Ephesians - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

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(Eph. 6)

One great thing in Christianity is, that it brings us back to God. Not only have we mercies from God, providential and the like, but we are brought to God. Towards the Jew God had a vail before His face, and He said, “I dwell in the thick darkness;” and once a year, or the day of atonement, the blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, but now once and forever sin is put away by the sacrifice of Christ, and we are brought into the very presence of God. Good and evil being known, the question between good and evil had to be settled before God. The redemption of the cross brings us out of the evil—from the evil to Himself. God's Son suffered the just for the unjust to bring us to God. The consequence of this is that the whole life of the Christian is to go on with God—every day becoming better acquainted with God—everything going on in the presence of God. All our ways are elevated by this. If only a servant, he not only serves his master but Christ; and therefore if he has a froward master, he can serve him just the same, because it is Christ he serves. All the life of the Christian is perfect liberty, because he is in the presence of God; it is liberty from sin, from fear, from wrath. Children are to obey their parents in the Lord. The commonest things in life are raised in their character through service to Christ. The parent must not allow evil in the child, but train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and the master to the servant must forbear threatening. In virtue of our place before God, our liberty and happiness are as perfect and blessed now as they will be hereafter: only the body will be set right then.

Then, after speaking of the common details of life, the apostle rises up to speak of the proper position of the Christian as such—free in things; but we are to be “strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.” He goes on to speak of the whole armor of God. We are supposed, though in conflict, to be in our proper position of blessing with God, standing in the power of redemption, not having to get there. The warfare is to stand when there. Satan's aim is to get us out of that place. There can be no conflict between us and God, but between us and the power of evil. There we are as being God's army. We are naturally under Satan's power, but redemption brings us into God's army. This was the position of Israel when warring with Amalek—they were on God's side, and He said He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Christ's conflict in Gethsemane was quite another thing. He was enduring, but He was accomplishing redemption too. We have it through Christ, and now have to stand. God can never use our flesh, but Satan always can; there is the difference. He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. The new nature Satan never can touch, but unjudged and undetected flesh he can, and cause me to fall. The first and last thing and all through as a question of power, is entire dependence. Satan will come in all manner of ways—worship, &c.; and if the flesh is not judged, he will deceive us by it. The thing is, we want the evil of the flesh detected by the word of God and not by temptation. “The word of God is quick and powerful,” &c. There is no good in the flesh. This, when I see how bad my flesh is, casts me only on God—makes me feel the need of dependence. With our Lord Jesus there was entire dependence, and that is the perfection of a man. With us how different it is! You know how many things you do of your own suggestion, not perhaps knowingly and willingly, but you are betrayed into it.

“To stand against the wiles of the devil” —that is the use of the armor of God.

Christ has overcome, and therefore we have only to resist the devil and he will flee. If we resist him, he knows he has met Christ who has all strength against him, for He has vanquished him. The devil can never touch Christ in you—only the flesh; so if there is a fall, it is a proof you were walking in the flesh. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood,” &c. The contrast here is between the conflict with men that Joshua led the children of Israel against (flesh and blood as man, not sinful flesh, is meant here). Now we are not fighting with men, but we are Christians fighting with all these mighty beings, whose subtlety we are apt not to detect because they are so elevated— “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual [powers of] wickedness in the heavenlies.”

Satan can easily overcome a man with his wiles, if we are not found in the strength of Christ. I must have God's armor. Man's armor, intellect, or power is nothing in conflict with Satan. Satan used his wiles to Christ, but He answered him with the word of God, and there was no power against it. We must have the whole or complete armor. If I have a breastplate, but no helmet for my head, I am assailable at that point. If it is only a matter of theory with me, I shall forget my helmet; but if I am in the place of dependence, I shall feel my need of it and take care to have it on. Independence makes us careless. If Satan can get a Christian to give an un-Christian testimony to the world, he is satisfied. If he can dim the heavenly testimony for Christ here, his object is gained. Christ was God's testimony here. We ought to be so now; and what Satan is striving at now is to dim it. God would have us “able to withstand in the evil day,” &c. All this time is an evil day. Though there is darkness in the world, we ought to be light in it. There are peculiar days of evil—heresy, infidelity, &c. So to an individual there are peculiar seasons of buffetings, tossings, exercises, evil days; but to stand is the great thing. We are sitting in unchangeable blessedness before God, but our position. in this world is standing. So David sat before the Lord, yet he had to fight the battles of the Lord. Our salvation is complete and perfect, for we are set down with Him who has by “one offering perfected forever them who are sanctified;” but we are standing in conflict—just as the poor man out of whom Legion was cast was sent back to his house to tell them how great things the Lord had done for him. The world (Gadarenes) would not have him, and the world will not have us; but we are to be God's army in this world and a witness to them, though they will not have us. It is a question of struggling against Satan while having the flesh in us. Therefore we need the “loins girt about with truth” —the affections girt up by the power of truth, and not to have all hanging loosely about. It is not merely having and knowing truth that will do. If the loins are girt about with truth, if the heavenly calling has power over you, you cannot follow the world; your affections will be in heaven, and Satan can have no power with you. The “loins” represent the inward bracing of the man's thoughts and feelings, and affections. All that is going on in the mind needs to be exercised in the truth so as to be girt with it. I can never use truth but in the presence of God, because truth is light, and light makes manifest darkness. Man on a sick bed will show what is in his heart. There is at last, sincerity

there, when brought into the presence of God and abstracted from other things. There may have been much profession before, but nothing but what is real stands before God.

All the perfection of divine life in man we get in Christ, and He is our example. In having on the armor of God we have on what Christ was and had (e.g., the “breastplate of righteousness.") All these things which are ours in Christ should be applied to us. Take truth—Christ is the truth and the righteous One. He is my righteousness. But it is here used for conflict against Satan—not for God, but for practical power. I must have it before God first, or I shall not be able to contend with Satan. I am made righteous before God—this is a settled thing; and now I want all that Christ is and has been for my power against the enemy. If a man have a bad conscience, there can be no power against Satan. There must be the “armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.” The loins must be girt with truth first, and then a man will walk as in the presence of God. There will be a savor of Christ's ways in his character. What a difference there is between a man walking before God and one walking before men! What a trouble there is to keep things straight for a man walking before men! While one who is walking before God, though in the presence of men, can leave things quietly to God. The real difference between a mere professor of Christ and a Christian is just this.

“Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” means, not only having peace with God, but walking in the spirit of peace. There is sure to be peace in the spirit of a man who is girt about with truth, and walking in the power of Christ's righteousness. A man who has been walking with God many years will be more gentle with others than one who has just begun to know Him; he will neither crave things, nor be irritated at evil in another, for his own soul has tasted what the peace of God is, walking with God in the power of it. Then suppose a man has all this on, there is the need of dependence. Independence is sin, and there is need therefore of always being in conflict, and having the undeviating confidence that God is for me.

The thing wanted then is the “shield of faith.” Satan comes and tempts me: Is God for you? how do you know? There are of course different kinds of temptation—not lusts, but questions whether God is for me, come what will. Then the shield of faith is needed. Christ was in an agony in the garden, but He could say Abba Father, all things are possible to Thee. On the cross, when He said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” — “but thou art holy” —God has His place, come what will. We are not to be afraid with any amazement. If Satan succeeds in terrifying a man, he flies, and there is no armor for the back. Of Saul, David said, “the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away” (amongst the Philistines). “The shield of faith” is that by which one is able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. To Christ he threw a fiery dart when he said, “cast thyself down.” Are you quite sure God is for you? Cast yourself down and try. No, says Christ; I know God is for me, I need not try. “It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” The dart is quenched by the word of God. If the dart of doubt or fear, &c., gets in, you have no power at all. The moment the heart gets troubled, remember, “if God be for us, who can be against us;” if thoughts arise about yourself, “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” God is for us through all, even chastening. If there is an Achan in the camp, God says, I will not go out with you: and they are beaten by a very little city. If God be for us, who against? The “shield of faith” is mentioned after the others, because there cannot be this lively faith (not the certainty of salvation is meant here but practical faith) if sin is allowed, and if the loins are not girt about with truth, &c. Recognizing ourselves as a people connected with God, in respect to this power that is in Him, is just faith. Moses might have reckoned on God through all the murmurings of the people, &c.

All this is defensive armor .” the helmet of salvation also.” There is not a single blow aimed by the Christian warrior yet. What is the helmet? God has saved me and will save me. “Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell,” &c. A general, broad, full apprehension that all through God will be with me and for me; not only faith in the particular thing and at the particular time, but as expressed in Rom. 8 Nothing can separate from the love of God, &c.; therefore I may lift up my head with joy.

Now I can use the word of God offensively, as “the sword of the Spirit;” now I can fight. We ought to be able to confound every enemy, not with man's wisdom, intellect, and understanding; but in the power of the Spirit. Do others not believe in it? I am not going to give up the sword of the Spirit because you do not think it will cut. I know it will cut, and therefore use it. There is a power and authority felt by the person who uses it. There must be a sense of dependence for this; and therefore prayer, the sense of dependence expressed, is needed— “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” Of one it was said that he labored earnestly in prayer for the saints. This was because of the sense of the conflict from Satan going on with the saints; therefore labor needed watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. If other things come in, I have no power to turn everything into prayer; therefore watching is needed. Give yourselves to prayer. You are in God's interests connected with all saints; therefore pray for all saints.

There is nowhere that conflict is so much felt as in prayer: that is where Satan desires to come in.

Verse 19. We should be bold for God in such a world as this. How far are you identified with Christ in the world? And are you careful to avoid everything that dishonors Christ? Whatever destroys Christ's character before men is really a fall, though it may not be positively gross sin.

Miscellaneous 4, Canaan and the Armor of God: a Lecture

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore; having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast. plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance m y be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." (Eph. 6:10-20.)

IT might seem strange at first sight that in this epistle, where there is the fullest unfoldings of the privileges of the children of God, conflict should be brought out; but we are often not aware of the character of the conflict from not knowing our privileges. Here it is found we are specially in conflict, and in a conflict that is neither known nor got into until we realize the privileges which this epistle specially unfolds.

In Galatians there is conflict, but it's a conflict between flesh and Spirit-the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; but in Ephesians it is not flesh, but spiritual wickedness in high places. We have to overcome flesh, and there is a very close connection between these two conflicts, still they are distinct.

In Ephesians, it is a new creation; Christ has ascended up on high, "He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." So completely has He taken us out of the power of Satan that He can make us the vessels of His service. He has taken us out of the world, and then sent us into it, and if we thus stand associated with Christ, (which is the the privilege of every Christian, though all do not realize it,) we must expect all the conflict associated with the place into which we are brought. In proportion as we realize that we are the vessels of heavenly service, we get this special character of conflict.

You cannot cross Jordan without finding the Canaanite and the Perizzite in the land. There are the trials and perils of the wilderness, which test our hearts,-all know more or less of the weary way testing our hearts and discovering what is in them, but wilderness experience is not the same as conflict in the land. When Joshua got into the place of the privileges of the people of God, he was in the place of conflict. God has set Christ as a Man in the glory, because He (as a Man) has perfectly glorified God as to sin. Christ has not only died for our sins, but we have died with Him, (dead with Christ is what Jordan is,) and we are raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; thus associated, dead and risen, with Him, we are brought into the place where all the conflict is. It is most valuable and precious to get distinctly hold of this; many a Christian has not realized it; there is many a one still in Egypt, holding the value of the blood on the door-posts, but knowing nothing of the deliverance accomplished at the Red Sea. Israel had to stand still and see the salvation of God; this answers to the death and resurrection of Christ. I am out of Egypt: the judgment which fell on the Egyptians has saved me. God has raised up Christ and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. Just as every poor sinner has been driven out of the earthly paradise because sin is complete in the first Adam, so am I taken out of this world into the heavenly paradise in the Second Adam because righteousness is complete. God raising up Christ and giving Him glory proves that the question of sin has been all settled in Christ on the cross, and in virtue of this, He is sitting where He is, at the right hand of God. The passage through the wilderness is to humble and prove us; our perseverance is tested by God, leading us through the path in which Christ was found implicitly faithful. Israel went through that great and terrible wilderness where were the fiery serpents and scorpions and drought, where there was no water. God brought them water out of the rock of flint, fed them with the manna to humble them and prove them, to do them good at their latter end. They came to Jordan, they pass it, they get into the land, they eat the old corn, and the land is theirs.

In the wilderness and Canaan we get two characters of Christian experience,-one, the life down here; the other, the position in the heavenlies. We are not only a testimony to the world, but also to principalities and powers in the heavenlies.-" To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." He " hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places; " but though that is all true as to title, as to fact, the Canaanite and the Perizzite are still in the land to dispute the possession. We have our place in the power of the Spirit of God. Christ having gone before, our place is sure to faith; but the Canaanite is not yet destroyed-Christ's enemies are not yet put under His feet, so conflict characterizes the place of the Lord's redeemed people. When Joshua got into the land, he met a man with a drawn sword. Fighting was to characterize their possession of the land, and when Joshua asks, " Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? " the answer was, "Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." They were the redeemed of the Lord -the LORD'S host,-so completely the Lord's, that He uses them as His servants in conflict to subdue His enemies.

They must be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and they cannot fight the Lord's battles if the flesh is at work. With an Achan in the camp there can be no victory, and therefore we must be practically dead to fight successfully; not merely reckoning ourselves dead, but be always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.

Paul, as a servant, always carried with him the sense of this, not as a title merely, but "Paul" was kept completely down, always bearing about in his body the dying of Jesus; nothing of Paul appeared, it was Jesus only. As soon as they crossed the Jordan (Jordan is death and resurrection with Christ), they were circumcised-death is practically applied; and in like manner after they had crossed the Red Sea they had to drink of the bitter water-really the salt water; they had been saved by it, they must now drink it. "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of the spirit."

As soon as we get in heavenly places we get the " old corn "-we find Christ there, we feed on Him; but we have to be circumcised, practically putting off the body of the flesh. Israel got into the land, and had to be circumcised;-their title they knew, but they had not taken the ground of being practically dead and risen (from Egypt). If a man is practically dead and risen, what has he to do with this world? A man dead, and thus taken out of the world, has to go through the world and live in it again if God so wills it. We have to run across the wilderness to glory. As one associated with the Lord, I am the witness and testimony to the world of what a heavenly Christ is. I am to be a follower of God, an imitator of God. I shall be seeking other souls to enjoy it with me. If we are endeavoring to serve the Lord, shall we not find hindrances? if seeking to maintain the Lord's people in the place of fidelity to all this, do you think Satan will let you alone? There will be the wiles of Satan to get saints into his power, and we have to withstand his stratagems, even more than his power.

Infidelity, superstition in its various forms, are opposed to us, consequently we need the whole armor of God the moment we come in. We shall not get through in our own strength, we need the strength of the Lord and the power of His might; we need the whole armor, not one piece must be wanting; the armor must be of God; human armor will not ward off the attacks of Satan; confidence in that, armor will engage us in the combat to make us fall before an enemy stronger and more crafty than we. Let us see what this complete armor is.

"Stand, therefore; having your loins girt about with truth." This is the first thing, looking at what we call the subjective part. Our state comes first, and there is no divine activity until the heart is perfectly in order. The loins are the seat of strength when duly girt, but represent the intimate affections and movements of the heart. The figure is taken from the habits of the country where these instructions were given; they wore long garments, which hindered their working unless girded up. We get the expression in Job 38:3,-" Gird up now thy loins like a man "-that is, to see what he had to say to God. It is the power of truth applied to everything that takes place in the heart; it is not doctrine, but truth practically applied. The Lord said, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth." God has sent into the midst of the world all that can judge man according to what God is. Christ is the center of the Word; He was the light of the world; He revealed the thoughts of many hearts. He was here as a man, and revealed what God was, and the world was judged by it. He comes and brings all that is divine and heavenly in a man (Christ) in direct contact with all that is contrary to God in this world. Satan, as the god of this world, led man against

Christ. Some fancy that he has ceased to be the god and prince of this world; but though the cross broke his title, it was not until the cross (where man openly ranged himself, under Satan, against God) that he became its prince. Truth came into the world-Christ Himself, the truth. The truth of God brought right to men's hearts discovers their thoughts and intents. Now, when I get this Word effectually applied to me, I get the girdle of truth.

When all that God has said in His Word, and the unseen realities He reveals, have their true force and application to my heart, my loins are girt, my garments are not dragging in the mire of this world, my thoughts are not wandering, and the condition of my heart is, so to speak, tucked up ready for service, whatever that may be. We do not get into this conflict until we get into this place. We get the conflict of the old man, but that is Egypt. In order to get the victory over Satan, and carry on the Lord's battles, I must realize my position according to the truth, just as Israel overcame by realizing the promises of God.

First thing of all, my heart must be completely tested and subjected to a heavenly word. The Lord said, "No man bath ascended up to heaven." Christ brings this heavenly truth before us and says, Does what is in your heart correspond with this? When this Word becomes a positive delight to us, we get the taste and appreciation of heavenly things-the things that are lovely and of good report-which He has brought to us. I get on the one hand judgment of all flesh in me, and on the other the blessedness of what Christ is. Wherever the loins are girt about with truth, there will be confidence of heart, and the soul will be steadfast, there will be no turning back in the conflict to judge ourselves, our souls, so to speak, will be naturally with God, there will be occupation of heart with Christ, and there will be the Holy Ghost taking of the things which are Christ's and showing them to us.

The result of this girding of the loins is, that a man's condition is the effect of truth. It was Christ's condition; He was the truth, and my condition will be like Christ's in proportion as the truth is in effect on my heart,-the affections and heart right, I pass through the world in spirit with Him. "Stand, therefore; having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." All this, mark, is practical righteousness with God; we do not want armor with God, we want it against Satan.

If I am an inconsistent man, going to serve God without the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left-without practical godliness, Satan will be sure to bring it up. In preaching, for instance, if your walk is not consistent, the world will say you are no better than they, and Satan will then have power against you. If you are walking according to Christ because your heart is according to Christ, you have the breastplate of righteousness; but unless a man has a good conscience, he will be a coward, and afraid of being detected. With a good conscience, we can go on boldly; the condition of the soul where Christ is revealed is truth, and the walk of 'the man is all right-there is nothing for Satan to lay hold of. The loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, I have then to see that my feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I pass through the world with my feet shod. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." In this path there is no selfishness; selfishness is for maintaining its rights, byit that is not having my feet shod with peace. Self is subdued if I am following Christ. "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Learning of Christ, he carries peace with him, the soul is at peace with God, the conscience at rest, his feet are shod with peace, and he carries through the world the spirit and character of Christ.

He has on the breastplate of righteousness. What was the path of the blessed Lord? There was nothing in question as to His state. He went untouched with all that man could bring against Him; His feet were shod. So with him who follows Christ; he can bring out the spirit and character of Christ wherever he goes. It may raise hatred, as it did with Christ; His perfect love brought out the hatred of man; but a subdued, godly, upright man will be a peaceful man in passing through the world, and although man may not speak peaceably to him, as much as lieth in him, he is to live peaceably with all men. Thus we get it in both. aspects,-the path is characterized by the spirit of grace and peace, and there is righteousness and truth. The state of the heart first right, loins girt with truth, righteousness for a breastplate, and feet shod with peace, the soul subjectively right, I can then take up the shield of faith. Subjectively right, I have not to think of myself. A man walking with nothing on his conscience is free; if not walking right, he will be occupied with himself. The mere existence of an evil nature does not suppose a had conscience, but yielding to it does. We are not told to confess sin, but sins; it is easy to confess sin-easy to say, "I am a poor sinful creature," but that generally is to excuse sins. I have failed to keep the flesh down. Of course I can never say I have no sin, but if I am not bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus,

practically dead, the flesh will surely play me false. We want these three first elements of the armor, and then we have not to think about ourselves. Practically in the light, as He is in the light, the heart right, I then get the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. This shield supposes I can look up with entire blessed confidence in God. " He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty; He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His truth shall be Thy shield and buckler; thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day."

God is above Satan. Satan may shoot his arrows, but they cannot break through the shield of faith. In Christ, the victory has been won in man and for man. Satan did his worst against Christ, first, to seduce and afterward to deter Him, but he was completely overcome. All the power of Satan is broken and gone. Christ has gone through death and annulled him who has the power of death. Christ has not only put away our sins, but as a man standing for us, He has completely overcome the devil. We are not told to overcome, but to "resist " the devil, and he will flee from us. If resisted, he meets Christ in us and runs away. Human nature cannot resist, it will acquiesce. It is not a question of power on our part, but of simple faithfulness and looking to Christ; it is not that we are strong, but strength is made perfect in weakness. What was ever so weak as Christ-Christ crucified through weakness? but then the weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Nothing could be more weak and foolish in man's eyes than the cross, but we know, nevertheless, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Whenever we are content to own ourselves weak, there is the strength that enables us to overcome. Satan is very subtle. If Satan deals with man (apart from God), it is all over with him. How is it possible that wise and learned men of this world give way to such follies as ritualism and the like? Satan, more clever than they, is behind it all, and laughs to see them trusting their own wisdom. The simple soul that has his heart right cannot go wrong. Satan has no kind of power while the soul is walking in obedience, that is the secret of it all. If walking inconsistently, the shield of faith will be down, and I shall be open to all the fiery darts. There should be that blessed confidence in God which reckons on Christ having completely overcome the world and the devil, and that all the power of evil now in the world will soon be put down. We are to be exercised in the conflict; the Lord has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

We have as yet no activities brought out, -so far, it is defensive. The defensive armor comes first. We are slow to understand this, and we often get into activities when we ought to be quiet. The shield is defensive. Satan is active. The Lord may bless and help us, in His grace, but there is many a one got into activities without knowing themselves. The helmet of salvation is still defensive; we have the conscious, blessed, and full certainty of being in heavenly places in Christ-the soul walking in the full confidence that I have Christ there, who has delivered me out of the power of the devil. Christ has fought my battle and overcome. I can hold my head up, because I have got salvation. The blessed certainty that I am in Christ and Christ is for me is my helmet. I can now be active. Having judged the flesh, godly in walk, peaceful in my path through the world, with confidence in God, and salvation assured, I can take up the sword of the Spirit,-I can fight, sheltered in the inner man, and shielded from all attacks from without. I take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We do not always look to see that it is so-that there's nothing between God and our souls, so that He is practically with us in the conflict. Are we walking in the practical sense of God being with us? If there is an Achan in the camp, as there was with Israel, God will not go up. It is of all-importance we should be clear as to this. Paul kept under his body, and brought it into subjection. If we are to be active in the service of the Lord, we must go out from the presence of the Lord according to what His presence gives. Paul said, " Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and men." Always self-judgment, always keeping close to God, and then you can go out in service to others; not always, perhaps, in public ministry, but in the path of every-day life.

You will have the secret of the Lord with you, the consciousness of God with you, clearness of judgment, and not distracted or dismayed by half a dozen thoughts. You have the secret of the Lord; going on quietly, it may be, but going on with God. Then comes, no matter how active I may be, the inward preparation,-" praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." We have had the inward affections and the sword of the Spirit, but now it is entire dependence-the Word of God and prayer. These two things are found running together through Scripture: the Word of God and prayer. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard His word. The Lord said, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." In the next verses, the Lord teaches His disciples to pray. When the apostles chose deacons, the reason assigned is, that they might give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word. When there is to be service carried on against the wiles of the devil, half the battle is to be fought out in God's presence beforehand in prayer. When the prince of this world came to the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, he found Him agonizing in prayer. Peter slept while the Lord prayed: the result was, that Peter denied Him, but the blessed Lord witnessed a good confession.

Nothing can, nor ever will, take the place of that earnestness in prayer: if we are to have God with us, we must pray. It is marked by perfect calmness. If we have God with us, we must be with God, who is sovereign in love and goodness, and has associated us with His own interests. Does not my heart yearn after the conversion of poor sinners? do I not pray that hearts may know more of Christ? that saints may walk more faithfully? God desires this, and He has given us a path in the world associated with His interests. There is to be perseverance and supplication for all saints. If I see a soul in danger of going astray, I go with all perseverance and supplication to God about him: my heart is in it.

The very same word used of the Lord in Gethsemane is used of Epaphras, who labored fervently in prayer. It is conflict of heart. He craves the blessing of God with all his heart-craving for it earnestly, and entering into it because it is in the interests of God in the world. This has to be carried on in opposition to Satan, who will bring all his craft and power against us. We have consequently to be with God. What a blessed thing to know that I get power and wisdom from God, grace and wisdom in practice! If I use a sword, I must get wisdom for it. What a place of blessing it would be if we were all practically with God For our own souls it is so helpful, because prayer is the expression of entire dependence, but at the same time, confidence in God. A person like Paul, in weakness and trembling, fightings without and fears within, going about getting victories! He says to the Corinthians, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." It is always good to be conscious of weakness provided there is faith in God. Constant dependence is the constant expression of faith in God; the soul goes to God with God's affairs; we realize how much they are our own. The blessed Lord has gone down into the dust of death. Satan's power was exercised to the fullest, but it was all broken. He comes up again and sits at the right hand of God, takes His people, whom He has completely delivered from the hand of Satan, and uses them for conflict against him-the instruments of His service in the world. A wondrously blessed place if we only knew how to hold it,-blessed to be made the Lord's host against Satan. The more you are in the forefront of the battle, the more you will be exposed to the fiery darts. The more you bear testimony to God's thoughts, God's mind, the place the saints have in God's mind, the more you will be the object of Satan's attacks. You will necessarily be exposed to more snares and dangers than those who lag behind, and there is no place where dependence is more needed and felt.

There is more strength provided for those in the forefront to bear witness to Christ's title against Satan, and Satan will never let it pass without opposition. When I have all the armor on, and come to wield the sword, I am not to be thinking of the armor, but of God and His purposes, " watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Oh how little we know of this! Supposing we pass through a day, was all that happened turned into prayer? If I am walking maintaining Christ's cause, it all turns to prayer. It is a wondrous test of the state of our souls. Do you find you can intercede much for others? Do you find earnestness in intercession for all saints? Is my heart so in the interests of Christ that I can have a lasting and continual interest for others? If my heart is in a bad state, and the presence of God is revealed to me, I think of myself-I am not free to intercede for others. "And for me also," says the apostle, " that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly,... as I ought to speak." How is it with us, beloved friends? It is an amazing blessing to be doing this, but we cannot if our own souls are not right-if I am not in the presence of God. As far only as I keep on this armor, I am useful: all is founded on being in a settled place before God. The blood on the door-post, the Red Sea crossed, Jordan passed, circumcised, and the reproach of Egypt rolled away, -then comes conflict in the land: all is founded on redemption.

Be assured we shall meet the wiles of Satan. Our own state and conscience are easily detected if our hearts are simple in the truth. It is not that we are to be learning Satan's wiles, but if our hearts are simple, we shall be more than a match for him. Satan is a good deal cleverer than we are, and wherever redemption is not fully known, there Satan plays his tricks. The moment that redemption is really believed in, all the systems of superstition, so prevalent in the world, are gone. You may have old things lingering, but you will never find a person under the power of superstition who has the consciousness in himself that Christ has died and suffered for him. We see wise and learned men going away to ritualism, and the devil behind it all, but the moment redemption is really known, the devil's power is gone. The system of ritualism proceeds on the footing that Christ can have to say to man in the flesh that he is not lost and dead in his sins, and consequently a complete and accomplished redemption is denied. The moment I have my soul established in Christ, this snare of the devil will not prevail. A man may know the truth of the incarnation, and may speak more beautifully of the person of the Lord than even Christians, but all the time ignorant of redemption. I have the witness of Christ in me; I know Christ. They may try to persuade me that Christ is such and such, but I know Him; I

have got Him; He is dwelling in my heart, so that I am not to be turned by such follies as ritualism and the like. The Lord keep us in a constant sense of dependence, in a sense of what He is, dependent on Him every moment, that we may never get out of the presence of God, for when we are out of His presence there is danger.

Letters 2, Child Baptized by Sprinking

There is only one question which this brother definitely puts which I consequently answer, quite disposed with Mr. W. to let him work his own result out. It P seems to me inconsistent to bring up those held to be outside, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But the substance of such things is far more important than the forms, and the duty is a plain one, and the Lord will bless him in it, if he does it in truth and conscience, though I recognize baptism as an ordinance of Christ. The mischief I see, is occupying people with that which is only an ordinance. If a person has not been baptized, of course he ought to be. But it is not what the Lord is occupying souls with, but separating His saints from the evil that is around them in a vast professing mass and to wait for His Son from heaven. Baptism has been pressed, and there has been a reaction: such airs pass often over the church in its present state and pass away. No one will begin the church over again. I should not rebaptism a person sprinkled in infancy; though I do not like the form, because the intended signification in the form is lost. There is an analogy between baptism and circumcision, but such analogies must be used with intelligence, as the dispensations are different. Believers do take their place no doubt in baptism; but that is not the question, to them it is only an outwardly taking it, but whether none others (as believers' children) are not admitted to that place. Taking their stand is an ambiguous term, as if a man be a believer fully he is dead and risen, and it is only the place which God has set up on earth that remains to take. The Baptist looks at it as an outward confession that he was already dead and risen; that is intelligible, but it is not taking a place. The ideas are wholly distinct.

But I say no more, as this occupation with the forms of Christianity (though bowing to them as such) I find has little edification and much wearying of the mind. Only of course one is the servant of others, if they have it on their minds. Our brother could not do better than wait on the Lord. My mind is clear, but I should accept him as cordially if he walk close with Christ, whatever his views may be: and with the Lord close to him he will be guided. I do not rebaptize those sprinkled as children, because if a person has been he cannot be again, though I do not like the form. The Lord give our brother peace in his spirit by His own presence.

Ever truly yours in the Lord.

[1878.]

Letters 2, Obedience of Children

As long as a child is of the household, actually in relationship with its parents, the duty of obedience remains. If a man is married, he begins a new house, and is the head of it, leaves his father and mother. But as long as he or she is of the house, obedience is the duty, as the relationship remains. "In the Lord" is the limit and character of the obedience. If I had a Jewish or heathen parent who commanded me to deny Christ, I could not do it. It is not "in the Lord." If the parent be merely unjust in ways, and no duty be compromised, I believe the part of children to be patience and casting themselves on the Lord. I can suppose a child engaged in a positive duty, which the parents in such case would have no right to cause the child to break through. "In the Lord" has nothing to do with the character of the parents, but the conduct of the child; otherwise it would absolve from all obedience the child of heathen or Jewish parents. The obedience is "in the Lord."

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

June, 1871.

Letters 2, Government of God; Letters to a Young Convert

* * * This is a world of passage, and you have been living like a plant in a greenhouse all your life, and know little of being shaken from vessel to vessel, as is said of Moab. I do not regret it is so, and in your petty troubles you ought to be very thankful. But your turn may come, in one sense must come, and in this there is the government of God. We may have-the most patient and godly-sore troubles for our good, like Job, but as a general rule and order, the quiet, gentle, submissive spirit, that walks in obedience and order (not in self-will in whatever shape its restlessness may show itself) has a quiet and peaceful life. "Honor thy father and thy mother" has a general application in its consequences even now.

It is quite true that sin has brought disorder into everything, and that we are not under the manifested government of God as Israel was, and, as I have said, sorrow may come for spiritual good. Still, not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father, and the government of God goes on. The epistles of Peter open out this-the first in our favor, the second as against the wicked; and this is true of you, dear -. If you walk quietly, submissively and obediently, with a will not seeking itself, no matter in what direction, not indulging itself or its thoughts, you will find happiness even here. Our own will and making ourselves the center is the spring of all our wretchedness; for outward circumstances may be trying, as we know—may give sorrow, but not wretchedness. Where this is it is the fruit of will, restless and discontented. Be it in little things or great, let patience, submission and self-government characterize you. You know, thank God, that there are better things than what will seeks here; and here there must be a diligence and earnestness to know their enjoyableness, and be free—and at your age, the world and evil begin to solicit us and distract the heart—communion too; and if there be not diligence (which indeed is always true) it gets a hold on the heart, and if not judged in the will, it shuts out the beauty and desirableness of Christ, so that there is no counter-power in our hearts, even though our conscience may condemn us. I am sure you know this to be true already. But in seeking earnestly the Lord and His grace, it is not only that we are not occupied with these things so as to get the mind engaged with them, but positive power comes in to deliver and free us

and make us find in Christ delight which shuts out evil and the world. Seek this, and do not be lazy in divine things, for this can produce its fruit even in those who are sincere, as I do not doubt you are....

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 6, Ephesians 6:10-18: Conflict in Heavenly Places

THE very blessings of the church (as in Eph. 1:3) set us into a sort of conflict, which, without such blessings, we should not have. So the church is subject to more failure than either Jews or Gentiles were, because they were not called to the same blessing. A Jew might do many things that would be monstrous in a Christian, and yet find no defilement in his conscience. The veil that was over the knowledge of God being rent, the light shines out; and the consequence is that this light which has come out of the holy place cannot tolerate evil. Christians are in a more dangerous position, if not walking in the light, than Jews. Satan may draw and entice me with many things, which would have no power against me if I were not so favored. " Be strong in the Lord "; here is the place of strength. There is no strength but in Christ-I have none at any time, except as my soul is in secret communion with Him, and through Him with God the Father. The direct power of Satan is toward this point, to keep our souls from living on Christ. Put on the whole armor of God; there is no standing against Satan without this. Strength is always the effect of having to do with God in the spirit of dependence.

We see in 1 Sam. 14 the contrast between Saul and Jonathan; between confidence in God overcoming all obstacles, and self failing with all the resources of royalty. Jonathan clambered up on his hands and feet, confident in God, and the enemies were overcome. Saul, when he saw the work going on, not knowing the Lord's mind, calls for the priest. He had a right intention, but not a simplicity of dependence on God, when inquiring what he should do, and spoils all by his foolish oath. It is said of Jonathan that " he wrought with God." God was with him, and he had strength and liberty, not a humiliation we have often felt, because he wrought with God. When we are walking in dependence on God, there will always be liberty before God. Jonathan knew what he should do, and took some honey, because he went on in liberty, for God was with him, whilst Saul in legality had put himself and the people into bondage.

The word then, after grace in Christ has been fully shown throughout the epistle, is, " Be strong in the Lord," v. 10. We have the privilege here of individual dependence on God. Everything may be dark, but the Lord tells us to be strong. This is always accompanied with lowliness of heart; come what will, when the Lord is rested on, we are strong.

We are called to put on the panoply of God, to take it to us (v. 1-13). And no wonder: the conflict is not with men but with evil spirits (v. 12). Who but an unbeliever can overlook or despise them? They are principalities and authorities; they are the universal lords of this darkness; they are spiritual wickednesses in the heavenly places. Truly to withstand such we need the whole armor of God; which, remember, is not a question of standing but of practical power, and this is in entire dependence.

If we pray, be it observed, without searching the word, or read the word without prayer, we may get no guidance, for Jesus said, " If my words abide in you, ask what ye will," etc.; without this I may be asking some foolish thing that would not be given. We are to stand against the wiles of the devil, not his power. It is not knowing Satan that enables us to discover his wiles, but the keeping in God's presence. It was always so with Christ, because He was always dependent on God. Stand, having your loins girt about with truth. Truth is never really ours but as the affections are ordered by it. If the soul of the hearer be not in communion with God in the truth he hears, his loins are not girt with it. The breastplate of righteousness supposes not merely this, but that we have nothing on the conscience (v. 14). Christ's blood made it good; and walking in the Spirit keeps it so.

Verse 15. The gospel of peace is ours in Christ; but I must have the spirit of peace in my heart, and be sanctified by the God of peace, the soul in communion with God, with Him in the spirit of peace; and without this how can the saint walk as always having peace? He is thus prepared to walk by the gospel.

Verse 16. Whether I look at the sin that made grace necessary, or at the power which caused me to enjoy it, I may walk in perfect peace against every source of sorrow. Every fiery dart is quenched by confidence in God-the shield of faith. It is as essential for the conflict as for saving the soul. We need to cherish confidence in the grace of God all through.

Verse 17. I hold up my head because I know I am safe; salvation is mine. I must first get that which is internal: that which is wrought in me is power. Before I use the sword of the Spirit, I must first have the loins girded about with truth, the heart covered with righteousness, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and then (the shield of faith being up and the helmet of salvation on) I can take the sword of the Spirit. Nothing is more dangerous than to use the word if it has not touched my conscience. I put myself in Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, or what is in possession of my soul. To talk with saints on the things of God, beyond what I hold in communion, is most pernicious; to fight without it is fatal.

Verse 18. The word always must deal with ourselves before others, but prayer is the expression and exercise of dependence. If a person asks me a question, and I answer without speaking to God about it-going direct, it will be more likely to lead him from God than to God. When a question or difficulty comes, do we turn to God? We may have turned to God before, and the thing is answered, and we ought to have such power of prayer, that there would be no difficulty when any circumstance arises. If supplication be thus continual, there would be no occasion to ask Him about particular things when they come before us.

" Supplication in the Spirit." All acceptable prayer is not, I think, prayer in the Spirit. A wish or desire expressed to God, in all the confidence of a child to his father is heard, but this is not necessarily " prayer in the Spirit." It is the power of the Spirit in us looking for blessing as walking in the Spirit of God-that is such prayer; not even a difficulty here when living really in the power of communion. We have that energy of supplication which looks for answers-for all answers, and for myself too-watching thereunto with all perseverance. Suppose you begin the day with a sweet spirit of prayer and confidence in God: in the course of the day, in this wretched world you find a thousand cares and agitations; but if you are spiritually exercised, alive to see the things of God, everything will be a matter of prayer and intercession, according to the mind of God. Thus humbleness and dependence should mark all a saint's actions.

Instead of being full of regret at what we may meet with, if we are walking with Christ we shall see His interests in a brother-in the church. What a blessed thing to carry everything to God! The word in verse 18 refers to a man walking in the whole armor.

The apostle took the love of the saints for granted. We also, if walking in the Spirit, can always count on others being interested in our affairs.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 2, Whole Armor of God, The

Ephsians 6

The Epistle to the Ephesians has a peculiar character. It considers man not as having a life of sin, which he has to hold as dead in principle, and to resist in practice; but, in order to give God His own full part, and the blessing He gives its full character and perfection, it treats man as dead in trespasses and sins; and hence his whole moral existence is a new one, and depends on God, and is derived from His power; it has its origin and subsistence from His creative and lifegiving energies. It is a new creation.

Hence, in the first chapter, before even speaking of the redemption which meets the necessities of man, the Spirit directs our eye to the eternal counsels of God's grace, towards those chosen in Christ (vss. 3-6), the unspeakable riches of the blessings to which they are destined. The inheritance which has fallen to them in Christ comes afterward (vs. 1), as a subordinate thing. Hence we have the union of the church with Christ as its Head, exalted above every name in this world and that which is to come: hence the vivifying and raising up with Christ, and setting in heavenly places in Him, where all difference of Jew and Gentile is forever lost; and our creation again in Christ, the Holy Spirit, according to the mystery hidden from ages, but now revealed, becoming by His presence the power of the church's unity as the habitation of God; and the conferring of every gift necessary for the perfecting of the saints, for the gathering and edifying of the body by the Head on high, who had received the Spirit to this end for the members thus united to Him. Thus viewed in its Head, and in the power of the Holy Spirit on the earth, the church has a heavenly character, and as its privileges take this elevated character, so also its testimony, its difficulties, and its combats. Compare Ephesians 1:3; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12. For in the measure in which our spiritual position is raised, so, of course, do the difficulties and exercises of heart assume a character which requires greater experience and greater power. Our spiritual advance introduces us necessarily into them. But God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. We could not expect a babe in Christ to be exercised as an apostle. Still the principles of all temptations are in general the same, and the experience of an apostle would render him capable of entering into the trials of an infant all the better. His more thorough knowledge of the wiles of Satan enables him to expose those wiles in their true light to the more inexperienced Christian. Because they have ceased to be wiles for himself, he can expose their wiliness to him by whom they are as yet unsuspected, or imperfectly judged. By following the word of God the simplest soul avoids danger, though it may be inexperienced in the devices of the enemy; for in that path God is found, and all is simple. One is wise concerning that which is good, and can be simple concerning evil. Still such as we are there are exercises; and the same human nature is in the oldest and in the youngest saint. The form of the trial may be different and suited to the progress made; but the principles are the same, and the means of defense too. One may, if humbler in spirit, use them better, but God's weapons do not vary in their nature. The apostle will explain their use to the young soldier; but he uses (if with greater expertness) those he explains.

But before I enter on the character of the armor, a few words as to the position of him who is called upon to use it. It will be remarked that the spiritual use of the armor is found at the close of an epistle in which all the highest spiritual privileges have been spoken of as the portion of a Christian. He is looked at, all through the epistle, as in the heavenly Canaan, "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; quickened with Him, raised up, and sitting in heavenly places, in Him. He has redemption and forgiveness. The desire of the apostles that he may know the fullness and extent of his calling, of his inheritance, and the power that has brought him into it, in spirit and life, if not in body. On the earth he is looked at as builded together with all saints, for God's habitation by the Spirit.

Hence, when the apostle treats of warfare, it is not carried on in order to enter into these privileges, but in order to maintain oneself in them, and to realize them by the power of God. When the apostle speaks of not combating with flesh and blood he refers to Joshua and Israel. Now the combats of Israel were not in Egypt, nor even in the desert as such. They were oppressed in Egypt and slaves there, as the unconverted man is a slave of sin and Satan. God sees his afflictions, comes down to deliver him. He leaves his misery (weakness he cannot escape), and is cast on God as a Savior, and through the death and resurrection of Christ, that is, through redemption, passes into a new scene, where he is forever beyond all that was his plague and sorrow before his deliverance. "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed [says the song of Moses, Ex. 15]: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." Not only the blood on the door-posts had sheltered them from the just judgment of God, but the active power of God had now delivered them entirely and forever from the condition in which they were lying. The only difference in the Ephesians is one we have noticed, that the previous troubles and sorrows are passed over. Man is looked at as dead in trespasses and sins, that all his privileges, and the whole work of God, may be looked at in their full extent in themselves. I pass over the desert, which represents what this world is become to the redeemed, and which is characterized by the exercise of faith and patience, not by spiritual combats in order to realize or maintain privileges given.

