Micah - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Messianic Prophecies

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But I turn to what is more important. The result of the rationalist system is, that they never examine the prophetic scriptures as a whole, and hence are totally incapable of estimating the value or real bearing of the parts. Mr. N. has had greater advantages than they, and often seeks to use them against the christian faith. It is a painful thing to see how often he speaks the language of Canaan, while he labors in the spirit of a Philistine. Still he has chosen to take up the rationalist system. Now, I affirm, that according to its own clear contents, be they true or false, all scripture is Messianic from Genesis to Revelation. From the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head-yea, from "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (for according to scripture all things were created by Him and for Him),-until "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"1-"the first and the last," the testimony as well as the purposes God refer to (have as their object) Him who, the Wisdom of God before the worlds, was all His delight in this, who first descended and then ascended that He might fill all things.

Now there are two great subjects of scripture besides. That is, first, it speaks of man's sin, the change in him needed to enjoy the blessing, and the redemption accomplished, that we may be with God, with all its varied effects and glories; and, secondly, of the government of this world. Some true and devoted Christians have looked only at the first, as being the great vital necessity (as it is), but, having thus dropped the other when the scriptures which applied to it were before their minds, they were bewildered as to the interpretation of them. There are the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow. These glories include many parts, inasmuch as God, for the administration of the fullness of times, will head up all in Christ, of things in heaven and things on earth. Every family2 in heaven and earth comes under the name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, no doubt the Lord Jesus suffered amongst the Jews; and this made one ground of Jehovah's judicial dealings with them, as Isaiah and Zechariah and the Psalms abundantly testify. But the government of the world is the great subject treated of in the prophetic books. And we are expressly told in Deut. 32:8, that "when the Most High divided unto the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel." God made Israel the center of His earthly government. The profane history of nations, in fact, centers round it; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, all contend for it; are known in connection with it, or actually get their full imperial possession and character at the time they acquired possession of it-I do not say by gaining possession of it, but at the epoch at which they did. Clouds of dark traditions, scarce pierced by modern researches, hang over all the rest, and obscure the history of nations, while they reveal their existence.

In the neighborhood of Israel all is light. Prejudiced, ignorant, barbarous as they may have been, they possess and shed the light of their history on all the nations around them. It is preserved almost with modern accuracy, when a few fragments scarce rescue from entire oblivion other ancient histories. We must disentomb the remains of Thebes and the Ninevehs to get at the history of their ancient monarchs, to know their dynasties, and say even if there were two Assyrian empires or one, while, by God's providence, that which gives some historic data to the glories of Mizraim and Asshur confirms in its detail that of which we have already the minutest particulars in Israel's authentic history. We find, in pictures yet fresh on the lore-covered walls of the country of the Pharaohs, the very kinds of overseers over the Jews making their bricks, of which Moses speaks in the Book of Exodus. Modern research alone has given the place and importance to these countries which the scriptures had already assigned them.

Now, when is this great drama of this world's history to find its dénouement and its close, according to the scriptures? Not clearly till the end. It would be an absurdity to suppose such a thing-a denial of the terms in their proper meaning. Scripture places it at the end-speaks of the Lord coming in glory, of the destruction of the Assyrian, of the beast, of the false prophet, of Gog, and that by a grand day which should "burn as an oven" -a day in which the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and all flesh see it together, in which by fire and sword the Lord would plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord should be many-a day when a man should be more precious than the fine gold of Ophir; when God would punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; when the Lord would come forth out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; when the earth would uncover her blood, and no more cover her slain. Is it not equally declared that when He came there was no man, when He called there was none to answer-that He should give His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, nor hide His face from shame and spitting-that His visage should be so marred more than any man, and His countenance more than the sons of men, even that Servant who was to be exalted and extolled, and be very high-that He was to be despised and rejected of men, to make His soul an offering for sin, and bear their iniquities- that they should look on Him whom they had pierced, and mourn for Him? Accordingly we find in the Psalms the expression of the deep sense of these sufferings, as Psa. 22; 69, 102, and others.

Do not these scriptures, in their general tenor-confirmed as they are by hundreds of others and the constant course of God's moral ways in putting suffering on the path of glory-do they not most clearly point out two distinct scenes: a time when the great subject of prophecy, the Son of man, the Son of God, should suffer; and a time when glories should follow, in respect of the government of this world, and that by judgment being in His hand?

