Isaiah - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Notes and Jottings, Revelation, Notes on

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IF we look at the Book of the Revelation generally, we shall see its division into three parts:-

In the first part, we find not so much the divinity or the humanity of Christ, as His personal or official glory (chap. 1).

In the second part, we see Christ judging the seven churches (chaps. 2 and 3).

In the third part, we have that which takes place after the church has been removed (chaps. 4-22).

In the addresses to the seven churches, it is interesting to note that what is taken up by the Spirit of God is so presented that there should be nothing to check the expectation of the Lord's return at the time these letters were written, and still less so now.

And so elsewhere. When the Spirit of God speaks of the Bridegroom not tarrying, He takes the things then present, and uses them as existing on to the end. It is so in Matt. 25, where the same virgins go to sleep and awake; and in the parable of the talents, the lord, at his return, requires at the hands of the same servants that with which they had been entrusted at the first.

And thus it is in the seven churches. The evils seen therein at the end were there at the first.

Ques. Does that show a cumulative responsibility?

I do not doubt it does. All the blood shed from Abel to Zecharias was to be required of that generation; Luke 11:51. And in Babylon was found the blood of all that had been slain upon the earth; Rev. 18:24.

After the seven churches, we find that which characterizes the Book of the Revelation generally is the throne. In chapter 4: 2, " A throne was set in heaven," and in chapter 1: 4, it is grace from before His throne.

Ques. What is meant by " to come," in that verse?

It does not refer to futurity of time, but to the coming One. "Which is," i.e., exists; "which was," i.e., has been revealed in time; and "is to come," i.e., the coming One.

Ques. Why is the "garment down to the foot "?

That is, as not in service. You have here a transitional aspect of Christ; there is no crown upon His head.

In chapter 4, the throne is that of Dan. 7, but with a larger development. It is not simply for judgment or government, for we find seraphim as well as cherubim.

Ques. What is the special difference between the two?

A cherub is the instrument of God's judicial power upon earth; like the cherubim which stopped the way to the tree of life; Gen. 3. But in Isa. 6, we find the seraphim, and there it is, not merely a throne governing in respect of responsibility but, God revealed in His own character; and so the seraphim cry, " Holy, holy, holy "; this was to bring man as man into God's presence, whether clean or unclean, and it goes right beyond Israelitish government. It was government, but as having respect to God's own nature in its holiness, and not merely to the particular revealed ways in which God dealt with Israel.

You do not find God saying to Israel, " I will punish you with the Assyrian "; but it was according to the terms in which He had made a covenant with them.

And it is so with us now. As life and incorruptibility are brought to light by the glad tidings, so God's wrath is " revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

In the seraph, then, we have, not exactly the executioner of governmental power, but the nature of God coming out. All this is seen in the living creatures; they are cherubim, but with the attributes of God; the heads of creation are also seen in them (which is cherubic), man, lion, bullock, eagle, and they are here used as symbols of the throne of judgment.

Observe that, in this connection, we have nothing to do with the name of " Father "; the names used being those of the Old Testament; neither in Isa. 6 is there anything to do with grace.

Cherubim are thus indicative of the government of God upon earth; seraphim, of His nature.

We find them both in Rev. 4, where the living creatures are of cherubic character, but crying, " Holy, holy, holy." Seraphim, means, " burners."

Ques. What is the character of the seven Spirits of God? They indicate wisdom, power, etc., i.e., all that is necessary for this government.

Next, we find the heavenly saints sitting on thrones ("seats" should be "thrones"), round the throne; they are seen here as kings, and, in the next chapter, as priests.

Ques. Why are the cherubim said to be in the midst of the throne?

They are the pillars of the throne; in the Psalms we read, " He sitteth between the cherubim." These same creatures are found in Ezekiel, and God is sitting on the top of them.

It is very noticeable that the sculptures which have been brought to this country from Assyria largely represent these attributes of God, which have been worshipped there, but there is no God upon them.

Ques. Are the cherubim, the church?

They may, or they may not be. In chapter 5, the beasts are identified with the church-saints, and the angels are viewed as a distinct, outside company.

The Lamb's taking the book marks the beginning of the coming age, though it is not actual as yet. Unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the habitable earth to come. Up to this time it is in subjection to the angels, but here no longer so; and we pass from angelic authority into saint authority. There are no angels in chapter 4, but in chapter 5, beasts and elders, and angels, worship together.

Ques. Are, then, the beasts symbols?

Yes, they are true symbols; for if they were persons, there would then be but four.

People try to make pictures of such things; but suppose you have seven heads and ten horns, as in Daniel, how can you put them together? How can they fit?

Another thing that strikes me is, that you never get angels giving a reason for their worship, but the elders, i.e., saints, do say why they worship.

I regard the church as the instrument of the power which is symbolized by the beasts.

Ques. " Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? " Does that come in here?

It will be part of it.

I do not take the Lamb in chapter 5: 6, to be the Redeemer in character. He is the Redeemer, but this is not the feature of His humiliation that comes before us here. He is seen, not as Redeemer, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, and as such, He opens the book.

Ques. What are the seven horns and the seven eyes?

The perfection of power and the perfection of intelligence. Ques. What is the difference between these eyes, and the eyes of the beasts within, as in chapter 4?

It is quite distinct action; here, they are sent out into all the earth; but in the other, it is divine perception of everything-the direct government of the earth, in contrast with the indirect government of God as now. In chapter 4: 6, the thought of the eyes is that of all-seeing; but in chapter 5, it is governmental intelligence. " Without," i.e., as seeing events; " within," as seeing by divine intelligence.

" Eyes within " are a real thing now; the spiritual man judgeth all things; we now have the mind of Christ; and, as to range, we shall not have more in the millennium. The church depends now, in point of fact, upon her spirituality. " Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

There is a perpetual contradiction between my place before God, as in the new creation, and the circumstances of my body, which is still part of the groaning creation.

In chapter 4, it is the praises of creation, and in chapter 5, the praises of redemption.

Ques. In chapter 4, have we the resumption of God's action on the earth?

Not exactly; we see that the thrones are set in view or all that is going to follow. When you get God in heaven, you must have that which is according to God in heaven, and therefore the seraphim are brought in here. When, too, man fails in his place, God comes out according to what He is in Himself. Just as, in the first three gospels, we have the presentation of Christ to men in their responsibility and their rejection of Him; so, in the last gospel, there is the bringing in of God.

Ques. But is not the gospel of John limited to the Jews? No; " I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world."

Ques. But has not such an interpretation been put on John's gospel?

Whenever you put an interpretation, you go wrong; there is a remark of one of the old fathers (so-called), to this effect, that " he reads Scripture well, who brings back a sense from it, and not one to it."

In chapter 6, the dealings of God, when the horses come out, are in view of the Lamb.

It is not God, but the kings who say, " the great day of his wrath is come "; this is not really the end, though it has been so taken.

In chapter 7 the church is no longer here; the closing verses do not refer to us, for it all takes place after the church is gone. It is a striking evidence as to the state of souls, that this description should be taken to be that of the highest kind of blessing, whereas, after all, it is blessing for those saints who will be found on the earth after the church has been removed. A frequent use of this passage is that which makes God a mere Comforter of man now, just relieving man where he is. Of course, it is blessed, because it is really consolation from God.

The presence of the temple shows it is not the church. Yet these saints will have the advantage over those who have their origin in the millennium, because they have had to go through the great tribulation in which they have learned most blessed experiences of God. At the

present time, the church has dropped down to the condition of earth, so that Christians have assumed all this applies to them. It is not so, because it is written of those who have come out of the great tribulation.

Ques. If the church is already gone from the earth, where does this multitude come from?

Clearly from the peoples still living upon the earth. Ques. What is the nature of the " everlasting gospel "?

It is an immediate warning of judgment, something like John the baptist's gospel.

Ques. Does the great multitude include the hundred and forty-four thousand?

No. This is not the time of Jacob's trouble of Jeremiah and Matt. 24, though contemporary with it. The great tribulation comes on all the earth, and is confined to the three and a half years.

It is my own conviction that in the Revelation only the last half of the seventieth week of Daniel is referred to.

Ques. What are the "white robes" of Rev. 6:11? The sign, I suppose, of acceptance in righteousness. The sixth seal has the character of an answer to their prayer.

From Psa. 93-100 we can see the character of the everlasting gospel. Psa. 93 exhibits Jehovah reigning, and the throne established in holiness after all the raging of men.

Psa. 94 is a cry in distress for Jehovah's coming in vengeance, and for the power of wickedness to be set aside.

Psa. 95 is a last appeal to Israel to come to Jehovah as their God.

Psa. 96 is a testimony that goes out to the Gentiles because Jehovah is coming.

Psa. 97 is Jehovah actually coming in the full power of His reign.

Psa. 98, that He is come; and that He remembers His truth to Israel, and sets aside their enemies.

In Psa. 99 He is seen sitting between the cherubim in Jerusalem on earth.

Psa. 100 is the call to the Gentiles to come up and praise.

Ques. What is the silence spoken of in chapter 8: 1?

That after the terrible shaking at the end of the sixth seal, there is no action in heaven's mind.

Thereupon, another angel-Christ-comes and stands at the altar, and gives efficacy (this is, I believe, the force of it) to the prayers of the saints. It struck me, the other day, that when we see the saints as priests, they do not pray at all. But here, when Christ is priest, He adds incense and gives efficacy to the saints' prayers. These latter are suffering saints on earth; chap. 8: 4.

In the first four trumpets, we have judgments on the state and circumstances of people. God is here clearing the ground. Christ is not seen in action through these scenes, His proper judicial action not being manifested until chapter 19. The Lamb does not anything more here than to open the seals. This continues to chapter II: 17, and then, in verse 18, we are carried right over to the end of all.

In chapters 12-16 we have the opening out of fuller details, with chapters 17 and 18 added as an appendix to the two previous ones (chapters 15 and 16).

After which, Christ comes out, and the final scene is then displayed.

In the earlier trumpets we have, I believe, the judgments of the western nations; and in the fifth and sixth trumpets, that of the eastern nations. The seventh trumpet closes up everything. In the first four, the state of things is touched. Grass represents general prosperity. In chapters 9 and 10, people are attacked. The contents of the little book of chapter 10 are found in chapter 11.

Possession is about to be taken of everything, and the angel, therefore, declares there shall be no longer delay; chap. 10: 6 (New Translation).

Then follows the last persecution of Jerusalem. The holy city is trodden under-foot forty-two months; whilst from chapter 13: 5, we see that the beast continues for the same period. The forty-two months and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, I take to represent the same space of time; if it were not so, the second verse should follow the third verse.