In order to enter fully into these, we must realize our own death and resurrection with Christ; not merely that He is dead and risen for us. We must pass the Jordan, and thus enter into the land, in spirit. The Red Sea prefigured redemption by the death and resurrection of Christ; Jordan, our being dead and risen with Him, in the power of the Spirit of God, so as to enter in spirit into that which is within the veil, according to the power of the redemption which has been wrought for us. And remark, that on the entry into Canaan, as depicted in the Book of Joshua, the portion of Israel was not rest. Their combats for the enjoyment of the land began then. Jordan was doubtless the figure of death, but properly of death with Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so as to be risen in spirit, in the liberty with which Christ sets us free, that we may realize and live in the heavenly things into which He is entered as our risen Head. As soon as Israel had crossed the Jordan, before a blow was struck, they ate of the old corn of the land. They were, as to title, in full possession of the country. But to possess it actually they must combat with the enemy. The principle of the Christian warfare is the same. "All things are ours." As regards our title we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ, eating the corn of that land. But conflict then begins, to hold our ground against the enemy, and realize the sum of our privileges through every attack he makes upon us. For in holding good our ground against his attacks, there is continual progress in the realization of that which God has given to us, though in the conflict itself we have only to hold fast faithfully. If we sit in heavenly places as to title and our place with God, as to possession we must make it good; for spiritual wickednesses are there. Having made these general remarks on the position of those engaged in this warfare, I return to the Ephesians.

In this epistle, the blessings, the saints themselves, the witness of the church, the combats of the saints—all is in heaven. The rest will be there, as in Canaan (figuratively) for Israel. The combat is there, as in Canaan under Joshua. But now the combat is not with flesh and blood, but with the prince of the power of the air, “the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Carnal weapons and carnal wisdom are of no avail. One may be victorious over the instruments of Satan’s power in our reasonings, and be overcome by himself. There is no safeguard but the armor of God; and to maintain one’s ground continually all the pieces of it are needed. What should we say of one who, armed in every other point, forgot his helmet or his sword? He has forgotten his enemy and his own capability of being wounded. Thank God, we have the word and wisdom of God to tell us what is needed, that we may stand! Satan has no power to touch what is born of God. He who lives and walks in the Spirit is not reached by his weapons, nor subverted by his wiles. But the flesh has no power against him; and if this is exposed, we are exposed to be subverted by him. Hence the Spirit of God shows us what is needed.

The first thing is that we remember, what I have just remarked, that the armor is that of God; that no human power, no wisdom, is of any avail. Satan’s weapons, or wiles, go clean through them at once. The use of such weapons is the foolishness of confidence in self, which is (witness Peter’s case) exactly what exposes us to him. Let us remember too the foundation we have laid: that the conflict with Satan here spoken of supposes peace with God. If I am really on my feet, combating with Satan, and armed by God, I have no question with God as to whether He is for me. My combats are not with Him, my fears have not Him for their object. The anxieties of the unreconciled soul have the dread of God, the uncertainty of His thoughts, for their source. The combats of the reconciled souls are with the enemy. Remark, further, that it is not in the time of combat, in the evil day, I am to put on my armor. I enter into it armed, at least if I enter into it aright, and in the way to be victorious. The armor we wear is our abiding state as regards this world, though with God all be peace.

In the next place remark that those parts of the armor which relate to the spiritual condition of the Christian’s own soul and his walk—what relates to the subjugation of flesh and self—come first; then the maintenance of practical confidence in God (and how true that order is!); and then the activity of the believer as regards others: all closed in by the expression of entire dependence. It is not the force and power of Satan which we have to resist, but his wiles. When really resisted, he has no force against us, for he is overcome by Christ; and the new nature he has nothing in or for. When the inclinations of the heart are unjudged, then he has the power to deceive us. Hence, as to receiving any truth, the state of the soul is really what is in question. When this is not right, reasonings are vain. When the eye is single, the whole body will be full of light. So when the flesh is not judged, the enemy can overthrow and trouble us. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

The first part then of our armor is to have the loins girt about with truth. The word first girds about my own loins before I can use it as a sword. The girding about the loins is that strengthening and giving of firmness to the whole man, which cannot be if all is left loose in his ways and mind, and which flows from the application of truth to his soul. And this application of truth to his soul, though an internal operation, has a double bearing. It is the application to the heart and conscience of all that is revealed in Christ. Now, this first judges all that is not of Christ, detects it and judges it; at the same time what is in the heart is seen in its true light as compared with what I see in Christ revealed as truth to my heart. I have judged what springs from the flesh and is adapted to it; it has lost its false appearances and deceiving power, and—as Christ is really there—its power altogether. I do not let my heart go after it; it has lost its place there, because not seen by the flesh, but judged by the Spirit. Instead of having any attractions for the heart inspired by this, it has its true hateful character. Christ, as truth, has put it into its true light, out of the affections, and into its own judged hatefulness. It is no longer myself as a moral affection at all. It is sin and flesh in my eyes. But besides this, there is what has wrought this judgment, the revelation of the truth itself of Christ in the heart. Hence what is good is loved, has power in the heart, authority there; the will and affections are bridled by what has authority over them—instead of being let loose—while they, at the same time, delight in what exercises this authority over them. They are girded up, restrained, given moral tone and firmness, by the known value of that which is an obligation, because it is in Christ; a delight because it is good. For in man obligation, where it is in grace, gives strength. That is when the thing itself is delighted in, not imposed on, as a law. It is a governed heart, not an ungoverned will. Yet it is intelligent, and delights in what it sees in Christ. It governs itself. The girding about the loins with truth then is the application of the truth to the affections, so that a man is braced up, having to do with what is right in authority over his soul, while he delights in it too.

There are two passages to which I would draw the reader’s attention, in connection with the first part of the armor. Hebrews 4, “The word of God is quick, [living] and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Here it is, evidently, the searching character of the word; and “thy word is truth.” It is divine, living, and efficacious. Nothing that is creature escapes its penetrating judgment. The declaration of scripture does not here go beyond this. But if I have an earnest desire that all things should be “of God” in me, according to the new creature (2 Cor. 5), and have learned that as to what is of the mere creature, in so far as it has a will, all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil, and that continually. If my heart is divinely right I shall be most thankful for this detection of all that hinders my spiritual life, and comes between my soul and God, mars alike my communion and my walk, and I shall bring the hindering inclination into the all-judging and delivering presence of God.

John 17 goes somewhat farther: “Sanctify them,” we read there, “through thy truth: thy word is truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:17,19). Here we have the word bringing in its positive formative action, as well as its detective; and Christ also set apart as the perfection of that which we are to be, that the revelation of what He is to the soul may conform us to Him. It is evident that such a communication of what Christ is, while attracting and delighting the new creature, would in everything judge the old; but it is more than merely the divine word as a sword, as the eye of God on us, discerning and detecting; there is an attractive and an assimilating power. It is a man whose nature I have (for He is my life), in whom I see all this moral perfection, love, holiness, truth, absolute purity, grace, patient kindness, devotedness beyond all measure, to us self-sacrifice, and an absolutely single eye in devotedness to God His Father’s glory, and all the life-giving fullness of God in all these things. All this is in man, and in One with whom I have to do; who loves me; with whom I am one. He has sanctified Himself for our sakes. By the communication of all this, and much more than this, in the truth, we are sanctified. First of all, it is in believing, so as to have a share in it, and then by daily realization of it in detail, attaching the heart thus to Christ. “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” (2 Cor. 3:18). Blessed portion! Used, it is true, in the passage which occupies us in the Ephesians, more in its guardian power than in its delight and advantages—in its moral bracing energy, than in its joys in communion; but profitable alike for both. The truth, then, as this divine revelation to the soul by the word, detects all that gives a handle to Satan in us, and destroys its hold on the soul. It causes that we are no longer debtors to the flesh; for we have a new life with God, in which we have a right to live, and over which Satan has no right’ and no power; and in which the flesh has no claim and no part; and which is freely and new—given of God, so that none else has any

claim over it. Hence the absolute and exclusive claim of God is brought in, and with delight to the soul—delight, because obedience to Him is now delight. We love Him and His claims over us. It is delight, because the things He calls us to walk in are enjoyed morally by our souls. There is an intelligent nature which is of Him, and from Him, having the delights and desires of His nature, and rejoiced to have the perfect expression of its own desires in God's claims over us. For we are "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4). Hence it is called the perfect law of liberty. "But whoso looketh [looked down closely] into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25). There is our own delight in good thus; the authority of God in it; the rejection of evil, yet not in haughtiness, for God is there; and the authority of God over us, yet in personal delight in what is good, in a nature which loves it for its own sake: What hold has Satan there? The mind is braced up, the loins girt about with truth in the midst of the dissolution and uncertainty of the world; dissolution to which the flesh would yield itself at once. It is girding the loins.

In heaven this will not be needed. The flesh will not be there. All that attracts will be divine. We can let ourselves freely go to it. There is nothing but what God has authority over; nothing but what answers to His will, His nature, and His glory; while authority is perfect and delighted in, there is nothing to watch and guard against. We can let out all our affections there. The more we have, the better; at least all we have are rightly in exercise, for God and the fullness of Christ entirely fill the scene. Here we must have our loins girt about with truth. Blessed that we can, and have this privilege in a world of which we once were; a world of dissolution. Blessed that we have God's truth to do it with!

But when the heart is thus kept, the conduct will follow. The breastplate of righteousness will not be wanting. We must remember that in the passage we are occupied with, the subject treated of is what is needed in conflict with Satan, not what is called for that we may stand before God. Christ is our righteousness before God, perfect and unchangeable; and without that we could in no way make head against Satan; but it cannot assume the character of a breastplate when we consider it as our righteousness before God. All is peace in this righteousness; peace is made, there is no combat there. Christ has met and overcome the enemy, and is become my righteousness; and this is the foundation of all. God is truly with me and before me.

But in my conflict with Satan, while I cannot do without this, I need something else—practical righteousness. My conscience must be without reproach, in order to combat with him. If my conscience be not purged with the blood of Christ, I have not yet peace with God; I am still in Egypt, though I may be striving to get out of it; I do not yet know the power of redemption. I cannot say that God is for me, nor that I am for God in this world. I need to be delivered and reconciled. But if I am, a conscience practically bad will make me weak before the enemy. How can he, whose conscience reproaches him, whom the world could reproach if aware of it, how can he go boldly into the combat? He is afraid the blow may reach him there; he is obliged to think of that: he is not free to think, in simplicity of heart, of nothing but the service which is before him. The Spirit of God also is grieved, and lets him, if he go on thus carelessly, feel that he has failed, as Israel before Ai. For boldness when we have failed shows rather indifference to sin, or an effort to carry on appearances, when the heart is not right. But if the conscience be good, the walk upright, there is confidence in God, and self has not to be thought of. One can do God's work freely. Thus Paul—"Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly" (Heb. 13:18).

And again, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and towards man" (Acts 24:16).

The second part of the armor, then, is a righteous walk, a walk with God. Only remark that, as to confidence in service, it is not merely evil known, or easily to be known to others; it is all allowed evil. Because Satan can use this against the conscience and make it timid; and certainly the Holy Spirit will not make it hard or indifferent. A good conscience before God is acquired by one thing alone, by the blood-shedding and work of Christ. But the result of this is the presence of the Holy Spirit in us; and then a good conscience against Satan is only when the Spirit has not been grieved by anything done contrary to the light He has afforded me.

But many have not the courage to go on in God's warfare, because they hold to something which is inconsistent with the light they have received. Perhaps alas! they lose the light which they have not acted up to, and Satan is able to bring their mind under the darkness of his good reasons for staying where they are, without conquering more territory from him, though they are uneasy, perhaps bitterly hostile, when light reaches them from without, which threatens to awaken conscience again.

The existence of flesh in us, though judged as sin, does not give a bad conscience, nor interrupt communion; but the moment it is allowed, even in mind, it does both. Although the Christian who walks faithfully, clothed with the whole armor of God, enjoys the effect of its use, in the peaceful joy of communion, the difference must have, perhaps, been felt, between this state and the loss of communion, to know the immense importance of this armor, or rather of wearing it. Far better however to enjoy the confiding peace, which accompanies its use, than to know its importance by exposing oneself without it to the assaults of the enemy.

Communion with God is a real thing, in which He pours into the soul, in a greater or less degree, the deep joy of His presence—of that favor and perfect love in which He communicates with the soul, revealing Himself—and gives, by His presence, the happiness of a relationship, in which no breach is suspected, nor thought of, in which the soul lives. It is more than faith, though founded on it; other than the certainty of salvation, though the crown and seal and realization of this. The abstract certainty, the consoling certainty, that my Father loves me, and will not, nay, cannot, do otherwise, is another thing from happy intercourse with this love, with no consciousness of anything else, or of anything in the way of that enjoyment. The certainty of love in God constitutes the bitterness of the sense of the loss of the enjoyment of it, for I speak only of saints here. The Spirit's seal to the truth assures of God's love; and Christ, if we fail, intercedes for us. But the Holy Spirit being the spring of the enjoyment of it in the heart is another thing. The one—the foundation, it is true, of all—assures that God is for us: the other is God in us, filling the heart with joy, with communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

There are two ways, very distinct indeed in their character, in which I may fail in this communion: one negatively, where negligence has deprived me of positive and sensible intercourse with God, the heart being cold and indifferent; the other, where the conscience is concerned, and, the heart having allowed the enemy to prevail against it, the Holy Spirit becomes in us a stern reprover; and while never destroying the sense of God's love, makes us bitterly bewail the loss of the inward sense and enjoyment of it, and makes us taste, more or less, the fruits of sin, as in its nature separating the soul from God; and thus makes it horrible to us, not as feeling with God its evil morally, but as in its nature separating us from Him—not as to faith, indeed, allowing us to suppose that He will give us up at all, but to feel what it is. But this last is an extreme case, and discipline, on God's part, and very severe discipline too. The other, alas! is but too common. They are very different. Many Christians live frequently in a state analogous to the last case I have supposed; but in them it is from being yet under the law, and from their

not being established in their relationship with God; and the distress, consequently, is not so great, because there has not been the same nearness to God. I have said these few words as to the result of not using the armor with which God has furnished us. I return to its character and use.

I have spoken somewhat of the loins being girt about with truth, and of the breastplate of righteousness; of the affections being governed and kept in order by the truth; the revelation of Christ, and the walk which flows from this; the godly vigilance of an unassailable conscience. Thus the soul is in practical peace—has not to occupy itself with itself—can walk in unsuspecting openness and confidence. When the heart is full of peace, and enjoys the unsuspecting sweetness of it with God, it walks in the spirit of peace. This peace characterizes all its ways and relationships with others. There is not effort or restraint, nothing to guard or keep back. The course is natural, unconstrained and unsuspecting. There is not fear of evil because there is not the consciousness of it. Not that the soul is without wisdom; that cannot be in such a world; but it is wise concerning that which is good, and simple concerning evil. It does not much fear evil befalling it, because it has a portion of peace that outward evil cannot touch; nor does it count on outward good as its resource. In this peace the heart depends on God; and, as above evil in this sense, it brings peace with it into the scene through which it passes. The expression, having the feet shod with it, is beautiful, as showing the habitual character of the walk. Such was the character, especially, of Christ. He brought in peace— rejected indeed, but not the less true—the great Peacemaker.

He declared such should be called the children of God. These three first parts of the armor are practically expressed in the words, as far as relationship with the saints goes: “Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another” (Mark 9:50).

Thus governed within, and walking in peace without, the soul is free to trust in God. All three parts of the armor are indeed worn together, but there is a moral dependence and order. Internal condition goes before external activity; order in the affections and practical righteousness, before the spirit of peace in our ways with others; and both before that confidence in God, which shields from the assaults of the enemy. It is not that the confidence flows from this walk— it is in God only; but it is in this soil that it grows, in this state that it has its free exercise. It is as important to remark that it does not look back or calculate on any state of the soul, as that that state of the soul is that in which this confidence is found in free exercise. When we enjoy our health, all depends on the state of the body; but because it is in health its energies go out on their just object, and the health is not thought of at all.

Faith here is the full confidence in God, which counts on His goodness and faithfulness, and that He is for us—which trusts a God who is entirely for us. Without this all is despair, or near to it, in a conscience which feels that it has to do with God. Satan has got in; and to the soul which feels the need of God being for it there is left only the agonizing feeling that He is not. Hence the Savior prays for Peter, that his faith might not fail; that is, that in spite of his dreadful fall he might not be left to the thought that therefore God had abandoned him, was against him, and that there was no hope. The fiery darts of Satan are not his efforts to seduce by acting on our various lusts; but where, by any means, our hearts are turned away from God, the inroads he makes in the form of unbelief and despair. This is the force of the passage in the Corinthians, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency. The evil was there, the incontinency was supposed, the temptation was the power of Satan over the soul, which was the result. It is evidently a different power from his seductions. There is no pleasure in despair, but deep agony. The flesh finds its pleasure in satisfying its lusts, but there is no lust of despair; it is as a consuming fire in the soul.

We may see, in the temptations of Christ, as far as He could be on the same ground as we, this same difference. There could be no lusts and no despair; but Satan sought, at the beginning of His career, to seduce Him from the path of obedience; and brought all the terror of death upon Him at the end. Only in the former case He maintained His first estate; in the second, His agony only led Him into more earnest communion with His Father. But He went through, for us, the whole pressure of Satan’s power; for us in both respects: only He was never reached within by it, so as to turn Him aside from God, in the perfect path of obedience. The fiery darts of the enemy are the power of the enemy over the soul, when it has been left exposed to his inroads, by the shield of faith (an entire confidence in the grace of God, in His favor, as that in which we dwell, and changes not) having been down.

Such, I doubt not, are his fiery darts; and terrible they are, when, from the shield of faith not having been our safeguard— having been dropped, we are exposed to them. But I would add, that I do not believe that, this is ever a simple case: that is, that it happened by itself, without some producing cause. The passage I have alluded to in the Corinthians explains what I mean: Satan tempted, for incontinency, a heart which had opened the door to him by lust; which had even strayed out, in spirit, into his domains, forsaking God—not in will perhaps but in heart—in letting itself loose, exposed itself naturally to his power; particularly in these lusts, which a corrupt will nourishes, which, as the apostle expresses it, war against the soul, and which are so contrary to the very nature of God, to His purity and holiness. Where these are in any degree willfully indulged by one who is a Christian, it is well if the result be not this terrible power of Satan over the soul, which for a time at least darkens the light of God in it, and hides His favor; the knowledge of which only makes the loss of the sense of it more terrible to him who suffers under it: it seems to be gone forever, at least it may reach this point. At any rate it is the most terrible chastisement which can reach a human heart.

If a soul belong to God, it will surely be delivered; but who can say how long it may suffer? The great remedy against such a danger is to have the soul frequently, in a positive way, in God’s presence. To walk there constantly is our privilege and supreme joy. But I speak of a positive entering into His presence, who is light, that all may be clear in our conscience, all free in our heart. In a word, that we may not only enjoy blessings from Him, but be, as He graciously permits us, before Him. I have gone through the effect of not having the shield of faith up, and particularly what is the cause of it, as a warning; but the case, blessed be God’s grace, is as rare as it is terrible.

But something of an analogous nature takes place, in a different state of soul, as to what is not unfrequently called the fiery darts of the enemy. I refer to those cases where blasphemous and infidel thoughts seem to arise in the mind. They are not desired, not the effect of reasoning, but present themselves unsought, to the great distress of the soul. But this, I believe, happens when the soul is not set free in Christ. When once we are really introduced into the presence of God, in the knowledge of His favor and love—are there before Him, enjoying Himself—Satan cannot get there, cannot thus reach the mind. In the state of despair, spoken of previously, feelings of rebellion against God may and do arise, but these are the working of the mind itself, in the state it is in; whereas the suggestions of which I am now speaking are foreign to every feeling, and every acknowledged thought. But there is not, I believe, the true personal knowledge of God in grace, though that grace may be admitted as a truth, and as the only ground of hope. These thoughts distress and harass the mind; and persons assaulted by them sometimes draw dismal conclusions as to themselves; as in other such cases they think they have committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. General deliverance, and the true knowledge of God, is to be sought here. The liberty wherewith Christ sets free—for this

deliverance is real—brings us, as freed from everything that was against us, to God Himself. In the case, then, of the trying suggestions, of which we now speak, the shield of faith is not dropped; it is not yet up, has not yet been borne up on the arm of faith.

The shield of faith then is that entire confidence in God, flowing from the real personal knowledge of redemption, which silences every doubt and prevents every question, by the personal knowledge of God's love, which, instead of having questions with God, reckons upon Him against everything else. If God be for us, who can be against us? It is not merely peace, as regards evil, through the blood of Christ, but confidence in God, resulting from His being thus known. "If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord," says Moses, "let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff necked people" (Ex. 34:9). God is our resource and help against ourselves, our security against all else. Satan may prove a thousand things against us; our knowledge of God is the answer to them all.

Entire unwavering confidence in God Himself is the spring then and source of energy; the efforts of Satan to break and enfeeble it are quenched by the shield of faith. Maintained practically in its place by walking with God, it rests in itself on the true divinely given knowledge of God, as for us, as He revealed Himself in Christ; a knowledge sustained and fed by the grace and intercession of Jesus. But there is a further development of this condition of soul, closely allied to it, yet different—the knowledge of and possession of salvation. The difference is this: it is not abiding confidence in what God is, but the joyful certainty of what He has done, the consciousness of the position He has set us in.

Confidence is dependence, a blessed, right, and softening feeling; though emboldening in what is right, and as against the enemies of our souls. Salvation gives boldness and energy: we hold up the head, so to speak, a head covered by the strength and salvation of God Himself. "I would to God," says Paul, "that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26:29). Was he—after two years' imprisonment and wrong, in the presence of judges, as a chained prisoner, without resource save in God—was he disheartened or fearful in spirit? The helmet of a known salvation was on his head. Yet to be possessed in glory, all was his in Christ, all was his in his own soul. He was what the love that was in his heart could wish others to be; the consciousness that it was his animated the love which expressed itself towards others, gave it its object in its own happiness. His relationship to God was known, his being in the light as God was in the light, in the blessed joy of holiness, sin and evil and all confusion outside—Jesus' glory complete—the Father's love, unhindered by anything in the state of the object, is rested on. This secured by the cross, so that it could fully flow in now; the possession of Jesus' love, in whom it was all secured; salvation was a helmet to his head; he could lift it up before all. Nor is it less such to us in the day of battle: we have not to think about ourselves; that is secured, for that helmet is riven by no blow: we are free to use our wisdom and strength undisturbed by any fear for self in the conflict in which we are set. We can seek victory and blessing for others, glory for the Lord, success before Him. He has thought of us and put us into the place where we are, and have more than man's heart knows how to desire. And secure in it we can think of serving Him. Evidently this, as all else, must be realized by the ungrieved power of the Holy Spirit to use and walk in it.

In all these parts of the armor we have found what relates to our own standing, our enjoyment (in governed affections and godliness) of our blessed relationship with God, which is given us in the new position which the second Adam has, and which we have in and by and ever with Him. This is our security, our defense, in the conflict. Thus nothing separates us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But there is active energy, arms which we wield in the power of the Spirit of God, which silences flesh, and baffles the power of Satan, and controls those who are under his power. When fully in the power of our relationship with God we can take the sword of the Spirit, which is His word. If the soul be not in communion with God, it cannot wield His word in His name. It is not a carnal weapon to be used with carnal force or wisdom. It is the Spirit's sword: sharp, reaching the conscience, and of the most hardened where rightly applied, and bowing and subduing the most haughty. But if the soul be not with God, there is not the thought of the right passage, nor the power of God with it. It is not spoken of here, mark, as the means of edification—it is not a sword there—but of conflict. The weapons of our warfare are spiritual, to the pulling down of strongholds.

The word of God in conflict, when spiritually used, carries light with it to the soul as to our whole position in conflict— the light of God's mind on the whole scene and question before us—which inspires a confidence, of which he who has it not has no idea. Satan's object is to deceive; the conscious possession of the divine mind only makes the discovered deception an element of strength, in the knowledge of whom we have to do with, and of God's being in the light thrown upon his wiles. It detects and judges them appositely; and a deception laid bare is a victory over the wiles to which no answer can be found. See the Lord's use of Scripture, as an example—ever matchless—of this weapon. How were His adversaries put to silence, no man daring to put to Him any more questions. How was Satan himself reduced to leave One whom he could not touch! For this weapon repels all the attacks of Satan, as it confounds by its power all the force and wiles of the enemy. We have no other weapon; we must have skill to use it, which no practice but the power of present grace alone can give; but it is the weapon of God's own mind, and light, and truth, in the midst of the darkness by which Satan would overcloud man's mind.

An arm of a peculiar and distinct character closes the list, showing how all are used in entire and constant dependence. The first parts of the armor, we have seen, are defensive, those which hinder Satan from touching us, connected with the judgment of self and godliness: after these the active energy of the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. But the Holy Spirit, who alone can enable us to use the word, cannot do so by putting us in a position of independence; it is contrary to His nature and service, and to the moral effect of His presence with us. He puts our souls into connection with, and dependence on, the source of all power and grace. He cannot be separated from those in whose name He acts, from whom He comes forth; and by His very presence He puts us in communion with, and dependence on, them. It is thus it is said of Him, "He shall not speak of himself" (John 16:18), that is, unconnected with the Father and the Son; as it is said, Sayest thou this of thyself? as an isolated spirit might say things of which himself was the source.

But there is more than this, because the Holy Spirit acts in us morally, and makes us feel, as new creatures, our entire, and I may add, glad, dependence, on so blessed a source of activity and power, as God Himself. We know we are so. It is a creature's place; it is a godly creature's place, and his willing place; for the heart, led by the Holy Spirit, is rejoiced to receive all from God, as it knows also that it can receive nowhere else what is good. But this is exercised in confidence; we ask, we express our dependence; we supplicate, both in the sense of need, and in the earnestness of desire for the accomplishment of what we are thus enabled to succeed in or obtain for others. The mind, though in dependence, is brought into the channel of God's desires and blessing, by the operation of the Holy Spirit—given a share in this energy of divine working, though in the sense of entire dependence on God. God meets, answers, shows His concurrence in what He has put into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We are occupied with what He works in, and works with, and for us. Not only are our desires accomplished, but we have the consciousness of God's concurrence in them, and that we stand, on His part, in our conflicts and service, while we have the joy of everything being His. Nor is this all; it is not only our own part in this divine conflict that occupies; love to others, those without that are His,

and united thus indeed to us, acts in the grace of intercession.

Everything is found, in this (seemingly, to human judgment, so feeble) instrument—above all precious, because it is an unseen one. Need is there, earnest desire for others, good in love is there; desire for God's glory, confidence in His love, in His word, dependence on Him, reality of intercourse with Him; while, as a consequence, every inconsistency is brought to light in the heart by this nearness, not only as respects holiness, but as it touches confidence in this nearness. Besides this, there is a close linking of all the whole body together, in its dependence on the Head. What a place is this to use the given sword of God, His own thoughts in power, and to be with Himself in confidence for every answer of His love and strength.

It will be remarked that it is on every occasion—"always." This is one mark of our living in this state of communion, that the heart turns at once, naturally, there. It does not set about to consider when something arises, but to pray. God's answer surely comes. Next, remark, it is in Spirit, that is, in the power of the Holy Spirit working, in our communion with God. But another element is put before us here; the active exercise of a vigilant mind, so that all turns to prayer, and that we observe that as to which we have to pray. There is the active interest of love, which is awake and alive, does not sleep over the interests of the church of God, over the holiness and communion of the saints—cannot if we are near to God. For there is an active, living energy of love, which, in the desire of the blessing of the saints, thus draws near to God. This gives perseverance and earnestness; for, whatever our confidence in the love of God, affection is earnest and persevering; and here, above all, it is that divine affections, our personal participation through grace in the interest God takes in blessing, are brought out.

Here, as elsewhere, the apostle therefore brings in all saints. Compare Ephesians 1:15; 3:18. The apostle knew what it was, as all abundantly testifies, and he knew its value. It is a privilege of all saints, on which an apostle himself is dependent. All have not distinguished gifts, but all have the privilege of drawing near to God as child and priest. See 2 Corinthians 1:11. Divine power in us is the fruit of dependence on Him who gives it.

The armor of God then begins with all being inwardly right in affection; then in practice; then peacefulness of walk; and so it is, for sin is restless and impatient: then security, by unfailing confidence, from Satan's attacks; the joy and power of salvation before God; and finally, the active energy in which we can use the word in all; and behind all, dependence exercised in prayer.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Faith Furnished for the Evil Day

Ephesians 6:10-24

The very blessings of the church set us in a sort of conflict, that, without such blessings, we should not have. Thus we are subject to more of failure and evil. A Jew might do many things that would be monstrous in a Christian, and find no defilement of conscience. The veil being rent, the light shines out, and the consequence is, that the light coming from the holiest cannot tolerate evil. Blessed be God! we have power to meet the difficulties of our position; and this epistle brings out the provision which God has made for the saints.

The church is seated "in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 2:6)—blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3). So also are we said to contend with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). We are carried into conflict in the very place of strength; for the nearer we are to God, the more we want strength to walk there.

Israel, when they got into the land, found the consequences of sin desperate. What a terrible slaughter at Ai, for the sin of Achan! (Josh. 7) And again, the consequences of neglecting to ask counsel of the Lord about the men of Gibeon went on for generations, even to Saul's time (2 Sam. 21). In the land, where God was and took His place, the consequences of sin were proportionate.

By virtue of our privileges we get this conflict. Moreover, if you and I have more knowledge than many other Christians, there will be more dishonor and failure amongst us than amongst other Christians, unless we are walking according to the light.

"Be strong in the Lord" (Eph. 6:10). Here is the place of strength—strength found only in Him. Whatever instrumentality He may be pleased to use, there is no object of faith but the Lord Himself. Whilst there is nothing more blessed than the ministry of the word, and also, if I have been instrumental in the conversion of a soul, through God's blessing, that soul will cleave to me, and rightly so, it is of God and God owns it (for if He breaks that which is of the flesh, He creates that which is of the Spirit: God gives it—it may be abused, yet God makes the link between the one blessed and the instrument), yet you cannot exercise faith in man, you cannot put your dependence on man. It is true, there is this link; but it is because the soul is brought to Christ. This alone is conversion. And here is the place of strength. There is no strength but in Christ. I have none, at any time, except as my soul is in secret communion with Him, and (through Him) with God the Father. Now the direct power of Satan is towards this point, to keep our souls from living on Christ.

What we call duties, but what God calls "cares," often separate us from Christ. They fatigue and oppress the soul: and, if the saints do not cast all this on Christ, they unnerve themselves by things which distract the mind. The person says, I do not enjoy Christ; he knows not how it is, but thinks it is from the pressure of unavoidable care; whilst, in truth, it is the effect and result of having sought his resource elsewhere than in Christ. The soul has got distressed because it has not found Christ in the suffering, and this has thrown it toward something that is not Christ, something that (to human sight) promised fair. Thus it gets a taste for mere idle things. What we are led to by the Spirit is to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). It is no good talking of cares: Satan is behind them all; it is no good talking of difficulties: Satan is behind the difficulties, thrusting them on to shake the power of the word in us; and we may be quite sure of this that, if not in communion, Satan will have the advantage of us, because these cares (see 2 Cor. 2:11), are not about Christ. I have all to do to, and for, Christ. He will make us feel our dependence, but it is never falsified.

Whilst thus oppressed with the turmoils of life, it is ever a truth, that we are not in the strength of Christ, for He is stronger than the shop or the family or any other care. It may be I am occupied with something I ought not to be; if I cannot do it, "to the Lord," I ought not to do it. It is quite certain that Christ's strength does carry us through everything, no matter what the difficulties are: we shall feel them, we may groan under them; but when I can say, with David, "It is God that girdeth me with strength" (Psa. 18), the enemy may come against me—"a bow of steel is broken by my arms." The Lord made him triumph over all.

It is in difficulties that we learn this strength. Hence in little things the believer is apt to forget, that our whole dependence is to be “strong in the Lord”; that is, not being taken out of the place of conscious weakness. Paul says, “I was with you in weakness” (1 Cor. 2:3); so, again: “without were fightings, within were fears” (2 Cor. 7:5). It is not that the saint will be able to say, I am strong, when put into difficulties: these make us lean on Christ, when in them, and strength is always there—“strength made perfect in weakness” (a consciousness of weakness). The whole truth of it is in the spirit of dependence, whether we see bright light or not. Paul said, “I rather glory in my infirmities “—why? Because they made him lean on Christ. Faith, in exercise, is strengthened, and Christ giveth light to him that wakes up: “unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness” (Pa. 112:4). The reason why a saint, who has had a great deal of joy, often gets into failure is, because it has taken him away from the present consciousness of dependence; the very goodness of the Lord has made him enjoy himself. There is always a tendency for the flesh to slip in.

After showing the place of the Christian's strength, the apostle says, “Put on the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:11). The great thing is, that it is God's armor. There is no standing against Satan without this. What is not of God fails. If ever so skilful in argument, and able to confute an opposer with the truth, I have nevertheless done him no good, and myself much harm, because I was acting in the flesh: Satan was working on me, and not God. Whenever it is God's armor, it must be by faith, and in secret communion with God. There is the departure from all strength, when we lose this; not anything we know will be of use—the word of God even, for it is the “sword of the Spirit,” and it is shut up. Strength is always the effect of having to do with God in the spirit of dependence. In the exercise of this dependence, I may have such a blessed sense of His power, that I may triumph over all; but whether in trial or in triumph, I shall be strong in a sense of dependence. If Moses' hands were not upheld, Amalek prevailed (Ex. 17). One who looked on might have been astonished at seeing Amalek prevail at certain times, and would be calculating about the array (the advantages or disadvantages of the array) in which Israel were set; but the secret was, when Amalek prevailed, Moses' hands were hanging down. It was not because Joshua was not in the blessed place of doing God's work, but because the act of dependence on God was stayed. If my mind has been exercised about a brother, and in walking along the streets, on my way to him, I get apart from God, I shall do him no good, though I say ever so much to him.

See the contrast between Jonathan and Saul (1 Sam. 14)—between confidence in God overcoming difficulties, and self failing, with all the resources of royalty. Jonathan clambers up upon his hands and feet, confident in God, and the enemy falls before him. Saul, when he sees the Lord's work going on, not knowing the Lord's mind, calls for the priest. It may be that he had a right intention, but certainly not simplicity of dependence on God (when inquiring what he should do); and he spoils all by his foolish oath. It was said of Jonathan, “He hath wrought with God this day.” God was with him, and he had strength and liberty. When we are walking in dependence upon God, there will always be liberty before God. Jonathan knew what he should do, and took some honey, because he went on in liberty, for God was with him; whilst Saul, in legality, put himself and the people into bondage. Unless we are dependent on God, the very things that would be our armor will be weapons against us, striking friends instead of enemies, or injuring ourselves.

Observe it is said, “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”—“Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may withstand in the evil day” (Eph. 6:13). If I saw a person going into battle without a shield, and without his helmet,' etc., I should say he was mad. One living in theory might not have it; but, if we live near enough to God, to be practically in conflict, we shall need “the whole armor.” If we pray without searching the word, or read the word without prayer, we may get no guidance. Jesus said, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). Without this, I may be asking some foolish thing that will not be given.

Conscious. weakness causes a saint not to dare to move without God. I cannot go to meet an enemy with the word and without prayer. If I felt as a sheep in the midst of wolves (Matt. 11:16), I should be aware of my weakness. I may be, like an antiquary, occupied with the theory of the armor, and not putting it on, not having any real dependence on God. We have to stand against the wiles of the devil (it is not said his power). As soon as I see them I can avoid them.

But after all it is not knowing Satan that keeps us intelligent of and able in discovering his “wiles,” but keeping in God's presence. It was always so with Christ. Even Peter's affection tried to make the cross ugly to Him (Matt. 16:22). Jesus resisted Satan and discovered his wiles; He not only always received things from above, but in the spirit of dependence on God. The moment we know the thing to be of Satan, the temptation is over if we are walking with God. When the devil came to our Lord (Matt. 4), Christ did not at once say to him, Thou art Satan; that would have been only showing His power. He acted as the obedient Man, and thus foiled the tempter. When the devil claims worship, He then says, “Get thee hence, Satan.” To discern his “wiles,” we should see whether the thing proposed leads from obedience to Christ; if it does, no matter who proposes, I must reject it. The devil has this character of subtlety (not always of open opposition), as the serpent (see 2 Cor. 11:3); but the place of obedience to God will always upset him.

This is a remarkable expression—“the evil day” (Eph. 6:13). It supposes, in a general way, all this present time, for it is the time of Satan's temptations; but then there are certain circumstances which cause Satan's power to be more exercised at one season than another. There is a time when the soul will be put to it. It is different to be going on in energy against Satan, and exercising the triumphs of victory, enjoying the triumphs; we may be walking in an energy that overcomes all opposition, or in the conscious weakness of being hardly able to stand. A soul often gets an “evil day” after triumphing through Christ. There may be exaltation in the remembrance of the triumph, and a new source of trial and dependence comes. I may give up the world and be so very happy in the esteem and love of Christians as may bring out a bit of the flesh lower down. A saint often gets into this state, having gone on for a while in the strength of former conquests. A fresh battle comes; and, if he is not prepared for this, he is overcome for a season. The place of strength is always that of being forced to lean on God. As noticed before, respecting David, what a contrast between his songs of deliverance and thanksgiving to God, and the mournful words, “My house is not so with God” (2 Sam. 22-23).

The saint that always fears God, is always strong, for God is always with him; the secret of his strength is, he has God on his side. We are apt to look at means, even right means, and forget God. The most important victory has often come, when we have been most afraid of being beaten—the brightest songs, when an evil day has forced us to lean on God. The soul fearing, and in dependence, difficulties fall before us. We might not be able to explain why success was there, but the secret is, the hands were lifted up. The Lord is always working out His own plans.

“Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth” (Eph. 6:14). Truth is never really ours but as the affections are kept in order by it. I might preach beautiful truth, and many delight in the truth, but the soul not having been in communion with God in the truth spoken, the loins

would not be girt with it.

“And having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph. 6:14). A person not having a clean conscience, Satan cows him in his walk; but if the conscience is good, he has on the “breastplate,” and so is not continually thinking of attacks there. If Satan accuse me, I say, Christ is my righteousness. But here it is Satan troubling me as to conscience. If I am not honest in my confessions before God, I am without the “breastplate.” If I have it, there is no need that I should keep looking at my own breast, I can go on in the confidence that I am hiding nothing from God, but am walking in all good conscience before Him. The Lord may shield us in the battle, but we cannot go on in conflict unless we have on this part of the “whole armor.” There is a resource, doubtless, in God's grace, in all our failure; but the right place is to have a good conscience. And it is the place of liberty and strength.

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph 6:15). The gospel of peace is ours in Christ; but I must have the spirit of peace in my heart. Peace has been made for us that we may dwell in peace. It is the peace that “passeth all understanding “—“the peace of God” that is to keep our hearts and minds. There is no place so full of peace as heaven—no jar there: myriads of worshippers all in concord, while there are a thousand harmonies round the center of God's glory. The soul in communion with God will live in the spirit of peace. There is nothing more important, to meet the turmoil of the world, than getting into this spirit of peace. When the spirit of peace does not rule in the heart, how can the saint walk as having always peace? There may be uncompromising faithfulness in such a man, but he cannot walk as Jesus walked. Nothing keeps the soul in such peace as a settled confidence in God. Without this a man will be continually excited, in haste, and full of anxiety. If the peace of God keep your hearts, you will have the triumph of it; nothing can be heard that is distinctive from it, that does not perfectly harmonize with it. Uncompromising firmness becomes us, yet calmness; and nothing keeps the soul so calm as a sense of grace. This is a sign of power, and, moreover, connected with humbleness. All grace has come to us. A sense of nothingness, with the spirit of peace, gives a power to surmount all things.

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph. 6:16). Every “fiery dart” is quenched by confidence in God. A Christian need not be afraid to hold up his head in the day of battle, because God is with and for him. This is not shaken by whatever abominable thought Satan puts into the mind. All is quenched by this confidence. “And take the helmet of salvation.” I hold up my head because I am safe. Salvation is mine.

Strength begins from within. We first have the loins girded about with truth, the breast covered with righteousness, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and then we can take (our only offensive weapon) “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). There is nothing more dangerous than to use the word when it has not touched my conscience. I put myself into Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, what is in possession of my soul, and use it in ministry or privately. There is nothing more dangerous than the handling of the word apart from the guidance of the Spirit. To talk with saints on the things of God beyond what I hold in communion is most pernicious. There would be a great deal not said that is said, were we watchful as to this, and the word not so used in an unclean way. I know of nothing that more separates from God than truth spoken out of communion with God; there is uncommon danger in it.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph. 6:18). The word “always “is not used in reference to some other things; prayer is the expression and exercise of dependence. If a person asks me a question, and I answer, without speaking to God about it, it will be more likely to lead from God than to God. Just as with Hezekiah (Isa. 39) when the ambassadors came and he turned them to his treasures instead of to the Lord who had healed him. When a question or a difficulty comes, do we turn to God? We may have turned to God before, and the thing is answered; and we ought to have that power of prayer that there would be no difficulty when any circumstance arises—this continual supplication; we ought to be furnished unto every good word and work. Thus it was with Jesus. He had prayed before, so when the cup came He was quite ready to drink it.

A wish or a desire expressed, to God, in the confidence of a child to its father, is heard; but this is not necessarily prayer “in the Spirit.” When living really in the power of communion, we have that energy of supplication that looks for answers (1 John 3:21-22; 1 John 5:14-15), and the apostle, here, speaks of one who is in communion. Thus should it be with us; we should be so walking in the liberty of Christ, as not to be tripped, or thrown out of communion, by the cares, lusts, and anxieties of this life, though it may be an “evil day.”