See Psa. 2, compared with the general expression of feeling in the Psalms. Is not the first a declaration of Messiah, He who is King in Zion, and Son of God, set as God's King in spite of all enemies-Adonai laughing to scorn their efforts in the day of His wrath? Yet are not the Psalms, as a whole, the expression of the sorrows and sufferings of the righteous, and of Messiah with them? Is He not David's Lord, called to sit at God's right hand, till He makes His foes His footstool, and the rod of His power goes forth from Zion, ruling in the midst of His enemies? Such is the uniform tenor of scripture in every part. The first song we have after the exodus (Hannah's, in the beginning of Samuel) sings with a heart confiding in goodness, after its sorrows, the same truths as to Christ, naming Him as the object of hope.

Now, I ask, Is the destruction of the Assyrian connected with deliverances in power and judgment, or with the suffering of Christ?3 No one who has read scripture can hesitate for a moment as to the answer. The destruction of tl is powerful enemy, no doubt, will be connected with Him who suffered, but not with the time of His suffering. The two parts of His history (not the length of the interval, because that did not belong to Israel, but to the Church) are as clear and distinct as possible. The argument, therefore, of Mr. N. that Messiah could not be Jesus, because the prophecies relating to Messiah are connected with the destruction of the Assyrian (Phases, pp. 192, 193), is worse than worthless. I am persuaded he knows better than his pages bear upon their face. That these testimonies of future glory and deliverance then given were comforts to the souls of believers, and sustained their faith in the midst of evil, and the consequent judgments which fell on the beloved people, I do not doubt; and they were, I doubt not, meant to be so; but the things they prophesied of were different from the present comfort conveyed, though rationalists cannot distinguish these things, nor suppose, with the evident reason for it in the history before them, that God was merciful enough thus to consider the brokenhearted faithful whom He had taught to confide in Him.

They understood it; and, though with much obscurity of mind and many prejudices, gracious confidence in God was maintained; and, through all their darkest times, there were those who feared the Lord and spake often one to another, and who waited for redemption in Israel. I do not spiritualize it; I believe it. I do not believe Jesus has fulfilled the prophecies which speak of the revelation of His glory in judgment and government; but I am sure that that Stone on which those who stumbled have been indeed broken, as we know, will grind to powder those on whom it shall justly fall-that "Stone which the builders rejected, and which is become the head of the corner"-when Hosanna shall be sung, not only by babes and sucklings, to confound the adversary, but by a people to whom every promise shall be fulfilled, and by a world dwelling in peace under the blessing of Him for whose law the isles shall wait, and whose scepter shall be their confidence and their blessing-the King of righteousness and King of peace.

I will now show that on this point Mr. N. is as incorrect in detail, as he is narrow and superficial in his apprehension of the whole-more than narrow; for he connects parts of which the least attention or understanding would show the distinctness. Indeed, his remarks prove, either that he has not attended to what he is talking about, or that he is incapable of seizing its bearing. Not a prophecy connects the Assyrian with the sufferings of Christ. But Mr. N. refers particularly to a passage in Micah, which he declares cannot apply to Jesus: "The Messiah of Micah however was not Jesus; for he was to deliver Israel from the Assyrians, and his whole description is literally warlike." (Phases, p. 192.)

We had better have the passage: it will help to show the value of "our logic," and of rationalist comments in general. It is as follows:-"Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto m that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land," &c. Then we have victories attributed to the Jews; and they become the source of blessing to the earth-are as a lion and yet as a dew among many people. (Mic. 5) Now, whatever the explanation of the details, which I do not think indeed exceedingly obscure, it is quite clear that the smiting of the Judge of Israel on the cheek is followed, not by the destruction of the Assyrian, but by being given up for a period designated by "until she which travaileth shall have brought forth." Whatever may be in the womb of God's purposes, till it be accomplished the Jews will be given up. There is, first, one period or order of things; the Judge of Israel not warlike, but smitten, and they given up in consequence. Then we have another, He stands and feeds in the majesty of the Lord, for now shall He be great to the ends of the earth; and when the Assyrian comes into their land, this Man-this same Jesus-will be the peace, and Israel great and glorious. Can anything be plainer than the distinction of these two conditions of the Judge of Israel, and of the two states of Israel-given up at one time; and at another defended, in peace, victorious, and a blessing?