The only place where we have the whole week distinctly mentioned is in Dan. 9 He does not say how long after the sixty-two weeks, the cutting off of Messiah takes place. But to us, and to faith, Christ's ministry was the first half of the seventieth week; and that is just what unbelieving Jews do not own. Notice, too, that in Dan. 7:25, the times and laws are given, not, as some have said, into the hands of the saints, but into the beast's hands.

Ques. Do you think that the first book of the Psalms refers to the first half-week?

Yes, I do. Observe this, that when Christ came, the nation would not receive Him, though a remnant did; but when the false Christ comes, it will be the reverse of this, for then the nation will receive him, but the remnant will not.

There will be both worship and testimony during the forty-two months.

Ques. If the forty-two months and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days be the same period, why is it not forty-two months also in verse 3?

In verse 3, it is given in days to show the constancy of the testimony, which is a daily one.

We must remember that all computation of time is Jewish, and not at all for the church; we belong to heaven, and we do not count time in heaven.

Ques. What about the children of the saints, after we have been caught up, if they have refused the truth In that case, they will be lost; but if they died now, it would be just the same thing.

The best thing for us is to have a heavenly portion and hope to draw our hearts out of the world; but so often it is by the candle of the Lord that we are driven out of it rather than by the drawing of the Daystar.

In chapter 11: 19, God is giving a heavenly security to His covenant with Israel.

In chapter 12, the sun is the emblem of supreme authority. A circle is a divine thing; a cube is finite; you never get to the end of a circle, but you do to a cube every way.

To the woman a child is born. Then the devil, in the shape of the Roman empire, wants to devour the child, which is caught up to the throne of God, whilst the woman is left to persecution. This introduces the three and a half years. The devil is cast out of heaven at the beginning of the last half-week.

Ques. Is the woman Judah only?

She is Israel as well; for she has a crown of twelve stars. Chapter 13 gives us both the persecution and the instruments of it. We find there, also, a second beast, whom I believe to be the antichrist, because he has two horns and he speaks like a lamb. In chapter 12 The devil is anti-priest, accuser of the brethren, but here, he is seen as cast out of heaven, and consequently, no longer as anti-priest; so he takes the place of king and prophet; it is false, of course. The two horns indicate power, rule.

Chapter 14 gives the process of God's dealing at this time; first, the everlasting gospel is proclaimed, and then the Son of man comes and reaps the harvest.

In chapter 7, we find a mystic number of all who may be gathered from east, west, north, and south; but here, in chapter 14, it is those who have been specially faithful in time of trial. They learn the heavenly song, though they are not in heaven. It is then too late to be taken up to heaven, unless they are killed, and they therefore follow the Lamb upon earth. They are the first-fruits on earth, just as we are the first-fruits in heaven. Chapters 12—14 go together. In chapters 15 and 16, the vials of God's wrath are poured out Chapter 15 begins before the end of chapter 14. Each angel,' implies that there is a distinct testimony borne. And notice that there are seven distinct testimonies found in chapter 14.

Babylon is the evil of corruption, but the beast is the evil of power. Each is a center; only the corrupt system rides the beast, and is finally destroyed, not by the Lamb, but, providentially by God.

In chapter 17, we have the connection of the beast with Babylon; and in chapter 18, the judgment of Babylon. Observe, too, that though the beast was the killer of people, yet all the blood of prophets and saints was found in Babylon, just as of old all the blood shed from Abel onwards was found in Jerusalem.

Corrupt religionism is the most hateful thing of all to God.

In chapter 19, the marriage of the Lamb is come, followed by Christ coming out and destroying the beast. It is Christ's coming and taking power.

In chapter 20, Satan is bound; and then we have the millennium and the resurrection of the wicked dead.

The eighth verse of chapter 21 finishes, properly speaking, the prophecy. From verse 9, we have the description of the heavenly Jerusalem; and then, lastly, warnings.

And just as, at the beginning of the book, we have the relationship of the church with Christ, so again, after the book is ended, do we find the same thing.

Ques. Is there any. connection between this Jerusalem and that mentioned in Heb. 12?

There, we have Mount Zion, which is royal grace on earth in contrast with Sinai; the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly; the church of the first-born which are written in heaven; God the Judge of all, not in sovereign grace, but power in judging; so, next, just men are brought in; then, the Mediator of the new covenant, which introduces earthly blessing; and, lastly, the blood of sprinkling.

Ques. But did not Abraham look for that city?

Yes; not that I believe he has it, but he looked for the blessing that accompanied that state of things.

Eph. 5 settles for us who is the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife; and also what is the heavenly Jerusalem.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 3, What Do the Scriptures Teach Concerning Judgment to Come?

FIRST, that definitive and final judgment is entirely committed to the Son.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." (John 5:22, 23.) The Father "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is Son of man." (Ver. 27.)

As regards our sojourning in this world, the Father does judge (1 Peter 1:17): "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed... but with the precious blood of Christ." This judgment is carried into effect in the holiness of His nature against evil, and in His fatherly care of us in holiness: as it is written, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name," &c. (John 17:11.) And so we have to judge ourselves; and if we do not, we are judged of the Lord. There is His government in this respect. (1 Cor. 10:31, 32.) It is chastening. Compare Job 33 and 36.

Christ judges the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. Now is not the time of Christ's judgment, save as Lord over His people for their good, as we have seen. It is the time of grace to the world. That the Jews as a nation are rejected is, as to God's dealings, the reconciling of the world, the accepted time, the day of salvation. Of course God can interfere in judgment, supremely if He pleases, as He once did in the flood, not a sparrow falling to the ground without Him. But this time is the time of grace to the world. When He appears and establishes the kingdom, it will be the time of judgment. As it is expressed in the Psalms; "judgment shall return unto righteousness and all the upright in heart shall follow it." (Psa. 94:15.) In the cross, though infinitely deeper things were wrought by it, and divine righteousness established through it, yet righteousness was not made good in this world, but the contrary. Righteousness was found in the person of Christ; judgment in the hands of Pilate, or the chiefs of the Jews. When Christ appears for His kingdom, judgment and righteousness will go together in the earth. As it is written (Psa. 94), " Jehovah, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth. Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud. Jehovah! how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?" Christ comes to judge the quick: "He cometh, he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness." (Psa. 96:13.) "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world [habitable earth] in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts 17:31.)

When the Lord judges the dead, He does not come at all. " I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened." (Rev. 20:11, 12.) Here there is no coming to the earth or coming again in any way. One sits on a great white throne, and heaven and earth flee away. At the judgment of the dead there is no coming of Christ. His kingdom is given up after it is executed, but not till then. (Compare 1 Cor. 15:24.)... But there is another judgment, that of the quick or living (a judgment of this world), for which Christ comes; which will be like the days of Noah and Lot: there will be eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, marrying, and giving in marriage, and the day will come upon them like a thief in the night. It is clear this is a different scene from the great white throne. There is no buying and selling there, in the midst of which they are caught.

Yet, when Christ comes to judgment, there will then be those who are "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." (2 Thess. 1:9, 10) At this judgment of the quick, Christ comes, He appears. The holy angels come with Him, as in the passage just quoted from verse 7, "The Son of man... shall come in his own glory', and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26.) I might cite other passages, but these are clear.

But He brings His saints with Him too: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thess. 4: I4.1) Chapter 5 shows that this is the time of the judgment of the careless on the earth. And this truth of the saints coming with Christ, when He appears to judge the quick, is largely and fully taught in scripture. Even in the Old Testament we read (in Zech. 14:5), "And Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." That is the day when "Jehovah shall be king over all the earth." (Ver. 9.) So in Jude: "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all." (Ver. 14, 15.) Nor is it the angels alone who are spoken of, as in some of these passages it might be alleged, though groundlessly. They will come; but Col. 3:4 cannot apply to them: nor 1 Thess. 4; nor Rev. 17

"They that are with him are called, and chosen and faithful:" nor again, in the chapter where it is fully brought out-Rev. 19, where the clean linen is the righteousness of the saints; when the Lord comes "as King of kings" to judge and destroy the beast and his armies, and Satan is bound, and the saints are seated on thrones, and judgment is given unto them; for the saints shall judge the world and even angels. (1 Cor. 6:2, 3.) In Isa. 66:16, we find this judgment also of the quick, with the solemn declaration: "It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations," &c., where we see that in this judgment of the quick some will escape. This will be seen, as to the Jews in Zech. 13; as to the ten tribes, in Ezekiel 20; as to Gog, in Ezek. 39 It may not be amiss to quote another passage relating to this judgment of the living: "Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, 0 Jehovah. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. Jehovah also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but Jehovah will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." And the abiding blessing of Jerusalem is then spoken of (Joel 3:11, and following).

Were I to enter into details I should multiply passages too much, and perhaps distract the reader from the main point. An earthly judgment was familiar to the Jews; a judgment of the dead little so. To us, one of the dead is familiar; one of the quick far less so. Hence it was needful to quote a greater number of passages. The last passage refers to the time (as indeed all do that speak of the judgment of the quick) when Jehovah shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem; when God will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat;2 and will plead with them there for His people. (Joel 3:1, 2.) Psa. 93 to too describe this scene in general, including the precious call to all who have ears to hear-it is reproduced in Rev. 14:6, 7: judgments on the earth following also there. The parable of the sheep, goats, and brethren (Matt. 25) describes the judgment of the nations-not exactly the destruction of the beast and his armies and the false prophet. That is executed by Christ as coming from heaven, and as a warlike judgment. "And in righteousness doth he judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11): it is the destruction of those who, animated by Satan, rise up against Him.

But, besides the warrior-judgment, there is a sessional judgment, when, by the destruction of the beast and Antichrist, Christ has taken the throne of Jehovah on the earth at Jerusalem; for Jerusalem is to be called the throne of Jehovah. (Jer. 3:17.)

Let us now examine the passage in Matt. 1 do it with more detail because it is the passage which stands in the way of many, and is appealed to as a description of a general judgment (a thing unknown to scripture); whereas it is simply and exclusively (as is stated in the passage

itself) the judgment of the Gentiles or nations, not of any dead persons at all. In the end of Matt. 23, the Lord, addressing Jerusalem, declares her house is left desolate to them, and He declares they would not see Him thenceforth till they said, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The Lord then (in chap. 24:31) gives an account of all that was connected with the testimony among the Jews till He came-when "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." He then exhorts His disciples, and in three parables presents the responsibility of Christians in His absence, showing that the putting off of His own return would lead the public ministry of the Church to hierarchical oppression and worldliness, as has happened; and that the actual delay would lead even true saints to forget His return and go to sleep as to thus waiting for Him; but what would awaken them was the midnight cry that He was coming; and, lastly, the service of the saints in His absence (namely, the use of the gifts which He had left to them on His going away to receive the kingdom) is judged of in the parable of the talents.