Suppose you begin the day with a sweet spirit of prayer and confidence in God; in the course of the day, in this wicked world, you will find a thousand causes of agitation; but, if you are spiritually exercised, alive to see the things God is exercised in, everything will become a matter of prayer and intercession according to the mind of God. Thus humbleness and dependence should be marked on all a saint's actions. Instead of being full of regrets at what we meet with, if walking with Christ, we shall see His interests in a brother or the church. What a blessed thing to carry everything to God! to take all to Him, instead of constantly murmuring over failure! This is our position—to have on the whole armor of God, and not to be tripped up of Satan. Unless right ourselves, we cannot make intercession for others. The words in verse 18 refer to a man who is walking in “the whole armor.”

The apostle could pray for everybody, and yet he the more needed the prayers of the saints, because he had more cares than others (Eph. 6:19-20). He always wanted their prayers, as we see; v. 19. Walking in full affection himself, he reckoned upon people caring for him; walking as Paul did, this is taken for granted. Here too (Eph. 6:21-22), and to the saints at Colosse, he speaks of having sent Tychicus, to declare his state—“that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do.” He takes their love for granted. We also, if walking in the love of the Spirit, can always count upon others being interested in our “affairs.” In the world it would be pride to suppose others anxious about our concerns; but the saint knows, and counts on, the love of the Spirit in the saints.

To come back to the first great principle—“Be strong in the Lord.” Spite of Satan, and of all he may do to hinder, we have the privilege of individual dependence upon God. Everything may look dark, but the Lord tells us “to be strong.” This is always accompanied with lowliness of heart. Come what will, when the Lord is rested on, we are strong. But our dependence must be simply, and singly, on God.

Letters 3, Abbott's Hill and Principles

I never felt so thoroughly humbled as in writing the leaflet I sent. I have felt more than ever through all this business, what a solemn thing it is to have to do with God—never practically knew His faithful love so much, and the deep responsibility of acting for Him, and a most solemn thing it is. And then when I set about to write to all, as a kind of resuming word from Him at the issue of it all, I felt and feel now, in looking back at it, this responsibility as, I believe, I never did. And then all I have said and done has been so canvassed, that I had to see and not say a word that He did not mean me to say, and which I might not know how to justify afterward, at least before God. But if you feel you can do that, it gives great firmness and comfort of spirit with Him, not going beyond His will, and serving Him in it. Of course it is always what we have to do, but it is greatly put to the test sometimes. I have happily not a feeling of unkindness. Character comes out in these siftings, and there are things which morally offend you; but God is above all the evil. It is the essence of Christianity. He can be where, as to our own path, we cannot; but further, this ought to rule in us—" Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us." And we must remember that His saints are precious to Him. This allows no evil in ourselves, nor acquiescence in it; but it should govern our ways towards others....

Patience with any human effort to maintain evil will prove its nothingness more than a restless feeling: it gives weight and gravity to the testimony, and it enlists God with us. It is the "God of peace" sanctifies: it is not acquiescing in evil; I would have—I have no tendency in that direction; but following God, not going before Him. Though often tried, I do trust Him fully.

I have looked through the old 'Poor of the Flock,' and corrected a great many hymns, perfectly astounded that so much short of all the light we had ever passed; but there was often piety, and I have put them in the form of truth where there was. I have already gone through the new one. I am now going to look through other hymn-books which I have, to see if there are any which could be added, and there are two or three of my own from which some verses perhaps may be taken, some of which you have not seen.

May the Lord keep you all in peace and patience! Rousing to devotedness I trust will follow: that God alone can do; but our hearts can be directed towards it, and that, I trust, they may be. There has been a good deal of awakening of conscience.... I look much to rousing the saints to joyful devotedness, but, 1 repeat, that is God's gracious work. But after all, our business is to keep our hearts up in heaven, for our own joy and for the life of our souls, and to be able to serve Him on earth. God is above all this evil, and can keep our hearts above it. Not that there may not be exercises and fears; still He is there to sustain, and will in His own time—the best—bring us out of them. Meanwhile we have to stand fast, trusting in the Lord.

Pau, October 25th.

Letters 1, Bride Contrasted With Union and Membership; the Heavenly Jerusalem; Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, The

My Beloved Brother,-Our letters have about crossed, but I take up my pen by reason of the question you raise as to the bride: more than one has been raised on it, some applying it wholly to the earthly Jerusalem. It may not be our highest position, and may be connected with a help-meet in the kingdom when all was subject; its distinction, however, from the earthly Jerusalem is clear. On the other hand, the main point is the distinction of the body: that is our own proper place connected with and founded on the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God. I have therefore no conscious a priori objection, if it be not the habits of thought which always exercise some influence, and particularly when one is an old man, more fixed than recipient, and I am not young. But I have not yet been able to make the bride the Lamb's wife other than the church. The Book of Revelation decides nothing absolutely. It says, "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and, "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." If the nations of those who are saved, who walk in the light of it [are] contrasted with the kings of the earth, that indeed would decide the matter, and shows Abraham's place, which has made a difficulty to some minds; but this I could not affirm. Still, up to the present, I am not able to see anything else but the church. The contrast with Babylon, and His wife having made herself ready, seems to point out the present period in contrast with church corruption.

The espousing to Christ, to which you refer, points to the same thing, but I hardly see how Eph. 5 can be taken otherwise, for surely it points to the present relationship of Christ as Christ, which can hardly apply to the Old Testament saints when He was not Christ at all-the nourishing and cherishing it, as a man his own flesh, for we are members of His body, we are of His flesh and of His bones. This in every way connects itself with Christ become man, and though, as you urge, the church is not termed wife, because in fact that marriage is not come, yet surely it goes from the thought of this relationship, and refers to the relationship of Eve, and connects the thought of membership of the body with being of His flesh and of His bones; that is, the body and the wife. The body is not de facto more complete than the wife, though no doubt present union of members exists with the Head. The marriage is clearly future. Still Eph. 5 seems to me to identify the body and the wife. Bride is not a leading Pauline thought, but Old Testament and figurative. Union and membership is actual and real. Hence we do not find the bride so much in Paul, but in Revelation, which goes on prophetic ground, but transfers to heaven the images of prophecy. But I do not think the twelve tribes show Israel-no more than the angels, angelic beings-making part of the city: both I esteem characteristic. The providential power administered by angels, and direct government of Jehovah, as well as apostolic foundation, characterize the church, not so much Paul as the twelve, even so. Abraham's looking for the city does not exactly make him to be the city: it is another line of thought....

The agitation is very great in these countries, even in England. There is recrudescence on the Bethesda question, though but little as yet, but in Ireland and Scotland plenty; many being in movement, and leaving the Establishment, and in Ireland many meetings being formed without much knowing what they are about, through the labors of young men very hot against the Establishment, rather revivalist, and hitherto knowing nothing of the unity of the body; but there is progress—pretty decided as to breaking with evil, but not yet aware of its craft, so as to assure one they will keep it out; but the Lord is faithful. The brethren are going on happily enough, both in England and Ireland, and there is general growth and peace, though infirmity here and there:

Ever affectionately yours in the blessed Lord.

Glasgow, 1865.

Letters 1, Canada; Devotedness; Evangelical Body's Loss of Paul's Doctrine; John and Paul Compared; Justification by Faith; Publications; Righteousness Controversy, Work in

I do not know what else we have to do down here but to know God better and to serve, but I look especially for devotedness in brethren now. I have no doubt their place is just the testimony of God, not from any wisdom of ours, but the sovereign goodness of God, and more or less knowledge; but the testimony is not filled up or made good if there be not the devotedness. I do not deem the doctrine unimportant. The more I go on, the more I see that the evangelical body has lost itself-never has had, and resists the doctrine of Paul -not merely the church, that has been long clear, but even as to our whole standing as Christians. I am daily more distinct, when occasion requires, in bearing testimony to it. Striving may be of no use, but I think clearness of testimony is, and no fear in giving it; the times are too serious, only one must know what one is about, what the real point is.

But the controversy about righteousness, and so about law, has brought the matter out; are we in the first or second Adam?

Save the most useful and searching Epistle of James, the writings of the New Testament do not treat of justification, save those of Paul. John takes up the principle involved in it, but not in that shape-of course, confirms it as of one Spirit; but being risen with Christ, and so presented before God, is Pauline: only one has to watch that the divine character is fully developed, if we are occupied with this (I mean in one's own mind and faith), and that is fully done in Paul in his own way-of course I mean in that channel of truth in which the Holy Ghost led him-and wonderful it is how it is out of and above law; for these legalists are in their doctrine contemptible. We are to be imitators of God-Christ being our pattern-and show divine life in our entire offering up of self, and that to God, that the principle may be perfect. I have been occupied with this lately, and am thinking of sending a paper to the "Girdle" on it.

I think God has been somewhat helping brethren in their publications lately, which is mercy from His hands, but we have to fill up a vastly greater framework of testimony than we do. Workmen must have faith in all they have to do with. Often laments and inquiries as to the state of brethren are mainly the want of faith as to those who express them. Yet I fear the world for them-sometimes rash statements, but that is a less evil-but devotedness, and separateness from the world, nonconformity to it-that is what I look for.

Blessing has gone on here. There has been life enough to increase everywhere in numbers without any special gift, and healthful, comfortable additions. Our meeting (conference) at Toronto was a very happy one indeed. One, who I trust may be a workman, at any rate a witness, got his soul cleared on a multitude of subjects, once connected with Adventists, before a Methodist preacher: our communion as happy as possible, and scripture much opened and enjoyed. I am here arrived at Collingwood in a heavy snowdrift (if you can find the Georgian Bay, which makes a large part of Lake Huron, but all this part is now under ice), though it has not been particularly cold, but pretty early, and steady, once ten degrees below zero: but save snow, the cold is delicious weather, and not felt, unless when there is wind-then it is no joke. A few meet here, but it is wild enough. Last summer enormous districts of forest took fire and were burnt down, and the deer this year easily taken; but I came in railroad carriages with stoves, in this country where endless forests, and the highest degree of civilization strangely meet together. But the Lord is the same everywhere—and so is man morally!

Kindest love to the brethren, whom I remember with true affection and thankful love for all their kindness.

Affectionately yours.

1865.

Letters 1, Light and Love; Testimony for These Days

* * * Why is it said that we are light, and not love? They are the two names that God gives Himself. I have a thought about it: what do you say to it? See how, in Eph. 5, the two names of God are the models we are given to follow, that is to say, God, under these two names which reveal His nature; and in each of the two cases Christ is the expression of it in man What a privilege! What a vocation in the world! Ah, how poor we are! When love leads us, men are indeed those for whom we give ourselves; but God, He to whom we offer ourselves. (Chap. v. 2.) This is what renders it perfect. Perhaps this helps one to understand why it is we are light, and not love.

January 4th, 1865.

Letters 1, Love More Than Views; Union Among Saints

The Lord can speak the word of peace; a little love will smooth all this trouble. I was not united with the brethren for exact opinions on such or such a point, but by the love of Jesus, though truth be precious; and the Holy Ghost is able to and in love will order this. the word is sure, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule and mind the same thing—if in anything we be differently minded, God will reveal this also. That which is of the flesh will be manifested flesh, and probably there is some of it in all of us, in one as in others; but love is stronger than death. I doubt not that a little love will soothe the spirit of -, and irritation on any side is not of the grace of the Spirit of God. If it were a foundation truth for the soul, no peace could be held with error: mistake in the interpretation of Revelation, one may exercise much patience with. These things are always the sign of some other evil; but God will turn it to good. Perhaps knowledge has been too much attended to at Plymouth. The influence I had there was always and everywhere by great fundamental principles, and I trust it may ever be so, while I delight and believe in all the revelation of God as others. More humility will put all this in blessing, and perhaps it is needed to this end. I trust in the Lord for this, present or absent, that He will keep His poor children walking in love. I hold to love much more than to my views, or to those of others, or sustaining or destroying the views of others: hold fast by that, dear brother, for love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God. I fear knowledge has too much prominence at Plymouth, though it be very precious.... Grace be with you all, and all that love the Lord Jesus, our blessed Savior and patient Lord, in sincerity.

Yours ever affectionately.

I am myself in great peace about all this matter; I am sure the Lord is the stronger, and that the enemy shall be found to cede, rather give occasion to a better victory; such is my conviction....

Lausanne,

February 3rd, 1841.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 6, Ephesians 5:22-30: Christ Loved the Church

Remark, beloved brethren, how the grace of God has associated us with Himself and with Christ, though, of course, remaining Himself meanwhile in the supremacy of infinite Godhead, in which none can be associated with Him; but He has made us partakers of the divine nature, and given us His Spirit to dwell in us, so that we realize what He is, and become one with Christ through being united to Him.

We find, in the early part of Eph. 5, that we are called to be " imitators of God, as dear children, and to walk in love." Love is His nature; and we see this exemplified in a man, if we take Christ as the pattern of it. " Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."

Besides this we get another word brought before us, which also expresses God's nature: that is light; and it is said: " Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." And, here too, Christ is given as the perfect expression of what is put before us. " Awake, thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." As a man in the world, He was the expression and pattern of light.

But after this he adds, " Be filled with the Spirit "; for, though we are made partakers of this divine nature, which is light, and we are called to love after the pattern of God in Christ, yet after all we are but poor human creatures, powerless in ourselves; and the Spirit is the only power we have for everything.

In God's mind it is everything for us to have fellowship with Himself. He has put us before Himself in love; He has made us His sons and daughters-the objects of His delight; and He should be the object of our delight. So much for the first relationship that we find here. It is with the Father as sons, and in this Christ is the Firstborn among many brethren.

The second is union with Christ now glorified: " We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." We are livingly united to Him, as members to a head. I cannot get closer to him than being a member of His body, and in the same glory with Himself. This relationship gives us the indissoluble union of Christ and the church. " Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it... and let the wife see that she reverence her husband." Though quite true as regards husband and wife, it is a figure of Christ and the church.

But, though we are united to Him, He is ever pre-eminent, and what even gives its value to this relationship is the necessary pre-eminence in it, as in everything, of Christ. When Moses and Elias were on the mount with the Lord, they were in the same glory as He was, and talking with Him of what was nearest His heart, and nearest His Father's heart too; they were in familiar intercourse with Him. But, even then, the moment Peter talks about making three tabernacles, one for each, thus putting them on an equality, the Father's voice comes in and owns His Son, and Moses and Elias at once disappear. I only use this to illustrate what I mean; and so it must always be. There must always be the eternal blessedness and pre-eminence of His Person, and the nearer we get to Him the more conscious we shall be of this. If I know a man indeed intimately, I shall surely get to know his foibles. In Christ, the more I know Him, the more I shall only get to know deeper, and divine, excellence. There is no fear of near acquaintance diminishing respect towards Him: the more I feel His love, the more I shall feel that He is supreme in it. Intimacy with His love only shows out its excellence, and produces more adoration and love in me.

God is supreme in love. It is not said in chapter 5 that we are to be love; we cannot be free and supreme in it; we are said to be light, because the new man partakes in the purity of His nature. And in the love of Christ we find the working of this supreme goodness, and in a man, so that following Him we can walk in it, though we cannot say we are love, as we say we are light.

But, in the case of the church, at the close of chapter 5, we have a love of special relationship, not simply the goodness and sovereign love of God; yet the spring and source of all is in the unsought love of Christ, in which He acts in the thought of His own grace, when there was nothing to draw it out. He has to purchase what He loves, and form it for Himself. He " gave himself for it ": and when He gets it, He cleanses it for Himself.

But there is yet another point of view. He presents it " to himself." When God had made Eve, He presented her to Adam; but here we get the glory of Christ's Person. Being a divine Person He presents the church to Himself, having formed it and perfected it, so as to be suited to. Himself He does all for the church. Let us now see a little of the way in which He does it.

The first thing of all is His own unmotived love. " He loved the church," perfectly, divinely, infinitely; we here find the utterness of His love. " He gave himself." He did not only do something for it: " He gave himself! " And this is constantly repeated in the word; it is even said that " He gave himself for our sins," our sins being that which was in the way between us and God. As I look at Christ's love, I see that it had no motive but in itself, and it gives itself: nothing is held back. He is wholly and altogether mine; He has given Himself, and all is lumped up in that. The self-sacrifice of Christ was absolute: it was Himself, all He is, and all He was in His perfection. The whole motive of His nature was engaged in it: " He gave himself." And this is a wonderful thought, if our hearts could only get hold of it. It is not that He gave His blood, and gave His life, though that is true, and we may speak of it distinctively, for Scripture does; but the point here is the character of His love; so it says, " He gave himself." The motive was self-giving.

Mark here how, as regards the process of fitting the church for Christ, loving it and giving Himself for it goes first. It does not say, He cleansed and washed it so that He might have it, and then loved it because it was cleansed and fit to be loved. No. He gives Himself for it, and possesses it with a perfect title; Himself given for it, in the absolute completeness of His whole heart, according to which He has taken it to Himself. He gives Himself for it because He loved it; and now, He says, it must be cleansed and made fit for me. Not, it must be happy-happy it is, no doubt-but not only so; it must be made fit for Himself. I cannot be satisfied if a person I love is not what I like him to be-my children or wife, for example. It is not a feeling of discontent -I do not mean that-but a want of full satisfaction. So Christ sets about making the church

what He would like it to be. He cleanses it by " the washing of water by the word." As He said before: " Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

As the word comes from God, it judges all that is contrary to God, by the revelation of what is in God, so that it may make me like what it reveals. " For their sakes," He says, " I sanctify myself." As Man, He set Himself apart as the perfect expression of what is divine in a man, or man according to God. So it is not that I am what I ought to be, but that I am connected with Christ, who is the expression of what I ought to be, and forms me into His likeness. " We all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." That is the way it cleanses: it purifies our motives, thoughts, and apprehensions, thus changing us into the same image from glory to glory. But He is the doer; He redeems us, cleanses us, sanctifies us, and presents us.

There is also a thought here which is full of the deepest interest; and that is, that we cannot separate the cleansing from the glory. The cleansing is according to the glory, and, when the body is changed, the state of holiness is according to the glory revealed; see 1 Thess. 3:13, where we should have said " unblameable in holiness " in our walk; but we read, in the presence " of God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." We cannot really get on without looking at Christ in glory. It is said that " He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish." That is the cleansing. Practical cleansing is by the power of the revelation of the glory of Christ. But let us always remember that this cleansing is not in order that we may belong to Him, but that it is " Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might cleanse it."

Another thing that we find as regards the church, and this ought to comfort us in these dark days, and in the darker ones which we see coming. He goes on to say: " No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." It is not only that He fits it for Himself-makes it according to His own mind; but the same love that fits it, watches over it in the circumstances of weakness in which it is found, as it passes through the world. Why, he says, a man's flesh is himself; Christ takes care of Himself in taking care of the church. As he said to Saul: " Why persecutest thou me? " You are touching Me in persecuting them. Christ does not separate the saints down here from Himself. He is interested in them, cares for them, nourishes and cherishes them as a man does the flesh of his own body. And in this He can never fail. The darkness may be great, and the power of evil strong, and growing stronger (not that God is not working, for He is; and when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him, and is doing so, and preparing the coming of the Lord), but no more than a man can hate himself, can Christ fail in doing this-nourishing and cherishing the church.

The Lord has long patience with all this growing evil (we may pray that things may go quicker, that He would bring the end on more rapidly, calling in His own; but, if so, it will bring evil out more rapidly too, and the judgments that are coming on the earth, but yet we may desire it); but all through the faith of the saint can reckon on the care and love of Christ. You cannot put me in any circumstances where the love of Christ cannot suit me.

Nor even does the working of unbelief hinder. For, when those who are believers cannot use the power that has been brought in against evil, what is to be done? We read, that when they brought one possessed of a demon to the disciples, and they could not cast him out, the Lord says: " How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? " If you cannot use the power I have brought in, what is the use of staying with you? But He adds, " Bring him hither to me." Even if the faith of the church fail, and one were alone in the trial, individual faith will always find grace in the Lord Jesus Christ for its want. Just as the father of the child cried out with tears: " Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Christ cannot fail; and we on our side must not be like Elijah, saying, " Lord, they have thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away " (and mark at the moment he had thrown down their altars and slain their prophets), and then run away. What we want to say is: Well, Christ never fails, and there cannot be a want in Christ's church without there being an answer to it in Christ's heart.

All we want, beloved friends, is to have the eye fixed on Christ, from whom all grace and love flow, and to be sanctified in heart and spirit thereby, while waiting for Him, who has given Himself for us, so that we might be like Him even now, while walking through this world.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Love of Christ and the Experience That Flows From It, The

Ephesians 5

There are two points seen distinctly in our salvation and in the ways of God. The first is God bringing His thoughts to pass about us in grace, the second is the dealings of God with us, so as to bring our souls into the full enjoyment of both the source and effects of all His thoughts. And I am sure we ought to take heed to the difference of those two things, if we are to walk wisely as Christians. We need to hold both distinctly—God accomplishing His thoughts about us in grace, and His dealings with us to bring us into the enjoyment of them. The first is as sure, settled, and steadfast, as God Himself is, because “Hath he spoken, and will he not do it?” (Num. 23:19). But the other is His work also, and it is a process that must be carried on in our souls. For God never can depart from what He is. None of His counsels can deny His nature. His nature is holy, and He must have us holy; His nature is love, and He must have us in love. He cannot have us enjoy Himself, which is His purpose in grace, in a way different from what His nature is.

What man got in the fall is the knowledge of good and evil. This must be worked out in our hearts, if I may so say, to the measure and thoughts of God. It is there that all kinds of exercises come in—discipline, if needed, sifting processes, which go on in people's hearts.

If it is a question of the accomplishment of God's thoughts, He brings them about. He has called us, and, when the time comes, He will glorify us, as it is said, “Whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). So we find here, “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle” (Eph. 5:25,27). But then there is this other thing which our hearts have to notice (and it is all grace), that we are brought—our minds and souls. are brought—to enjoy God. Now, we must all be conscious how often, either positively or negatively, our souls are short of enjoying Him. Sometimes we enjoy something else, or our hearts are dull and old with God. But we must not confound in our hearts the full certainty of salvation through God's work, and the actual enjoyment we have of it; nor, on the other hand, by shortness of enjoyment, dim or cloud the

certainty of His work. Our foolish hearts are apt to do both. But if we look at the truth, the word of God, I see as to the first that it is all quite settled. The apostle can even speak of it as a thing past. “Whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). I am perfect in Christ. Beyond doubt the knowledge of good and evil is there, in our hearts alas! sadly dimmed; but still this is what we have got. I am brought into this condition, so that, if my heart is not according to the light I am brought into, I get the consciousness of it at once. There might be a person going on outwardly well for years, and yet all that time he is not brought into the light of God.

As to the first of these points, it is important to look at it as all settled. While our souls are exercised, and have got perhaps under law, we cannot understand this. We are looking at our own responsibilities, and are not thoroughly brought down and emptied of self. We have not yet real faith that the first Adam never has reached God, and never will. These are exercises of the heart short of the full knowledge of redemption. But when I have understood that our whole condition as children of the first Adam is a rejected one, that all are sinners, and that sin cannot get into the presence of God—when that is wrought, I look to another thing. I see in a sense that that responsibility is over—that I am entirely lost. Through grace Christ takes my place, and I get into another position altogether; I am a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is not speaking of my practical condition, but of the place that I have got into in Christ. Not one single bit of the old nature can come in there. And this is as true of the life I received from God as it is of redemption—“that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (1 John 1:2). Of course, when the glory comes, there will be no difficulty in saying, It is entirely of God. All is perfect and settled, whether I look at the individual saint or the church of God as a whole. He has loved it, and given Himself for it.

So, again, when I look at all that has to be done, “that he might sanctify and cleanse it” (vs. 25). He takes God's work and cleanses it, and then presents it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. Just as God in the garden of Eden presented Eve to Adam, so Christ will present the church to Himself, a glorious church and faultless. All that is blessedly certain; and if received as a divine truth, and mixed with faith in our hearts, we become thoroughly clear before God as to the new ground we have got; and no question remains whatever, because it is a question of the efficacy of God's work. It is a settled thing for my soul that, looked at in Adam as a sinner, I am utterly rejected, and that it is a question now of whether Christ has done His work well. I have done my work, which virtually sent me to hell; and now it hangs upon God's work, which of course, is perfect.

The more one looks into it, the more there really is a deep sense of perfectness. I see the perfect love that is the source of it all—infinite unspeakable love, a love which God's very nature, and being, and purpose about us too, express. When I look at the way it is accomplished, I see the perfectness of Christ's work, the absoluteness of His obedience in giving Himself up entirely. He gave Himself for us altogether, not merely His life, but Himself. He “hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:2). The more I study it, the more I see the intrinsic blessedness of it, and the delight that God takes in it. It is a “sweetsmelling savor to God.” We cannot see it too completely in God's hands. Christ “loved the church, and gave himself for it”; that is the first thing. And then He sets about, after He has got it and made it His own, to sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. It is according to His own mind that He does it, and then He presents it to Himself a glorious church.

Now the effect is to put us into the light, as God is in the light—into that light which makes all things manifest. It is the fullest and completest work, in effect redeeming us from all iniquity. I need my conscience to be brought into the presence of God according to His own delight in what is blessed. There is no evil there, and we are made light. This is just as completely true as the redemption is perfect. “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:8). Not merely you were in the dark, but you were darkness; but now you are light, and not merely in the light. My nature, as born of God, exactly answers to what God is.

But now I come to another thing. I have a nature capable of enjoying God and being in the light. Yes. But what is the knowledge of good and evil? What place am I brought into by that knowledge? I am brought into the light, and I am light. And when these two things come together, when this divine nature in me and the perfectness of the divine nature in itself come together, practically and consciously, What comes of our judgment of all other things? It is then that the knowledge of good and evil takes its true and full character.

When we as light come into the light as God is in the light, having a nature capable of resting in it, in the power of this, all in my heart becomes judged according to what God's presence is. The light makes all things manifest, and I see everything perfectly and according to God. How can I enjoy this light? How do I enjoy God in fact? It is not a question here of salvation and peace, because it supposes you are in the light of God, that is, brought to God. My new nature takes cognizance of all that is not of God, and I say, What is this? I get my conscience occupied with all these things, and in the presence of God. Here exercises come in for the Christian on the very foundation of salvation. The very thing that gives the judgment of evil in his heart is that he has got to God, and that there, in His presence, he gets the right estimate of everything. It is not absolutely perfect, of course; but he gets the just estimate, according to the degree in which he knows God, of what he is himself. All these exercises may go on either gently or painfully; but there must be a bringing up in our souls—a dealing with—good and evil, according to God's estimate of it.

This is founded on grace. I never, should be able to think about good and evil in my path, and to walk according to such an estimate, except as knowing that Christ suffered, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. And here is the practical importance of the fullest clearness as to salvation. You will never see a person safe against the corruptions of Christianity where that full assurance is not known in his soul. If I am not brought to God, I must get something in the shape of a mediator between me and God. But Christ has brought us to God. And this assurance of salvation really is a part of Christianity; because what Christ has done in suffering, the Just for the unjust, is to bring us to God. But if I am looking for anybody or any ordinance as the means that is to carry on anything between me and God, I am not brought to God. As regards my walk here, I do want these supplies of grace; but if I want anything in order to keep up my condition with God, I am not brought to God. This was the principle of the Jewish system. There was the holy place, and again the holiest also into which the way was not then opened.

The principle of all priesthood supposes that the man has not got to God himself: he cannot go himself, and he will be glad to get some one to go for him; whereas, as a believer now, I do not want even Christ to go for me, because He is there already. Thus assurance of salvation is connected with Christ, and, in one sense, it is the very essence of it; because we are brought into the presence of God, and the effect of this in our new nature, the divine nature that is in us being in God's presence, is to make us judge about good and evil. His presence makes us judge it, just because we are there and have a title to enjoy everything that is there. If a man is walking with God, he has the light of God upon his path: no part is dark. And this is what Luke himself tells us. “The light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light” (Luke 11:34). “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Paul speaks there of a real Christian who has got asleep, who needs this perfection of Christ as the light of his path. Are you then thus gone to

sleep? You are not dead really as to your condition before God, but you are walking like a dead man. You must awake and rise from among these dead people, and you will have the perfect light of Christ.

But supposing I have been asleep, and I wake up and find myself to have been walking among the dead, what is the effect of this light? It is to bring in the light of God upon the conscience, perhaps to the extent of clouding all joy, or even for the moment causing me to doubt of salvation. But the exercises of the soul that is holding fast the certainty of salvation, founded upon the word of God (which is the real starting-point of the Christian, and in virtue of which it is that he gets any exercises of soul), flow from this—that he looks at the inward state of his soul, and sees that it ought to be up to that full character of the presence of God in which we are placed. It is there that our daily exercises go on. God has brought us to Himself—brought us all to Himself, because this is the very position of the Christian. We may be passing through the world with different degrees of knowledge and acquaintance with Christ and power of communion, but, as far as His work goes, we are brought to God. The conscience has nothing inconsistent with that light. Brought to God, as certainly as if we were in heaven, the effect is, as we are not really in heaven, to bring all our thoughts and ways into the light.

How far are we, from day to day and from hour to hour, walking where we are set? We walk in the light as God is in the light; that is, we are brought to God, who is light, and then it is a question of degree of realization. Are you walking according to the light, as God is in the light? This is another question, and it is where practical exercise of soul comes in, founded on salvation, whether from day to day and hour to hour. I am not looking on the things which are seen, and temporal, rather than on the things which are not seen, and are eternal. His word is that which is the revelation of all that is not seen, but alone real and enduring. All the rest will perish—every thought of our hearts. Nothing but the word of the Lord abides forever.

You will find, when speaking of Christ's work which He carries on, Paul speaks of sanctifying and cleansing the church. He is bringing it up towards this light, “that He may present it to Himself a glorious church.” That is, in virtue of God's having brought us to Himself, we start from Him to pass through the world, with a divine nature and the knowledge of God according to that divine nature that is in us, and to judge everything that is in the world by that light. As it is said in 1 Corinthians 2, “He that is spiritual judgeth all things.” How does he judge all things? It is not his own judgment; it is by that light which maketh all manifest.

Whatever the will of God allows as a path in the world, He gives light for it in His word. He shows us a path, and He gives the light for it, if I am walking in the light. The question is, whether the path in which I am walking, and my ways, hinder or are the effect of my communion with God? whether they are in the light? Does my path in everyday life come from the light, and is it guided by it? Does it flow from, and is it the effect of, my new nature being in communion with the divine nature—with God? That is the question. If not, it has not glorified God. I may not have sinned outwardly, or done anything positively wrong; but so far I am asleep. I am not thinking about it; and it dulls the spiritual sense. But when I awake, I find out that I am away from God, and all is disturbance with my spirit. I cannot see God clearly. The practical enjoyment of God by the new nature is interrupted by the workings of the old, so that the things of God and God Himself have got out of sight, and I am not quite sure where I can get hold of them. All will be bright where it is with God. There will be trials, and trials with God are perhaps the brightest spots in any man's life. If not, the soul's condition of enjoying God has been injured. When it cannot enjoy God, what a disturbed state it gets into! God is perfect love, I say, but I cannot enjoy it, if there is uncertainty as to His love.

I am sure of the sun while it is raining, but still I say, What terrible weather we have!—there is not a bit of sunshine. God will never make us doubt about His love, but He will make us feel the loss of it. He will bring us into the conscious sense of the loss of His love. He may make us find out some positive wrong thing that has done it, or a slothful state of soul in not acting in the light. But He loves us too well to let us go on, without finding it out sooner or later. God is perfect in His grace, and He deals with us so that if a person is walking with God, we shall find weakness, but we are with Him about it directly. But where there is a failure in walking up to the light, where it is anything habitually wrong, there the soul gets away, not from the knowledge that God loves it, but it goes on asleep, and, when it wakes up, as it does, through mercy, it finds, perhaps, darkness as to everything—certainly as to the enjoyment of God. It is there where the exercises of soul come in, and the need of constant watching unto prayer. If it be not so, there will be the loss of the enjoyment of divine love; and when we get back into the presence of Him that loves us, that is the very time we get distressed and miserable.

But then we have the second part of Christ's work on the other hand, which is in constant exercise towards us—not His finished work of redemption. In the very verses before us, the first part looks at His finished work, and the second at His carrying on the work till He presents us in glory. He “loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it” (Eph 5:25-26). That cleansing is still His work to bring us up to the level of what God is; and then what is connected with it? “That he might present it to himself a glorious church.” It is that work which He carries on perfectly to the end. But there is another thing, and this He adds in verse 29: “No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” Here I get the daily care of grace: the priesthood of Christ comes in. And it is of all importance that there should not be insensibility to it. The walk not being in the light makes us to have less intimacy with His daily care over us. This is going on constantly. A man takes care to do all for his wife as he would for himself; so does Christ to the church. He nourishes and cherishes it. And our faith, if we are walking with God, can look for that for the church, in spite of everything. He nourishes and cherishes it through all and spite of all, as a man does his own wife.

We may speak of the ruin of the church, but Christ is faithful. You never can touch that—never can touch the fact for faith that Christ always nourishes and cherishes the church as a man does his own wife. He never ceases to do it. And it is our privilege to go along with Christ, to be associated with Christ in caring for the church. But in caring for it I may cast doubt on that very consciousness that He nourishes and cherishes it, so there is the continual exercise of faith in communion with God. We can count upon Christ actively. If I love the church and the saints rightly, I shall have the consciousness of Christ's love to them, and sympathy with Him in it. I shall have it, and my heart, in its love toward the saints, will be reckoning always upon Christ's love towards them, and so making it active. But we have this comfort, even where we fail, that He restores us, and intercedes for us. He is either maintaining, or bringing the soul, which has got away, back into the full enjoyment of the sunshine of God's perfect light. Only remember this, that it will always be wrought in the conscience and in the affections. I grant His love will attract us. He will tell me of His love, and make me find out, by recalling it, that I neglected it. It gets into the conscience and then comes exercise of heart, in order that the divine life should be perfectly unclouded upon my soul.

And then I can give thanks for everything; I can glory even in infirmities. The apostle Paul himself besought the Lord that the thorn in the flesh should be taken away. But the moment he got the clue of divine love working in it, he said, I would not have it gone for the world. He glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Christ's everyday care over us, and the exercise of His love, reveal that love,

and bring the heart back to it. But all this is carried on in the conscience, which therefore gets exercised; and then the heart returns into the unclouded brightness of God's face, where we see everything is ours—life, death, things present and to come. This is founded upon the blessed truth, that we are brought to God, that the very meaning of salvation is that we are brought to Him, and have a nature which comes from God and enjoys Him. The Holy Spirit has the power to keep up the communion, and we are walking in the light.

How far has my soul been walking thus in the presence of God? Enoch walked with God, and God took him. Only let us remember that the life of Christ has been given to us, and that we are in the light, as God is in the light. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us. How far are our lives going on in this grace? God always has the state of the heart in His mind. He has various ways of dealing with the individual soul as He has with His church. But it is wondrous to see that God is every moment thinking of us—how to bring us up to the full enjoyment of His love.

The Lord give us to know the perfectness of that love. And then, while in the world where everything is passing, and where evil has come in and produced all kinds of confusion, there is a sense of divine grace that, if the sin has come in, grace has come in. The Lord give us to walk in the consciousness that we are brought into this, and then may we seek to enjoy it in communion! It must be by faith and not by sight. We cannot see these things; but there is a divine work always going on. It may be either recognized or forgotten by us; but it is always going on. There is not an instant that we have not to say to God: there is many a one that we forget; and then I have to start up again, and say, Ah! where have I got to?

The Lord give us, in the full sense of His grace, to have our souls exercised before Him.

Christian Truth: Volume 29, Dear Children: Words From God Our Father

"Dear Children"

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Eph. 5:1, 2.

What a wonderful place the Lord sets us in here, and sets us in the consciousness of it too. To think that such a word should come out of His mouth to us, calling us "dear children"! We are familiar with the thought of being sons of God, "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"; but when we think of the nearness and intimacy of this, and His revealing Himself to us, it is wonderful.

It is not what He has done to deliver us from condemnation; but when the sin is all gone, to be remembered no more. He sets us in this relationship of "dear children," and in the consciousness of it. If He says to me, Dear child! what a thought I have of Him, and of the wonderful condition I am in; the expression draws out the consciousness of the love in the place. He may have done all kinds of things for me, but the very word conveys to me where I am. If we come to think of it and measure it, we have to think of Christ. He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." He dwells in us to be the power and enjoyment of it, and attracts down from the Father's heart what He feels for Him and for us, and that is shed abroad in our hearts.

We have been accustomed to look at God as a judge—a solemn truth in its place. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity; but there is a complete putting away of sin. Looking at the work of Christ there is such an entire putting away of sin according to God's glory, that I get into the light, and the only thing it shows is that I am as white as snow, leaving the heart free to enjoy the present "grace wherein we stand." Being justified by faith, I have peace with God. I can say I am waiting for the glory and, besides that, I have access to this present grace. It is of all importance for our hearts and affections that we should be there with God; we cannot enjoy it if we allow evil, and even negligence dims our hearts and prevents our apprehension of it.

We get the doctrinal part of the epistle before, and now He says, You are My dear children; it is not a mere doctrine. but the address of God to us. When He says "dear," what says it? It is His heart, what He feels about us, poor creatures as we are; but He says it because He feels it. He is expressing Himself and reaching us, and that is what is so thoroughly blessed. A child is to be obedient and dutiful; but it is wonderful that God should say this, and He reckons on our hearts walking in it. This is the outgoing of God's good pleasure and delight, poor unworthy creature as I am; it is not a question of worthiness; that is in Christ. The sin has been so put away in God's sight that His heart can go out. Christ's love took Him to that baptism—"I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished"! Till then His love could not go out freely, but then it could flow out in unmingled freeness—perfect love in the drinking of that terrible cup. Now the lave is free to act. Grace reigns because righteousness is accomplished. His whole love can go out through grace.

I get, through the work of Christ, God free to satisfy His love, all the purposes and delights of His own nature. The love is free to flow out in all its fullness. You never get a word about the prodigal when he comes to the father (a great deal about him when he is coming); but you hear about the father, and his joy in having him. The poor prodigal was happy enough, but it is not meet to make him happy; he had the best robe, but it is "meet" to "make merry, and be glad"; for "this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." He tells it to us that we should know it. It was meet that he should make merry, and have all glad around him because this poor sinner had come back. There is no hindrance to the full satisfaction of his soul, his own joy to have this one in.

We get great truths: the work of Christ that was needed to put away sin and open out this love—there is a new creation, and we are dead. We are to put off the old man and put on the new. Then the love is perfectly free, and I get hold of another thing—what did it all come from? what have I got into? It comes from God; the very nature is of God. "Of Him {God} are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." We are of God, and the righteousness of God; all is of God, and according to God; and we have a nature capable of understanding it, and of enjoying all God is. All is free and full, and this nature can let itself out to me in love. The thing I am brought to enjoy is of God, and all my intelligence for conduct and feeling and everything is of God. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me"; but the Spirit here goes up to the source and says, "Be ye... followers of God"; "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him," etc.; "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," and love too.

Having the divine nature (sin put away) we are in the light as God is in the light, brought into the presence of God, and capable of enjoying it. It is not of human wisdom or knowledge, but of a pure heart; we learn more and more every day if we are walking with God, but it is not intellect. All the intellect in the world never knew what it is to be loved, never found out God; it found wills and lusts, but never found God. We learn Him by our wants. The one who learns what strength is, and knows the comfort of it, is a poor feeble person who cannot get along a rough road, and a strong one lends his arm. What a comfort strength is to him!

God has met the real need of a soul in every possible way. "When we were yet without strength,... Christ died for the ungodly." The perfection of His love came out, in that when we had no strength to get out of our state, He says, I must come down to you. It takes me up to enjoy it in God Himself. He comes down to the sinner where he is, and the sinner learns there is love enough to reach from the holy throne of God to him, and to take his poor heart up to the throne of God. Not wisdom or intellect, but God revealing Himself; and as He thus acts in love, I get the very spring of it, and the root from the beginning to the end as I know Him. The light comes into my conscience and makes everything manifest, and the love comes too. We have to learn more of the treacherousness of our hearts, of the wiles of Satan, and of the world; but I am in positive relationship with God, sin is outside (by faith, I mean), and there we have to keep it. We are in the heavenly places as to doctrine; then we get the practical power. He sends us out from Himself to the world that men may know what He is....

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. 4:32.

As brought to God I have learned what God is as to His ways of grace. Did God come and clamor against you in justice? He sent His Son to give Himself for you, and has forgiven you. You go and do so to others. You are a dear child; go and manifest what God is; He has forgiven you. There is a man who has wronged me; I go and forgive him as God forgave me, if I am near enough to God to do it, to show out that what we have been learning is the joy of our souls.

"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us." There we see the preciousness of Him who brought it so close to us. Have you not understood what Christ's love to you as a poor creature was? Have you not learned for yourself that He gave Himself—no light thing. Then you go and give yourself. He did not give a great deal for us (everything in one sense); He gave Himself. The law requires the measure of your love to yourself to be that of your love to your neighbor. In a world like this I want something more than that. I have to do with people who wrong and insult and harass and outrage me. Christ did more than love us as He loved Himself—He gave Himself entirely. The perfection of love is measured in self-sacrifice. We may fail in it, but there is no other measure. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Was not God manifested in Christ?

Is not Christ your model? He, the blessed Son of God walking through this world, manifested God with a divine superiority over evil. It is put away between me and God, and I am to be above it between me and man—the power of good in the midst of evil. If you see unrighteousness, and your spirit boils over, that will not do; you may "be... angry and sin not"—righteous indignation at evil. Christ was the expression of unavenging righteousness—doing well, and suffering, taking it patiently.

One word on this verse—Eph. 5:2. I give myself for others, but to God. If I give myself to others, I may not go right, for they may not go right; but the lower and worse the person I give myself up for, the higher it is. The principle of Christ was—He gave Himself to God, but for the vilest. It was a sacrifice of love—love that had its motive in itself for God, its object in God—and that kept it steady in the path.

