1 Peter - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Sanctification or Setting Apart to God, Sanctification or Setting Apart to God: 1

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

1 Peter 1

There is something very sweet in the certainty with which the apostle Peter presents to us the truths contained in this Epistle. There is neither hesitation nor uncertainty. The word speaks of things received, of a certainty for those to whom it is addressed. Their faith was tried, but the thing was certain. The apostle speaks here of an inexhaustible fund of truths which belonged to him; and it is not as one groping in the dark that he speaks of it. These things are too important to be left in doubt; they deserve all our attention: our hearts need it. It is not the unregenerate heart that loves the Lord Jesus. One may be brave and all that, and think that if one's conduct is good, the result in heaven will be accordingly; but therein is no love for the Lord Jesus. And this is the badge of the Christian.

The apostle says in the eighth verse, “Whom (Christ) not having seen, ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Now, there is no such thing as that without regeneration, which is a new life that has interests, and affections-quite a new world; and without this there is no Christian, because there is not Christ.

We will now see the two principles laid down in this chapter, and in the work here attributed to the Holy Spirit.

God finds the soul in a certain position, in certain relations, and removes it to place it in quite a new state; and this separation is according to the power of the resurrection of Christ.

The apostle speaks to the Jews of the dispersion (that is, to those of whom it is spoken in John vii. 35, those dispersed among the Greeks) in these words. “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” &c. He addressed himself to the dispersion, to Jews now converted to Christianity, to those who are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace and peace, &c. He says this because he is speaking of another election than that of the Jewish people. The Jewish nation was elected after another manner. Here he writes, as we said, to Jews who had believed on the Lord Jesus; so that sanctification in them was not sanctification of a nation by outward means, but by the Holy Spirit, Who separated the souls from among the Jews to belong to God, and to form a part of the present dispensation of grace. It was not with them as with the ancient Jews, who were separated from the Egyptians by the Red Sea. They were separated by the sanctification effected by the Holy Spirit. Observe particularly this word “sanctification “: the first idea is separation for God, not only from evil, but a setting apart for God Who sanctifies.

This is what God does in those whom He calls, finding souls lying in evil. John says on this subject, in his First Epistle, (chap. v. 1.9), “We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;” and it is very precious to have things clearly stated. “We are of God": it is not merely that we should conduct ourselves aright; doubtless, that is well. But the great difference is, that we are of God, and that “the whole world lieth in wickedness.” Does this mean that we are always as we should be? No: but we are of God. One is not all one would desire to be: that will come to pass only in heaven, for only there will God make us conformed to the image of His beloved Son.

But this is what God has done: He has separated us to Himself, as a man who hews stones out of a quarry. The stone is hewn out of the quarry and set apart, destined to be cut and fashioned, in order to be placed in the appointed building. And God detaches a soul from the quarry of this world to separate it for Himself. I say not but there is much to do; for a rough stone cut out of a quarry requires often considerable labor before it is placed in the building for which it is destined. Even so God separates, prepares, and fashions this soul to introduce it into His spiritual building. There are many useless matters to take off; but God acts every day in His grace. Howsoever, this soul is sanctified, set apart for God, from the moment it is taken out of the quarry of this world.

The apostle speaks here of sanctification before he mentions obedience and the blood of Jesus Christ. We are sanctified to these two things (ver. 2): “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” He takes us out of the quarry of this world to place us under the efficacy of the blood of Christ. The stone is entirely His and adapted to His purpose. Although He has yet to work upon it, the question is not of what He does each day, but generally of the appropriation to the end God has proposed to Himself. It is the Holy Spirit Who acts in the soul and appropriates it to Himself. It may previously have been very honorable, or very wicked in its conduct; this makes no difference: only it will be more grateful, if it feels itself more evil. But as to the former condition, that matters little: one belongs now to God.

To what does God destine this soul? To obedience. Up to this period what has it done but its own will? It has followed its own way, no matter what appearances may have been, more or less good, more or less bad; it is all one. The character may have been weak, or more or less fiery, until, as with Paul, the Lord arrested him on his road. Now behold this soul, hitherto filled with its own will, set apart for obedience.

Paul had been very learned in what concerned the religion of his fathers; he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He honestly believed that he had done the will of God, but there was nothing of the kind. He followed his own will, according to the direction impressed by the tradition of the fathers. Never, till the moment that Jesus stopped him on the way to Damascus, had he said, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

Thus, whatever may have been the conduct of a soul before this setting apart, nothing of all before has made it do the will of God. But the aim of the life of a soul sanctified, set apart, is to do the will of God. It may fail.; but that is its aim. Jesus said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” He had no need of sanctification, in one sense, because He was holy; but the aim of His whole life was obedience. Here am I “to do thy will, O God.” He took the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He existed

only for God; the principle of His life was obedience. He was come to do nothing but His Father's will.

As soon as a soul is sanctified, it is sanctified unto obedience; and this is manifested by the spirit of dependence which has done with its own will. It says, “What must I do?” It may fail through weakness in many respects; but that is its aim.

As to the second thing, we are sanctified to enjoy the sprinkling of blood. The soul, thus placed under the influence of the blood of Christ, is thereby completely cleansed. The blood of the Son of God cleanses us from all sin; it is by the efficacy of His blood that we are separated from this world.

The question here is not of bulls and goats which could not sanctify the conscience of him who did the service, but of the blood of Christ, Who by the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. It is the blood which purifies the conscience. (To be continued, D.V.)

Sanctification or Setting Apart to God, Sanctification or Setting Apart to God: 2

1 Peter 1

Let us see a little what the apostle says on this subject. “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Whereabouts are we then, when the process of sanctification is carried on? It is that although we have not seen Jesus, we love Him; and although now we see Him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of (our) souls.

It is there that the heart finds itself; and while saying that His love is boundless, passing all knowledge, we can say also that we have the intelligence of it.

The magnet always turns towards the pole; yet the needle may tremble a little when the storm and tempest roar; but its direction changes not. The needle of the Christian heart points truly towards Christ. A heart which understands, which loves Jesus, which knows where Jesus has passed before it, looks at Him to sustain it through its difficulties; and however rugged and difficult the way, it is precious to us, because. we find there the trace of the steps of Jesus (He has passed there), and specially because this road conducts us, through difficulties, to the glory in which He is. Seeing, says the apostle, that it need be, in order that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

It is not only that we have been regenerated, but that we should receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of (our) souls. The end of my faith is to see Christ and the glory that He has gained for me. He says here, the salvation of souls; because the question is not of a temporal deliverance, as in the case of the ancient Jews. I see now this glory through a veil, but I long to see myself there. And being now in the trial, I look to Him Who is in the glory, and Who secures it to me. The gold will be completely purified; but the gold is proved: as to me, as to my eternal life, it is the same thing as if I was in the glory. Salvation and glory are not the less certain, though I am in the trial, than if I were already in the rest. And that gives practical sanctification; habits, affections, and a walk formed after the life and calling one has received from God.

If I engage a servant, I require him to be clean, if I am so myself. God says “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” And as it is with the servant I desire to introduce into my house, so it is with us. God requires that we should be suited to the state of His house; He will have a practical sanctification in His servants. Moreover, the aim of the apostle is, that our faith be firm and constant. He gives us in the twenty-first verse, full security, in saying to us, “that your faith and hope may be in God,” not merely in that which justifies us before a just judging God. It is a God Who is for us, Who willed to help us, and Who introduced us into His family, setting us apart for obedience, and to share in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. He has loved us with an eternal love. He has accomplished all that concerns us. He keeps us by His power through faith, in order to introduce us into glory.

He places us in trial; He makes us pass through the furnace, because He will wholly purify us. It is Himself Who has justified us: who shall condemn us? It is Christ Who is dead, or rather Who is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, and Who also maketh intercession for us: who shall separate us from His love (Rom. 8:33). Our faith and our love being in God, what have we to fear?

We have in Zechariah a very encouraging example (chap. iii). Jehovah caused Zechariah to see Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And Jehovah said to Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan! Jehovah, who hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand that I have plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments (the sin, and corruption of man), and he stood before the angel. And the angel said, Take away the filthy garments from him. And he said to him, Behold, I have made thine iniquity to pass from thee, and have clothed thee with new garments (the righteousness of God applied). Satan accuses the children of God; but when God justifies, who can condemn? Would you then that God were not content with His work, which He hath wrought for Himself? Is it not in order that we be holy and unblameable in love before Him?

Can you say, “He has sanctified me,” in the sense that He has given you Jesus for the object of your faith? If it be thus, He has placed you under the sprinkling of His precious blood in order that you may be a Christian, and happy in obedience. You may say now, He is the object of my desires, of my hope: You may not yet have understood all that Christ is for you, and you may have much to do in practice; but the important thing is to understand that it is God who has done all, and has placed you under the efficacy of that resurrection life, in order that you may be happy and joyful in His love.

It is remarkable to what point God makes all things new in us; and this because He must destroy our thoughts, in order that we may have peace. There is nothing morally in common between the first and the Second man. The first sinned and drew the whole human race in his fall; the last Adam is the source of life and power. This applies to every truth of Christianity, and to all that is in this world. There are but these two men.

Nicodemus is struck with the wisdom of Jesus, and with the power manifested in His miracles; but the Lord stops him, and cuts the matter short with him by saying, “Ye must be born again.” He was not in a condition to be instructed. He did not understand the things of God, for to do so a man must be born again; in short, he had not life. I do not say that he could not arrive at it; because, further on, we see him paying honor to Jesus in bringing the necessary spices to embalm Him.

I have been led to this thought because the end of this chapter recalled to me the fortieth chapter of Isa. 1 do not speak of the accomplishment of the prophecy which takes place at a later day for the Jews, but of a grand principle. This chapter begins with these words, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.”

Before God begins, He must cause it to be understood that all flesh is grass, &c.

If God will comfort his people, what saith Jehovah? “All flesh is grass,” &c. It must begin there. “The grass is withered, because the spirit of Jehovah hath blown upon it. But the word of God endureth,” &c. Therein lies the foundation of hope. Had it been possible for anyone to have obtained anything, it would have been the Jews, who had all; but they were nothing more than the grass of the fields, than the grass that withereth. When God will comfort man who has failed in the responsibility which attaches to him, it is thus He begins. “All flesh is grass,” &c.; and it is for this reason that there is such a confusion in the heart of the newly converted man, and even of the Christian. Let him then pay attention to it: namely, that the word comes to tell him, “The grass is withered,” the flesh is incapable of producing any good; and that he does not yet rest on this, that the word of Jehovah endureth forever, and that the blessing consequently cannot fail to His own. Till we cease in our efforts to get good from the flesh, and till we are assured that the word of Jehovah endureth forever, we shall always be troubled and weak before the assaults of the enemy.

The people had trampled on the ordinances, broken the law, crucified the Messiah, done all possible evil. Has the word of God changed? In no wise. God alters nothing in His election, nor in His promises. Paul asks, Has God rejected His people? God forbid. Peter addresses himself to the people; there is no more of them apparently. The grass is withered, but the word of God remains; and He can say to them, You are now a people, you have obtained mercy. Thus we are going to see that this word becomes the instrument of blessing and of practical sanctification. God never sanctifies what withers like grass. He introduces, on the contrary, what is most enduring and most excellent of man into heaven.

Sanctification or Setting Apart to God, Sanctification or Setting Apart to God: 3

1 Peter 1

The word withers man, the breath of Jehovah has passed over. Introduce man's glory into heaven, it is dreadful! This work is painful, because of the often prolonged wrestlings of the pride and the self-will of the flesh; and God does not begin His work by modifying what already exists. Neither can He, because He will destroy it. He can neither require nor produce fruits before the tree be planted. But He begins by communicating a new life, and detaches the creature from the things to which its flesh is attached; and the Holy Spirit communicates to it the things of the world to come, and the instrument He employs is the word-that word whereof it is said, “it abideth forever.” The word, which was of promise for the nation, becomes an instrument of life for our souls. We are begotten by the word of truth, which judges also as a two-edged sword all that is not of the new life.

Let us now examine the difference between our justification and our sanctification. Justification is something not in ourselves, but a position in which God has placed us before Himself; and those who possess His righteousness, those to whom it is applied by God, being the children of the Second man, possess all that He has and all that He loves. He who becomes the righteousness of God is born of God, and possesses all that belongs to his Father, Who assimilates the rights of His children to those of His Son, Who is heir of all things. So soon as I am a child of the Second man, I am in the blessing and righteousness in which Christ Himself is found; and thus as I have inherited from the first Adam all the consequences and results of his fall, even so, being born of the Last Adam, I inherit all that He has acquired, just as I had inherited from the former.

If it be thus, it is evident that I have part in the glory of Christ; but if life be not there, it is naught. God presents His love to us. He reveals it to us, and His word abides eternally. And here is the way God begins with the soul. He presents the truth to us, ever fresh before Himself. It is not a result produced in us that He makes us see; on the contrary, it is, that man, such as he is, has no part in this righteousness, because of the flesh, which, being as grass, cannot be in relation with God. He reveals and imparts to us a justification He has accomplished.

God cannot give precepts of sanctification to such as have no justification. The effects of the life of Christ are to convince of sin, and also to cause fruit-bearing. When the gospel was presented at the beginning, it was to Gentiles who, till then, had had no part in the promises of God. There was no need to speak to them of sanctification. But now that all the world calls itself Christian, I must see whether I be really a Christian; but this idea is not found at all originally in the Bible. The state of sin was spoken of, and the gospel declared. Now, men say “Am I really a Christian,” which thing was not so then. A man takes his practical life to see whereabouts he is, believing that the question is of sanctification, when it is only of justification. This question was not necessary at the commencement; now people look at the fruits to see if they have life, and confound with sanctification that which is only a conviction of sin previous to justification by faith and peace with God. Until a soul has consented to say, “Jesus is all and I have nothing” —till then, I say, there is nothing in this which relates to Christian sanctification. These things must be set right before the soul can have peace.

At one preaching of Peter three thousand persons were made happy; they were not in doubt. From the moment a man embraced the gospel, he was a Christian, his soul was saved.

The progress of practical sanctification must not be confounded with justification, because practical sanctification is wrought in a saved soul that has eternal life. It is an entirely new thing, of which there is no trace before I have found Christ. Do we comprehend this passage, “Without holiness” (sanctification) “no man shall see Jehovah” (there is nothing troubles a soul as that often does)? It is clear that if I do not possess Christ, I cannot see Jehovah; that is very simple. If I have not in myself the life of the Last Adam, as I had before the life of the first, never shall I see His face. The tastes natural to the one will develop themselves therein, as they developed themselves in the other.

The first inquiry to be made in such a case is, “Have you peace with God, the pardon of your sins?” If not, the question is of the justification of a sinner. “Having then purified your souls in obeying the truth by the Holy Spirit,” that is the power “by the Spirit.” The essential thing is the obedience of the truth; people seek purification and desire to bear fruit. But this is not what God first asks of us; it is obedience, and obedience to the truth.

Whereof then does the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, speak? He has much to say to us, but first of all, “All flesh is grass.” He says that no good thing exists in man; the Spirit convinces the world of sin. The whole world lies in wickedness; that world would none of Christ; and the Holy Spirit cannot present Himself without saying, “You have rejected the Christ.” The Holy Spirit comes into this world and proves to it its pride and its rebellion. Behold, the Son is no longer there; and why? The world has rejected Him. The Spirit comes to say, “The grass is withered,” &c.; then, when that is acknowledged, He communicates the peace that He has preached. He says truly, “You are sinners,” but He does not speak to sinners of sanctification; He will produce it by the truth, and He tells them the truth. Can man produce it? Nay. It is Christ, He Who is the way, the truth, and the life. The Holy Spirit speaks to the sinner of God's grace, of the righteousness of God-of peace, not to make, but made; this is the truth. He convinces the world of what it is, and He speaks to it of that will of God by which the believer is sanctified, that thus we may be obedient to the truth, in submitting to the grace of God; and when the soul is subject to the truth, life is there.

He communicates life, “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” The word abides eternally. It is thus that God first produces the principle of sanctification, which is the life of Christ in us; if the practical means be inquired, it is the word of truth.

Does the Holy Spirit tell pagans to make progress in sanctification? Does He say this to men unconverted? No. When a sinner has understood the truth, such as God presents it, then the Holy Spirit puts him in relation with God the Father, and the sinner rejoices in all that which Christ has acquired for him. Thus having purified your souls in obeying the truth by the Holy Spirit, &c., ye have been born again of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. Dear friends, you will find that it is ever thus. (To be concluded, D.V.)

Sanctification or Setting Apart to God, Sanctification, or Setting Apart to God: 4

1 Peter 1

In 2 Thess. 2:10 it is written, as to the unbelieving contrasted with the Christians, that they have not received (or rather accepted) the love of the truth, that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who have not believed the truth, &c. But, my brethren, beloved of the Lord, we are bound to give thanks to God for you, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

It is then the belief of the truth; it is not the belief of its fruits. The Holy Spirit cannot present to me the works He has produced in me, as the object of my faith. He speaks to me of my faults, of my short-comings, but never of the good works that may be in me. He produces them in me, but He hides them from me; for if we think of them, it is but a more subtle self-righteousness. It is like the manna which, being kept, produced worms. All is spoiled-it is no more faith in action. The Holy Spirit must always present to me Christ, that I may have peace.

The same principle is in John 17:16, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth.” The world was not Christ's aim.

During His whole life, though He was not gone out of the world, He was no more of the world than if He had been in heaven. When practice is in question, He says, “They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by thy truth.” Truth is not of the world; the world is a vast lie, which is demonstrated in the history we possess in the Bible. There we find the manifestation of sin in the natural man, and the manifestation of the life of God in the regenerate man by His word. “Sanctify them by thy truth.” “For their sakes I sanctify myself.” What does the Lord Jesus here for us? He sets Himself apart, He sanctifies Himself. It is not that He may be more holy, but He makes Himself the model-man. It is not a law requirement; but it is Christ Himself Who is life and power, whereof He presents the perfect result. It is Christ Who presents the fulfillment and the perfection; He is the vital spring of all; and in considering these things, the reflection of them is in me by faith, which reproduces them in the inner man and in the life.

We find something interesting on this subject in the first chapter of John's Gospel. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” The law was not this. It was not a light that condemned; but the Life was this light, and we have seen it, full of grace and truth-not of truth only but of grace; and of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. When we have received Christ, there is not a single grace which is not for me, and in me. There is no Christian who has not every grace that is in Jesus. Suppose even a state of failure; it is the strongest case: but this hinders not that we possess all in Him. Failure is a sad thing, but it changes not the position; for the Christian has not received a part only of Christ, but the whole of Christ.

On the one hand, it is encouragement: when I say to myself, “I must seek after such a grace,” the answer is, “Thou possessest it;” and on the other hand, “it humbles me,” for if I possess it, why is it not manifested? This always supposes that we have received the truth that God has made peace. We must always return to this, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” Is it by looking into myself that I shall find this sanctification? No: but in looking to Jesus, in Whom it is, Christ having been made unto us of God “righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

I see perfect humility in Christ, and take pleasure in it. When I look to Him by faith, my soul is in peace. His Spirit is always in me, and I am sanctified by faith in Him, according to that grace which makes me one with Him. Christ gives me all that; and His truth reveals to me that the

redemption is made, and I enjoy it, having obeyed the truth.

If anyone seeks after sanctification without being assured of his justification, and is consequently troubled about it, doubting whether he be a Christian, then I ask him: “What have you to do with sanctification?” You have not to think about this for the present. Assure yourself, first of all, that you are saved. Pagans, unbelievers, do not sanctify themselves. If you have faith, you are saved; then sanctify yourself in peace. The only question is to consider your sinful state. First, have you obeyed the truth? have you submitted to it? What does God speak to you about? He speaks of peace made. He says to you, that He has given His Son; He says to you, that He so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This is the truth to which you have to submit, and to receive above all; specially before you busy yourself about sanctification, which depends upon Him Who has given you eternal life.

Begin then by obeying the truth of God. This truth tells you of the righteousness of God, which is satisfied in Jesus, and which is yours; yea rather that you are in Christ. Then you will enjoy peace, and you will be sanctified in practice: for practical sanctification flows from the contemplation of Jesus. Here is what the apostle Paul says to us on this subject in 2 Cor. 3:18: “We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image, from-glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.”

You see that it is in beholding Jesus that we are transformed from glory to glory. Life, the principle of life, is there, and not in your anxieties; the development of the life of Jesus is progressively realized by looking to Him. It is faith which sanctifies, as also it justifies; it looks unto Jesus.

When Moses came down from the mountain from before God, he did not know that he also shone with glory; but those who saw him knew it. Moses had looked toward God; others saw the effect. Blessed be God that it is thus in a practical sense! As to practice then, the question is the sanctification of Christians, because they are saved, because they are sanctified to God as respects their persons (not those who are not yet so). It is not to exact (on God's part), but to communicate life. Now, this communication proceeds from Jesus, Who is its source. He communicates life, which is holiness in effect.

Oh! that God might always show us the grace to make us ever more and more feel that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass; but the word of Jehovah endureth forever! “And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” It is of this incorruptible seed we are born. What ought not our confidence to be in His word! J.N.D.

Courtesy of BibleTruthPublishers.com. Most likely this text has not been proofread. Any suggestions for spelling or punctuation corrections would be warmly received. Please email them to: BTPmail@bibletruthpublishers.com.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Path and Character of the Christian, The

1 Peter 1:1-7

The Spirit of God in the Epistles of Peter does not contemplate the Christian as united to Christ in heaven, but as running the course through the trials of this world toward heaven. Both things are true, and we need both. We are passing through the wilderness towards it, and at the same time we can say through the Spirit that we are one with Christ in heaven. It is in the former of these two ways that the Christian is looked at here. The inheritance is reserved for him, and then we have the application of the truth and grace of God to the condition we are in. It is exceedingly precious to know that, no matter what the trials may be or the difficulties, we are to expect that down here. It is merely a passage through the trials and difficulties (which are useful to us after all), and there is “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled” kept safe in heaven for us; and, as he adds then, we are kept for it by the power of God through faith. This is the position in which he sets the Christian. We are “begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). It is not exactly that we are risen with Him; but he looks at Christ as risen and gone in, and therefore that He has begotten us again to a living hope, and that “an inheritance incorruptible, and undelfiled, and that fadeth not away”—there it is, kept safe in heaven for us. As Paul said, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). All his happiness was safe in heaven, and the Lord could keep it safe for him; and then we have the blessed truth that we are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”

There is the character and the path of the Christian—both these things; the blessed faithfulness of the Lord in keeping it for us and us for it, and at the same time the character of the Christian as passing onward towards it, and a little of the trials of the way. We first see that here. You will find it in the striking contrast with the law and the position that Israel had under it. Indeed this runs through the whole—constantly in the New Testament.

The apostle says, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1:2). He rests them on this blessed truth—their being “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” Not merely a people chosen out as a nation, but it was that foreknowledge of God the Father through which they had this place: and then the Spirit of God comes and sanctifies them or sets them apart. We find, next, what they are set apart to practically, as a present thing; and that is, the obedience of Jesus Christ, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. These are just the two essential points of the life and path of Jesus, one running into the other; and, in this case, if I may so speak, the one completing the other. For us the great thought is the obedience of Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. “Jesus Christ” applies to the obedience as well as to the sprinkling of the blood; and both are in contrast with the law, whether as regards what the law required, or as regards the sacrifices of the law: the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ are in contrast with both.

As regards our obedience, it is essential for the true character of our path as Christians that we should lay hold of what this obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ was. Legal obedience in us is a different thing. We have got a will of our own: this was not true of Christ. He had a will in one sense, as a man, but He said, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). But we have got a will of our own; it may be checked and broken down. But if the law is applied to us, it is as stopping this will, but it finds it here, and such is our notion of obedience constantly. Take a child! there is a will of its own; but when the parents' will comes in, and the child yields instantly without a struggle, and either does what it is bid or ceases to do what it is forbidden, you say, This is an obedient child, and it is delightful to see such an obedient spirit. But Christ never obeyed

in that way. He never had a will to do things of His own will in which God had to stop Him. It was not the character of His obedience. It is needed with us, and we all know it, if we know anything of ourselves; but it was not the character of His obedience. He could not wish for the wrath of God in the judgment of sin, and He prayed that this cup might pass from Him. But the obedience of Christ had quite another character from legal obedience. His Father's will was His motive for doing everything: “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:9).