Thus, what concerns the Jewish people having been fully gone into in Matt. 24:1-31; and then, in the parenthetical exhortations and parables, the conduct of Christians and their motives in reference to His return set forth, after that the historical part is resumed in chapter 25: 31. " When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him." This will not be a transient act like a flash of lightning, but "He shall sit on the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all the nations [the Gentiles]." Israel and Christians have been already spoken of. Now the gospel of the kingdom had gone out (chap. 24: 14) as a testimony to all nations (all the Gentiles), and then the end was to come. And now the end was come; and the nations were judged-the quick-according as they had received these messengers of the kingdom. It is a mistake to say that there are two classes here. There are three; the sheep, the goats, and the brethren. The goats had despised this final message of the kingdom and were condemned. The sheep had received the messengers and were blessed; their treating the brethren so, was as if they had treated Christ in the same way. There is not a word about the resurrection.3 Those judged are the nations (or Gentiles) upon the earth when Christ comes. Christ as King will sit and judge the Gentiles. That is the express statement, and it is an event often spoken of by the prophets.

I have dwelt more fully on this passage because it is that which, from old traditional teaching, hinders people receiving the plain and positive testimonies of the word of God. It is simply and expressly the judgment of the Gentiles upon the earth: for when Christ comes and appears in glory, He comes to earth; and He must judge the quick as well as the dead; and as regards the quick (as the very word itself means, those living on the earth), when they will be eating and drinking, buying and selling, saying Peace and safety, "as a snare shall it come upon them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth."

Many details might be gone into; the judgment of the Jewish people and Jerusalem, the judgment of the beast, of Gog in Idumea, which vary in details and character so as to distinguish even the Jews (who having rejected Christ receive Antichrist) and the ten tribes (who do neither); but this would lead me too far from my object. Suffice it to say that Matt. 25 describes the sessional judgment of the nations by the Son of man when He is come. It has nothing to do with the dead.

Let us now inquire how far, and how, does judgment apply to us-to the [heavenly] saints? First, from the judgment of the quick and the dead (which is to take place at His appearing and His kingdom) they are clearly wholly exempt: for when He appears, they shall appear with Him in glory; they come with Him when He comes to execute judgment. (Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4; Rev. 19.) This is confirmed by the striking scene in Rev. 4, where the throne (not of grace, but) of judgment, of thunderings, lightnings, and voices, is set in heaven. There are twenty-four elders, the kings and priests, are sitting on twenty-four thrones around. I need not recall the many passages already cited which speak of their coming with Him. But there are other scriptures which refer to the subject.

But first let us recognize that we are all subject to condemnation, and liable in ourselves to judgment as responsible to God. That is a great foundation truth which is at the basis of salvation as well as of wrath. Nothing must be allowed to weaken that, and further, that "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:12.) We shall all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body. (2 Cor. 5:10.) "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." (Rom. 14:10.) But the Christian has, through grace, anticipated this. He has recognized by divine teaching that condemnation is his own portion; he knows that in him, that is in the flesh, dwells no good thing; he has said in spirit, "enter not into judgment with thy servant, 0 Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

In a word, the sentence of the day of judgment has passed upon his soul by faith. He knows that he that believes not is condemned already; and he has applied to himself the sentence: "there is none righteous, no not one;" he has gone farther-if really clear as to his state-and learned that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." In a word, he has recognized, by a divine work in his own soul, what sin is before God as the judgment-seat will show it. The feeling may have been deeper or less deep, but if one is a Christian at all, it has been truthful in this respect. But then he has recognized that He who is to judge the quick and the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ, has also (anticipating that day) stepped in, in grace, as a Savior before He becomes a judge, and has borne his sins in His own body on the tree, and, in blessed obedience and love, drunk the cup of wrath. The sins, for which himself would have had to be judged, and certainly and justly condemned, have been borne already by another, and that other the One who is to judge; and that, if this were not so, he is condemned. He owns it to be a perfect work; perfect in every respect, perfect to glorify God, and perfect as regards all his sins; and he owns that if Christ has not completed that work in dying once for all, it never can be completed, nor God glorified about sin; and that, if all his sins were not put away then, they never can be, because Christ cannot die over again; but that indeed, having by Himself purged our sins, He has sat down forever on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, having by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified; so that there is now no more offering for sin. He may feel them, though gone, more deeply (it is most right he should); he may see more deeply what they are (and the nearer he draws to God, the more deeply will he see the horror and baseness of them); but the work which has put them away is done and cannot be repeated. And when he is manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, he is before Him who Himself put them all away. Christ must deny Himself if He imputes them to him.

But, further, in what state does the Christian appear before the Lord? He is raised in glory. No judgment can apply to him which can affect his being in glory, for he is in it already when he appears there. And to what extent does this go? Judgment begins when Christ appears. "He shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;" but, "when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3: 2.) We are "conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29.) We have borne the image of the earthy, and we shall bear the image of the heavenly. (1 Cor. 15:49.) What is judgment, if we are completely like the judge, and He Himself our righteousness? And the knowledge of this is applied to our present happiness in this world. "Herein is love made perfect4 with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17.) The truth is,

though we may all pass through it as an experience, hope for the day of judgment is an imperfect and ill-founded feeling which cannot be justified. If I am judged, I shall certainly be condemned; if justified, there is no judgment for me. Hope, though very natural, is here the result of human reasoning, not the simplicity of divinely wrought faith. But the more we reflect on what scripture teaches, the more shall we see the truth on which I am dwelling.

When we depart or are absent from the body, we are with Christ, present with the Lord (as we speak) in heaven. Could Paul or Stephen be taken out of heaven to be judged as to whether he should have a place there? This is not what scripture teaches. It teaches an accomplished salvation, in virtue of which being justified we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God; in which we say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" But, further, how is it that we believers arrive before the judgment seat of Christ? "Let not your heart be troubled" (says the Lord, John 14:1)... "I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." That is, the way I come up before Christ is that He so loves me that He comes Himself to fetch me, that I may be with Himself. And so the apostle teaches us (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17): "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain [to the coming of the Lord] 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." That is a blessed way of going before the judgment seat. And so in Phil. 3:20, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

In a word, we go up before the judgment-seat of Christ, in that Christ (who has loved us, and given Himself for us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood; who comes Himself to fetch us, and changes our vile body into the likeness of His glorious body) raises us, or changes us into glory, and takes us, made like Himself, to be with Himself forever, who in His own resurrection was the firstfruits of the saints that slept. Such is the scriptural account of the way we go up before, and the state in which we are manifested before, the judgment-seat of Christ.

And scripture is yet more precise as to the question of our being judged. In John 5 this question is directly treated of. Two means are stated by which the glory of the Son is secured. In one He works in common with the Father; in the other, alone. The two are life-giving and executing judgment: one, that by which we are brought to enjoy communion with the Father and the Son; the other, that by which the Son's glory is secured in the case of the wicked who reject Him. These two are not confounded. He does not bring into question the truth of the life He has communicated by calling the quickened into judgment. In which (the question naturally arises) is my part? The Lord answers (in ver. 24), "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life" (he is quicken& "and shall not come into judgment,5 but is passed from death unto life." He is not to be tried, as on the footing of his own conduct, to know if he can be received. He was dead in sins, but has been brought out of that totally lost state into a new one by the quickening power of the Son of God. So in the resurrection; there is a resurrection of the just to life, and a resurrection of the wicked to judgment. Those who have everlasting life do not come into judgment. (Ver. 29.)

This contrast of the natural portion of man in judgment, and the value of the cross of Christ-as come to deliver and redeem- is strikingly shown in the end of Heb. 9 "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." He appeared the first time to be made sin for sin, but to put it away by the sacrifice of Himself. This He accomplished for us, and He who was ever sinless Himself, having put it away for us the first time He came, appears unto those who look for Him the second time, not having to say to it at all, to take us into the full salvation of glory. Man's portion as such is death and judgment. The believer's portion is Christ's bearing and putting away his sins; and then coming to bring him to glory. Hence, when the throne of judgment is set, the kings and priests are seen sitting on four and twenty thrones around it, and come back in glory with Christ when He executes it on the earth.

A striking instance of the effect of the thought of judgment according to scripture will be found in 2 Cor. 5 The apostle first looks at the proper portion of the saint, not as death and judgment, or even death and happiness. It is mortality being swallowed up of life, the mortal body being changed into glory, without death's necessarily intervening at all. But death and judgment are fallen man's portion; and if death did thus intervene, confidence remained unmoved, for he had divine life, and, if he were absent from the body, he would be present with the Lord. Then he considers judgment, calls it the terror of the Lord, looks it fully in the face, knows it, states we shall all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ; and then, what- trembles or thinks of himself? In no wise; he persuades men. Its terror produces no effect of terror at all on his own mind. It was a judgment which, as such, affected others. It had however a powerful influence on his heart and conscience. Others were not free as he was. And the thought of that day stirs up the love of Christ constrainingly, and he persuades men who were not ready for it; but then, secondly, it brings him into God's judgment as a present thing in a sanctifying way. We are, says he (not shall be), manifested to God. And this is a most important effect; nothing more, practically, than bringing us into the presence of God to judge ourselves, and to do so as to good and evil, as it will be judged of in that day. Such then was the effect on Paul: no terror for him in that day of terror, but a stimulus to his seeking unconverted sinners, and keeping his soul in the presence and fear of God.

Another expression in this passage calls for remark-" to receive the things done in the body." The expression, "judgment," is carefully avoided, even when in a certain sense there is such. Man would soon turn it into a question of the acceptance of the person. As regards the wicked, I need not dwell on it. They will receive the things done in the body, it will be their condemnation; but as regards the saints, they will also. As regards acceptance, we are in Christ, all accepted alike-all to be conformed to the image of the Son-all having Christ for our righteousness. Paul cannot have one more perfect or a higher glory.

But, besides this, saints have the privilege of service, of being the vessels of God's love to others. In the work of the Holy Ghost by us there is a difference. And while all is pre-ordered of God, and to sit on Christ's right hand and on His left is for those for whom it is prepared of the Father, yet we do receive through grace the reward of labor, and every man his own reward according to his own labor. Scripture speaks of receiving a full reward. The Thessalonians will be Paul's joy and crown of rejoicing, not ours, as the fruit of our labors. If we have built with wood, hay, and stubble, all will be lost, though we are saved. In a word righteousness is in Christ, the same for all; service is rewarded.

Another point remains. We shall be in glory, we shall not even have the nature, the flesh in which we sinned; but we shall know as we are known, and give an account of ourselves to God, re-pass our whole life and all God's blessed ways with us, see it all as God sees it, and wonder at the all-perfect grace which has led us onward from our birth. Now when I look back, I adore God's grace. Then I shall know as I am known, and see the thousand instances of how His eye has watched over me to bless me. We are manifested thus now, even in thinking of it. We shall give an account then, in fact; but it is when we are glorified, and brought to be with Christ by Himself forever. As to judgment there is

no such thing for the saint, understood as pronouncing on his state. He is already in glory when he stands before Christ. On that scripture leaves no doubt, no ambiguity.

