2 Timothy - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Spirit, Not of Fear, but of Power, The

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2 Timothy 1:3-8

Such exhortations are never given unless there are circumstances to require it. They are intended to meet some tendency in the flesh, that we may guard against it in the Spirit. It is well to remember how the Lord deals with us, just as we are; how, in all His ways, He takes into account the circumstances we are in, and does not, like philosophy, take us into other circumstances.

With regard to our cares and trials, Christ does not take us out of them. “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world” (John 17:15). While He leaves us in the world, He leaves us liable to all that is incidental to man; but, in the new nature, teaches us to lean on God. The thought with us often is, that (because we are Christians) we are to get away from trials; or else, if in them, we are not to feel them. This is not God's thought concerning us.

The theoretical Christian may be placid and calm; he has fine books and nice sayings; but, when he has something from God to ruffle his placidity, you will find he is a Christian more conscious of the difficulties there are in the world, and of the difficulty of getting over such. The nearer a man walks with God through grace, the more tender he becomes as to the faults of others; the longer he lives as a saint, the more conscious of the faithfulness and tenderness of God, and of what it has been applied to in himself.

See the life of the Lord Jesus; take Gethsemane, what do we find? Never a cloud over His soul, uniform placidity. You never see Him off His center. He is always Himself. But take the Psalms, and do we find nothing within to break the placidity? The Psalms bring out what was passing within. In the gospels He is presented to man, as the testimony of the power of God with Him, in those very things that would have vexed man. He walked with God about them; and so we find Him in perfect peace, saying with calmness; “Whom seek ye?”—“I am he.” How peaceful! How commanding! (for peace in the midst of difficulties does command.) When by Himself, in an agony, He sweats as it were great drops of blood; it was not a placidity because He had not heart feeling within. He felt the full trial, in spirit; but God was always with Him in the circumstances, and, therefore, He was uniformly calm before men.

We are not to expect never to be exercised, or troubled, or cast down, as though we were without feeling. “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psa. 69:21). He thoroughly felt it all. The iron entered into His soul. “Reproach,” He says, “hath broken my heart.” But there is this difference between Christ in suffering and affliction, and ourselves; with Him there was never an instant elapsed between the trial and communion with God. This is not the case with us. We have first to find out that we are weak, and cannot help ourselves; then we turn and look to God.

Where was Paul when He said “All men forsook me “? His confidence in God was not shaken; but looking around him, by the time he got to the end of his ministry, his heart was broken because of the unfaithfulness. He saw the flood of evil coming in (chaps. 3 and 4), and the danger of Timothy's being left alone, looking at the evil, and feeling his own weakness; and so (lest Timothy should get into a spirit of fear), he says, “Stir up the gift of God which is in thee,... for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim. 16-8). If we have got the spirit of fear, this is not of God, for God has given us the spirit of power. He has met the whole power of the enemy in the weakness of man, in Christ, and Christ is now set down on the right hand of the majesty on high.

“Be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim. 1:8). What! a partaker of afflictions? Yes. Of deliverance from the sense of them? No—a partaker of afflictions that may be felt as a man, but “according to the power of God!” This is not in not feeling the pressure of sorrow and weakness. Paul had a “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. 12:7); and did he not feel it, think you? Ay, he felt it daily; and as “a messenger of Satan to buffet him” withal. And what did he say? “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities [in those things in which I am sensibly weak], that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” The power of God coming in on our side does not lessen the feeling to us; but we cast all our “care upon him, for he careth for” us. Not that at the very moment we refer it to God we shall get an answer. Daniel had to wait three full weeks for an answer from God; but from the first day that he set his heart to understand and to chasten himself before his God, his words were heard (Dan. 10). With us the first thing often is to think about the thing and begin to work in our own minds, before we go to God. There was none of this in Christ. “At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father” (Matt. 11:25). We weary ourselves in the greatness of our way.

“Be careful for nothing” (Phil. 4:6). That is easily said. But what! not be careful about the state of the church, or about the pressure of a family? “Be careful for nothing.” Whatever produces a care in us, produces God's care for us; therefore “be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” So, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ”; not your hearts keep the peace of God; but the peace that God Himself is in, His peace, the unmoved stability of all God's thoughts, keep your hearts.

Further, when not careful, the mind set free, and the peace of God keeping the heart, God sets the soul thinking on happy things. “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest-just-pure-lovely; of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” God is there the companion of the soul; not merely “the peace of God,” but “the God of peace.”

When the soul is cast upon God, the Lord is with the soul in the trial, and the mind is kept perfectly calm. The Spirit of love, the Spirit of Christ, is there; if thinking of myself, this is the spirit of selfishness.

Letters 1, Faith Turning to Knowledge; Sources of Joy; the Path of His Will

* * *

Where His will is, there is happiness, and I am quite happy here. Christ is my happiness, beloved brother, but it is in the path of His will that we find the enjoyment of His love. Thus, feeble as I am, I find in Him a source of profound and ineffable joy. This joy has a character of peace which is connected with the revelation of Christ Himself to the soul, and when He is in 'question, it leaves no room for the idea of something that changes; not that we reason about it, but we know whom we have believed, and He will keep that which we have committed to Him until that day. Besides, our treasure is Himself. Peace be to you, beloved brother. May God keep us near Himself. It is scarcely a conviction of faith which assures me that happiness, the only happiness, is there. When, in spite of so many shortcomings, we have found His love always faithful for long years, and are in the present enjoyment of His love, no doubt it is faith in one sense, but it is more than that: we dwell in Him, whatever may be our weakness, and He dwells in us, and we find our rest in Himself. Everything else is only folly which passes with the breath of the life which is occupied with it (and often long before), and is but vanity while, we possess it. God will have us walk by faith, but this turns to knowledge by daily communion. London, October, 1852.

Letters 2, Moody's Work; Revivals; What the Testimony of the Lord Is

The question as to what the testimony to be rendered is, is one of great importance—what to put out before souls; but the passage (2 Tim. 1:8) is as simple as possible. Not to be "ashamed of the testimony of the Lord" is the testimony itself—not what it was. He was not to be ashamed of bearing witness to Christ the Lord. Paul was in prison for it; Timothy was not to be ashamed because shame was put on him who had borne the witness, but to partake "of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." Persons who live in the ease of Englishmen do not know what it is, but where Popery is rampant and liberty unknown, to be put in prison, or taken by the gendarme daunts and cows people. The world's reproach is on them. How many remained with the blessed Lord when He was taken, or with Paul even when he was? They were ashamed of the testimony of the Lord and of His prisoner—without considering what the various exigencies of the church were to give a character to this testimony. Indeed, in such cases this development has no place. The testimony reduces itself to its simplest elements—not being ashamed of Christ, set before the world in testimony....