And this is adduced to show "that the Messiah of Micah was not Jesus, because he was to deliver Israel from the Assyrians, and his whole description is literally warlike"-"and Micah conceived of a powerful monarch on the throne of David." But it is a singular sign of power that He should be smitten on the cheek, and Israel given up, none could say till when-till the birth of the fruit of some great purpose of God! Such interpretation entitles us to lay aside the conclusions and the judgment of him who has pretended to speak of the passage, and to put no further confidence in anything he alleges about the scriptures.

The same train of reasoning applies to Isa. 8 in even a stronger way. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." And then he goes on to describe the misery of the great and final vexation of Israel,, after He had already arrived, and then (by Messiah) their deliverance from every yoke, and His glorious reign, through this battle, not like that of ordinary warriors, but of fuel and fire. Can anything more clearly distinguish the two dates-one, God's hiding His face from stumbling Israel; and another, the glorious subsequent deliverance by the Lord?

But it is well to pursue the spirit of rationalism into some further details.

I admit that Psa. 724 has never yet been fulfilled. The Son of David has never yet sat on the throne of His glory as such. We may leave it; as Mr. N. himself must be a prophet to say that this prediction never will be fulfilled.

Isaiah5 9 "may be verified by Jesus hereafter." Well, I believe the greater part will; so here we have not much to contend about. Still Mr. N. repents of the seeming candor of his acknowledgment, and so says it cannot be, for Judah and Israel had been reconciled long before the time of Augustus. When? A few of the ten tribes had from the beginning thrown themselves into the kingdom of Judah; but when were the ten tribes reconciled? I never heard of it; I thought they were carried away captive by Shalmaneser and others. That faith always owned them as a whole, from Elijah on his Carmel to Paul and James, is true; but that is nothing to the purpose. Besides, the prophet is speaking of what they will do, when as tribes they are restored in blessing and power to their land. Then will there no more be these quarrels. The distinctions of Philistines, Moab, and Ammon are lost to Mr. N.: they are not to this day by the Jew; and such distinctions are much more preserved than people suppose, and will, I doubt not, re-appear, and Israel will dispossess the people inhabiting these countries. These testimonies, as to the future, must have their credit, it is perfectly evident, from the general proof of the authority of the prophecy: no one can, as to the future, have any other proof, unless he sets up to be a prophet himself.

We get three things spoken of here: one that we have not got, and two that we have.

The thing we have not got is rest: There remaineth a rest for the people of God. The prophet says, "Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, for it is polluted." (Mic. 2:10.) We are partakers of the divine nature, and we must rest where He rests.

The other two things are the word of God and the priesthood of Christ. Also I wish, in speaking of this help by the way, to refer to that in which all is absolute perfection, to show the difference between our standing before God, and that which is a help more for infirmity than for sin. We have to learn-if we have not yet learned-the place in which we are set through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first exercises of the heart do not come in in this portion at all, those which we have when we do not know our place, when we try to do good, and do it not; but that is not the path of the people of God as such. It may be the way into it, but the place of the Christian is in perfect acceptance before God, with every question of sin perfectly settled. Just as with Israel: they were delivered from the place they were in, God's judgment met by the blood upon the doorpost, and they brought through the Red Sea to Himself: "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." (Ex. 19:4.) That is where the Christian is; the veil is rent, and we are now before God without any veil at all, though it may be on our hearts through unbelief. I do not speak of that now.

As far as God's government goes, all are in relationship with Him, but I speak now of the relations of the heart. Every possible trial of man has been made, and it only came out that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Christ has been rejected, and the world has no place before God at all, though His love goes out towards it, for He has had His purpose and thought of grace ever since Adam fell, and souls get into a place in which they are in relationship with God. We have to see where we are, when the whole world is lying in wickedness. Men own Christ outwardly, that He died on the cross, etc., and go on just as they did before. You cannot call that relationship -there is none.

There remains a rest even for God's people, just as Israel were journeying on to Canaan; they cannot have rest in a world which is contrary to Christ. We are exercised in the wilderness, we are in conflict, too, with wicked spirits in heavenly places; and that is not rest. Israel will get their rest in time; but I drop that for the moment, and apply it to ourselves. It is a blessed thought, that there will be rest and joy for this poor sin-stricken world, but for us it is a heavenly rest-we are blessed in heavenly places in Christ.