There is then a judgment of the quick when Christ comes; a judgment of the dead afterward before the great white throne. There is a continuing judgment when Christ returns, in a more general sense, of power associated with righteousness governing the earth, of which prophecy specially treats:-a subject full of interest, but too long to be entered on here. For the saints is no judgment at all: Christ comes to receive them to Himself, and raises them in glory to have them with Him. But they do give an account of themselves to God when in glory, and receive the reward of service, though it be grace that has wrought it in them. Such is the scriptural instruction on this subject.

Letters 2, Israel Saved as a Nation

There is no telling what folly man's mind will run to: still, soundness in faith, fundamental truth, will keep the soul from these human wanderings. I have heard of this folly once. When he says, Of Jacob's seed God made no selection, but accepted them all': what does accepted mean? That nationally Israel is accepted for earthly things, and called so (John 3), scripture teaches, but who told him they were accepted for heavenly things, or as righteous? This is inventing, not believing. That Jacob or Israel is elect for earth, scripture does teach; and that as a nation they will be blessed—the gifts and calling of God being without repentance—scripture teaches. But this says nothing as to their souls being saved; but the positive testimonies to the contrary are clear. (Isa. 65:9.) Read the whole chapter, which teaches positively that only a remnant shall be saved. Chapter 66 shows the same truth if there be intelligence. Rom. 11, while plainly declaring their certain blessing as a nation, yet lays it in an election according to grace, and at the time of the people's deliverance—when "all Israel shall be saved." Dan. 12 is quite clear that an elect remnant only who are written in the book shall be delivered, and that many shall arise to shame and everlasting contempt. Zech. 13:8, 9 is also clear as to there being only a remnant spared from the great tribulation; if the Lord had not left them a very small remnant, they would be as Sodom and Gomorrah. And note, these statements apply to the time when it is said all Israel (not all the Israelites) shall be saved. Isa. 4 clearly teaches the same truth, that it is in a very small remnant this blessing will be effected: not all Israel, because they are not gathered to the church, but saved as a people—all that are spared.

As to the ten tribes we have the same testimony, that only a remnant will be delivered. Zechariah shows us two thirds cut off in the land—Jews. Ezek. 20 teaches us that the rebels of the ten tribes will be purged out, and not allowed to enter into the land. And in this very place where the rebels are cut off, and not allowed to enter into the land, there it is said of all the spared ones, "There shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me," making the teaching of scripture too plain to leave a trace of doubt. But the truth should have hindered such a delusion, because where Israel's restoration is taught, it is not only said they were blinded, but they did not attain to the law of righteousness. The application of "mercy upon all" is an utter misapplication. What the apostle is teaching is, that as the Gentiles had no promises, and it was sovereign mercy to them, so the Jews, having not only broken the law, but rejected the promises in rejecting Christ, in whom they were, come under mercy like a Gentile, though the promises would be fulfilled. The "all" in verse 32 (Rom. 11) refers to Jews, and Gentiles in verses 30, 31. In the last you must read, "Have not believed in your mercy that they may be objects of mercy." (See Isa. 10:20-22.) Nothing can be plainer that the deliverance is for the remnant only.

But again, the blood saved them, he says, in Egypt; but what utter darkness is this—confounding the type and the antitype. The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin. God was passing through to destroy the firstborn, and He did not enter into their houses: nor is there one word in the passage about saving anybody. No doubt the firstborn were not destroyed. It is never said in the antitype that He died to save all the individuals. The nation will be restored. Whatever has their deliverance at the Red Sea to do with their souls? But two were saved after all. Even with that outward salvation, in result their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Aaron's priesthood never saved a single soul, was a shadow of good. things to come; and even so only carried them nationally, not individually, on his dress. And in the covenant with Abraham quoted, the promise is of the land of Canaan.... This promise though obtained through Christ, and mercy (Rom. 11), is distinguished carefully there from the promise of Christ (Gen. 12) the one seed, confirmed to the seed, Gen. 22 There is a distinction between the literal and spiritual seed (but which he confounds), and the literal will have the land, which is not personal salvation: and "they are not all Israel which are of Israel," the apostle tells us. So that the ceasing of the distinction (which he teaches) when we come to Israel, is exactly denied by the apostle. And it is just where the apostle is insisting on the privileges of Israel that he makes the distinction which this dream denies: "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." The whole ninth chapter of Romans is an elaborate argument to destroy this Jewish fallacy, yet secure the earthly promise to a spared remnant by sovereign grace. What the paper argues for, the Holy Ghost carefully shows to be folly.

The purpose of God in their fall has nothing to do with the condition of those who did fall, rejecting Christ, yea, blaspheming the Holy Ghost, so that there was no forgiveness in that or the coming age—" never forgiveness"—and on whom the Lord pronounced the damnation of hell. And what he says as to the Holy Ghost excusing them because of their ignorance is wholly false: there was a suspension of judgment through Christ's intercession; and the Holy Ghost by Peter says, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out"; but they did not repent, but stopped their mouths, and Stephen, summing up against them, declares that they resisted the Holy Ghost as well as incurred all other guilt under law, prophets and Christ. The spared remnant will be all righteous; all the rebels will have been cut off. If two were in one bed, the one would be taken in judgment, the other left. For God will then return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. They will be graffed in again into their own vine.... Christ, and Christ only, is the true vine, and even there fruitless branches are broken off: but though, as a nation, Israel was a vine brought out of Egypt, it never was the true vine. I have no doubt that the nation will be restored, and have the promises in the land; but what has that to do with all their souls being saved—unless to turn people away from the truth?

There is only one thing more to mention, the giving up the kingdom—it is "that God may be all in all"; and the earth will be destroyed, and the elements melt with fervent heat. The making Israel priestly to slay Christ is too bad. If the words Christ spoke will judge them in the last day, they have no cloak for their sin; they have seen and have hated both Him and His Father. They were blinded in rejecting Christ, lest they should be converted, and Jehovah should heal them. "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already"—because these believed not, would not come to Him, that they might have life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (See John 8:41-48.) Paul taught they were "the children of wrath

even as others," and "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly." So Christ said they were not Abraham's children, though outwardly so. They were not to think within themselves that Abraham was their father: and John anticipated the terrible words of Jesus—" Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, How can ye escape the damnation of hell?"—"He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

I have forgotten to notice Ezek. 37 I deny it means any resurrection of bodies at all, and for a very plain reason, that it is explained otherwise in the passage (ver. 11), "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts." And we have a prophecy which explains it all besides, where the whole house of Israel is explained to be contrasted with the Jews, and the stick of Israel and the stick of Judah are to be united in the land, and God will take them from among the heathen, whither they be gone—He does not say, the good and believing ones; but He does say He will purify them and sanctify them, in words which, if not quoted, are referred to by the Lord in John 3, where He insists that unless born again (speaking in Israel) none should see or enter the kingdom of God. And we have already seen that in chapter xx. this prophet declares from God that He will purge out the rebels in the way, and they shall not enter the land. The whole thought is a denial of the constantly repeated declaration that a remnant should be saved, and what is worse, of the plain declarations of the word of God as to being saved or lost.

1878.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Doctrinal 2, Eternal Punishment, Brief Scriptural Evidence on the Doctrine of

The doctrine of everlasting punishment having been much called in question, and the minds of the simple shaken, and the faith of some overthrown (though I have been occupied with the subject, more at large, for some time back, with the purpose of writing on it), I have thought it well to publish some brief pages meanwhile for plain people. And here to such I would suggest to distrust those who talk much about Greek to those who do not understand it. It is easy thus to impose on people. It is useful to know Greek, no doubt, in studying the New Testament, because it was written in Greek; and it is perfectly fair to refer to it with those who, knowing Greek, can judge of what is said; but it is very suspicious when much quoted to those who do not; for how can they judge about it? A man tells you " eternal " does not mean " eternal " in Greek. That sounds very conclusive; but how can you judge whether it does or not? Now in all those who talk much about Greek to plain people, I have generally found trickery; and that their Greek has not been worth much when put to the test by those who did understand it. Without pretending to be very learned, I know Greek, and I have studied the Greek Testament, and I have not been led to place any confidence in their statements about the Greek, but the contrary. The Spirit of God will guide more surely a plain man, if he be humble, in fundamental truths, than a little Greek will those who trust in it.

Now, to a plain man, the statements of his English Bible leave not a doubt on the mind that the punishment of the wicked is eternal.

These statements, I have no doubt whatever, are substantially right. No doubt, being a human work, translations are imperfect, and the translator's views and feelings are apt to be transfused into them. But in the main, the doctrine presented by the English Bible, and the faith produced by it in a plain believer's mind, is sound doctrine and divinely-taught faith, though it be possible some passages might be more exactly rendered. None, however, that I am aware, affecting this truth are misrepresented by the translation. And it is quite evident to me, and to any plain honest man, that God meant to produce on the mind of the reader the conviction that eternal misery is the portion of the wicked, and I do not believe that He meant to produce the conviction of a lie, nor frighten them with what was not true. Now I shall quote many plain passages, adding my unhesitating conviction that the attempts to undermine this doctrine of scripture (and I have been compelled to examine a good many) have entirely failed, and that the arguments used are either dishonest, some of them flagrantly so, or contradictory and fallacious, and that all of them subvert other fundamental truths. And I declare also my conviction that a sound knowledge of Greek confirms the plain man's scriptural faith. I shall state why in a few plain words at the end.

I give a body of texts (some of which by themselves might not prove the point), that the effect the Holy Ghost meant to produce may be wrought according to the full testimony He has given. I beg the plain reader's attention to these passages. Some refute the doctrine of the salvation of all; some, the notion that the wicked will perish, i.e., cease to exist. Some show that the human notion of divine love, which denies the vindication of God's majesty and holiness against sin by wrath, and the eternal impossibility that light should have fellowship with darkness, is an unscriptural and an unholy notion. Some refute particular arguments used in favor of these errors. So that, if the mind be solidly imbued with these passages, the error is confuted; and, lastly, some of them show, that the doctrine of scripture is, that there is wrath, and that everlasting misery and punishment is the portion of unbelieving and rebellious sinners. Some show that it applies to all kinds of sinners, without law, under law, and unbelievers of the gospel.