This is the true character of the obedience of Jesus Christ, and of ours as Christians. The other may be needed for us—the stopping us in our own will; but the true character of our obedience, and that which characterizes the whole life of the Christian is this—that the will of God, of our Father we can say, is with us, as it was with Christ, our reason, our motive, for doing a thing. When Satan came and said to Him, “Command that these stones be made bread,” He answers, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word... of God” (Matt. 4:4). His actual life as carried out in conduct flowed from the word of God, which was His motive for doing it; and if He had not that, He had no motive. You will find that it alters the whole tenor and spirit of a man's life. We have to be stopped in our own will, that is true, because we have the old nature in us; but it alters the whole spirit and tenor of a man's life. If I have no motive but my Father's will, how astonishingly it simplifies everything! If you never thought of doing a thing except because it was God's positive will that you should do it, how three-quarters of your life would at once disappear! This is the truth practically as to ourselves; yet we clearly see that such was the obedience of Christ.

This, too, is the principle of real piety, because it keeps us in constant dependence upon God, and constant reference to God. It is an amazing comfort for my soul to think that there is not a single thing all through my life in which God as my Father has not a positive will about me to direct me; that there is not a step from the moment I am born (though while we are unconverted we understand nothing about it) in which there is not a positive path or will of God to direct me here. I may forget it and fail, but we have in the word and will of God what keeps the soul, not in a constant struggle against one thing and another, but in the quiet consciousness that the grace of God has provided for everything—that I do not take a step but what His love has provided for. It keeps the soul in the sweet sense of divine favor and in dependence upon God, so that like David we can say, “Thy right hand upholdeth me” (Psa. 63:8). Moses does not say, Show me a way through the wilderness, but “Show me now thy way” (Ex. 33:13). A man's ways are what he is: God's way shows what He is.

The heart gets separated in its path more and more intelligently to God, and gets to understand what God is. If I know that God likes this and likes that along my path, it is because I know what He is; and besides its being the right path and causing us thus to grow in intelligent holiness of life, there is piety in it too. The constant reference of the heart affectionately to God is real piety, and we have to look for that. We have it perfectly in our Lord: “I know,” He says, “that thou hearest me always” (John 11:42). There is the confidence of power and reference to God with confiding affection. If I know that it is His path of goodness, His will that is the source of everything to me, there is the cultivation of piety with God, communion is uninterrupted, because the Spirit is not grieved. This is the obedience of Jesus Christ, to which we are set apart.

Then there is the other blessed truth. We are set apart through the Spirit for, and to the value and the sprinkling of, the blood of Jesus Christ. We know that when the priests were consecrated, the blood was put upon their right ear and upon the hand and foot, as a token that all the mind and work and walk should be according to the preciousness of this blood. In God's sight there is not a single spot upon us because of the blood that has been shed, and we have to walk according to the value of that blood before God. In the case of the leper the blood was to be sprinkled upon him seven times. He was set apart to God (in type) under the whole perfect efficacy of what the work and blood of Jesus are in God's sight.

Such was the true character of Jesus, whether throughout His life or in death. Even in dying His obedience was His life in that sense. And this is what characterizes the Christian. This introduces us at once into the unclouded apprehension of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in heaven for us. He has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I see His path down here; He has gone up there; death has no power over Him. And now through Him nothing stands in the way between me and the incorruptible inheritance. Death itself is totally overcome—so entirely, that if the Lord Jesus were to come soon enough, we should never die at all. In any case, we shall be changed and glorified; but I speak now as showing the way in which the power of death is set aside, so that instead of our belonging to death now, death belongs to us. “All things,” the apostle says, “are yours, whether ... life, or death, or things present, or things to come” (1 Cor. 3:21-22). Christ having come in and having gone down to the full depth of everything for us, He has gone through it all, and has left no trace of it in the resurrection. It is not merely that the blood has been sprinkled, but He has left no trace of anything. Therefore, though we may die, it is a gain if we do. It is to an inheritance incorruptible.

Then we come to a third point in the chapter, that is, the keeping through the way. There are difficulties and trials, and temptations: it is well we should look them in the face. Everybody is not passing smoothly through this life, though some may be more so than others. There are plenty of difficulties and trials, and we have to make straight paths for our feet. Still, we are “kept by the power of God,” but, mark this, it is “through faith.” We have to remember that, and this is why the trials come in. We can count upon the whole power of God, but it is exercised in sustaining our faith in God, as the Lord says to Peter, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:32). He does not take us out of trial; on the contrary, it is said, “Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” There may be this heaviness through trial; no such thing as doubting God's goodness, but the pressure, whether of sorrow or of that which might tend to make our feet slip, may produce heaviness of spirit. But after all it is “only for a season,” and “if need be.” Do not make yourselves uneasy: the One who holds the reins of the need—be is God. He does not take pleasure in afflicting. If there is the need for it, we go through the trial, but it is only for a moment. It is a process that is going on, and do you fancy that you do not want it? The great secret is to have entire confidence in the love of God, in the certainty that He is the doer of it—not looking at circumstances or at second causes, but seeing the hand of the Lord in it, that it is the trial of our faith, and that it is only on the way. When the day comes in which God has things His own way (He does His own work now, of course, but when He has things His own way), these very trials will be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. It is a process that He is carrying on now; it may be even the putting into the furnace to bring out the preciousness of the faith. It is not a question of being cleansed, but He does cause us to pass through all that which He sees needed for discipline. He uses the things that are in the world: the evil, the sin, the ill-will of others, all the things that are in the world, He uses simply as an instrument to break down and exercise our heart, so that our obedience may be simple, and that our faith may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus.

We see thus what a strengthening thing it is to wait for Christ. It is not spoken of here in the highest way, but it is the same general principle. I am waiting. I do not think much of an uncomfortable inn if I know that I am only there for two or three days on the way. I might perhaps wish it were better, but I do not trouble myself much about it, because I am not living there. I am not living in this world, I am dying here; if there is a bit of the old life, it has to be put to death. My life is hid with Christ in God. I am waiting for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ—waiting for God's Son from heaven, who is going to take us there, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away; and all that we pass

through here is merely this exercise of heart, which God sees to be needed to bring us there where the Lord Himself will have us with Himself, and that forever. And there is nothing more practically important for everyday work and service, than our waiting for God's Son from heaven. If you want to know what this world is, and if you want to get comfort for your soul, you will be waiting for God's Son from heaven. If I am belonging to the world, I cannot have comfort. The apostle says, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor. 15:19). And if we are getting into ease in it, we shall find His discipline. But the moment I am waiting for God's Son from heaven, my life is but the dealings of God with me with an object, and the object is that it should be to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Let me ask you all, What would be the effect of Christ's coming on your souls? Would it be this? Here I am passing through in heaviness because of manifold temptations, but He will come and take me out of it to Himself. Or would it surprise you? Would it find you with a number of things which you would have to leave behind? As to your heart, where is your heart with respect to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Young or old (there may be more to learn if we are young; but) would the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ find you with plenty of things that you would have to throw overboard? or with this feeling, Here is an end of all the exercises of heart; He for whom I have been waiting is coming to take me to Himself. There is the difference between Christians. If my whole life is founded upon this, that His will is the motive and spring of it, I shall find the exercises and the needed trial; but the coming of the Lord would be simply this to my soul—He is coming to take me away to Himself.

The Lord give us to be of a true heart, and to remember that, if we are Christians, Christ is our life, and Christ could not have a portion down here. Joy and peace and quietness of spirit go with it, and real happiness: only we must have faith. Abraham found in the mountain a place where he could intercede with God; while Lot was saying, “I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die” (Gen. 19:19). Unbelief always looks at the place of faith as the most awful thing possible—all darkness. The Lord give us to know what it is to live the life which we live “by the faith of the Son of God!”

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 7, 1 Peter 1:1-9: Sanctified, Purged, and Kept

Sanctification of the Spirit is spoken of before the " blood of sprinkling." Israel in Egypt were taken and set apart (which is the same as sanctification) for God while they were in Egypt. This sanctification is spoken of in Jude's Epistle as the Father's work-" sanctified1 by God the Father." In Hebrews Jesus is spoken of as sanctifying-" That he might sanctify the people with his own blood." Here, in Peter, it is spoken of as the Spirit's work. The setting apart to God is a different thing from having forgiveness, and it is the accomplishing of God's purposes, though not the purposes themselves. The prodigal in Luke 15 turned back in the far country, and then he was set apart for God. There was a total and utter change, but not all the effect yet. When he began to return, his face was turned towards his father; while, when he went away his back was towards him. So the soul set apart by God is livingly turned to God in power; it may be, as the prodigal, in rags and want; but there is the turning of heart, and, like Paul who was converted on his way to Damascus, there is a new creation. The will is broken. There will be conflict afterward as the result, but the whole man is changed. It is not that there are not difficulties to be overcome, but the object before the mind is different.

The soul is thus said to be " sanctified unto obedience." It is not a question of being better or worse, but it is turning to God; and if it is sanctification to obedience, it is also to the " blood of sprinkling." Now I have to learn the value of that blood. He has brought me under the sprinkling of blood, as Israel was by coming out of Egypt; and what was the sprinkling of blood then? It was the seal, while liable to the sentence of death, of the covenant which they were to obey; Ex. 24:6, 7, 8. If they obeyed, they stood, but if not, the penalty of death was their portion. Is it so with us? No. We have disobeyed, but He (Jesus) has suffered for us, and we are sealed under the covenant brought in by Him for the disobedient. We are brought under the blood of sprinkling, whatever its efficacy is. Nothing has power against this title. Does my guilt rise up? or Satan come against me? All is gone, because of the value of His blood. I have, as the first thing, redemption through His blood, perfect deliverance from all that was for my condemnation. I am, in my whole condition as a sinner, redeemed out of it forever. The covenants, we know, were sealed with blood. Abraham and Jeremiah killed a calf, and the blood was a witness to the covenant. This covenant differs from former ones, inasmuch as it is not binding as to guilt if we fall; on the contrary, it discharges us from guilt by the blood that was shed for it.

Another kind of purging is that of cleansing from defilement, so that by the blood we are not only acquitted of guilt, but made absolutely clean. " The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Another effect is, that it brings us into wonderful nearness of thought with God. The blood has been already spilled. Christ has done it and I see in it that He has taken the deepest interest in my soul, and given Himself that I might be delivered. Was He all alone in it? As regards man, He was; but God the Father had to do with it. He spared not His own Son, and I am reconciled to God by His death. That is more than being merely turned, in will, to God. Where is my assurance of its efficacy? God Himself having done it, who " hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," we have, then, a dying Savior, but a living hope. We have life in Him, power in Him, through the Holy Ghost. The Second Adam, the Quickener, is He who went into death for our sins, but who came out of death, and is risen in the power of an endless life. This life then makes us pilgrims and strangers down here, and there is not a single object here for the Christian but to please God. With Jesus it was ever His delight to do His Father's will. " My meat is to do the will of him that sent me," etc. This puts the heart to the test. Do you say what harm is there in this or that? Your flesh is after it, and that is the harm! Are you to live after the flesh? If the old man is working in you, that is the harm. We are " begotten unto a living hope," etc., " to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away "-just the contrast of everything here. If the divine nature is in us, it has divine tastes suited to that to which it belongs. My heart's affections have found a home, where God has found His rest, in Christ.

Besides, it is " reserved in heaven." No moth or rust can corrupt th re, neither thief break through to steal. It is preserved by God, and " I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have," etc. It is safe. Another thing is, we must wait for it; but we know it is well kept, if God keeps it. " Reserved... for you who are kept." The inheritance is kept for you in heaven, and you are kept on earth waiting for it. He will keep you for the inheritance and the inheritance for you. It is then not a question of my perseverance, but of God's faithfulness. Do any say, Oh! I shall never hold on to the end? But God has said, " They shall never perish." Ah! but it may be said, there is all the power of Satan! Again, " None shall pluck them out of my Father's hand." " I and my Father are one." There is one common counsel between them. " Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed."

There is not something to be done, something not yet accomplished. No! it is done, and that is what could not be said when Christ was upon earth. But now He has passed through death, risen out of it, ascended to the right hand of God, where He is waiting until " his enemies be made his footstool." It is ready to be revealed, and is only delayed while souls are being brought in for the completion of His body. That is matter of joy to wait for; though, in one sense, we should desire that it were already completed, that glory may be revealed. But there is rest to the heart in the consciousness that the salvation is ready, and that we are kept through faith. There is blessing in that, through exercise, because the flesh never has faith; and if a single worldly or careless thought comes in, faith is not in exercise, and the image of Jesus is dimmed in us. We do not live, except when and so far as faith is in exercise; for all that is of the flesh perishes. " He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Another blessed thing for us is, that everything becomes matter of exercise. We must never do a thing we have not faith for.

This makes us feel the need of having the affections " set on heavenly things." " Keep yourselves in the love of God." " Wherein ye greatly rejoice," etc. Are you greatly rejoicing in this salvation? " It shall be in you a well of living water " was the word. There are none so subject to inertia as the Christian who is halting between two opinions. If worldliness, love of ease, self in this or that form come in, who are so weak and wretched? We cannot find happiness in the world and be rejoicing in heavenly things If the soul is occupied with this great salvation, it will rejoice therein. There will be heaviness through manifold temptations, but the valley of Baca will become a well, the rain filling the pools.

We now have the " earnest of the inheritance "; not the earnest of God's love, for this is fully our portion now, and not merely the earnest of it. The " trial of faith will be found unto praise," etc., at the appearing of Jesus Christ. He has entered within and has His crown; and now at the thought of that, we can rejoice with " joy unspeakable and full of glory." It is " unspeakable " because it is Himself, and " full of glory " because He is in the glory: and lest the fire which tries should cast the least cloud over the hope and the joy, it is said, " receiving the end of your faith." I have received the salvation of my soul, and that is really the end of my faith, though I may have to go through trial to purge away the dross.

Is your face turned upward to God, and not as the beast's which goeth downward? or is your back towards God, as Adam turned when he had sinned and was ashamed?

The Spirit of God in the Epistles of Peter does not contemplate the Christian as united to Christ in heaven, but as running the course through the trials of this world toward heaven. Both things are true, and we need both. We are running through the wilderness towards it, and at the same time we can say through the Spirit that we are one with Christ in heaven. It is in the former of these two ways that the Christian is looked at here. The inheritance is reserved for him, and then we get the application of the truth and grace of God to the condition we are in. It is exceedingly precious to know that, no matter what the trials may be or the difficulties, we are to expect that down here. It is merely a passage through the trials and difficulties (which are useful to us after all), and there is " an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled," kept safe in heaven for us; and, as he adds then, we kept for it by the power of God through faith. That is the position in which he sets the Christian. We are " begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." It is not exactly that we are risen with Him, but he looks at Christ as risen and gone in, and therefore that He has begotten us again to a lively hope and that hope " an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." There it is, kept safe in heaven for us. As Paul said, " I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." All his happiness was safe in heaven, and the Lord could keep it safe for him; and then we get the blessed truth that we are " kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

We get the character and path of the Christian-both these things. The blessed faithfulness of the Lord in keeping it for us and us for it, and at the same time the character of the Christian as passing onward toward it, and a little of the trials of the way. We first see that here. You will find it in the striking contrast with the law and the position that Israel had under it. Indeed this runs through tl whole-constantly in the New Testament. He says, " Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." He settles them on this blessed truth-their being elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Not merely a people chosen out as a nation, but it was that foreknowledge of God the Father through which they had this place: and then the Spirit of God comes and sanctifies or sets them apart. We get then what they are set apart to practically, as a present thing, and that is, the obedience of Jesus Christ, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. These are just the two essential points of the life and path of Jesus, one running into the other: and, in this case, if I may so speak, the one completing the other. For us the great thought is the obedience of Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ applies to the obedience as well as to the sprinkling of the blood, and both are in contrast with the law, whether as regards what the law required, or as regards the sacrifices of the law-the obedience and sacrifice • of Jesus Christ are in contrast with both.

As regards our obedience it is essential for the true character of our path as Christians that we should get hold of what this obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ was. Legal obedience in us is a different thing. We have got a will of our own; that was not true of Christ. He had a will in one sense, as a man, but He said, " Not my will, but thine, be done." But we have got a will of our own; it may be checked and broken down. But if the law is applied to us, it is as stopping this will, but finding it here, and our notion of obedience constantly is that. Take a child-there is a will of its own: but when the parents' will comes in and the child yields instantly without a struggle, and either does what it is bid or ceases to do what it is forbidden, you say this is an obedient child, and it is delightful to see such an obedient spirit. But Christ never obeyed in that way. He never had a will to do things of His own will in which God had to stop Him-it was not the character of His obedience. It is needed with us, and we all know it, if we know anything of ourselves; but it was not the character of His obedience. He could not wish for the wrath of God in the judgment of sin, and He prayed that that cup might pass from Him. But the obedience of Christ had quite another character from legal obedience. His Father's will was His motive for doing everything: " Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God."

That is the true character of the obedience of Jesus Christ, and of ours as Christians. The other may be needed for us- the stopping us in our own will; but the true character of our obedience, and that which characterizes the whole life of the Christian is this-that the will of God, of our Father we can say, is with us, as it was with Christ, our reason, our motive, for doing a thing. When Satan came and said to Him, " Command that these stones be made bread," He answers, " Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." His actual life as carried out in conduct flows from the word of God which is His motive for doing it; and if He has not that, He has no motive. You will find that it alters the whole tenor and spirit of a man's life. We have to be stopped in our own will, that is true, because we have the old nature in us; but it alters the whole spirit and tenor of a man's life. If I have no motive but my Father's will, how astonishingly it simplifies everything! If you never thought of doing a thing except because it was God's positive will that you should do it, how three-quarters of your life would at once disappear! This is the truth practically as to ourselves; yet we clearly see that such was the obedience of Christ.

This, too, is the principle of real piety, because it keeps us in constant dependence upon God, and in constant reference to God. It is an amazing comfort for my soul to think that there is not a single thing all through my life in which God as my Father has not a positive will about me to direct me; that there is not a step from the moment I am born (though while we are unconverted we understand nothing about it), in which there is not a positive path or will of God to direct me here. I may forget it and fail, but we have in that word and will of God what keeps the soul, not in a constant struggle against one thing and another, but in the quiet consciousness that divine favor has provided for everything-that I do not take a step but what divine favor has provided for. It keeps the soul in the sweet sense of divine favor and in dependence upon God, so that like David we can say, " Thy right hand upholdeth me." Moses does not say, Show me a way through the wilderness, but, " Show me now thy way." A man's ways are what he is: God's way shows what He is.

The heart gets separated in its path more and more intelligently to God, and gets to understand what God is. If I know that God likes this and likes that along my path, it is because I know what He is; and besides its being the right path and causing us thus to grow in intelligent holiness of life, there is piety in it too. The constant reference of the heart affectionately to God is real piety, and we have to look for that. We have it perfectly in our Lord; " I know," He says, " that thou hearest me always." There is the confidence of power and reference to God with confiding affection. If I know that it is His path of goodness, His will that is the source of everything to me, there is the cultivation of piety with God, communion is uninterrupted, because the Spirit is not grieved. This is the obedience of Jesus Christ, to which we are set apart.

Then there is the other blessed truth. We are set apart through the Spirit for, and to the value and the sprinkling of, the blood of Jesus Christ. We know that, when the priests were consecrated, the blood was put upon their right ear and upon the hand and foot, as a token that all the mind and work and walk should be according to the preciousness of this blood. In God's sight there is not a single spot upon us because of the blood that has been shed, and we have to walk according to the value of that blood before God. In the case of the leper the blood was to be sprinkled upon him seven times. He was set apart to God (in type) under the whole, perfect efficacy of what the work and blood of Jesus are in God's sight.

Such was the double character of Jesus, whether throughout His life or in death. Even in dying His obedience was His life in that sense. And that is what characterizes the Christian. This introduces us at once into the unclouded apprehension of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in heaven for us. He has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I see His path down here-He has gone up there-death has no power over Him. And now through Him nothing stands in the way between me and the incorruptible inheritance. Death itself is totally overcome-so entirely, that if the Lord Jesus were to come soon enough, we should never die at all. In any case, we shall be changed and glorified; but I speak now as showing the way in which the power of death is set aside, so that, instead of our belonging to death now, death belongs to us. All things, the apostle says, are yours, " Whether life or death, or things present or things to come." Christ having come in and having gone down to the full depth of everything for us, He has gone through it all and has left no trace of it in the resurrection. It is not merely that the blood has been sprinkled, but He has left no trace of anything. Therefore, though we may die, it is gain if we do. It is to an inheritance incorruptible.

Then we come to a third point in the chapter, that is, the being kept through the way. There are difficulties, and trials, and temptations-it is well we should look them in the face. Everybody is not passing smoothly through this life, though some may be more so than others. There are plenty of difficulties and trials, and we have to make straight paths for our feet. Still, we are " kept by the power of God," but, mark this, it is " through faith." We have to remember that, and this is why the trials come in. We can count upon the whole power of God, but it is exercised in sustaining our faith in God, as the Lord says to Peter, " I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." He does not take us out of trial; on the contrary, it is said, " Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." There may be this heaviness through trial; no such thing as doubting God's goodness, but the pressure, whether of sorrow or of that which might tend to make our feet slip, may produce heaviness of spirit. But after all it is " only for a season," and " if need be." Do not make yourselves uneasy: the One who holds the reins of the need-be is God. He does not take pleasure in afflicting. If there is the need for it, we go through the trial, but it is only for a moment. It is a process that is going on, and do you fancy that you do not want it?

The great secret is to have entire confidence in the love of God, in the certainty that He is the doer of all-not looking at circumstances or at second causes, but seeing the hand of the Lord in all, that it is the trial of our faith, and that it is only on the way. When the day comes when God has things His own way (He does His own work now, of course, but when He has things His own way), these very trials will be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. It is a process that He is carrying on now, it may be even the putting into the furnace to bring out the preciousness of the faith. It is not a question of being cleansed, but He does cause us to pass through all that which He sees needed for discipline. He uses the things that are in the world. The evil, the sin, the ill-will of others, all the things that are in the world, He uses simply as an instrument to break down and exercise our heart, so that our obedience may be simple, and that our faith may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus.

We see thus what a strengthening thing is the waiting for Christ. It is not spoken of here in the highest way, but it is the same general principle. I am waiting. I do not think much of an uncomfortable inn if I know that I am only there for two or three days on the way. I might perhaps wish it were better, but I do not trouble myself much about it, because I am not living there. I am not living in this world, I am dying here; if there is a bit of the old life, it has to be put to death. My life is hid with Christ in God. I am waiting• for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ-waiting for God's Son from heaven, who is going to take us there, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away; and all that we pass through here is merely this exercise of heart, which God sees to be needed to bring us there where the Lord Himself will have us with Himself and that forever. And there is nothing more practically important for every-day work and service, than our waiting for God's Son from heaven. If you want to know what this world is, and if you want to get comfort for your soul, you will be waiting for God's Son from heaven. If I am belonging to the world, I cannot have comfort. The apostle says, " If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." And if we are getting into ease in it, we shall find His discipline. But the moment I am waiting for God's Son from heaven, my life is but the dealings of God with me with an object, and that object that it should be to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Let me ask you all to search and see what would be the effect of Christ's coming on your souls? Would it be this? Here I am passing through in heaviness because of manifold temptations, but He will come and take me out of it to Himself? Or would it surprise you? Would it find you with a number of things which you would have to leave behind? As to your heart, where is your heart with respect to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Young or old (there may be more to learn if we are young; but), would the coming of the Lord Jesus find you with plenty of things that you would have to throw overboard? or with this feeling, Here is an end of all the exercise of heart? He for whom I have been waiting is

coming to take me to Himself. There is the difference between Christians. If my whole life is founded upon this, that His will is the motive and spring of it, I shall find the exercises and the needed trial; but the coming of the Lord would be simply this to my soul-He is coming to take me away to Himself.

The Lord give us to be of a true heart, and to remember that if we are Christians, Christ is our life, and Christ could not have a portion down here. Joy and peace and quietness of spirit go with it, and real happiness; only we must have faith. Abraham found in the mountain a place where he could intercede with God, while Lot was saying, " I cannot escape to the mountain lest some evil take me and I die." Unbelief always looks at the place of faith as the most awful thing possible- all darkness. The Lord give us to know what it is to live the life which we live " by the faith of the Son of God! "

Bible Treasury: Volume N11, Sanctification Without Which There Is No Christianity: Part 1

There is something very sweet in the certainty with which the apostle Peter presents to us the truths contained in this epistle. There is neither hesitation nor uncertainty. The word speaks of things received, of a certainty for those to whom it is addressed. Their faith was tried, but the thing was certain. The apostle speaks here of an inexhaustible fund of truths which belonged to him and it is not as one groping in the dark that he speaks of it. These things are too important to be left in doubt; they deserve all our attention; our hearts need it. It is not the unregenerate heart that loves the Lord Jesus; one may be brave and all that, and think that, if one's conduct is good, the result in heaven will be accordingly, but therein is no love for the Lord Jesus. And this is the badge of the Christian.

The apostle says, in the eighth verse: “Whom [Christ] not having seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Now, there is no such thing as this without the new birth, which is a new life, which has an object that preoccupies it. It is an entirely new life, which has interests, affections, quite a new world; and without that there is no Christian, because there is not Christ.