There is good in Italy: at this moment, Satan seeks to trouble them partly by attracting publicity by the flight of a poor girl from her home by violent persecution, partly by efforts to raise the question of Bethesda among those who know of course little of the facts, when, wearied with the nothingness and even sometimes bad conduct of the paid agents, they turn to something better. But God will turn all this, through grace, into good. Only I see the devices of the enemy at the moment, but I do not distrust the Lord. There is progress, and the kind of work I feel needed, though more aggressive, may come in time....

As to the work at Edinburgh, I dare say there may have been conversions, and one must bless God for that. But Moody before he came to England denied openly all work of grace in conversion, and denounced it as diabolical in his own pulpit. I hear he has got on in this subject, that M.'s tract did him good, which is in a great measure a résumé of brethren's teaching; the author not concealing in his intercourse with others where he learned it. But some of Moody's false doctrine was taught in his public ministrations at Edinburgh, according to R. and M.'s account, which no doubt is correct, for we discussed it at Chicago, and he held it there, namely, that no man is condemned for his sins, but for not coming to the refuge—sins are all borne and put away for everybody.

I am quite satisfied that the Scotch revival will make Christians more worldly and godliness more superficial than ever where it works. It takes means and avows principles which make un-worldliness and spirituality impossible, and will make indifference to Christ's will, and to evil in the church, more powerful than ever. But then poor souls, stirred up by what was going on, and brought to hear that there was salvation, and that they needed it, may have been met by grace, and have found life and Christ, and that is joy. All the rest will, I believe, be positively evil. It has stirred up Christians, but to throw them on what is routine, not personally on Christ, and what will not really meet their need, and on working—which is all right if flowing from Him, but not as replacing Christ for peace and blessing. Next year I will tell you the rest, and shall always rejoice in every converted soul, and so will the Lord. I know the effect of the system in America and under Moody's own care. Here it is new, and may awaken.

There is blessing in Switzerland: of Italy I have spoken; the effort I have referred. to is the rousing of the enemy, but the Lord is the strongest.... The Lord has His own way of doing things. We must expect the enemy's working to oppose, and look to the Lord and His grace.

Yours ever affectionately.

March, 1874.

Letters 2, Christ Being All; Infidelity; Paul

As one advances in age, Christ becomes all; always all in principle, He becomes it more in the habits of the soul. The apostle does not say 'I believe' but "I know whom, I have believed," a sweet word that discloses the certainty and the realization of what Christ is in the soul. There is a calmness in heavenly things which is not found elsewhere, even in the activity of love, most blessed as it is. Things are hurrying headlong in the world. Infidelity in England displays a boldness to which we have not been accustomed. In America it is the same thing, but the word, the promise, and heaven remain as they were, and we are a little nearer. I wait for the Lord, but as long as there is something for me to do, I am here for His work. I have a deeper feeling than ever of what we are, and of the times in which we live. The struggle against infidelity pre-occupies me, but I go on my way as always, as far as my strength permits me.

For my part I believe that we scarcely know what Paul was. We have the same salvation, the same Savior, the same grace, and for the end the same glory, namely, to be like Christ—but to bear always in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that shows a life of continual abnegation and of devotedness. He was separated from the Jews and the Gentiles to be connected with the glorified Christ, the alone source, and point of departure of his whole life; brit whilst he was in the body he had always the sentence of death in himself. Death wrought in him, and life wrought thus from him in others. This is saying a great deal, but he was an elect vessel, and the Lord showed him how many things he must suffer for His name. There is this true and deep consolation for you and me and for all who are His, that, be as it may, He will be perfectly glorified in us all according to the counsels of God. For me, I know it well, it will be His grace that will be glorified, and I shall be satisfied with it.... God knows by what road He is leading His own; one thing is certain, it is that Jesus will rejoice in the travail of His soul, and will be fully satisfied with it; and He will not be satisfied, His love will not, without seeing His own in the most perfect blessedness near Him. If His love is satisfied, we may well be. We shall enter into the rest of God, where His love, His fixed purpose, His character, will be fully glorified in all that surrounds Him, and "He shall rest in his love," as He works now according to that love. For the rest,

I believe that we shall rejoice more in the fact, that Christ is fully glorified, than in our own glory.

Zurich,

June 7th.

Miscellaneous 4, 2 Timothy - for the Closing Days, Thoughts on

It is worthy of remark that the moment you get out of the epistles to the churches, you get catholic epistles and others which treat the church as in the " last days." In John, there were " many antichrists." In Peter, " Judgment must begin at the house of God." In 1 Timothy, " In the latter times some shall depart from the faith." In 2 Timothy, " In the last days perilous times shall come." In Jude, " Certain men are crept in unawares." In 2 Peter, " There shall be false teachers among you."

It is at such a time that God specially commends us to His word; and He has taken care that we should have in Scripture what would guide us in the last days, when He commends us to it. After Paul's departure grievous wolves would come in, not sparing the flock. He commends us to God and the word of His grace. (Acts 20 See also 2 Tim. 3:14-17). We need the grace of endurance in such a day. And when one goes through the trial with God beforehand, he meets the enemy and the actual trial when it comes, and the distressing effect upon the heart is gone. God helps and sustains us in it and through it.

One is struck in reading the second epistle to Timothy, by the way in which Paul goes back from dispensational glory (as in Ephesians, etc.) down to natural and Jewish relationships of private and personal character: " I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers, with pure conscience," and, " When I call to mind the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother, Eunice."

There is nothing he insists on more, than NOT TO LOSE PERSONAL COURAGE IN A TIME OF RUIN, no matter how great the ruin may be: " For God hath not given us the spirit of cowardice; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." It is always thus. " In nothing terrified by your adversaries." " Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord (i.e., the gospel and the testimony generally), nor of me his prisoner." Satan is to be met with confidence as a beaten enemy. This gives steady firmness to the soul. One has the truth, and knows one has it; and this gives quiet consciousness, and keeps one in the midst of the attacks of the enemy in an evil day. He is to be thoroughly courageous when all the evil was coming in, and was there; to " be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus "; to " endure hardness." It was when the power of evil had come in that he expects courage.