I shall quote figurative as well as plain statements, because figures are meant by God to produce some conviction, the exact force being no doubt to be sought in exact expressions. Matt. 3:10, 12; ch. 5: 22, 29, 30; ch. 6: 15; ch. 7: 13, 23;1 ch. 8: 12; ch. 10: 28, 33; ch. 11: 22; ch. 12: 31, 32; ch. 13: 4o,2 41, 49; ch. 18: 8, 9;3; ch. 22: 13; ch. 23: 33; ch. 25: 46;4 ch. 26: 24. Mark 3:22; ch. 8: 36; ch. 9: 43; ch. 16: 16. Luke 12:4, 5, 9, 10; ch. 16: 19-31. John 3:3, 15, 36; ch. 5: 29;5 ch. 6: 53; ch. 8: 24. Acts 1:25. Rom. 1:18; ch. 2: 5-16; ch. 9: 22. 61 Cor. 1:18;7 ch. 3: 15. Phil. 1:28; ch. 3: 18. 2 Thessalonians: 8-10; ch. 2: 10-12. 1 Tim. 6:9. Heb. 6:6; ch. 10: 26-31; ch. I I: 27. James 5:20. 2 Peter 2:9, 17, 21; ch. 3: 7. 1 John 5:12. Jude 13. Rev. 14:9, 10; ch. 20: 10-15; ch. 21:

Now no one can deny that the effect of these passages is, to lead men to believe that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness, as well as His love in Christ; that, if this love be despised, and the gospel rejected, damnation is the consequence; that, as to those who come under wrath, their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; that they have never forgiveness; that they are not saved, but perish; and that they are tormented forever and ever in the lake of fire and brimstone; that having despised the sacrifice of the cross, there is no more sacrifice for sin. But men seek to evade these plain testimonies, and begin to reason, and to speak of Greek.

Now there are two systems by which men seek to set aside these plain passages. One is that all will be saved, all, even the devil himself, though some few of them do not like to say anything so plain as that.

The other is, that the wicked will not be saved (the soul not being immortal at all), and that the fire of hell will in time consume them.

Now these two systems quite destroy one another. It is the latter which most prevails here in England, the former in other countries. Those who hold the latter say that the former is monstrous and unscriptural: first, because of the passages which declare that some people are to be damned and others saved, and very many which speak of destroying body and soul in hell, or something of equal force; and also because, if they are saved, they are saved without the atonement and regeneration, for there are those who have rejected the one and despised the other, and for whom there remains no more sacrifice for sin. And indeed nothing can be plainer. And so as to the devil and his angels. For, to be consistent with their views, they must save them too. For they say God is to be all in all, and, being love, there can remain no misery. But if so, the devils must be saved too. But then, they have no Christ, no Savior; so that, according to this doctrine, if I tell a man he cannot be saved without Christ, I am not telling him true, for there are those who are, according to this system. That is, the whole gospel is subverted as to every one. But is it not plain to an honest mind that when it is said " he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," this does not mean " he that believeth not " shall be equally saved with him that believes-only he shall be punished for awhile first? For that is the doctrine of the first class, or Universalists, as they are called. And when it is said, they which believe on Him " should not perish, but have everlasting life," is it not equally plain that it does not mean that, though they would not believe, they would still have it and not perish at all? And when it is said " whose end is destruction," it does not mean that their end should be to be in happiness like others, though they waited a little longer? And when it is said " hath never forgiveness," that it does not mean one will have it in the end? And when it says, " where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," that it does not mean they are to get out of it safe and sound and to be in glory like the saved? God has said, " these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Now, who would believe that this meant that the condemned were to go for a short time into punishment, but had or would have eternal life quite as much as the others? Eternal life and eternal or everlasting punishment answer to one another, and mean the same in either case. They argue that it means eternal in neither! But will any one believe that " eternal life " does not mean life forever and ever? If its lasting forever is only to be understood from the word " life," because it is Christ's life, why add the word eternal? The plain reader will hardly believe that they say eternal is added to confine it to the next age, or millennium!8 But this is quite a fallacy; for we are said to have it now, before the millennium comes at all. " He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

The punishment of the wicked, then, is said to be of equal duration with the life of the blessed. But further it is said to be of equal duration with the life of God. In Rev. 5:14, it is said that they worship Him who liveth forever and ever. And in chapter 14: II, it is said, the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever. Now if the punishment of the wicked is said to endure as long as the life of the blessed, and as the life of God Himself, I ask, how could God have expressed more strongly to living men its enduring everlastingly? If He has said " it hath never forgiveness "if He has said " their worm dieth not "-what could God have said more if He had meant to convey what eternal punishment was? And note here, that Revelation 20, where they are said to be in the lake of fire without, is after the millennium, and all is over, when it is said It is done, and God is all in all.

Hence the advocates of the second system of error have declared that the first has long been proved entirely absurd and untenable; and they have set up another, namely: That the soul is not immortal at all, and that death means simply ceasing to exist, and therefore, that life is to be found only in Christ; and that, after a certain quantity of punishment, the wicked will be turned out of existence, or consumed by the fire of hell, and exist no more.

Such is the doctrine much in vogue, in this country, on this subject.

Now, upon the face of this doctrine the grossest inconsistency at once appears. For, if death means ceasing to exist, the soul not being immortal at all, and that anything beyond this is found only in Christ, how come the wicked to be alive after death in order to be punished? Where do they get this life?

They cannot be alive to be punished at all. " He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life," say they. Now, if this means literally that the wicked have not life beyond death, they cannot exist when dead to be punished. It is quite clear to a Christian man, that " life " is used here in the sense of life in which we live to God in blessedness; for having no life is said of those who are naturally alive, but are dead in trespasses and sins. They have no divine life or blessedness, instead of being dead to sin and alive unto God.

But then the scripture is most clear and positive, that there is wrath and punishment and judgment and torment after death for all who are not saved. And this they cannot deny, without denying the whole testimony of God. But if there is, then men do live after death; and death does not mean ceasing to exist, but ceasing to exist soul and body together in this world. And that is what is as plain as possible from scripture. " It is appointed unto men once to die, and AFTER THIS the judgment." Why here, the judgment, which is to bring on men the whole extent of the consequences of sin from the wrath of God, is after death. Though sin makes always miserable; yet the coming of wrath, in the true full sense of the word, does not begin till after death, and by judgment, instead of death being the end of the man. And mark, this is not anything peculiar to those that have heard of Christ, though they doubtless are far more guilty and will be beaten with many stripes. It is appointed unto men. It is their common natural portion as sinners9-death and judgment.

Again, " Fear not them which kill the body, but after that have no more that they can do, but fear him who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell." Now here death (instead of being the whole wages of sin, though it be its wages) is made comparatively light of, if taken alone, but what comes after in body and soul in hell is the thing to be feared. And note, there is no such thought as a man's soul dying with his body, as they say who teach that simple death was the whole wages of sin, alleging the passage, " In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

This threat is also quoted by them to prove that man was not created immortal;10 for how should it be said " thou shalt die," if he was immortal? Now I should think this was a very plain proof that he was immortal. If I say to a child, If you do such a thing, you shall be whipped, that would not surely mean, you shall be whipped at any rate; so, " if you eat, you shall die " means, plainly, death was a consequence of eating. And so the apostle tells us, " By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." But that death thus coming in was not ceasing to exist is evident, because " it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Again, " Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But... fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell."

That is, we have the positive revelation of God, that their comment is a false one, that death is not the whole wages of sin, but that judgment comes after it. But then, to get out of this, they say that death was the wages of Adam's sin, but that these punishments are the wages of our

own. Now the apostle does not state the matter so. He says, " and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." That is, he connects the sin of all men and Adam's sin together, as bringing in death itself on all; so that this will not do either.

But were it even not thus disproved by the apostle's statement, there is another thing remains: if Adam's sin brought in death on all his posterity, and man is not immortal (for that is their doctrine), where do sinners get the life from after death (that is, after ceasing to exist at all)? Their sins cannot give it them. They tell us that, death having been pronounced on man, there is no immortality, no life, but in Christ. Well then, see what it comes to: the wicked have life in Christ in order to be punished for their sins, and this life, which they have in Christ, is not eternal life: for if it be, they must be (if not eternally happy or saved) eternally miserable. And moreover, this life, which they have of Christ to be punished in, is to be consumed by the wrath and punishment of God! If it is not life in and from Christ, then death does not put an end to a man; death is not what they pretend it is; man is, in a. word, an immortal being. And further, what was the worth of Christ's death? Some of them say it was just simply death as the wages of sin. But " He bore our sins "; and if so, our sins being merely a measured quantity of punishment, it is not the wrath of God due to us as lost sinners, but merely a partial punishment He had to avert. But further, as regards the wicked, the death of Christ, they say, averted death from them so that they should be punished. He did not bear their sins-that is clear-for it is for them they are to be punished; so that Christ's death was necessary to keep alive the wicked in order to punish and then consume them, and was applied to this purpose by God!

And now some general remarks. Note this, all kinds of expressions are used, beside eternal punishment, as Their end is destruction-They shall not see life-They have never forgiveness-They have no life in them-Christ shall deny them-He never knew them. So that the argument as to the meaning of " eternal " in Greek, were it valid, leaves many other statements untouched; but it is not valid. They pretend that " eternal " means what belongs to the millennial glory of the dispensation that is coming. Now I believe in the glory of that dispensation; but I say " eternal " does not mean this in Greek, and I challenge any man who knows Greek to produce me one passage where it does. It is used sixty-eight times11 (besides three which refer to past time), and not one can be brought to show that it means the millennial period. Many prove that it means " eternal " in all, and many prove that it does not apply to the millennial state when used in the connection in which they say it does. I shall quote some plain ones to both points.

That it means " eternal."

2 Cor. 4:18: For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Cor. 5:1: A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

1 Tim. 6:16: To whom be honor and power everlasting.

1 Peter 5:10: The God of all grace who hath called us to His eternal glory.

So in Heb. 5:9; ch. 9: 12, 14.

These passages show that the natural meaning of the word is " eternal," in contrast with temporal.

As to the second point, that it does not mean " millennial,"

the reader will find that eternal life is quite as often said of our having Christ's life in this world as in the next; because it is that divine life which is a real thing given us, as true in this world as in the next. Its full development is in the next, of course, and therefore we naturally speak of it as there; but scripture equally states that we have it here; so that it certainly does not mean a millennial condition, though we have it then as now. The word translated " forever,"12 does sometimes mean, when used in other ways, what is not eternal. It is used for the duration of anything in uninterrupted continuance, though the thing in its nature may not last forever, and hence for the whole of any particular period-as the whole of man's life, sometimes the whole course of this evil world, the whole of a dispensation. But when it is used in connection with the subjects we are treating of, there is not the least doubt it means eternal, and indeed wherever it is not used with a particular subject which limits it; and when translated forever, it never means the millennial age, as alleged.