Further in the chapter (v. 14) you get light brought in—the full light into the conscience, and the full love into the heart—and then you will go right. There our souls should be—walking in the light, our consciences alive, and our hearts in the undisturbed consciousness of that word of God, "Dear children," the feeling of affection going out from His heart—so that when I go to Him, there is not only the love that sought the sinner, but the love now in the relationship that finds delight in expressing itself. Wherever the world or selfishness gets in (evil too, I need not say), that is not after God, but after the world and after the devil. That is like a man asleep. He does not hear or speak; he may dream, and the word to him is, "Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." If my heart goes with the things of the world, Christ is not shining into it. There may be glimmerings, but I cannot say "Abba" and go to Him with the sense that He will say, Now My child, go and follow Me.

The Christian Shepherd: 2003, Walking Circumspectly

“See that ye walk circumspectly [watchfully, discreetly], not as fools but as wise” (Eph. 5:15).

In heaven there will be no “Take heed”; there we may give free way to perfect joy: There all is holy, but down here in this life, in the midst of evil, we must take heed we must use wisdom. The man of the world, in order to avoid evil, must be skilled in the knowledge of the evil. The Christian has no need to think about evil; he must be wise without the knowledge of evil, as it is written, “Wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil” (Rom. 16:19), because full, divine knowledge of good in the midst of evil is what Christ gives. What He Himself was here contains no familiar acquaintance with evil. The child of God ought to possess that spiritual wisdom which is simple as a dove.

J. N. Darby

Notes and Jottings, Detached Memoranda From a Reading Meeting: Unity of the Spirit

No one can hinder there being “one body," but when you come to keeping " the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," you get that power of the Spirit of God that makes me practically realize the unity of the body in the path down here. God alone can carry it out, but that is what I get down here.

In the house are false brethren crept in unawares; but there is no such thing as false members in the body. If you strike my hand, I say, why are you striking me? But I do not speak thus of a house. Failure does not destroy the character of the house as such; if badly built, it is still a house. Just as the Lord says of the temple, “My Father's house," though they had made it a den of thieves.

Letters 3, Unity of the Spirit

The unity of the Spirit is what occupied us at Croydon, and though I think I have it clear in my mind, I have some difficulty in making it so to others. The grand fact is, there is one Spirit as there is one body; not only abstractedly, but actually one, forming the body, putting each member in its place in the body; and He is the source of every proper thought and act in the church, now the fact is there. No doubt the end of Eph. 2 is the great example of two made one, but then that was brought about by death and resurrection putting all on a new footing, bringing in a new state of things founded on it. It is of the unity of this new state of things that the Spirit is the power and characteristic. Now the Holy Ghost brings all these things into harmonious detail, and gives fellowship in them in that harmony; there then is the unity of the Spirit, and this may be of course in a thousand details, wherever the Spirit works. I do not think we can bring in verses 4-6; not that the Spirit has not to do with them, but that they are collateral subjects formed by the same Spirit.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

London, February 18th, 1882.

Letters 2, Perfectionism; Need of Watchfulness; Work and Its Fruits

And now Dear—-, what are we doing, living near God, waiting for His Son from heaven. What else have we to do? What else would we have done when the end comes, when we see His face? We have to work with a force sometimes secret to us, follow His word, have His motives, depend on His strength, but wait for the result (though possibly partially manifested now, cheering and rejoicing us) when Jesus shall come; and then the work will be pure and its motive pure—not fall back on us as now, that is, self be mixed with it. The brethren rejoiced when they heard of the conversion of the Gentiles, 1.nd the apostle related to the church what God had wrought. (Acts 14:27.) But for Paul's own soul it was at Christ's coming that he saw the fruit of his labors. And that is when we shall rejoice in them, the laborer's crown no doubt, but Christ's glory eternally, and their own blessedness: it is identified with divine love and His glory. In this our path is a path of faith, and this carries through the dark and difficult passes of ministry with a single eye, and makes Christ everything. We are satisfied with "I know thy works." But we have to be manifested to God, to walk as if we were before the judgment-seat as to ourselves, and in love to others, seeking what they need from Christ, not thinking of party or sect. An exercised soul is a great thing; "herein do I exercise myself" day and night—yet well imbued with love. There I feel myself weak. Care for the saints I do, but divine love I find too feeble in my soul. I have no object but Christ, but that is another thing See what ministry flows from. (Eph. 4) Christ has overcome Satan, and having received the promise of the Father for us as man, has made those delivered the vessels of His power and gifts for the warfare that has to be carried on. He has gone down into the lower parts of the earth, and thence far above all heavens, filling all things in the power of redemption, and so gives apostles, prophets, and the rest, for the perfecting of the saints, making them to grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Who, we may well say, is sufficient for these things? But I must close. May grace be with you, and peace, and strengthen your hands, keeping you close to Him Kindest love to the brethren.... May the Lord keep all His saints, and hasten His coming.

Yours affectionately in Him.

Boston, February, 1875.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Miscellaneous 3, True Path of a Christian, The

ALLOW me to present to you a brief outline of what has struck me as to the true path of a Christian, or rather the principle and measure of his walk, as taught in Eph. 4 and 5. I purpose merely to draw attention to the great principles.

I should gladly see some application or exhortation added by yourself.

We get the principle and the measure of this walk; its double principle in chapter 4. If we have learned the truth as it is in Jesus, it is that we " have put off " (not to " put off ") " as concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and that we have put on the new man." And here we at once get the true character of this new man. It is " created after God in righteousness and true holiness "-not yet love, though this will never be separated, but its intrinsic moral nature in respect of good and evil.

God has been perfectly revealed through the work of Christ, and revealed in respect of evil and sin. He has been revealed in His dealing with others, with evil and with good where it is, with what glorifies Him, that is Christ. He is righteous. He has been revealed in His own nature too, as regards good and evil: abhorrent of evil and having His delight in what is pure and good, He is holy. Adam was innocent; he did not know good and evil till after he had eaten the forbidden fruit. Now we know good and evil, and if we are to be " after God " it must be more, far more, in nature than Adam's estate. It must be in righteousness and holiness of truth. The power of the divine word revealing God, as Christ as now sitting at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens has brought Him to light, and quickening us, gives the true character of holiness in which we are created after God. (Compare John 17:17, 19.) God is known now not merely as a Creator who saw all as very good which had come out of His hands, but as one whose whole nature is revealed in the dealings and work of redemption, when evil and good are fully manifested, when evil is there and rife. But redemption, the new creation in which we are quickened out of our state of death in sin and raised as Christ out of His grave, has taken us completely out of that condition, and has made us, as so quickened, the living expression of the divine nature thus fully revealed. We are created again after God, in righteousness and true holiness. (Compare Col. 3:9-11.) What God is, in respect of good and evil, we are in nature as having put on the new man created again in Christ Jesus; and this, as we see in Colossians, connected with a true full knowledge of God as so revealed. We are partakers by a new creation of the divine nature as fully revealed in Christ.

This is the first great principle of our walk as Christians. It is our life, what we are.

The second is the presence of the Holy Ghost as dwelling in us.

God Himself dwells in us by His Spirit, and sheds His love abroad in our hearts We have been thus sealed for the day of final, full redemption. We are not to grieve so holy and blessed a guest. Nothing inconsistent with His presence, where all is peaceful and holy love, is to be allowed in our hearts. It is not now merely a new nature, holy and righteous in itself, and capable of enjoying God blessedly revealed in Christ, but God dwells in us, shedding His love abroad in our hearts, sealing us for the time when we shall fully enjoy Him. He guides, orders, reveals the things of Christ to our minds, communicates what is blessed to us, filling us with what is divine; but especially, here, is present in us, so that nothing inconsistent with God's own presence in love is to be allowed in us. Nay more, we are to walk according to the love of the divine nature.

Such are the two great principles of the Christian's walk. He has put off the old man, the first Adam, with all its lusts and will, and put on the new man which, with the knowledge of God's estimate of righteousness and holiness, is created after God according to this righteousness and holiness; and the Holy Ghost is present with him and in him, and he is not to grieve Him. No word or temper unsuited to that holy guest who sheds abroad God's love in our hearts, and seals us for the day when all will be holy and blessed, is to find a place in our mouth or in our heart. In a word, the divine nature with its moral effect, and the presence of God in love, and the power of holy hope, form the Christian. We now get the measure of this. In the latter we already get the walking of love. Chapter 5 gives us the measure, if measure indeed we can call it.

God takes two essential names: Love and Light-none else. These are taken as characterizing the walk of the Christian.

The measure of it Christ Himself, being the practical model, Christ in whom we see the life of God, God Himself, in a man. And this it is leads us to the full extent and character of what is looked for from the Christian. We have seen that we have been made partakers of the divine nature, created after God, and that the Holy Ghost is given to us-we are sealed by it. The measure of the Christian is not what man ought to be, but what God is, and has been to him; of course this does not refer to His Omniscience and Omnipotence and the like, but morally, in holiness and love. The latter we are never said to be. It is the prerogative of God to be it, and love without a motive. We, that it may be also holiness, and withal as creatures, must have an object, and a motive. We cannot be it and love sovereignly; for we are not sovereign but subject. Yet we shall see how blessedly the divine character of this love in us is maintained, though God Himself becomes its full and final object. Light we are said to be, for purity of nature we can have, and have, as regards the new man.

We are called then to be imitators of God as dear children. Being born of Him we are to imitate and follow Him in our actions and spirit, as partaking of the divine nature, and in relationship with Him as children. We are to be followers of God and walk in love. We find a double character of this, by which, as I just now intimated, its divine perfectness is maintained. We are to be tender-hearted and forgive, show grace to one another as God has forgiven and shown grace to us. Compare Matthews: 48, and the preceding verses; see also Col. 3:13.

But there is another element in divine love in man, which has a very deep stamp of perfectness on it. I have said Christ is given as the model of the display of God's character in man, as naturally it must have been. It is said here, " And walk in love as Christ has loved us and given himself for us, a sacrifice and an offering to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Perfect love was here shown in giving up Himself. So we are called to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our intelligent service. Two principles characterize this perfectness. First, offering up himself. It is not loving my neighbor as myself-a true and perfect principle where evil is not, a state which the law as such would produce if efficacious to do so-but where evil, moral or external, or sorrow requires it, wholly giving up offering up oneself. This Christ did. He offered up Himself, perfect in love. Our path is to follow Him in this. As in 1 John 3, " Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." The second seal of perfectness is that it was an offering to God. The object and motive were perfect. If He had only given Himself for us, there might have been touching generosity, nobleness of character; but the object which formed the motive was inadequate to give perfection to the act, take men as good, or simply evil; for it was love in a man and had a motive, though divine love; and it is in that He is a model to us. But He offers Himself to God, though for us. Here our worthlessness only adds to the proof of the perfectness. But the offering being to God the motive was adequate-the act of love perfect. Hence, too, we are called to add to brotherly kindness charity or love, which, we are told, is the bond of perfectness. Absolute, sovereign love is where there is no motive in the object. This we have seen in the last verse of chapter 4 and in Colossians. And this we are called to imitate as concerns our matters, that is, when any wrong is done to us. But when it is love with an object or motive in a man, when the motive gives its true character, then to be morally perfect, self must be given up to God. In us it may have been an evil self. But whatever it may be, it is given up, and, in our own case, the body presented a living sacrifice.

We are not, then, said to be love, for sovereign love we cannot be; but we are called to be followers of God in it, as forgiving in grace, which rises above all injury, and to walk in a love which gives self wholly up to God, as Christ did. Blessed privilege!

The other essential name of God is Light-essential purity of nature. And this in the Lord we are said to be. For in as far as Christ is our life, as having put on the new and put off the old man, we are so. Christ is our life. This is not prerogative with an object in grace, it is a nature which we have. We were darkness, but now are we light in the Lord. It cannot be separated from the love, because that gives us purity of motive, setting aside self. (Compare 1 Thess. 3:12, 13.) Yet it is a different thing. It is the purity of nature, thought, and object which were manifested in Christ. I do not add conduct, because that is a matter of exhortation. " Walk as children of light." God is light, purity itself, and making all things manifest. Whilst Christ was in the world, He was the light of the world. " In him was life, and the life was the light of men." And in Him we have life, and thus become light in the Lord, in a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, as Christ (1 John 1) was the manifestation of the word of life. God has shined in our hearts to give out the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ. Then indeed it was for the full purpose of apostolic testimony. Still as having Christ as our life, the fruits of light are manifested, divine intelligence of good as in Christ Himself contrasted with the darkness of the world (a darkness which belonged to our nature) and the separation of good from the evil by the word, but by the living knowledge of Christ as He is, which was practically expressed in all His life. As it is written, " Sanctify them through the truth; thy word is truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself that they may be sanctified through the truth." So even in our intercourse with God, " Such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens." It is the revelation of Christ as He is now that acts by the Holy Ghost on our souls, " We beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory." The effect produced, in walk, is what His walk was on earth; and for the same reason He could then say the Son of man who is in heaven. That, no doubt, was the glory of His Person, but so far as we are introduced by faith, livingly, through the power of the Holy Ghost into what is heavenly, we,

as to object and motive are purified according to that in our walk here, while His lowly path here engages our affections in imitating and following Him. That of which the power is seen in what He is was manifested to the understanding heart in His life down here. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from among the dead. In us it is a nature, a new man, but, as the creature must, having an object, Christ. " I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." So in Eph. 5, " Ye are light in the Lord." Then not only are reproveable things manifested by the light, but Christ is Himself the perfect standard and light of the soul. " Awake, thou that sleepest," sunk into ease and apathy as a Christian, like the dead, though not dead, " and Christ shall give thee light." God is light, we are light in the Lord, and the perfect divine expression of this light in man, in which we are to walk, is Christ. The eye is upon Christ " Christ shall give thee light."

Such, then, is the true measure of Christian walk-what God is in His nature as love and light, brought down to its true, perfect, and blessed expression on the earth, in man, in Christ. Thus we are to be followers of God as dear children, the fruit of the light, the purity of the divine nature to be seen in us.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Evangelic 2, Growing Up Into Christ

Ephesians 4

ONE cannot help seeing in such a passage as this the profound interest the Lord takes in blessing. There is profound love in it, as well as that it is a fact that He delights in blessing. His purpose is to bring us into the enjoyment of His own blessedness. His thoughts are blessings; and there is none anywhere else but in Him. If I speak of blessing, it must be what is in the heart of God. A father's thoughts of giving to his children are measured by his love for them. When we see what is in God's heart for us, and that all His thoughts have the form and power of blessing, what must be for us! He is bringing us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ-this is to be the result; but it is the principle and spring of blessing that was in my mind to speak upon. He is conforming us as to His own thoughts in blessing at the end. The objects of such love, we, abject sinners, taken up by Him show the greatness of His love. Christ is the great workman of it all. It is by Christ that He does it. When God sets about to bless, it is by the Son of His love. It is an immense foundation for us to rest upon-not only strong but wide and large and deep. " He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." " He descended first into the lower parts of the earth." What then is to escape the power of Him, who has been borne up to the throne of God, after going down to the very lowest place of death under sin? He has been in the lowest place of misery and death, and is taken up to the highest place of glory-the throne of God- and all between is filled up by Christ. Thus nothing can escape. He went down to the place of death and sin, " made sin for us," and went up to the throne of God. There is strength for me a poor sinner, something to rest on. Yet it is not distant from us, but we have the consciousness of its being in and around us. In Revelation it is said of the heavenly city, " the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

The Lamb is nearer to my heart than any. He has known me better than any, better than I know myself; and this Christ who dwells in our hearts by faith is the One we shall meet there. I shall find One in heaven nearer and dearer to my heart than any one I know on earth. Nothing is so near to us as the Christ that is in us, and nothing is so near to God as Christ. Yet the world is in a man's heart. All that is agreeable and outwardly good in this world finds its echo in a man's heart, and all the evil that has come in finds its place there too. Christ was here amidst it all. He met every whit without having the evil in Him, yet He knows it all. Everything we feel, all that passes through the heart of man, Christ has gone through, not by grasping at the thing but by resisting the evil. With all the sensibilities of the heart to good or evil (and this makes the heart of man such a wonderful thing) Christ can meet all. The center key to all this is Christ: He has power to put away the evil. If there was one thing where my heart could not rest on Christ, it would be dreadful. All have the knowledge of good and evil, even the unconverted man. Without Christ he sets about racking his heart to find any good thing that is under the sun. All the best affections of a man are the occasion of his greatest distress, because sin has come in: the heart gets pulled and torn every way, but must go through it. See a wife losing her husband, a mother her children. The instant I see Christ in all this trial, I find the perfect good God delights in. Divine sympathy is found in God Himself. I may have trial and conflict, I must have it in passing through the wilderness; but I become weaned from the thing that was a snare to me by looking to Christ in it.

Present confidence in Christ is needed in trial (losing a near relative, etc.), but the practical effect is that every trial a man goes through gives him (if the heart is thus trusting) to know more and more of what Christ is to meet the need, and more of Christ as possessing Him.

" I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself "; and there we find all the unfoldings of what God is in Christ. I cannot do without Christ. I want manna in the wilderness: God gives it to me; and not only do I get all this, water, manna, etc., but I have Christ Himself in it all.

No matter what it is that exercises my heart in the knowledge of good and evil, and the need of the heart in consequence, it makes Christ more known and more enjoyed. Our natural portion as Christians is to enjoy God. Where has God planted us? In the enjoyment of an accomplished redemption; and the result is that love has not only been manifested towards us, but poured out in us. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which He has given unto us. We dwell in God; for His love is infinite, but I am in it. I dwell in it, and He dwells in me; I, a poor little thing, nothing, dwell in Him. I must learn it, as a sinner, in Christ. A proud sinner will try to prescribe to God this and that, but God will have His own way; and blessed it is that it should be so. " Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit "-this is the " vocation." What a thought! What a bringing down, not of heaven, but something more, by special blessing bringing Him down to dwell in us. God would not dwell in angels: there is not the same want in them, but He will make Himself better known to angels through His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus. There is a great deal more for us than the bringing down heaven. " Whosoever shall confess Jesus the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God."

What is the first practical effect of this calling to be " the habitation of God through the Spirit "? " With all lowliness and meekness," etc. (chap. 4: 2). " A vessel of God "! All the passions of the flesh there, but having the presence of God makes us unspeakably happy: that is our portion! " In all lowliness," etc. A man who is humble needs not to be humbled. There is no safety but in being low. Then what is the consequence if self is not working and there is lowliness? Why, love works. I cannot be happy with you really, if self is working; but if self is not working, love is, and I am full of love towards you all. What a spring of blessedness in communion there is! so far as self is down, broken to pieces, there is an out-going of perfect love to the brethren. " Love is of God." His nature is at work when we love one another. The spring of the fellowship we

find just now is God being here. God is our joy, and love (God's own nature) working, and God our common object. There are trials and difficulties for us all; but there is blessed joy in knowing one another thus, and seeing Christ in one another. " Receive ye one another to the glory of God." If we meet a Christian, though he may be a stranger, we can be more intimate with him than one's own family who are not. Why? Because God is there. Another thing-there is the consciousness of what this unity is. " There is one body, and one Spirit, etc., one Lord, one faith," etc. We are brought together, not only through being united, but by what we possess together, whether we be outwardly rich or poor. He has his particular trials, and I mine; but both have God.

" One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all." God is above the world: you cannot tell me of one thing God is not above, and therefore there is not one thing that can separate me from His love. He is " through all." You cannot find yourself in trouble and God not there; you cannot find yourself in any difficulty, perplexity, and not find God through it all. And He is " in you all "; He has come to be the spring of all happiness in us. If I know what water is, it is by drinking; if I know what sweetness is, it is by tasting it; if I know God, it is by His being in me. We can look upon one another and see God in us all. Then these light afflictions, what are they? God is come to take possession of us, and He is the spring in our hearts also. He comes to make us love, because He loves. We shall find it is fully so in heaven. If anything is a safeguard against evil, it is that such an one dwells in us; but it is more, it is the spring in the new nature, God's nature.

The perfecting of the saints is before God and should be before us. Christ is the object of His thoughts; and He will have these loved ones like Christ: therefore what God does is to make them grow up unto Christ. In the unity of the body, and in all the communion, and through all the exercises of heart, we have the end of all. In ministering to you or you to me, it is to grow up into Christ that there may be more of Christ in us. All the flow of Christian affection, all the enjoyment we have here, is for this end. I can look at my brother and know he is going to be in heaven with me. The enjoyment of all this shuts out the world-you are not thinking of your cares and troubles now. Fellowship with the brethren is perfect deliverance from all that is of the flesh; flesh cannot enter into it; all that is of the world is gone. I am dead to all. Every bit of fellowship I have with a brother is a proof that outside things are now done with. The more we are individually full of divine things, the more this communion with each other is realized. Two together, if both are spiritual, open the sluices that all the wells in the world cannot dry up. The power of the Holy Ghost that makes me now overcome evil will make me enjoy heaven, where there is nothing but good: " they that dwell in thine house will be still praising thee." The power of evil, of the world, of Satan, is all gone. Our common joy now is in Christ, in the communion of His love; and, when we are with Him, it will be completely without alloy.

The Christian Shepherd: 2003, Word on Pastors and Teachers, A

The next class [in Eph. 4:11] pastors and teachers-is brought together as one (for watching and feeding and that with the Word) and is most clearly united and identified.

Pastorship includes guidance in holy wisdom and grace and applying teaching to the state of the saints. (We have seen the subordinate part of this distributed by itself; Rom. 12:7.) But the gift here [in Eph. 4] is guiding as a pastor, shepherding and feeding the flock, applying the Word in wisdom, watching against intruding heresies, building up by the Word, guarding and securing from evil, guiding the feet of the saints into straight paths in a word, the care of the saints. It is not here government controlling the flesh, but the ministration of grace, nourishing and cherishing, guiding and feeding. Some were pastors and teachers.

These were ministrations: the first two (apostles and prophets) being in their primary sense the foundation-extraordinary and the last three (evangelists, pastors and teachers), the ordinary abiding ministrations of the church to build them up in Christ’s known and thus ministered fullness, that the body of Christ might be edified, “grow up into Him.”

The primary and full object was the perfecting of the saints their being formed and fashioned according to the pattern of this fullness and into it, that “we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men” (Eph. 4:14).

J. N. Darby (Collected Writings, Vol. 3, excerpted)

Substance of a Reading on Ephesians, Ephesians, Substance of a Reading on: Part 4

We have had the two subjective elements (that is, the state I am in) consisting of the new man, and the old man put off, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Now follow as a measure the two essential names of God—love and light. That is what Christ was in this world. “While I am in the world,” He says, “I am the light of the world,” and He was the expression of divine love. You are to be an imitator of God, and if you ask, How can that be carried out in man you get Christ, that is, God manifested in a man. How clearly the thing is entirely above law. If law was carried out in the world, we would have the world all happy and righteous and peaceful, but that supposes the world to be all right. I am to care for another as much as for myself, but that will not do in this world, and therefore I get this, “He gave himself.” It is not taking love to self as the measure of love to my neighbor, but going beyond the law, and giving oneself up for others. If all went on rightly, the law would be your rule now, but it is, otherwise. As Christians, when you come to a world of wickedness, you have to follow God.

Let us look at the double character of this love, which is entirely practical. There are two kinds, what I may call love up and love down; and they are entirely different in kind. The care of a father and his child will illustrate the difference. The father loves down and the child loves up—the one is to something above it, whereas the other is in condescending goodness. If you take a case of loving up, the more excellent the object the more excellent the affection. If I love a base thing, it is a base affection. If I love a man of noble character, it is a noble affection. If I love God, of course it is the highest of all. Then on the other hand, if you take love down, the baser the object the greater the love. That is die character of God's love to us. I get both in Christ. He loved His Father perfectly as man (that was loving up), and He loved us when vile sinners (that was loving clown). And we are to go and do likewise. Therefore I read here “as Christ hath loved us and given himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” He gave Himself for us and to God. That is perfection. He had an infinitely high object, and an infinitely low one, and He was perfect both ways. We have to seek to walk as He walked. There is fellowship also one with another. Of course

when we can see, the thing to imitate is Christ walking in love— “as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.”

That is the side of love that you are imitators of God. Then you get the other essential name of God, and that is, light; and he says we are it. We are partakers of the divine nature— “ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.” God is love, and God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. We were darkness, but now in Christ we are light in the Lord. “Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light.” I get the full light in Christ, as I get the full love. Thus are the two essential names of God brought out. I am a partaker of the divine nature, and the Spirit of God dwells in me, and I am to act as God acted, and that acting in Christ. “Awake, thou that sleepest,” that is, looking at Christians, not committing sins but gone to sleep in the world. In the world the people are all dead; but if a man goes to sleep, he is just as much alive as when awake, but he is as much as dead; he does not hear, nor speak, nor think; he is like a dead man. There is a Christian that is going on with the world—he is with the dead. What am I to do, then? Christ is the light of the world, and “ye are the light of the world” He says to His disciples. It is a wonderful exhibition.

In 1 John it is said, “If we walk in the light,” that is, absolutely; but, realizing position, we walk in it. It is position we are actually there. It is not like standing in righteousness. Here he is looking at practice. Walking is a real thing. It is not as if I say, Christ is my righteousness. It is a real living place we are walking in. Of course he judges in detail all sins. All the Gentiles are walking in darkness—I refer to the passage in Ephesians. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but wise.” Uprightness is not sufficient. If I have got a bog to go through, I may be perfectly sincere in seeking a house on the other side, but if I do not look about me I may sink in the bog. I must look about me. It requires wisdom to go through this world, I mean as a Christian.

The expression “redeeming the time” is apt to be always misapplied. It means seizing opportunities. You get it in Dan. 2, where the king speaks to the Magi, “I know ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.” They wanted to redeem the time. Here I am to walk in such a way, so full of Christ, that, when an opportunity offers, I can bring Him out. The days are evil. You cannot always have an opportunity; you might be casting pearls before swine; but you must be in a condition to embrace every opportunity. In Daniel it is “gain the time,” or buy the time; as it is in the margin. A thousand more opportunities would present themselves of bringing Christ before people if we were living in the power of the Spirit of God. The days are evil, we are told. The power of evil is there. You must not complain because the days are evil. The Lord can guide us through one day as well as another.

“Instant in season” is to the saint. The time will come when they will not receive sound doctrine. This applies to the dealing with the saints. It is often applied to the gospel; but the mischief is, that people take passages without reading the context. I am sure we could find a great many more seasons if we were faithful to Christ. “Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all, long-suffering and doctrine, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” He is evidently looking to Christians. Timothy was to go on earnestly pressing because soon they would not listen to him. Whether it was seasonable or not, he was to go on with it, because very soon there would be no season at all.

I do not think the apostle here means the gospel. The previous chapter speaks of the departure. He is speaking of the evil days. It is not that we are not to be preaching everywhere we can to sinners, but the special thing he has in his mind is that the church would get into such a state that they would not listen to truth. When we preach the gospel now, we preach to people that call themselves Christians. You may meet infidels, it is true. It is of the last days he is speaking. In John's time they were come in. It was the last time then, though morally developed since. Peter says, “The time is come that judgment will begin at the house of God;” and Jude says, that these men “have crept in unawares,” and also that these are they that the Lord comes to judge.

The latter times bring it up to the last days, being the more general term “In the latter days some shall depart from the faith,” and in Clio last days they shall have a form of godliness. It is rather more distinctly characteristic; because in John you get the last days marked by antichrists being there. He does not use them to say they are the last of the latter. In the latter days you get celibacy and asceticism, as it is called: so the apostle shows in Colossians. He speaks of that system which was already dawning. God allowed it all to begin before the apostle went, that we might get scripture upon it. It ripened afterward. Therefore he speaks of the latter days as those coming in after he was gone. They are used in the Old Testament pretty much in the same sense. Still the last days are more definite: “You have heard that Antichrist shall come, and now there are many antichrists.”

We had before the oppositions of science, falsely so called, and the forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, and we all know it is going on since. In England you can hardly go into a cathedral without finding the monument of a bishop who lived forty days without eating anything. I have seen them when I used to go into such places. A. man may fast very profitably if he has occasion to do it. I recognize it; but to set about making a virtue of it, in the way usually done, is wrong, because it went upon the principle that matter was an evil thing, and denied the atonement entirely, for they said that Christ could not have a body. This is the reason the apostle John insists he is come in flesh, and that His disciples had handled Him. It was denied that He was really a man in that way, because they thought all matter was a bad thing; and therefore the great thing to be done was to get the Spirit, which was good in everybody away from matter. Therefore they fasted to keep the matter down. That was a torment to the church. Though some of them were very strict, a great many were grossly immoral. It spread everywhere and affected even the orthodox. The Gnostics died out, but they left their taint in the church, and the whole system of celibacy and monasticism continued. I used once to fast in that way myself. On Wednesdays and Fridays and Saturdays I did not eat anything at all, but on the other days I did eat a little bread. I said, If I fast three days, I can fast four, and if four five, and if five better six, and if six better seven; and what then? I had better die. I felt there was something that made it impossible to go through with the thing. I went on with it, but God delivered me.

The Spirit of God had them in view. They were dawning then, because it says, “The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter days some shall depart,” &c. You see that evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, and that, when once the evil was introduced, it could not be put out.

It had been among the heathen before. The system of monasteries, and celibacy, and begging friars, was all in existence 540 years before Christ, and many think it was actually borrowed from the East. Certainly it is the same thing morally, but, as I said, many think it was actually borrowed from the East; as a great many of their doctrines were, I have no doubt. A Roman Catholic priest when visiting the East was perfectly astounded, and did not know what to think when he found among the Buddhists exactly the same things as Roman Catholics had at home. He told them he was a Lama from the west, and he was received in all their monasteries and everywhere.

Well, to go on with our epistle—another element comes in. When we have them all in, order, he says, “Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Such is the joy they were to have, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There are two things—my own will gone, and the perfect certainty of God's love. “Giving thanks always for all things:” take away my fortune and I say, “Thank God.” It is not easy, but of course the will must be broken; and on the other hand God makes everything to work together for good to those that love Him. Then you get a spirit of grace, “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” It is not submitting to do evil if you want me to do it, but that in faith there is no will. If you want me to do wrong, I cannot do it because it is not God's will, but in everything in which my will is concerned I give way to you. We are to submit to one another in the fear of God. It is what sitting in heavenly places produces upon earth. Christ when here could say He was in heaven, and He is given as our pattern, though to us it is purely by grace.

Then there are two other main subjects that follow—the love of Christ to His church, and the conflict of the saints with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. We have passed away from what we are with God, and now we come to the special relationship of Christ with the church. The main thing in His mind is the church. “The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body.” This I believe to be our body.

I get two things He does in consequence of His love to the church. He gave. Himself for it out and out. That is the first thing He does in consequence of His love to it. Then, having taken it to be His own, He sets about to make it what He likes. He does not make what He likes to be His own, but takes it to be His own to make it what He likes. Next I got present sanctifying and washing by the word, and afterward His presenting it to Himself as a glorious church. This is special. It is not God loving poor sinners, but the special love of Christ to the church. The purification that we get here Is that which we have in heaven; as far as it goes, it is the same nature, and quality, and standard, and measure, and everything, as will be in heaven. He washes it here that it may have no spot there. “Beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image [now] from glory to glory.” Looking at Christ in glory our heart gets filled with the motives that are there, and this effect is produced upon earth. The effect is produced here, but the motives are all above. He “loved the church and gave himself for it.” This is the starting-point— “that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” It is a great thing for us to see that the condition we are to be presented in to Christ is the power and measure of our sanctification here.

It is manifest that we find the same thing all through the epistles. For instance, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” I know I shall be perfectly like Christ in glory, and I purify myself according to that standard. It is not that I am pure according to it. I take that measure and apply it now. Every step I take I see it clearer, and I may apply it to something else; but this is the only thing I am looking at to judge by.

In 1 Thess. 3 the same truth comes out in a striking way. “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 establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” This is a passage that looks perfectly unintelligible until you get hold of what I have been saying. Instead of saying unblameable in holiness before God at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should have said, “unblameable in your walk down here.” He looks at their realizing their Christian position— “to the end he may establish your hearts,” and draws the veil and there they are unblameable when Christ comes. That is where it is all measured.

This is evidently a very important principle for this day and every other. All the perfection which is spoken of, Wesleyan or whatever it may be called, is all gone. It does not come into the question, good or bad, because what I am shown is the perfection of Christ in glory. I do not get it till I am in glory, and there is no other object presented to a Christian as the standard but Christ in glory. We are to be “conformed to the image of God's Son that be might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Again, “As is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly: and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Therefore the apostle said, he had not yet attained, but there was no other thing before him. He was always running on to it. We retain in heaven the impress got here; but, this is Christ. There may be degrees of realization. We shall be perfectly like Christ when we get there; all of us will be perfectly like Him. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall bear the image of the heavenly. I am like a person in a straight passage with a light at the end. I have more of the light every step I take, but I do not get the light till I come to the end. When He shall appear, we shall be like Him. I get sight of this, and say, This is what I am going to be. It sounds strange to say that we cannot be as Christ was here, because He was absolutely sinless, and if I say I have no sin, I deceive myself. But I shall be like Him there, and that is brought to bear upon me now that I should have no motive working in my soul but Him there. This is what the apostle means when he says, “not looking at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen.”

It has been said indeed that God would not give a measure that we could not attain to; but I take the bull by the horns and assert that He never gave one that a man could attain to. He made man innocent, and there was no demand necessary; but the moment man becomes a sinner, God put something beyond him, which he is to run after. God gives him a law when he is in the flesh, and he is not subject to the law of God. It is an unattainable measure. “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” This is our measure. Are you as perfect as this? When I get things fully developed I get Christ in glory. This is perfectly unattainable here, because God wants me to be always running on and having the one thing always before me. “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

The meaning of John 17:19 (“For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth") is, that for their sakes Christ sets Himself apart as a model man (though I do not like the expression), that we might be made into His likeness.

The passage in Heb. 13 (“Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus"), is more the difficulties we have to encounter he is looking at there. He says Christ has got there: you take courage and run on. It is just the same race exactly. It is wonderful that we shall really be conformed to the image of God's Son, when we think of what we are. But it has nothing to do with our responsibility as to salvation. You are not set in this path until you are saved. Our responsibility as men, God's creatures, is not affected: as responsible men we are lost. It is over in that sense. Take, by way of illustration, a man in business who has contracted debts; suppose I go to him and tell him how he is to manage not to get into debt, he would tell me I was

only mocking his misery, for he had got nothing to manage. Responsibility is over in that sense; not that a man is not responsible for all he has done, but that he is ruined already, and of that the cross is the proof, because the highest act of grace is that He came to seek and save the lost. As to the history in scripture, the whole system of probation concluded at the cross.

“Now,” said Christ, “is the judgment of this world,” as it is also said in Hebrews, “now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” When it is all over with man, sovereign grace steps in, and saves people out of their ruined condition. A person may get all his debts paid but be left without a penny to begin the world again. God has not dealt with us in that way. He has paid our debts, and has given us the same glory as His own Son. This was a matter of His counsels before the foundation of the world. That belongs to all Christians. There is labor which God rewards, for every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor; but in the likeness of Christ every saint will then be.

We shall all be conformed to the image of God's Son in glory. It was God's counsel before the foundation of the world, but never brought out till the cross. “Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works [that is responsibility], but according to his own purpose and grace which was given as in Christ Jesus before the world began, but now is made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.” It was before the world in God's purpose about His people, but it was never brought out till Christ had laid the foundation for it in the cross. In the first of Titus there is a similar statement, “In hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching.” All this glorious purpose, glorious for us and for God, never was brought out—never hinted at—until Christ laid a righteous ground for it in the cross. Then God brought it out and said, “That is what I am going to do.” This with much more is what we find here in Ephesians.

Substance of a Reading on Ephesians, Ephesians, Substance of a Reading on: Part 3

We now come to the ordinary exhortation as to walk. He shows the state they were in—ignorance and sin. “As the truth is in Jesus;” it is not doctrine, though doctrine is contained in it. The truth as it is in Jesus is the having put off the old man and put on the new—this having been done by faith. Then he adds, “and being renewed in the spirit of your mind.” The putting off and the putting on are not in the present tense, whereas being renewed in the spirit of your mind is. The truth is, that you have put off the old man, but you do want renewing. In Colossians (chap. 3) it is distinct: “Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new.”

In the epistle to the Ephesians he is not saying directly to them what they have done, but saying what the truth is in Jesus. So it is more abstract. The truth in Jesus is having put off and having put on. Being renewed is present—the renewing of the spirit of your mind is a thing that is always going on.

After this we get another immensely important principle in the new man which according to God, is created in “righteousness and holiness of truth.” That is the character of God Himself. The first man was innocent; he was not righteous but innocent. There was no evil in him. To be righteous and holy you must have the knowledge of good and evil. God is perfectly righteous and perfectly holy: He judges with authority what is evil and good; but innocence does not know good and evil. The new man is after God. You get another expression in the Colossians, which is of great importance— “renewed in knowledge according to the image of him that created him.” There is a positive knowledge of God. It is not merely that there is an absence of sin, but I have a positive knowledge of God Himself, and it is what God is that is the character and essence of my new man.

Peter speaks of being “made partakers of the divine nature.” It is not merely that a man is born again. It is the truth as it is in Jesus. Of course he is born again. Abraham had to be born again; but he did not know anything about putting off the old man and putting on the new. You never find this in the Old Testament. You find there the knowledge of sin working, but the Old Testament saints did not make a difference between the old man and the new. The moment that death came in and man took his place with God in Christ, I get the old man and the new.

We get here, I put on this new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness. I have put on this new man, but then I have put off the old. It is a totally new thing. It is Christ who has died so that the old thing is done with. For faith I have done with the flesh. I am not a debtor to the flesh; I am. crucified with Christ; the old man is done with. We are quickened together with Him. This is more than being born of God. Christ quickening as the Son of God, which He does—He quickeneth whom He will—is a different thing from being quickened with Christ as risen; because when I am quickened with Christ as risen I have left all that is the old thing behind me and have gone into a resurrection state. The old man is crucified with Christ. This is of all importance as being one of the two great elements of Christian walk. There are, first, the putting off the old man and the putting on the new; secondly, that the Holy Ghost dwells in us and we are not to grieve Him. These are the two grounds of Christian walk in Ephesians.

To be made partakers of the divine nature is the moral character of it. It is after God; it is the pattern of what God is. God is righteous and God is holy, and now it is not merely setting us up as innocent, but we being actually partakers of the divine nature, have a character according to what He is. It is after God, created in righteousness and holiness.

It is morally like God's nature, but still there might be rather a bold way of saying it. Morally it is the same: else you could not delight in Him. Morally speaking it is the same—it is “holy and without blame before him in love,” which is God's nature. He is holy, He is blameless, He is love. And so it is with Christ. If you look at Him down here, He was holy and blameless, and He was here in love. We get this, “he that sanctifieth,” that is Christ, “and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

But this putting off the old man we had better not pass over. The Christian, in virtue of Christ's death, and having Christ as his life, as a Christian does not own the flesh at all. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, but he does not own it. He has not to die to sin but to reckon himself dead, Christ having died and all being available for him. What Christ has done lie reckons himself to have done in this respect. How can you be alive? I say I am not; Christ lives in me. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” We have put off the old man (not are to put it off), that is, if we have heard Him and have been taught of Him. Then this new man is after God.

Observe the two in Rom. 8: “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus:” that is, the new man “hath made me free from the law of sin and death, for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,

condemned sin in the flesh." When Christ was on the cross, He not only bore our sins and put them away, but God condemned sin in the flesh there, so that I see it is all put off. Faith reckons it. Christ died to sin—He is the only person that died to sin; so God reckons us alive unto God, not in Adam, but in Jesus Christ our Lord. My life in which I live is not flesh— "ye are not in the flesh" but in Christ. When you come to realize it, you take the putting off first; you say I have put off the old man—I am not a child of Adam—and put on the new man, that is, Christ. It is that I believe in the testimony of 1 John 5 where it is said, "this is the record [or testimony] that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." It is entirely a new thing in Christ, and as a proof that eternal life is not in Adam but in Christ, he shows the Spirit, and the water, and the blood—what cleanses, what expiates, and what has living power—all coming consequent upon Christ's death. The water came out of His dead side, as did also the blood, while the Spirit came after He was glorified. These are all witnesses that eternal life is not in the first man but in the Second. I reckon myself dead, I am crucified with Christ. Thus it is a nature that is after God Himself. Then we get another element—the Holy Ghost dwells in me, and I am not to grieve Him.

The, putting off of the old and the putting on of the new occur at the same time, really; but practically when you come to details, you find you have the one first, and then you realize the other. In real truth I put on the new man first. When you come to practice, you have to treat the old thing as dead, and the other leaps free. In point of fact we must get the new man in order to treat the old man as dead. If the old man was treated as dead first, I would have no man at all. When I have got Christ as my life, I come to look at myself, and it is all over with the old man. There are many who own that they must be born again, but they do not recognize that they put off the old man. The moment I have got the death and resurrection of Christ, I say I am not a debtor to the old man. This is not merely the fact of being born again; it is not merely saying I am born again, but that the other thing I have put off, that is, to faith.

Of course the old man is part of the old creation. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation." We are the first-fruits of His creatures. "He has begotten us that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." When he speaks of dealing with the condition I am in, which you do not get here but in Colossians, which is a little lower, he does not say mortify the old man, but your members which are. upon earth. He does not allow any life but Christ— "Your life is hid with Christ in God." "Ye are dead;" now mortify, that is put to death, your members. This implies power. It is, never dying to sin, but that I am dead to sin and alive to God in Christ, and therefore I can mortify.

Rom. 8:13 ("ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body"), and Col. 3:5 ("mortify your members") are but a different way of expressing the same thing. In Romans we are not viewed as risen with Christ, whereas in Colossians and Ephesians we are. In Romans we are presented as dead with Christ, because the object of Romans never is to take us out of our place in this world. It shows us that we are in Christ, but at the same time still here; whereas in Colossians the apostle will not let them be alive in the world. "Why," he says," as alive in the world are ye subject to ordinances?" All this ritualism flows from not knowing we are dead.

Then we get another immensely important element, namely, that God dwells in us—the Holy Ghost; for we are told, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." The Christian is to do nothing that displeases God that dwells in him. You have no mortifying the members here in Ephesians. It is a new creation and nothing else. Colossians does not go as far at] Ephesians. In the former you get us risen but not sitting in heavenly places as in the latter.