We will now see the two principles laid down in this chapter, and in the work here attributed to the Holy Spirit.

God finds the soul in a certain position, in certain relations, and removes it to place it in quite a new state; and this separation is according to the power of the resurrection of Christ.

The apostle speaks to the Jews of the dispersion (that is, to those of whom it is spoken in John 7:35, those dispersed among the Greeks) in these words: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” etc. He addressed himself to the dispersed, to the Jews converted to Christianity, to those who were elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through “sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace,” etc. He says this because he is speaking of another election than that of the Jewish people. The Jewish nation was elected after another manner. Here he writes, as we said, to Jews who had believed on the Lord Jesus; so that sanctification in them was no sanctification of a nation by outward means, but by the Holy Spirit, who separated the souls from among the Jews to belong to God, and to form a part of the present dispensation of grace. It was not with them as with the ancient Jews, who were separated from the Egyptians by the Red Sea; they were separated by the sanctification effected by the Holy Spirit. Observe particularly this word “sanctification": the first idea is separation for God, not only from evil, but a setting part for God, who sanctifies.

This is what God does in those whom He calls. God finds souls lying in evil. John on this subject says, in his First Epistle, chap. 5: 19: “We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;” and it is very precious to have things clearly stated. “We are of God;” it is not merely that we should conduct ourselves aright; doubtless, that is well; but the great difference is, that we are of God, and that “the whole world lieth in wickedness.” Does that mean that we are always as we should be? No; but we are of God. One is not all one would desire to be; that will come to pass only in heaven; for it is only there that God will make us conformed to the image of His beloved Son.

But this is what God has done: He has separated us to Himself, as a man who hews stones out of a quarry. The stone is hewn out of the quarry, and set apart, destined to be cut and fashioned, in order to be placed in the appointed building. And God detaches a soul from the quarry of this world, to separate it for Himself. I say not but that there is much to do, for a rough stone cut out of the quarry requires often to have considerable labor expended upon it before it is placed in the building for which it is destined. Even so God separates, prepares, and fashions this soul, to introduce it into His spiritual building. There are many useless matters to take off, but God acts every day in His grace; howsoever, this soul is sanctified, set apart for God, from the moment it is taken out of the quarry of this world.

The apostle speaks here of sanctification before he mentions obedience and the blood of Jesus Christ. We are sanctified for these two things (ver. 2.); “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ.” The stone is entirely His, and adapted to His purpose. Although He has yet to work upon it, the question is not of what He does each day, but generally of the appropriation to the end God has proposed to Himself. It is the Holy Spirit who acts in the soul, and appropriates it to the end God has proposed to Himself. It is the Holy Spirit who acts in the soul, and appropriates it to Himself. It may previously have been very honorable or very wicked in its conduct; that is all the same; only it will be more grateful, if it feels itself more evil; but as to its former condition that matters little, it belongs now to God.

To what does God destine this soul? To obedience. Up to this period it has done little but its own will; it has followed its own way, no matter what appearances may have been, more or less good, more or less bad; it is all one. The character may have been weak, or more or less fiery, until, as with Paul, the Lord arrested him on his road: now behold this soul, hitherto filled with its own will, set apart for obedience.

Paul had been very learned in what concerned the religion of his fathers; he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He honestly believed that he had done the will of God, but there was nothing of the kind; he followed his own will, according to the direction impressed by the tradition of his fathers. Never, till the moment that Jesus stopped him on the way to Damascus, had he said, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Thus, whatever may have been the conduct of a soul before this setting apart, nothing of all that has made it do the will of God. But the aim of the life of a soul sanctified, set apart, is to do the will of God. It may fail, but that is its aim. Jesus said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” He

had no need of sanctification in one sense, because He was holy; but the aim of His whole life was obedience. Here I am “to do thy will, O God.” He took the form of a servant, became in the likeness of men, and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He existed only for God; the principle of His life was obedience. He was come to do nothing but His Father's will.

As soon as a soul is sanctified, it is sanctified unto obedience, and that is manifested by the spirit of dependence which has done with its own will. It says: “What must I do?” It may fail, through weakness, in many respects, but that is its aim.

As to the second thing, we are sanctified to enjoy the sprinkling of blood; first to obedience, then to enjoy the sprinkling of blood. The soul, thus placed under the influence of the blood of Christ, is thereby completely cleansed. The blood of the Son of God cleanses us from all sin; it is by the efficacy of His blood that we are separated from this world.

The question here is not of the blood of bulls and goats, which could not sanctify the conscience of him who did the service, but it is the blood of Christ, who by the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. It is this blood which purifies the conscience.

The Jews, under the law, said indeed, trusting to their own strength, We will do all that Thou hast spoken. They undertook to do everything, when it was prescribed to them as a condition. But here it is much more; it is the Spirit that makes them say, “What wilt thou have me to do?” It is submission; it is the principle of obedience, really produced in the heart: ‘I know not what Thou wilt, but here am I to do Thy will.' It is obedience without reserve. There is no question here of rules that man cannot accomplish, but of the whole will changed, no more to do one's own will, but to do God's will.

The book of the law was sprinkled, as well as the people; but that gave its efficacy to the requisitions of the law, while the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus gives to the changed heart the purification and the peace which belong to those who are placed under the efficacy of His blood. We are placed there as the Jews were under the blood of the goat of atonement; not, however, for a year only, but forever.

As to a soul, then, that the Holy Spirit has hewn out of the quarry of this world, being honest, amiable, kept by the good providence of God, but withal doing its own will—well, God has found it there in the world and of the world, notwithstanding all its good qualities, and He has to put His love in its heart, in order that it may, without hesitation, care only about the will of God to do it. But, thus separated, it is under the blood of sprinkling, it is cleansed from all its sin.

That is the first principle; the separation wrought by God Himself, who places us outside of this world, or rather of the things of this world, and makes us Christians; without this there is no Christianity.

God acts effectually. He does nothing by halves; and that is all His work. God does not deceive Himself. He must have realities. He does not deceive Himself as we deceive ourselves, and as we try to deceive others, although we deceive others less than we deceive ourselves.

I would point out to you the meaning of the word “sanctification": it is rarely used in the Scriptures in the sense in which we generally use it; that is to say, in the progressive sense. It is only three times employed in this sense. It is said: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness (sanctification), without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). I quote these two passages to show that I do not set aside this sense of the word; but it more particularly designates an act of separation, a setting apart for God. If we have not laid hold of this meaning, there will be an entire mistake as to what sanctification is. In the two above-quoted passages, the work has an every-day application. In the sense in which it is used by the apostle in the beginning of this Epistle, it is perfectly in the sense of taking a stone out of the quarry of this world to fashion it for God.

Sanctification is attributed to the Father in more than one place in the Bible. See Hebrews 10:10. Now, it is by this will that we are sanctified; by the offering made once of the body of Jesus Christ. It is by this will of God that we are sanctified.

1. There is the first thought, the will of God, which is, to set us apart (to sanctify us).

2. And the means, -it is the offering of Christ.

And it is always (with scarcely more than one exception, which we have already quoted) in this manner that it is spoken of in the Hebrews. Sanctification is attributed to God the Father in another passage also—Jude 1.

The Father having willed to have children for Himself, the blood of Jesus does the work, and the Holy Spirit comes to accomplish the counsels of the Father, and to give them efficacy by producing the practical effect in the heart. The soul separated from the world is sanctified by that very fact. There is the old trunk which pushes forth its shoots, but God acts in pruning; and His acting, which takes place by the Holy Spirit, works the daily practical sanctification. The heart is each day more and more set apart. It is not like a vase, because in man it is the heart which is set apart. Thus, when life is communicated, and thereby the man is sanctified, there is a daily work of sanctification which applies to the affections, to the habits, to the walk, etc.

Let us see how God does this—

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (ver. 3).

Such is the way He does it. God sets us apart for Himself. It is not by modifying what was bad in us, but by creating us anew; by making afresh a new creature, for the old man cannot be made subject to the law. He gives a new life.

If one be not thus born anew, one belongs yet to the world, which is under condemnation; but when God acts, it is altogether another thing. Being born in Adam, we have need to be born by Christ. When the heart is visited by the Holy Spirit, one is begotten again by a life which is not of this world, which urges it to another end, Christ. It is not by precepts addressed to the old man; it is by another life. The precepts follow afterward; that is to say, that this life of which we speak, which is the new birth, belongs not to this world, neither in its source, nor in its aim; it cannot have a single thing in common with the old life. This life is found here below in the body; we eat, work, etc., as before; but that is not what Christ came for. Christ came to make us comprehend quite another thing from the life here below, into which He entered. And that is the rule of the Christian's conduct. He has for object, for aim, and for joy what Christ has for object, aim, and joy; his affections are heavenly, as

those of Christ.

If the life of Christ is in me, the life and the Spirit of Christ in me cannot find joy in that wherein Christ finds not His joy.

The Spirit of Christ in me cannot be a different spirit than it was in Him; and it is evident that he who is separated from this world for God cannot find pleasure in the life of sin of this world, and prefer it to that of heaven.

We know well that the Christian often fails in this rule; but this hinders not that there is nothing in common between the life of heaven and that of the world. It is not a question of prohibitions as to using this or that, but of having altogether other tastes, desires, and joys; and it is on that account people imagine that Christians are sad, as if they were absorbed by only one thought.

It is that our joys are altogether different from those of the world; the world knows not our joys.

No unrenewed person can comprehend what renders the Christian happy; that is to say, that his tastes are not for the things of this world.

His thoughts rise higher. This is the joy of the Christian, that Christ is entered into heaven, and has Himself destroyed all that could have hindered us from entering there.

Death, Satan, and the wicked spirits, have been conquered by Christ, and the resurrection has annihilated all that was between Him and the glory. Christ placed Himself in our position.

He underwent the consequences of it. He has conquered the world and Satan. It is written, “Resist devil, and he will flee from you:” if he is already conquered, we have not to conquer him, but to resist him. When we resist him, he knows he has met Christ, his conqueror. The flesh does not resist him. Jesus gives us a lively hope by His resurrection from the dead; in this way, and being in Him, we are on a foundation which cannot fail.

Christ has already shown that He has won the victory; and what grace is here presented to us Even that of obtaining the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith, etc. (vers. 4, 5).

This treasure is in heaven. I have nothing to, fear, it is in perfect safety. But this is what I fear as to myself, temptations, all sorts of difficulties, for I am not in heaven. That is true; but what gives every security, is not that we are not tried or tempted, but that in the trial here below, we are kept, as the inheritance is kept in heaven for us.

Here is the position of the Christian, set apart by the resurrection of Christ, and begotten again., It is that, in waiting for the glory, we are kept by the power of God, through faith, separated from the world by the power and communication of the life of Him who has won the victory over all that could have hindered us from having a part in it.

And why are these trials sent to us? It is God who works the soil, in order that all the affections, of the heart, thus sifted, may be purified and exercised, and perfectly in harmony with the glory of heaven, and with the objects which are set before us.

Is it for naught that gold is put in the furnace, or because it is not gold? No; it is to purify it.

God, by trials, takes out of our hearts that which is impure, in order that when the glory arrives we may enjoy it.

Let us see a little what the apostle says on this subject: “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (vers. 6, 7). Whereabouts are we, then, when the process of sanctification is carried on? It is that although we have not seen Jesus, we love Him; and although now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

It is there the heart finds itself; and whatever be the circumstances of the present life, Christ is present in the midst of our temptations, and the heart always finds itself close to Jesus, the source of its happiness; and while saying that His love is boundless, passes all knowledge, we can say also that we have the intelligence of it.

The magnet always turns towards the pole; the needle always trembles a little when the storm and tempest roar, but its direction changes not; the needle of the Christian heart points always towards Christ. A heart which understands, which loves Jesus, which knows where Jesus has passed before it, looks at Him to sustain it through its difficulties; and however rugged and difficult the way, it is precious to us, because we find there the trace of the steps of Jesus (He has passed there), and specially because this road conducts us, through difficulties, to the glory in which He is. Seeing, says the apostle, that if need be, it is “that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

It is not only that we have been begotten again, but that we receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. The end of my faith is to see Christ, and the glory that He has gained for me. He says here, the salvation of the soul, because the question is not of a temporal deliverance, as in the case of the ancient Jews. I see now this glory through a veil, but I long to see myself there. And being now in the trial, I look to Him who is in the glory, and who secures it to me. The gold will be completely purified; but the gold is there: as to me, as to my eternal life, it is the same thing as if I were in the glory. Salvation and glory are not the less certain, though I am in the trial, than if I were already in the rest. And that is practical sanctification; habits, affections, and a walk formed after the life and calling one has received from God.

[J. N. D.]

(To be continued)

Bible Treasury: Volume N11, Sanctification Without Which There Is No Christianity: Part 2

If I engage a servant, I require him to be clean, if I am so myself. God says: “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” And as it is with the servant I desire to introduce into my house, so is it with us. God requires that we should be suited to the state of His house; He will have a practical sanctification in His servants. Moreover the aim of the apostle is, that our faith be firm and constant. He gives us, in the twenty-first verse, full security, in saying to us, “that your faith and hope might be in God,” not merely in that which justifies us before a just-judging God. It is a God who is for us, who willed to help us, and who introduced us into His family, setting us apart for obedience, and to share in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. He has loved us with an eternal love. He has accomplished all that concerns us. He keeps us by His power through faith, in order to introduce us to glory.

He places us in trial; He makes us pass through the furnace, because He will wholly purify us. It is Himself who has justified us; who shall condemn us? It is Christ who has died, or rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, and who also maketh intercession for us; who shall separate us from His love (Romans 8:33)? Our faith and our love being in God, what have we to fear? We have, in Zechariah (chap. 3.) a very encouraging example. The Lord caused Zechariah to see Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said to Satan: The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! the Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this the brand that I have plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments (the sin, the corruption of man), and he stood before the angel. And the angel said, Take away the filthy garments from him. And he said to him, Behold, I have made thine iniquity to pass from thee, and have clothed thee with new garments (the righteousness of God applied). Satan accuses the children of God; but when God justifies, who can condemn? Would you then that God were not content with His work, which He hath wrought for Himself? And it is in order that we be holy and unblameable in love before Him.

Can you say, “He has sanctified me,” in the sense that He has given you Jesus for the object of your faith? If it be thus, He has placed you under the sprinkling of His precious blood, in order that you may be a Christian, and happy in obedience. You may say now, He is the object of my desires, of my hope. You may not yet have understood all that Christ is for you, and you may have much to do in practice; but the important thing is to understand that it is God who has done all, and has placed you under the efficacy of that resurrection life, in order that you may be happy and joyful in His love.

It is remarkable to what a point God makes all things new in us; it is because He must destroy our thoughts, in order that we may have peace.

There is nothing morally in common between the first and the Second man; the first sinned and drew the whole human race in his fall; the last Adam is the source of life and power. That applies to every truth of Christianity, and to all that is in this world. There are but these two men. Nicodemus is struck with the wisdom of Jesus, and with the power manifested in His miracles; but the Lord stops him, and cuts the matter short with him, by saying, “Ye must be born again.” He was not in a condition to be instructed. He did not understand the things of God; for to do so a man must be born again; in short, he had not life. I do not say that he could not arrive at it; because, further on, we see him paying honor to Jesus, in bringing the necessary spices to embalm Him.

I have been led to this thought, because the end of this chapter recalled to me the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. I do not speak of the accomplishment of the prophecy which will take place at a later day for the Jews, but of a grand principle. This chapter begins with these words: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.”

Before God begins, He must cause it to be understood that all flesh is as grass.

If God will comfort His people, what saith the Lord? “All flesh is grass.” It must begin there. The grass is withered, because the spirit of the Lord hath blown upon it. But the word of God endureth forever. Therein was the foundation of hope; had it been possible for any one to have obtained anything, it would have been the Jews, who had all; but they were nothing more than the grass of the fields, than the grass that withereth. When God will comfort man who has failed in the responsibility which attaches to him, it is thus He begins, “All flesh is grass,” and it is for this reason that there is such a confusion in the heart of the newly-converted man, and even of the Christian, if he does not pay attention to it; namely, that the word comes to tell him the grass is withered, the flesh is incapable of producing any good, and that he does not yet rest on this, that the word of the Lord endureth forever, and that the blessing consequently cannot fail to His own. Till we cease in our efforts to get good from the flesh, and till we are assured that the word of the Lord endureth forever, we shall be always troubled and weak before the assaults of the enemy.

The people had trampled on the ordinances, broken the law, crucified the Messiah, done all possible evil. Has the word of God changed? In nowise. God alters nothing in His election, nor in His promises. Paul asks, Has God rejected His people? God forbid. Peter addresses himself to the people; there is no more of them apparently; the grass is withered, but there is the word of God, and He can say to them, You are now a people; you have obtained mercy. Now, we are going to see that this word becomes the instrument of blessing and of practical sanctification. God never sanctifies what withers like grass. He introduces, on the contrary, what is most enduring and most excellent of man into heaven.

The word withers man, the breath of the Lord has passed over. Introduce man's glory into heaven, it is dreadful! This work is painful, because of the often prolonged wrestlings of the pride and self-will of the flesh; and God does not begin His work by modifying what already exists. Neither can He, because He will destroy it. He can neither require nor produce fruits before the tree be planted. But He begins by communicating a new life, and detaches the creature from the things to which its flesh is attached; and the Holy Spirit communicates to it the things of the world to come, and the instrument He employs is the word, that word whereof it is said, It abideth forever. The word, which was of promise for the nation, becomes an instrument of life for our souls. We are begotten by the word of truth, which judges also as a two-edged sword all that is not of this new life. Let us examine the difference between our justification and our sanctification. Justification is something, not in ourselves, but a position in which God has placed us before Himself; and those to whom it is applied by God, being the children who possess this righteousness, those of the last Adam, possess all that He has and all that He loves. He who has this righteousness of God is born of God and possesses all that belongs to his Father, who assimilates the rights of His children to those of His Son, who is Heir of all things. So

soon as I am a child of the last Adam, I am in the blessing and righteousness in which Christ Himself is found; and just as I have inherited from the first Adam all the consequences and results of his fall, even so, being born of the last Adam, I inherit all that He has acquired, just as I had inherited from the former.

If it be thus, it is evident that I have part in the glory of Christ; and if life be not there, it is naught. God presents His love to us. He reveals it to us, and His word abides eternally. And here is the way God begins with the soul. He presents this truth to us, ever fresh before Himself; it is not a result produced in us that He makes us see; on the contrary, it is that man, such as he is, has no part in this righteousness, because the flesh, which is as grass, cannot be in relation with God. He reveals and imparts to us a justification He has accomplished.

God cannot give precepts of sanctification to such as have no justification. The effects of the life of Christ are to convince of sin, and also to cause fruit-bearing. When the gospel was presented at the beginning, it was the Gentiles who, till then, had had no part in the promises of God. There was no need to speak to them of sanctification. But now that all the world calls itself Christian, I must see whether I be really a Christian; but this idea is not found at all in the Bible. The state of sin was spoken of, and the gospel declared; now men say, “Am I really a Christian?” which thing was not so then. A man takes his practical life to see whereabouts he is, believing that the question is of sanctification, when it is only of justification. This question was not necessary at the commencement; now, people look at the fruits to see if they have life, and confound with sanctification that which is only a conviction of sin previous to justification by faith and peace with God. Until a soul has consented to say, “Jesus is all, and I have nothing;” till then, I say, there is nothing in this soul which relates to Christian sanctification. These things must be set right before the soul can have peace.

At the preaching of Peter, three thousand persons were made happy; they were not in doubt; from the moment a man embraced the gospel, he was a Christian, he was saved.

The progress of practical sanctification must not be confounded with justification, because practical sanctification is wrought in a saved soul that has eternal life. It is an entirely new thing, of which there is no trace before I have found Christ. If we comprehend this passage (Heb 12:14), “Follow.... holiness [sanctification] without which no man shall see the Lord” (and there is nothing troubles a soul as that often does), it is clear that if I do not possess Christ, I cannot see the Lord: that is very simple. If I have not in myself that life of the last Adam, as I before had the life of the first, never shall I see His face. The tastes natural to the one will develop themselves therein, as they developed themselves in the other. The first inquiry to be made in such a case is, Have you peace with God, the pardon of your sins? If not, the question is of the justification of a sinner. Having then your soul purified in obeying the truth by the Holy Spirit, that is the power “by the Spirit.” The essential thing is the obedience to the truth; people seek purification, and desire to bear fruit. But this is not what God first asks of us; it is obedience, and obedience to the truth.

Whereof does the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, speak? He has much to say to us; but first of all, “All flesh is as grass.” He says that no good thing exists in man; the Spirit convinces the world of sin. The whole world lies in wickedness; that world would have none of Christ, and the Holy Spirit cannot present Himself without saying, You have rejected the Christ. The Holy Spirit comes into this world, and proves to it its pride and its rebellion. Behold, the Son is no longer here, and why? The world has rejected Him. The Spirit comes to say, The grass is withered; then, when that is acknowledged, He communicates the peace that He has preached. He says truly, “You are sinners;” but He does not speak to sinners of sanctification; He will produce it by the truth, and He tells them the truth. Can man produce it? Nay. It is Christ, He who is the way, and the truth, and the life. The Holy Spirit speaks to the sinner of the grace, of the righteousness of God of peace, not to make, but made; that is the truth. He convinces the world of what it is, and He speaks to it of that will of God by which the believer is sanctified, that thus we may be obedient to the truth, in submitting to the love of God; and when the soul is subject to this truth, life is there.

He communicates life; “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” The word abides eternally It is thus that God first produces the principle of sanctification, which is the life of Christ in us; if the practical means be inquired for, it is the word of truth.

Does the Holy Spirit tell pagans to make progress in sanctification? Does He say this to men unconverted? No. When a sinner has understood the truth, such as God presents it, then the Holy Spirit puts him in relation with God the Father, and this sinner rejoices in all that which Christ has acquired for him Thus, having purified your souls in obeying the truth by the Holy Spirit, etc., ye have been born again of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. You will find that it is ever thus.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10 it is written, as to the unbelieving, contrasted with the Christians, that they have not received (or rather, accepted) the love of the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who have not believed the truth, etc. But, my brethren, beloved of the Lord, we are bound to give thanks to God for you, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (ver. 13).

It is, then, the belief of the truth; it is not the belief of the fruits. The Holy Spirit cannot present to me the works He has produced in me, as the object of my faith. He speaks to me of my faults, of my short-comings, but never of the good works that are in me, He produces them in me, but He bides them from me; for if we think of it, it is but a more subtle self-righteousness. It is like the manna which, being kept, produced worms.

ALL is spoiled—it is no more faith in action; the Holy Spirit must always present to me Christ, that I may have peace.

The same principle is in John 17:16: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” The world was not Christ's aim.

During His whole life, though He was not gone out of the world, He was no more of the world than if He had been in heaven. When Practice is in question, He says, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth.” Truth is not of this world; this world is a vast lie, which is demonstrated in the history we possess in the Bible. There we find the manifestation of sin in the natural man, and the manifestation of the life in the renewed man, by His word. “Sanctify them through thy truth.... For their sakes I sanctify myself.” What does the Lord Jesus here do for us? He sets Himself apart.

He sanctifies Himself; it is not that He may be more holy, but He makes Himself the model Man.

It is not a law requirement; but it is Christ Himself who is life and power, whereof He presents the perfect result. It is Christ who presents the fulfillment and the perfection; He is the vital spring of all; and in considering these things, the reflection of them is in me by faith, which reproduces them in the inner man and in the life.

We find something interesting on this subject in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. In the beginning was the life, and the life was the light.

The law was not this. It was not a light that condemned; but the life was this light, and we have seen it full of grace and truth—not of truth only, but of grace; and of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. When we have received Christ, there is not a single grace which is not for me, and in me. There is no Christian who has not every grace that is in Jesus. Suppose even a state of failure, it is the strongest case, but this hinders not that we possess all in Him. Failure is a sad thing, but that changes not the position; for the Christian has not received a part only of Christ, but the whole of Christ. On the one hand, it is encouragement. When I say to myself, “I must seek after such a grace;” the answer is, “Thou possessest it;” and, on the other hand, it humbles me; for if I possess it, why is it not manifested? This always supposes that we have received the truth that God has made peace. We must always return to this: “Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth.” Is it by looking into myself that I shall find this sanctification? No; but in looking to Jesus, in whom it is, Christ having been made unto us of God “righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” I see this humility in Christ, and take pleasure in it; when I look to Him, by faith, my soul is in peace; His Spirit is always in me, and I am sanctified by faith in Him, according to that grace which makes me one with Him. Christ gives me all that, and this truth reveals to me that the redemption is made, and I enjoy it, having obeyed the truth. If any one seeks after sanctification without being assured of his justification, and is troubled about it, doubting whether he be a Christian, then I ask him, What have you to do with sanctification? You have not to think about that for the present. Assure yourself, first of all, that you are saved; pagans, unbelievers, do not sanctify themselves. If you have faith, you are saved; sanctify yourself in peace. The only question is to consider your sinful state. First, have you obeyed the truth? have you submitted to it? What does God speak to you about? He speaks of peace made. He says to you, that He has given His Son; He says to you, that He has so loved the world, that He has given His Son to the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This is the truth to which you have to submit, and to receive above all, specially before you busy yourself about sanctification, which depends on Him who has given you eternal life. Begin, then, by obeying the truth; this truth tells you of the righteousness of God, which is satisfied in Jesus, and which is yours; or rather that you are in Christ; then you will enjoy peace, and you will be sanctified in practice. This practical sanctification flows from the contemplation of Jesus. Here is what the apostle Paul says to us on this subject, in 2 Cor. 3:18: “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

You see that it is in beholding Jesus that we are transformed from glory to glory. Life, the principle of life, is there, and not in your anxieties; the development of this life of Jesus is progressively realized by looking to Him. It is faith which sanctifies, as also it justifies: it looks unto Jesus.