Many other arguments from the use of it in Greek might be urged; but I do not go farther here, as I might only perplex those who do not understand that language. In a passage which relates to our subject we have plain proof, however, that " everlasting " does not mean millennial. For it is said, " depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Now, on their own showing, the devil and his angels are not there till the millennium is over; so that it does not mean millennial. Further, they insist on the words " destroy " and " destruction." Now we have already shown, it cannot here mean to put an end to the existence of what is destroyed; because it lasts as long as the life of the blessed, and even of God Himself. But that it does not mean so in many passages is plain. The very title given to the angel of the bottomless pit would show it. He is called Apollyon, i.e., the destroyer; now he ruins no doubt many, but he cannot destroy in the sense referred to. So " the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." " The lost sheep of the house of Israel " is the same word; and it is the strongest used.

I have thus stated some of the strongest scriptural proofs of the doctrine, and I have met the main arguments of the systems which error has attempted to set up. The attentive Christian will find that both subvert the work of Christ and the claims of the holiness of God; for if men are saved who have died in the entire rejection of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and for whom there is no more sacrifice for sin, then salvation by these means is not needed for us. Or, if death is the whole wages of sin, and man is not immortal at all, the sufferings of the Son of God and His being forsaken of God in wrath are really set aside: it is not that which comes from the necessary majesty of God's holiness, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And at any rate, Christ merely set aside a certain temporary punishment for some, and secured its infliction on others, as without Him men would have ceased to exist, like a horse or a dog! He procured eternal life for some, and a temporary life for others, in order that they might be miserable! No Christian, I think, but must see that this is not what God teaches us. Nor is there the smallest ground for one doctrine or the other. It is alleged that in Colossians Christ is said to reconcile all things that He makes; but this is merely the visible creation, to the exclusion of a third class who are mentioned in Philippians as being obliged to bow the knee to Him, namely, those under the earth, strictly, the infernal things or beings, but who are not included in the reconciliation. So that, when compared with Phil. 2, it proves quite the contrary.

The result of our examination is to leave in its full force eternal punishment (the terrible consequence of the enmity of man's heart against God), and eternal blessedness (the result of God's free and blessed grace), in their plain scriptural sense, as commonly believed by simple-minded Christians. It is equally clear that the just divine vengeance which inflicts the punishment will know how to apportion the many stripes and the few stripes, to distinguish duly those who perish without law and those who are judged by law (though all be shut out from the presence of God, as in the judgment which devours the adversaries); and that the sovereign divine grace which has called any to glory will know how and when to place on the right hand and on the left in the kingdom, according as He has prepared it for them, while giving to each his reward according to his labor (eternal blessedness with Jesus, and like Jesus, being the common portion of all).

The thought is indeed solemn: but I can say that the examination of scripture on the subject has not left a cloud on my mind as to the truth taught in it; while the examination of the systems opposed to it has satisfied me, that they are fallacious and superficial, not taught by the Spirit of God, nor the truth of the word; and that sound and full examination of the Greek they plead confounds their statements.

And now, poor sinner, mark this: you may fancy that you are to judge God, and that you are competent to say that He ought to assign so much or so much punishment to so much sin; but know that He is to judge you. The notion of His love, which makes it an obligation incumbent on Him to act so and so in it without His being able to help it, and so that eternal punishment cannot be, is a false, unscriptural, and senseless notion. He is love; but He is God, and acts freely and holily in His love. God is love; but it is GOD that is so. Love is what He is. But the first question is, who He is; and He is God, and doeth what pleaseth Him. Now, mark this. If the Spirit of God has touched your conscience, you know that you deserve to be shut out of the presence of God forever. You are conscious that you have deserved eternal wrath and punishment. If you are not, you do not know yet, by divine teaching, what sin is. And I pray you to remark that, in this question, it is not what may be, or what might be, which is in question. You are a sinner:-What, in your own conscience, does sin deserve? And further, if it is a question what sin deserves, it is a question of what Christ bore, what His atonement was; for He bore our sins and was made sin for us.

God speaks plainly of wrath, indignation, vengeance, because of sin. What was the wrath due to sin, which Christ bore when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree? It is not a speculative question, of what might be, but of what saves you! Do you believe, that what Christ bore, when He made His soul an offering for sin, was merely the amount of a certain temporary suffering? that this was what sin amounted to in the presence of God? and that this too was what God's wrath amounted to? Do not be led astray by any abuse of the blessed truth that it was Christ's divine nature that gave infinite value to His work, It did so, blessed be God. But He " bore our sins in his own body on the tree." And " it pleased the Lord to bruise him." " He was wounded for our transgressions." " The chastisement of our peace was upon him, with his stripes we are healed." Now was what He bore for us, for you, a mere amount of temporary punishment, or the holy wrath of God, the awfulness of God's forsaking Him while He was alive, His soul being made thus an offering for sin? That wrath which shuts out from His presence, while the soul can know what it is-is not this what we have deserved? It is not merely torment and then ceasing to exist; though Christ, as a divine Person, gave infinite value to His work.

Some mightier creature might well have borne temporal punishment due; but the wrath and judgment implied in eternal punishment a divine eternal Person alone could bear.

Those who deny eternal punishment quote also sometimes the scriptures of the Old Testament, such as the following- Gen. 6:3, " My spirit shall not always strive with man "; Isa. 57:16, " For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wrath; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made "; and again, Psa. 49:12, " Man being in honor abideth not; he is like the beasts which perish."

Now any plain godly reader can judge from such quotations as these what such an argument is worth; for it is clear that nothing but exceeding inattention, or positive dishonesty, could apply such passages as having anything to say to it. First, as to Genesis, it is most plain, that it is God's patience with man before the flood, while the ark was a preparing, when, according to Peter's comment, the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah. Their spirits being cast into prison, when thus judged, is plain proof enough that they subsisted after their death.

As to the second, Isa. 57:16, it is equally plain that the Lord is speaking of men in the earth. If He contended with them continually-did not cease and spare them, they would perish as living men. The stumbling-blocks were to be taken out of the way of His people. The high and holy One would revive the hearts of the humble, and the heart of the contrite, for He would not strive forever, nor be always wroth. " For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him... I have seen his ways and will heal him," etc. Now what has all this to do with hell? Just nothing at all. Let me advise the simple reader, when a quotation is made, always to read the context before he receives a new doctrine.

Lastly, Psa. 49 Again I say, read the Psalm, and it will be at once seen that it applies to glory in this world. " For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever... they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless, man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." What " man being in honor " has to say to his being in hell would be hard to say. " Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them." Is it not evident that the doctrine here taught is, that death blasts all the earthly glory of man? " His glory shall not descend after him "; but even here, dark as were the views of what was beyond death, there is no sign of any final destruction or of final recovery.

I add a word for the reader who does understand Greek. The etymology given as early as the time of Aristotle, and by him, is aien on, always existing. The earliest use of the word is in the sense of a man's life. It is so used frequently by Homer of the death of his heroes and in other ways. It is used by Herodotus and the Attic poets, so far as to say anepneusen aiona. Very much later it came to mean one whole dispensational period or state of things; but, when used by itself in its own meaning, it had very clearly the sense of eternity. It is thus used by Philo in a passage which can leave no doubt, en aioni de oute pareleluthen ouden oute mellei alla monon uphesteke. " In eternity, nothing is either past or to come but only subsists."

In conclusion, I say (as has been remarked by others) that, if God had meant to convey the idea of eternal punishment, He would not have used expressions stronger than He has used; nor do any exist.

Letters 1, Spring of Service

You will, I trust, have got my letter. I gave you some account of -. It is so far difficult that there is nothing very striking or salient, though it seems to me the Lord is evidently working. Souls have been added to the assembly; but it is not so much this as the working of truth in many, in which the Lord's hand seems to be manifest. Then, of course, too, opposition has been at work: it is all a useful experience of patience.

But our spring of labor must be in the Lord, not in effects. He has to say, "Then have I labored in vain and spent my strength for naught and in vain: yet is my judgment with the Lord and my work with my God." We are often encouraged as He never was, but we must depend on Him for energy to work. Perhaps I am wrong to say "never," for the woman at the well of Samaria evidently was sent to His soul, when driven by jealousy out of Judea, and one anxious soul showed Him the fields white for harvest, and gave Him meat to eat man knew not of. But we must be in the secret of the Lord to have this kind of encouragement. Perfect grace in Him gave Him to see the bearing and import of the working of grace in others and the immensity of such facts; so in the poor woman (Mary) who anointed His feet in Bethany. But then He is a source of strength and blessing and encouragement to us which, though perfect in communion with His Father, He had not, because He enters into all our difficulties and infirmities, and loneliness -has a word in season to speak to him that is weary, as having passed through the sorrows.

I have known much what it is to have little retirement in the villages of France and Switzerland. But where there is the earnest desire of it, and we are in the path of the Lord's will, He makes opportunities for us, and makes-when there is diligence-our opportunities profitable by His grace. We have in such cases to use diligence to seize moments, but even in going from one place to another, if alone, we find such, and richer sometimes than longer times where there is not the same diligence of heart with God. And then be sure moments of longer duration have a value which otherwise they would not, and are rescued from idle intercourse otherwise. Still it is always of the last importance to take care we have always moments of communion, as nothing can supply their place, and our work flows from God when we have; and there is the seriousness and earnestness of dealing in God's behalf with souls in their eternal interest.

I think we ought to look for fruits as a sign that God is working with us, but it should not be the spring of labor, but our intercourse with Him so as to have His mind. Peace be with you, dearest brother, and may He give you to be much with Him.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Hamilton.

Letters 2, Love of God; Spring of Service; Work in the United States; Study of the Word, The

Very dear brother,

I was very glad to have tidings, and to see your name at the end of the page. I trust God is keeping you very near Himself, and that He maintains the freshness of His grace and love in your soul. _ We need to be constantly renewed; without that, spiritual energy does not keep up—"they shall renew their strength," it is said, "like eagles." And it is not progress in knowledge that effects that; although this is profitable for teaching Christians, and even for rendering the gospel which we preach more pure: what is of moment is the keeping of oneself near God. There love maintains itself and grows—His love in our souls, which finds its activity and comfort in exercising itself towards poor sinners and towards the saints: one seeks the glory of the Lord in them, and their own well-being. God gives you to enjoy Himself; but God reveals Himself not only as infinite blessedness in Himself—but also in the activities of His love in which He finds His delight.

And when His love is shed abroad in our hearts we enjoy assuredly what He is, but this love is active towards us by His grace. Activity, unless renewing itself in communion with Him, may be sincere, but will degenerate into routine and into a habit of acting, and is even dangerous; the soul gets far from God without knowing it. But abiding in His love in Jesus and His word abiding in us, we can count on an answer to the requests we address to Him in our hearts.