This is not the tide of blessing which carries on others; but the ebb had come, and individuals were standing and stemming it, and carrying on the testimony of the truth. It was not like the tide of the gospel at the first when " a great door and effectual opened "; but, rather, " be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God." It is then we require the power of God and personal courage more than ever. All this is "truth for the times " in which we live. (There is truth for eternity as well.) Chap. i. 9, 10: " Not according to our works," i.e., our responsibility. The history of the responsible man ended with the Cross. There atonement was made, and God's eternal purposes came out. The Cross maintained the responsibility of man and the authority of God. Through it, we get out by redemption into the state where it was His purpose and grace to put us before the world began. The Church has nothing to do with this earth except to go through it.

The tide of the Gospel had gathered a crowd of people into this wonderful calling, but the tide began to ebb, and all were going back again (ch. 1, 15). Positive power is needed in such a time, as well as having the truth. There are two things that are worthy of notice; first, that we now have only the power of good in the midst of evil, but the evil is never set to rights till the Lord comes; and the instant the power of good is not there, you get away down the stream; and second, how the good that God set up failed so fast. But this has always been so. The counsels of God as to what He set up were made known, and the power of evil came in at once to frustrate the counsels.

Verse 12. " For the which cause," &c. He was a prisoner for having carried the testimony to the Gentiles. But he had entrusted his happiness to Christ, and He would keep it for him against that day.

In verses 13 and 14, he passes on the testimony to Timothy, who would commit " the truth " to faithful men, who could teach it to others. The Church had ceased to be a guarantee for "the truth," i.e., the doctrines of Christianity and of Christ.

Defection was the order of the day (see ch. 1, 5:15); and in view of such, as of the general state of things, Timothy was to be " strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The Apostle now takes up the case of a soldier, an athlete, and a husbandman. He must not be entangled with the affairs of this life, but be entirely at the disposal of Him who had called him to be a soldier. Striving in the games, he must do so lawfully; and laboring first, be a partaker of the fruits of it.

Paul's gospel and Paul's doctrine are positive things for the last days. WE ARE WALKING AND Laboring IN THE MIDST OF AN IMMENSE NETWORK OF SYSTEMS IN WHICH PAUL'S MINISTRY IS TOTALLY UNKNOWN. For it he suffered as an evildoer unto bonds.

How like to Christ's own words are those of the Apostle in verse 10 of chapter 2 I We now get corruption of doctrine (ch..ii. v. 16, &c.). There had been falling away. Thus (v. 19) individual responsibility (coupled with God's faithful knowledge of His own) to depart from iniquity. In v. 20 we have ecclesiastical apprehension.

Supposing a person says, "I do not see that so and so is wrong when Scripture forbids it," this those walking in the truth cannot allow. You cannot take the conscience of the individual for the rule of the church. Scripture is its guide. Thus we have to walk with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. At the beginning of Christianity we did not find this expression. It was more general, " all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." Now it is " all that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." The Church should have been the witness for the glory of Christ on high, and is now mixed up with all that witnesses against Him here below.

In ch. ii, verse 24, " patient " should be " bearing evil." " In meekness instructing those that oppose " (see New Trans.), that they might be recovered to God's will from the snares of the devil.

The profession of Christianity has become the reproduction, under the name of Christ, of all the horrors and wickedness of heathenism. (Compare ch. 3:1-4 with Rom. 1:29-31.)

We are never able to judge rightly as to what we have to do and to meet in the last days, unless we are conscious that we have to do with Satan's power actually; the " Jannes and Jambres " referred to were mere instruments of Satan. But their folly will be shown up, perhaps now, perhaps by and by.

The expression " silly women " is applicable to men of effeminate mind as well as to women. It is the turn and bent of the mind of the persons who are thus beguiled.

We here get Paul's doctrine (v. 10) and the manner of life which flowed from it. " Thou hast fully known "-i.e., had perfect understanding of it. It is a like expression to that in Luke 1:3: " Having had perfect understanding," &c. He had fully followed up his teaching, as having learned it thoroughly. The manner of life goes with it.

In v. 12 The emphasis is on " godly "; they will suffer. Things would get worse and worse. It was the old story with the world-either deceiving itself or being deceived.

He now casts us upon Scripture specially. In v. 15, it is the Old Testament Scriptures which Timothy had known. In verse 16 he embraces " all Scripture." Scripture is the point-that which was written. Peter stamps Paul's writings with the authority of the other Scriptures. He says they are Scripture (2 Peter 3:16). The man who can do this was conscious he was writing Scripture himself.

One may say, " How do you know that Scripture is the Word of God? " I reply, " How do you know that the sun shines? " If you say " It does not," you manifest the ground you are on, as denying it. If you say " It does," you admit it. God has spoken so as to make Himself known, and to make people know He is speaking.

In the New Testament the Holy Ghost comes down and vitalizes all the circumstances through which the new man has to pass. He takes up the little things of everyday Christian life. It is a mistake to suppose the Holy Ghost only engages Himself with great ecclesiastical things. As there is nothing too great for God to give us, so there is nothing too little for God to take up and interest Himself in for us. There is nothing so common as eating and drinking and dress. These things are here taken up most strongly. Even these things become an opportunity for the glory of God. God would never have us to act as a man; but always, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to act as a Christian. Thus the Holy Ghost enters upon the circumstances of daily Christian life, and vitalizes them. When the apostle writes of these things therefore, the words in which he wrote are the words of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 2:13), as much as when the prophet of old uttered his magnificent strains with " Thus saith the Lord," and then sat down to study his own prophecies, to see what they meant and of whom they spake. (See 1 Peter 1; 2.)

The man of God is prepared unto every good work, in his having departed from iniquity and purged himself from the vessels of dishonor. In chapter 2 he is equipped; in chapter 3 furnished unto every good work; in chapter 4 he goes to war. He is to " reprove, rebuke, exhort." This shows the signs of failure which the wisdom of the Spirit foresaw. It was not so much evangelizing as preaching " the word " amongst professing Christians who would not endure sound doctrine. All was to be done in view of His appearing and His kingdom. Then faithfulness would be manifested.