When Moses came down from the mountain, from before God, he did not know that he also shone with glory, but those who saw him knew it. Moses had looked towards God; others saw the effect. Blessed be God that it is thus in a practical sense! As to practice, then, the question is the sanctification of Christians, because they are saved, because they are sanctified to God, as respects their persons; not those who are not yet so. It is not to exact, on God's part, but to communicate life. Now, this communication proceeds from Jesus, who is its source. He communicates life, which is holiness. Oh that God might always show us the grace to make us always more and more feel that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass; but that the word of the Lord endureth forever! “And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” It is of this incorruptible seed we are born. What ought not our confidence to be in this word!

J. N. D.

(concluded from page 48)

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 2, 1 Peter 2:24

The true force of 1 Peter 2:24 has been called in question by those who seek not only to make Christ's life vicarious, but His sufferings during the time of His active service penal. The thought that all the sufferings of that Blessed One have infinite value, and that they were all for us, every Christian heart would close in with adoringly. There may be obscurity of mind connected with it; but the heart is right. But when intellectual proofs are attempted to be given to sustain unsound doctrine on this point, so as to undermine the true character and value of atonement, and to cast a cloud on divine righteousness, it is desirable then to maintain the truth. I do not hesitate to say that those who speak of the appropriation of Christ's living righteousness to us for righteousness, and hold the sufferings of His active service to have been penal and vicarious, have, in no case, a full, clear, and scriptural gospel. I am sure many who, from the teaching they have had, hold it, are as far as my own heart could desire from the wish to weaken the truth of atonement and the value of Christ's blood-shedding, without which there is no remission. They have not seen the deep evil lying at the root of a doctrine which speaks of vicarious sufferings, and bearing of sins to which no remission is attached. I am quite ready to believe that the most violent accusers of the doctrine which looks to the sufferings of Christ upon the cross as the alone atonement and propitiation for sin do not wish to enfeeble its value. But we may inquire into the justness of all views which we do not judge to be scriptural, and press too with confidence what we find in scripture.

I do not believe in the penal and vicarious character of Christ's sufferings during His active service, nor do I believe in the appropriation of His legal righteousness to me as failing in legal righteousness myself. I am satisfied that those who hold it have not a full, true, scriptural gospel; by some it is used for the maintenance of what is horribly derogatory to Christ. I have known many valued and beloved saints who hold that Christ, under the law, satisfied, by His active fulfillment of it, for our daily failure under it. I believe it to be a very serious mistake, though I may value them as His beloved people still. I believe in His obedience to the law; I believe that all His moral perfectness, completed in death, was available to me as that in which He was personally agreeable to God, and a Lamb without spot and blemish. But these are not the appropriation to me of legal righteousness. But I am not now purposing to go over all this ground; I merely maintain the ground on which I stand, and the doctrine which I hold as scriptural, and as of immense importance to the Church just now. I would do it meekly, patiently, that souls may be delivered from error and bondage into the liberty of the truth of God, which is the only real power of godliness; but I would do it firmly and constantly.

In the attempt to maintain the doctrine of Christ's bearing sins all His life, the translation of the text I refer to has been called in question. I am satisfied that it is perfectly correct. As an element in this question, I would now examine it. The English version is, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." A simple person would, surely in reading Peter, refer to His sufferings in death. Thus, in chapter 3, I read: " For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." No one denies that Christ suffered, during His life, sufferings which found their perfection in His death, besides the wrath-bearing character of it; for He was obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.

But the question is, " Was there sin-bearing during His active service, or was He kept up as the Lamb to bear sin? " It turns on the word " bear," anenegke. It is alleged that if it meant " bare," it must be upenegke or ebastase or eblae. All this is a mistake. A sacrificial word is, I do not doubt, purposely used; but anaphero means "to bear, or undergo," probably because sacrificial victims, which were offered up, were supposed to bear sins: at any rate, it does mean" to bear, undergo, sustain." The truth is, determining the meaning of a word by etymology, in a cultivated language, is the most absurd thing possible. It is interesting as philological research; but as determining the usus loquendi, it is ridiculous. I might say " hell-fire " must mean " covering sins " (for it is the same word as "to heal," used also provincially for roofing)-for the same reason, hence, that the fire of hell was purgatorial or remissory! It did originally mean a covered place, hades, and hence, gradually, everlasting punishment. Anaphero does mean to offer in sacrifice: it means "to recreate oneself, to remember, to cough up, to return, to cast the sin on another, to weigh or consider, etc. The question is, does it mean to bear, to undergo the pain and burden of? and, when used sacrificially, can it be separated from the altar of sacrifice? I say it does mean "to bear, undergo the pain and burden of anything "; and when used in connection with sacrifice, cannot be separated from actual offering up to God.

First, it means "to bear or undergo." I must turn to the dictionaries for this, and the passages in which it is used. They leave no sort of question. It is only systematizing, and not the facts in the Greek language, which can lead any one to deny it. I turn to Stephanus. I find anapherein, ferri, perferre, pati, ut Christus dicitur, anenegkein, peccata nostra (1 Peter 2:24; Heb. 9:21). Citatur e Thucydide, anapherein kindunous, quod durum sit reddere, Ferre pericula: potiusque verti debeat, Subire pericula (better " to undergo," that is, than " to bear "). The general sense of " undergoing the burden and pain of" is evident; and that is our point here. There is a reference in the beginning of the article to Aristides (I suppose, lius Aristides, the rhetorician), which I cannot verify. So Pape, auf skit nehmen ertragen, "to take on oneself"; " to bear" kindunous, Thucydides; phthonous kai diabolous kai polemon, that is, " envy, calumny, war," Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. He adds, New Testament. Liddell and Scott give "to uphold, to take on one," Latin sustinere (quoting Æschylus (achthos) and Thucydides). It is thus perfectly certain that the word means " to bear the burden of anything, to undergo." The etymological sense of "to bring up or back " is a mere absurdity here.

We have now to examine the scriptural use of it in connection with sacrifice, and in particular the passage in Peter. Anenegke is a sacrificial word. It is used here (if we are to take it as it usually is taken, as referring to Isaah 53: 12) for nasa, which means "to lift up, to bear, to forgive," and here confessedly " to bear." It is alleged-for I have considered diligently what is alleged against it-that it cannot mean "to bear passively with ", as would be the case with anenegke epi to. This is a mistake. Aaron was to bear the names of the children upon his heart (Ex. 28:29). So with the judgment, in verse 30.

It is said that Isaah 53: 4, is translated elabe by divine inspiration, and hence it could not be anenegke, in verse 12. But this proves, if anything (for the word may be translated differently in different places according to the sense, but if it be the Spirit's purpose to make the difference here, it proves this), that He would not use a sacrificial vicarious word in verse 4, but would in verse 12 (that is, that the " bearing," in verse 4, was not sacrificial, but is in verse 12); for Heb. 9:28, that Christ was once offered eis to pollon anenegkein amartias, are the very words of Isa. 53:12. So that, if this is of any value, we have not an inference that it cannot be used in one place because it is not in another; and that Peter, if he had quoted it, would have used another word for" nasa "in verse 12, because Matthew did in verse 4 (an argument, when said to be from inspiration, which I decline characterizing), but a direct proof that inspiration will not use a vicarious sacrificial word as to Christ's living sympathies and sorrows; but that it will and does use it when it speaks of bearing sins when offered up to God.

And now, leaving argument, which I am glad to do, what is the scriptural use of anaphero, in connection with sins and sacrifices, with or without epi to? The following instances will show: Num. 14:34, kai anoisousi ten porneian umon. The use of it in this passage is the more noticeable: save in Lev. 20:19, the word always used for bearing the consequence of our own or a father's sin (and under the old covenant this is the same thing), is lambano in the Septuagint. In Lev. 20:19, it is aphoisousi. In Ex. 28:29, lepsetai to onomata epi to logeion; and for the same words in verse 30, it is kai nisei tas kriseis epi ton. Indeed, the argument as to lambano may justly be carried much farther, for lambano is regularly used for bearing the fruit of one's sin, bringing sin on oneself in its consequences. It is not bearing it vicariously, but as a consequence on oneself. The only apparent exceptions that I am aware of, and they are only apparent, are Lev. 16:22, the scapegoat; and Ezek. 4:4, 5, 6. But the first is lepsetai eis gen abaton, " He shall carry them in to a land not habited," and in the case of Ezekiel, it was clearly not vicarious, but representative and the same as the ordinary case. In a word, amartian lambanein is not used for vicarious bearing, but bearing the consequence of one's own fault, coming under the effect of it oneself, pcenas luere.

But what is important is to see the actual use of anaphero, when used with sacrifice. Num. 14:34, and Isa. 53:11, are plain proofs that it is used for bearing sins penally. But now, as to sacrifice. The reader must bear in mind that the act of having the sin on the victim is not in itself the expiation. That puts the victim in the answering place. For the other, death and the judicial action of God must come in to put it away. It must be slain and offered on the altar-as it is said, "by means of death." Christ had to take our sins on Him, and therefore die-give His life a ransom for many. Every one, therefore, believes He had taken them on Him before He gave up the ghost. The question is, did He take them on Him in order to suffer on the cross, and suffer the penal judgment of them there, as the victim was brought up to the altar, then the sins confessed on his head, and then the victim itself, thus made sin, slain, and burnt? Or was Christ born into this penal state, suffering it before He actually gave Himself up to be offered on the cross? Was He under the penal consequences of sin in the sufferings of His active service-was that penally from God? or in the sufferings of the cup He took to drink upon the cross from God? I believe the latter-that it was after the victim was presented as an offering to the altar (in Christ's case we must say presented Himself as a spotless victim to the cross) that the penal sufferings for sins were on Him, because our sins were on Him; and that it is to this bearing of sins alone that the passage in Peter applies. Christ offered Himself without spot to God. Jehovah laid, then, the iniquity upon Him. He who knew no sin was then made sin. Did the Lord lay the iniquity upon Him before He offered Himself without spot, a proved spotless lamb? One who knew no sin was made sin when He had bowed to His Father's will to drink that cup.

Offering has, in scripture, a double character. It is used for presenting the victim, or indeed any offering, heevi or hikriv, "to cause to come nigh "; but anaphero epi to is not used for this, though in grammar I know not why it should not be. It is for hard causes in judgment in Deuteronomy : 17, anoisete auto ep eme, " Ye shall bring them to me," but not for offering that I can find. If the reader takes Leviticus he will find for these words prospherein or prosagein, to bring up. This was the presenting the offering which was to be a victim. But as soon as the victim, or part of it, is spoken of as burnt on the altar (Lev. 3:5), then it is anoisousin auto epí to thusiasterion. So in verse 9, the general idea of offering is prosoisousi, hikriv, and in verse 11, the burning of it on the altar, anoisousin epi to. And this is the regular use of it in Leviticus, and elsewhere, as Ex. 29:18, 25; ch. 30: 20; Lev. 2:16; ch. 3: 16; ch. 4:10, 20, 26, 31; ch. 6:15, 35; ch. 7: 21; ch. 8: 16,19, 20, 27; ch. 9:10, 20; ch. 16:25; ch. 17: 6; Num. 5:26; ch. 18: 17. This last has the same force but there is not epi to thusiqsterion. That is, anaphero epi to is the technical expression for consumption or offering up to God by fire, when on the altar, in contrast with bringing up to the altar. When epi to is not used, it has practically the same force when used of offerings-that is, offering to God; but anapherein epi to has the proper peculiar force of bearing them as a victim on the altar, under the consuming fire of God, not of bringing up to. It answers to hiktir, not to hikriv. It is impossible that the use of language can be made plainer by the facts of that use.

There is another word for which it is used, which confirms this, hala (Gen. 8:20; ch. 22: 2: so Ex. 24:5; Lev. 14:19, 20); where the reader will remark, comparing verse 13, that in both cases, of the sin or trespass-offering and the burnt-offering, they are killed before they are offered in this sense of the word. In Christ both went together; He died on the cross. But it is of importance to remark it here, because it shows that halo, as well as hiktir, is not bearing the sins up to the altar, but the being offered (in consuming fire) on the altar to God. The word is used in some passages generally as a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, the sense being assumed to be known; but this shows the strict sense is, the ascending up to God as a sweet savor, under the proving and consuming fire, not the bringing up sin to the altar. And this is so true, that as to these burnt-offerings were of a sweet savor, so no offering not made by a fire was a sweet savor. Compare Lev. 2:9 and 12, determining the use of this word in the most positive way. They were to bring it up (takrivoo), as an offering, but they were not to offer it (yahaloo) as a sweet savor, very justly as to the sense translated" burnt " in the English. It was not to be made to ascend as a sweet savor-that is, to be burnt and mount up to God as such.

The general use may be seen ín Num. 28:2 and Deut. 12:13, 14; chapter 27: 6 is a proof that the notion of epi to, i.e., epi with an accusative (see below), is not so absolute, but proves that anoisei, in any case, does not mean necessarily bringing up to, for here it is used with the genitive.

Judg. 13:19, again shows distinctly what anaphero epi to means (here epi ten, because it was a rock); for it is added, "For it came to pass, that when the flame went up," behaaloth, " from off " the altar. The victim was offered on the rock, and in the going up of the flame. That was what hala refers to, not the bringing up to the altar.

Additional cases will be found in Kings and Chronicles, David's and Solomon's offerings; but it is only repeating similar cases, which confirm, but are not needed, to prove the point. The words for which anapherein epi to thusiasterion are used (namely, burning or causing to ascend on the altar), and the uniform use of them, prove distinctly that the force of the word is the bearing under consuming fire on the altar, and not bringing sins up to it. I may quote another proof, strongly confirming the use of this word in 2 Chron. 29:27. Verse 24, the victim was killed; verse 27, Hezekíah commands it to be offered, anapherein epi to thusiasterion. I add, on this occasion, it is never used for bringing or bearing sins up to the altar, it is used for bringing victims to the house; but this I quote because there it is not epi. The sins were not yet upon them; they were the spotless victims that were to become sin-bearers, and sweet savors of offerings made by fire.

Anapherein epi to thusiasterion is never used for bringing or bearing sins up to the altar; what it is used for has been fully shown. But the supposition that epi with an accusative means actively bringing up to, and then rest, is a mistake. There may be grammatically the idea by, implication that that which is epi to is not always and naturally there; but as a matter of fact, it does mean resting on a place or thing at the time spoken of. Thus, Matt. 13:2, " All the multitude stood" epi ton aigialon. So Matt. 19:28, " Ye shall sit on twelve thrones," epi dodeka thronous. Acts : 17; ch. ii: ii, epestesan epi ton pulona epi ten oikian. Winer's " Grammatik " (section 583) may be seen for this use and the use of epi with a genitive for motion. See a singular example in Levitícus 3: 5, the pieces of the peace-offering on the burnt-offering, epi ta-on the wood, epi ta-on the fire, epi you. This may be from the fire being always there belonging to the altar, whereas the wood was brought there: ousin will be understood then before it. In many cases, I have no doubt that the real cause of the accusative is this; when the preposition of the compound verb implies motion, there will be the accusative though the whole sense will be rest. I do not think you would ever have einai epi to. With ephistemi anaphero, you will have the accusative; so eisteke epi to in contrast with Christ's sitting in a boat on the sea; but Mark esan epi ges. But this is grammar, and I pursue it no farther.

It remains only to adduce the cases of anapherein, in the sense of bearing or offering. We have first Heb. 7:27, "who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice; for this he did once when he offered up himself." Now, here it is perfectly certain that it has nothing to do with the victim bearing sins up to the altar, but with what we have seen to be its usual and uniform sense-the high priest's offering it on the altar, where it was a victim. So, also, we have distinct proof that it is no vicarious life, for He did it once when He offered up Himself, and it was for sins. When, consequently, it may have a more general meaning of giving Himself up to be a victim, we have the word used for that in Leviticus, prosphero, Heb. 9:16. Hence we have in verse 28, " once offered [prosenechtheis], to bear [anapherein] the sins of many " Thus He was once offered, and offered to bear sins as thus offered, of which it is said that He had not to offer Himself often, for then He must often have suffered; but now He has appeared once in the consummation of the ages to put may sin by the sacrifice of Himself-that is, His offering, His suffering, was the sacrifice of Himself. His being born was not His sacrifice. He offered Himself-One who was a man, though by the eternal Spirit, or there could be no offering. That is, He was a man before He offered Himself, His own blessed voluntary act, the perfect act of Christ, though in obedience, and Himself already the spotless Lamb. He was thus the Man, the spotless One, to bear the sins of many. This, there can be no doubt, refers to Isa. 53:12.

We have, further, James 2:21, " When he had offered up Isaac on the altar "; and 1 Peter 2:5, " Offer up spiritual sacrifices," which give no proof, save that the last shows this, that it was the offering up to God, which is very important in this way, that it shows it was not the bringing up the sins when laid on the victim's head to the altar. The offering of the victim to God is prosphero. The consumption on the altar was its offering up as a sacrifice to God; this is anaphero. The notion of bringing up a living victim to the altar is unknown to scripture; the animal was slain when he had been offered (prosenechtheis), slain by whom it might be, and the blood sprinkled on the altar, and the fat, or the whole victim burnt; the altar had to do with death and the judgment of fire, and there was the sacrifice. A living victim bringing up sins to the altar is a thought foreign and contrary to scripture. When the victim had been presented, and the hands of the offerer had been laid upon it, it was

slain at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Death was the way sin was dealt with in the victim (we know Christ's death was on the cross, as well as the full drinking of the cup of wrath); the thought of bringing sins up livingly, as if He offered Himself and His sins, is an impossibility. No; He offered Himself, and bare (anenégke) our sins, when offered (prosenechtheis) as a dying victim. Death was the wages of sin. Thus I return to 1 Peter 2:24 with the full evidence of scripture and the Greek use of the word. All the scriptural order of sacrifice, and the language of scripture, confirming it, that the simple-hearted reader may rest in all confidence in his English translation, "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." The word " bear" has a sacrificial character; but that no Christian reader ever doubted in this passage.

I do not see, I confess, how any scriptural locution could be made more certain. I doubt that any other could have so ample and absolute a proof of its actual meaning, and refutation of the meaning attempted to be put upon it, and of the desired change in the authorized version.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 1, Growth Through the Truth

1 Peter 2:1-6

IN one sense, as here taught us by the Spirit of God through the apostle, the healthful position of the saint is ever that of the " new-born babe "; whilst in another sense we are, of course, to be making progress so as to become young men and fathers in Christ. As to practical position of soul in receiving truth from God, it is that of the new-born babe: "as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." This is the place in which, as believers, we are set by the Spirit, in order that we may grow up into Christ.

But if we are to grow by the sincere milk of the word, it is not by the exercise of our minds upon the word, nor yet even by great study of it merely; we need the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and in order to this, there must be the exercising of ourselves unto godliness-the " laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings," so that the Holy Spirit be not grieved. Has the Christian envy, guile, hypocrisies, allowed to work in his heart? There can be no growth in the true knowledge of the things of God. Therefore he is called upon to be ever a " new-born babe," coming to receive, in the consciousness of his own weakness, littleness, and ignorance, and in simplicity of heart, food from the word of God.

The Lord always keeps His simple dependent ones thus. " Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." But then the knowledge of God always humbles; the more we know of Him, the more shall we know of our own emptiness. " If any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Just as the babe is constantly receiving nourishment from the mother, so need we to be constantly receiving spiritual nourishment from the word of God. When the word is received by us in faith, we become strengthened; we grow thereby in the knowledge of God, and of His grace. The apostle Paul, having heard of the faith of the Ephesians in the Lord Jesus, prays " that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," would " give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," etc. Having " tasted that the Lord is gracious," we come to His word and receive from Him that which we need to comfort, nourish, and refresh our souls. The word always comes with savor from Himself; it is known as " the word of his grace." I may study the word again and again; but unless I get into communion with Him by it, it will profit me nothing-at least at the time.

God reveals not His things " to the wise and prudent," but unto " babes." It is not the strength of man's mind judging about " the things of God," that gets the blessing from Him; it is the spirit of the babe desiring " the sincere milk of the word." He says, " open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." The strongest mind must come to the word of God as the new-born babe.

And so too in speaking of God's truth; whenever we cannot " speak as the oracles of God," through the power of communion, it is our business to be silent. We should be cautious not to trifle with unascertained truth. Nothing hinders growth more than this-trifling with unascertained truth: we then act as masters and not as learners. Our position as regards the truth of God must be ever that of new-born babes desiring the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby.

But there is nothing so hard for our hearts as to be humble- nothing so easy for them as to get out of this place of lowliness. It is not by precepts merely that we are either brought into this state, or preserved there; it is by tasting " that the Lord is gracious." It is quite true that God is a God of judgment- that He will exercise vengeance on His enemies; but this is not the way in which He stands towards the Christian. He is made known unto us as " the God of all grace "; and the position in which we are set is that of tasting that He is gracious.

How hard it is for us to believe this, that the Lord is gracious! The natural feeling of our hearts is, " I know that thou art an austere man." Are our wills thwarted? we quarrel with God's ways, and are angry because we cannot have our own. It may be perhaps that this feeling is not manifested; but still at any rate there is the want in all of us naturally of the understanding of the grace of God, the inability to apprehend it. See the case of the poor prodigal in the gospel: the thought of his father's grace never once entered into his mind when he set out on his return, and therefore he only reckoned on being received as a " hired servant." But what does the father say? What are the feelings of his heart? " Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it... for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." This is grace, free grace.

So too in the case of the woman of Samaria (the poor adulteress, ignorant of the character of Him who spake with her, " the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and therefore the suited one to meet her need): the Lord says to her, " If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Hadst thou only understood what grace is, thou wouldst have asked, and I would have given!

It is not only when there is open rebellion against God, and utter carelessness and unconcern about salvation, that there is this darkness of understanding as to grace. Our natural heart has got so far away from God, that it will look to anything in the world-to the devil even-to get happiness; anywhere but to the grace of God. Our consciences, when at all awakened to a sense of sin, and of its hatefulness in the sight of God, think that He cannot be gracious. Adam, had he known the grace of God, when he found himself naked, would at once have gone to God to cover him. But no, he was ignorant of it; he saw his state, and he sought to hide himself from God amongst the trees of the garden. And so it is with us. The consciousness of being naked before God, apart from the understanding of His grace, makes us flee from Him.

Nay, further, as believers in Jesus, when our consciences come to be exercised, and we feel that we must have to do with God in everything, we may not have the distinct sense of the Lord's being gracious; and there will then be not only a deep sense of our responsibility but at the same time the thought that we have to answer to God's requirements, and shall be judged of Him according to the way in which we do so. There is a measure of truth in this: the requirements of God must be met; but then the wrongness is in thinking that, if we do not find in ourselves what will please God, He will condemn us because of it.

On the other hand there is sometimes the thought that grace implies God's passing by sin. But no, quite the contrary; grace supposes sin to be so horribly bad a thing that God cannot tolerate it. Were it in the power of man, after being unrighteous and evil, to patch up his ways, and mend himself so as to stand before God, there would then be no need of grace. The very fact of the Lord's being gracious shows sin to be so evil a thing, that, man being a sinner, his state is utterly ruined and hopeless, and nothing but free grace will do for him-can meet his need.

A man may see sin to be a deadly thing, and he may see that nothing that defiles can enter into the presence of God: his conscience may be brought to a true conviction of sin; yet this is not tasting " that the Lord is gracious." It is a very good thing to be brought even to that, for I am then tasting that the Lord is righteous, and it is needful for me to know it; but then I must not stop there: sin without grace would put me in a hopeless state. Peter had not " tasted that the Lord was gracious " when he said, " Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, 0 Lord! " and therefore he thought that his sin unfitted him for the presence of the Lord.