Where God can rest in His love, we can rest. If God rests in His love, there is nothing wanting. He is active now in His love, seeking to save that which was lost; but that is not rest; He rests in His love when those whom He has brought by His love are there, and no single thing is lacking to their enjoyment. It is ours, that rest, but we are not there yet. Christ is waiting too, He does not yet see the full result of the travail of His soul, but He will do so, and be satisfied. That rest, of course, is according to God's nature. He brings us now, "holy and without blame, before him in love," having the adoption of children, knowing God as our Father, and the blessed rest of God's people is also according to His nature. And it is all revealed now, the veil is rent, and all that is revealed which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. The Father fully revealed in the Son, the essence of all the blessing. The more spiritual we become, the more we learn what it all is. We get the figures of it in Revelation, where the spiritual apprehension lays hold of it, so that we can live in it, but it is clear we have not come to it.

It is a mistake to speak of this rest as rest of conscience. "We that have believed do enter into rest" only means the character of those who enter; as I might say, Men come in by this door, and women by that. I do not say that any are coming in now. We have rest in the sense of ceasing from our own works for righteousness, but not in the heavenly sense.

But then, beloved friends, all has been completely brought out now-they are not promises, the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared. The work is all completely finished and revealed. The moment the Son of God was rejected, all that could be done to test man's heart had been done, and He says, "Now is the judgment of this world." For when Christ was there, in perfect love and goodness, revealing the Father, He had to say, "The world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." He appeals to the righteous Father to judge between them.

We get Man then-Christ in the divine glory, because He had finished the work His Father gave Him to do: there, when He had finished it, and because He had finished it. And Paul says he did not know the Christ who came to be Messiah among the Jews; they had forfeited all the promises, and it was all over with Jew and Gentile, and there was no relationship that God recognized at all. Man was cast out of the first paradise, but was set in Christ in the heavenly paradise, and between the two there is nothing really that God owns. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19.) Satan was the prince of the world before, but he was never called it until the cross, where the world proved what it was: it was not a question of the responsibility of man, but the proof that he is. enmity against God, and that he will not have Him on any terms. But in that, God wrought His own work, the work He had always had in His mind before the foundation of the world, and as the fruit of which, Christ is in heaven. (Of course, He always was there, but I speak now of Christ as Man.)

The more we dwell upon it, the more we shall see the whole question of good and evil definitively settled at the cross. The perfect wickedness of man was fully brought out there; the disciples run away, and all the rest were delighting in getting rid of the Lord, saying, Aha! Aha! so would we have it.

We get here, man entirely rejecting the Lord, and that is what we are ourselves, our natural state. On the other hand, when the wickedness of man's heart is brought out, then I get man perfect (in Christ, of course), absolute obedience at all cost, even to the cup and the curse, perfect love to the Father: "that the world may know that I love the Father, even so I do." That love was shown really and perfectly where He was made sin. I get man in His perfectness here, glorifying God at all cost: God revealed in His Majesty-He could not let His own Son be spared when He had put Himself in that place—His judgment against sin, the thought of which made the Lord sweat great drops of blood; and all this was done for us: He suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Morally speaking, the whole question of good and evil was resolved: Satan's power, the wickedness of man, the perfection of Man, and the nature of God 'all fully brought out. It is not now a question of probation, but of belief in a thing that is so settled, that God has set the One who did it at His own right hand. He was perfectly glorified in the place where Christ was made sin, and Man is sitting at the right hand of God in glory. It is all done, and that is what the Holy Ghost comes down to reveal to us.

Exercises of heart there will be, finding out what we are, that in our flesh dwells no good thing-that we are the very persons who were thus manifested at the cross; but I find, too, that being one of those persons, and having that evil nature, it was all met at the cross-a settled thing. He would not have the twelve legions of angels, He went on to the end. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

When, beloved friends, I have been thoroughly convinced of sin and sins, I find then, when I get before God in the full conviction of what I am, I get Christ instead of myself; He is before God for me. Not that all the sin is nothing, but that Christ has borne it all for me; God has accepted it as meeting it completely and absolutely, not giving me a legal righteousness-it is infinitely beyond that-but giving me a place in glory, in virtue of the work which has perfectly glorified God. I do not believe we get the sense of that until we have done with all confidence in self; it is a very subtle thing. A man does not set about saying there is something in him to trust, but he goes on as if there were, and he will not get that liberty spoken of in Rom. 7

I am utterly condemned, and taking my place under the righteous judgment of God, I find Christ is not on the cross now. He is sitting at the right hand of God, after He has been on the cross. All I was as a child of Adam is done away, and I am sanctified by the will of God, "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." He is sitting there at rest, because He has finished the work. (I do not speak now of the grace He is daily ministering to us.)