We should be more earnest than ever in living to Christ, as we are now in the shaking of all things, and the Lord may come at any time now. Worldliness amongst us is a sign and a source of weakness. It must be " with all long-suffering and doctrine." These are the elements that must give character to our service. If men were left to their own responsibility they would never come in.

So he concludes, " I am now being poured forth " (v. 6). In Phil. 2 it had been, " If I be poured forth." Things have gone further here. " My release," is the thought, because he had been in the combat as an athlete. He can say, " I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith." It was the finishing of his race and wrestling of 1 Cor. 9:24-27. The Lord would preserve him to His heavenly kingdom, if he was not to be preserved on earth (v. 18). Earlier, his desire was that he might finish his course with joy (Acts 20) Here he had done it: I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

May we covet the same grace!

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Critical 1, Rightly Dividing the Word

To the Editor of the " Bible Treasury."

Allow me to make a remark on " Rightly dividing the word of truth," the first article in your number for May (1858). In the general principles and spirit of the article I cordially agree and judge it to be most timely. But the path of wisdom is a narrow one-one which the vulture's eye has not seen. And there is a point in the paper in which the word does not seem to me to be rightly divided, or rather, that is attributed to the

passage (2 Tim. 2:15) which is not in it.

It involves, I am satisfied, very important consequences in spiritual judgment, or I should not perhaps have noticed it. I am not aware that I differ from the writer in general practical result. It is a point which has been a good while on my mind, and, while hesitating whether it was God's will that I should formally notice it, the article of which I speak gives, by its statement, direct occasion to do so. The point I refer to is in the following passage: "According to all this Timothy is here told of a house that he has to leave, and not (as the first epistle had told him) of a house in the midst of which he was to ' behave ' himself." I find no direction whatever in the passage to leave the house-no trace of such a thought, but other directions given which exclude the thought. And this is evident in the change of language which the article introduces into the scriptural phrase, " We are, therefore, to purge ourselves from it, and not strive to purge it." Now the passage does not tell us either to purge it or to purge ourselves from it. I admit that the thought of purging it is wholly foreign to the passage: no such thought is presented to the believer to guide his conduct. But he is not told to purge himself from it, but to purge himself from the " vessels to dishonor." " If a man shall purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel made to honor, fit for the master's use." A vessel where? The master of what? " The foundation of God standeth sure. The Lord knoweth them that are his." No matter what the confusion and evil, there is divine security; " and let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." There is the unchangeable character of human responsibility, whatever state the nominal or real church may be in. But there is no direction to depart from the house. It is not said that we are to purge ourselves from it, but from the vessels to dishonor, which are not it. If Christ be the master of the house-whatever vessels are in it-how can we? Whatever consequences may be drawn, the first and essential point is to hold fast the word itself. I am satisfied the point is not an unimportant one, and that the truth gives more true separation and departure from iniquity than any misapprehension of the word of God can, however upright in purpose it may be.

Faithfully yours,

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Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 4, Two Letters as to Plymouth

[Received February 5th, 1846.]

Beloved Brother,

I was glad to get something from you, and glad to get this letter. In reply to it I can only say, without answering for every expression in it, after running it over, instead of quarreling with it as an objection, as to the general bearing and object of it, I believe that it is having departed from what has suggested itself to your mind which has been the weakness of the brethren. I believe that churches have been merged in the map of ecclesiastical popular hierarchism and lost; but I believe that the visible church, as you call it, has been merged there too. Still there is a difference, because churches were the administrative form, while the church as a body on the earth was the vital unity.

What I felt from the beginning, and began with, was this: the Holy Ghost remains, and therefore, the essential principle of unity with His presence, for (the fact we are now concerned in) wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them. When this is really sought, there will certainly be blessing by His presence. We have found it so, most sweetly and graciously, who have met separately here.

When there is an attempt at displaying the position and the unity, there will always be a mess and a failure. God will not take such a place with us. We must get into the place of His mind to get His strength. That is now the failure of the church. But there He will be with us. I have always said this. I know it has troubled some, even those I specially love; but I am sure it is the Lord's mind. I have said we are the witnesses of the weakness and low estate of the church. We are not stronger nor better than the others, dissenters, etc.; but we only own our bad and lost state, and therefore can find blessing. I do not limit what the blessed Spirit can do for us in this low estate, but I take the place where He can do it. Hence government of bodies in an authorized way, I believe there is none; where this is assumed, there will be confusion. It was here; and it was constantly and openly said that this was to be a model, so that all in distant places might refer to it. My thorough conviction is that conscience was utterly gone, save in those who were utterly miserable.

I only therefore so far seek the original standing of the church, as to believe that wherever two or three are gathered in His name, Christ will be; and that the Spirit of God is necessarily the only source of power, and that what He does will be blessing through the lordship of Christ. These provide for all times. If more be attempted now, it will be confusion only. The original condition is owned as a sinner, or mutilated man, owns integrity of conscience or a whole body. But there is a most important point that comes in: I cannot supply the lack of human arrangement or wisdom. I must be dependent. I should disown whatever was not of the Spirit, and in this sense disown whatever was-not short of the original standing, for that in the complete sense I am, but-what man has done to fill it up, because this does not own the coming short, nor the Spirit of God. I would always own what is of God's Spirit in any. The rule seems to me here very simple.

I do not doubt that dispensed power is disorganized; but the Holy Ghost is always competent to act in the circumstances God's people are in. The secret is, not to pretend to get beyond it. Life and divine power is always there; and I use the members I have, with full confession that I am in an imperfect state. We must remember that the body must exist, though not in a united state, and so even locally; I can thence therefore own their gifts and the like, and yet my warrant in two or three united for blessing promised to that. Then, if gifts exist, they cannot be exercised but as members of the body, because they are such, not by outward union, but by the vital power of the Head through the Holy Ghost. " Visible body," I suspect, misleads us a little. Clearly the corporate operation is in the actual living body down here on earth; but there it is the members must act, so that I do not think it makes a difficulty. I believe, if we were to act on 1 Cor. 12 and 14, farther than power exists to verify it, we should make a mess. But then the existence of the body, whatever its scattered condition, necessarily continues, because it depends on the existence of the Head and its union with it. In this the Holy Ghost is necessarily supreme.