Such too was the thought of Simon the leper, respecting the poor woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Ah, if this man had been a prophet (if he had known the mind of God), he would have sent away this woman out of his presence, " for she is a sinner." And why? Because he did not know that the Lord was gracious. He had a certain sense of the righteousness of God, but not the knowledge of His grace. I cannot say that God ought to be gracious; but I can say (if ignorant of His grace), that He ought to cast me, as a sinner, away from His presence, because He is righteous. Thus we see that we must learn what God is to us, not by our own thoughts, but by what He has revealed Himself to be, and that is " the God of all grace."

The moment I understand (as Peter did) that I am a sinful man, and yet that it was because the Lord knew the full extent of my sin, and what its hatefulness was, that He came to me, I understand what grace is. Faith makes me see that God is greater than my sin, and not that my sin is greater than God. " God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." As soon as I believe Jesus to be the Son of God, I see that God has come to me because I was a sinner and could not go to Him.

Man's ability to meet the requirements of the holiness of God has been fully tried: but the plainer the light came, the more did it show to man his darkness; and the stricter the rule, the more did it bring out his self-will. And then it was, " when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly "-" when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This is grace. God, seeing the blood of His Son, is satisfied with it; and if I am satisfied with it, this is what glorifies God.

But the Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me is the same Lord that I have to do with every day of my life; and all His dealings with me are on this same principle of grace. Do I want to learn what His love is? it is taught in the cross; but He gave Himself for me in order that all the fullness and joy that is in Him might be mine. I must be a learner of it still-a new born babe desiring " the sincere milk of the word that I may grow thereby."

The great secret of growth is the looking up to the Lord as gracious. How precious, how strengthening it is, to know that Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love towards me as when He died upon the cross for me! This is a truth that should be used by us in the most common everyday circumstances of life. Suppose, for instance, I find an evil temper in myself, which I feel it difficult to overcome: let me bring it to Jesus as my friend, virtue goes out of Him for my need. Faith should be ever thus in exercise against temptation, and not simply my own effort; my own effort against it will never be sufficient. The source of real strength is in the sense of the Lord's being gracious.

But the natural man in us always disallows Christ as the only source of strength and of every blessing. Suppose my soul is out of communion, the natural heart says, I must correct the cause of this before I can come to Christ: but He is gracious. And, knowing this, the way is to return to Him at once, just as we are, and then humble ourselves deeply before Him. It is only in Him, and from Him, that we shall find that which will restore our souls. Humbleness in His presence is the only real humbleness. If we own ourselves in His presence to be just what we are, we shall find that He will show us nothing but grace.

But though " disallowed indeed of men "-of the natural heart in every one of us-who is this that says, " Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded "? It is God; He laid this corner stone, not man; and He says, This is what I think of Christ. By learning of God, through His teaching me by the Holy Spirit, I come to have the same thoughts about Jesus that He has. Here I find my strength, my comfort, my joy. That in which God delights and will delight forever is now my joy also.

God says, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased "; " mine elect in whom my soul delighteth "; and, working these (His) thoughts into my soul, I too see Jesus to be precious, and find my delight in Him. Thus He who was crucified for me-who " bare my sins in his own body on the tree "-is precious to God and precious to me. God could find no rest save in Jesus. We may look throughout the world, we shall find nothing which can satisfy our hearts but Jesus. If God looked for truth, for righteousness, all He could desire He found in Jesus; and He found it in Him for us. Here is that which gives comfort to the soul. I see Jesus " now in the presence of God for us "; and God is satisfied, God delights in Him.

It is Christ Himself in whom God rests, and will rest forever; but then Jesus, having borne and blotted out my sins by His own blood, has united me to Himself in heaven. He descended from above, bringing God down to us here: He has ascended, placing the saints in union with Himself there. If God finds Jesus precious, He finds me (in Him) precious also.

Jesus, as Man, has glorified God on the earth: God rests in that; as Man, having accomplished redemption, He " has passed into the heavens," " now to appear in the presence of God for us." It is Jesus who gives abiding rest to our souls, and not what our thoughts about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks about that which is in ourselves as its ground of rest; it receives, loves, and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus, in whom is His rest.

It is not by human knowledge or intellect that we attain to this. The poor ignorant sinner, when enlightened by the Spirit, can understand how precious Jesus is to the heart of God, as well as the most intellectual. The dying robber could give a better account of the whole life of Jesus

than all around him, saying, " This man has done nothing amiss "; he was taught by the Spirit.

Are we much in communion with God, our faces will shine, and others will discover it though we may not be conscious of it ourselves. Moses, when he had been talking with God, wist not that the skin of his face shone; he forgot himself, he was absorbed in God. As knowing Jesus to be precious to our souls, our eyes and our hearts being occupied with Him, they will be effectually prevented from being taken up with the vanity and sin around; and this too will be our strength against the sin and corruption of our own hearts. Whatever I see in myself that is not in Him is sin; but then it is not thinking upon my own sins, and my own vileness, and being occupied with them, that will humble me; but thinking of the Lord Jesus, dwelling upon the excellence in Him. It is well to have done with ourselves and to be taken up with Jesus. We are entitled to forget ourselves, we are entitled to forget our sins, we are entitled to forget all but Jesus. It is by looking to Jesus that we can give up anything, that we can walk as obedient children: His love constrains us. Were it simply a command, we should have no power to obey.

The Lord give us thus to be learners of the fullness of grace which is in Jesus, the beloved and elect One of God, so that " we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

May we, beloved, in searching into the truth of God, having " tasted that the Lord is gracious," ever be found as new-born babes desiring the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby.

Courtesy of BibleTruthPublishers.com. Most likely this text has not been proofread. Any suggestions for spelling or punctuation corrections would be warmly received. Please email them to: BTPmail@bibletruthpublishers.com.

Letters 3, Principles of Gathering; the Reformation

The doctrine of the Reformation put forth the view that Christ died to reconcile His Father to us-a statement every way erroneous, confounding the name of relationship in blessing with God in His nature; and teaching, what scripture does not, that Christ's work was to reconcile God to us, to change His mind But others have used this to deny real propitiation and atonement.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." He did not need to have His mind changed. But a righteous and holy God could not pass over sin as nothing, and if God so loved, the Son of man must be lifted up. God was not (as a heathen god) one who had to be propitiated that He might not be against us; but He did require that the righteousness and holiness should be maintained in the universe. I think you will find that the New Testament never says God was propitiated, but you will find Christ was an for our sins. (1 John.) And that Christ was a priest . It is not, as in Homer, [Il.á 386] . We have the imperative in Luke 18. "Be gracious."

We have never God for the object of in the New Testament; but we have sins; and it seems to me to set the point on very clear ground.

I have elsewhere1 fully shown that to apply (1 Peter 2:24) to anything but what was done on the cross is simple ignorance of the use of the word. I add a confirmatory remark here that the three preceding words are in the imperfect, giving them a continuous character—, the aorist, showing one special act.

Notes and Comments 4, Fragments: The Apostle Peter

With what deep feeling, in recollection, the Apostle Peter must have said, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"!

Notes and Jottings, 1 Peter, Readings on: 2

Reading 2

Ques. In verse 21, " Who by him do believe in God," is Christ looked at as the medium through whom we know God? I suppose so.

Ques. Then we have two things, God is the One who has raised up Christ, and Christ is Lord?

Yes.

Ques. Is He looked at as made Lord?

Yes; but this statement is more general, and the effect is that our faith and hope are in God. I know God through Christ, and this gives a distinct aspect of God altogether. It means that I can trust in God in everything, for I know that God has come in on my behalf. I know the love of God in giving Christ, and I know that all my sins are gone, and that God Himself is my Savior. He is not here in the character of Judge, nor is it faith in Christ before God; but it is faith in God Himself who has raised Christ from the dead, so that it takes in everything between myself and God, and alters His whole character from that of Judge. I may believe in God as a righteous Judge, and so He is, but that will not save me, though there must be that for salvation.

Ques. Abraham believed God?

Yes, that was believing what God said, and we find various forms of that.

Ques. Does the hope connect itself with Christ's glory on high?

Well, not quite so much that; there is the Jewish expression " hope," but hope is often used as confidence, as, " In him shall the Gentiles trust," i.e., hope, and also in, " Hope thou in God." Hope is used as counting on a person; but He will give us glory, too; here, it is the general thought, namely, that we reckon on Him. Believing on Him, and believing in Him are different. ' I believe in God,' is a different thing. Believing on God shows the object and the confidence, that is to say, God is the object of the faith.

Ques. Is not this the Red Sea?

Yes, it raises Christ from the dead.

Ques. There is no knowing God any other way?

Well, only as Creator. I do not know God at all, save as I know Him in Christ.

Ques. When it says, " That know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," is that all one class? I do not know that.

Ques. " This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," that is knowing God, is it not?

It is God the Father, not merely God. The other names of God do not give eternal life, but the Father sent the Son that we might live through Him, and that gives eternal life.

We have, then, first, the revelation in Christ, and secondly, the " obeying the truth through the Spirit." This sanctifies the soul. " Unto unfeigned love of the brethren." It is wonderful how the purifying of the soul and love go together. We may get hold of truth, but in man's hand it is always imperfectly so, and badly put together; but " obeying the truth through the Spirit " is quite another thing. Selfishness is at the bottom of sin; the opposite of selfishness is love, and we are purified from the selfishness of sin by divine love. Here, it is love of the brethren, and the love, too, which brings in holiness. We find the same thing in 1 Thess. 3:12, " The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God." Love and holiness are here brought together. A wonderful power has thus come in in Christianity! The apostle adds, "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." It is not to establish our hearts here, but he is looking at it in all its fullness when Christ comes. It is the power of the hope, too, for he " that hath this hope in him purifieth himself; even as he is pure." And therefore, in John 17, it is, " Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," and also, " For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." This takes us up into the other world.

Ques. " Even as we do toward you," would not that qualify it?

That is the pattern of it, but it is " one toward another," and " toward all." We never find it stated that Christ loved the world, or that God loved the church, because this latter refers to the relationship of Christ and the church, His body and His bride. When it speaks of " love as brethren," it is again the love of relationship.

Ques. Why " unfeigned "?

We do not want feigned love to the brethren, do we? It is just the opposite of that, it is real, not ' putting it on,' as men say. We have here the converse of that which is in Thessalonians. It is the bringing in of divine life, and of the Holy Ghost who is the spring that is in my heart. So it speaks, not about inconsistencies, but of love and of what is God's nature. A wonderful thing it is for us to look at Christ in our pathway down here, and then, in that sense, we could not know any man after the flesh. God is looking for purity and love here. As self is dead, consideration for others reigns in the heart according to God. And the recollectedness of God's presence is the great secret of this. I was struck some time back in seeing that, when the apostle describes in 1 Cor. 13 what love is, it is all subjective; not one atom of activity do we find in it, but it bears, endures, hopes, and so on, and that is all.

Ques. You would not say love is always subjective? No; but it is so in 1 Cor. 13

Ques. Is " kind," subjective?

Yes; I go and meet you, and you may look very glum at me, but I am kind from a sense of love towards you, what is that but subjective?

Ques. That chapter has sometimes been a kind of disappointment to me, for one finds there what love is not, rather than what it is?

You go and live it out, and see if other people will be disappointed!

Activity, of course, is all right too. God gives to us in the blessedness of His nature, He makes us enjoy Himself; but besides that, He gives us a share in the activities of His love. " See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." He will have these two things together-love and purity, and "fervently" too.

These instructions are drawn from the very depths of God's nature, and thus we have God and grace instead of self. Suppose I am giving way to bad feeling towards someone, well, the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. I ask myself how should I feel if I met that person at the door of heaven just going in. Would it not be nice to meet people here as we shall meet them there? Only, when we have to meet opponents, we must take care that it does not connect itself with anything of feeling as regards the individual. Look at Christ in an agony in Gethsemane. He asked His disciples to tarry, while He went further, but when He comes to them again, He finds them sleeping, yet He only says, " What, could ye not watch with me one hour? " And He goes back again into His agony; this was His way with them when He was thinking of meeting God in judgment.

Ques. Is it not, " See that ye... love," in verse 22?

No, that it is not; it is, " Love one another with a pure heart fervently." " Seeing ye have purified," etc., is the principle of it, let us then have the practice in all its extent! He is looking for fervent love with a pure heart, seeing that we have been brought into this relationship. God is light, and God is love, and having come down in light and love, He wants this divine nature, which has taken root in us, to come out.

Ques. How can " increase and abound " be brought about?

By our keeping nearer to God.

I have often thought that it requires great grace to see a little grace. If we go out in love, it will find some response. At one place, they complained that all was so dreadfully cold, and I could only say, why do you not go out in love and warm the rest?

" Born again," is divine life, for this connection of purity and love is by the Holy Ghost; it is divine love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

Ques. Is " born again " the same thing here as in John 3?

It is the same truth, but rather more specific in the passage in John which insists on its being altogether new (anothen), and so makes it more emphatic. Here, it is connected with the word, in John, with the Spirit. In John, too, we have the positive communications of the new life; in Peter, it is the practical effect and working, not the source. It is similar in 1 Peter 4:1, " He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin," whilst with Paul it is, " he that is dead "; it is the same truth, only the one gives the principle, and the other, the outward practical carrying out of it. As to the Jews, they must be born again.

Ques. " I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh," does that mean that they will not have a bad heart?

Oh! no.

Ques. Does not the word " born " imply more?

We are born of the Spirit and we receive a new life, but this brings in divine thoughts, so that we are cleansed.

Ques. Then sin remains in them, in Ezek. 36?

Yes, and so it does in us now. It is a great thing that the word lives, it comes from God in the power of the Holy Ghost, but then it brings in the things it tells about. In John 8:25, the Lord tells the Jews who He is. In the Authorized Version, it reads, " Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning," but the real force of this is, 'In principle altogether that which I also say to you,' i.e., His word expressed Himself.

And not only does the word live, but it judges also what is in us because it is true.

Ques. " If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature "? That is another idea; such an one is a new creation, and belongs to an entirely different state of things.

Ques. Is it the same in Gal. 6?

Yes, but it is there more applied to the individual. It is the thing so many will not have. Dr. Bonar openly ridicules the idea of two natures, but " that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." Methodists always take wrong ground, having no thought of being born again at all, and this has run very much through the whole body of the Evangelical world.

Ques. What is the difference between " new birth," and " new creation "?

New creation takes in everything, new birth is our having a nature that is fit for it. If we take it in its full sense, new creation leaves nothing else.

Ques. I am the same man after I am born again?

I do not doubt you are, but you will find some difficulty in saying what the " I " now is. I have a life from Adam that is never mended one atom; but I have also a new life from Christ, which is a totally new thing: " He that hath the Son hath life." Adam had not that life, but I have the life of the second Adam.

Ques. Had not the Old Testament saints eternal life?

That is another question, and we will not hunt the two hares at a time. Adam innocent had not that life one bit more than Adam guilty. " That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, but Adam was not born of the Spirit. This is a new thing. " That eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." That is the Christ who has become my life through the operation of the word; a totally new thing it is, and one which does change the man.

As to the. Old Testament saints, eternal life formed no part of the Old Testament revelation, even supposing that the Old Testament saints had it. Light and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the gospel. Not that they have been brought to existence, but they have been " brought to light." And when He in whom life is, came down and died and rose again, then a totally new thing was brought out. Eternal life is twice found in the Old Testament, but in both the passages it is prophetic of the millennium. And therefore, in the Old Testament, we never get conflict between flesh and Spirit. We find, ' conceived in sin,' in Psa. 51, but there is no thought of flesh lusting against the Spirit. "I am crucified with Christ:" says the apostle, " nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and there we find a contradiction twice over, and somebody else put in instead of " I." So again in Rom. 7, " What I hate, that do I," and, " It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," though in the previous verse he had just said that he did do it! All that the Psalmist can say is, " Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He takes the ground that if God wash him, he will be whiter than snow. In that passage, it is not a question of washing with the blood of Christ, and what I insist upon is, do not put into a passage what you cannot get out of it. The Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, i.e., those who are dead in sins are quickened, it is not the simple fact of receiving a new life; it is not the way Scripture speaks, to say, ' here is a living man, and I quicken him.'

Ques. ' Quickens' refers to both soul and body?

Yes, " quicken your mortal bodies." When we speak about quickening, it is always that of one dead. But " quickened us together with Christ " involves a great deal more. Christ was lying in death, where we were lying, and then was raised, and God has quickened us together with Him, but that is a great deal more than life. A man is changed, but the flesh is never changed. In the history of the flesh, I find it both an outlaw and under law, but it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; again, I find the flesh, with Christ presented to it, and man crucified Him; next, with the Holy Ghost come, and I find this, " ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye," and then I see what the flesh was in Paul after he had been caught up to the third heaven and Satan tried to puff him up about it. Dealing with the old nature formed no part of the Old Testament dispensation, though saints were quickened or born again; as regards eternal life, they ought to have this found out, and the Pharisees, as we know, had done so. When the young man came to Christ and asked, " What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? " the Lord, in answer to him, takes up the law upon its own footing, and says, in effect, " this do, and thou shalt live."

Ques. When it says, in John 20:8, " that other disciple... saw, and believed," what was it he believed?

That Christ was risen, only, he believed what he saw, but he had no knowledge of the Scriptures that Christ must rise (v. 9); so he saw, and he believed that He had risen. They did not know this by faith in the word of God, but they believed when they saw.

Ques. Mary had more faith than any of them?

Yes.

Ques. Does 1 Peter give us the new place?

No, it only gives us it in hope.

Ques. Some say the seed here is the divine life?

So it is, but it is by the word of God which is the seed of life; in verse 23, we are looked at as born again, but it is instrumentally by this word. This shows us the character and source of the thing, but the instrument is the word, and so the word of God is the seed. It " liveth and abideth forever." It is a great thing to see that clearly in the word. " He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The word is the revelation of what is in God, in His nature and character, His love, His ways, in short all that He communicates. And this is what God uses to quicken. In verse 23, " forever," is left out by the editors.

Ques. Is there any difference between logos and rhema?

Logos is the deeper word, and the rhema is the giving of it out. Logos is that which is known in the mind and known by expressing it. I cannot think without having a thought, and logos is used for that and the expression of it, but rhema is the mere utterance, and is that which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Ques. Then what of the expression, " the word of the Lord "?

The word of the Lord is, I suppose, that which is in mediatorial communication, that is all. It is a great thing to see that character in the word, for if here, in this book, I have not an inspired word, the inspiration of God's mind, I have not got it at all.

Ques. Is the Bible the rhema?

It is the rhema written down. And the Lord gives importance to it when He says, " If ye believe not his [Moses'] writings, how shall ye believe my words? "

Ques. Then is it Christ here?

It is not Christ here, but it is Christ written down. In Heb. 4, we see the two thrown into one. And, again, " Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live "; so it is God's own mind, of course. In the midst of a world away from God, and which has rejected both God and Christ, there is one thing we have that is of God and from God, and that is the word of God, and that is all. God Himself is here, of course, but the word is the only thing that is of Him. And when everything else has passed away, God's word will remain until it is shown that everything it said is true.

Ques. " The word of God is living and operative," what is the force of " living " there?

That is the very thing, it is divine; it is not merely a word that I give out, and it passes, but a word that comes out from God which abides, and never changes, and never can change. It comes down into my heart, and shows me everything that is in it. In these days, it is a great thing for saints to carry with them the conviction that the word of God is the word of God, and that not only it can never be broken, but it endures forever. It is, and it ever will be, the truth; many of the things spoken of old have passed, and many others may pass, but the word of God will be the truth hereafter, just as much then as it is now. As for this world, and infidels and their reasonings, there will not be one atom of them left! Man's " breath goeth forth," and " his thoughts perish."

Then, in chapter 2: 2, we have another thing, and that is, growing by the word. It is the only thing here with is positively of God. Of course, in one sense, the creation is of God; that will, however, be all burnt up, but that which is of God nourishes. There is a. sense, too, in which we are all new-born babes; it is the new life in simplicity and purity that desires the sincere milk of the word, so that whenever I come to the word to get nourishment, I come to it as a new-born babe.

Ques. When he says, " desire," is not that exhortation?

Yes, of course it is.

Ques. What is growing up to salvation?

Peter looks at salvation as ready to be revealed.

Ques. Why, here, " if so be "?

It supposes one has tasted, or else one will not desire. The knowledge of the graciousness of Christ makes us desire to get more and more of it.

In verses 4 and 5, we have the house that Christ builds. It is in contrast with 1 Cor. 3, where the house is built on the ground of man's responsibility, " according to the grace of God which is given unto me," etc. Man is there viewed as in responsibility building the house. But in Matt. 16, the Lord says, " I will build my church "; that is still going on, and it is not yet built. Here, in Peter, it is not the responsibility of man, but living stones built together. In Eph. 2 it says, " Groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord," groweth, i.e., it is growing yet. Matt. 16 answers more to Eph. 2:21, verse 22 being a matter of fact; the one, "groweth unto an holy temple," the other, is a "habitation of God through the Spirit."

Ques. " Judgment must begin at the house of God," is that the broad view of it?

Yes. It is the confounding of these two things together which has brought in all the pretensions of Popery and High Churchism.

Ques. Is it ever said of the house of God that it is a body?

A house is not a body, the two ideas are totally different. It is Christ's body and God's house. In Heb. 3, it is, " Christ as Son over his [God's] house," I believe that the " own " in the Authorized Version ought not to be there. A person may be in the house, and not in the body; wood, hay and stubble will be burnt up, but no member of the body will ever be. People often ask if Christ is precious, but the terms, " elect, precious," give us His character, not our estimate of Him, and they are connected with the chief corner stone.

Ques. " Whereunto also they were appointed "?

So they were; the Jews were appointed to stumble at Christ, that was to be their judgment, but they were not appointed to be disobedient. Judas was not appointed to be a sinner, but, being a sinner, he was appointed to be a betrayer of Christ.

Ques. " The unjust unto the day of judgment "?

That is in this world; there is a day of judgment that comes upon them here in this world.

Ques. " Before of old ordained to this condemnation "?

That is not condemnation as people commonly think; it is to this condemnation. The stone of stumbling was such to the house of Israel.

You see we are all lost to start with; not that I believe in what is called reprobation, I do not, but God brings about His own way. Israel was appointed to stumble, as I have just said, and prophecy had declared that they would do this when Christ came, and then they stumbled upon Him; it was the form that their wickedness took in the purposes of God.

In Rom. 9 we have, first, the sovereignty of God, and if He chooses to make vessels for destruction, nobody can say " no " to Him; you cannot help it. Then, in verses 22 and 23, he takes up the ground, " What if God," etc., that is another thing. But when he comes to the good side, God prepares them, when he is on the bad side, God endured the vessels fitted to destruction.

Ques. Does " fitted " mean that they fitted themselves?

He found them fitted, you must not bring in what is not there. He finds things fitted for destruction, and He exercises endurance.

Rom. 9 is simply absolute sovereignty; people talk about national election there, which is the very thing the apostle is denying. You are the children of Abraham, are you? Very well, then, says the apostle, if you plead that, you must let in the Ishmaelites, for they were of Abraham. But they were slaves! That ground is gone. Then take Esau and Jacob" Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Then come to Israel, but if God had not been merciful, all of them would have been cut off except Moses' own children. God is, then, sovereign and so He can let in the Gentiles as well. It is a smashing argument to the Jews, for they had broken the law, and they could not deny it. Ah! says the Jew, but I have got the unconditional promises, and so I have a right to have them. And the apostle takes up that principle and shows that, in rejecting Christ, they had rejected the promises, too. And then he deals with the question of national election. When I was young, you might have found an infidel or two, but now, one may almost say, people are appointed to infidelity; though they were as bad then as now, one way or another.

Ques. Infidelity is often according to the increase of light?

Yes, very often it is, and the increase of light is often according to the infidelity.

Ques. The infidelity now is like that in our Lord's time? Yes, the Pharisees are the Puseyites, and one may find as well Nicodemuses and Josephs, or even Nathaniels.

Then, in verses 5 and 9, we have two kinds of priesthood, " holy," and now " royal." The " holy " is a kind of Aaronic priesthood, the " royal," more Melchisedec.

Ques. Does the Aaronic secure the going in and out, and finding pasture?

Going in and out, is liberty. One "fold " is a piece of wickedness in translating, to keep up an established church; it should be " one flock." We find three things there: eternal life, never perish, and saved; going in and out; and, finding pasture. Salvation, liberty, and God's sheep finding. No longer shut up in a fold, they are under the care of the good Shepherd who keeps them safe. So it takes first the image of the Aaronic priesthood. We are the epistles of Christ in our life, and words, and everything.

Ques. What is " the offering up of the Gentiles " in Rom. 15:16?

I take it to be an allusion to the offering up of the Levites in Num. 8

Ques. Why, " acceptable... by Jesus Christ " (v. 5)? They could not be so without Him, I cannot carry anything up to God except in Christ's name.