If I am looking for anything to put away my sins, I do not believe in the finished work of Christ, and therefore the apostle says, in Heb. 9, "then must Christ often have suffered." There is not a thing to be done; but it is done-"no more conscience of sins." It is not that I do not fail, but when I look up to God, faith cannot have a thought that God imputes anything to me. And why so? Because Christ is sitting at the right hand of God when He had purged our sins.

If I go in faith, I go through the rent veil-His flesh-into the holiest of all, in boldness, because He who has accomplished the work is there. I find Him there when I go. I press that, beloved friends; because you are not on the full, true ground of liberty before God, until the thought of imputation, when you put yourselves in the presence of God, has completely disappeared. It is well to put yourselves there to test your souls. Supposing I stand before the judgment seat. Why, the One who is there is the One who bore my sins! I see it more every day, that the whole question of the church's ruin hangs upon this; whether or not the worshipers once purged have no more conscience of sins. People speak of Christ bearing their past sins, but there is no sense in saying Christ bore my sins up to the 16th of July! He was there before God meeting the whole question of sin, and He sits down because it is all settled. God has made death and judgment, like the Red Sea, to be a wall on my right hand and my left.

What, then, comes of our present life? The first thing to get quite clear is, that my place before God is Christ's place every instant. "No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." How can you condemn one who is in Christ? It is absurd, and the apostle says it triumphantly.

But what do we get as to what is going on now? It is not a question of imputation at all, but we have to do with the same Christ who is the perfect Witness to God's satisfaction.

I am here, a poor weak creature, exposed to all sorts of snares and temptations, and we have the word of God, sharper than a two-edged sword, which comes and judges; it runs right through, and says, What is this in your heart? Is that in accordance with the light? No buts, no buts, there is no excuse, you are brought into the light. It shows me things I never suspected before-all things naked and open; the word is God's eye; prying into my heart, and showing me what suits that eye, judging not merely acts, but the thoughts and intents of the heart.

But, supposing all the thoughts and intents of my heart were as perfect as possible, still I am a poor weak creature, and then I get the Priesthood of Christ. There are snares all around-the world, Christian friends who are not spiritually-minded-and I have to go through all that, all the difficulty and trial that comes from those who do not wish the cross to be quite what it is. We are in danger in passing through this world, and so I have Christ, who has met every difficulty and temptation, and ten thousand times more than we do, and understands it all, not only in the divine, but also in the experimental, way. But for the evil movements of my heart, I want the hatchet: for the difficulties, trials, etc., I have the throne of grace-God Himself, the perfect and adequate supply of all grace to overcome.

The Priesthood of Christ does not apply to sins. Many a one who does not quite know that he is perfected forever, if he gets into a low state, goes to Christ, just as if he could not go to God. I have a High Priest there, and I go to the throne of grace; it is for help in time of need, not for sin.

If you go to Christ about your sins, as if He were to go about them to God, that is not what He does as Priest. The Priest is to obtain grace for me, that I should not sin; He is always there to obtain every needed grace, to help in time of need. It is impossible that a temptation can be too strong for us, for He is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, and we have all the strength of God. We go to the throne of grace, and get what is needed to help in time of need.

The epistle never connects the priesthood with sin; it is well you should feel it, that you may not think you may sin, and then run to the Priest to get it set straight. But supposing I fail, and sin (which we all do), then I have an Advocate with the Father; it is not then going to God to get grace and strength, but that fellowship with the Father must be restored. Fellowship is interrupted if I even allow a sinful thought; it were blasphemy to say He could have fellowship with that. I go, then, not doubting His love, but not cheerful and happy as if nothing had happened; while the righteousness in which I stand is not touched, communion is destroyed. If I allow anything that is not of God, communion is interrupted: and "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father;" that is about our sins. But mark how he speaks, that there may be no cloud-"Jesus Christ, the righteous." Why bring in that word? Because our righteousness is not touched, it all remains in unalterable value.