Romans puts us into Jordan, but it does not go on to the coming out of Jordan. Colossians puts us up on the bank; but Ephesians takes us and sets us down in Canaan to eat the old corn of the land where there is no manna any more. You cannot say they are a figure of that, it is going into details, which the figure does not. You get a figure of the whole thing that I have passed through Jordan. I am not in the wilderness but am in heavenly places, and seated there in Christ. And not till this do I get circumcised. You get this in Colossians. There are two things in the Romans: man is dealt with—looked at as alive in sin, and death is brought in—Christ's death. By Christ's death their guilt is gone, and by His death they died. They are in Christ, but they are looked at as persons that have died, though not risen with Him. In the Ephesians, although the fact is looked at, as to the doctrinal statement, they are not looked at as alive in sin; they are dead in sins, which is another aspect of it, but the same state. When I am alive in sins I am dead towards God—there is not a single movement of thought, heart, or feeling in that state towards God. God can create me over again spiritually. Ephesians looks at a man as dead in sins, and says we are created in Christ Jesus. It is not justifying sinners there.

The man is justified in Romans and a new creation entirely in Ephesians; while in Colossians you get both. In the latter there is death and the new creation, but not yet seated in heaven. They are looked at as on the earth, and there is a hope laid up for them in heaven— "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." In chapter 2 (vers. 11, 12) we read, "In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism [there I get the doctrine of Romans] wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead [I have now got beyond the Romans]. And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with him." There we get Colossian doctrine, but it does not take us up to heaven. When he speaks of that in Ephesians he says, "He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Colossians is as it were between Romans and Ephesians. Therefore in Colossians you get, instead of sitting in heavenly places, "set your affections on things above," "the hope that is laid up for you in heaven," and such like expressions. He does not talk of the Holy Ghost in Colossians. What we find in Colossians is life, and this is as important in its place as the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. In Ephesians you get the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and therefore the body; whereas in Colossians you never get the Holy Ghost mentioned except in the expression "your love in the Spirit." For example, in Ephesians we read, "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another," whereas in Colossians he says, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." Instead of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, it is God's nature the measure of how we are to behave ourselves.

The Holy Ghost works in the new nature, but is not said to dwell in it. It is said, that "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The Holy Ghost operates in the new nature. Still the dwelling is never spoken of as in it, but in the body; we need Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith.

I have got a new nature, and of course have not to pray to get one. The effect of this is most striking. In the Ephesians we are brought to sit in heavenly places, we have put off the old man and put on the new, and we have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in us. In Ephesians it is, "As God in Christ hath forgiven you." We have got the nature, the state that I am in to be able to walk; we have put off the old and put on the new; and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and then we are told to be imitators of God as dear children. Then if I say, How can I talk of imitating God (of course it is not Almighty power, it refers to moral things), how can poor worms such as we talk of imitating God? Well, is not Christ

your pattern? You are to follow that. This shows the absurdity of making it merely the law as our rule of life. I am a dear child, and I am to have a sense of it in my soul and exhibit it in my walk; I am “to walk in love as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” “Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;” we are to go and walk as He walked.

Miscellaneous 5, Christ Dwelling in the Heart

(Unrevised Notes of Lecture by J. N. D. on Eph. 3:14-21.)

IN the former part of this chapter we have the unsearchable riches of Christ contrasted with all that had been previously revealed. In all the Old Testament scriptures there had been nothing of the mystery as we get it here. There had been glimpses now and then, but nothing more. What strikes the apostle's mind is that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. It was outside all the promises. True, it had been written, " Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people," but here it is sovereign grace coming in outside all that had been previously thought of.

The gospel came to the Jews first because God had promised it ; but they rejected it. Paul was the strongest proof that the Jews would not have Christ. We find him persecuting the Church and consenting to Stephen's death. He is met in grace from the very place where Stephen, looking up, sees the end of his testimony, and, as he says, he was made "a pattern to all who should hereafter believe." When the enmity of man had been brought to the highest pitch, then God could come in in sovereign grace, in His own personal will above all that man had done to prevent Him. Paul calls himself the chief of sinners, and justly so too ; but we find God rising above him, and hence he goes to people who, like himself, had no title. It is astonishing how the two apostles, Peter and Paul, are both fitted for their several parts-Peter cursing and swearing ere he was converted and could strengthen his brethren, and Paul breathing out threatenings and slaughters. As we have seen, flesh must be put down. It is only an empty vessel that the Lord can use, that no flesh should glory in His presence ; it is very humbling that we should need it, but we do need it. This fits him for preaching to Gentiles who had no promise, and we now find God revealing Himself in all the fulness of that love in which He could bless those who had nothing to say to God. Flesh was judged in the cross of Christ, and it was not now merely a question of promises, but of having Christ. I first find out what God is through the Son, but now I find the divine affections all centred in Christ" the Father lo yea the Son," then " the unsearchable riches," everything put into Christ's hands as Heir of all things, and this as man, as we get in Psa. 8 In Prov. 8:31 I find Him delighting in man. He passes by the angels-blessed, doubtless, in their places ; but He passes by them, and takes man's nature upon Him. People keep Christmas, but the world's estimate of Christ when He came is shown by the fact that it could find no better place for Him than a manger. When Christ came the angels sang God's good pleasure in ma it ; but man would not have Him in his life, and so He must die, because if not, like a corn of wheat, He must abide alone. But His desire is to get outside of all man's rejection and to have man notwithstanding. If man would not have Him in life, because man was dead, He must die and take man up in death, to make him partaker of a new and risen life. This was perfect, infinite love, not merely kindness (we get His goodness every day); but His love in coming to take a sinner's place ! God's truth is brought out in this. He has taken man clean out of the position in which he was, and the consequence is that now I see man entering into a new position altogether, in the Second Man, who has gone into sin and death and borne the judgment, and now is in the glory of God as a Man., and I with Him. This is unsearchable riches, far more than promise, and the apostle's heart was here opening out to this.

In the first chapter we find his prayer is to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ ; we have Christ as Man, and God in power, making the revelation of the inheritance, etc. But in this third chapter he bows his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is seen here in His own personal relationship as Son. Mark, it is our Lord, not the Lord. Thus saints are brought into closer relationship than any other created intelligence, and angels, instead of being jealous, are delighted at it. The poorest saint knows his union with Christ, and knows it by the Holy Ghost. We own Him as Lord, but He is not ashamed to call us brethren. I am brought into Christ's place, and, as Paul says, it is all by grace, it is all of God.

Christ identifies Himself with the Church-" Why persecutest thou Me ? " It is all association with Himself. The apostle asks here that the saints may enter into the fulness of communion ; not as in the first chapter, that they might know it outwardly, but that being strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith-Christ Himself in your own souls, that He may be the centre of your hearts by the Holy Ghost, a consciousness that Christ fills you, not merely with knowledge, but that you may be rooted and grounded in lore. The love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost should flow in your hearts ; then you would rise above everything-trial, tribulation, the result of all is lore. This is the way the Holy Ghost reasons, not the way man- reasons. God's love was shown in giving the nearest thing to Him for that which was farthest from Him. Solomon was large of heart, but if I could have such a large heart, God must be the centre of it, or else I should find only sorrow and vanity, as Solomon did.

" That ye may be able to comprehend," etc. If I am walking in self, I cannot see beyond the petty things of this world ; but when I get beyond the region of self I am able to judge about sin, sinners, to have a true judgment about everything ; and I am able to understand the breadth and length and depth and height. He does not say of what, that has to be filled in ; but in order to make all practical I must " know the love of Christ." If I were going into the Queen's presence, how glad I should be if someone would tell me what to do I Well, this knowledge of the love of Christ is the very thing that calms my heart when I think of the immensity of the glory that is to be revealed in me. Christ is next me. I have known Him intimately down here and as risen too ; for He is just the same as when He said, " Children, have ye any meat ? " When I read that the glory of God cloth lighten the city, is that too dazzling, too much for my eye ? The next words that I read are that " the Lamb is the light thereof." You see, the heart gets into a condition where it is at home, and therefore the poorest, simplest saint is quite easy in all this glory, because Christ is in it all, and Christ is in his heart. I may be a poor earthen vessel, but then I have got the treasure inside. By faith in my heart He speaks to me ; He manifests Himself to me as He does not to the world. It is a wonderful thing for me to say that I know Christ's love, at the same time that I can also say it passeth knowledge. And now the apostle, having shown the saints the exalted position, rises up to it, and says it is " that ye might be filled into all the fulness of God." Wondrous place ! wondrous purpose of love to have brought me here ! Now how shall I look on tribulation ? Oh, I can glory in it! I can joy in God, not merely joy amid the circumstances, but joy in God Himself.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think "-this is often wrongly put forth as though it said, " able to do for us" (quite true, of course, in its place, because He is able and does do for us); but it is not the thought here ; it is " able to do in

us "-" according to the power that worketh in us." (v. 20.) The Church has been looked at as all that we have been speaking of, in order that Christ may be glorified in us. " He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe in that day," although the apostle is not here looking at what it will be in the future, but what it is now by faith. Moses reflected in his face the glory of God when he came clown from the mount ; so should the Church now. The angels are looking on ; there is wisdom in the Church, although very feeble. The angels ought to see in the saints the glory of God ; but how little, beloved friends, how terribly little, can be seen ! How everything has failed that has been put into the hand of man, as far as man is concerned-the law, the Son of David, Nebuchadnezzar, the Church ! Man has spoiled everything, as far as he had the power. And, dear friends, would that you knew you were weak, then you would be better able to say, "Now unto Him be glory," etc. When Paul said, " I was with you in much weakness," we learn God had " much people in that city." There must be weakness in the vessel. The object known is Christ ; the place, our hearts. God is looking for Christ being known by us, and God glorified in us, not merely Christ dwelling in us by the Holy Ghost, but in our hearts-mg heart ; my thoughts, my feelings, the same as Christ's. The Lord give us to know how God has treated us, that we may know the heart's obligation to love, and that obligation not a legal one.-December 26th, 1861.

Letters 3, Love of God, The

I am a bad person to answer this question, though the blessed. Lord has not left me without His presence. Yet I love to get on these subjects. A person, I think, who has really found God must in some measure feel as this person does. The passage of St. Paul in the Ephesians is the answer and expression of this, "Oh! the height and depth," etc. He that, loving, knows God, dwells in God and God in him; and one knowing His fullness must know that he is brought into a depth which none can fathom but God, and be pained at not doing it. It is the way of growth, as a child who uses the compass of strength but cannot reach it; but a Christian's exerts itself (by that solecism) to know that "which passeth knowledge." And therefore the soul, when first learning it especially, will feel at a loss and perhaps pained, nor finds its repose till it knows in a certain sense as it is known.1...

In two ways it thus dwells upon, and because of this seeks, Jesus. [First as] the unfathomable love of God, that is of love in Himself, he learns and knows that it is this too in itself, yet not as separate from the revelation in Jesus' body, therefore the apostle adds, "Herein is love," etc. Secondly, that it may be brought near to familiarize and make [known] yet diminishing naught of its fullness, it is brought into intelligence in the incarnation, and death especially, of the blessed Lord Jesus our Head. Therefore he says, To know "the breadth and length and depth and height... that ye might be filled into (or `unto,' that is, of what fills and its extent) all the fullness of God." So, hereby know we love "because he laid down his life for us." It is the stepping-stone of weakness and emptiness and necessity unto that fullness, and the resting-place of the soul, as to its natural powers, at this inexhaustible fullness of God. Yet this is indeed learning the heavenly, having God, the peculiar and distinctive privilege of those quickened by the Spirit, which alone gives capacity to know and fathom such a thought. But as a motive of conduct it is infinitely wholesome that we should feel pained at how little we reach the fullness of God (for it is in this He has acted towards us, and as Christ is the order of this towards us, so is He of it towards Him) by His Spirit, and ever seek for more full manifestations of the power of this in us, accompanied by simple apprehension.

[A very early copy—first two pages only preserved.]

Letters 3, Perfectionism

was very glad to hear from you and that you were all safe arrived, and thankful too that none had left to follow those that went out. Dear—will want no spectacles now to see the King in His beauty, and even the vanity which may have hindered him on earth is gone forever: there is none in the presence of the glory of God, nor with Christ our just and infinite delight.... It is sweet to think that he is, dear fellow, with Christ, and nothing but the new man remains. That is a comfort for us all, though we ought to keep down the old man here, that we may be free fully to enjoy Christ. I am not a perfectionist, fundamentally not, but I believe there is Dower in Christ to keep the old man down so that the Spirit be not grieved, and thus communion perfect in our measure....

Christ, is the same, dear brother, in Barbadoes, as in London, and He and He only is life and power, but He is intimate with us, can dwell in our hearts by faith, and so we can not only comprehend the wide extent of glory, and look down its infinite yet perfectly ordered parts as from a center, but know, blessed be His name! a love which passes knowledge.

It is wonderful, the place God has given us, yet it is, while we were only sin, what Christ's work was only worthy of, so that while pure and sovereign grace reigns, so that we know perfect love, that is God, yet it reigns through righteousness. It has often, for some time, been a joy to me that we shall all be a perfect testimony to the efficacy and worth of Christ's work which brought us into it, as well as of the Father's love, and that eternally. It is what we ought to be here, but we know how feeble it often is here, but there we shall forever be adequate witnesses of Christ, by the very glory into which He will have brought us, and that is very blessed.

The Lord be with you, dear brother, in your work: we have only to serve Christ earnestly, and in communion with Him, and all is well; the rest passes and is gone. I have nothing much to tell you of things here.... I do not, as you know, move in and out among brethren, from my bodily state. But God is working on to the result of His own ways. There is the occasional difficulty of letters of commendation, otherwise all around us is as quiet as possible.... May the Lord be with in his work, and all the brethren. I am very thankful to them that they remember and think of me. They may be assured I do not forget them, and earnestly desire of God their blessing and peace in Christ, and that the whole assembly may be indeed as trees of the Lord's planting. Oh that all His saints were! Christ all to them. Peace be with you.

Affectionately yours, dear brother, in the Lord.

1881.

Letters 2, Love More Than Views; the Path of Faith; Principles Exercised at the Beginning; Testimony for These Days; Separation From System; When Darby Left the Camp

Dear brother,-It rejoices me much to learn that the faithful Lord has turned your thoughts and your steps in the direction of brethren, or rather, as I believe, of the path appointed by God. I own fully that it is a question of obedience to the word of God, not of walking with me, or anybody else, but positively to do the will of God. At first, when I left the Episcopal church, there was no one with whom I could walk; I was led on and guided simply by the word of God. Afterward four of us met together; I thought only of satisfying my conscience according to the word of God. The work extended, and that everywhere, and I am deeply convinced that it is a testimony which God Himself has raised up for these last days.. I have been walking in this way for fifty years; I have seen weakness in myself, and mistakes, I do not doubt, in the way of walking; but I have never doubted for a moment that it is the work of God. But it is needful that each one should be convinced of this for himself by the word of God. It is a path of faith, and faith only can sustain the soul in this path; but I know that the peace, the approval of God are there; and those who walk in it by faith are made happy by them. I hope that my love for the brethren with whom I cannot walk will be always increasing. We cannot realize the blessings which belong to us if we do not comprehend all the saints in our christian affections. (Eph. 3:18.) Not to walk with them in a path that is not according to the word is not saying that one does not love them, but just the contrary. I want no more than this, that you should search the word of God in His presence, and He will certainly guide you. Glad as I should be to find you in the path which I believe to be that of God, I shall not cease to love you, even though you should condemn me: it is a delight to me to know that God has blessed you in your labors amongst these dear souls in Italy.

It was the unity of the assembly of God, of those who are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, which forced me to leave the Anglican church, and prevented me from joining any other; and I have found in the word of God all the directions needed for walking according to the will of God, amid the ruin and confusion which surrounds us. I own then every true Christian as a member of the body of Christ, but I cannot walk with them when they do not walk according to the will of God, according to the word. May our God bless your soul, and your labors, and may He lead you in the path of Christ and of faith, the "good and acceptable and perfect will of God"! He is blessing the work in this place; many are sounding the word, and the expectation of the Lord is continually on the increase.

Your affectionate brother.

New York,

March 5th, 1877.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 6, Ephesians 3:16-21: The Power That Works in Us

THE subject of prayer here is that there might be an inward power put forth by the Holy Ghost. Paul's heart was desiring to see these saints in a deepening enjoyment of Christ, and this by an operation of the Spirit unlimited in its measure.

They had the inner man. the divine nature communicated to them. God had looked upon them in His great love, not only quickened them, but given them out of His fullness. They were in a family every member of which is purged from sin. " I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you." The incorruptible seed is not the word of God, but that which is communicated by the word of God. The Christian is thus put into a position in which the creature does not stand. The first Adam was innocent but corruptible. The Second man was pure and incorruptible. The believer now (in spite of that which is corruptible in him) has received this incorruptible seed, and that by the word of God. This they had: yet the heart of the apostle was not satisfied, but must go forth with energy that God the Holy Ghost might act in them according to their individual need, and that " according to the riches of his glory," not only eventually to be enjoyed, but a spring of power now to be given, and that without measure. It is the same Spirit to quicken and to strengthen now as will fill the whole bride. Paul put no limit short of this.

" That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith " (v. 17). This is not having happy feelings, or suavity of character, etc. It is one thing to be safe in the ark on the Ararat of God, and another thing for Christ to dwell in the heart by faith. Oh what a quantity of care goes out when Christ is there! If Christ is the master of the house, and dwelling in it, He does not let the dust and cobwebs accumulate, but He fills it altogether: and should a sudden start come to the heart, there will be found not fear, but Christ.

Some people make love among believers into a commandment. This is not the secret. If Christ is master of heart and conscience, He will teach brotherly love, and then will be comprehended " with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," v. 18. See the connection of understanding with being rooted, etc., here and in Col. 2:2. I shall not understand, save as divine (not human) affections are in exercise. Breadth, etc., of what? Soon after Christianity was launched, philosophy came in with progression. Paul knew no length, breadth, etc., save what was in Christ; Satan knows many, but they are only his depths and can be detected.

Next, we are set in the fullness of God. Thus we have had first the inward strengthening by the Spirit; next, this is shown by Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, rooted and grounded in love, that they might comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height; thirdly, by this they might be filled with all the fullness of God; and fourthly, this is described as the power that works " in us." This fullness of God calls for something back. All that God gives Christ is yours: then I must praise Him. Can I be silent? Why not lift your voice to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you ask or think? We cannot expect too much.

Observe the distinct superscriptions of the prayers. The first is to God the Father of glory, the second is to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of Christ as the servant of God and the glory of the only begotten of the Father are quite separate. It is very different for Christ to say, " My Father and your Father," and " My God and your God." When Christ took the servant's place, God was the Father of glory to Him.

Christ's sympathy flows out according to need down here. We have His sympathies. If we knew more of Christ's sympathies, the children of God might have more for one another. If full of sorrow yourself, go and sympathize with another, and your own will be gone.

Many a saint, if he knew what Christ's sympathy was, would wish to be left alone. Christ does not sympathize with my fleshly thoughts, but what He does is for the glory of God. He may have to break my will, and bring it to His. He will take up all the good, and He can make the face to shine; but it is of no use for us to ask for sympathy, if not set on the glory of God.

Our sympathy with Him is another thing: but He cares for us; John 16.

Let me ask (as exhortation) whether you pray for the acting of the Spirit as prayed for here. One of the reasons why the light and knowledge given connected with God and His Christ is so little entered into is connected with lack of prayer for the operation of the Spirit in this way. Christ is in heaven now. He was the center of the thoughts of the little company who followed Him in Galilee. Why should not you and I have Him practically as the center of our minds and hearts? All with them was simply done in the light and at the word of their Master. Had they boats to launch, nets to let down, all was at His word. This is a challenge to our hearts as to every-day circumstances. His presence in our hearts changes everything. It is very hard to be discontented when He is in the heart. How the thoughts of one's mind change with the company one is in! God has put us into a place where we may be sounding the unsoundable depths of the motives that have acted on Christ.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Critical 1, Greek Article, Brief Hints on the

All my experience has confirmed the principle stated elsewhere, that the article is used when the object of the mind is spoken of, and is left out when the word or combination of words is characteristic. This does not at all conflict with its being the notion expressed by the substantive as viewed by the speaker as an individual, which, as another form of the thought, is correct enough, but gives no expression to the import of the absence of the article. All the particular cases and rules are but reducing expressions under the general principle, often multiplied (as in Middleton) by ignorance of it. I doubt altogether that his notion of the general rule not applying where there is a preposition, or with proper names, etc., has the least truth in it.

Thus, as to abstract nouns here, the rule only perplexes. I confess I do not understand particularizing an abstract idea: perhaps individualizing or personifying is meant. may be abstract or not. If I have spoken of a particular , realizes that as an individual; or, as I should say, presents it as a definite object to the mind. If I have no such law mentioned, would be " the thing law," law viewed as an object before my mind as such. Abstract nouns are a kind of personification. " Law " does this, " law " does that. If I say , it is something that happens on that principle; it is only characteristic.

Anarthrous nominatives (such as ' , Isocr. . 8 : .... , Id. p. 28 a) express moral characteristics, beings or things that have a certain quality. It is what each is, anything that has this character. It is not an abstraction but a universal, that is, a species which is known by a predicate of each individual that has such a character. There may be many a , and all sorts of not such as these. So (Plat. Theact. 8) is the character of the measure used. would point out an object, the race viewed as one whole, where some specified individual was not meant (that is, if you please, one individual, real or ideal); it is always a subsisting thing to the mind, about which something is affirmed. Hence, as an abstract noun is an objective personification of the idea, it has the article. But a universal, or species, as in these anarthrous instances, is the character of all the individuals composing it. If a characteristic universal be not seized, it is impossible to understand the omission of the article in Greek.

An abstract noun as such has always the article, because it is always the personification of the idea, its reduction to an objective individual. But in so intellectual (or if you please imaginative) a language as Greek, it requires keen perception to see why or why not an article is used. Just so in English: " The daylight came." I am thinking of daylight as a positive substantive thing. " It was already daylight." Here daylight characterizes the state of atmosphere, of surrounding nature, spoken of as day. " It " is the mind's object, " daylight" the state or character of it. I could perfectly well say " Daylight came," and I should think of the state of the scene around me, though the thing characterized is not expressed. We have a strong case in . would have been the Jewish law: here it would not do either, to say for the abstract idea. It was merely the legal principle which characterized the dealings of God, the state of things; but, as " daylight," it means the state in which the world is. This explains . It is peace, a state of peace. You might have said , and then it would have been the thing itself. But is not a predicate characterizing -does not affirm that peace is good, but that peace is the good thing, the one good thing. It is the abstract idea individualized. It would have been if it had been a predicate.

In Matt. 1:1, (,) it is the common case of a title, and exceptional; as in English one might say, " Book of Wisdom; yet were I making a sentence, I should say, " The Book of Wisdom is so and so." It is elliptical. The name of what follows (not anything as to each) is . The article is usually put with known persons, because they are definite objects before the mind. Were one never heard of before, it would be anarthrous; but with the article it would be " that Isaac which you know so well of in Genesis, the well-known Isaac."

The same remark applies to Matt. 7:25, 27. It is the well-known rain and floods; the rain came on. I should say in English, " The rain was very heavy on a particular day-the rain spoiled flowers." It is a well-known particular object in nature before the eyes. But it would be better to say, " The rain spoils the flowers," because both become objective. The rain did it. I could say, " Rain spoils flowers." This is aphoristic; which is always anarthrous, because essentially characteristic. If I say, " The rain spoiled," it is again objective -the rain on a given day in my mind. If I say, " It was not heat, it was rain spoiled them," rain becomes characteristic, in contrast with heat, of a state of the weather. It is something of a proper name, but a proper name has not an article when the person is not known or has not been mentioned.

I do not believe that there is any difference as to or , save that they may be proper names. Compare, for , Matt. 1:20, 22, 24; 2:15, 19; 3:3; 4:7, 10; 21:9; 23:39; Mark 11:9; 13:20; Luke 1:16, 17, 32, 38, 45, 58, 66, 68, 76; 2:9, 23, 24, 26, 39; 3:4; 4:8; 5:17; 19:38; John 1:23; Acts 2:20, 39; 3:22; 5:9, 19; 7:31, 37; 8:26, 39; 12:7, 23; 13:10, 11. is often not a name but an office, as , unless they may have been mentioned before so as to make them a present object here. In Matt. 1:20, is the character of the angel, is the simple way of saying one when there are many; would not do if there were many, unless followed by a characteristic word, the angel of the Lord; then I think of one to the exclusion, at least then, of all others.

As to Matt. 13:6 ( ) I do not accept the being a proper name. It is at sunrise-a characteristic state. I might say " the rising of the sun," as in Mark 16:2; then I have an object. So with , , , , , , , , etc.

Again, in Matt. 5:1 5 14: 23 5 Mark 3:13 (cf Luke 6:12, 17), does not mean some particular mountain well known by this name (as Wetstein and Rosenmiiller think); nor " a mountain" (as in the Authorized Version, Campbell, Newcome, Schleusner); but " the mountain " in the sense of the hill-country or highlands, in contrast with " the plain." The same principle accounts for in Matt. 7:24, 25; only that this is made more obvious by the expressed contrast in verse 26, of . Just so with , Matt. 9:10; 10:12, 13, in contrast with " without" or " the open air," and contrasted with " the city" or " town"; similarly es " on board ship " (Matt. 13:2, etc.) in contrast with being " ashore," unless in cases where reference required the article, as perhaps in chapter 4: 21; 9:1. In Mark 1:45, is purposely characteristic (and not a license because of the preposition, as is commonly said) " into town," any town: so , in chapter 16: 12, and in chapter 2:1, meaning " at home." The article might or might not be used in many cases; but the phrase or thought is never precisely the same.

With a proper name as such, one can hardly have an article, save as a reference, and this not immediate, I apprehend. If I say , it is the well-known man, or the Xenophon I have been speaking about-always as a designated object of thought: why so, it may be a question which only appears afterward, and hence is anticipative. When the person is named historically, the article disappears; when spoken of as a direct object before the writer's mind, and meant to be so pointed out to the reader, the article is used (as in ordinary appellatives). When not thus referred to or presented, one cannot point out a name as a subject-matter of thought: it is a predicate then and anarthrous as usual.

So is not an exceptional case. . is a name, and as such without an article; and the name is necessarily an individual. You cannot gather a name of a city into one as a country or province, like . By the article a country is brought before the mind as one whole. But if one thinks of a name simply, the article is excluded, a name being not a thing but something said about a thing. The sense in this case is [, which city is called] . A river has the article; because from its nature, like a district, it needs this sign of unity as a whole.

Rom. 4:13 is a simple case of the general rule, to which I admit no exception for prepositions; was the character or way of his getting the promise. So " by righteousness of faith." It was not by law. The case is a very simple one. So in Rom. 1:17, characterizes the revelation, the manner of its reception. God's righteousness is revealed (not merely but) , excluding claims of birth, ordinances, works, etc., by faith as the sole ground, , and therefore open to faith wherever found.

The abstract noun is more abstract, if that could be said, with an article than without. It is in the essence of its nature, all things foreign to it apart; is " that thing called sin," as such in itself. A being is only what it is, or it is not that being, but another. Hence when it is said , they are identical: one of the things before my mind is itself and no more; but the other is the same with it, as itself and no more. This is the effect of an article with an abstract noun.

There are nouns, it may be remarked here, which are generalizations more than abstractions. Thus : in general, it is a certain particular rule, and becomes a general idea of acting on the principle of a rule. In such cases it is hard to use the article without returning to the particular form which one has generalized. Law gives the idea of an actual concrete thing. Hence I have a mental difficulty to decide in Rom. 4:15, whether it is abstract. It would be more naturally abstract law, " the thing law "; but with this word, which is first known as an actual existing objective code, it is difficult, when thus taken by itself, not to return to the particular. When is used, I should have no difficulty.

Objective is before the mind as an object, objective truths for instance. Subjective is the quality of mind by which opinions are formed. Thus I judge respecting God when I judge what He ought to be by what is in my own mind: objectively He is presented in revelation. Now what is objective has the article. It points out the object. (Logically it becomes the subject in a proposition, but this is another matter wholly.) The use of the article and all speech must depend on the view the mind takes of a thing; only where the speech is formed we have to judge what view has been taken.

Now the theory propounded is that the object of the mind has the article, the attributives or qualities have not, and that mentally. And here Middleton's theory (which indeed is merely the subject and predicate as to the metaphysical side of it) comes in. is the object before the mind, that is, refers to it, explained by the word following in its nature or distinctive character. This forms the subject of a proposition; the predicate without the article (unless reciprocal) is affirmed about it. It is very simple, and has nothing to do with the view one's mind takes of the passage. It is a rule positive, that objects have, attributes or characteristics of objects have not, the article. When I find one, there is an object referred to; when none, it is qualification.

As after , I have noticed in my paper (as Middleton also recognizes) verbs " to have " as taking an anarthrous noun. would be some particular woman, or woman kind: that thing, the individual before our eyes or mind; or that thing, woman.

In Greek plays the choruses are noted for leaving out the article, and (unless emphatic) the tragedians before names.

That predicates have the article as apposition seems to me want of critical discernment. The is some well-known ox, and then is necessary.

Reasoning from English to Greek, save as arriving at abstract principles, is beside the mark. All verbs of existence (as Middleton recognizes) are (save on some exceptional account) without the article; because I must have, if I say " was," something existing before my mind. To the question " what" (qualification) is answered . Now here or takes the same place as . I point out objectively, that is, affirm existence. I say what? . So -what? . is Greek equally, but it is a particular bird, already the object of the mind, that bird; not " what," but individual.

The first line of the Iliad, as Middleton remarks from Apollonius D., is not pure Greek. , etc. In pure Attic it would be ; but such things do not set aside the rule.

Again, with , which I cannot now trace, I should expect to find a mental reference in the writer to the king of Macedonia, or some such object, both names being distinctive or characteristic examples. I do not believe mentally applies to either but may be mere freedom of style-using the article to the first and not for the second as in the same category; so in Acts 15:22. It is only where two agents come under one mental thought that this is the case. And I think in reference to it, Paul and Barnabas, or Alexander and Philip, become a single object to the mind. The idiom unites in the one article either two qualities of the same person or two persons under the same quality.

In the case of a proposition it is evident that the predicate is characteristic of the subject, its genus or category. Man is an animal. Where it is simply " there was," or , what is this proposition? The noun answers to " what," just as the predicate does. When I say " was," " something was," what was? A man. In the ordinary proposition I have as a subject before me; when I say , I wait to know what. If I say or , I say What or ? I answer : it characterizes; it is the nature or category of the thing which exists, or an affirmation about it. Existence is the thing affirmed, or a

something existing. " What " comes in the noun, and is anarthrous. If not, then would be the subject, or the proposition reciprocal. If I say , it is either man is something else, or it is reciprocal with a previous description and way expressed by , , etc. There is an exception where the absolute existing One comes in. I can say , . But this distinctly shows that existence is formally included in the affirmation of the verb. This only confirms the principle. I could not say . I could say , because there it is historical, not absolute; that category of being was, . So I could say on the sixth day , because it is historical: here is the subject, and existence is affirmed of him. So one might say : only here becomes predicate, and hence individual, because " was " is one thing that was, and that one thing was man-a man. And this gives such a clear force to : deprives it of created existence, giving absolute existence, and is necessarily an individual. No man takes it for a category of beings.

A noun is a mere name, the designation of " what" or character (not proper names of course). Thus house, man, cat, dog, in any language, names " what" a thing is, not an individual: points out and individualizes. In certain styles (which raise a question), as fables, proverbs, these may in a measure merge, because particular care is there taken to paint a character. Latin is metaphysically special in this and uses all nouns so, as venit homo. Number, unless by special designation, gives individuality, but the genius of the language is to abstract into kind. Greek is more material for individualism as to what is external; that is, is so. French is still more, which makes it the most exact and the most narrow language in the world, incapable of stating abstractions. It individualizes and materializes everything. , , , is " what." Man, or a man, is a question of the style of the language. We think it must be a man, that is, we make it precise by a number. Ein mensch, ein matin, un homme, un uomo, un hambre, etc.; but in such a sentence it is really what kind of being came, though I may add only one (ein, a, un). In× German, unity is secured by emphasis on ein; in French, when it is distinctive, you must add seul, pas un homme being characteristic. You must say pas un seul homme; but un is not less " one " for all that. though singular, is not this (though is so used at any rate in New Testament); it is indicative of personal individuality, and, if an abstraction or a contrasted part, as or , is still this; it points out an individual in contrast with others. If there were only one man, I could not say unless in contrast with what was not man, as . Hence is no diminution of the force of , but only shows that it is not the whole individual Being in contrast with all others; is. , a particular known man, or mankind, are both in contrast with others, that is, individualized or pointed out. So does this, does that. It is that quality or kind of thing that does it in contrast with others, as , . But when these things are names by themselves, existence being in , it is , , , but the greatest of these is , here individually contrasted. I know not whether I have brought this out so clearly in my paper, though the principle is there; but so it is.

Shades of style may vary. I may say, the renard, a certain renard, or Maitre Renard; but this a question of poetry or descriptive fable.

is constantly cited as the instance of an appellative passing into a name. It is not so. Thus, if I remember (why, I cannot say), it is used in the beginning of Homer without one - yap (I cite from memory), meaning Agamemnon. There were many such titles in the East (Tartan for general, and others) which may have led to the use of it in Greek similarly, being the word translated.- is no difficulty. It is every case of blood shed, not all the blood as a whole. So . The article gives always the entire of what is said, as it points out one object as one: hence would have been quite false. also distributes the time: it was not a continuous whole Peter would speak of, but " at every time."

Again, presents no difficulty. It does not mean " a building " but " building." I doubt that it is ever used for " a building "; if so, by accommodation, as in English. Thus would be everything added by an act of building. This being adapted it grows to an entire whole. Indeed it is difficult to say , and perhaps to this answers . I mean the idea-without deciding on the reading.

The other two seeming anomalies are proper names. Now with a proper name as such I doubt you can have an article save as a reference, and then it is not immediate, I apprehend. I say , because I think of a country and bring it thus into one whole. But if I think of a name, I cannot use the article: a name is not a thing, but something said about a thing. If I say , it is the man well known, or that I have been speaking about, Xenophon. I cannot point out a name as a subject of thought, as it is a predicate of a thing. Hence is not an exceptional case; it is a name, as always, without an article. And the name is necessarily an individual. And I cannot gather the name of a city into one as a country: the sense is -which city is called .

I apprehend that is similarly circumstanced. would give one the idea of a material house. It is possible the figure might be so carried on; but the dropping of the article shows to me that the figure was dropped, and is as one word. In English we say, "All the house of ": the force of the material thing is carried into the figure. But with a name, though we say " all," we have no article; it is " all Israel." We could not say " all the Israel "; we could say " the Israel of God," because we think of all the persons composing it, and assemble them by the "the" into one. would arrest my mind at " house," and Israel be only its name-the name of the house. This is avoided, and is viewed as a unity carried by the name itself. One of the main points of the article is the gathering a composite thing into unity, making one whole of it to the mind, a name being the name of an individual and allowing by its nature no composite idea. It is one person. This can have no place here. Middleton was right therefore in connecting with . I judge that has a peculiar and exceptional reason, from being used in opposition. In Israel would not have been itself the house, but it would have been a house belonging to Israel distinct from Israel. would have been distinctly designated as an object, and so separated from Israel; it is Israel, but I mean the house, not the person.

We may add that Middleton takes indefiniteness for granted from the absence of the article, though showing its presence is not always a proof of definiteness. I have no objection to take as by itself (it is substantially the same principle, but from not seeing the mental or metaphysical noun M. broke down in prepositions and the like) and the noun, etc., as itself something stated about . Only the indicates something clear to the speaker, not yet to the hearer, being the person or thing I have in my mind, which is , and then the hearer knows. When I say , I say something exists which I am thinking about: what I explain is what follows. Hence etc. meets the case without , in words of having. If I have, I must have something, and so on. Accounting for omissions is another thing from accounting for the use. Middleton's work did not require it, and he has not done it, save as illustrating the use and his theory; my principle does, and claims to account for every case, save only common and proverbial expressions which affect brevity, as "he is gone down town," they say in America: it is a useful abbreviation, but no question of grammar. " Gone into harbor " may mean a particular one, but it is a state; and so in Greek, , , of Piraeus and Athens, quoted by Middleton. But these are special cases; not rule, but habit from locality, and found in all languages. I do not find Middleton treat such a case as . But I find no omissions which are not explained by the answer to " What? " That is, an attributive or a personal name. With a genitive it is part of the word. In , is one idea. You might say , but there it would be reciprocal and exclusive, not merely attributive or a qualification. I take up , . Supposing for a moment that it was merely the Greeks not having an indefinite article, accounting for the article's use is not touched, nor the explanation of a multitude of omissions, when it might be by a given principle. But I am not content with this. In good Greek we should have generally , as in Luke. I believe may be partly taken as Hebrew language in Matt. 1; 2 but we have in Mark ; in Luke . I doubt its being strictly good Greek to leave it out, save in proverbs and apologues which affect what is characteristic and abound in such expressions in all languages (Greek has , which has the sense of an indefinite article, and uses it); as we see in Luke 7:37 (Mark 5:25,), Mark 5:2, 21, Luke 7:12,

etc., Luke 6:17, Acts 6:7, John 12:9, Acts 23:9, Mark 7:25, Matt. 9:20. These passages my memory has furnished from scripture, and such have to be accounted for.

My conviction is that answers to the indefinite article as to the absence of any word. The difference is this: notes an individual object like , only generalized like " a," " an." The word by itself answers, as I said, to " what? " , , or gives one whole individual object. When there is nothing, it is a scene before me, the anarthrous word saying " what" it is. Thus several are with , what? , . The last generally has as contrasted with individuals, or the particular crowd that followed Jesus. But the article would be given with any known body of people, . We have . We have also as in Matt. 4:4, 13:28, 31. A concordance will furnish many others.

The result of the use of these words to my mind confirms the principle: is a whole, a particular individual, an individual separated in thought from others. The absence of the article simply in the nominative is always characteristic, not individual. In Luke it is generally , and better Greek. could hardly be, because it is a confusion of individuals, a crowd, and can scarcely be individualized; suits, for it is a known pointed out crowd. When I say , I separate that man from others; so , I think of other angels, etc. When I say, , , , I think of the kind of being.

Hence in proverbs, parables, fables, which describe, it is more usual to omit the article, unless they read as if a real history. Chat echaude is the kind of thing, un chat echaudo is an individual cat. English has not this unless very rarely in proverbs. If I say , it is not or other means employed. If I say it is distinct from other angels. I do not know that I have discussed this form of its application, but it is the same principle. The absence of the article gives kind or attributives, not an objective individual, though it may be such. Grammarians must not make a rule for what is merely the shortening tendency of habits of speech. All aphorisms or substantive statements as such are anarthrous. Perhaps brevity occasioned it; but in fact they are in their very nature essentially characteristic and only so-it is their object. Chat echaude craint l'eau froide. Chat echaude characterizes the thing which fears even cold water; l'eau froide is not grammatical, it would be de l'eau froide.

So is all essentially characteristic; were it , it would be a certain set of things. So here of : the being that has this character or title is measure of all things. Here a measure would do in English, or the, because it is merely characteristic, no object: in fact, it is the predicate. Man is not here looked at as a person; it means humanity, or what man is.

Take again Isocr. page 8, B; ' : Id. page 28, , . In all these cases the phrases express moral characteristics, and are not viewed as objects of the mind. It has the force of anything that has this character-a .- , any one which is such. This is not an abstraction but a universal; that is, a species which is known by a character, a predicate of each individual which has such a character. There may be all sorts of , but not such as this. points out an object, an individual if you please, a real subsisting thing to the mind about which I affirm something. An abstract noun (not a universal) is an objective personification of the idea, and hence as such would have the article; but a universal, or species, is the character of all the individuals composing it. Its being in the place of the predicate changes nothing. When I say , it is evidently such; it is the character of all the beings of the species. It is this character which makes it a ; the individual man is-that would not be characteristic. And when I put the article, it ceases to be characteristic and becomes an object; . I personify the whole race in order to predicate something about it. This would not do for an aphoristic sentence. See the multitude of sentences in James of this character.

Matt. 14:25 furnishes also a usage from abbreviation as in English. " I had fourth watch ": regular English would give " the fourth watch " contrasted with the third. But this is needless; it is the short characteristic of a known object. Quakers say, " fourth day," " third month," not " the." It is the same principle but more obscurely. So as to Matt. 22:38. The Jews measured the commandments to make out righteousness; as says the young man (which has this well-known character). The Lord answers, not by formally comparing this with other commandments, but by so characterizing it. I do not think He means a first and great, though the grammar would bear it, but an absolute characteristic. This is first and great; but only by , the commandment so to be characterized. But this is brief familiarity of language, not grammatical distinction.

, John 1:1, is evident; would at once lead me to the beginning of something, whereas is characteristically (that is, universally and absolutely) such. This form of thought is rare in English, but is found " in measure," " in part," but only where it has become from use characteristic and abstract. In Greek it is much more common, particularly with , as also with . When a word in English is used characteristically, the form is found, particularly in characteristic words, " in anger," " in pain"; but we say " in a bad temper," because it is one kind of temper.

I should rather suppose Acts 7:36 to be used as a proper name; the rather as we have in the same passage. and are as articles, that is, indicate an object, as a name sufficiently does.

In John 4:37, apprehend, must be taken as an attribute of , not as a predicate; "in this is the true word " [verified]; whereas in 1 Peter 5:12 it is the usual form. In the former has the sense of subsists. I find Winer and Middleton both take it so.

If we cannot seize characteristic universals, we shall never get at the use of the article.

As to the article in , it is no way difficult; it is like the month, has the force of each, and points out a particular month, inasmuch as it is each one. Distinctive parts would have the article as in contrast with another part: as " a half" is only a quantity, " the half" is in contrast with the other half. Contrast always has it. A class would bear no article; it is an idea, not an existence, being a predicate of something else, as is a character, not an existing one pointed out. So , , though the words may become by an article a specifically existing object. Words joined by a conjunction are also persons joined to some idea by the article, or the same person as . These are qualities of the one who is . It is sometimes irregular in form; as, when there are two ambassadors, is with the first only, but the reason remains the same.