Ques. Is there any analogy between these two priesthoods and Rom. 12 and Eph. 5, the offering our bodies?

We have to offer our bodies, but he is not here speaking of that so much as of praises, and thanksgiving, and adoration. It is the same character as in Heb. 13, and that is more Aaronic. To show forth the praises is somewhat Melchisedec. It refers to Ex. 19, "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation," and it puts these despised believers in the place formerly given to the nation of Israel who will have this place again, by and by.

Ques. How do you apply the wine of Melchisedec?

Melchisedec comes out with the blessing, up and down, and not with intercession, properly speaking, at all. In Hebrews, Paul takes Melchisedec as the mark which was to mark out Christ, but another priesthood there was that offered sacrifices, and so on, viz., that of Aaron.

Ques. Why " out of darkness "?

Darkness is always ignorance of God, and light is the knowledge of God.

Ques. Is such priesthood still going on?

Yes; and we have all the value of Christ's name and acceptance.

Ques. Some brethren think priesthood is advocacy, and presenting our worship?

Some of the brethren are very nice, but I do not think they gain much by such a notion. It is never said that Christ presents our worship, but that in the midst of the assembly He sings praises. Advocacy is a definite thing; priesthood in Hebrews is for grace to help in time of need. But this notion of Christ presenting our worship, as though we could not go in, does not give us the full character of Christian worship at all. It is " the Father seeketh," etc. Scripture does not speak of a priest with a Father. Christ is priest over the house of God, and so we draw near. We know He is there, and so we draw near with boldness. But that is not Father. Worship of the Father is peculiar for the Christian, but there is a tendency to bring worship down merely to Hebrews (there is no Father in Hebrews). " The Father himself loveth you "—one cannot bring in a priest here. In John, we have the obligation and necessity, and it is always Father; so our fellowship is with the Father, and that is the necessity of His nature.

Ques. Is not Heb. 2:12, a present thing?

Yes.

Bible Treasury: Volume 17, 1 Peter 2:24: Part 1

The true force of 1 Peter 2:24 has been called in question by those who seek not only to make Christ's life vicarious, but His sufferings during the time of His active service penal. The thought that all the sufferings of that Blessed One have infinite value, and that they were all for us, every Christian heart would close in with adoringly. There may be obscurity of mind connected with it; but the heart is right. But when intellectual proofs are attempted to be given to sustain unsound doctrine on this point, so as to undermine the true character and value of atonement, and to cast a cloud on divine righteousness, it is desirable then to maintain the truth.

I do not hesitate to say that those who speak of the appropriation of Christ's living righteousness to us for righteousness, and hold the sufferings of His active service to have been penal and vicarious, have, in no case, a full, clear, and scriptural gospel. I am sure many who, from the teaching they have had, hold it, are as far as my own heart could desire from the wish to weaken the truth of atonement and the value of Christ's blood-shedding, without which is no remission. They have not seen the deep evil lying at the root of a doctrine which speaks of vicarious sufferings, and bearing of sins to which no remission is attached. 1 am quite ready to believe that the most violent accusers of the doctrine which looks to the sufferings of Christ upon the cross as the alone atonement and propitiation for sin do not wish to enfeeble its value. But we may inquire into the justness of all views which we do not judge to be scriptural, and press too with confidence what we find in scripture.

I do not believe in the penal and vicarious character of Christ's sufferings during His active service; nor do I believe in the appropriation of His legal righteousness to me as failing in legal righteousness myself. I am satisfied that those who hold it have not a full, true, scriptural gospel. By some it is used for the maintenance of what is horribly derogatory to Christ. I have known many valued and beloved saints who hold that Christ, ender the law, satisfied, by His active fulfillment of it, for our daily failure under it. I believe this to be a very serious mistake, though I may value them as His beloved people still. I believe in His obedience to the law; I believe that all His moral perfectness, completed in death, was available to me as that in which He was personally agreeable to God, and a Lamb without spot and blemish. But these are not the appropriation to me of legal righteousness. Yet I am not now purposing to go over all this ground, but merely maintain the ground on which 1 stand, and the doctrine which I hold as scriptural, and as of immense importance to the church just now. I would do it meekly, patiently, that souls may be delivered from error and bondage into the liberty of the truth of God, which is the only real power of godliness; but I would do it firmly and constantly.

In the attempt to maintain the doctrine of Christ's bearing sins all His life, the translation of the text referred to has been called in question. I am satisfied that it is perfectly correct. As an element in this question, I would now examine it. The English version is, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” A simple person would surely, in reading Peter, refer to His sufferings in death. Thus, in chapter iii., I read: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins; the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” No one denies that Christ suffered, during His life, sufferings which found their perfection in His death, besides the wrath-bearing character of it; for He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

But the question is, “Was there sin-bearing during His active service, or was He kept up as the Lamb to bear sin?” It turns on the word “bare,” . It is alleged that if it meant “bare,” it must be or or . All this is a Mistake. A sacrificial word is, I do not doubt, purposely used; but means “to bear, or undergo,” probably because sacrificial victims, which were offered up, were supposed to bear sins: at any rate, it does mean “to-bear, undergo, sustain.” The truth is, determining the meaning of a word by etymology, in a cultivated language, is the most absurd thing possible. It is interesting as philological research; but as determining the usus loquendi, it is ridiculous. I might say “hell-fire” must mean “covering sins” (for it is the same word as “to heal,” used also provincially for roofing)—for the same reason, hence, that the fire of hell was purgatorial or remissory! It did originally mean a covered place, hades, and hence, gradually everlasting punishment. does mean to offer in sacrifice; it means “to recreate oneself, to remember, to cough up, to return, to cast the sin on another, to weigh or consider,” &c. The question is, Does it mean to bear, to undergo the pain and burden of? and, when used sacrificially, Can it be separated from the altar of sacrifice? I say it does mean “to bear, to undergo the pain and burden of anything;” and when used in connection with sacrifice, it cannot be separated from actual offering up to God.

First, it means “to bear or undergo.” I must turn to the dictionaries for this, and the passages in which it is used. They leave no sort of question. It is only systematizing, and not the facts in the Greek language, which can lead any one to deny it. I turn to Stephanus. I find , ferri, perferre, pati, ut Christus dicitur, peccata nostra. (1 Peter 2:24; Heb. 9:28.) Citatur e Thucydide quod durum sit reddere, Ferre pericula: potiusque verti debeat, Subire pericula (better “to undergo,” that is, than “to bear”). The general sense of “undergoing the burden and pain of” is evident; and that is our point here. There is a reference in the beginning of the article to Aristides (I suppose, lit's Aristides, the rhetorician), which I cannot verify. So Pape, auf sick nehmen, ertragen, “to take on oneself; “to bear” , Thucydides; , that is, “envy, calumny, war,” Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassns. He adds New Testament. Liddell and Scott give “to uphold, to take on one,” Latin sustinere (quoting schylus () and Thucydides). It is thus perfectly certain that the word means “to bear the burden of anything, to undergo.” The etymological sense of “to bring up or back” is a mere absurdity here.

We have now to examine the scriptural use of it in connection with sacrifice, and in particular the passage in Peter. is a sacrificial word. It is used here (if we are to take it as it usually is taken, as referring to Isa. 53:12) for Hebrew nasa, which means “to lift up, to bear, to forgive,” and here confessedly “to bear.” It is alleged—for I have considered diligently what is alleged against it—that it cannot mean “to bear passively with” (al), a s would be the case with . This is a mistake. Aaron was to bear the names of the children upon (al) his heart (Ex. 28:29). So with the judgment, in verse 30.

It is said that Isa. 53:4, is translated by divine inspiration, and hence it could not be ; in verse 12. But this proves, if anything (for the word may be translated differently in different places according to the sense, but if it be the Spirit's purpose to make the difference here, it proves this), that He would not use a sacrificial vicarious word in verse 4, but would in verse 12 (that is, that the “bearing,” in verse 4, was not sacrificial, but is in verse 12); for Heb. 9:28, that Christ was once offered , are the very words of Isa. 53:12. So that, if this is of any value, it is not an inference, that it cannot be used in one place because it is not in another; and that Peter, if he had quoted it, would have used another word for “nasa” in verse 12, because Matthew did in verse 4 (an argument, when said to be from inspiration, which I decline characterizing). It is a direct proof that inspiration will not use a vicarious sacrificial word as to Christ's living sympathies and sorrows; but that it will and does use it when it speaks of bearing sins when offered up to God.

And now, leaving argument, which I am glad to do, what is the scriptural use of , in connection with sins and sacrifices, with or without ? The following instances will show: Num. 14:34, . The use of it in this passage is the more noticeable: save in Lev. 20:19, the word always used for bearing the consequence of our own or a father's sin (and under the old covenant this is the same thing) is in the Septuagint. In Lev. 20:19, it is . In Ex. 28:29, , and for the same words in verse 30 it is .. . Indeed, the argument as to may justly be carried much farther; For is regularly used for bearing the fruit of one's sin, bringing sin on oneself in its consequences. It is not bearing it vicariously, but as a consequence on oneself. The only apparent exceptions that I am aware of, and they are only apparent, are Lev. 16:22, the scapegoat; and Ezek. 4:4, 5, 6. But the first is , “He shall carry them into a land not inhabited;” and in the case of Ezekiel, it was clearly not (nasa) vicarious, but representative (saval) and the same as the ordinary case. In a word , is not used for vicarious bearing, but bearing the consequence of one's own fault, coming under the effect of it oneself, poenas luere.

(To be continued ...)

But what is important is to see the actual use, of , when used with sacrifice. Num. 14:34, and Isa. 53:11, are plain proofs that it is used for bearing sins penally. But now, as to sacrifice. The reader must bear in mind that the act of having the sin on the victim is not in itself the expiation. That puts the victim in the answering place; for the other, death and the judicial action of God must come in to put it away. It must be slain and offered on the altar; as it is said, “by means of death.” Christ had to take our sins on Him, and therefore die—give His life a ransom for many. Every one, therefore, believes He had taken them on Him before He gave up the ghost. The question is, Did He take them on Him in order to suffer on the cross, and suffer the penal judgment of them there; as the victim was brought up to the altar, then the sins confessed on his head, and then the victim itself, thus made sin, slain and burnt? Or was Christ born into this penal state, suffering it before He actually gave Himself up to be offered on the cross? Was He under the penal consequences of sin in the sufferings of His active service—was that penally from God? or in the sufferings of the cup He took to drink upon the cross from God? I believe the latter—that it was after the victim was presented as an offering to the altar (in Christ's case we must say presented Himself as a spotless victim to the cross) that the penal sufferings for sins were on Him, because our sins were on Him; and that it is to this bearing of sins alone that the passage in Peter applies. Christ offered Himself without spot to God. Jehovah laid then the iniquity upon Him. He Who knew no sin was then made sin. Did the Lord lay the iniquity upon Him before He offered Himself without spot, a proved spotless lamb? One Who knew no sin was made sin when He had bowed to His Father's will to drink that cup.

Offering in scripture, a double character. It is used for presenting the victim, or indeed any offering heevi or hikriv, “to cause to come nigh.” But is not used for this, though in grammar I know not why it should not be. It is used for hard causes in judgment in Deut. 1:17, ’ “Ye shall bring it to me,” but not for offering that I can find. If the reader takes Lev. 1, he will find for these words or , to bring up. This was the

presenting the offering which was to be a victim. But as soon as the victim, or part of it, is spoken of as burnt on the altar (Lev. 3:5), then it is , . So in verse 9 the general idea of offering is hikriv, and in verse 11, the burning of it on the altar, . And this is the regular use of it in Leviticus, and elsewhere, as Ex. 29:18, 25; 30:20; Leviticus 2:16; 3:16; 4:10, 19, 26, 31; 6:15, 26; 7:5; 8:16, 20, 21,27; 9:10, 20; 16:25; 17:6; Num. 5:26; 18:17. This last has the same force, but there is not . That is, is the technical expression for consumption or offering up to God by fire, when on the altar, in contrast with bringing up to the altar. When is not used, it has practically the same force when used of offerings—that is, offering to God: but has the proper peculiar force of bearing them as a victim on the altar, under the consuming fire of God, not of bringing up to. It answers to hiktir, not to hikriv. It is impossible that the use of language can be made plainer by the facts of that use.

There is another word for which it is used, which confirms this, hla (Gen. 8:20; 22:2: so Ex. 24:5; Lev. 14:19, 20); where the reader will remark, comparing verse 13, that in both cases, of the sin or trespass-offering and the burnt-offering, they are killed before they are offered in this sense of the word. In Christ both went together; He died on the cross. But it is of importance to remark it here, because it shows that hala, as well as hatir, is not bearing the sins up to the altar, but the being offered (in consuming fire) on the altar to God. The word is used in some passages generally as a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, the sense being assumed to be known; but this shows the strict sense is, the ascending up to God as a sweet savor, under the proving and consuming fire, not the bringing up sin to the altar. And this is so true, that as these burnt-offerings were of a sweet savor, so no offering not made by fire was a sweet savor. Compare Lev. 2:9, 12, determining the use of this word in the most positive way. They were to bring it up (takrivoo) as an offering but they were not to offer it (yahaloo) as a sweet savor, very justly, as to the sense, translated “burnt” in the English. It was not to be made to ascend as a sweet savor—that is, to be burnt and mount up to God as such.

The general use may be seen in Num. 28:2 and Deut. 12:13, 14; chapter xxvii. 6 is a proof that the notion of , i.e., with an accusative (see below), is not so absolute, but proves that , in any case, does not mean necessarily bringing up to, for here it is used with the genitive. Judg. 13:19, again, shows distinctly what means (here , because it was a rock); for it is added, “For it came to pass, that when the flame went up,” behaaloth, “from off” the altar. The victim was offered on the rock, and in the going up of the flame. That was what hala refers to, not the, bringing up to the altar.

Additional cases will be found in Kings and Chronicles, David's and Solomon's offerings; but it is only repeating similar cases, which confirm, but are not needed, to prove the point. The words for which are used (namely, burning or causing to ascend on the altar), and the uniform use of them, prove distinctly that the force of the word is the bearing under consuming fire on the altar, and not bringing sins up to it. I may quote another proof, strongly confirming the use of this word in in 2 Chron. 29:27. Verse 24, the victim was killed; verse 27, Hezekiah commands it to be offered, . I add, on this occasion, it is never used for bringing or bearing sins up to the altar, it is used for bringing victims to the house; but this I quote because there it is not . The sins were not yet upon them; they were the spotless victims that were to become sin-bearers, and sweet savors of offerings made by fire.

is never used for bringing or bearing sins up to the altar; what it is used for has been fully shown. But the supposition that with an accusative means actively bringing up to, and then rest, is a mistake. There may be grammatically the idea by implication that that which is is not always and naturally there; but as a matter of fact, it does mean resting on a place or thing at the time spoken of. Thus Matt. 13:2, “All the multitude stood” . So Matt. 19:28, “Ye shall sit on twelve thrones,” . Acts 10:17; 11:11, . Winer's “Grammatik” (section 583) may be seen for this use of with a genitive for motion. See a singular example in Lev. 3:5, the pieces of the peace-offering on the burnt-offering, —on the wood, —on the fire, . This may be from the fire being always there belonging to the altar, whereas the wood was brought there: will be understood then before it. In many cases, I have no doubt that the real cause of the accusative is this; when the preposition of the compound verb implies motion, there will be the accusative, though the whole sense will be rest. I do not think you would ever have . With , you will have the accusative; so in contrast with Christ's sitting in a boat on the sea; but Mark . But this is grammar, and I pursue it no farther.

t remains only to adduce the cases of , in the sense of bearing or offering. We have first Heb. 7:27, “who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice; for this He did once when He offered up Himself.” Now, here it is perfectly certain that it has nothing to do with the victim bearing sins up to the altar, but with what we have seen to be its usual and uniform sense—the high priest's offering it on the altar, where it was a victim. So, also, we have distinct proof that it is no vicarious life; for He did it once when He offered up Himself, and it was for sins. When, consequently, it may have a more general meaning of giving Himself up to be a victim, we have the word used for that in Leviticus, , Heb. 9:14. Hence we have in verse 28, “once offered [] to bear [] the sins of many.” Thus He was once offered, and offered to bear sins as thus offered, of which it is said that He had not to offer Himself often, for then He must often have suffered; but now He has appeared once in the consummation of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: that is, His offering, His suffering, was the sacrifice of Himself. His being born was not His sacrifice. He offered Himself—One Who was a man, though by the eternal Spirit, or there could be no offering. That is, He was a man before He offered Himself, His own blessed voluntary act, the perfect act of Christ, though in obedience, and Himself already the spotless Lamb He was thus the Man, the spotless One, to bear the sins of many. This, there can be no doubt, refers to Isa. 53:12.

We have, further, James 2:21, “When he had offered up Isaac on the altar;” and 1 Peter 2:5, “Offer up spiritual sacrifices,” which give no proof; save that the last shows this, that it was the offering up to God, which is very important in this way, that it shows it was not the bringing up the sins, when laid on the victim's head, to the altar. The offering of the victim to God is . The consumption on the altar was its offering up as a sacrifice to God; this is . The notion of bringing up a living victim to the altar is unknown to scripture. The animal was slain when he had been offered (), slain by whom it might be, and the blood sprinkled on the altar, and the fat, or the whole victim, burnt. The altar had to do with death and the judgment of fire, and there was the sacrifice. A living victim bringing up sins to the altar is a thought foreign and contrary to scripture. When the victim had been presented, and the hands of the offerer had been laid upon it, it was slain at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Death was the way sin was dealt with in the victim (we know Christ's death was on the cross, as well as the full drinking of the cup of wrath); the thought of bringing sins up livingly, as if He offered Himself and His sins, is an impossibility. No; He offered Himself, and bare () our sins when offered () as a dying victim. Death was the wages of sin.

Thus I return to 1 Peter 2:24 with the fall evidence of scripture and the Greek use of the word. All the scriptural order of sacrifice, and the language of scripture, confirm it, so that the simple-hearted reader may rest in all confidence in his English translation, “He bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” The word “bear” () has a sacrificial character; but that no Christian reader ever doubted in this passage.

I do not see, I confess, how any scriptural location could be made more certain. I doubt that any other could have so ample and absolute a proof of its actual meaning, and refutation of the meaning attempted to be put upon it, and of the desired change in the Authorized Version. J. N. D.

(Concluded from page 111.)

Christian Truth: Volume 24, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Comments on

This passage has occasioned difficulties to readers of Scripture; but it appears clear to me, if we perceive the object of the Spirit of God. The Jews expected a Messiah corporeally present, who should deliver the nation, and exalt the Jews to the summit of earthly glory. But He was not present, we know, in that manner; and the believing Jews had to endure scoffs and the hatred of the unbelieving, on account of their trust in a Messiah who was not present, and who had wrought no deliverance for the people. Believers possessed the salvation of their souls, and they knew Jesus in heaven; but unbelieving men did not care for that. The Apostle therefore cites the case of Noah's testimony. The believing Jews were few in number, and Christ was theirs only according to the Spirit. By the power of that Spirit He had been raised up from the dead. It was by the power of the same Spirit that He had gone—without being corporeally present—to preach in Noah. The world was disobedient (like the Jews in the apostles' days), and eight souls only were saved, even as the believers now are but a little flock. But the spirits of the disobedient were now in prison, because they did not obey Christ present among them by His Spirit in Noah. The long-suffering of God waited then, as now, with the Jewish nation; the result would be the same. It has been so.

This interpretation is confirmed (in preference to that which supposes that the Spirit of Christ preached in hades to souls which had been confined there ever since the flood) by the consideration that in Gen. 6:3 it is said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;... yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." That is to say, His Spirit should strive, in the testimony of Noah, during a hundred and twenty years and no longer. Now it would be an extraordinary thing that with those persons only (for he speaks only of them) the Lord would strive in testimony after their death. Moreover, we may observe that; in considering this expression to mean the Spirit of Christ in Noah, we only use a well-known phrase of Peter's; for he it is who said, "the Spirit of Christ which was in them [the prophets]" (1 Pet. 1:11).

These spirits then are in prison, because they did not hearken to the Spirit of Christ in Noah. (Compare 2 Pet. 2:5-9.) To this the Apostle adds the comparison of baptism to the ark of Noah in the deluge. Noah was saved through the water; we also; for the water of baptism typifies death, as the deluge, so to speak, was the death of the world. Now Christ has passed through death and is risen. We enter into death in figure in baptism; but it is like the ark, because Christ suffered in death for us, and has come out of it in resurrection, as Noah came out of the deluge to begin, as it were, a new life in a resurrection world.

Now Christ, having passed through death, has atoned for sins; and we, by passing through it in spirit, leave all our sins in it, as Christ did in reality for us; for He was raised up without the sins which He expiated on the cross. And they were our sins; and thus, through the resurrection, we have a good conscience. We pass through death in spirit and in figure by baptism. The peace-giving force of the thing is the resurrection of Christ, after He had accomplished expiation, by which resurrection therefore we have a good conscience.

This is what the Jews had to learn. The Christ was gone up to heaven, all powers and principalities being made subject to Him. He is at the right hand of God. We have therefore not a Messiah on earth, but a good conscience and a heavenly Christ.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 7, 1 Peter 3:10-18 Are You Brought to God?

The apostle leads us to expect suffering. There will be more or less of it; for though called to " inherit a blessing," it is through suffering here. This passage shows out the result of God's government, but, besides that, it shows that we are brought to God. This is the great central truth. Christ " once suffered for sins... that he might bring us to God." There is little doctrine laid down in the epistles of Peter, but strong and vivid bringing out of fundamental truths. At the end of 2 Peter we have God's government of all this present scene; and things that the world is trusting in are all to be consumed; for indeed " the world and all that is therein will be burned up." There is not a single shelter here to be trusted to: all is going to be rolled up as a garment. Peter does not here dwell upon what was done for believers by Christ at His first coming, but on God's government closing in the terrible judgment. Are we brought to God?

Verse 10. The moral government of God is not brought to an issue, and cannot be while grace is going on, but the principles of it exist. For example, a quiet, peaceful, upright man would be better off than a turbulent man, etc. " What a man sows that will he reap " even now. It is not that everything gets its just recompense now-quite the contrary; but there are certain consequences a man will suffer for his deeds. There cannot be in this world now the full final expression of God's government, because sin has come in; and if He were to act in judgment, He would cut it all off; but as a general thing the principle is true-" The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous... but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil "; and behind and within it all there is something more. His own power and grace are at work in the gathering out of souls to form His church. In the millennium evil will not be allowed, the sinner will be cut off. There is a secret exercise of this principle now. " If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." There is the working of sin and evil; but, though the terror of the wicked is here, " be not afraid." The only thing is to have the single eye and serve with a good conscience; but if you do, you will find plenty to oppose you. " Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled," " sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he shall be for a sanctuary." In spite of the blessedness of a peaceful walk, there may be the whole power of Satan brought out against you; but you have the whole power of God: therefore " be not afraid."

There are two characters of suffering noticed by the Lord in the sermon on the Mount, as here by Peter-suffering for righteousness' sake, and suffering for Christ's sake. The effect of being a Christian is to have a conscience exercised to know what is right for him as such: he walks in God's presence, and therefore in the light; he has his will thwarted. Thus many things in the world, he finds, will not do for him as walking in the path of righteousness; the world will not have this scrupulousness; and therefore trial comes from them for the believer. His hopes and joys being elsewhere, his treasure and his heart are elsewhere. " Blessed are they that suffer for righteousness' sake." Then the Christian

must expect to suffer for Christ. And " blessed are ye when men shall revile you," etc., for my sake. When God becomes the object and motive, he takes suffering as a natural portion. Then it comes to be a question of testimony for God to those who are not with God; that is a different thing from suffering for conscience' sake, or righteousness' sake.

In chapter 4: 13, 14, it is Christ's sufferings, and Christ's glory. The same Spirit that makes me partaker of the suffering, makes me also partaker of the glory. I should be a witness of His power through the Holy Ghost, a witness for Christ, and not only keeping a good conscience. As a witness for Christ, in being a vessel of His testimony, you share the glory He is in.

Peter does not speak of the church's place. As in the church, we are all partakers alike of glory according to the gift of grace, we are all predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. But here it is as individuals, and the glory is put before them as the reward of suffering. An energy of love ever goes out if the Spirit of Christ is really there. I cannot see a person perishing, and not feel it. The spirit of love cannot look upon perishing sinners, and not care for them. This becomes an occasion of suffering.