But it has brought me, too, to walk in the light, as God is in the light, and after communion is broken, He interferes to restore it. If I look at the sins as interrupting my standing before God, Christ is not my righteousness, but the effect of His work is to put me into the light, there to judge of everything, as He does; there is no other place for a man except that of being in his sins.

The moment there is anything inconsistent with the presence of God, in the measure in which I release it, communion is interrupted. Then do I go out of the position of grace? Not at all. He interferes to break me down about my sin, to make me judge the root, the place where I got away from the path. My soul has to go through the judgment of all that, and there I do get the question of sin raised, but then it is as Advocate with the Father.

If I think of the Priesthood, I am before God perfected forever. But though this is true, I am a poor weak creature going through the wilderness and there is infinite strength for me, and He is my Priest, representing me before God. We never can excuse ourselves if we fail, because He is faithful. There may be negligence, and we may not have power at the time to overcome; negligence in prayer, and in using the means God has given, but I never can excuse myself.

Have your hearts right open before God. Do not leave any chambers locked up before Him, or you cannot have joy and liberty. You may walk well outwardly, not scandalize anybody, but if you have anything in your heart not open before God, you have lost your communion, and there is that which tends to weaken your whole path.

There are two things: the full and distinct apprehension that before God there is no more conscience of sin: if you have not reached it, never rest till you do: He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Here comes the fact that we are poor, weak, infirm creatures, and we are put through all sorts of things to exercise us; and He is my Priest where the intention is right. I have to have my will broken, things I do not suspect brought out, and, even if I fail, the advocacy of Christ is founded on His righteousness, and in that there is no progress, and no change.

I press upon you distinctly and definitely-for the loss of it was the very ruin of the church-and for your own souls, not to rest till you have no more conscience of sins. Then, not only watchfulness against evil, but growing up unto Him in all things. But there is no perfectness till we are like Him in glory. I press toward the mark.

The Lord give us diligence and earnestness of heart thus to follow Christ!

Letters 2, Bereavement; Death in a Family

Thank you for writing to me about your dear A.; you judged rightly in thinking I should be interested in hearing. I was thinking of seeing her before she left this, though knowing she was declining. Most thankful I am that peace and Christ was her portion to the end: not that I doubted she leant on the Lord, but when I saw her, though she left no trace of doubt on my mind that she was His, there were moments that the full peace and liberty in Christ were clouded, though never attachment of heart to Him. I should have been glad to have seen her; but for her, oh! how far better to be at rest and with the Lord: that is joy and blessing, yet we have it in His grace here, though as yet in a very poor earthen vessel. Dear child! I so rejoice in seeing her with Him who loved her, and now has taken her where He is, and evil and sorrow cannot come. And I rejoice for you, dear brother, and Mrs.-, that you have been given to see her peace and joy before she went. Her affections were all right with Jesus, and they have not been disappointed; and my heart goes up there where she is. It is our home and our rest.... My true sympathy with Mrs. -.

The Lord, dear brother, be with you and yours, and multiply His blessings. May He keep you near Himself in lowliness and joy of communion! It is not our rest—there remains one for God's people—but what a reason! "it is polluted": we belong to what is of God and is holy.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

San Francisco,

June, 1876.

Letters 2, Bereavement; the First Death in a Family

——kindly let me know of the loss of your dear boy, and I write a line only to assure you and Mrs.- of my unfeigned sympathy.

The Lord has seen good to lay His hand, dear brother, heavily upon you, but it is all in love. He would bring you close to Himself, and make this world more of a passage, and a wilderness; and such it is, for a saint who has a place in the Father's house. "This is not your rest," says a prophet, "because it is polluted." What an honor! God has sanctified us to Himself, and cannot have us rest where He cannot; but the promise is left us of entering into His: but we need to be weaned from this world, to have our hearts there. He is working this with you. I have always felt that the first break in the family is more than all others. Our children are a kind of continued life to us, we live on in them. But when death first strikes a family, we find death has come in and has power where life was. It tells the tale that all here is smitten. But Christ has come in where death was, and given a life beyond it all. He calls us in gracious and tender love to live in that. He knows how to comfort—knows what death is far better than we do, because He is the resurrection and the life—has wept over it and suffered it; He will comfort you and Mrs.- with a comfort which, if it feels for death, death cannot touch. Assure also-and all how much I feel the stroke that has fallen upon you. I trust it may be for deep blessing to them. Peace be with you.

January, 1873.

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