I do not deny that there is a difference when the adjective is first and when the noun is first, though it is hardly apparent sometimes. It is so in French, but the object, c'est un temps rude, is in contrast with doux or agriable; while un rude temps is but one idea. I apprehend it is the same in Greek. I doubt the exactitude of Hermann's rule, that in the principal stress is on , in . it is rather on . For in there is emphasis on . In the phrase . . there is no emphasis anywhere, only distinction from one not . So in . it is the Holy Spirit, not another; but . brings into relief.

As for the expression (Luke 18:13), it is evidently distinctive, as if I should say, Who is the sinner of the world? The publican answers, I am. He is the sinner. It is contrast, but so characterized in comparison with all others.

I may remark that it is our positive place before God that lets us into the counsels of God. There is no real knowledge of these counsels except as we stand in our place before God. Knowledge that puffs up is always defective and sterile; it is a statue, not life. There is nothing really connected with it in the mind, when it puffs up. There is a certain place for the believer before God; into this the heart has to get. We are made partakers of the divine nature. Then all these thoughts and counsels of God come to be precious, not as knowledge, but as belonging to the glory of Christ. “I... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness.” Where our own souls are before God, according to God, of course there is fellowship and communion with God. Activity, of course, even right activity, tends to bring self in. Take Paul: there was danger of his being puffed up; and the Lord sent a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. When he came down from the third heaven into the ordinary activities of life, there was danger. The thorn was a hindrance to him in his ministry, that the power of Christ might be made manifest in him. The moment he finds what it was, he says, “I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” God chooses things that are weak that no flesh may glory in His presence.

Taking the general principle, if I enter into the knowledge of divine things, it must be along with God. Love is never puffed up; love likes to serve. I am thus blameless that I may have communion. We cannot have practically a more important truth than that all real divine knowledge is found by being in the presence of God; and whenever we are in the presence of God, there must be lowliness of heart and mind and spirit. God's presence is always a holy thing. There is no true knowledge, and no true communion unless the soul is in that state before Him. There is no more dangerous thing than a certain apprehension of divine things without the soul learning them with God; as we see in Balaam and in Hebrews 6, where you get all the wondrous things of Christianity poured on the mind and natural heart. This is dangerous even if there is life, and fatal if there is not. The revelation of the counsels of God is founded on knowledge of our place with God. The eye cannot bear light from God except so far as we are right with God. Having brought us into the blessed consciousness of this place, where we are at home with God, now He can unfold His counsels, as to Christ Himself. Having brought us there in grace, He can trust our hearts with all His plans. There is no real divine knowledge of the counsels of God except so far as we are personally with Him. “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” He reveals to Abraham what He is going to do, not with Abraham, but with Lot.

All flows from the soul being consciously in the place where it is set, in Christ. He can then trust us with the knowledge of His will; He can trust the sons of the family with the family affairs.

Christ was a true real man in this world: was He occupied with the interests of His family, or the interests of man? He was subject to His parents. There was in Him perfect obedience, perfect confidence, and—what is so hard for us—perfect waiting. He gave Himself for our sins; He says, “Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” This is not merely an outward thing. “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Christ was a dying sacrifice. The Christian is to be a living sacrifice: this is to be the whole life of the Christian. We are set at liberty by the power of the life of Christ, and the Holy Ghost is in us, and then we yield ourselves to God. We cannot yield ourselves of ourselves; but the moment we are risen with Christ from the dead, we have the power of the Holy Ghost. Suppose a child is exceedingly anxious to go and see something, if his father desires him to go, there is an instance of perfect liberty and obedience also at the same time. It is a “law of liberty” to us; the new man having the mind of God, its delight is to do the will of God. We do not belong to anything in this world, but only to God. I have no duty that does not belong to a man who has died and is alive again. Blessed path of liberty it is, but a path of liberty to one who has no object but Christ! This is the Christian's place, entirely separated to God. If I am my own, I am a poor sinner (Christ never called Himself His own); we are bought with a price, and we belong to God. When in that case, He can open out to us all His wisdom and prudence; “we have the mind of Christ.”

Thus I first get Christ's own place; and this is exceedingly blessed, because it puts us into our place. Our calling is what we are towards God. Remember you do not get dispensed glory, until as a first thing you get to God. Christ offers Himself up to God; you have a life to God down here, and then a death to God, before you have the glory. Our relationship to God Himself comes before any acquaintance with the dispensed counsels of God. Responsibility and the counsels of God are distinct. I was a poor sinner: but I find, through the work of Christ, that all that was against me is gone. God's counsels and plans have nothing to do with man's responsibility. When man had come to the point of positive hatred against God in killing Christ, then the counsels of God were brought out, the mystery hidden in God. All this plan and counsel of God were before ever the world was. Christ in His rejection does the work which is the foundation of everlasting righteousness.

Everything that concerned the person of Christ was revealed before in the Old Testament, but not these counsels of God. You may find the ascension, resurrection, gifts—all that concerns the person of Christ—but nothing of union with Him, of being members of His body, joint-heirs with Him: all these counsels were hidden. I was a poor sinner, I must have my responsibility met; but this does not say that I should be in the same glory as the Son of God. Not merely has He cleansed our sins, but He has glorified God. Man goes into the glory of God because Man (He was more than man of course) has perfectly glorified God. We are loved as Christ is loved: the world will know it when He appears. Ah! if we only saw where the Christian is placed! It is a terrible thing to see all this rest on the surface. Are you conscious that the Father loves you as He loves Jesus?

The “fullness of times” is spoken of here, not eternity; in eternity we find God all in all. “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ.” This is the thought and purpose of God that everything He has created He will bring under Christ's moral power as Man. He created all things, we read in Colossians. He is going to reconcile the state of things: but we are reconciled. The place of the Christian is absolutely reconciled to God in a world that is not reconciled at all. Everything in heaven and earth will be reconciled. If you want to go as Christians through the world, you must go as absolutely reconciled to God among things not reconciled. You have nothing to do with “things under the earth” here: in Philippians they bow at the name of Jesus. The scene He created He will perfectly restore. His first title is Creator; His second is Son—He is the heir of all things.

Actual creation is always referred to the Son and Spirit—God of course. Man is to be set over it all, set at the head of everything in the fullness of times. As we get into Christ's place in our calling, we get into Christ's place in our inheritance. Whatever He created as God, He inherits as man.

“By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified “; the work is complete and finished for His friends, and He is waiting till His enemies be made His footstool. When that comes, He leaves the Father's throne and takes His own. He who created all things is Son and

heir of all things, and He inherits them as man. We are joint-heirs with Him. In the thoughts of God, His Son having become a man, we have become completely associated with Christ. He went alone through the earth; but, the moment redemption was completed, He says, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren.” How thorough is this association! Christ became a man, and in perfect love He brings us to everything He has as man. If He takes everything in heaven and earth, we are joint-heirs with Him (as Eve was with Adam), members of His body. When Mary Magdalene comes to the grave, He says, “Tell my brethren that I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

God's heart is set upon me. It is the fixedness of heart on an object, but besides that I have the confidence that He never takes His eye off me. We get divine love in the nature of God, and, besides that, love set on an object. “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” My inheritance is in Christ, because God has associated me with the Lord Jesus. See the way the apostle dwells on and repeats this word “in”!

If I have the love of Christ in my heart, can I look on a world that is under Satan's power, and not be a man of sorrows? We have joy through Christ, if you take that side. If a holy being is in a world of sin, he must suffer; if a loving person is in a world of misery, he must suffer.

It is not that the glory is the highest thing, for it concerns self. At the transfiguration Moses and Elijah were in the same glory as Christ; but more than that, a bright cloud overshadowed them. Jehovah was in the cloud; and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son.” When they went into the cloud, the disciples were frightened. The cloud, so to speak, answered to the Father's house.

This chapter invariably refers to God, His calling, and His inheritance.

“That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ” —hoped before He appears. The world will get a portion under Him, but we a portion with Him. While we must be born of God, there is in the proper sense of the word no glad tidings in telling a man that he must be born again. The thing revealed in the gospel is, that the grace of God which brings salvation has appeared; there is remission of sins and full salvation. Have you never been in God's presence? Were you fit to be there? The veil is rent: we are just as much in God's presence as if already in heaven; we shall see it more clearly then. I have everlasting life, I have divine righteousness, because I am in Christ. I am brought into God's presence, and I am not there without being fit 1 through the work on the cross. We have not got anything of the inheritance as yet, but we are sealed with the Holy Ghost. The blood of Christ having cleansed me from all sin, the Holy Ghost can take His place because I am clean. “Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost?” What if the apostle were to write this to you? Being born again, I have life; when sealed, I have God dwelling in me. The Holy Ghost can take His place as a witness that in God's sight I am as white as snow. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” Oh! beloved, what a place the Christian is in! If you confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God is dwelling in you. How are you treating the divine guest? “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed.”

It is not merely quickening, which was from the beginning: but when there is life, the Holy Ghost becomes the seal. I do not want an earnest of God's love. He loved me so perfectly that He gave His Son for me. His is a love proved in the death of Christ, and known in present consciousness. The Holy Ghost is the earnest of the inheritance. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Do not you be looking into your heart to find if He is there. Imagine a child inquiring if he is a child! Look if you are walking up to that. “We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Do you believe in the truth that “Jesus is the Son of God?” “By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” But “they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.”

The apostle's prayer here is to “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,” that the saint might know what He has wrought, and would do for them.

Do you believe that Christ has put you in the same place with God as He Himself is in? We are in Him, we shall be with Him, and like Him, and He gives us the knowledge of it now.

Have your hearts gone back, when accepted, to look at this model? Have your hearts burned within you as you have seen Him, and talked with Him, and have you said “His path is mine”?

Has it possessed your souls? This is a matter of daily diligence and conflict. The time will soon come when we shall say, of all that has not been Christ in our lives and ways, “That was all lost.”

J. N. D.

Bible Treasury: Volume N7, Portion in Christ, Our: Part 1

EPHESIANS I.

PART I.

There are two ways in which we may look at man in relation to God: first, in responsibility; second, in the counsels of God.

It is important to know the full value of the work of Christ and our present relationship. All duties and right affections flow from relationships; the Christian lives in those new relationships into which God has brought him. We find in this chapter our relationship to the Father as children (the individual relationship has the first place in Ephesians); then comes in the unfolding of the unity of the body of Christ.

God put man originally in a certain relationship with Himself in innocence; that relationship—the claim of it—must subsist. You cannot destroy God's title by human sin, but on man's side the relationship is gone and broken. Wickedness on one side does not destroy rights or claims on the other.

As to the history of God's ways and dealings, man's responsibility has closed at the cross; it is not a time of probation now, though the individual is proved. In the same cross Christ perfectly glorified God Himself. We find the two things quite distinct: responsibility; and the intentions of God before any responsibility was in question. This epistle takes up the side of these counsels.

In Philippians we are looked at as running the race through the wilderness with our eye fixed on the glory. In Ephesians we are seen as brought completely to God and sent out into the world to show God's character. In Romans we see the responsibility side simply, the sinfulness of man, what man is without law and under law, and the justification of a sinner. The counsels of God are only just touched on in the verse, “For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Man is proved to be a sinner; the blood of Christ is that which cleanses us. There we get responsibility, as also justification—not in Ephesians. God has no need to justify the new creation.

In 2 Timothy 1:9 we see that what was before the world began is now made manifest. We have the same thing in Titus 1. This thought of God is very distinct.

In Genesis we begin with the responsible man. All depended on man's responsibility; but nothing could be more complete than his fall. He distrusted God and believed Satan. Distrust of God is the essence of all sin. There is no way back to innocence. We may get divine righteousness, and may be partakers of His holiness; but we shall never have innocence again. Christ was “the seed of the woman.” All God's thoughts and counsels and plans were around the Second man. Promises there were, and prophecies clearer and clearer; but what God was actually doing up to the cross was trying man on his responsibility.

Before the flood testimony was given; but there were no particular dealings of God. Then the world became so bad that God had to bring in the flood. When God begins again with Noah, he got drunk. The world subsequently went into idolatry.

Adam was the head of a fallen race, Abraham was the head and father of all that believe. When God had scattered the people of Babel, from among them He takes a people for Himself; then, having chosen Abraham, He gives him promises. The apostle in Galatians spews how the promises to Abraham could be neither disannulled nor added to. The law came in by the bye. To Abraham there was not a question of righteousness—no “if.” The law was the perfect measure of what man ought to be. Before ever Moses came down from the mount the Israelites had made the golden calf. At last God says, “I have yet one Son,” one thing more that I can do. The husbandmen cast Him out of the vineyard and slew Him.

Thus in the cross the history of responsibility (not individual responsibility) was closed. Sin had been fully brought out. Man was lawless; then, when the law came, there was the transgression of the law; and when the blessed Lord in wondrous love and grace came into the world and went about doing good, they could not stand God's presence. “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?” Stephen gives us the summary—prophets slain, the Just One killed, the law broken, the Holy Ghost resisted. “We will not have this man to reign over us.” Christ interceded for them on the cross, “they know not what they do,” and the Holy Ghost in answer to this says by Peter, “I wot that through ignorance ye did it.”

The history of Adam, the moral history, is closed; that is, what we are. In all this we have God's history of man's responsibility. I find in the cross that I am in a condition which God must reject. Christ has come to be made sin, and a work has been done according to God's holy and righteous nature. If I look up to God now, I find no sin in His presence; I go there by the work of Christ, and God cannot see the sins. Not only has Christ died for my sins, but I have died with Him, I have done with the nature. First, I find the putting away of sins, and along with that I have died with Christ. Christ did much more than this at the cross. Sin was in the world, evil was rampant, Satan reigning, God 's glory in the dust, the earth full of violence (whatever the signs of wisdom). It was not merely a question of my sins; but God was compromised in a sense. Christ then was Jehovah's lot.

Suppose God had cut off Adam and Eve, there would have been righteousness, but no love. Suppose He had spared every one, there would have been no righteousness. If I look at the cross, there is righteousness against sin—never such displayed before. And there I learn the perfect love of God. At the cross I see God perfectly glorified in a Man, His own blessed Son, but still a Man. There is a Man in the glory of God. Not only is there one man out of paradise, but another Man is in paradise. The work, by virtue of which He is sitting there, can never lose its value. Now the counsels of God can be brought out. If sin is cleared away, why should I be in the same glory as the Son of God? We do not get the one without the other; but nothing can be the result of that work on the cross less than the glory. There are two things: not merely are my sins cleared away, but I stand in the light as God is in the light, as He is. This we are in Christ; and we are to be “conformed to the image of his Son.” Now we are brought as Christ and like Christ. He is the “firstborn among many brethren.” “Tell my brethren that I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.” This is our present place. “Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.” But, says the Lord, you need not wait till then: “to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

O how the things of this world are dimmed by this that we are loved as Christ is loved! What a blessed place this is! Christ has taken all on Him as man, that we may be forever with Him. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places [a remarkable expression, in the best place, in contrast to Judaism] in Christ Jesus.” There is not one possible blessing into which Christ has entered as man that we are not brought into. Christ never gives away; He brings us into enjoyment with Himself: “not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” This is perfect love.

Have you ever thought of God's thought about you, that you are “to be conformed to the image of his Son?” “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” This cannot fail. The Lord presses on our hearts that He brings us into association with Himself. “Then are the children free.” He “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” God gives us His own nature, “holy and blameless before him in love.” He puts us in this place answering perfectly to His nature, and with a nature to enjoy it. We are in Christ: that is God's thought. I get the place of a son with the Father. Servants would not do for Him; He takes us as sons. We are “accepted in the beloved:” “in Christ” would not do here. “I was daily his delight.” In this One, who was always God's eternal delight, we are accepted. Have you the thought of God's heart about your blessing? Is the thought you have that you are loved as Christ is loved? Are you able to see God's heart as He has revealed it? Where shall I get what is in God's heart? Is it in my heart? If the angels want to know what love is, it is in us they see it. Is this the way you think of God? We soon find out what poor creatures we are. Quite true, but can you say, There is where God has set me? This is the very thing that makes us see our own utter nothingness. The reasonings of the Holy Ghost are always downward from God to us; the reasonings of conscience are always upward from us to God. “For if, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” The Holy Ghost reasons downward: is this the way we reason? If you are naughty, do you feel you are a naughty child? You cannot be a naughty child, sad as this may be, unless you are a child. If I am a child of God, am bound to live like one. He expects children's affections, children's duties. Have you given up the first

Adam entirely, and found your place in the last Adam, “accepted in the beloved?” J. N. D.

Bible Treasury: Volume 16, Administration of the Fullness of Times, The

The good pleasure of God is to unite all that is created under Christ's hand. This is His purpose for the administration of the times in which the result of all His ways shall be manifested. It will be a grand spectacle, as the result of God's ways, to see all things united in perfect peace and union, under the authority of man, the Second Man and Son of God; ourselves associated with Him in the same glory as Himself, His companions in heavenly glory, as the objects of God's eternal counsels. Eph. 1 directs our attention to the communication of God's counsels respecting it, and not to the scene itself. The eternal state, in which God is all in all, is quite another thing. The administration of the fullness of times is the result of God's ways in government; the eternal state is the result of the perfection of His nature. In Christ we inherit our part, heirs of God, as it is said elsewhere, and joint-heirs with Christ. Here, however, the Spirit sets before us the position, in virtue of which the inheritance has fallen to us, rather than the inheritance itself. He ascribes it also to the sovereign will of God, as He did before with regard to the special relationship of sons unto God. In the inheritance we shall be to the praise of His glory; as in our relationship to Him we are to the praise of the glory of His grace. J. N. D.

Notes and Comments 6, Fragment: The Privileges and Glories of Ephesians 1

Remark how the Holy Ghost completely answers in us to the privileges and glories of Ephesians z; how He makes them good down here. First, answering to verse 4, the power of holiness is His very character, and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by Him given to us. He is the Spirit of Sonship, so that we cry: " Abba, Father." He is the earnest of the inheritance, and the transforming Revealer of the glory. Even as to the body of Christ, we are baptized by Him into One Body, united to Christ, One Spirit. It shows us greatly how the Holy Ghost, as the Paraclete (Comforter) fills up now in power the whole scope of God's counsels in which we have part.

Notes and Comments 4, Prayers in Ephesians 1 and 3, The

THE prayer in chapter i is, as the counsels and plans of God are unfolded towards us and about Christ as One He is glorifying, and so our inheritance with Him, for the working of God towards us in enlightening us as to our place in these counsels, and the power that brings us into it far above every name and near and like Himself. Wondrous thoughts of God! But Christ Himself (and that is our blessing) is looked at as a Man dead, and we dead in sin, and God raises Him, and us in Him, and sets us all in the highest place of blessing and glory- but it is man dealt with.

The prayer of chapter 3 is relationship-the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he sees already every family brought under this Name, and looks for another thing, the capacity to be at the center as our portion-that God might grant, according to the riches of His glory developed in all this, to be inwardly strengthened with might by His Spirit. We are not heirs here, but are divinely made competent inwardly to be at the center, and seize it all around. And thus it is Christ (He is the Center of all) to dwell in our hearts by faith-known there, not merely on our lips, but faith realizing Himself in the heart. Now this puts us in the divine center in its very nature. We are rooted and grounded in love, but that is what God is. So there is a moral capacity to apprehend all that in which He displays Himself; for, dwelling in Him, we can comprehend what He displays, and “he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Thus the soul can look out in every direction, and all directions, into the display of divine glory. Still this, in itself, would be dazzling, and for the heart cold in a certain sense-the heart though adoringly admiring, would want an intimate object; and here consequently the Spirit, by the Apostle, returns to Christ again, and to " know the love of Christ"—One we know in the depths of the intimacy of His love, yet it passes knowledge for it is divine, and thus we are filled to the measure of the fullness of God. So the “Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the Light thereof." We are brought into the whole sphere thus of the divine glory by Christ, dwelling in our hearts by faith, being our Strength and Capacity through the Spirit; but this puts us at its center in love, and that love in the endeared intimacy of Christ, yet in the fullness of divine nature, for the love in which we are, and know, passes knowledge.

Hence "Glory to him" is looked for in the Church in all ages, according to His power that works in us. That is the practical result; what a place it puts us in as to this!

In the wonderful prayer of chapter 3, I think I see more order than heretofore. Under the name of "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," every class of being, "every family in heaven and earth” comes. It is not our knowledge, as in chapter 1, of our place as to calling and inheritance, and the power that brings us into it as Christ from death to the throne of God—wondrous translation!—but the whole scene of the display of God's glory under that Name, and Christ the central point; it is under His Father that they hold their place. Then the prayer demands that, according to the riches of His glory, of all the display of Himself as such in this universal sphere, we may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man to be able to seize it all, but it is by His dwelling in our hearts by faith, who, while loving the saints perfectly, is the Center of all this glory. Having Christ, who fills all the glory, thus in our hearts, we are capable of reaching out to all this, and this according to that love of which He is the expression and power to us, and He thus dwelling in us we are rooted and grounded in it.

Thus filled with that which is really God as to nature, and the wisdom of God as to understanding, we comprehend with all saints-for, having Christ in our hearts, it is impossible to be separated from them-the whole sphere and display of God's glory, breadth, length, depth, height, and not only so, but, Christ dwelling in us, we know that love which passes knowledge, but, thus apprehending the whole sphere and display of His glory, and the love of Christ which passes knowledge, we are led up to that out of which this flows, and of which this is the display. We are filled into (eis)—to this completeness-all the fullness of God.

Thus we get the internal competency, verses 16, 17—the intermediate sphere and display, verse 18, and beginning of 19—leading us to the whole fullness of God in itself. The Apostle then desires that, according to His power that works in us, this same strength, the effect may be produced—Glory to Him in the Church throughout all ages.

The preceding remarks are connected with the unsearchable riches of Christ, but further, as to the bearing of parenthesis, i.e., chapter 3:2-21.

Note too in chapter 3, verse 18 resumes morally what precedes. It is not 'That ye being rooted and grounded may,' but “being rooted and grounded in love, that ye may." It is a nominative absolute, and, I think, gives the Apostle's consciousness of what the effect in a soul of what precedes in verses 16, 17, or what the practical reality of such a strengthening and dwelling is.

The connection between the prayer in this chapter and the mystery is striking. God has established Christ as Center and Head over all things, both in heaven and earth, but the Church is in immediate connection with Him. Being strengthened in might by His Spirit, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. Thus the Center, as to Spiritual understanding, is in our hearts that we may comprehend. But the center of all, as to what characterizes the source of the whole plan, is Love—this has made it—that is, God Himself. And we, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, are rooted and grounded in love, and thus have the source, the motive center which makes capable of comprehending-Christ being the revealed Center as to the counsel, while bringing as He alone does, the love, for He is its manifestation and power. Then, if it is Christ's love, God's love, I must associate all saints, for that is the first circle which that love forms, and itself thinks of. Having got this, which is intimate and immediate, I go out into the whole extent of that in which the God of love glorifies Himself-breadth, length, depth, height. But while this gives me the sphere, my soul wants to find the center for itself, something more intimate, that is a stay for the soul in this vast scene—that is, it knows the love of Christ, One well known, tender, familiar, who serves, One who is ours in grace. Yet it is infinite, passes knowledge. Thus in counsels, nature, and the perfect revelation of love, we are filled up to the fullness of God. Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, the actual Center of all, thus introduces us, in understanding and communion, into all.

Note, this is attributed to the One God and Father of all, in an abstract way, in chapter 4: 6, and to Christ in the power of redemption, verses 9, 10.

The exhortations of chapter 4 are more especially founded on the end of chapter 2-naturally so, as that is the responsible side of the Church, though not excluding the other character, as verse 4 shows, and also from verse 7 on. Chapter 3 comes in, not only as enlargement of the truth stated in its various bearings, but it brings the other, and more Colossian side of the mystery, in—Christ dwelling in the heart by faith—so that we are able to take it all in, look out at it as from a center. Hence it looks by this power to the glorifying of God in the Church by this; that naturally brings the Apostle back to the exhortation to make it good now. In chapter 2:21, 22, we have the Church in the place in which it is to glorify; in chapter 3:20, 21, we have the power in which they fill this place, and then comes exhortation.

Note, too, how in chapter 4:15, the power of that in which Christ is said to have come is looked to be realized by the saint. " Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ "; here, "speaking the truth in love" (aletheuontes en agape). And this confirms the connection of " in the truth," and " in truth," as in John. There is no truth in the inward parts but by the Truth and Word of God, which searches the thoughts and intents of the heart, in Christ's, the Truth's, being there. " Hence too the truth as it is in Jesus," putting off the old man, and putting on the new, renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us.

Note, further, in chapter 4, we have the two parts of verse 12, in verses 13 to 16. The first in verses 13-15; the last in verse 16. Nor is the middle part wanting, for the supply of the joints is the work of the ministry, and this connection is put in its arrangement; verses 13-15 is the main point governed by eis, and the ministry is connected with the edifying of the Body by pros, and so in verse 16. And this shows us what the work of the ministry is. There are permanent gifts used in service in a definite way, but there is a ministry by the supply of every joint. The Body edifies itself by the effectual working in the measure of every part. This makes permanent ministers, and the supply by every joint for the edifying of Body very clear, as to the place it holds. " He ascended up and gave gifts." Here are individuals given a place-some of them antecedent to the formation of the Body- all of them derived directly from Christ, and dependent on Him. But besides, and through this, and with it, there is a Body which, in all its parts, by the operation of the Spirit in each part, edifies itself. A pastor may come in in his place in this ministry, still he has a direct responsible service to Christ.

The three measures and principles of good in chapter 4 are the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, the new man created after God, and not grieving the Spirit. Then, as a general and wondrous rule, blessed as it is wondrous, "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." In this last, we have the most perfect expression of a divine walk in the world—following God in the affections of dear children-walking in love. That is the perfect, divine principle, love also to others; but, next, giving Himself, that is absolute and perfect-the giving up, not much by self, but self itself. Then, though there were love, perfect love to others, yet God was Himself objectively before the eyes, an offering and a sacrifice to God, to be a sweet smelling savor to Him. So with the incense, though others might smell the sweet odor, yet all was burned to God. This was the perfectness of Christ.

They were not to grieve the Spirit; that referred to subjective state and walk. Then, when they have had their objective measure of love and light, they are to be filled with it. But then in this we get the sobriety, and the 'beside ourselves.' Verses 15-17, it is sober; verses 18, 19, besides oneself, so to say. Will is gone, and honoring God's goodness, he can give thanks always for all things.

Further, we are light—that is one divine name—partakers of the divine nature. But it is never said we are love, because that is supreme goodness in its essential nature; but we love because we are partakers of it. Light, though intrinsically pure, shines. Love, save as the Father loves the Son, does not necessarily go out of itself, and indeed there it really does not. It delights in itself, when it exercises itself out of itself. It is sovereign, and hence we cannot be said to be it. But light always manifests itself, then other things. Hence, though essential, it is not so properly so as love.

Note, too, here besides the order noticed elsewhere in chapter 5:25, et seq., there is another point. Christ's first act is wholly written Himself. He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. This is summed up in 'Himself,' but it embraces the whole of Himself. Now this is as is right. The first must be of and within Himself as being divine. It was a divine work, and—so absolutely complete within Himself; and hence the love was perfect—He gave Himself; nothing was kept back. It was not a gift of something, but giving Himself. Yet it was love, and a work, we must remember, which had a specific object, which makes it so precious to us, and supposes that divine Person to be a Man indeed too—He loved the Church—for in giving Himself He was Man, though the gift, the thing given and He who gave was divine. But what I note now is, that

before any application, any cleansing, or presenting another thing to Himself, He had accomplished by Himself a work—was complete in His own act and work—and that this suited the glory and perfectness of His divine Person.

Note too in this chapter, how, with the most perfect, devoted love, personally exercised and given as blessing, perfect, divine, moral excellency is looked for and wrought out too. He gave Himself. That is perfect love, for indeed the Church was in fact in the sink of this world. He would present it to Himself. There is the perfection of His love and her enjoyment. But between there is what is called for in order to the latter, and divine necessity morally—sanctifying and cleansing by the washing of water by the Word. The divine perfection applied morally, judging all of flesh, all evil, and revealing, requiringly but cleansingly, all good. And so we ought to take things, adore, trust to the love, but look for God's character as equally necessary and to be desired, what must be if it be a divine blessing. The purchase of love, giving Himself, comes first—what is His by perfect grace, He cleanses to have it according to His heart.

There is in chapters 4 and 5, another, and to me an interesting point. The relationships, up to speaking of wives, are with God. So Christ offers Himself for us to God. We have the objective perfectness of motive in God Himself, and so in the character of the work, as well as perfect self-sacrifice for others. But in chapter 5, in His loving the Church, it is a love of relationship. He still gave up self in love. He gave Himself for it, but it ends in the perfectness of His own acts, and He presents it to Himself. This is beautifully in its place, and perfect. How perfect Scripture too is! Christ ought to have the Church to Himself.

I am inclined, too, to think that "The fullness of him that filleth all in all," is not simply Godhead, but Christ in redemption. The passage in chapter 4: to, leads me to this. It is redemption—He who went into the lower parts of the earth, and now far above all heavens.

I do not know how far I have hitherto accurately remarked on the armor of chapter 6, that we have subjective, objective, active, and dependence.

Notes and Comments 1, Holiness

To estimate holiness aright, we must first of all think of God Himself in His holy nature—and of a nature, a divine life in which we have fellowship with and enjoy Him. But for us, sinners, we must then take into account Christ, in and through, and by whom we have a part with God—further we must take cognizance of the operation of the Holy Ghost, through whom all is revealed and imparted—lastly of the state and condition of the sanctified.

There is another point needed to be gone into to judge rightly of it, that is the object before us, which, as a means, sanctifies us; for the creature morally lives by objects placed before it, and acting on it. Besides all this, the Word of God, which is that in which all is revealed, and works effectually in us through faith.

With a holy God we have to do, with a holy God to be in communion—holiness becomes His house forever. But it is important as a preliminary point. to distinguish between righteousness and holiness, both elements of God's nature and character in which we have to do with Him, and even practically that in which we are assimilated to Him in the new nature, "after God created in righteousness and true holiness"—I do so, because these are often confounded, to the prejudice of the soul's peace.

Righteousness, as contrasted with holiness in God, is the judicial estimate of, and dealing with what is right or wrong—involves responsibility to some one, and obligation in the one judged—and, in its exercise, the authoritative acceptance or rejection of what is presented to its judgment. It is used also

for that which is the fulfillment of obligation, and acting according to what is due (and in this sense is true even of God), and satisfies that judicial estimate, but also for the just estimate itself too—the righteous Lord loveth righteousness—in all cases, its measure is consistency with the relationship in which we stand—in God, consistency with Himself and His own perfection, maintaining withal the obligation of those relationships in which He has placed us. It is thus doing right according to them, or judging justly how far right is done.

Holiness, on the other hand, is the abhorrence, in the nature, of what is evil, and delight in what is good and pure, and, when we speak of men, God having His own full place in our hearts, as in God it is His separation from all evil, and abhorrence of it. One is connected with judicial title, the other with the delights of the nature.

Now we are clearly told that " without holiness no man shall see the Lord."This, assuredly true, acts on the conscience, and it is all well; but then we seek to be holy that we may be accepted. But in this case, it is really righteousness which is sought—God's judicial estimate of us according to what we are—it is a question of acceptance, hence of judicial estimate, not of holiness, or our own delight in good, or hatred of what is evil-and feeling evil in us, we feel God cannot accept us. Thus, though there may be a holy nature, and an abhorrence of what is evil, and delight in what is good, there is never holiness practically till the question of righteousness is settled; because the holy nature acting on the conscience, this—our righteousness not being settled, nor our acceptance in righteousness known—necessarily raises the question as to that acceptance, and ought to do so. Suffice it to say that it must—hence the true desire for holiness destroys peace. When the question of righteousness is settled, and the soul thoroughly convinced of sin, "none righteous, no not one"—and that it cannot make it out, even if the will is present with it—cannot make it good as an obligation, which it is before God, the flesh not being subject to the law of God, as it cannot be—and has given up hope of righteousness in itself, and through grace finds Christ its righteousness before God—peace made by His precious blood, and He in the presence of God for us—divine favor resting on it in Christ, knowing that it is in Him, and that it is accepted in the Beloved, by one offering perfected forever—in a word, washed from its sins through His precious blood, and not only so, but accepted in Christ in the sweet savor of His acceptance, then the delight in God Himself, from whose love all comes, is free, holiness has its free scope. We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have been reconciled to Him. It is of God's holiness we are made partakers, even when chastened.

This, then, is practically what holiness is—the soul in the new man in the light as God is, enjoying His purity (enabled to do it through the blood of Christ), and that in grace, having fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; and the more we take it in this simple manner, the more really and practically shall we know what it is. If we are holy, we shall know what holiness is, only it will be enjoyed in its

fullness and perfectness in God Himself, and so directly connected with love, for God is love; His other essential name is light, and in that we walk, being light in the Lord, and there enjoy, as we are formed by love. We have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Christ—and what brought us there? Infinite love—and what do we find there? Infinite love—and in Christ, nothing in us inconsistent with it; and, walking with God, nothing in our minds of consciences. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the reconciliation"—for this we must have life, divine life, to know and enjoy it, and by the power of the Holy Ghost be separate, through the eye being fixed on Christ, from evil to good. The simpler we apprehend this, the better, if we would know what holiness is. It is separation, in living communion, to God who is holy.

It is only as to the means of meeting the practical difficulties of many souls, that I pursue the subject into any details, showing how Scripture teaches us on the subject. I know not anything which will more fully express our calling in this respect, than the first verses of Eph. 1, "According as He hath chosen us in him (Christ), before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame before him in love"—this is the counsel of God as to us in Christ. The other part of it—being sons—is His prerogative and sovereign purpose, the good pleasure of His will. The first is according to His nature, both not only in Christ, but Christ's own place in which we are set by grace; it is the first which is according to God's nature, so that He cannot have other than such—this is our subject here. As it is here spoken of as the counsel of God, the degree of realization is not. It is what His purpose about us is—it is identified with what God is, in His nature and ways, and what Christ was before Him; of course He is essentially the same now that He is glorified. The second part of the calling—sons—is relationship, but Christ's also—He is gone to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. On this wonderful and perfect place (we could have none other such), I have entered elsewhere; my part now is to weigh that part of it which is contained in verse 4. We may look at it in two ways, as God's nature thus imparted and reflected in us, and enjoyed in its perfectness in Him—or as Christ, as man before God, according to it. God is blameless in His ways—He is love and He is perfectly holy—we are called to answer perfectly to what He thus is. We are made partakers of the divine nature; the spirit of love and holiness is that of the new man in us, and, as such, its fruit blameless—hence it is said, we cannot sin, because we are born of God. Thus the Christian state is, with a nature derived from God, " born of him," and hence necessarily holy—to be "before God" in His presence; an infinite and infinitely perfect object—God Himself—before Him, with a nature capable, as being of Him, of enjoying Him. We must add, the Holy Ghost as the power of doing so. The divine nature, with God who is love, a divine and infinite object—"before him"—to enjoy, with no thought of self needed (for we answer to His own nature), save to know that His favor rests upon us.

Now, the actual accomplishment is imperfect because the flesh is in us—in heaven, perfect; but in this passage it is looked at in itself, without estimating the degree of accomplishment, and in Christ we are perfectly so now.

We may also look at it in Christ Himself, as Man here below—He was holy and without blame, always before God so, and in love; the same applies to verse 5, but on this I do not enter here. It is what we have to seek to realize—communion with Him who is light, being light in the Lord, and in the light as He is, called to have communion with Him, not grieving His Spirit who dwells in us. The measure of it in practice is walking as Christ walked, and walking in the Spirit as we live in the Spirit. Walking in obedience, we have our fruit unto holiness, a greater knowledge of God, walking in His presence and enjoying Him, and are more deeply imbued with His estimate of all things, with His mind, more separated to Him in spirit, before whom we thus walk. In obedient righteousness in Christ (for it is to Christ's obedience we are called) we walk, and increasingly in the atmosphere in which God dwells. Practically separated from evil, we live in that we are separated to, we delight in Him, have communion with Him, and are separate from all that obscures this, and distracts us. True we see through a glass darkly, then face to face; but the objects are the same—God revealed in Christ—and the nature in which we enjoy them, the same. We joy in God—we have the treasure, but in a poor earthen vessel, and needing to have our senses exercised to discern good and evil; still, we walk in the light as God is in the light.

I may now inquire into the means of so walking, and what and how it is, as to our place in this world. It is in every sense—place, state, relationship with God, nature and glory—likeness to Christ, and that in glory, for this is the only good. It is true, this includes glory as well as holiness, but so it is presented in Scripture—we are "changed into the same image, from glory to glory"—"he that has this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure."

But there is another element, which though collateral, cannot be separated from it, and that is, love. If God is holy, His nature is love as well as light, and He cannot, so to speak, be divided; and thus divine love is inseparable from holiness. For divine affections in us is the very being of holiness, and these cannot be without divine love—we partake in them of the divine nature. Failure in love would not be holiness, but flesh and sin—self as a center, if not positive hatred—and this is not holiness, for holiness is separation of heart to God in known love, and so walking in that spirit with others. This gives us too, superiority over the evil with which we have to say; this, in an infinite way, is in God too, in whose communion we walk in holiness, and then we are followers of God as dear children. Compare Eph. 4; 5, and Matt. 5:43-48, and Luke 6:35, 36.

So we find in 1 Thessalonians 3, " the Lord make you to increase, and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you, to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." A remarkable passage, showing the path of holiness, before whom it is measured and estimated—before God, even our Father; and, when and in what circumstances—the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with the saints in glory. Sin is always selfish—holiness inseparable from love. It is holiness before God and our Father. It will have its estimation in the time of glory.

Such is the nature of holiness in general as stated in Scripture.

We may now look at the blessed Lord, as the One who in every respect is the way and pattern of holiness to us. And first of life—we are born of God; but this by the Holy Ghost.

It is a wholly new nature communicated and given, which Adam innocent had not more than Adam guilty. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, partakes of the nature of Him of whom it is born, as every nature does. It is entire contrast with the Adam life in us; "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other"—"they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit"—"the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace." We shall have to see that the power and mind of the Holy Ghost is included here, the objects being there, as well as the nature; but the nature born, as we have seen, is of the nature of which it is

born. So the Christian by faith has put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. Here “renewed” is that which is wholly new, was not before, not that merely which is not grown old. God's seed remains in him and he cannot sin because born of God, not the flesh that is born of the flesh. It is a holy nature—Christ as life—our life the last Adam, not the first. " Not I," says the apostle, " but Christ that lives in me "; and again, " when Christ who is our life shall appear." And in formal doctrine, in 1 John 5, "God hath given to us eternal life, and that life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." "He has sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." He is "that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us "; and as it is expressed of this life in 1 John 2, "which thing is true in him and in you." In Him this life was the light of men—He was the light of the world.

Thus as He was the holy One of God here, only absolutely and perfectly as born, even as to the flesh, of the Holy Ghost—walking in love—so we, as partakers of life in Him, He being our life, are holy brethren, are saints, brought in as we have seen by His precious blood, but saints as partakers of the life also that was and is in Him.

If we look at that life in Him, we find perfect separation to God, love to Him and to us, and necessarily, separation too, consequently, from all evil, passing through the midst of it, but not touched by it, goodness and holiness in the midst of evil in the power of divine love—and that is our path.

This takes a double character in the Christian, according as we look at him as emerging out of a world of sin, in the power of this new life and the Holy Ghost, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus"—or as sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and coming thence, so to speak, into the world. The one we have in Romans 12, the other in Eph. 4 and 5. In the former, we yield ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead—yield our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our intelligent service, proving what the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is. Here it is the original principle of giving ourselves wholly up to God, separated, sanctified to Him. It is simply that—and that is much—and true of the believer; we have not love connected with it.

In Ephesians we have another aspect of the believer's consecration. He comes as a dear child, out of his Father's home, to show out his Father's character—"be ye imitators of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ hath loved us and hath given himself for us, a sacrifice and an offering to God for a sweet smelling savor." He gave Himself—not just loving His neighbor as Himself—but gave Himself up, not merely as separated from evil to God, but in love to us, divine love, looking downward in love to need—hence a sacrifice for us, and also to God, looking upward in perfectness to what made the sacrifice perfect. This too is our pattern—"hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Here, while offering up to God is perfection in the sacrifice, love comes fully in—one is the measure of what we ought to be, as walking in this world as alive to God in Christ; the other is the measure of devotedness of walk, as manifesting God's nature and loving others, but still having the eye on God as the One towards whom we act, that all may be perfect. The lower the object in the love of grace, the greater and more divine the love; the higher the one to whom it looks, the purer and holier the affection, and here it is God Himself. Self is wholly got rid of in both—it is thus a holy love. We are not said to be love, for that is sovereign in goodness and free, though we are to love. We are light in the Lord, for we have a life in which is the purity of the divine nature—God's seed remains in us, we cannot sin. Such then is our life in its nature.

And as to this unselfish grace, we are called on, not to be, as Abraham, perfect with the Almighty, nor, as Israel, perfect with Jehovah our God, but perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. Such is our life in its nature, for indeed it is Christ Himself—"he that hath the Son, hath life." God has given us eternal life, and that life is in His Son.