The body exists in virtue of there being one Holy Ghost. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling. Indeed this is the very point which is denied here.1 Then Christ necessarily nourishes and cherishes us as His own flesh, as members of His body; and this goes on "till we all come," etc. (Eph. 4). Hence I apprehend we cannot deny the body and its unity (whatever its unfaithfulness

and condition), and (so far as the Holy Ghost is owned) His operation in it, without denying the divine title of the Holy Ghost, and the care and headship of Christ over the church. Here I get not a question of the church's conduct, but of Christ's, and the truth of the Holy Ghost being on earth, and His title when there, and yet owning of Christ's lordship. And this is how far I own others. If a minister has gifts in the Establishment, I own it as through the Spirit Christ begetting the members of His body, or nourishing it. But I cannot go along with what it is mixed up with, because it is not of the body, nor of the Spirit. I cannot touch the unclean, I am to separate the precious from the vile. But I cannot give up Eph. 4 while I own the faithfulness of Christ.

Now if we meet, yea, and when we do not meet, all I look for is that this principle should be owned, because it is owning the Holy Ghost Himself, and that to me is everything. We meet and worship; and at this time we who have separated meet in different rooms, that we may in the truest and simplest way, in our weakness, worship. Then whatever the Holy Ghost may give to any one, He is supreme to feed us with- perhaps nothing in the way of speaking, and it must be in the unity of the body. If you were here, you could be in the unity of the body, as one of ourselves. This Satan cannot destroy, because it is connected with Christ's title and power. If men set up to imitate the administration of the body, it will be popery or dissent at once.

And this is what I see of the visibility of the body: it connects itself with this infinitely important principle, the presence and action of the Holy Ghost on earth. It is not merely a saved thing in the counsels of God, but a living thing animated down here by its union with the Head, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in it. It is a real actual thing, the Holy Ghost acting down here. If two are faithful in this, they will be blessed in it. If they said, "We are the body," not owning all the members, in whatever condition, they would morally cease to be of it. I own them, but in nothing their condition. The principle is all-important.

Christ has attached therefore its practical operation to two or three, and owns them by His presence. He has provided for its maintenance. Thus in all states of ruin it cannot cease, till He ceases to be the Head, and the Holy Spirit to be as the guide and the Comforter sent down.

God sanctioned the setting up of Saul, He never did the departure from the Holy Ghost. The " two or three " take definitely the place of the temple, which was the locality of God's presence, as a principle of union. That is what makes all the difference. Hence, in the division of Israel, the righteous sought the temple as a point of unity, and David is to us here Christ by the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand church government, save as the Spirit, is always power which cannot be acted on.

Let me hear from you, for this is of all importance at the present moment.

Ever, beloved brother, very affectionately,

J.N.D.

September 24, 1846.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

I suspect many brethren have had expectations, which never led me out, and which perplexed their minds when they were not met in practice. I never felt my testimony, for example, to be to the ability of the Holy Ghost to rule a visible body. That I do not doubt, but I doubt its proper application now as a matter of testimony. It does not become us. My confidence is in the certainty of God's blessing and maintaining us, if we take the place we are really in. That place is one of the general ruin of the dispensation. Still, I believe God has provided for the maintenance of its general principle (save persecution); that is, the gathering of a remnant into the comfort of united love by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, so that Christ could sing praises there. All the rest is a ministry to form, sustain, etc.

Amongst other things government may have its place, but it is well to remember that, in general, government regards evil, and therefore is outside the positive blessing, and has the lowest object in the church. Moreover, though there be a gift of government, in general, government is of a different order from gift. Gift serves ministry, hardly government. They may be united as in apostolic energy; elders were rather the government, but they were not gifts. It is specially the order of the governmental part which I believe has failed, and we are to get on without that, at least in a formal way. But I do not believe that God has therefore not provided for such a state of things.

I do believe " brethren " a good deal got practically out of their place, and the consciousness of it, and found their weakness: and the Lord is now teaching them. For my part, when I found all in ruin around me, my comfort was that, where two or three were gathered together in Christ's name, there He would be. It was not government or anything else I sought. Now I do believe that God is faithful and able to maintain the blessing. I believe the great buildings and great bodies have been a mistake: indeed I always did. Further, I believe now (though it were always true in practice) the needed dealing with evil must be by the conscience in grace. So St. Paul ever dealt, though he had the resource of a positive commission. And I believe that two or three together, or a larger number, with some having the gift of wisdom in grace, can, in finding the mind of the Lord, act in discipline; and this, with pastoral care, is the mainspring of holding the saints together in Matt. 18 This agreeing together is referred to as the sign of the Spirit's power.

I do not doubt that some may be capable of informing the consciences of others. But the conscience of the body is that which is ever to be acted on and set right. This is the character of all healthful action of the kind, though there may be a resource in present apostolic power, which, where evil has entered, may be wanting; but it cannot annul " where two or three agree it shall be done." So that I see not the smallest need of submission to popery (that is, carnal unity by authority in the flesh), nor of standing alone, because God has provided for a gathering of saints together, founded on grace, and held by the operation of the Spirit, which no doubt may fail for want of grace, but in which every remaining gift has its scope; in which Christ's presence and the operation of the Spirit is manifested, but must be maintained on the ground of the condition the church really is in, or it would issue in a sect arranged by man, with a few new ideas. Where God is trusted in the place and for the place we are in, and we are content to find Him infallibly present with us, there I am sure He is sufficient and faithful to meet our wants. If there be one needed wiser than any of the gathered ones in a place, they will humbly feel their needs; and God will send someone as needed, if He sees it the fit means.

There is no remedy for want of grace but the sovereign goodness that leads to confession. If we set up our altar, it will serve for walls; Ezra 3:3. The visibility God will take care of, as He always did; the faith of the body will be spoken of, and the unity in love manifest the power

of the Holy Ghost in the body. I have no doubt of God's raising up for need all that need requires in the place where He has set us in under-. standing. If we think to set up the church again, I would say, God forbid. I had rather be nearer the end to live and to die for it in service, where it is as dear to God: that is my desire and life.

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Ever yours affectionately,

J.N.D.