" But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." God must have His right place in our hearts in both these things; giving God in my heart His true character is sanctifying Him. In whose heart has God this perfect place of power and love? I do not mean in activity, that is according to gift, but in the heart. Where is the heart that keeps itself entirely for God, that is filled with God's love and holiness? All that is in the world, pleasure, vanity, etc., robs God of His glory in us. God is not then sanctified by us, and this is the secret of our weakness. Could you say to-day-yesterday-that God has had His right place in your hearts? What is the consequence? It ought to be a bad conscience. Ought I to forget my forgetfulness? I shall find it out in weakness, if I do not find it in confession. Power for testifying for God is not there, if I have been talking idleness or vanity. If I turn to anything for God, as if my whole heart were in it, I am in danger; I do not sanctify the Lord in my heart. There may not be insincerity or hypocrisy in it, but the lack of the sanctifying the Lord; and when He has not the place in us that makes us happy and that gives us power (for the joy of the Lord is strength), there is not the blessing flowing out to others. We want the practical power of the God that loves us, working in our hearts. What a thing this supposes! If I do not know God, I cannot sanctify Him. It is as being brought to Him I can sanctify Him. The thought of getting to God when I get to heaven, supposes that I have not come to Him now. All we have been speaking of flows out of giving God the place He really has. We are to sanctify the Lord because He is there, trusting in that love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Why is the conduct of one man different from another man's? One is without God, and the other has Him as a present spring of delight and strength, love, comfort-this is a total, immense, and infinite change. What a thing to be without God as regards the soul! Immortal beings without God! having faculty, intelligence, sagacity, but without God! Human affection is lovely in the creature, but it is not God. The objects of affection may come in between the creature and God, even what He has created in us; for blessing may be an occasion of idolatry.

It is not responsibility here. My leaning on a friend is not responsibility, my being happy with a friend is not responsibility. If I drink when I am thirsty, it is not responsibility; but God is there, when I drink of the living water which Christ gives me. He makes these affections to flow out to Himself, necessarily and divinely. He is working upon me, communicating to me in the sovereignty of His grace: therefore it is not responsibility. If God then can communicate Himself in our hearts, what a well of water is springing up! I have got trouble, but what is that? I have got that, yea, Him, to give me joy in the trouble, which the trouble cannot touch. I have a spring within and a sanctuary around me. If there is such blessedness in God being sanctified and enjoyed by us, perhaps some of you say, I know nothing about it. I do not speak of enjoyment now; but where a man is a believer, it is not a question of whether he has the relationship of grace, but whether he has failed in it. If I am unfaithful in this love, and unhappy in the consciousness of having done so, it is because I really have it. The thing he has to enjoy is what is in God Himself, and that is His own love. If we believe what God communicates to the soul, by dwelling in us, " we know and believe the love that God hath to us." A person may say well-I do not know, I cannot speak of the present, but I hope to get to God. The questioning how a man is to get it is very solemn and a sure sign that He is not there.

" That you may be able to give an answer to every man," etc. It is not you suffering for sins; but if the will of God be so, it is better to suffer for well doing than for evil doing; but do not suppose you are suffering for your sins: Christ has done that for you. If you suffer for righteousness' sake, it is all well, but for sins-Christ has done it for you, having left you nothing to suffer for them.

How mighty this inward purpose of God! This one act brings a man to God. Christ suffered all His life long, but from whom? Man. But there at the end, the center of all this, by the cross, we are brought to God Himself. God is in a man's heart or He is not. But the suffering for sins Christ bore was from God Himself. Here we get the purpose of God, not His government; and notwithstanding such a death, all the wrath of God, all the power of Satan, all the consequences of sin brought to bear upon Christ on the cross (this was suffering for sin), He did it in respect of what man was, and in respect of what God was, and it was to bring them together. All that was in God was fully brought out. His love brought out suffering, wrath, etc. All that my heart must be rightly exercised about met there. I could not go to God without God knowing what my heart is; and (all the difference of good and evil being to Him) can He know the evil and be indifferent to it? Can He say it is no matter? Impossible! It would be unholiness in Him. Could He see all the levity, ill-humor, willfulness, indifference in the presence of His cross and be indifferent? What is He to do with it? What is He to do with you? He must put sin away, and He must deal with it in the perfectness of His love and holiness. We have turned God into a Judge by our sins, and I find myself in the presence of the God whom I dreaded. He has put away the sin from my conscience, put His love in my heart, given me to delight in holiness. He who was just suffered for the unjust; and now, being brought to God, there is nothing in Him, with whom I have to do, but what I have been made acquainted with (not His glory yet, of course). I am the sinner He has been engaged about. He has made Himself known to me by what He has done. I know God. What a home I have! Its spring is the love in God's heart, and it has brought me back to the source of that love. I am brought home to the enjoyment of His love, and am partaker of His nature.

After this I need not say that there are all the exercises of heart in consequence, conflict with evil, etc.; but I can testify to sinners " God so loved the world." How do you know this? it may be said. I have tasted it. Thus we are fellow-workers with God. We have the immense privilege, according to the sphere given us, of testifying of the love that has saved us. But if I have not this love in my heart, how can I testify of it to others? If I say to one who is weary, " Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," says Christ, you will turn to me and say, Have you got rest? A person may warn another, and be exercised himself; but he cannot testify to the truth of deliverance. Could you go and say, He has received me? I can say He has received me, and none viler. Now if you have not got God, you have your sins, your will, your responsibility-but not God. Why did Christ suffer for sins? It was because you were away from God. Now have you the consciousness of having been away from God, and are you, like the prodigal, brought back? If not, it is very solemn. You have loved vanity, you have loved your pleasures, you have loved yourself, and have not God; not willfully opposing, perhaps, but in the ignorance of unbelief,

you are without God-the God of love.

If you have not yet come to God by the cross, may He give you to see it, that you may walk in the spirit of blessing, and sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, living a life of communion with God, and bringing forth the fruit of communion in ways according to it, till you come to the full enjoyment of eternal blessing in the Father's house on high!

The Christian Shepherd: 2003, How Love Covers Sins

“Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

In speaking of the “inner-relations” of Christians among themselves, the first thing that the Apostle Peter enforces on them is fervent charity (divine—“agape”—love). This love is not merely long-suffering, which prevents the outbreak of fleshly anger, but it is an energy of love which characterizes all our ways towards our brethren exhibiting the divine presence and action.

This love covered a multitude of sins not here regarding ultimate pardon, but of present relations of God in government with His people.

If the assembly is at variance, if there is little love, if fellowship among Christians is restricted and difficult, all such evils and wrongs exist before God. But if there is love, which neither commits nor resents any wrongs, but pardons such things, finding in those very sins occasion for its own exercise, the eye of God then rests upon the love rather than the evil the multitude of sins is covered.

Where there are sins, love occupies itself about them, the offender is brought back, is restored, by the love of the assembly, and the sins are removed from the eye of God they are covered.

“Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins” (Prov. 10:12). We have a right to forgive them—to wash the feet of our brother—and we not only forgive, but love maintains the assembly before God according to His own nature so that He can bless it.

Christians ought to exercise hospitality towards each other with all liberality. It is the expression of love and tends much to maintain it; we are no longer strangers to each other.

J. N. Darby (Synopsis on 1 Peter 4, adapted)

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Critical 1, Suffering in the Flesh

The will of the flesh is the practical principle of all sin. Will is not obedience to God, and hence is sin in its very principle, but being the will of the flesh shows itself in the flesh's lusts. It does not turn towards God, but the contrary, and does turn towards what the flesh desires. It is the acting of the nature at enmity with God's. Suffering in the flesh is the opposite of this will, or acting of the nature. This is applied both to Christ and to us; but in the case of Christ it is applied to His death. (See 1 Peter 3:18.) Rather than be disobedient in anything, and perfect in obedience, from the divine surrender of all will in Psa. 40 to take the place of obedience, He goes on to death, as man's weakness, Satan's power, God's wrath, and was obedient through all these, and in the former passed through both the latter rather than not obey. He was perfect in obedience, not sparing the flesh in anything, and died to sin once; that is, He went on to death in its fullest forms, rather than withdraw from doing God's will, or have one of His own. His died rather than He would have a will or aught but God's will. Thus sin found no inlet or place. An apple served to lead Adam into sin; nothing could lead Christ into it. Not only He had never any sin, but He went through everything that could induce will, and all failed to lead Him into it. He suffered in the flesh. Sin was baffled forever, and totally-the whole proof gone through, and nothing served to introduce it; all possible trial is over, for He has gone through it in weakness, as to His human nature. He has thus rested from all further question of sin, He has a divine and eternal sabbath as to it. How blessed! On the earth He had not. He had always victory over it-never let anything but obedience in His heart-proved He had a nature contrary to it, on purpose to obey, and nothing else. This was perfection, and the rather because He was tempted; but it was not a sabbath or rest. Between Him and His Father, in the exercise of love in obeying, He had joy, but till He died, (,) He had not rest from it. This has, as a great principle, its application to us. " He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin," is an abstract principle. When the will of my flesh works, I have not ceased from sin; but when, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I act entirely and feel entirely in the new nature, and the flesh has no will allowed, nor a thought belonging to it has entrance, because I am full of what the Spirit gives me, and obey in the delight of obedience, though suffering as regards man, in that I have ceased from sin. As sin is in the flesh, it may be in us a question of degree. It is partial, temporary, perhaps, in its realization; but the principle remains ever true, and suffering (that is as far as suffering) in the flesh, sin has no place in me, my thoughts, mind, and moral being. The flesh is not changed; but if I only suffer in it, it in me then has no operation as to will. It is important that scripture truth- perfect moral truth-should be given us unmodified in its own truth and nature; because then we can see what it is, and judge the comparative degree of attainment. Besides the spirit is refreshed by the thing itself. We have the same thing in John's epistle, who never introduces the modifications resulting from the adverse action of the flesh or any hindrance. The difficulty of the passage in Peter is its abstract nature. The point important to hold clear is that it is Christ's death that is spoken of in His case, though, of course, all His life was consistent with it.

1 Peter 4:6

1 Peter 4:6 refers to verse 5. Christ is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Good news of promise were addressed to those now dead, that they might be thus judged; but not for that only, but that through grace they might live in the Spirit. In respect of their human position in flesh, they were to be judged for the deeds done in the body, but, if they received the message, live spiritually to God. Their being judged shows clearly, I think, that it is no preaching to spirits, that they might be judged for that. Read, it has been preached. It was preached to those now dead. It must be remembered that Peter is writing to the strangers of the dispersion or scattered Jews. Christ has suffered. They are suffering among the ungodly, no longer doing the will of the Gentiles as other Jews were. Now Christ, being exalted, is ready to judge. The Church has only to be complete and caught up for Him to do it. He is exalted and ready; and if He comes and judges the quick among whom

they were suffering, His authority to judge extended to the dead also who had received promises (compare Heb. 4:2) that, if they did not live in the Spirit to God, as the believing Jews had to do now without a rest or present Messiah according to promise, they might be judged as responsible men in flesh.

He had made a previous statement to the same purport in respect of those who were in the time of Noah. The Christian Jews were now a little flock; so were the spared in Noah's time. They had Christ only in spirit (a trial and reproach for a Jew who spoke of Messiah's being come); and so had Noah. (Compare chap. 1: 11.) But what was the effect of their rejection of Noah's preaching? Their spirits were now in prison, a proof that the Lord knew, as he says elsewhere, to deliver the godly out of temptation, and reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished. So the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks, in contrast, of the spirits of just men made perfect. It would be a strange thing, if those of whom it was said, " My Spirit shall not always strive with man, but his days shall be one hundred and twenty years," should be the only ones selected to be preached to afterward. But this by the by.

ON 2 Cor. 5:10

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

The passages on the subject are these. They will be seen to be of two classes.

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

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

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

This is one class of texts. The other here follows:-

Matt. 10:26. Fear them not, therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known.

Mark 4:21. Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel or under a bed, and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested, neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

Luke 8:16-18. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel or putteth it under a bed, but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed, therefore, how ye hear, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thus the bringing of sin to light and judgment may be here from the hand of God. Men are chastened of the Lord that they may not be condemned with the world. 1 Cor. 11.

One passage remains, demanding more particular notice- 2 Cor. 5:10-" For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of the Christ, that each may receive the things done by the body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad."

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

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

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

Remark the true effect on a right state of mind as here described by the apostle. First, not a thought of judgment as to righteousness has any place whatever. The judgment-seat only awakens that love which thinks of those still exposed to it. " Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Secondly, it is realized so as to put him who realized it responsibly in the presence of God. Now " we are manifested to God." Oh, what a healthful and blessed thing this is for the soul! The rest is a mere effect readily hoped for-" I trust that we are manifested in your consciences." The other considerations produced a conduct proper to have this effect; but if a man was before God it was of link matter, it did not affect the soul, save in the desire of others' good and Christ's glory. This double effect will certainly be produced in any such manifestation before others, and we then shall as certainly desire nothing else.

The shame of a nature we have left will not be there then; the just judgment of evil will. I say this, however, in respect of the present condition of the soul. Anxiety on this point is a proof that the soul is not wholly in the sight of God. There it disappears because we are wholly there. Scripture never brings in the thought of brethren as concerned in this manifestation, and could not; but it does maintain, in the fullest way, manifestation in the light, so that if the heart reserves anything- has not brought it wholly out before God, it should be ill at ease. We certainly are perfectly manifested to the Lord, consciously I mean (for we always are so), and to ourselves. If it be for His glory that anything should be known to the saints also, we shall not regret it then; but our proper full manifestation is certainly to God, and in our own souls. All that is needed to verify the government of God will, I doubt not, be made manifest. All that has been through evil sought to be hidden, so that the heart was false-the counsel of the heart evil, will be brought to light; but where men have walked in the light, the counsels of the heart, however man may have judged them, will be made plain; for in that day God will judge the secrets of men's hearts. His grace and His government may have wrought all this in this world, and some men's sins and good works go before to judgment, but those that are otherwise cannot be hid.

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

Bible Treasury: Volume 1, Suffering in the Flesh

The will of the flesh is the practical principle of all sin. Will is not obedience to God and hence is sin in its very principle, but, being the will of the flesh, shows itself in the flesh's lusts. It does not turn towards God, but the contrary, and does turn towards what the flesh desires. It is the acting of the nature at enmity with God's. Suffering in the flesh is the opposite of this will, or acting of the nature. This is applied both to Christ and to us; but in the case of Christ it is applied to His death. (See chap. 3:18) Rather than be disobedient in anything, and perfect in obedience, from the divine surrender of all will in Psa. 40 to take the place of obedience, He goes on to death, as man's weakness, Satan's power, God's wrath, and was obedient through all these, and in the former passed through both the latter rather than not obey. He was perfect in obedience, not sparing the flesh in anything, and died to sin once; that is, He went on to death in its fullest forms, rather than withdraw from doing God's, or have one of His own. His nature died rather than He would have a will or aught but God's will. Thus sin found no inlet or place. An apple served to lead Adam into sin; nothing could lead Christ into it. Not only He had never any sin, but He went through everything that could induce will, and all failed to lead Him into it. He suffered in the flesh; sin was baffled forever, and totally—the whole proof gone through, and nothing served to introduce it; all possible trial is over, for He has gone through it in weakness, as to His human nature. He has thus rested from all further question of sin, has a divine and eternal Sabbath as to it. How blessed! On the earth He had not. He had always victory over it—never let anything but obedience in His heart—proved he had a nature contrary to it, on purpose to obey and

nothing else. This was perfection, and the rather because He was tempted; but it was not a sabbath or rest. Between Him and His Father, in the exercise of love in obeying, He had joy, but till He died, , He had no rest from it. This has, as a great principle, its application to us. “He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” is an abstract principle. When the will of my flesh works, I have not ceased from sin; but when, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I act entirely and feel entirely in the new nature, and the flesh has no will allowed, nor a thought belonging to it has entrance, because I am full of what the Spirit gives me, and obey in the delight of obedience, though suffering as regards man, in that I have ceased from sin. As sin is in the flesh, it may be in us a question of degree. It is partial, temporary, perhaps, in its realization; but the principle remains ever true, and suffering, that is as far as suffering in the flesh, sin has no place in me, my thoughts, mind, and moral being. The flesh is not changed, but if I only suffer in it, it in me then has no operation as to will.

It is important that scripture truth—perfect moral truth—should be given us unmodified in its own truth and nature; because then we can see what it is, and judge the comparative degree of attainment. Besides, the spirit is refreshed by the thing itself. We have the same thing in John's epistle, who never introduces the modifications resulting from the adverse action of the flesh or any hindrance. The difficulty of the passage in Peter is its abstract nature. The point important to hold clear is that it is Christ's death that is spoken of in His case, though, of course, all His life was consistent with it.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 1, Notion of a Clergyman, The

DISPENSATIONALLY THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

[It is necessary to give a brief account of the following tract, which is now published for the first time. It was intended to be published at the time; but the printer and publisher showed it privately to some of the influential clergy before it was published, and I was surrounded and entreated not to publish it (I cannot really, at this distance of time, say by whom), and gave way. We can all understand (at least, any who have had deep convictions on points which affect the whole standing of the church of God) how (however deep internal convictions of any such truths may be) a serious and conscientious mind may hesitate as to putting forth what may shock the feelings of many godly persons, and violates established order; and in such matters all ought to be not only conscientious but serious, have the fear of God, and not merely an opinion on that which may work deeply in the minds of any, and affect so sacred a thing, the only sacred thing in the world, as the church of God. It never therefore appeared. Nor do I, though it may appear to be weakness in myself, regret it at the hands of Him who makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. I have a deep, abiding conviction that the building up of good can alone give lasting blessing, not the attacking evil. I would press it on every one who seeks good. I had not the most distant feeling of enmity against any, nor against the Establishment; I loved it still, I looked at it as a barrier against Popery. When I left it, I published the tract on " The Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ." Every one knows, and for myself it is a matter of profound sorrow, and a sign of approaching judgment, that it has ceased to be such a barrier, and, for many, has been the road into it, and that infidel principles have been judicially pronounced to be fully admissible in it. Christians are thrown (where Paul originally threw them when warning them of the perilous times of the last days) on the word of God, and knowing of whom they have learned anything; as to which we have this word of the Apostle John, " He that is of God heareth us "-not tradition, not the fathers in numberless folios, but " us "-not development nor decrees of violent and clashing councils, but " that which was from the beginning," and, I add, the infallible faithfulness of an ascended Lord. But we are thus cast on great principles, I mean scriptural principles and truth. Of this the presence of the Holy Ghost is a cardinal one. I may add as that which led to this (I mean as to the truth itself in my own soul), that, after I had been converted six or seven years, I learned by divine teaching what the Lord says in John 14, " In that day ye shall know... that ye are in me, and I in you "-that I was one with Christ before God, and I found peace, and I have never, with many shortcomings, lost it since. The same truth brought me out of the Establishment. I saw that the true church was composed of those who were thus united to Christ; I may add, it led me to wait for God's Son from heaven; for if I was sitting in heavenly places in Him, what was I waiting for but that He should come and take me there? The infinite love of God flowed early into my soul in this process which the Lord was carrying on. Previously I had had, from the first, the deepest possible convictions of sin, and had known and after some years taught that Christ alone could fill up that abyss, but not that He had. I had passed in the deepest way, fasting (a thing which, I believe, if spiritually used, may be most useful), but then in a legal spirit, and in an elaborate system of devotedness, sacraments, and churchgoing, through what is now called Puseyism; but had found that Christ and not that could give peace, but had not found it; I sought it, looked for the proofs of regeneration in myself, which can never give peace, rested in hope in Christ's work, but not in faith, till I found it, as I have stated, when laid by for some time by what is called accident, from outward labor. The presence of the Spirit of God, the promised Comforter, had then become a deep conviction of my soul from scripture. This soon after applied itself to ministry. I said to myself, if Paul came here, he could not preach, he has no letters of orders; if the bitterest opponent of his doctrine came who had, he would, according to the system, be entitled. It is not a wicked man slipping in (that may happen anywhere)-it is the system itself. The system is wrong. It substitutes man for God. True ministry is the gift and the power of God's Spirit, not man's appointment. I state merely the great principle. This principle, with a process and with a delay the details of which I cannot recall and which are immaterial, was under deep pressure of conscience, the source and origin, as a principle, of the following tract (printed, I suppose, now seven and thirty years ago). There will be found immaturity in it in expression. The sin against the Holy Ghost, though universally used, is not a scriptural expression. Every sin a Christian commits is a sin against the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost dwells in him, and he grieves that Holy One by whom he is sealed to the day of redemption. But the principle is one of deep importance, one on which the status of the church and the Christian depends-the security of the one, as well as that by which he is responsible and judged in his walk, and the ground of judgment of the other. I did not save myself in any way by not publishing it. It was soon bruited about, and of course held, that I charged each clergyman with the sin against the Holy Ghost, which the tract itself entirely disclaims. It is a question of the dispensational standing of the church in the world-a statement that that depends wholly on the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, and that the notion of a clergyman contradicts His title and power, on which the standing of the church down here depends. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit. Scripture is clear, that if the Gentiles do not abide in God's goodness, they will be cut off like the Jews. It equally predicts a falling away, which is not continuing in God's goodness. I believe these times are hasting greatly. I add, that there may be no mistake, that I have an absolute confidence in the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus, the great Head of the Church, that what He builds will endure and be translated to heaven, when God judges the corrupt and evil system (which He as certainly will do) which bears His name, and Christ Himself becomes in glory the blessed witness of His unchangeable faithfulness and love. The doctrine of the church as the house of God (Eph. 2, and 2 Timothy) became developed in my mind much later; and I add here, that I believe the confounding the church, as man built it, as conunitted to his responsibility (1 Cor. 3), resulting in the great house, with Christ's building (though the former be God's building responsibly

in the world), and attributing the privileges of the body to all that are in the house, is the origin of the corruption, which has defiled, and for which God will judge the guilty, professing body with His sorest judgment. The tract is given as it was printed at first. As I have spoken of myself (always a hazardous thing), I add that at the same period in which I was brought to liberty and to believe, with divinely given faith, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, I passed through the deepest possible exercise as to the authority of the word: whether if the world and the Church (that is, as an external thing, for it yet had certain traditional power over me as such) disappeared and were annihilated, and the word of God alone remained as an invisible thread over the abyss, my soul would trust in it. After deep exercise of soul I was brought by grace to feel I could entirely. I never found it fail me since. I have often failed; but I never found it failed me. I have added this, not, I trust, to speak of myself-an unpleasant and unsatisfactory, a dangerous thing-nor do I speak of any vision, but because, having spoken of the presence of the Holy Ghost, if I had not brought in this as to the word, the statement would have been seriously incomplete. In these days especially, when the authority of His written word is called in question on every side, it became important to state this part also of the history.]

IN the statement which I make here, I make no rash or hasty expression of feeling, but what I believe the Lord would press upon the minds of Christians, and that which they must receive: that, the converse of which He might bear with in practice, while it did not interfere with and oppose the purposes of His grace, winking at the ignorance, but cannot when it does.

The statement which I make is this, that I believe the notion of a Clergyman to be the sin against the Holy Ghost in this dispensation. I am not talking of individuals willfullya committing it, but that the thing itself is such as regards this dispensation, and must result in its destruction: the substitution of something for the power and presence of that holy, blessed, and blessing Spirit, by which this dispensation is characterized, and by which the unrenewedness of man, and the authority of man, holds the place which alone that blessed Spirit has power and title to fill, as that other Comforter which should abide forever.

If the notion of a Clergyman has had the effect of the substitution of anything which is of man, and therefore subject to Satan, in the place and prerogative of that blessed Spirit exercising the vicarship of Christ in the world, it is clear, that however the providence of God may have overruled it, in the ignorance which He could wink at, it does, when stood upon and rested in against the presence and work of the Spirit, become direct sin against Him-pure, dreadful, and destructive evil-the very cause of destruction to the church. I must be observed here to say nothing whatever against offices in the church of Christ, and the exercise of authority in them, whether episcopal or evangelical in character. It were a vain and unnecessary work here to prove the recognition of that on which scripture is so plain. But they are spoken of in Scripture as gifts derived from on high: " He gave some apostles " (Eph. 4:5, 7, i s); so in 1 Cor. 12, they are known only as gifts. My objection to the notion of a Clergyman is, that it substitutes something in the place of all these, which cannot be said to be of God at all, and is not found in Scripture. Now, I believe the whole principle of this to be contained in this dispensation in the word clergyman, and that this is the necessary root of that denial of the Holy Ghost which must, from the nature of the dispensation, end in its dissolution.