Here I do not see much movement in souls: what there is does not turn away from human ways in the christian path, and presses them to activity in doctrines not scriptural. But there is not activity in the gospel among brethren. They walk very well. There is not any gift; but in general there is a good deal of movement and need in this vast country, and even conversions are not wanting. The state of the churches is scandalous indeed: pious souls groan, but where are instruments to be found to guide them in the good way? God has raised up a few, several ministers even have left their systems, but it is a drop of water in the wide sea, and there is a great effort to keep souls in the various systems while taking advantage of the light which brethren have and preaching their doctrines. They do not even conceal it. One of the most active who has visited Europe told ministers that they could not keep up with the brethren unless they read their books, but he was doing everything he could to prevent souls leaving their various systems called churches. It is a new wile of the enemy. Thank God, that does not discourage me. I have seen that God is above all that; but it is an additional difficulty. If there is activity of grace with brethren, it is another victory to carry off. He also tries to hold them by presenting a false perfection as an object to attain to, which is none at all, where Christ the precious Savior is so terribly veiled.

I had to stop. I had a very good meeting last evening, and some strangers came to hear. I do not doubt that if a gift were exercised here in a continuous way there would be blessing. But the harvest is great and the laborers few: we know where we have to go to have them—may God give us to do it with faith! Study the Bible, dear brother, with prayer. Seek the Lord there, and not knowledge—that will come too; but the heart is well directed in seeking the Lord: the eye is single, and then the whole body is full of light. Greet affectionately all the brethren. My earnest desire is that they may be near the Lord, and the Lord very near them—not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their mind. Christ is all: the more one travels on down here in His ways, the more one feels it.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Boston, September 27th, 1874.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Sanctification, Without Which There Is No Christianity

1 Peter 1

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

The apostle says, in verse 8: “Whom [Christ] having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Now, there is no such thing as this without the new birth, which is a new life, which has an object which preoccupies it. It is an entirely new life, which has interests, affections, quite a new world; and without that there is no Christian, because there is not Christ.

We shall now see the two principles laid down in this chapter, and in the work here attributed to the Holy Spirit. God finds the soul in a certain position, in certain relations, and removes it to a place in quite a new state; and this separation is according to the power of the resurrection of Christ.

The apostle speaks to the Jews of the dispersion (that is, to those of whom it is spoken in John 7:35, those dispersed among the Greeks) in these words: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1:2). He addressed himself to the dispersed, to the Jews converted to Christianity, to those who are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: grace and peace.

He says this because He is speaking of another election than that of the Jewish people. The Jewish nation was elected after another manner. Here he writes, as we said, to the Jews who had believed on the Lord Jesus; so that sanctification in them was not sanctification of a nation by outward means, but by the Holy Spirit, who separated the souls from among the Jews to belong to God, and to form a part of the present dispensation of grace. It was not with them as with the ancient Jews, who were separated from the Egyptians by the Red Sea; they were separated by the sanctification effected by the Holy Spirit. Observe particularly this word sanctification; the first idea is separation for God, not only from evil, but a setting apart for God, who sanctifies.

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

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

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

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

Paul had been very learned in what concerned the religion of his fathers; he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He honestly believed that he had done the will of God, but there was nothing of the kind; he followed his own will, according to the direction impressed by the tradition of his fathers. Never, till the moment that Jesus stopped him on the way to Damascus, had he said, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

Thus, whatever may have been the conduct of a soul before this setting apart, nothing of all that has made it do the will of God. But the aim of the life of a soul sanctified, or set apart, is to do the will of God. It may fail, but that is its aim. Jesus said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:9). He had no need of sanctification, in one sense, because He was holy; but the aim of His whole life was obedience. Here I am “to do thy will, O God.” He took the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He existed only for God; the principle of His life was obedience. He was come to do nothing but His Father's will. As soon as a soul is sanctified, it is sanctified unto obedience; and this is manifested by the spirit of dependence which has done with its own will. It says, “What must I do?” It may fail, through weakness, in many respects, but that is its aim.

As to the second thing, we are sanctified to enjoy the sprinkling of blood; first, to obedience, then to enjoy the sprinkling of blood. The soul, thus placed under the influence of the blood of Christ, is thereby completely cleansed. The blood of the Son of God cleanses us from all sin; it is by the efficacy of His blood that we are separated from this world. The question here is not of the blood of bulls and goats, which could not sanctify the conscience of him who did the service, but it is the blood of Christ, who, by the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. It is this blood which purifies the conscience.

The Jews, under the law, said indeed, trusting to their own strength, We will do all that thou hast spoken. They undertook to do everything when it was prescribed to them as a condition. But here it is much more; it is the Spirit that makes them say, “What wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). It is submission, it is the principle of obedience really produced in the heart: I know not what thou wilt, but here am I to do thy will. It is obedience without reserve. There is no question here of rules that man cannot accomplish, but of the whole will changed; no more to do one's own will, but to do God's will.

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

As to a soul, then, that the Holy Spirit has hewn out of the quarry of this world, being honest, amiable, kept by the good providence of God, but withal doing its own will—well, God has found it there in the world and of the world, notwithstanding all its good qualities; and He has to put His love in its heart, in order that it may, without hesitation, only care about the will of God to do it. But, thus separated, it is under the blood of sprinkling, it is cleansed from all its sin. That is the first principle; the separation wrought by God Himself, who places us outside of this world, or rather of the things of this world, and makes us Christians. Without this there is no Christianity. God acts effectually; He does nothing by halves, and this is all His work. God does not deceive Himself. He must have realities. He does not deceive Himself as we deceive ourselves, and as we try to deceive others, although we deceive others less than we deceive ourselves.

I would point out to you the meaning of the word “sanctification”; it is rarely used in the Scriptures in the sense in which we generally use it, that is to say, in the progressive sense. It is only three times spoken of in this sense. It is said, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness [sanctification], without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Thess. 5:23). I quote these two passages to show that I do not set aside this sense of the word; but it more particularly designates an act of separation, a setting apart for God. If we have not laid hold of this meaning, there will be an entire mistake as to what sanctification is. In the two above—quoted passages, the word has an everyday application. In the sense in which it is used by the apostle in the beginning of this epistle, it is perfectly in the sense of taking a stone out of the quarry of this world to fashion it for God. Sanctification is attributed to the Father in more than one place in the Bible; see Hebrews 10:10. Now, it is by this will that we are sanctified; by the offering made once of the body of Jesus Christ. It is by this will of God that we are sanctified.

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

2. And the means—it is the offering of Christ.

And it is always, with scarcely more than one exception, which we have already quoted, in this manner that it is spoken of in the Hebrews. Sanctification is attributed to God the Father in another passage also; Jude 1. The Father having willed to have children for Himself, the blood of Jesus does the work, and the Holy Spirit comes to accomplish the counsels of the Father, and to give them efficacy by producing the practical effect in the heart. The soul separated from the world is sanctified by that very fact. There is the old trunk which pushes forth its shoots; but God acts in pruning; and His acting, which takes place by the Holy Spirit, works the daily practical sanctification. The heart is each day more and more set apart. It is not like a vase, because in man it is the heart which is set apart. Thus, when life is communicated and thereby the man is sanctified, there is a daily work of sanctification which applies to the affections, to the habits, to the walk.

Let us see how God does this:—

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). Such is the way He does it. God sets us apart for Himself. It is not by modifying what was bad in us, but by creating us anew; by making afresh a new creature, for the old man cannot be made subject to the law. He gives a new life. If one be not thus born anew, one belongs yet to the world, which is under condemnation; but when God acts, it is altogether another thing. Being born in Adam, we have need to be born by Christ. When the heart is visited by the Holy Spirit, one is begotten again by a life which is not of this world, which urges it to another end—Christ. It is not by precepts addressed to the old man, but by another life. The precepts follow afterward; that is to say, that the life of which we speak, which is the new birth, belongs not to this world, neither in its source, nor in its aim; it cannot have one single thing in common with the old life. This life is found here below in the body: we eat, work, etc., as before; but this is not what Christ came for. Christ came to make us comprehend quite another thing from the life here below, into which He entered; and that is the rule of the Christian's conduct. He has for object, for aim, and for joy, what Christ has for object, aim, and joy; his affections are heavenly, as those of Christ.

If the life of Christ is in me, the life and the Spirit of Christ in me cannot find joy in that wherein Christ finds not His joy. The Spirit of Christ in me cannot be a different spirit from what was in Him; and it is evident that he who is separated from this world for God cannot find pleasure in the life of sin of this world, and prefer it to that of heaven. We know well that the Christian often fails in this rule; but this denies not that there is nothing in common between the life of heaven and that of the world. It is not a question of prohibitions as to using this or that, but of having altogether other tastes, desires, and joys; and it is, on that account, people imagine that Christians are sad, as if they were absorbed by only one thought. It is that our joys are altogether different from those of the world: the world knows not our joys.

No unrenewed person can comprehend what renders the Christian happy, that is to say, that his tastes are not for the things of this world. His thoughts rise higher. This is the joy of the Christian, that Christ is entered into heaven, and has Himself destroyed all that could have hindered us from entering there.

Death, Satan, and the wicked spirits have been conquered by Christ, and the resurrection has annihilated all that was between Him and the glory. Christ placed Himself in our position; He underwent the consequences of it; He has conquered the world and Satan. It is written, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7); if he is already conquered, we have not to conquer him, but to resist him. When we resist him, he knows he has met Christ, his conqueror. The flesh does not resist him. Jesus gives us a living hope by His resurrection from the dead; in this way, and being in Him, we are on a foundation which cannot fail.

Christ has already shown that He has won the victory; and what grace is here presented to us! Even that of obtaining “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith”

(1 Peter 1:4-5). This treasure is in heaven. I have nothing to fear, it is in perfect safety. But this is what I fear as to myself, temptations, all sorts of difficulties, for I am not in heaven. This is true; but what gives every security is, not that we are not tried or tempted, but that we are kept in the trial here below, as the inheritance is kept in heaven for us.

Here is the position of the Christian, set apart by the resurrection of Christ, and begotten again. It is that, in waiting for the glory, we are kept by the power of God through faith, separated from the world by the power and communication of the life of Him who has won the victory over all that could have hindered us from having a part in it. And why are these trials sent to us? It is God who works the soil, in order that all the affections of the heart, thus sifted, may be purified and exercised, and perfectly in harmony with the glory of heaven and with the objects which are set before us.

Is it for naught that gold is put in the furnace, or because it is not gold? No; it is to purify it. God, by trials, takes out of our hearts that which is impure, in order that, when the glory arrives, we may enjoy it.

Let us see a little what the apostle says on this subject. “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:6-7). What are we about then, as the process of sanctification is carried on? It is that although we have not seen Jesus, we love Him; and although now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

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

The magnet always turns towards the pole; the needle always trembles a little when the storm and tempest roar, but its direction changes not; the needle of the Christian heart points always towards Christ. A heart which understands, which loves Jesus, which knows where Jesus has passed before it, looks to Him to sustain it through its difficulties; and however rugged and difficult the way, it is precious to us, because we find there the trace of the steps of Jesus (He has passed there); and specially because this road conducts us, through difficulties, to the glory in which He is. Seeing; says the apostle, “that if need be”; in order “that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:6-7).