Letters 1, Courage; Our Present Path; Reception, The Need of

Our present path is a very simple one. There may be all sorts of evil here and there, and even God's people are so mixed up with it, that we may not be able to say who are His and who are not. "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." But we have also a word to act upon the conscience: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." If you say, I know what I am in is unscriptural, and I am constantly involved in what is wrong, but I see nothing better; I answer that you must not go on with that: "depart from iniquity." We are told to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonor-that he who does, "shall be a vessel unto honor," sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Then, it may be urged, you will have to go alone, or lead in some new thing. But not so; I have to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." In these days, however, a great deal of patience also may be needed, as, indeed, Paul proceeds to remind Timothy in his day. Jeremiah was indignant at the state of things he saw around him; but he received the word, "If thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." (Chap. 4.) Be, at present, one might be provoked to abstain from having anything to do with persons in the sects, &c.; but we have to remember that there are true saints of God in these associations, whose good we are to seek for the Lord's sake, and deliverance from all that is offensive to Him. If it be argued that, in this case, we ought to go with them, the answer is, "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them."

1864.

Letters 2, Evangelizing; Need of More Laborers; Work in the West Indies, Service of

Most glad I was to get your letter, and doubly so from its contents. The Lord has been indeed blessing you, nor have we been without some droppings of the shower. Barbadoes was very interesting; numbers came, earnest, attentive, and many declared they had never heard the real gospel before; and considerable numbers found peace. Some were added every Lord's day we were there, and a good many have now to decide between taking up their cross and following Christ, or accommodating themselves to the world, and religious error and false doctrine, which they know to be wrong. The Lord give them grace to be faithful.

However, we had to come on to Jamaica, where there is scarce one to labor, and not much spiritual life, but some nice brethren, as far as we have seen, glad to profit by what we are enabled to afford them. How far the door may open is in the Lord's hands; at Barbadoes there was no mistake as to this. It helped, too, dear -, who had been laboring under reproach, a lowly man, distrustful of himself, but whom the Lord has blessed there much; treated as a bringer of strange doctrine and folly, but many say now, "they charged him with wrong doctrine, but now we see it was we who were wrong," and the rumor of it spread through the place. The brethren are in much union and harmony. Here, there are a good many scattered small gatherings in rather inaccessible places—no roads or means of communication. I suppose I shall have, as people do, to buy a carriage and horses, and sell them again on leaving, riding when a road ceases, lodging where one can.

We want laborers. Oh! that the Lord would raise up singleeyed, devoted workmen, coming direct from Christ to those around, enduring hardness too betimes, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. He has raised up some, His name be praised, but we need many more. We have to pray the Lord of the harvest, and may He grant them. I suppose I shall have to go back to Europe from this; France and Germany claim a visit. I thought I had done with them: and I have some London work. But I am so used to the Atlantic and so well on it, if God preserves my strength, I may yet see the States, and so, the Lord willing, Canada. What effect has the new work in western Canada? But it is the Lord's work, and He only wakens and arouses.

W. has suffered a little, otherwise we are all well. No doubt it tends to destroy exertion, but people are needlessly frightened about the West Indies. This land is magnificent, full of misery, and like all the West Indies, degraded in morals, but temporally has seen its worst.

The full mind of God has opened itself to me more largely than ever in these latter times, but I am not satisfied with myself as to my love to souls. I bow to filling up the little niche I may have been allotted, but still envy (not with an ill feeling) more active evangelists, and sometimes ask myself whether cowardice and want of zeal does not hinder one. Fully occupied and laboring, the question is whether a simpler love to souls would not put me in another place. I am content with—thankful for—any the Lord will allow me to have, unworthy as I am of any. I ask if the exposition of scripture is the task allotted me. I see the Church's need as to it, and am content with anything, but I have ever loved evangelization. I have gone out on that work. The Church is at my heart perhaps more than souls: yet I trust I love them. But Christ's glory must connect itself with evangelizing for me. Some much prized, though I heartily rejoice in it, falls cold on my heart for this reason. But all is in His hands, only I would not avoid any responsibility. Well, enough of myself!

We are in a delicious spot by the harbor, a mile from town, quiet itself, with woods and noble mountains before us, behind one of which there is a gathering. At present we are occupied with Kingston. Next week (D.V.) we, or I with a brother, go a hundred miles west, partly by roads, partly without.

Give my kindest love to the brethren: may they be kept very near the Lord, and truly waiting for His Son from heaven. My heart is with them in their blessing. May they know how, through grace, to keep it. Kind remembrances to Mrs.-and your boys too: the Lord graciously keep them

from the world, and by His own gracious power.

Affectionately yours.

Kingston, Jamaica.

Letters 2, Ignorance Being No Bar to Fellowship; Principles of Gathering; Principle of Meeting as Members of the Body of Christ; Reception to the Lord's Table

The question you put as to receiving is to me always a delicate one. The point is to conciliate sound discipline, and being wholly outside the camp, which is of increasing importance, and avoiding being a sect, which I should as anxiously do. Receiving all members of Christ's body is not a sect clearly, and that is the principle on which I unite, but they must walk orderly and be under discipline, and not pretend to impose conditions on the church of God. If therefore they came claiming as a condition liberty to go elsewhere, I could not allow it because I know it is wrong, and the church of God cannot allow what is wrong. If it was ignorance, and they came bond fide 'n the spirit of unity, to that which is the symbol of unity, I should not reject them, because they had not in fact broken [with it], but I could not accept what made us part of the camp, nor any sort of claim to go to both, to be inside and outside. This is equally pretentious and dishonest.... But I receive a person who comes in simplicity, with a good conscience, for the sake of spiritual communion, though they may not yet see clearly ecclesiastically; but the assembly is bound to exercise discipline as to them, and know their walk and purity of heart in coming whenever they do. They cannot come in and out just as they please, because the conscience of the assembly is engaged in the matter, and its duty to God, and to Him at whose Table they are. Looseness in this is more fatal than ever now. If a person practically says I will come to take a place in the body of Christ when I like, and go into sects and evil when I like for convenience or pleasure, that is not a pure heart. It is making their own will the rule of God's assembly, and subjecting the assembly to it, and that cannot be—is clearly wrong. May the Lord's grace and gracious keeping be with you all.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

1873.