I am quite aware that people will say, that this is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, that it may amount to resisting the Holy Ghost, but sin against the Holy Ghost is qUite another thing. It is not so much another thing as people suppose. At any rate the cause of the destruction of the Jewish system was this very thing: " Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." And I am perfectly satisfied, however this dispensation may be prolonged in order to the gathering of souls out of the world, of God's elect, it has sealed its destruction in the rejection and resistance of the Spirit of God. But I go a great deal farther, and I affirm, though that were sin enough, that the notion of a Clergyman puts the dispensation specifically in the position of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that every Clergyman is contributing to this. The sin against the Holy Ghost was the ascribing to the power of evil that which came from the Holy Ghost: and such is the direct operation of the idea of a Clergyman. It charges the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the Spirit gives by the mouth of those whom He chooses,1 whom they are pleased to call laymen, and the righteousness of conduct which flows from the reception of that testimony, with disorder and schism. Now, God is not the author of confusion or disorder, nor of schism, but the enemy of souls is; and to charge the plain testimony which the Holy Ghost gives concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and the effects which it produces, with disorder and schism, is to charge the work of God with being evil, and from the evil one. But if clergymen have the exclusive privilege of preaching, teaching, and ministering communion, which they claim, and which is the very sense and meaning of their distinctive title, then must it be all evil. That is, the notion of a Clergyman necessarily involves the charge of evil on the work of the Holy Ghost, and therefore, I say, that the notion of a Clergyman involves the dispensation, where insisted upon, in the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Sinners are converted to God, souls called out of darkness, the truth preached with energy and love to souls, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in the constraint and constancy (in whatever weakness) of the Redeemer's love: men are gathered from evil and wickedness (for I will put the fullest case my adversaries could wish) into the communion of the Lord's love, to bear witness to their sole dependence on His dying love; and this is producing confusion and schism- of which God is not the author, but Satan-because they are not, nor are brought together by, clergymen! What is this but to charge the work of divine grace with proceeding from, and having the character of, the author of evil, which is blasphemy? and this is the immediate and direct effect, the necessary effect, of the notion-the exclusive notion of a Clergyman.

And this is a thing of very common operation where a number of unconverted clergymen are; and how common this is, yea, how it is the case in a large majority of instances, is well known. There all the operations of God's Spirit are charged with confusion and schism; and therefore I affirm, that the idea of a Clergyman, that is, of a humanly appointed office, taking the place and assuming the authority of the Spirit of God, necessarily involves (in its condemnation of what the Holy Ghost does do) in the sin against the Holy Ghost: and I defy anyone to show how it can be otherwise. Those who would most oppose that which I am now writing, would admit, that not half a dozen, or possibly none, of the Bishops are of God's appointing; and this is the case with the highest churchman, in consequence of their being appointed simply by the King's Letters Patent.2 And yet all those who charge the efforts of others with schism and confusion, derive all their authority and distinction from those who, they admit, are not appointed by God at all; and yet charge them with schism, because they act on the same notion, and do not, therefore, look to that authority, while the effect of the authority thus ungodlily recognized is necessarily to throw those whom God does appoint into the position of schism and disorder. The notion of a Clergyman consists in acknowledging that, as the source of authority, which, they admit, is not appointed by God at all.

Let any layman ask a conscientious clergyman, who is converted to God, whether he believes the mass of the bishops are appointed by God? He must say, No; and yet he has no other authority whatever, as a clergyman; and condemns others solely by virtue of his possessing this assumed authority, which, he admits, is not of God, but by virtue of which he calls the Spirit's operations in and by others disorder and schism.

But are there no clergymen Christians? Doubtless, there are. And they are all trying to do in spite of the Bishops what they condemn others for doing; and are forced into the position, by being clergymen, of resisting God or the bishops they derive their authority from.

They cannot deny that the work going on in the country is from God, though it be not by clergymen; but they condemn it as evil, and therein sin against the Holy Ghost-and do so as clergymen: and their only ground of so charging it is this notion of a Clergyman. And now let us cast our eyes round every place, and see what is the position and character which this name occupies. I affirm that it comes from God in nowise. An ungodly man, be he a very hater of God, can confer it the same as the most godly, were he in such an office; the most ungodly man can be it as well as the most godly; and the most ungodly man can receive it, honor it, and attach all its value to it as much as the godly. Can this be the case with anything spiritual which comes from God? I affirm that it cannot: that it is quite otherwise with spiritual authority, which it most assumes to be like.

Nay, much more, you will find the value and estimation of a clergyman as such (I am not speaking of individual grace) to be precisely in proportion to the blindness, darkness, and ignorance of the person who may have it; I appeal to any one for the truth of this.

Now, the deference and obedience to a spiritual pastor will be just in proportion to the right feeling-to the holiness of mind of the Christian; but in the same proportion will his idea of a clergyman be weakened, and will he judge according to what they are, if they assume any office circumstantially connected with the name. The value attached to it is a purely worldly thing: a thing of this world, with the pretense of religion in its external character, which is just the destruction of the church-the essential characteristic of apostasy.

Let us consider it in its actual operation. If we go to India, the difficulty to be got over, the persons to be soothed and won, so that the gospel should not be hindered, are the clergy; I speak of nominal Christianity in India, as on the Malabar Coast and their Catanars. Go to Armenia; the difficulty would arise from precisely the same quarter. Carry the gospel in its power, where would difficulty be anticipated?-from what quarter? From the clergy. At best, they must be conciliated. Go to Egypt amongst the Copts: the same thing just is true. Go to the churches in Palestine, and wherever the Armenian Church is spread, the facts are the same. I do not say, they may not in any case be conciliated; but that the opposition to the truth, when it exists, arises from them. Go to the Greek Church: it is precisely the same. Their Papas, or Priests, the ministers and sustainers of all the corruption and evil of the church, are the great hindrance to all missionary and spiritual exertion. Their churches are fallen; therefore they proportionately estimate the clergy, and they do not the gospel. But the opposers and hinderers, the persons whose influence is dreaded, are the clergy.

Let us look now at the great western body, which is called the church, the Christendom of the world-the vine of the Christian profession. Whence is the difficulty in preaching the gospel? Where is the grand barrier of opposition to Christ in His gospel? It is at once known and felt. The word would be echoed by everyone familiar with the subject. But surely we are not to identify the willful resisters of the truth with those who preach and forward it. In this point they are identified, they are both clergy, they have both precisely the same title; if a Protestant clergyman has title to this, or whatever title to respect he has, the Roman Catholic priest has the same. I am not talking of mine or any one's estimation of it, but of facts. And this is so much the case that a priest joining the Established church, whatever his motive might be, acquaintance with or ignorance of the truth, would be at once a clergyman of the Establishment. His clerical character existed before and his person merely was transferred from onerto the other. Nothing could more clearly mark the identity of the two characters. Their title the same confessedly, the same by the acknowledgment that the title which they insist on distinctively is the same as, and no other than as, it is derived from those whose apostasy and opposition to the truth is the ground of judgment on the vine of the earth, the nominal church of God. If I am bound to acknowledge the one, I am bound to acknowledge the other in the same title and office. They are their own witnesses that there is no difference between them in title as clergymen. Whether the ministry of the priests come from God " their mission " they may determine.

But, that we may let no part of the world escape our notice, turn to Protestant Germany. Who are the hindrances, the bars to the gospel-to truth there finding its way among the people? The clergy. Consult any missionary reports, or Continental reports, or Jewish reports, or a Home Mission Society: and the clergy will be universally found to be the hindrances to the propagation of the truth.

But it will be said, do you mean to class the efforts of the clergy in Ireland with all this? Look at the Home Mission. My most sorrowful answer is, The Home Mission is the fullest and darkest evidence of the truth of what I argue. Of all things it has shown the character of clergymen in the darkest colors. For I am not denying or questioning that there may be individual clergymen Christians, but pleading that the notion of a clergyman is great hindrance to truth. So far as the clergy, as individuals, have broken through the trammels of their character and done the things for which they are excommunicated by their own canons, they are blessed and have influence. But the evil clings to them with a tenacity which no circumstances remedy, and which shows the power of darkness working in it, and herein shows so darkly the force of this notion.

A clergyman began, from circumstances it is not necessary here to mention, what is called the Home Mission. The Bishops and other clergy opposed it, as naturally they must, on the principles of the Established Church, though it is hard to say what that is now. The consequence was that, though crowds went to hear the gospel (which I believe they preached very faithfully) at their lips, they stopped.

As clergymen they acquiesced in the barrier which as clergymen others put to the gospel of salvation. Subsequently it was carried on by the instrumentality of laymen, chiefly under the direction of one clergyman who disregarded all the ties which were imposed on him as such. The laymen, of course, were under none. The consequence was, the system became established in spite of the weak resources from which it was, humanly speaking, supplied. But the Lord did not allow it to fail, but the clergy would not work with them. Why? They were clergymen: though they owned them Christians, thought they preached the truth, and most of them thought they ought to preach-but they were not clergymen. However, being established-in fact as it touched their importance as clergymen that the work of evangelizing the country should be carried on entirely by others-the clergy took it up. Would they work with the laymen? No, they were clergymen. They turned them all out to labor alone, to give up God's work, or be stamped with schism where they might. They cared for none of these things so that they preserved their character as clergy; and to such a length was this carried, that on one of the Missions, having sent out two clergymen unfit for the purpose-not consistent men, so that the hearers complained- and foreseeing of course that failure one time would occasion nonattendance the next, they agreed to send an empty car to dismiss the congregations when they could not get a clergyman, rather than associate themselves with godly laymen or allow them even to supply their place as deputies on such a work, counting an empty car a better instrument for God's work than a man full of the Holy Ghost, provided he were not a clergyman. These are the reasons, without enlarging

further on them as affecting the general principle, which make me feel that the Home Mission puts the character of clergymen in darker instead of brighter characters. They broke every solemn obligation of diocesan control, and excluded every one else because they were clergymen, simply to preserve their own importance as such, just as they had given up the work of the Mission before on the same account till forced into it. Now if the notion of a clergyman can have such power over godly men, we do but see, in a far stronger light than anything else could put it, the horrible nature of the thing itself, and its influence over the mind. The evil it has produced in forcing schism by rejecting laymen is incalculable, while its influence in blinding the conscience is almost unintelligible to those who are not involved in it. But the evil seems to me hopeless but in the full recognition that the title and the acknowledgment is a great and horrid sin-the substituting something in the place of God's Spirit which accredits a man, an ungodly man, with the title of rejecting and denying the Holy Ghost, and which therefore impliedly does so, whether in authority or not- not an office, but an order of worldly respect and on which every false religion is founded and its influence proportionate to the darkness in which those subject to it are laying. Any one may see that it is not office, for a man may have no office at all and yet be a clergyman just as much all the time. He may spend all his time shooting or hunting or farming, have no service in the church and yet be just a clergyman, and this is constantly the case. I believe the notion of a clergyman has been the great hindrance to truth in the country. But the effects can, I believe, only be met by the conviction and perception that it is in this dispensation the sin against the Holy Ghost.

One question may remain, why press such a point now? I answer; first, because it is truth. God's truth is always profitable, and the testimony kept up by it in the world. But further, because these things have been brought to such a pass by the prevalence of this very notion that nothing remains but to rescue the saints out of its effects before the tide of Papal power which is founded on it, set in in its full and subduing strength. Men must rest on the Lord or sink into it. If the notion of a clergyman be anything but evil, dissociation from it is but schism and evil. But if the work of the Holy Ghost be not evil, then is that which assumes to condemn it, and charge evil upon it, most evil of all things; and that is the position in which every clergyman stands by virtue of his title, and which is involved in the very notion of a clergyman: the essence of its name, the sign and distinctive name. of apostasy and rebellion against God. I fully believe, if the clergy of this country had acquiesced in laymen's acting with them, or if they would have acted with laymen, all the successional respect which is connected with the name they would have preserved, and prevented any division and difficulty; but they declined this, and declined it because they were laymen, and threw the whole matter, whether men would or not, into the question what is a clergyman? Was the Holy Ghost confined to them? If not, were they doing right in prescribing their own narrow channel to the fullness of refreshing which flowed from Him? And, if not, what are they? in what position are they? and in what putting the dispensation, by thus opposing and vilifying with the name of schism the operations of the Holy Ghost Himself? I believe the name has brought hopeless destruction on the whole dispensation. What is the complaint of a well known signature, H., in the " Christian Journal "? In seeking the assistance of clergy for the Home Mission the answer continually was-admission of the necessity and evil, but that they were not accountable for it! Why? They were in their post as clergymen. God might have given them the gifts of evangelists. Souls might be, as far as means went, perishing, but they were not accountable, not their brother's keeper, and why? They were established clergymen in their parishes, and they were not accountable for it.

What is the answer of a poor Papist to the efforts of a godly layman (though God I believe is blessing laymen far more amongst them than clergy now)? The clergy of the two religions is enough: what business have these to speak? Who really encourage and sanction this as far as they can? The clergy-thus being the grand barrier to God's truth. Turn which way you will, this is the notion that meets you, as the barrier to God's truth and work, by whomsoever carried on.

And let us for a moment look at what the word means, and we shall very remarkably find the same great characteristic mark of apostasy upon it: the substitution of a privileged order whom man owned for the Church which God owned, and the consequent depression of the Church and the despisal of the Holy Ghost in it, or blasphemy against it. What does clergy mean? It means in scripture the elect body, or rather bodies, of believers, as God's heritage, as contrasted with those who were instructors, or had spiritual oversight over them; and it is used in the place where the apostle warns such against ever assuming the place in which-in much worse than which- the ministers have now put themselves; for they are not merely lords over, but the whole cleroi themselves. The present use of the word is precisely the sign of the substitution of ministers in the place of the Church of God: as men are accustomed to speak of " going into the church." Now, all this is of the essence of apostasy: power attached to ministry, and its becoming the church in the eye of the world, so that the world can save itself the trouble of being religious by throwing it on the clergy, and so the church and the world be all one thing, and irreligious people do for the church as laity, because religion is the clergy's business, and, if theirs, nobody's (for they do not want it for irreligious laymen); and thus that which has the name of the church, being really the world, serves to exclude and set aside the operations of the Spirit of God in His children as schism and evil; and who is to decide? The church; but they are the world: and will the world ever receive the Spirit of God? It cannot. What then? They hold themselves, of course, the church; they have the clergy, which is God's church in their estimation; and the Spirit of God and His work is voted schismatic. Such is the real and simple meaning of the word clergy so used. But to produce the passage in Scripture-" Be not lords," says Peter, " over God's heritage," to the elders or instructors. That is, over God's Clergy-to give it in its English form of letters, cleroi. The bodies of Christian believers were called God's " lots " (the meaning of the original word cleros) answering to Deut. 9:29. Now the clergy have assumed to themselves to be God's lot only, but the only use of clergy in Scripture is, as applied to the laity if you please, contrasted with ministers: charging these to assume no lordship. Now, the substitution of the clergy for the church is the very moral power of apostasy. But this is contained, indelibly contained, in the very word in its present use, be they Roman Catholics or Protestants: that is, we find the assumption of clericalism, the secret love of many a fair held name, to be really, in its character and operation, the sin against the Holy Ghost, and the formal character of the apostasy. How often have we heard from the mouth of a minister or clergyman-" My flock," as if it were a virtue, so to think: while it is a shocking blasphemy in fact-I do not say willfully so-which an apostle would never for a moment have thought of daring to utter or assuming to himself. It was God's flock which they might be given to oversee-Christ's sheep which they might be entrusted with a portion of, a (cleros) lot, to feed and guide. To call them their sheep, or their flock, was to put themselves in the place of God or His Christ; but they do so because they are clergy: they count it their title as clergy-they would be as gods. Will they say that they are God in the face of them that slay them?

I have the utmost affection and value for many of the individuals among the body designated as clergy; and many doubtless there are unknown to me. But this is not an individual question, but one affecting the divine glory and the whole order of the church; one which is the necessary result of its departure from God, and the form into which that departure was matured and has developed itself; and its present practical result is, that the things by which the Spirit of God would bless the world or them in it is charged, by virtue of this name, with being that of which Satan is the immediate author; and thus the name and title of the body become the concentration of that which, by its denial of the Holy Ghost and gratuitous blasphemy against Him, brings destruction, necessary destruction, on all to which it is attached.

How this came to be so is plain enough, without wearying any one with a parade of learning. The Church had confessedly apostatized, and the structure of the apostasy, that wherein it consisted, remained precisely what it was when the truth came in, with this single difference-that the king took the place of the Pope in the appointment of persons to offices in the church, and the control of its arrangements. The church, originally, sunk gradually into worldliness, until it embraced the world, and the world became its head. The world could not manage spiritual office: it could manage formal, local authority; it arranged these authorities, and did so. For a length of time, in the prevalence of ignorance and superstition, the nominal offices of the church had more power than secular strength; when this ceased to be the case, civil power reassumed the supremacy, but the structure remained the same: governing, contending, or governed, the same thing remained. The world, in authority, arranged geographical secular power- leaving its influence over superstitious feelings to be what it might-so that it might be an available instrument in its hand to manage the world in its mass, not in Christ's to minister to and guide the church. Whether the Establishment has sufficient of this influence to be of any use to the State, is exactly the question agitated at this moment. But what has the church of God to do with this? I cannot see. It is merely a compound of secular influence and remaining superstition, by virtue of which the church is bound up with the world, and all its real energies cramped. This system, or structure, goes by the name of clergy, whether it be the Pope, or from the Pope down to the lowest curate, who may be entitled, by virtue of it, to hold a place in the world which otherwise he may not have had; or, if a Christian, to labor in some field where his labors may be illemployed, and his usefulness thrown away; but the church is lost in it. I admit, as fully as anyone can do, that many of the clergy are most valuable men. They may have eminent gifts for various offices, which the exigency of the times may require; but the effect of this system, by which they form part of this great worldly structure, is to deprive them of the opportunity to stir up, or to bar the exercise of, whatever gifts God may have made them partakers of.

The operation of the Reformation was to introduce a statement of individual faith, and to break off, generally, all without the limits of the Roman Empire, from the immediate power of Rome and Popery. It in no way separated the church from the world, but the contrary; and, while it changed the relations, left the principle of the structure just where it was. The King's Arms took the place, in the roodloft, of the image of Christ. Christ and His Spirit ruled in neither case, save in honor. I verily believe, that the principle of a clergyman, as it is part and parcel of the structure of Popery, will reintroduce the power of Popery as far as the name of religion remains; for as it hangs on the doctrine and principle of succession, not on the presence of the Spirit, there is no ground on which a Protestant minister, as a clergyman, can prove his title, which does not validate the title of the Pope and his followers more even than his own. His happening to have right doctrine does not make him a clergyman; his having false doctrine does not make him not one. The layman or dissenting minister, who holds the same doctrinal truth, is not a clergyman. The popish priest, who conforms to the Church of England, is not ordained to become so: he has that already which makes him a clergyman. Nay, in point of fact, the truth was not preached in the Church of England for the greater period of its distinct existence; and in the vast majority of instances the clergy still do not preach the truth; and the rest of the body would not allow them to be Christians at all.

Is it not manifest that the term clergyman, of such amazing influence on the minds of men, is the distinctive title of that association which has grown up from the decay of the church, and now forms the common though varied ground of its association with the world, and a hindrance to cramp the operation of God's Spirit; the cementing title of that vine of the earth, which is cast into the winepress of the wrath of God; and which charges evil upon the operations of the Spirit of God, as rebellion to its authority, not acting within its limits, or in conformity to its secular arrangements and appropriations of service, appropriations of territory formed neither by, nor with reference to, the Church of God at all; and when the Spirit of God operates by individuals within its limits (for God chooses whom He chooses), making them at once schismatics from their brethren, who do not comply with their geography, or acknowledge authority which they pretend to reverence (because it is of the system) but really despise, and violate at the same time all the arrangements, for the sake of which they are rejecting their godly and faithful brethren? If it were not for this term clergy, the link and bond of the great evil of the earth, and of pernicious influence over the minds of men, where would be the occasion of schism, save in that which is ever to be subdued? Or where would be the opportunity to charge the fruits of God's Spirit upon the author of confusion? Or what else is it that consummates the occasion of judgment to the system (of which it has taken the place of the energy and spirit), and always opposed the blessing? Has there, I will ask, ever been an opposition to, and hindrance of, the truths of God, of which the clergy have not been the human authors, and in which they have not been the real and active agents?

The clergy, then, is the specific title which identifies the church and the world, not God and the Church; and as the world necessarily denies, rejects, and will blaspheme the Holy Ghost, because it is the world, and cannot receive it, the tendency of this name is solely to involve the church, corporately, in the same thing, and is to be viewed as the grand evil, the destroying evil, of the day. What is the remedy? The recognition of God's Spirit where it is-personally seeking for that holiness and subjection of spirit which will discern, own, and bow to its guidance and direction, and hail its blessing as the hand of God, wherever it operates, in the measure and way it does so-that other Comforter sent to abide with us, whatever else did, forever; and working in obedience, that we may possess its joy-boldness, as against all that grieves it, against joining the world, which cannot own or receive it, or denying the truth, of which it is the witness. The Lord give us to discern things that differ, and to separate the precious from the vile.

Bible Treasury: Volume 17, True Grace of God, The

There is not a single doctrine of scripture that is met by so much repugnance in the human mind as the truth of divine grace. This opposition is not confined to unconverted persons only; for the very same disposition, if discerned, will be found to operate in the minds of those who are renewed by the grace which, in measure, is opposed and denied. It is not that the necessity of grace is altogether disallowed a certain degree of it is admitted, as essential to acceptance with God. This even the Pharisee himself could allow, who thanked God for the difference between himself and others. But its absoluteness and completeness, i.e., its real and divine character, finds an unwilling reception in the heart.

It will be found, I imagine, on strict inquiry, that the substitution of our own feelings and natural apprehensions, in the place of an absolute and simple faith in God's testimony, has much to do with wrong and inadequate views of God's grace. The natural bias of the mind (acquired, it may be, and strengthened by, systematic exhibitions of truth) goes very far in restricting the breadth and freedom of thought in the divine word; and makes it a very hard thing for a man to “become a fool that he may be wise.”

Two things are exceedingly needful to be understood and kept in prominence, in order to the right apprehension of grace, viz., what the nature of man is, and has been proved to be, under the various trials to which it has been subjected in the dispensations of God; and the real nature and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God's fall and blessed and only remedy for all this proved and manifested evil in man.

It is comparatively an easy thing to dwell on the sense of personal evil, and to confess in humiliation the workings of a corrupt nature; but it is exceedingly difficult to connect the conscious evil of the flesh with all that has been discovered by God to exist in that flesh, from the day of its first murderous outbreak in Cain until its enmity found its worst vent in the rejection and murder of God's only Son. If it were kept in mind that it is the very same nature which failed in Eden, and filled the earth with violence before the flood, which turned to the baseness of idolatry in the newly-peopled world, and exhibited itself in the filthiness of Sodom, which wrought in rebellion against the law of God when He thus dealt with the Jew, which, finally, in Jew and Gentile joined in crucifying God's Son when He was sent into the world—it would go far towards clearing the ground for the admission of grace in all its fullness and perfectness, as presented in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

If my apprehensions of sin are limited by the discoveries I may have made of my own evil, and are not corrected by the results of God's dealing with man, brought to an issue in the guilt of the cross, I shall stop far short of the proved abomination and wickedness of the flesh; and shall in the same measure practically fall short of a just estimate of the riches of God's grace—that “true grace of God wherein we stand.”

It is this which constitutes the special evil of wrong and inadequate thoughts of grace; it disparages God's infinite goodness, and the value of Christ's work.

It is a right thing for a Christian to be desiring holiness, and to be mourning over his want of conformity to Christ; but what is it that gives the power of holiness, and what produces practical transformity to Christ?

The grace of God is not merely negative in its operations. There is a transforming power in the very gaze of the soul on Him, through Whose grace we are saved, and Who is the object of God's delight.

The true character of this grace can never be maintained in the soul, apart from walking in the abiding sense of the presence of the Lord. Out of that presence I lack the light that manifests it, and the darkness of the world produces a dullness of the faculties that apprehend it.

It is the province of faith to be continually lifting up our souls out of this world, and all that is passing around us and within us, and to show us things—the only realities—in the light of God.

And it is just as we get above the region of sense, and are acted upon by the realities of faith, that we are established in grace, and that our comfort and joy as the children of God are advanced, and our walk and ways here are according to God.

What we are as the children of God can only be known to faith; and the infinite depths of grace, and the bright prospects of glory, are laid open solely to the eye of faith.

It is a true and blessed fruit of the Father's grace “that we should be called children of God"; but then it is added, “therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.” It is not in the scope of the world's knowledge to know the children of God.

But this knowledge is essential to all who would walk as the children of God. Without it, yea, without the constant exercise of soul on this blessed truth, there cannot be the taking or the maintaining of our right place in the world, as exhibiting the grace that is to be God's witness to the world, “blameless and harmless, the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” “Beloved, now are we children of God.”

What we are is necessary to be known and cherished in the soul as the power and ground of exhibiting what we should be. It was so with the Lord. Had He not been what He was, His whole course through the world would have been altered by it. Could He have forgotten or denied His unique claim to be the Son of God, then (I speak not of His work only) His whole character and ways would have sunk to another level in the world.

But this is a truth known and admitted by us all. Still faith needs to be strengthened against the continual contradiction of the world and sense, and our hearts to be recalled to the grace in which we stand.

clickbible.org