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

If I engage a servant, I require him to be clean, if I am so myself. God says, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16 from Lev. 11:44). And as it is with the servant I desire to introduce into my house, so is it with us. God requires that we should be suited to the state of His house; He will have a practical sanctification in His servants. Moreover, the aim of the apostle is, that our faith be firm and constant; He gives us, in verse 21, full security, in saying to us “that your faith and hope might be in God,” not merely in that which justifies us before a just—judging God. It is a God who is for us, who willed to help us, and who introduced us into His family, setting us apart for obedience, and to share in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. He has loved us with an eternal love. He has accomplished all that concerns us. He keeps us by His power through faith, in order to introduce us into glory.

He places us in trial; He makes us to pass through the furnace, because He will wholly purify us. It is Himself who has justified us; who shall condemn us? It is Christ who died, or rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, and who also maketh intercession for us: who shall separate us from His love? (Rom. 8:33). Our faith and our love being in God, what have we to fear? We have, in Zechariah, a very encouraging example (Zech. 3). The Lord caused Zechariah to see “Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: Is not this the brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments (the sin, the corruption of man), and he stood before the angel.” And the angel said, “Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and will clothe thee with change of raiment (the righteousness of God applied)” (Zech. 3:1-4). Satan accuses the children of God; but when God justifies, who can condemn? Would you then that God were not content with His work which He has wrought for Himself? And it is in order that we be holy and unblameable in love before Him.

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

There is nothing morally in common between the first and the second Man; the first sinned and drew down the whole human race in his fall; the last Adam is the source of life and power. This applies to every truth of Christianity, and to all that is in this world. There are but these two men. Nicodemus is struck with the wisdom of Jesus, and with the power manifested in His miracles; but the Lord stops him, and cuts the matter short with him, by saying, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). He was not in a condition to be instructed. He did not understand the things of God, for to do so a man must be born again; in short, he had not life. I do not say that he could not arrive at it; because, further on, we see him paying honor to Jesus, in bringing the necessary spices to embalm Him.

I have been led to this thought because the end of this chapter recalled to me chapter 40 of Isaiah. I do not speak of the accomplishment of the prophecy which will take place at a later day for the Jews, but of a grand principle. This chapter begins by these words: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her

iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever" (Isa. 40:1-8). Before God begins, He must cause it to be understood that all flesh is as grass.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whereof does the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, speak? He has much to say to us, but first of all, "All flesh is grass" (1 Peter 1:24). He says that no good thing exists in man; the Spirit convinces the world of sin. The whole world lies in wickedness; that world would none of Christ, and the Holy Spirit cannot present Himself without saying, You have rejected the Christ. The Holy Spirit comes into this world and proves to it its pride and its rebellion. Behold, the Son is no longer there, and why? The world has rejected Him. The Spirit comes to say, "The grass is withered," then, when this is acknowledged, He communicates the peace that He has preached. He says truly, You are sinners; but He does not speak to sinners of sanctification; He will produce it by the truth, and He tells them the truth. Can man produce it? Nay. It is Christ, He who is the way, the truth, and the life. The Holy Spirit speaks to the sinner of the grace, of the righteousness, of God—of peace, not to make, but made; that is the truth. He convinces the world of what it is, and He speaks to it of that will of God by which the believer is sanctified, that

thus we may be obedient to the truth, in submitting to the love of God; and when the soul is subject to the truth, life is there.

He communicates life, “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23). The word abides eternally. It is thus that God first produces the principle of sanctification, which is the life of Christ in us; if the practical means be inquired for, it is the word of truth.

Does the Holy Spirit tell pagans to make progress in sanctification? Does He say this to men unconverted? No. When a sinner has understood the truth, such as God presents it, then the Holy Spirit puts him in relation with God the Father, and this sinner rejoices in all that which Christ has acquired for him. Thus, having “purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit,” “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:22-23), Dear friends, you will find that it is ever thus.

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

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

The same principle is in John 17:16-17: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” The world was not Christ's aim. During His whole life, though He was not gone out of the world, He was no more of the world than if He had been in heaven. When practice is in question, He says, “They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth.” Truth is not of the world: this world is a vast lie, which is demonstrated in the history we possess in the Bible. There we find the manifestation of sin in the natural man, and the manifestation of the life of God in the renewed man by His word. “Sanctify them through thy truth.” “For their sakes I sanctify myself.” What does the Lord. Jesus here for us? He sets Himself apart. He sanctifies Himself; it is not that He may be more holy, but He makes Himself the model Man. It is not a law requirement; but it is Christ Himself who is life and power, whereof He presents the perfect result. It is Christ who presents the fulfillment and the perfection; He is the vital spring of all; and in considering these things, the reflection of them is in me by faith, which reproduces them in the inner man and in the life.

We find something interesting on this subject in the first chapter of John's Gospel. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). The law was not this. It was not a light that condemned; but the life was this light, and we have seen it full of grace and truth—not of truth only, but of grace; and of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. When we have received Christ, there is not a single grace which is not for me, and in me. There is no Christian who has not every grace that is in Jesus: suppose even a state of failure, it is the strongest case, but this hinders not that we possess all in Him. Failure is a sad thing, but this changes not the position; for the Christian has not received a part only of Christ, but the whole of Christ.

On the one hand, it is encouragement, when I say to myself, I must seek after such a grace; the answer is, Thou possessest it; and, on the other hand, it humbles me, for if I possess it, why is it not manifested? This always supposes that we have received the truth that God has made peace. We must always return to this: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Is it by looking into myself that I shall find this sanctification? No; but by looking to Jesus, in whom it is, Christ having been made unto us of God “righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30). I see this humility in Christ, and take pleasure in it; when I look to Him by faith, my soul is in peace. His Spirit is always in me, and I am sanctified by faith in Him, according to that grace which makes me one with Him. Christ gives me all that, and this truth reveals to me that the redemption is made, and I enjoy it, having obeyed the truth.

If any one seeks after sanctification without being assured of his justification, and is troubled about it, doubting whether he be a Christian, then I ask him, What have you to do with sanctification? You have not to think about that for the present. Assure yourself first of all that you are saved: pagans, unbelievers, do not sanctify themselves. If you have faith, you are saved; sanctify yourself in peace. The only question is to consider your sinful state. First, have you obeyed the truth? have you submitted to it? What does God speak to you about? He speaks of peace made. He says to you, that He has given His Son; He says to you, that He has “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). This is the truth to which you have to submit, and to receive above all, specially before you busy yourself about sanctification, which depends on Him who has given you eternal life.

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

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

When Moses came down from the mountain, from before God, he did not know that he also shone with glory, but those who saw him knew it. Moses had looked towards God; others saw the effect. Blessed be God that it is thus in a practical sense! As to practice then, the question is the sanctification of Christians because they are saved, because they are sanctified to God as regards their persons (not those who are not yet so). It is not to exact (on God's part), but to communicate life. Now, this communication proceeds from Jesus, who is its source. He communicates life, which is holiness. O that God might always show us the grace to make us always more and more feel that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass; but the word of the Lord endureth forever! “And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:25); it is of this incorruptible seed we are born. What ought not our confidence to be in this word!

Letters 1, Daniel, The Book of

BELOVED BROTHER,-

I reply to your questions on the prophet Daniel. The "desolator" is not named in chapter 9, but I do not believe that the desolator is Antichrist, nor he who takes away the daily sacrifice. The wickedness that is at work within is not the desolation which comes from without; it is the cause of it. First, I would have you remark certain points in the translation, which considerably alter the meaning of the sentences. In chapter 8:11 The gender is different. It is no more as in verse 10, "It" (the little horn) "waxed great," but, "And he waxed great." This verse 11 does not refer then any longer directly to the little horn. Then, in this same verse, it is not said that "By him the daily sacrifice was taken away;" but, "From him" (the Prince of the host, Christ Jehovah) "the daily sacrifice was taken away." This alters the character of him who is mentioned in verse 4, or rather, this takes away from him that character.

I believe that what refers to the horn in verse 10, and that which follows, up to verse 12, has been fulfilled in the times of the Seleucidae (Antiochus Epiphanes), and I translate verse 12: "And a time of distress" (a word that one meets in Job with the same meaning) "was ordained for the daily sacrifice." All this refers to the horn, as well as the two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings of verse 14, to the oppression of Antiochus, and not to the last days. At the end of the chapter this period is distinguished from the vision of the evening and the morning. (Ver. 26.) The crafty king, at the end, shall stand up against the Lord of lords, that is to say, that he will be upon the scene when Christ shall be there. He rises up from the east, and not from the west. So, at all events, we find here the description of a desolator.

In chapter 9:27, instead of "By means of the abominable wings which shall cause desolation," I read, "Because of the protection of idols, there shall be a desolator;" it is not said who. The daily sacrifice will be taken away by him who had made the covenant for one week. In the same verse the "consumption determined" means "the determined accomplishment of the judgment;" it is a technical term, signifying the last judgments on Jerusalem and the Jews. I believe that the last word of this verse signifies desolate, and not desolator.

It appears clear to me from Isa. 10:22, 23, and following, that the determined consumption falls upon Judah and Jerusalem by means of the Assyrian, who is the rod of the indignation of God. Now the Assyrian is geographically of the territory of the Seleucidae. This is so much the more clear since the same prophet (Isa. 28:22) shows us this consumption overtaking the land of Israel, when the leaders of the people at Jerusalem have made a covenant with hell, sheol (Isa. 28:14, 15), and have taken refuge in lies. In Dan. 9:27 this same consumption comes upon Jerusalem. The head of the beast makes a covenant with them for one week; idols are there, they put their trust in them, and God sends a desolator. The Assyrian will be the great desolator; others will ally themselves with him. (Psalm) Gog will be the last form of the Assyrian. That explains, it appears to me, what is said in Ezek. 38:17: "Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel?" Jerusalem is taken a first time: the second time the enemy finds the Lord there. Zech. 14 is general: the city shall be taken, and the Lord shall go forth against the nations.

It is "the leader who shall come" that will take away the sacrifice in breaking the covenant; and the people giving themselves up at the same time to idols, there shall be a desolator until the chastisement upon Jerusalem is complete, and that the presence of the Lord puts an end to the power of evil and of the evil one.

The Roman emperor is the head of the beast, and Antichrist is only the head of the second beast in Rev. 13 He causes the first beast to be worshipped, and exercises his power, being the false Christ, or king and prophet, for the Jews in Judea. But it is the "leader" who will take away the sacrifice in the beginning of the last half-week; the royalty of the second beast seems to disappear through the power of this leader in the east.

The king of the north is always he who rules over the territory occupied by Antiochus; but in the end Russia will possess this territory, or will rule over it, so as to be the Assyrian. Russia is Gog, unquestionably.

Montreal,

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