Letters 2, Christianity Lowered; Service of Evangelizing; Ministries of the Gospel and the Church; Nearness to the Lord

One thing that you relate gave me much to think of, as indeed it has been a subject of thought pretty often for a long while, nor am I sure that I have the Lord's mind clear upon it. I think evangelizing the greatest privilege of any in respect of gifts, though I am not an evangelist, only when I can, do the work of one as well as I can. That is not my difficulty, but what you say: that the evangelization has enfeebled the teaching the saints. The gifts are clearly distinct, but I do not see that one should enfeeble the other. Paul assuredly evangelized, and as surely taught, and taught in evangelizing: witness the Thessalonians: and if he did not look for, he certainly found, present fruit. He distinguishes being a minister of the gospel and a minister of the church, to fulfill (complete) the word of God. This is not in the Thessalonians: all is personal, not corporate. We must be with God for each, as called of Him to it; and then I do not see why power should not be for both. But a certain salvationism, instead of Christianity, I think has to say to it, which God may bless, but which carries its effect with it. Few carry in their mind, "I endure all things for the elect's sake." It is a general idea that God is love, and would have all men to be saved, which is blessedly true; but thus it ends in being saved, man's safety. There is no purpose of God in it, no glory of Christ—all called upon to bow to and own Him. Hence as to the preacher's state of mind, when he has got the person saved, and this confessed, he is content, goes no further: God's interest in His own is lost, which leads on to building them up. If we were with God about them, the heart would soon be drawn out in testimony to them. There is another thing—glory to Christ in His church. This I confess greatly absorbs my spirit, though I be a poor hand for this work too: but this leads us to prayer for saints, so also to testimony to them.

The evil is not earnest devotedness to evangelizing—it is itself the way of blessing to an assembly, or rather God's working in one by His presence builds up the other—it is being absorbed by it. But this affects the evangelizing itself; there is less of Christ in it, more of man's importance, and when pursued in a revival way, more of delusive work; it never gives a solid foundation to build upon. I should be most loath to weaken evangelization: I believe God is blessing it, specially for gathering out in these last days, and it is healthful for an assembly that their hearts are engaged in it. At the very beginning it characterized brethren, and I trust still does, though it be more common now on all hands. The love exercised in it binds also saints together. But God is in a great professing body, awakening them to their state, and this has its importance also: the cry that awoke the virgins was not the gospel, ordinarily so called. Finally, the hand cannot say to the foot I have no need of you. I do not reject the joy of counting converts, but we must not lean upon it: " When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." The bond of service to Christ is kept up, and that is of great importance. It is not referring the effect to our work, but our work and heart to Him.

I am sure if we were near Christ we should do both well, assuming of course that Christ has called us to it. Do not be content to put one in place of the other, but see what Christ means by it. Be with Christ about the saints when you have to say to them. Be with Christ as to both, and then see what is the result. The question in general has very long pressed upon me in connection with the spiritual activities of the day. I have never been allowed to see much fruit, and have been more blessed in bringing to peace than in awakening. There is One, thank God, who is above all, and does all: let us look to Him. The Lord be abundantly with you, and guide you both in heart and work, and keep you in much enjoyment of Himself, serving from Him as well as for Him.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

New York,

November, 1874.

Letters 3, Word as Cream on the Surface, The

I rejoice that you are helped and happy in your work—I trust very constantly dependent too. That is the secret of a work wrought with God, and that, though it may seem quiet, lasts, and lays the ground for progress. I can only write a line now, though, thank God, much better.

It is not that there are not deep things in the word of God, but if we search it with His grace and Spirit it is always plain for us on the top; then we have it from Him. The cream is on the surface, not that we do not search and study, but that when we get it from God it is plain and on the surface. Till then we must wait till He teaches us. The passage you refer to is quite general. You must expect in a great house all sorts of vessels, precious and vile. Christendom has become such, and hence we must expect such. False doctrine, when it characterizes a man, is a vessel to dishonor; sound and exalted doctrine accompanied with un-holiness, makes a man a vessel to dishonor; he who builds up sacramental corruptions, as Puseyites, Romanists, Greeks, are—at any rate as teachers -vessels to dishonor. I give these merely as examples; but it is left to spiritual discernment, according to the word, to judge what is, and then to purge oneself from them...

The Lord keep you humble and near Himself.

London, February 9th.

Christian Truth: Volume 23, Scriptures, The: Divine Authority

2 Tim. 3:14-17

The Lord Jesus Himself said (speaking of Moses), "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" John 5:47. His words were the words of God; He does not contrast the authority of what He said with that of the written Word, but with the means of communication. God has been pleased to employ that means as a permanent authority. Peter says, "No prophecy of the Scripture..." (2 Pet. 1:20). There have been many prophecies which are not written; they had the authority of God for those persons to whom they were addressed. For the Word speaks more than once of prophets-who must therefore have prophesied without communicating their prophecies to us.

A multitude of things spoken by Jesus Himself are not reproduced in the Scriptures (John 21:25); so that it is not only a question of from whom we have heard a truth, but also of the character of that which has been communicated. When it is for the permanent profit of the people, or of the assembly of God, God caused it to be written in the Scriptures; and it abides for the instruction and the food of His children in all ages....

The Scriptures are the permanent expression of the mind and will of God furnished as such with His authority. They are the expression of His thoughts. They edify, they are profitable, but this is not all-they are inspired....

They teach, they judge the heart, they correct, they discipline according to righteousness, in order that the man of God may be perfect; that is, thoroughly instructed in the will of God, his mind formed after that will and completely furnished for every good work. The power for performing these comes from the actings of the Spirit. Safeguard from error, wisdom unto salvation, flow from the Scriptures; they are capable of supplying them....

Does this perfect and supreme authority of the Scriptures set aside ministry? By no means; it is the foundation of the ministry of the Word. One is a minister of the Word; one proclaims the Word—resting on the written Word which is the authority for all, and the warrant for all that a minister says, and imparting to his words the authority of God over the conscience of those whom he teaches or exhorts.... That which the Word says silences all opposition in the heart or mind of the believer. It was thus that the Lord answered Satan, and Satan himself was reduced to silence (Luke 4:1-13). He who does not submit to the words of God thereby shows himself to be a rebel against God.... The Old Testament left untold the history of Christ, the mission of the Holy Ghost, the formation of the assembly, because these facts being not yet accomplished could not be the subject of its historical and doctrinal instructions; and the assembly was not even the subject of prophecy. But all is now complete, as Paul tells us that he was a minister of the assembly to complete the Word of God (Col. 1:25). The subjects of revelation were then completed. God's Word speaks of grace as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, who gave His only begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him-deeply, intimately, truly know Him-and enjoy Him forever, and enjoy Him now, that the conscience perfectly purged might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without a fear. And to be these in His love, in such a way, is perfect joy. The written Word will tell you the truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels....