But we cannot omit the Holy Ghost, who is at once its source and its power. We may consider the Spirit as inseparable from this life, as the stream is connected with its spring, or apart, as a divine Person who leads it, and reveals the objects by which this life is governed—"they that are after the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit." The Holy Ghost is, as we have seen, the source of this nature—we are born of the Spirit, and this is spirit. But the Christian is also dwelt in by the Spirit—the seal of faith in Christ's blood—our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. We have liberty with God, and that as sons, and are delivered from the law of sin. The bearing of this on holiness is evident, indeed it cannot be without it; not only does it introduce us into the holy atmosphere of God's presence in confidence, but occupies our affections with what is there, making us abound in hope by His power. But His presence is a measure of holiness down here—"would I," reasons the Apostle, "use the temple of God to sin with?" So we are called on not to grieve that holy Spirit of God by which we are sealed. It keeps the conscience withal awake. The Spirit then is life because of righteousness, enables me to reckon myself dead, and to hold the flesh practically in subjection, and, by His power, I mortify the deeds of the flesh, so that my communion is not interrupted. He is the Spirit of adoption, and bears witness with my Spirit that I am a son, and so keeps me in the free enjoyment of divine and heavenly things—takes the things of Christ and shows them to me—has revealed the things that are freely given to us of God, enabling me to discern them. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (and this is based on redemption—a new place—in Christ), sets me free from the law of sin and death, and enables me, as a son, to enjoy the things which are above—yea to joy in God Himself—have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

We get this double basis for our walk in Eph. 4, the having put on the new man, and not grieving the Holy Spirit of God. It is nothing less than God dwelling in us, and we in God—His love shed abroad in our hearts by His presence. How this is the very place, and breath of holiness, is evident; in such a state, according to the measure of our growth, what God is and suits His presence, and nothing else, is in the mind—see 1 John 4:12-16. We have thus the highest and fullest character of holiness in the believer—a nature capable of enjoying God, derived from the Spirit—a holy seed of God in him, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in him—God dwelling in him and he in God—the same Spirit dwelling in him, shedding His love abroad in his heart. This is the fruit of redemption. God never dwelt with Adam, never with Abraham, but as soon as He had redeemed Israel out of Egypt, He dwelt among them—"they shall know that I the Lord their God have brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them"—here in an outward way, between the Cherubim. And now, so soon as Christ, as Man, sat down at the right hand of God, eternal redemption being obtained, the Holy Ghost descends, sent by the Father—the Spirit of adoption—in Christ's name; by Christ from the Father, to reveal His glory as Son of man above—to dwell in those who were washed in His blood, and He dwells in us individually, and collectively too. On the latter I do not enter, as we are occupied with personal holiness.

The Apostle Paul gives us the blessed effect, he desired for the saints individually, at the end of Eph. 3, " Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may

be filled up to all the fullness of God." John speaks more of the divine Personality of Christ revealing God, and so our dwelling in Him, and He in us—for habitually he does not distinguish God and Christ, speaking of Manhood and God—head in the same sentence, though in chapter 4 he goes up to simple Godhead, and His presence known by the Spirit; Paul more of His mediatorial place—of the counsels of God accomplished through His work and in His Person, and that to the glory of God by us. So that the form is different; still as one gives the fact, true through the Holy Ghost, that God dwells in us—all in whom Christ is—so Paul, in the desire of the saints realizing their privileges, leads us up to the fullness of God.

But while this is the full blessedness of our present state, living here as creatures acted on by grace, there is another aspect of the operation of the Holy Ghost in us; that is, the fixing the affections and intelligence on the Word which the Holy Ghost reveals, and that with sanctifying power. Thus the Apostle in Eph. 1 prays that they may know the hope of God's calling, and the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints; for the creature, whatever the excellency of his nature, lives by objects—is characterized by those that govern him—money—power—pleasure—in a word, our object, what our mind, our phronema is upon, is what we morally are. Thus where it is on Christ and on heavenly things, we are Christian and heavenly minded.

These then, the Holy Ghost reveals, fixing the affections on the object thus revealed, and so sanctifying the heart. Thus, so to speak, in its natural effect on the new man—"With open (unveiled) face beholding in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord." So in holy spiritual activity—we know that "When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, and every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." So the Apostle in Phil. 3, " This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press towards the mark for the calling of God above, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

So the exhortation (though the Holy Ghost is not the subject of the Colossians, but life), "set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth"; but these things are called "the things of the Spirit." "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." "We have received not the spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Hence our conversation is in heaven, and we declare plainly that we seek a country.

But this consideration of the sanctifying power of the object the Holy Ghost sets before us, gives us the true character and only measure of our sanctification practically—Christ in glory—"we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"—"conformed to the image of his Son, that he may be the firstborn among many brethren"—"as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The only object and goal of the saint is the prize of the calling above. This one thing he does. Hence he purifies himself even as He is pure—knowing he shall be like Him in glory, seeks to be as like Him as possible now. When Christ comes, even his body of humiliation shall be fashioned like Christ's glorious body.

The goal and object of the heart of the believer is Christ glorified, only the present effect is sanctifying him according to that measure, leading him to walk withal as He walked down here, and to grow up to Him, who is the Head, in all things. As Christ ever looked up to His Father, and ever did such things as pleased Him—in His case perfectly—so we, He being our life, looking up to Him glorified, walk in our measure as He walked. Hence we read that Christ sanctified Himself—set Himself apart—as the Man in glory according to the counsels of God, that we might be sanctified through the truth—our souls formed by the revelation of that into which He is entered.

It remains to be noticed that it is the Truth—the Word—by which we are thus sanctified. The Word is the truth as to everything, but it is, as Christ was in Person, the revelation of what is heavenly amongst men, and perfectly adapted to man on the earth. Though it be made effectual, by the Spirit, in the heart, the Word is that by which all is wrought, from the giving of life, onward till glory comes. So, just before the passage quoted above from John 17, we read, "Sanctify them through Thy truth—Thy word is truth." Hence, as to life—"of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creatures"—man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. It is by words the Holy Ghost taught, that the things the Holy Ghost revealed were communicated. It is the incorruptible seed of the Word which endures forever. Hence it is by faith—sinners are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus. The Word is the revelation of God's mind, and of all that is unseen, and, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, is faith in the heart; and thus we are sanctified and live by it, in communion with God according to what is revealed—are so far sanctified to Him.

It may be well here to note the way in which sanctification is used in the Scripture. It always means separation to God, consecration to Him; but it may be, in us, sanctification of our persons, or of the state of our souls. As soon as we are believers, we are set apart to God, sanctified—all Christians are saints; and hence, strange as it may seem, when sanctification and justification come together, sanctification comes before justification.

But then there is, or ought to be, as to our actual state, a perfecting holiness in the fear of God, as growing up to Him who is the Head in all things,—the enlargement of spiritual apprehension of the objects on which the Holy Ghost fixes our affections—an enlarged acquaintance with them, and living in that new creation, and, as to our path here, senses exercised to discern good and evil, more confidence in Found in this unfinished state.

Note.—In general the heavenly millennial blessedness is far more largely brought out in the New Testament, as well as the Old, than the time when God shall be all in all. But the blessedness of the latter has struck me as being amazingly great in this way. There is not so much conferred, not so much official glory, relative excellency of position, conferred glory, if we think of being with Christ, though indeed that will never cease, but see where we shall be. The Lord is as second Adam, the proper human Head of the whole blessed race. They stand as His brethren, are like Him, He the Firstborn no doubt, and channel of blessing, but still the Firstborn among many brethren, in the same place, state, and image, though He at the head of it. They are all of one, and now completely like. Yet He with whom they are thus connected—one common race, though He be the head of it—is One with the Father in the unity of the divine nature. What a place to be in, how close the association! surely leading to adoration, for the nearer we are, the more we adore; yet still how wondrously near! How intimately associated with divine things, not merely conferred blessings, though all be conferred, and so doubly appreciated, yet still how near for enjoyment! How deep the peace, and full the blessing, when we are fit and competent to enjoy it! I apprehend our millennial nearness will be education for this, as our present state for that. But it is a wonderful place, and near enough to be peaceful enjoyment.

Note.—We ought to think of the joys of Christ as well as His sorrows. Nothing shows where a man's heart is and what it is, more than when oppressed, distressed and full of sorrow, where his heart finds its joy and if it finds a joy unreached by it. We see these joys in Christ a secret comfort in the midst of His sorrow. He had meat to eat which man knew not of. Besides His communion with His Father there was this working of love to us. Paradise shone in upon His heart in comforting the poor thief. "Go in peace" refreshed His spirit in the house of the Pharisee. "She hath done it for my burial" justified Mary against the reproach of selfish man. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes" was His joy in the sense of the heartless rejection to which the wickedness of man subjected Him. How blessed to the heart besides learning where His joy was to think that He found it in the working of love to us!

Letters 1, Human Accuracy in Divine Things; Deceased in Relation to the Body of Christ; Unity of the Body of Christ; Hearing the Church; the Holy Spirit Dwelling in the House and in the Individual; Negatives in Scripture Subjects; Peace and Communion; Union With Christ

In the first place, I am afraid of human accuracy in the things of God: they are too great and we are too little to have it, and we know only in part. Then, the Holy Ghost does not teach by negatives but by positive revelations, so that we get on human ground. It may be right. When we state negatives we must know all absolutely on a subject to use a negative. If I say a thing is in scripture, one text proves it: if I say it is not, I must know the whole Bible perfectly. The Holy Ghost is said to dwell in the body; the earnest of the Spirit is said to be given in our hearts. Surely it acts in the heart, and, I may add, in the mind and conscience. The Holy Ghost dwells in us individually, and unites us to Christ. Hence we know also that we are in Christ (John 14); but this is individual, and if only one believer were on earth he would be in Christ-could not be an assembly, but he would be united to Christ. The Holy Ghost does not dwell in the assembly as the body (though, through want of accuracy, I have said so in old time) but in it as the house.

Eph. 1:20, I judge, clearly shows the whole of the body as in glory, because then Christ is over all things-" we see not yet all things put under him." The Holy Ghost has personally come down here and formed the body on earth, and there only it is at present known. The departed saints do not in this respect count, but the Holy Ghost is a divine Person, and, I have no doubt, holds their spirits in divine power for the time of glory, and even their dust for resurrection. We are told nothing of departed spirits but that they are with Christ, but they lose no privilege save what is down here. They surely are not separated from Christ and re-united to Him afterward; that, as a matter of faith and first principle, cannot be; but the body being de facto down here they do not personally in its present condition make part of it. I suppose that is what dear—means.1... As sometimes anything resting on the mind corrodes there, I write at once as to what seems to me the truth. Our union with Christ I hold to be surely indissoluble, and consequently to subsist essentially in the separated state- the how I do not speak of, as I am not aware the word of God does. The positive responsible body as such is down here consequent on the baptism of the day of Pentecost. It will not cease to be such when the whole is complete and united to the Head, and I have not a moment's doubt that the departed spirits and their union are divinely maintained by the Holy Ghost. You will remark that anything to the contrary is only an inference. We are justified in using consequences to prove error, but not in attributing them to another; he may be shocked at them when he sees them. Clearly the Holy Ghost is in heaven, though in the economy of grace as they say, He is come down; just as the Son came down, yet was in the bosom of the Father.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Dublin,

July, 1868.

Letters 1, Christ Giving Up the Kingdom

* * * The question has been raised, for which 1 was not prepared at the time, how far the giving up of the kingdom involved the giving up of His lordship over all things—His personal superiority (I do not merely mean divinity—that is clear). I apprehend, not. I have looked a little into it in Eph. 1 and Col. 1, but am not at the end of inquiry so as to teach, even if called for. What say you?

Ever affectionately yours.

New York,

April 4th, 1867.

Letters 1, Interpretation and False Doctrine; Justification; Loss of Paul's Doctrine, The Difference Between

* * * Justification is a point where two things unite: first, that the blood has washed us from all our sins, and this perhaps is justification, properly speaking. But in fact, we may add to it our acceptance in the Beloved. "He that practices righteousness is righteous;" for the practice of righteousness flows from the life of Christ in us; but by this life we are united to Christ, and enjoy His righteousness before God, being made well pleasing in the Beloved. The resurrection therefore is the pivot of it, for it is the proof of expiation; it introduces Christ, according to the power of this eternal life (in which we participate) into the presence of God. Around the Person of Christ regarded as risen, all the truths found in the word revolve. The union of the church with Him is the completion of them. Resurrection leaves behind, in the tomb, all that could condemn us, and ushers the Lord into that new world of which He is the perfection, the Head, and the glory. Now we are united to Him.

September 12Th, 1841.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 6, Ephesians 1:4-14: Elect of God, Holy and Beloved

GOD has purposed in Himself to have before Himself that which shall reflect His own blessedness-He taking pleasure in us, and we taking pleasure in Him; as it is said here, " that we should be holy, and without blame before Him in love." He will have His people of the same nature as Himself, gathered around Himself, happy here, and for Himself. His thought is not merely that we should have an inheritance; as we read of " the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." He " hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

And this is just the character of this Epistle; the apostle, in speaking of redemption, does so, not so much as of something needed by us, in order to appear before God, as of these purposes of God concerning us. We may look at God as a Judge; but, more than this, God is working for the display of the riches of the glory of His grace.

This lifts up the soul. God has thoughts and intentions about us. As in the case of a young man, whom, a person has (in ordinary language) " taken up," and is about to provide for, it is not a question of what the one was, but of the thoughts and intentions of the other-of what, in a word, he is, and will do, for the young man; so, though in a much more blessed sense, has God " taken up " poor sinners, that He might act towards them worthily of Himself, to the praise of the glory of His grace. The other thing remains true: God is a Judge, and " we have redemption, forgiveness of sins, through his blood " (Christ's); and we must understand this before we can enjoy our privileges in Christ.

God has " taken us up." Our very existence in the new creation, is the fruit of His purpose and thoughts about us. This has a double bearing. It shows how we are to measure what God is doing for us, as a question of God's purpose; and, besides being this measure, it makes us understand the source of it all. And this has a most happy effect: instead of looking at ourselves, and judging from ourselves, we look at God. Nothing but life-giving power could ever have wrought this. Our thoughts about God are, that He is the source of all our blessing. As the young man, before alluded to, would have pleasure in thinking about the friend who had " taken him up," so this thought about God is a happy thought, and, moreover, one of great sanctifying power.

God has " predestinated us unto the adoption of children." It is not here, simply, a question of purpose (of God's counsel, and, therefore, sure): that to which He has predestinated us, is the present adoption of children. A poor sinner, a sinner of the Gentiles, having no title whatever to blessing, I trace all my title to God's purpose, which He has purposed in Himself. This is true also of the Jews, though, in a certain sense, they stood on different ground; Christ was " a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers "; but of the Gentiles it is said, " and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." It is of grace, of God's free thought about us. He has taken pleasure in us, as Joshua said to Israel: " If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it unto us, a land which floweth with milk and honey." We cannot boast in anything; for we have not anything whatever wherein to boast, except in this, that God has taken delight in us to give us the adoption. The effect is most blessed; we know Himself-" after ye have known God, or rather are known of God." What He has predestinated us unto, is not a distant thing, nor yet merely salvation (in the sense of escape from the wrath of God); it is the nearest place He could have put us into, not as with the Jews, " I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn ": we are adopted with the " adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Here we get not only the source but the manner-the source, God's love; the manner, in Christ.

" The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us "-the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God. But the light shone in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. It is not said that there was want of power, but that men's deeds were evil, and that, therefore, they would not come unto the light. A Christian who is walking carelessly does not like a godly Christian to come into contact with him, he feels condemned; whenever the heart is not with God, light makes it uneasy. But besides being light, " In him was life," and that is what we needed; while He shows us our evil, He is the good we need. Predestinated unto the adoption of children, it is in Him. Called according to God's purpose, we are to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Of His fullness, have all we received, and grace for grace. We are brought into the presence of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore, when Jesus goes away, He says, " I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, unto my God and your God." He has Himself met all our responsibility, otherwise the light would have been terrible. There are two things, substitution, and communication of life. In substitution, He stood alone. But guilt being taken away, we quickened together with Him, He presents us in the Father's presence, as He is.

" In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." But not merely has the Son of God visited us when we were in our sins, nor merely, either, been delivered for our offenses. " Herein is our love [love with us] made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world." We have no life except in Christ; we have no acceptance apart from Christ. He has made us accepted in the Beloved-the measure is just that. It is God's delight to bring us, in Christ, and by Christ, into His own presence. We can go no farther; " truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," writes John. We may enjoy it more and more, we may delight in it in deepened measure, but we cannot have anything beyond. When God speaks of glorifying Himself, or of our glorifying Him, it means through the display of what He is; it is God's glory to display Himself; therefore, in this, which is to the glory of His grace, we have the display of Himself.

And do not let us suppose that this goes beyond what we may think about (a very natural thought): the apostle says further on, " For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: being rooted and grounded in love, that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God," chap. 3: 14-19. It is not a matter of human wisdom, learning, or attainment; in proportion as we become simple as little children, we shall understand these things, through the Holy Ghost. " God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." It has nothing to do with human learning, except to set it aside; lowliness of mind is what is needed.

" The good pleasure of his will " is not, simply, sovereignty- it is the good pleasure of His will. God is acting in His love, displaying the will of His grace, " taking up " poor, wretched, vile sinners, and unfolding on these objects of His mercy, all the riches of His own goodness. The "

good pleasure of his will," that which God takes delight in, is the ministering of the fullness of His blessing to us. Here the soul gets established. It is quite evident, that the measure of His goodness cannot be, in any sense, the measure of what we are, as deserving at His hands; while it is His good pleasure, it is the good pleasure of His grace. And further, whilst I have need, for the establishment of my soul, to learn what He is, to be delighting in the goodness of God, it is this too which sanctifies. If I could be always thinking of what He is, I should be perfectly happy, and there would be the reflection in me of that with which my soul was occupied.

We begin, often, at the wrong end. On what are we resting our acceptance? It is not anything in ourselves that will do. Or, it is a question of sanctification? " beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord " (that is, I look at the Lord, and, as a consequence of my looking at the Lord, I reveal to men what He is). Moses, on coming down from the mount, was not inquiring whether his face shone, in order to know if he had been with God; others saw this.

It is such a comfort, to get to God and feel, that it is in Him, and from Him.

Where, naturally, would our souls rest? It is quite a natural feeling, if we have been convinced of sin, that we should want to get at peace to know there is nothing against us, but the apostle here, is looking at those whom God has " taken up," and He has " made us accepted in the Beloved." That is God's thought about us; He has shown us this grace in a particular way, and in a particular person-Christ. It is not merely a negative thing; He takes as positive delight in us, as He does in Jesus. He is no double-measure God.

" Put on as the elect of God," Paul writes to the Colossians, " holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness," etc., saints, and beloved ones of God, objects of God's love, God's delight (the measure of which is Christ), thus He addresses them. If I am beloved of a person, this draws out love. So the consciousness of God's love, God's delight produces links in affection, that exist not without it. My thought of being accepted is not merely, that my sins are put away, so that I could stand before Him-I am the object of His delight; holy affections are drawn out, and I pass through the world as a beloved one of God. We cannot suppose, in Christ's going through this world (and this shows us our deficiency as Christians), one single thing of it, that acts on our hearts, acting on His; He was the beloved One of God-" This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and He was going through the world as such. Thus, too, should the Christian walk through the world with the consciousness of being beloved of God; with this, we do not want the world- without it, we are obliged to turn to something that makes self the center.

Young or old, that is what we are-beloved of God. Perhaps, you will say, " Ah, but I am very proud, very worldly, I do not give up the things of the world." Very likely not, and that is a reason for your being reminded of this, that you may.

" In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." This is the leading thought in the apostle's mind. And remark, he speaks of that which is positively possessed, not of something we are hoping for, or expecting; He " hath made us accepted in the Beloved," we " have redemption through his blood," etc. This grace of God, this " good pleasure of his will" has planted and set us in it all. We may be practically destitute of the joy of these things, but that is where we are. And He has given to those whom He has set in this place, the knowledge of His purpose as to the glory of Christ, as it goes on to say, " wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence "; the apostle explains it, " having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself "; here again it comes from the good pleasure of His will, " that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." Having placed the saints in all this fellowship and blessing, He imparts (as with Abraham-" Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I am about to do? ") unto them His thoughts. Not only has He accepted us in Christ, but He will have everything brought under Christ's dominion and power. He is to gather together in one, all things in Christ-" even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." We are joint-heirs with Christ. Hence the prayer at the end of the chapter.

We cannot deny, we do not deny (whatever man's efforts to make the best of the world), that sin is in the world; there is not a single thing (take dress for instance) that does not tell us that. There is not a single thing we are buying or selling, a single thing we are looking upon, that is not, in some sort, a proof of sin. All that man does for pleasure, is necessitated by sin; Adam in Paradise had no need of it. What makes the world get on without God? The principle of sin; this is running through everything, it has got, so to speak, into the vital blood, and (though it be God's creation through which it runs) it runs through everything. Man builds his city, invents his instruments of music (Gen. 4), and strives to make the world happy without God. Introduce God, and His amazing work, where men are occupied with gain or with pleasure, it is all wrong and out of place. Whether for pleasure, or for gain, God must be excluded. That is the character of the whole world, and to tack on the name of Christ does not mend it; an avaricious Christian (nominally such) is in nothing better than an avaricious heathen. God is lingering over it, but the existence of the gospel in the world is proof that the world is lost. " We know," says John, " that the whole world lieth in the wicked one "; and again, " All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." As it is, as a plain matter of fact, it is not God's inheritance. Who is called its god? Satan. God's title cast away, through the lust of men, and the pride and power of Satan, whom they follow, God has designated Satan " the god of this world," and made known to us (those who are of faith) the mystery of His will. The apostle speaks here of hope (v. 18). We have obtained an inheritance in Christ, and all things are going to be put under Christ; meanwhile (like Abraham, who had not so much as whereon to set his foot) " having nothing and yet possessing all things," the Christian walks through the world, as one beloved of God, in the consciousness that he is the object of God's purposes, and of God's delight. But what do we see in the Lord Jesus? Not merely that He has been designated the heir of all things; " the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." So too our proper delight is in knowing that we are beloved of God, and that God will have us before Himself, and for Himself-His delight in us, and our delight in Him. It is as a consequence of this love, that we shall have the glory of the inheritance. Where are our hearts? what is our joy? are we journeying, aye journeying, through the world in the blessed, joyful confidence of this secret of God? Then will the world be to us a " dry and thirsty land "; instead of finding delight in things around, we shall have to guard against them as against that which would bring us down to Satan's ground. Are we taking the world, with its pleasures and its gain? If so, we are entering into Cain's portion, and not into that of Abel or Abraham: we are " enemies of the cross of Christ." Through these things Satan is deceiving the world. Are we taking the position (not of Adam before he sinned, not of Christ when He was in the world, neither of Christ in the glory, but) of the " men of the earth? "

The Lord give us to see, and so to estimate that which is God's object, that we may have done with this present evil world.

ONE prayer is attached to the name of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He is looked at as Man; the other to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He is looked at as Son. The beginning of chapter 1 gave us God's calling, that we should be " holy and without blame before him in love," that we might receive " the adoption of sons." After stating His purpose concerning Christ Himself, that all things are to be gathered together in one in Him, the apostle goes on to the inheritance of which the Holy Ghost is the earnest, and then to the prayer for them on this ground. At the very close of the chapter he adds our relationship to Christ Himself, " the church which is his body." It is always well for us to remember that Christ has purified to Himself a peculiar people, a people of possession, and we cannot rise up to the counsels of God and mind of Christ unless we be brought into these intentions of God. The most immediate and closest object of His thoughts is His saints. I necessarily take in all saints if I am in His thoughts • I cannot have the mind of Christ without taking in all of them; it is the very spirit of Christ Himself.

There are two parts in this prayer of the apostle. The first is, that they might know the place itself; the second, that they should know the power that brought them there. The very fullness of the blessing we have got is that we are blessed with Him. As we were associated with the first Adam in ruin, so we are associated with the second Man in glory. There is nothing He has that He does not bring us into. This is the character of perfect love. Christ gives " not as the world giveth." The world may give generously sometimes, but it has done with what it gives; Christ gives by introducing His own into what He is enjoying Himself. Take glory: " the glory which thou gavest me I have given them." Take joy: " that my joy might remain in you." Take peace: " peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. ' Take love: " that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Having become man and accomplished perfect redemption, He would not take the inheritance without His joint-heirs. He is the source and head of all the glory that is given. " What is the hope of His calling? " Not of your calling-this would not do at all. Here it has the fullest and highest character. He takes the heart up to these thoughts and counsels of God. We are called to be before God holy and without blame; we are called to be in Christ's place before God, before the Father, perfectly answering to His love. He does not pray that they may have it, but that they may know it.

As to His inheritance in the saints, if our minds took in the Jewish place compared with our own, this would be extremely simple. Whose land was Israel's? It was God's inheritance; and those in whom He inherited it were Israel. We are not an inheritance, but we are heirs of God. We have nothing below what God would have in His mind here.

Observe the prayer is, " that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened." We must not think that we ought not to know these things. The New Testament carefully tells us that we have them laid open to us expressly. " But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." " Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him "such was the state of the Jews; but it is not our state. These things are not only given to us, but we are given to understand them; we are not in the condition of the Old Testament at all. In 1 Cor. 2 we have the three steps; revelation by the Holy Ghost; communication of the word given by the Holy Ghost; and the reception of the word by the Holy Ghost.

Take the account of the heavenly city in the Apocalypse-it means something. All those images are characteristic in Scripture; I quite admit they are only figures, but they convey thoughts. The more we live in the mind of God, the more intelligent we are. The same things I see through a glass darkly, I shall see more clearly, but not differently. Thus the " white stone " is a symbol full of power. We have common joys, but there is the immediate approbation of Christ to the individual. " Gold " is always the sign of divine righteousness in itself. In the laver the priests were to wash and be clean; but with the sea of glass like crystal I walk upon purity. So " fire " is judgment, as " a sea of glass mingled with fire "; it is perfect purity as the result of judgment. " The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." Instead of walking through the dirt of this world, I am to walk in holiness and righteousness according to God. In the Apocalypse we do not go beyond the idea of God in government.

Now we come to the power that brings us into these things. " According to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." What an immense truth there is in connection with this! The Messiah was not merely the promised Son of David, but the One in whom all God's counsels would be accomplished. He went down below all things, and then goes far above all heavens. This dead Man is raised above all principality and power. He had gone down into the place of death, and men are consequently looked at as dead in sins, not as living in them.

It is well to note here that to look at the sinner as alive in sins, or as dead in them, is just the same state, but a different aspect of it. In Romans man is seen alive in sins, and Christ meeting that state. There is nothing of justification in Ephesians, not a single stir of life there; we were dead in the sins, and Christ died for the sins. God comes in and takes us all up together, looked at as in the mind and counsels of God. God quickens us together with Him. Christ comes down to this place of death, having cleansed our sins on the road, and God raises Him. Man is looked at consequently as united to Christ. This you do not find in the other epistles. The same power has wrought in every individual who believes in Christ that wrought in Him. Christ had gone into death for us, entering into the whole thing in grace and finding us where we were, and, He having wrought the work that entitles Him to take us out of it, we are raised with Him, seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is your place; He does not ask you what you think about it! There is no person who has the Spirit of Christ without this as his place. We are waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body, but one must be either in Christ or out of Christ. There are never two places for the Christian.

All things are to be put under Christ's feet as Man, for God " gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body "-a short sentence, but the whole mystery is in it. It is a quotation of Psa. 8, " all things are put under his feet." In Psa. 2 He is seen as Son of David, King of Zion, Son of God. Nathanael refers to this psalm; and Jesus says to him, " Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man." He is rejected, and then comes out Psa. 8 Now He is crowned with glory and honor, but we do not see all things put under His feet yet. He is now sitting on the Father's throne. " To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." " Sit thou on my right hand," says Jehovah, " till I make thine enemies thy footstool." The day of grace is before that " till." There is our comfort and blessing, that He has finished the work for His friends. " By one offering he hath perfected forever them which are sanctified." We stand therefore between the work which He perfected at His first coming, and His second coming. We are not, like the Jews, waiting to see

that His offering is accepted, because the Holy Ghost is come out meanwhile and seals those who believe in Christ. I know the acceptance; I know that He is our forerunner. Then He deals with His enemies. When thus set over all things, the Son Himself will be subject to Him who put all things under Him-a most blessed truth for us. He will reign while He brings all into absolute order for God; when this has been done, He will take His place as Man and never give it up. He is the first-born among many brethren. Over everything He created, He is set as Man: but a head without a body would not be complete. The supplement is wanting; the church is His body.

No one ever mentions the church but Paul. Others may speak of a local church; and Christ said, " On this rock I will build my church "; but I am not speaking of this either. If the church had been revealed before the cross, you must make every Jew who was in it break the law. The essence of the church is that all are one, Jew and Gentile.

The prayer in chapter 3 is addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There the apostle does not ask that they may know all these thoughts and counsels of God, but that Christ may dwell in their hearts. He is not now looking at them objectively, but at Christ in them. He desires that they should have Christ actually, consciously, by faith dwelling in their hearts, settled in the perfectness of divine love, that they may be able to comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height-he does not say of what-while putting Christ in the center of all that glory. If I look at the breadth and length and depth and height, it is dazzling. If I found my closest friend the center of the Queen's court, I should be at home there at once. Is it that I have lost anything by this, that it is the humble lowly One who is dwelling in my heart? Not a bit.

Thus, if in chapter I we have exterior power bringing up Christ, or ourselves by grace, into a position of glory at God's right hand, in chapter 3 we find divine power in us as in the position, and we sought to be strengthened and filled accordingly, in order to realize what it and God Himself is in the fullness of it. It is not God dealing with man, but Christ's relation as Son and dwelling in us by faith-He, the center and divinely entitled light of the fullness and display, dwelling in us to give competency to enter into all the scene. Rooted and grounded in love we are at the center thus in its moral or rather divine springs, and so embrace all that partake of the divine nature, because it is the action of that nature. Thus we look out into the wide extended scene of glory, whose limit none can tell; yet still this is a display, not a source, a scene, not Himself. In love we are at the source of all. We know the love of Christ that passes knowledge. What I know it in has made it wholly and peculiarly mine, yes, mine as being nothing in it. Christ is divine, infinite in nature. It is so proved in the way it adapts itself to all my wants and weakness, known in adapting itself to them, yet known in itself. As Christ's love it is for man, is manifested in man, and adapts itself to man; yet therein as divine it passes knowledge and brings man, as spiritual (he can feel, think, and apprehend as man), into the enjoyment of the scene, in which God is displayed, and to God Himself according to His own fullness, and this filled with love as in the center of it consciously. It is we, not brought into a scene by power, but filled up to the measure of the fullness of God, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Thus love is the spring of power in us, so that we estimate the scene of that fullness according to the title, character, and nature of God in it, He Himself being the ultimate blessedness of which we are conscious. What makes us familiar there is, that that which is in us, and which is the central light of all, is One we know, who dwells in us by faith, the nearest and most confided in of all, yet the fullness of Deity is in Him. Compare Rev. 21:23.

God " is able to do exceeding abundantly according to the power that worketh in us." This is what we are to look for now: has your heart got hold of this? There is a power that works in us, and He can do exceeding abundantly above all we ask and think according to it. How little faith there is in the power of God!

I believe everything is in ruin or confusion; but there is no ruin or confusion in the power of Christ. I never can think of a power of evil that is not below His power.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Critical 1, Ephesians 1:9

WHAT has all failed in the first Adam will all be accomplished in the last Adam, and much more, gloriously fulfilled. In Eph. 1 there are two things as the portion of the church: one is not entirely fulfilled, and the other we have nothing of yet, the calling of God, and God's inheritance. The calling we get in Eph. 1:4, 5. The first part of the calling is what is before God (v. 4), to be holy and without blame, etc. The second part of the calling is in connection with the Father (v. 5) as children. He has not only put us in a certain place, but has made known to us the mystery of His will, that is all His plan for Christ's glory, which is to gather together in one all things in Him. And the moment that comes I get the inheritance-not the calling only, but the the inheritance. Of this we have nothing now but the earnest of the Spirit. We have the calling. Colossians presents the same general truth, but more developed as to Christ.

In Col. 1:15-18 I get the two headships of Christ- Head over all things, and Head of the body. He takes as Man what He created as God; and, besides, He takes other men as fellow-heirs with Him. Thus we see in verse 21, that us who not only were in confusion and disorder, but were positively enemies, He reconciles. This consciousness has been lost by the professing church-that we are reconciled. The state of things is not reconciled; but we are reconciled. The inheritance we cannot have, till the true Heir take it. Christ is not sitting on His own throne now, but on His Father's throne. When He sits down on His own throne, He will have us there with Him. He sits on His Father's throne by His title of Son. " To him that overcometh will I give to sit down with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." Our present condition is to know that Christ is exalted, and we reconciled. But He has not taken the inheritance, nor, of course, have we. Our place before God is His calling-everything that is created will be our inheritance.

In Psa. 2 you have the counsels of God about Christ, to set Him on Zion as king. Adonai shall have them in derision -not Jehovah as such. These two points, Christ set as king on the holy hill of Zion, and owned to be the Son of God, you find in Psa. 2 In Psa. 8, you do not get Him as Son of God, but as Son of man, put over everything that God has created-that He has created, for He is God. In John 1:49 you hear the Lord applying these two things. There Nathaniel owns Him as King of Israel, according to Psa. 2 and He says as it were, " That is over: I am not going to be King of Israel now." But you shall see greater things, the Son of man according to Psa. 8, with every creature subject. The place the church gets is to be joint-heirs. We take the place of suffering now. We only see half of Psa. 8 fulfilled yet. We see Him at the right hand of God, but not with all things put under Him. He is gathering now the joint-heirs. Nothing is yet fulfilled. For the redemption of the purchased possession He must come again.

Yet in Him we have redemption. There is no such thing recognized in Scripture, as a Christian doubting he is saved. And it is all a totally false pretension of humility. If my Father forgives me, and I doubt His forgiveness, I am not trusting Him. It is doubting God's word, or not receiving the truths He gives us: we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. Let a man fear temptation-doubt his own heart, that is another thing; but not doubt God, or dread God. There is no such thing in scripture as a Christian without the Spirit of adoption, crying " Abba, Father." There is no such thing after Christ's death recognized in Scripture as a Christian not knowing he is saved. The thief on the cross was as fit to go to heaven as Paul, and he went there; and none went not fit. I know that there is growth, of course; but there is no meetness or fitness for heaven, except the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not Christianity to doubt, though many a real honest Christian does doubt. It is Christianity to know we are reconciled. If you have not peace, you have not got what Christ left for you. He says,

Come unto me, and I will give you rest." If you have not rest, am I to say either you have not come? or Christ does not speak truth? It may be bad teaching. Many a one will cry " Abba, Father," most heartily in his prayers, who would not own, if you asked him, that he was a child of God. Of course, he has the Spirit of adoption, though he does not know it. It is just selfishness that makes him doubt. In Rom. 7, what is it he is talking about? Just self-not Christ at all. Is that humility? not a word about Christ and the Spirit! and I am told that is a Christian. There is nearly forty times " I " and " me," and not once Christ and the Spirit, just the law and me; and poor things those are to bring together! Very useful for plowing up, bringing down to self-knowledge. Then he sees there is no good in himself, and he gets set free, and it is all at an end. Rom. 7 is just a quickened man, without the knowledge of redemption.

In 2 Cor. 5:18 we are reconciled, but the state of things is not reconciled. After that we have the Spirit of God taking up our infirmities, and sympathizing with us, as we are-taking up our groans.

When the Lord Jesus comes, the first thing He does is to take us up to Himself. He cannot take His inheritance till He get His joint-heirs. The object of Christ's love is to take us into the enjoyment of all that He enjoys Himself. Is He a son? I am a son. Is it life? He is my life. Is it peace? He says, My peace I leave with you. Is it love? As Thou hast loved Me I have loved them. There is nothing He has not taken us into. Of course, I do not mean His incommunicable Godhead. But He takes us into the same place with Himself, and over everything. When He comes again, then, and then only, we get the full fruit, when " he shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."

Psa. 22 As soon as He is heard from the horns of the unicorns, He says, " I will declare thy name unto my brethren." So in John 20. " I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." He is alone in the work of atonement, but as soon as that is accomplished, He says, Now I am going to have others with Me. " In the midst of the church I will sing praise to thee." When all the joint-heirs are gathered, then He comes and takes them all; and after that He begins to take the inheritance. The wilderness is the the place in which we are tested and tried, not for fighting. When we get into heavenly places to possess spiritual privileges, then we must fight Satan. Supposing I can say I am of the Lord's host, I am dead, I have crossed Jordan-not merely redeemed or simply crossed the Red Sea; but if I am dead, crossed Jordan, and become one of the Lord's host, then I need all His armor to fight His enemies; and if I get a wedge of gold, or a Babylonish garment, it will be detected by my want of power, by my being conquered in the fight.

When Christ takes us up there to be with Him, He puts Satan out. We shall be taken up to God and His throne (not the Father's throne, that is the prerogative of Christ), then Satan is cast down. He will be in this world, then, in great rage, knowing his time is short; but we shall be above it all. Satan will never get up there again. When, those years being over, the Lord comes with us (when He appears, we appear with Him), then Satan is put in the bottomless pit, and the kingdom is fulfilled. Satan then is not merely turned out of heaven, but out of earth too. Before judgment begins to be executed, we are in glory in Christ. He that believeth shall not come into judgment, John 5:24. There are two things in the chapter showing Christ's power: first, He quickeneth whom He will, this is, life-giving power; then judicial power, by which the wicked are obliged to own His power in spite of themselves. Christ will not have to make good His power in judgment where He has made it good in life. We are passed from death unto life. There is the resurrection of judgment in John 5. We are raised in glory when He changes our vile bodies, and fashions them like His glorious body. We shall ALL be conformed to the image of God's Son.

But there is another privilege we have now by grace, that of being workers together with Him. So when that time comes, as regards the blessing of Christ I shall have that as much as Paul, but as regards the activity of love and its results, Paul will have fifty thousand times more than I For instance, Paul will have the Thessalonians for his crown, and I shall not. There comes in every man's little bit of service-in that you will have yours, and I mine. When He appears with us, then He sets up His kingdom. For Christ has a three-fold title. He created everything-that gives Him a title. He is the Son, and consequently the Heir; and He is the Man to whom God has determined to give everything- the title of redemption.

If I look for the worst power of Satan now, I must look for it in the so-called church. The responsible church has totally failed. In 1 Cor. 3 you get three cases: first, a wise master builder, who did his work well; then you get persons who build badly, but who are saved themselves, building with rubbish, as wood, hay, stubble; and lastly, if a man corrupt the church of God, him will God destroy. Think of men bringing in Gnosticism. I will not refer to modern times. This is not merely building badly (all do so) but it is antagonism to the church of God and even to Christ.

Not one of the fathers, so-called, saving Irenaeus, held the full deity of Christ, or held redemption as Irenaeus did, who was a saint. They were affected with Platonic philosophy, which brought out Arianism after. Justin Martyr positively declares that the supreme God could not become a man-that it was a certain inferior Logos who did. People say we must have what was at the beginning. Knowing of nothing more primitive than Peter and Paul, I will therefore have what was at the beginning; but I will not have what was one hundred and forty years after the beginning. Justin Martyr was about so long after.

In the four first of the seven churches we see the history of what is called the Apostolic succession; in the three last, the history of Protestantism. There are three things in the Revelation: " Things thou hast seen," that is, the glory of Christ; " things that are," that is, the seven churches; " things which shall be hereafter," when we are caught up into heaven, and the final judgment of God sets in. In the first four churches, is given the complete history of the church to the end, closing in popery. There are two ways God uses to judge the existing thing by. He contrasts our condition with what He set up at first, and with the readiness to meet the Lord when He comes. The previous churches were referred back to what had been. Thyatira is referred on to His coming; and hence His coming is here first mentioned.

In the last three churches the Lord's coming is already named, and is kept before them till Laodicea, which is spued out. First, we have the Protestant warning, " a name to live and are dead." To Sardis He threatens what in Thessalonians is spoken of as only belonging to the world,

His coming as a thief, that is, I will treat you just like the world. Philadelphia is a solemn word to us. It is the character of Christ which we are to suit ourselves to-" He that is holy, he that is true." After Thyatira we never get a reference to what he had seen walking among the golden candlesticks. There is no ecclesiastical position after that. What marks the thing the Lord owns now is, the absence of infidelity, or of ecclesiastical pretension: Christ's word against all such pretensions, and Christ's name against all infidelity. " Kept my word, and not denied my name ": the promise to these is complete identification with Himself-" a pillar in the temple of my God-the name of my God-the city of my God-my new name." To those who keep the word of His patience He says not now, " I will come to you as a thief, and ye shall not know when I come," but, " Ye have had patience: have a little more, I will soon be with you." Those who had a little strength are made pillars in the temple of His God.

We never get the direct work of God in the seven churches, because God cannot judge His own work. He walks through and sees how this thing has turned out and how that has; but you never get a direct intervention of God all through. Isaiah's prophecy, " the heart of this people is waxed fat," etc., was spoken nearly eight hundred years before the judgment was executed in nearly the last piece of New Testament history. Paul says in Acts 28, " Well did Isaiah say, the heart of this people is waxed fat "; " be it known unto you that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles," etc. It is more than eighteen hundred years since it was said of the church, judgment must begin at the house of God; and for all this time God has borne with it, but assuredly the judgment of the church will come.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Prophetic 1, Purpose of God*, The

" Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."-Eph. 1:9, 1O.

INTRODUCTION

THE good pleasure of the Godhead was that all its fullness should dwell and manifest itself in Christ. Such was the purpose of God, a purpose full of blessing. The way in which God is about to manifest that purpose, and in which we are associated with its blessings, is infinitely interesting to us.

In the following pages only a small part of that purpose has been treated of, the outward part, so to speak, a part which nevertheless is none the less interesting.

It was designedly that God was pleased to accomplish it in a visible way, in order thit that purpose might be revealed to us by means of positive truths, which, while bringing the Christian into fellowship with God, who is their source, preserve him-weak creature that he is-from substituting the wanderings of his own imagination for the holy manifestations which God has given unto us of Himself. The subject, we are treating is contained in the prayer of the apostle Paul, which we find at the end of Eph. 1 This subject finds a still deeper source (to which we have alluded) in what is announced to us at the end of Eph. 3, and we cannot truly enjoy the subject treated in Eph. 1, without having felt in some measure the power of Eph. 3

For the rest, in communicating what follows, I only respond in weakness to the desires of a few persons, and I am confident that God will deign to make up for what is lacking.

