, Jew and Greek, i.e., Christ risen—Object of faith and Power of life in resurrection, which was in effect the basis of the mystery. Its result was not stated here, i.e., revealed rather than preached; we have here what is preached as the basis of hope to bring in souls into that which was revealed. Further, we have seen in this epistle a special mystery subordinate and ancillary to this, that is that blindness in part is happened to Israel till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; indeed this was, in a sense, necessary to it—impossible to preach no difference through a risen Christ while the Jews maintained their privileges. The Gentiles brought to light by a risen Savior—sufficient Object between them and God, without the intervention of the Jews—such is the face of the mystery presented here, and proclaimed to the Gentiles for the obedience of faith. No difference is proclaimed; the unity of the Body is not yet brought out, but we have creation groaning till the manifestation of the sons of God, the joint-heirs of Christ who suffer with Him and will be glorified together. See chapter 1:16, 17, also verses 2, 3, 4, 5; compare also Acts 15:7-19.

Ephesians and Colossians

These still remain and here we have the substance and sum of the mystery.

Eph. 1:7-12

God has made the riches of His grace abound towards us in all wisdom and understanding, " having made known to us the mystery of his will according to his own good pleasure, which he purposed in himself, for the administration of the fullness of times, to head up all things in Christ, those in the heavens and those upon the earth, in him in whom we also have received [our] inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who have pre-trusted in Christ."

Here we have evidently the mystery in its general scope according to the counsels of God, that is, to gather together and head up in one all things in Christ, in heaven and in earth, for the administration of the fullness of times; they also among the Jews who had believed anticipatively in Him, and the Gentiles also, being to the praise of the glory of His grace as taking inheritance with Him, and in the meanwhile sealed with the Holy Ghost until the redemption of the purchased possession.

Eph. 3:3, 4, 9

Here we learn that the mystery was made known to him by revelation. It is the mystery of Christ (a Messiah accomplishing the earthly promises of God is no mystery) that was committed to Paul, to make known what was the dispensation of the mystery, hidden during the ages

in God, Creator of all things, that thus by the Church might be made known to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God, for it was a new thing. Here we have then added that the preaching of the fullness of Christ, and making known the dispensation of this mystery, brought the Church into the position of testimony of the variousness of God's wisdom to the heavenlies.

In Eph. 5:32, " This mystery is great, but I speak as to Christ and the Church." Here we have a special part only, that is the union of the Church with Christ, as of His body, His bones and His flesh, which set the Church in its own special and wonderful place when all was headed up in Christ in heaven and earth. It is a special mystery to itself.

Eph. 6:19

This merely takes up in general the idea of that which was thus specially revealed—the mystery of the Gospel. It was not the good news of evident import, as of old—the accomplishment of promises which belonged to the aion or aionoi of this world, but the mystery which none of its princes knew, or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Col. 1:26, 27

In Colossians, after naming Christ as the Image of the invisible God-the headship of creation—the headship of the Church—the reconciliation of all things—the present reconciliation of the Church—comes the ministry of the Gospel to every creature under heaven, and then the ministry of the Church to fulfill the word of God gives i.e., all its fullness, to wit, the mystery hidden from ages and generations, but now manifested to His saints, to whom God has willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory. Here we have another face of this revelation, unknown through the ages-suited to the subject of the Colossians, the bringing in Christ Himself as the fullness, so that they had no need of Judaizing; thus it is "among the Gentiles," Christ is in them the hope of glory. It was the practical realization of the unity of the Church with Christ, not in the height of its privilege, but in its preservative power, still being really the mystery, i.e., no Messiah accomplishing in person the age, but a Christ among the Gentiles, source and power of hope. This then gives the present power of the mystery here below.

Col. 2:2

We have here the mystery of God in which are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge—this in order that they should not be going to seek fantastic notions elsewhere, evidently implying both the whole extent of God's counsels, long time hidden, and the position and interest of the Church in them by its unity with Christ, center of all these counsels.

Col. 4:3

The Apostle here speaks of the mystery of Christ, for which he was in bonds. In general this is the same Gospel of a Christ for the Gentiles according to that which was now revealed, for the first time, of God and formed in part of conscious knowledge, and which was specially entrusted to Paul, that he might make it manifest as he ought to speak. These passages give the just idea of the mystery, that is Rom. 16, Ephesians and Colossians, alluded to in 1 Corinthians 2:7.

There is yet another passage which bears on the same subject, though it treats it in another way, it is:

1 Tim. 3:14-16

The Apostle speaks of Timothy's conversation in the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth. The Church is thus in the world, the sustainer of truth, and what is this?

The mystery of piety or godliness. And this is what Christ was among the Gentiles-Object of Angels' gaze-believed on in the world, and received up into heaven; in virtue of all which the Church existed. She sustained, as united to Christ and thus the center and body of the mystery in the world, the knowledge of all that He was to whom she was united. God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels- thus incarnate and owned-preached among the Gentiles (not again a Messiah present among the Jews), believed on (not seen) in the world, received up into glory-thus the necessary Center of all things-so by counsel also in the accomplishment of this ordained glory which identified itself with that inherent, which found itself, in Him by whom and for whom all was created. The Judaizing Gnostics are again set in contrast by the Apostle. This, I think, quite shows and confirms the force of the expression.

Rev. 10:7

This passage remains; here there is more apparent difficulty, and that partly from the word musterion. The word etelesthe seems always to mean something brought up to its completeness, hence often necessarily the end of a thing, because, if I am accomplishing a task, finishing it is arriving at the completeness of the task, but if it is something in progress, or which develops itself, then it is its full existence which finishes, if you will, the development. And this word musterion carries its own dissolution, because the moment the subject of it is brought to pass, it ceases to be a musterion-when labors are complete, one ceases to labor; when the work is complete it exists in its perfection-thus teleo may mean "beginning to exist" or "ceasing," because in either case it is the completing of something. But here taking the words chronos ouketi estai (time shall be no longer) I think we must take etelesthe musterion, not as if the subject matter of the mystery had ceased to exist, but that the mystery is accomplished and ceased to be an unaccomplished mystery. It was no longer a mystery spoken of, and only circumstances working out to that which was contained in the mystery as a revelation; this would now take place and be accomplished. This gives its usual sense to mystery, but supposes that God, having only revealed certain things in hope—Christ in us, the hope of glory—His power in the proper exercise of government, so that evil has not been allowed to rise, has not been exercised.

There is also in 1 Tim. 3:9, the general expression "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

It is a striking expression of the state of things in which we are that Christ, not simply works miracles and sets aside the power of Satan wherever he is, but gives power to His disciples to do it—yet John Baptist is put to death and it is not hindered. And He would not do any mighty work in "His own country"; Mark 6.

Note the absoluteness of Christ's gathering out of the world, and being a separative and positive Center, is shown in this, that He received even those who were with John Baptist. The whole passage has a character of unworldliness which it is well to note in the elements already given. He gathers round Himself—God Himself—as a new gathering to Himself out of a world which is thus judged and left as evil, a way wholly new and divine through it, following Christ (none in and of it), and heaven opened here on Christ, but to us now through the rent veil. All is taking (not the body yet) out of earth and associating it with God on a new footing with Christ and with heaven through the rent veil—oh! what a blessing.

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