Let me add, to my reader, that by far the best means of assuring himself of the truth and authority of the Word, is to read the Word itself.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Paul Misrepresented

We get a famous sample of Mr. N.'s reasoning in this part of his book. He says, "That faith in the book was no part of Paul's gospel is manifest from his giving no list of sacred books to his Gentile converts." (Phases, p. 141.) I do not know how Mr. . knows this. Infidels, it is true, do get their knowledge at wonderful little cost; and the advantage of this is so great that one can never get them to acquaint us with the sources from which they procure it. Still, it is always "manifest." But there are some difficulties in the way of slower minds in admitting the force of this. First, the list was already universally and fully known: half the first converts were Jews, of whom not one had a question as to what they were; and then the apostles, addressing Jews and Gentiles together, appeal to these very books over and over again, as of unquestionable authority. A list by Paul would have been a very foolish thing, because he appealed to them as of already recognized authority. No doubt this was adding his to them; but, besides this, it was drawing the authority of what he himself said from them, which was much more important, and a very much more solemn way of owning their authority. If faith in a book be not proved by Paul's writings, what would prove it? A list would have been ridiculous: the whole book was perfectly well known. He calls it "the scriptures."

And here I must beg leave to say, that Mr. . most grossly misrepresents what the apostle says to Timothy. He makes him say, "Although now you have the Spirit to teach you, yet that does not make the older writers useless; for `every divinely inspired writing is also profitable for instruction," &c. (Phases, p. 142.) Now Paul says nothing of the kind. There is no contrast of the Spirit with the scriptures, but something totally different. The apostle is showing what is the especial safeguard of the Christian in the perilous times of the last days, and, besides his own instructions, he refers Timothy in á particular manner to the scriptures (did he want a list?), to the written word of God, as able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The apostle is so far from contrasting it with the Spirit's teaching us, that though speaking of the Spirit, as announcing these perilous times, he refers especially to the scriptures, without naming the Holy Ghost, as competent to make the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. I am satisfied no one can profit by the scriptures without the Holy Ghost; but here the apostle had occasion to bring in a safeguard for the Church, exterior to her or any man's pretensions.

Mr. N. gives us the beginning of the phrase-which he is very careful not to finish-in a translation of his own, without noticing in any way that of the authorized version. It would not, indeed, at all have suited him. Quoted as it is there, in English, it would have utterly overthrown his statement. Now although I admit people may raise a question on it, I beg. leave to say, that I am thoroughly convinced the English translation is right, and that the passage (though I know some have so taken it) will not really1 bear the sense here put upon it. But Mr. N. might have spared himself the trouble of reasoning thus on the Old Testament-Christ certainly declares, in what amounts to a list, its authority. He, indeed, could give it such. Hence, when Mr. N. did not admit it as having such, as so quoted by Jesus in all its parts, he had given up Christ's authority altogether even as a prophet. He might have saved himself the trouble of commenting on any further details; he was completely an infidel already. All the rest was totally illogical. He did not know what he was about, or he was indulging his "antagonist will" in the hope of troubling others who yet cling to the blessed authority of the life-giving word of God. No doubt the scriptures are "a means"-but what a means-of knowing God's mind is His own communicating it! He who loves Him who gives it will love the communication. He who knows his own weakness and ignorance will rejoice in that which gives him certain, divinely sent knowledge of God and of all His ways. "The Bible was made for man."2 No doubt-God be thanked. But by whom was it made? But to set man up in self-importance, and to put God aside, is the natural desire of an infidel-the uniform practice of Mr. N.

Letters 3, World and the Christian, The

Beloved brother -,

I hope that all occasion for uneasiness as to the representations made to the government may by this time have disappeared. In every case we have only to present them to Him who directs everything, and holds His high hand even over the counsels of the princes and principal men of the earth. It is a comfort to know that He makes all things work together for the very best for those who love Him.

As to the brother who has left you rather than give up the editorship of his paper, you must not be astonished about it. Alas! these things occur but too often. They have happened to the Lord Himself before they happen to us. But this serves to keep the church and the heart in lowliness, a thing very important for us. We have need to remember that the world and the church—at least, if the latter be faithful—do not accord, and we shall cleave to the one and despise the other, or we shall hate the one and love the other. It is sad if it is Jesus that is forsaken, or even His words. One may forsake the faithful without absolutely forsaking Jesus. I do not believe that all those of whom Paul complains had forsaken Jesus. But they lacked the courage necessary for walking with Paul.

We must pray for that brother, and for all those whom the world still retains as captives in its chains of vanity. As to the contempt which this tends to bring upon us, this is just our true place. It was there that the Lord our Leader was to be found. He was the despised and rejected of men. It is good to be in His place; it is to be in His school. It is easy to leave the world. It is when the world leaves us that the heart is put to the test. As for the reproach which you may bear, my heart desires to bear it with you all, dear brother....

Thanks be to God, the work here, on the whole, goes on in peace, and with some blessing. There is nothing striking, but God gives us new souls, and the brethren enjoy the sweetness of mutual affection. In London it is not like in smaller towns and villages. In an immense town of two and a half millions of inhabitants, we scarcely see one another, and brotherly relations are more difficult to maintain; but here also God is sufficient, and certainly works in the midst of brethren, not in London only, but elsewhere.

I rejoice much, dear brother, at the doors which He opens for you. The work is our common work in the Lord. In the South of France He has manifested His good hand, and the work proceeds with blessing. We have had some of our brethren in prison, but this has rather turned to a testimony. Take heed to testings and exercises of heart whilst pursuing the work. Our dear Master has had them. If only we look steadily at Him, all this ripens us for His presence, and He recognizes it as a service rendered to Him We are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us. Greet the brethren affectionately (though I do not know them personally); they are all my beloved ones in the name of the Lord.

Your most affectionate brother.

London, March 31St, 1852.

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