THE CHURCH AND THE JEWS THE RESPECTIVE CENTERS OF THE HEAVENLY GLORY AND OF THE EARTHLY GLORY IN CHRIST.

Two great objects are presented to our contemplation by the prophecies and testimonies of the Scriptures, which refer to the millennium: on one hand, the church and its glory in Christ; on the other, the Jews and the glory which they are

to possess as a nation redeemed by Christ. It is the heavenly people and the earthly people. The Son Himself, who is the image and glory of God, will be their common center, and the sun which will enlighten them both; and although the place where His glory dwells in the church be the heavens, where He has " set a tabernacle for the sun " (Psa. 19:4), the nations will walk in the light thereof. It will be manifested on the earth, and the earth will enjoy its blessings. When all is accomplished God will be all in all. The tabernacle of God will be with men, not coming down, so to speak, but come down from heaven.

All these things, and the way in which they will have their accomplishment, are revealed in detail in the Scriptures. Although the church and the people of Israel are each respectively the centers of the heavenly glory and of the earthly glory, in their connection with Christ, and although they cast on each other a mutual brightness of blessedness and joy, yet each of them has a sphere which is proper to itself, and in which all things are subordinate to it. With respect to the church, angels, principalities, and powers, with all that belongs to heaven-the domain of its glory; with respect to the people of Israel, the nations of the earth.

We will confine ourselves here to the history and condition of the church, on one hand, and to those of the people of Israel, on the other.

" In the beginning God created," the Old Testament tells us. " In the beginning was the Word," says the New, proclaiming the foundation of a higher glory and more durable than that of the first creation, and on which was to rest the restoration of the latter, when ruined by the weakness of man and by sin.

" In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." When they came forth from the hand of the Creator, all His works were " very good." Sin appeared, and they were marred. Compare Col. 1:20, with Eph. 2:10. For a moment, God rested, so to speak, in them; but that rest came to an end. The• Scriptures say but little as to the evil which sullied the heavens: all that we know is, that there were angels who fell. But it was on the earth and among men that the divine and wonderful work of redemption was to be displayed; and this subject is revealed to us in all its fullness.

THE REST OF GOD IN THE NEW CREATION BY MEANS OF THE SECOND ADAM

The rest of God, after the first creation, was short. The rest of man with God passed away like a morning-dream. But the blessing of God was not to pass away in the same manner. That which was transient, on account of the weakness of the first Adam, was to be restored on an infinitely more excellent footing by the display of the might and power of the Second Adam; the will of God being to head up in Him all things which are in the heavens and upon the earth; Eph. 1: Io.

CHRIST THE HEIR-THE CHURCH JOINT-HEIR WITH HIM, THROUGH RESURRECTION

It is on this gathering together of all things unto Christ and in Christ, as their Head (Greek, anakephalaiosis-heading up), that depends the character and the substance of the hope of the church, until God be all in all. In this point of view, Scripture speaks of Christ manifested, as being Heir of all these things, and of the church as being joint-heir with Him. This is, as it were, the formal character which is attributed to Him with regard to all things; that we may understand what is our place with Him. Thus it is written, that God has appointed Christ " heir of all things " (Heb. 1:2); that, in Him, " we have obtained an inheritance " (Eph. 1: i); that we are " heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," Rom. 8:17. This glorious title of Christ-the Heir-has a still more glorious origin. He is " the firstborn of every creature, for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth... and for him," Col. 1:15, 16. The church, the children of God, are therefore joint-heirs with Christ. How are they such? It is this which we are about to develop. Christ receives the inheritance in His character of man, of risen Man, once our companion in sufferings because of sin, and then the Head, the root and spring of all blessing.

We must first remark that the first Adam, " the figure of him that was to come," is a type and figure of the Second Adam of whom we are speaking. He is referred to in this respect in Ephesians S: 3o, 31. Before His manifestation, the last Adam is, as it were, hidden, as the first Adam was buried in sleep;2 Eve, who prefigures the church, is taken from his side, and God presents her to him as the help meet for him, to be his companion in the government and the inheritance of all things given to him of God in paradise.

Thus Christ, who is God as well as man, presents the church to Himself, when He awakes in His glory, that it may share that glory with Him and that dominion which He already possesses in title and by the gift of God. " And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them," John 17:22.

Adam and Eve, taken collectively, are called Adam, as if they were but one (Gen. 1:27; 5:2), although, in a certain sense, Eve was inferior to her husband, and had come after him. So it is with Christ and the church, who are but one mystical body. This type, familiar to those who read the Scriptures, presents, in a most simple way, all the forms of the reality prefigured, with this exception, that the Second Man, being " out of heaven " (1 Cor. 15:47), is also the Head and Lord of the heavenly things.

ALL THINGS PUT UNDER THE FEET OF MAN

Let us now consider the passages which speak of the dominion of man, and of the union of the church with Christ in that dominion.3 It clearly results, from the terms in which they are worded, that their accomplishment has not yet taken place. All these passages rest on Psa. 8 There the Holy Ghost says, " Thou hast... crowned him " (man, the Son,of man) " with glory and honor,... thou hast put all things under his feet "; then He tells us (Heb. 2:7, 8, 9) that this is not seen as yet, but that Jesus has been " crowned with glory and honor," that He might be pointed out to the church as the one who, as man, is to have all things put under His feet. Meanwhile, and until the purposes of God are accomplished, until the enemies of Christ, who hold the power in unrighteousness, are made to be His footstool-in a word, during the period of the present dispensation-Christ is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high; He sits, as having overcome, at the right hand of God the Father. It is thus that He will grant to him that overcometh, to sit on His own throne (Rev. 3:21), when He takes possession of it and reigns.

Eph. 1:17 to 2: 7 shows us the church united to Christ in all these circumstances, according to the working of the might by which Christ was raised from the dead; chapter 2: 7 points out the cause, the glorious motive of it. In chapter I: 22 we find again the quotation of Psa. 8 " And hath put all things under his feet." The apostle adds: " And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

Thus, therefore, the church is united to Christ, as a body of which He is the Head, and under whose feet God has put all things. " Christ is head over all things to the church, which is his body." See the Greek. As to this character, it is as having been raised from the dead that He possesses it, as the passage itself clearly establishes. But this last point is treated in a special way in 1 Cor. 15, in which we find again the quotation from Psa. 8

.c Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom [that which He possesses as being risen, which is the subject of the chapter] to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject [always as last Adam, as risen man; for it is always in this character that He is spoken of in this chapter] unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all,"4 1 Cor. 15:21-28.

Christ, in His character of risen man, reigns therefore over a kingdom which He will deliver up, that God may be all in all. All this administration, and this human dominion, which is brought out in Psa. 8, comes to an end, that the glory of God, simply, may be universal. As to the way in which these things are accomplished other passages present it to us.

CHRIST AS HEIR RECEIVES THE INHERITANCE IN THE WAY OF PROMISE

We have seen that Christ is Heir, in title, as being Creator of all things-all things having been made by Him and for Him, as the Son; and also because He has been established such in the purpose of God. So that, God [acting] in the way of promise, all the promises find their center in Christ. " Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," Gal. 3:16. " For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us," 2 Cor. 1:20. Thus Christ is the Heir, the Seed, to whom the promise was made.

THE REJECTION BY THE NATURAL SEED GIVES OCCASION FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SPIRITUAL SEED INTO THE HEAVENLY PLACES AS JOINT-HEIRS.

As regards this earth, the people of Israel, the seed according to the flesh, were, of all mankind, in the best position to receive the Lord, in a world that knew Him not; in coming unto them, " He came unto his own," John 1 I I. That people possessed the law, the promises, the covenants, the oracles of God; it was in their midst that, according to the promise, the Lord was to come, and that He actually came; Rom. 9:4, 5. It was this people which, in the midst of a lost world, possessed, through their relationship with God, the sabbath-that sign which was to remind them of the hope of Jehovah's rest. But when the Messiah appeared, although His coming was in perfect harmony with the predictions of their own prophets, the Jews did not receive Him. It is true, they said, and this rightly, " This is the heir "; but as they hated Him, they added, " Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours," Mark 12:7. Thus vanished the last hope of God's rest upon the earth. After all that had come to pass, God had yet been pleased to send His own Son; but this trial served to complete the evidence that man is absolutely without any resource, and that "every man at his best state is altogether vanity," Psa. 39:5.

But that only opened the way for a dispensation far more admirable, far more glorious. The earth and the people of Israel as a nation were set aside for a time; although " the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." The design which was hidden in God for ages past was about to be revealed (that is, the gathering together into one body, and in Christ, the remnant of the Jews and the fullness of the Gentiles, in order to bring them into the heavenly places). The companion and bride of the One who had been rejected, but who is risen- the church-is gathered from among all nations, while her Bridegroom is seated at the right hand of God; and she will shine forth in the same glory as Himself, when He shall appear; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2.

Christ, in His character of Seed of Abraham, is the Heir of the promises. If He had taken possession of this inheritance during His life here below, He would have possessed it for Himself alone. In fact, after He had manifested His glory as Son of God by the resurrection of Lazarus, and as King of the Jews by His entry into Jerusalem, when the Greeks came also to seek Him, He said that the hour was come when (in spite of the rejection of the promised Seed by the Jews) the Son of man should be glorified; but, as the Lord immediately adds, " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,"

John 12:1-24.

It was as risen that Christ was to enter into the possession of the inheritance with the church-the ear, sprung from that grain of wheat cast into the tomb-with the church henceforth perfectly justified; Rom. 4:25. Thus Christ inherits the promises, not as having come in the flesh on earth, but as risen. He inherits them, after having done all that was necessary for the redemption of the church, and in the power of that life which He has taken again, of which He makes His bride to partake. The result of this union is, that the souls which form the church, when they are born of the Holy Ghost, are considered as risen with Him. In a word, Christ is heir, in His character of risen Man-of risen Head of the church.

Paul, in Gal. 3:17, speaks of the confirmation of the promise, made to Christ, and what he says perfectly agrees with what we have just been saying. Moreover, the apostle is quoting Gen. 22:18, " And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

In these words we find indeed that the promise, made to Abraham in chapter 12 and referring to the blessing of the nations, is confirmed to the seed of the patriarch, after that seed had been restored to him in a figure of resurrection; Heb. 11:19.

Thus we have seen how the scripture establishes, under divers aspects, this blessed truth, that the church is redeemed to be united to Jesus, in order that, when He takes possession of His inheritance, He may have a companion meet for Him, to be associated with Him in all things, and perfectly like unto her glorified Bridegroom. For the complete fulfillment of these things, it was necessary, not only that the church should be redeemed, but also that Christ should go to prepare a place for her.

CHRIST EXALTED IN THE HEAVENS PREPARES A PLACE FOR THE CHURCH, AND CAN FULFILL THE PROMISES MADE TO ISRAELMEANWHILE THE CHURCH IS CALLED.

The resurrection of the Savior had the double result of accomplishing the redemption of the church, and of putting Christ in a place where He could secure the sure mercies of David (Acts 13:34), that is to say, confirm in His own name all the promises made to Israel. Moreover, it was needful also that He should take possession of the heavenly places, in order to establish the kingdom of heaven and to fill all things (Eph. 4:10);5 as well as to associate the church with that glory- new, and yet eternal-prepared before the foundation of the world, and yet hidden from the former ages, but the manifestation of which had been determined according to the wisdom of God by the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish people.

We must here distinguish two things: Christ preparing a place, a heavenly habitation; and Christ gathering from among all nations those who are to be His joint-heirs, calling the bride who is to enter into possession with Himself. Thus, in John 14:2, 3 the Lord says, " 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." In John 17:24: " Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

In Rom. 8:29, it is written: " Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

AT HIS COMING, HE RECEIVES THE INHERITANCE WITH THE RISEN CHURCH.

In Col. 1:18, Christ is called " the head of the body, the church... the firstborn from the dead."

But in what manner do these things take place?-" As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." " As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." These words are found in 1 Cor. 15, where we find the subject of the resurrection exclusively treated. Thus again it is also written in Rom. 8:3o, and that in reference not to sanctification, but to glory-" Whom he justified, them he also glorified "; without any mention of sanctification. Phil. 3:2I: " Who shall change

our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

The time when these things will be accomplished is clearly taught in Scripture. Christ is now hid in God, and our life is hid with Him there; Col. 3:3. The present time is that during which are gathered, by the Holy Ghost, the members of His body, His joint-heirs, while He is seated at the right hand of Jehovah, until His enemies are made His footstool. The apostle says, " But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God, waiting from henceforth until his enemies be set for the footstool of his feet," Heb. 10:12-14. He has accomplished all that was to be done for the redemption of us, His friends; and while He is still gathering His own by the power of the Holy Ghost whom He has sent, and who reveals Him, and the Father through Him, He is seated, in the expectation of the possession -and not in the effective possession-of the earth, of creation; until the number of the joint-heirs is completed. He is sitting on the Father's throne, and it is there that the church knows Him at the present time.

But while He is waiting, we wait also; and even as regards the whole creation, it waits also: it waits for the manifestation of the children of God. As for the time and manner of that manifestation, the Scriptures are clear.

Since we are to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, it is evident that it must be by resurrection and by glorification; for He is risen and glorified. Therefore it is said that the whole creation waits for the manifestation of the children of God; and the apostle adds, " And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," Rom. 8:19, 23. Again, it is written, " When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," Col. 3:4. " We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," 1 John 3:2.

THE SAINTS JUDGE THE WORLD.

We have already seen that the Lord says, " I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also " (John 14:3); and this is what will take place, either by resurrection, or by being changed; for " we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," 1 Cor. 15:51. This is the entrance of the church into glory, as we are taught in detail by 1 Thess. 4:16, 17: " The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which arc alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

One may read in Rev. 19 the description of this scene- the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the subsequent judgment of the earth, or at least of the heads of the antichristian revolt. This judgment is again described in more general terms in Jude 14, 15: " Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment," etc.; and in Zech. 14:5, it is said, " The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

How blessed the time when Christ shall have presented the church to Himself, as a glorious spouse, " not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! " Eph. 5:27. Clothed with the beauty and glory which belong to her, seeing in her Lord the beauty and glory of the Father, she is moreover associated with the glory of her Bridegroom in the power of that love wherewith He loved her, and in which He gave Himself for her, that she might be perfectly cleansed and made glorious with Him, even where He is; then manifested in glory, surrounded with honors such as He receives Himself; made partaker of all His glory, of that glory which the Father gave Him, that the world might know that the Father has loved her, as He has loved Him. Associated with the Lord of glory, the saints will judge angels and the world; they will be the servants and instruments who will dispense the light and the blessings of His kingdom over an earth delivered of all its sorrows, and where Satan is no longer. " For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak," Heb. 2:5. " They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age] " to come, " and the resurrection from the dead," can die no more; Luke 20:35, 36. " On such the second death hath no power," but they live and reign with Christ a thousand years; Rev. 20:6. Happy those believers!

At the coming of Christ, these (already risen as to their souls) will rise as regards their bodies, by His Spirit that dwells in them; Rom. 8:11. This is that resurrection-not of judgment, but of life (John 5:29)-which belongs to the church in virtue of her union with Christ by the Holy Ghost. It cannot therefore concern the wicked; although they also must be raised up in their own time by the word of Christ, but to be judged. Those who belong to Christ will be raised at His coming; as for the rest of the dead, their resurrection will take place when Christ, after having delivered up the kingdom, will be seated, as Son of man, on the great white throne, to judge the dead, when the earth and the heaven have fled away before His face; Rev. 20:11.

Such is the teaching of the word of God. The taking possession of the kingdom by Christ is described in Daniel; but to treat this subject would lead to our second part, the earthly glory: we shall therefore lay it aside for the present. Our only desire here was to show the place which the church occupies in this scene, and the connection which exists in Scripture between that doctrine-well understood-and the most fundamental and comforting truths which form the hope and the joy of the believer.

THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER.

There is a point in this subject which we have scarcely touched upon, but the contemplation of which would lead us too far away from our main object, and might expose us to the danger of losing sight of it. It is the place which the Father's love has here-a subject equally full of deep comfort. It is for the kingdom of the Father that Jesus taught His disciples to pray: it is in the Father's kingdom that the righteous shall shine forth as the sun (Matt. 13:43), that is, as Christ, the Sun of righteousness. It is in the glory of the Father that Christ is to appear, and that is for us a most happy circumstance in the blessedness of that great day. Here we enter into deeper waters, and yet more calm; into that eternity which is an unruffled and boundless ocean of infinite joy-a joy of which, however, we shall know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, which pass all knowledge; for it is there that we shall learn these things; it is there we shall study the glory. Here below we may feel perhaps more deeply what grace is; there we shall be the full manifestation of it, we sinners made like unto Christ Himself; Eph. 2:7.

But the passages which have placed under the eyes of the reader, with the reflections which are added, may suffice to guide those who desire to inquire further as to this simple but blessed truth, and to receive the revelation of it in their souls. They will not be long without feeling that it contains everything; that it is the fullness of Him, who, without having had a beginning, was pleased to be born, and who, having no end, is pleased to accomplish eternally in us that infinite joy, the realization of which will even render us capable of enjoying it in a measure always increasing. We shall have great lessons to learn in glory with Christ, the Lamb, in whom the Father is fully revealed. The life we have received

gives us even now a right and title to all these blessings as ours.

This is only a simple outline of the position the church will occupy, when Christ shall be revealed in His power and glory. Then will it be manifested as His bride, His companion, in the same glory with Himself; and all things will be blessed through it. For it will be the sphere and means of the display of the glory and blessing of Christ.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Ecclesiastical 1, Grace, the Power of Unity and of Gathering*

BELOVED BROTHER,

I have had the desire on my mind to make a few remarks on a point I believe to have importance at the present moment; and in doing so, I carry in my mind a tract to which the circumstances drew attention, and practically review it. And I do so, the rather, because I think I read a paper some time back in " The Present Testimony," which, if my memory serves me, placed the subject on a ground which I did not think quite just: that is, it saw only one side of the matter, as it seemed to me. I am not going to comment on it, as I apprehend you can edify your readers better by other means.

What I think important to be understood is, that the active power that gathers is always grace-love. Separation from evil may be called for. In particular states of the church, when evil is come in, it may characterize very much the path of the saints. It may be, that through many acting under the same convictions at the same time, this may form a nucleus. But this in itself is never a gathering power. Holiness may attract when a soul is in movement of itself. But power to gather, is in grace, in love working; if you please, faith working by love. Look at all the history of the church of God in all ages, and you will find this to be the case. Grace is the formative power of unity, where it does not exist. I take for granted here that Christ is owned as the center. If evil exist, it may gather out of that evil, but the gathering power is love. The paper which I would pass under review is a tract, which, from circumstances, is not unknown: " Separation from Evil, God's Principle of Unity." I trust I should have grace to acknowledge error where I thought there was such, and I am sure I owe it to the Lord to do so; but my object here is somewhat larger. That tract refers to the state of the church of God at large, and not any particular member of it; but as one part of truth corrects an evil, so another, by its operation on the soul, may enlarge the sphere, and strengthen the energy of good. There are two great principles in God's nature, owned of all saints-holiness and love. One is, I may be bold to say, the necessity of His nature, imperative, in virtue of that nature, on all that approach Him; the other, its energy. One characterizes; the other is, and is the spring of activity of, His nature. God is holy-He is not loving, but love. He is it in the essential fountain of His being; we make Him a judge by sin, for He is holy and has authority; but He is love, and none has made Him such. If there be love anywhere else, it is of God, for God is love. This is the blessed active energy of His being. In the exercise of this He gathers to Himself for the eternal blessedness of those who are gathered, its display in Christ, and Christ Himself, being the great power and center of it. His counsels as to this are the glory of His grace, His applying them to sinners and the means He employs for it, the riches of His grace. And in the ages to come He will show how exceeding great these were in His kindness to us, in Christ Jesus.

Allow me, in passing, before entering on the examination of the point which is now directly my object, to say a word on the sweet passage I have referred to, because it opens out God's full thoughts in bringing into the unity of which that epistle speaks. We are blessed in Christ, and God Himself is the center of the blessing, and in two characters, His nature and His relationship; He is both as related to Christ Himself, viewed as man before Him, though the beloved Son. The verses I refer to, are Eph. 1:3-7. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Lord, when ascending up on high, said, " I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God "; only that here He goes on to the unity in Christ. There Christ speaks of them as brethren.

In this double character then, in which God stands to Christ Himself, He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, none left out, in heavenly places, the best and highest sphere of blessing, where He dwells; not merely sent down to earth, but we taken ourselves up there, and in the best and highest way, in Christ Jesus, save His divine title to sit on the Father's throne. Wonderful portion, sweet and blessed grace, which becomes simple to us in the measure in which we are accustomed to dwell in the perfect goodness of God, to whom it is natural to be all that He is, who could be no other.

In verse 4, we have " The God of our Lord Jesus Christ," according to the glory of the divine nature, introducing into His own presence in Christ that which shall be the reflex of itself, according to its eternal purpose. For the church in the thoughts of God (and, I may add, in its life in the Word), is before the world in which it is displayed. Here, it is His nature. We are chosen in Christ before the fOundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. God is holy, God is love, and in His ways, when He acts, blameless. Then there is relationship in Christ, and His is that of Son. Hence in Him we are predestinated to the adoption of children to God Himself, according to His good pleasure, the delight and goodness of His will. This is relationship. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as God. This is the glory of His grace; His own thoughts and purposes, to the praise of which we are. He has shown us grace in the Beloved. But in fact He finds us sinners. He has to put sinners in this place. What a thought! Here His grace shines out in another way. In this same blessed one, Christ the Son, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins-what we need, in order to enter into the place where we shall be to the praise of the glory of His grace-and this is according to the riches of His grace; for God is displayed in the glory of His grace, and need is met by the riches of grace.

Thus we are before God. What follows in the chapter is the inheritance which belongs to us through this same grace- what is under us. Into this I do not enter; only remarking, as I have elsewhere, that the Holy Ghost is the earnest of the inheritance, but not of God's love. This is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. These two relationships, of God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be found to unfold much blessing. They are of frequent occurrence in Scripture.

But interesting as that subject is, I turn now to the one before me. I have read over the tract I have referred to. I confess, it seems to me that one who would deny the abstract principles of that tract is not on Christian ground at all. I cannot conceive anything more indisputably true, as far as human statement of truth can go. Still there is something more than truth to be considered, and that is, the use of truth. God's imputing no sin to the church, through grace and redemption, is always blessedly and eternally true. To a careless conscience, I may have to address other truth. Now, I repeat, that on reading that tract I do not see how a person resisting the principles stated, is on Christian ground

at all. Is not holiness the principle on which Christian fellowship is based? And the tract is really and simply that. But two other points I believe it important to bring out along with that-one, in relation to man; the other, to the blessed God. The first is this: human nature we all own, and in a measure know, is a treacherous thing. Now separation from evil, when right, which I now assume, still distinguishes him who separates from him from whom he does so. This tends to make one's position important, and so it is; but with such hearts as we have, one's position mixes itself up with self-not in a gross way but in a treacherous one; it is my position, and not only so, but the mind being occupied with what has been important (justly so in its place) to itself, tends to make, in a measure, separation from evil a gathering power, as well as a principle on which gathering takes place. This (save as holiness attracts souls who are spiritual by a moving principle in them) it is not.

There is another danger: a Christian separates from evil, I still suppose, in a case in which he is bound to do so. Say, he leaves the corruptest system in existence; on this principle, it is the evil acting on the conscience of the new man, and known to be offensive to God, which drives him out. Hence he is occupied with the evil. This is a dangerous position. He attaches it, perhaps anxiously, to those he has left, to give a clear ground why he has done so. They conceal, cover over, gloss, explain. It is always so where the evil is maintained. He seeks to prove it, to make his ground clear; he is occupied with evil, with proving evil, and proving evil against others. This is slippery ground for the heart, to say nothing of danger to love. The mind becomes occupied with evil as an object before it. This is not holiness, nor separation from evil, in practical internal power. It harasses the mind, and cannot feed the soul. Some are almost in danger of acquiescing in the evil through the weariness of thinking about it. At all events power is not found here. God separates us surely from evil, but He does not fill the mind when it continues to be occupied with it; for He is not in the evil. It is quite true that the mind may say, Let us think of the Lord and drop it, and get a measure of quiet and comfort; but in this case the general standard and tone of spiritual life will be infallibly lowered. Of this I have not a shadow of doubt. The positive evil will not be actually acquiesced in; but God's horror of it is lost in the mind, and the measure of divine power and communion just proportionately lost, and the general path shows this. The testimony fails and is lowered. This is the widest evil-where there is conflict with evil not maintained in spiritual power-and creates the most serious difficulties to extended unity; but God is above all. The new nature, when in lively exercise, because it is holy and divine, revolts from evil when it comes before it. The conscience, too, will then be in exercise as responsible to God. But this is not all, even as to holiness. There is another, which in many (I may say, at bottom, in all) cases distinguishes real holiness from natural conscience, or conventional rejection of evil. Holiness is not merely separation from evil, but separation to God from evil. The new nature has not merely a nature or intrinsic character as being of God. It has an object, for it cannot live on itself-a positive object, and that is God. Now this changes everything; because it separates from evil-which it abhors, therefore, when it sees it-because it is filled with good. This does not enfeeble its separation. It makes its abhorrence of it lively when it has to be occupied with it, but it gives another tone to that which is abhorrent to it, the possession of good sufficient, when it is not forced to think of evil, to put it quite out of mind and sight. Hence it is holy, calm, and has a substantive character of its own, apart from evil, as well as abhorrent of it. With us this can only be in having an object, because we are and ought to be dependent only so far as we are positively filled with God in Christ. We are occupied with good, and hence holy, for that is holiness; and, therefore, easily and discerningly abhorrent of evil, without occupying ourselves with it. It is God's own nature; He is essentially good; delights in it in Himself: and therefore He is abhorrent, in virtue of His goodness, of evil; His nature is the good, and hence in His very nature He rejects the evil. He will do so authoritatively, no doubt, in judgment; but we now speak of nature.

Hence you will find, that when it is in power, love precedes and makes holy, whether it be mutual or the enjoyment of it in the revelation of God. " And 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 establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," Thess. 3:12-13. So in 1 John 1, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

Now here the separation from evil, walking in the light, in God's revealed character in Christ, in the practical knowledge of God as revealed in Christ, in the truth as it is in Jesus in whom the life was the light of men, is fully insisted on with lines as clear and strong as the Holy Ghost alone knows how to make them. He who pretends to fellowship, and does not walk in the knowledge of God according to that knowledge, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But what makes the fellowship? This keeps it pure- but what makes it? The revelation of the blessed object, and center of it, in Christ. He was speaking of One who had won his own heart-who was the gathering power into fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. He knew by the Holy Ghost, and enjoyed what the Savior had said, " He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." This was love, infinite, divine; and, through the Holy Ghost, the witness of it had communion with it and told it out, that others might have fellowship with him; and truly, his was such. They joined in it. Now that, I apprehend, was gathering power. The object gathered to, necessarily involved what follows. So, indeed, he closes the epistle. " We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, and we are in him that is true; that is, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." That is, the gathering power of good comes before the warning. This is the more remarkable in this epistle, because it is, in a certain sense, occupied with evil, is written concerning those that seduced them.

Holiness, then, is separation to God, if it be real, as well as from evil; for thus alone we are in the light, for God is light. This is true, in our first sanctifying-we are brought to know God, brought to God. If we come to ourselves it is, " I will arise and go to my father." If it is restoration, " If thou wilt return, return unto me." Indeed a soul is never restored really till it does; for it is not in the light so as to purge flesh, even if the fruits of flesh have been confessed; nor is sin seen as it is in God's sight. Hence love comes in, in all true conversion and restoration, however dimly seen, or through however dark workings of conscience. We want to get back to God; there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared; otherwise, it is despair which drives us farther away. Indeed, what would or could restoration be if it were not to God. But, in the full sense of gathering, that is, to common fellowship, it is clearly the blessed object which reveals that in which we are to have the fellowship, which so gathers. We are to have fellowship in something, that is, with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. This, then, must draw hearts to itself, that in their common delight in it their fellowship may exist. The principle of the tract is this, that in doing this it must separate from evil. It is " this then is the message " part of the statement. So Christ says, " I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Now here was perfect love, entire separation from all sin and condemnation of it. " In that he died, he died unto sin once "-separation from the world, and deliverance from the whole power of the enemy and the scene of it. It is perfect love drawing from everything to itself; showing all was evil, absorbing the soul into what was good, in a saving way from it. But when we follow Him into life, all is gone from which He

separated. " In that he liveth, he liveth unto God "; that is His whole being, so to speak. Now He is, in this life, made higher than the heavens-the divine glory I do not here enter into, but the life. It is a heavenly place He takes, and our gathering through the cross is to Him there, in the good where evil cannot come. There is our communion-entering into the Father's house in spirit. And this, I apprehend, is the true character of the assembly, of the church, for worship in its full sense. It remembers the cross, it worships, the world left out, and all known in heaven before God. He gave Himself that He might gather into one. But here I anticipate a little, for I am speaking as yet of the object, not of the active power. I apprehend that what separates the saint from evil, what makes him holy, is the revelation of an object (I mean, of course, through the Holy Ghost working), which draws his soul to that as good, and thereby reveals evil to him, and makes him judge it in spirit and soul: his knowledge of good and evil is, then, not a mere uneasy conscience, but sanctification; that is, sanctification is resting, by the enlightening of the Holy Ghost, on an object, which, by its nature, purifies the affections by being their object-creates them through the power of grace. Even under law it had this form, " Be ye holy for I am holy "; though, I admit, it there partook necessarily of the character of the dispensation. In the cross we have these two great principles perfectly brought out. Love is clearly shown, the blessed object which draws the heart; yet the most solemn judgment of and separation from all evil; such is God's perfectness-the foolishness and weakness of God. Divine attraction in love, evil in all its horror and forms, perfectly abhorred by him who is attracted and attaches himself to that. The soul goes with sin, as sin, to love, and goes there because love thus displayed has shown him that it is sin, in being made sin for us. This is the power objectively that separates from evil, and ends all connection with it; for I die then to all the nature I lived to. Evil ceases to be, through faith, as I live hereafter in blessed activity in love. But I have, perhaps, dwelt long enough on what objectively gathers and gives fellowship; and surely, our fellowship, communion, is in that which is good-and as heavenly by no evil being there. Imperfectly realized no doubt here, but so far as it is not, fellowship is destroyed, for the flesh has none. Hence it is said: " If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." But we cannot walk out of darkness but by walking in the light, that is, with God: and God is love, and were He not, we could not walk there.

But we have other privileges; God's love in Christ is not only an object which gathers-it is an activity which does so. Love is relative; it acts and shows itself. Hence God has acted. It is not the silent depths of self consciousness which heathenism made of God, as mere intellect, though erroneously supposing matter equally eternal, receiving merely form from God; though it then became active in generating thoughts-and, delighted with them objectively, became active in creation to produce them according to truth. In this scheme they justly made primeval darkness the mother of all things. But such is not our God. These, save in benefits sensibly known in creation, knew not love in God. Jesus has revealed Him, and we thus know Him to be love, and light, too. Blessed knowledge! It is, as given to us in the word, eternal life; and this life is occupied with it, as we have seen, with the Father and the Son. But we can equally say that we know this sweet and blessed truth: " My Father worketh hitherto and I work." It is the activity of love which is the power of gathering. " He gave himself... that he might gather into one the children of God, which were scattered abroad." Even in Israel: " How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Here we have not only the attractive, sanctifying object bringing into fellowship, but the activity of love, which acts, gives itself, in order to gather; in this we are allowed to have a part. It is this, while sanctifying and maintaining His holiness, making us partakers of it, reveals God and gathers weary souls.

Now this alone is the proper principle and power of gathering: I do not say on which souls are gathered; for that is clearly holiness-separation from evil in which alone communion is maintained-or darkness would have fellowship with light. But love gathers; and this is as evident to the Christian as that it gathers to holiness, and on the principle of it. For when would the mind of man separate from and leave the evil in which it lives, which is its nature, alas! as to its actual desires, and the sphere in which it lives? Never! Alas! its will and lusts are there-it is enmity against God. This is what the presenting of grace in Jesus has so solemnly proved. Law was never given to gather; it was the rule of a people already with God-or a convicter of sin. Sin does not gather to God, nor law; and one or other is all man's state unless grace acts. Besides, grace alone fully reveals God; and hence without grace that to which we are to be gathered is not manifested. Grace alone reaches the heart so as to bring it-all short of this is responsibility merely, and failure. It is Christ gathers, and hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us. Indeed, truth itself is never known till grace comes. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The law told man what he ought to be. It did not tell him what he was. It told him of life if he obeyed, of a curse if he disobeyed; but it did not tell him that God was love; it spoke of responsibility; it said, " Do this and live." All this was perfect in its place, but it told neither what man was nor what God was; that remained concealed; but that is the truth.

The truth is not what ought to be, but what is-the reality of all relationships as they are, and the revelation of Him who, if there are any, must be the center of them. Now that could not be told without grace, for man was a ruined sinner, and God is love. And how tell, moreover, that all relationship was gone2-for judgment is not a relationship, but the consequence of the breach of one-as the truth of any existing one, but in the revelation of that grace which formed one on this very ground by divine power? Hence we read " of his own will begat he us3 by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creatures "; that incorruptible seed of the word. Hence Christ is the truth. For since, grace, God Himself, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, even, are revealed as they are; what man is in perfection, in relationship with God; what man's alienation from God; what obedience, what disobedience, what holiness, what sin, what God, what man, what heaven, what earth; nothing but finds itself placed where it is in reference to God, and with the fullest revelation of Himself, while His counsels even are brought out, and of which Christ is the center. Hence grace is the acting power in and alone capable of revealing truth; for Christ's being here is grace; His working effectual grace.

Now, the very existence of such an object and such a power would prove a gathering power, gathering into unity, for it must, being divine, gather to itself; yet, we are not left to abstract consequences, however practically familiar to every renewed soul who does and must know, that all such are drawn together to Christ. The word of God is plain: " He should die... that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." I speak of these things as characterizing the power which gathers. Christ, though the truth itself, yet, while here, was lonely truth: no new relationship was established on a divine basis for other men. Hence presented grace was rejected grace; the corn of wheat abode alone; but, dying, redemption was accomplished and atonement made. He was no longer " straitened "; the grace and truth shut up, so to speak, into His own heart, could now flow freely forth. The highest love was shown; and sin in man, instead of hindering its application and barring relationship, was its object, at least that as to which it was displayed; and thus, therefore, He gathers. Divine righteousness supplants-what, indeed, never existed, though it was called for- human righteousness; divine life, mere human life; and God finds His glory in salvation. Grace reigns through righteousness. Now, this it is, by uniting souls in the power of the Holy Ghost to Jesus, which gathers by the cross, whence the truth is told to us as we are here, to Christ in heaven, who tells our true place to faith there-saving always, of course, His personal divine title.

Now this, I apprehend, is what Ephesians shows, only that as it begins with the divine glory, the true source of all, that epistle begins with the purpose of love as to us in heaven in glory; and brings in redemption itself as a second thing, needed to bring us there. But this clearly does not alter the love which is, and is acting to bring us into this blessed and heavenly unity, and which is thus heavenly, and, in connection with God's glory, is holy according to the holiness of His presence. Christ's path on earth is the pattern of it below- in its full measure on the cross. Hence heaven and the cross are correlative. When the blood went into the holiest the body was burnt without the camp-outside; yea, denying all relationship of God with man as he was. Then gathering into one began. He slew the enmity-as between Jew and Gentile-and reconciled both in one body to God; and so we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Ordinances always separate according to human holiness; grace unites according to divine.

I believe I have said enough to make what is in my mind plain; and I am more anxious to state than to insist on it. In the full divine sense, without grace, there is neither truth nor holiness (out of God, of course, I mean), save as holiness may be applied to the elect angels-nor can be; because it is impossible that a sinner can be with God but on the ground and by the power and activity of grace. The power of unity is grace; and, as man is a sinner and departed from God, the power of gathering is grace-grace manifested in Jesus on the cross, and bringing us to God in heaven, and bringing us in Him who is gone there. This is holiness: certainly the cross was not acquiescence in evil.

Christian Truth: Volume 12, Ephesians 1:11-12

There are two parts in the mystery: 1. All things shall be put under the headship of Christ. 2. The Church, which is His body, will have part in the inheritance. We shall be before God according to the perfection of His nature. Christ having been put to death, God and the sinner have met together. But here it is rather a question of the accomplishment of the mystery of the will of God for the glory of Christ. The Church will have part in the inheritance. "In whom," it is said, "we have obtained an inheritance"; but the whole of the mystery is not the Church only, and this is very simple if we receive the thoughts of the Bible; not, indeed, that we shall understand the whole extent of the glory, but we shall see that all things created are to be gathered together in one in Christ.

In the epistle to the Colossians Christ is presented as Creator; the Person of Christ is in the prominent place rather than the counsels of God as to the Church. Christ is the first-born of every creature, and the first-born from the dead; Head of His body, which is the Church. But here, in the epistle to the Ephesians, it is the privileges of the Church in Him which we are given to know. In verse 6 it is said that what we possess already is to the praise of the glory of His grace; and in verse 12, where He is speaking of the glory to come that is before us, it is said, "that we should be to the praise of His glory." The Church has a portion quite apart and most glorious. All things are to be gathered together in one in Christ. The Church, being united to Him, is made partaker of the inheritance, that we should be to the praise of His glory. The glory of God is understood by its being seen in us; and the world will then see that we have been loved as Christ is loved.

Verse 12 might seem a difficulty, where it is said, "We who first hoped in Christ"; but he is here speaking of the Jews, who have believed before the revelation of Christ to the nation, at His second coming, and before the national call to the Jews at the end: such of the Jews as have believed, as have hoped beforehand, they are glorified with Him.

Christian Truth: Volume 11, Ephesians 1:4-10

There is only one thing in which God does not suffice for Himself, and that is, in His love. His love has need of other beings besides Himself, in order to make them happy. He desires to have before Him beings in harmony with what He is, and He sets us before Him "holy and without blame." (The first of these words speaks of the character, the other rather of the conduct.) This is what He is Himself, He who is the Holy One, He who certainly is without blame; for it is impossible to find any fault in Him. He calls Himself the Holy One; He is love! Well; He sets us holy and without blame before Him in love. Precious and most important thought for us! He has resolved that the Church should be such that He could take delight in her, and behold in her before Him the reproduction of Himself- the most perfect happiness possible. He sets before Him beings like to Himself, in order to make them as happy as it is possible; He communicates to us His nature, and takes His delight in us. In order for that, He makes us "holy and without blame in love"; and these things are accomplished here below by the Spirit, though the effects are not fully shown till above in the place of perfectness. So, where is our place even now below? Before Him; and this place is not a joy only, but the most precious thing that can be imagined—to be before Him!

We do not like to be before Him when we are not holy; but when the conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ, we are truly happy before Him. In order that we may be happy before Him, we must be holy, we must understand the tastes of the divine nature. We ourselves must find our happiness in being "holy and without blame in love." The Apostle John shows in his first epistle (chap. 4:13), that the divine nature is produced in the Christian: the Christian has received God's own Spirit; it is a man who loves, and God is in him and he in God. What is granted is nothing less than the communication of the divine nature, by which we dwell in God, and God in us, "that we might be holy and without blame before Him in love."

What we shall be above ought to be our aim here below, not as a task imposed, but as being made partakers of the divine nature to the glory of God. Now if we would realize these things, our thoughts must be above, according to the nature of the grace which we have received. It is most strengthening for us to think of the things which are above—of their source, of Jesus, of the fulfillment of this purpose of God in glory.

The Apostle has ever this adoption in view; God wills to have us for Himself before Him through Jesus, according to the good pleasure of His will, as His children. Now this is the glory of this grace which has placed us there. In these verses Paul speaks to us of the basis, of the means which God has employed, and on the certainty of which we can count. He speaks of it as a settled thing, as of a thing which we possess, and the possession of which, indeed, is necessary to us, in order that we may partake of all that of which He is about to speak to us.

This is the door by which we have come in; and having passed through the door, in Jesus, I have the certainty of being in the house. But it would be sorrowful to have Jesus only as the door, though it is precious to understand that. If we are not sure of a hearty welcome, and of the love of the Father, we depreciate the riches of His grace, for "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according

to the riches of His grace." v. 7. If in uncertainty we do not enjoy this grace, we do not really acknowledge it; and in order to do so we must give ourselves up entirely to God, to the power of the love of Him who tells us to come inside. Here we may remark, that the Spirit, while declaring to us very plainly what is the means of our salvation, does not reason upon it as elsewhere, making known to us its character and its sufficiency; but He speaks of it as a privilege that we possess; He tells us what we have in Christ, before showing what belongs to those who enjoy the effect of this redemption. We have redemption; and instructed in all things, we wait for the redemption of the body, in order to enjoy it. The only thing that we have to do is to contemplate the riches of the grace of God; this will be a means of drawing us close to Him.

We have seen in the preceding verses the purposes of God with regard to us, and the means which He employs to render us partakers of them; namely, redemption through Christ's blood, according to the riches of His grace. Now what we have before us is the portion we have now here below, the understanding of the mystery of God.

God has given us of His grace in all wisdom and prudence. He is not content with only giving us this portion, by bringing us into it hereafter; but He wishes to give us now, here below, the knowledge of it in all wisdom and prudence, according to His good pleasure. We have not to do with a God who sets us before His justice, but with a God of grace who acts according to His own thoughts. God wills that the Church should not be only such before Him, but that it should be also, here below, the depository of all His counsels; that it should have the understanding of the mystery of His will.

Verse 10 gives us the explanation of this mystery. God gathers together in one all things in Christ in the dispensation of the fullness of times. All that which preceded was preparatory; as the law, the prophets, etc. This verse speaks of the fullness of times, when God will arrange all things according to His mind, by setting Christ at the head of all things; and it is by being united to Him that we are made partakers of the inheritance. God acts of His own will to bring about what He wills. All shall be gathered together in one in Christ. It is by Him that all has been created, and by Him all is to be reconciled; and this is set forth here as the result of the counsels of God.

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