Psalms - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Letters 1, Separation of Plymouth

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I think there is a rather increasing impression on reflection that the Dublin meeting was a happy one, that is, that it was not merely the joy of the moment, but blessing from God.

I feel for the Compton Street brethren, but I think that their path might have been a simpler and happier one, and that they have somewhat complicated it themselves; however, this does not take it out of the way of the Lord's grace, nor hinder others meeting the case as it is in the wisdom and grace of His Spirit.... I should trust the Bath meeting was decidedly useful; but I judge the brethren in general have moral position to recover. It seems to me that, from the character of the evil in certain points, when ascertained, they ought to have said, Mr. Darby or Mr. Anybody is not concerned here; God is in question, and the dishonor done to His name is what we have to think of as between us and you who have used it, for it was used in the most solemn way to support what is now admitted untruth. Here I think the brethren were not on the high ground the church of God ought to take. I do not speak of the evil in individuals now, but the ground the brethren were upon; they allowed themselves to be led into the question of blame to me, which was a mere subordinate question, an escape from the great point. However there it is. I feel what they did not take up, and which, in the position they had allowed me to be put in, I could not help them in, I must take before God; that is, recognize the fact as to the state of things as work yet to be done by His grace, which I wait upon Him to do. As to myself, the Bath meeting, however disagreeable, could hardly have been more mercifully satisfactory; but I think, as I said, there was a want of moral dignity. These form elements of judgment in one's path.

The Lord is working most graciously here, and, I judge, really reviving the brethren's testimony in these latter days; but I see He will not allow half positions. How sad, but how necessary, that any should be forced to the division. Peace be with you. I wait upon the Lord to direct it all to a quiet issue—His own in grace. As far as any love on my part to the Compton Street brethren could do anything, I think I can say it would not be wanting, waiting only on the Lord for spiritual judgment.

Leeds,

May 31St, 1848.

Notes and Comments 2, Smiting

People have talked much of smiting, but the truth is it is not applied in Scripture to atonement itself. It is no harm that the mind associates atonement with it—nay, it is useful—because it is the great and essential thing of the Cross where Jesus, the Blessed One, was smitten. But atonement was a far deeper and unfathomable act of suffering, and wrath drank into the soul-forsaking, not smiting.

Smiting is used as to the setting aside by death all the Messiah privileges, though we may, and it is all well, associate the other deeper work, done at the same time, with it. It is only used in Zech. 13:7, and quoted thence in Matt. 26:31, Mark 14:27, and Psa. 69:26, referring in all to the relative position He took, contrasted with an accepted Messiah—the Shepherd was smitten and the disciples scattered. This is not making His soul an offering for sin, and the Lord laying our iniquities on Him; it refers to His position, and being Shepherd of Israel's faithful ones in this world-He was, in this character, smitten. The effect was the scattering of the sheep, not forgiveness and atonement. Hence we see it applied when they come to take Him, and the disciples fled. No doubt the actual blow was in his death—I speak now of na-chah (to smite)—it is any blow; ne-ga (stroke, plague) is used in Isa. 53:8 (margin), when the thing is explained, not na-chah, "For the transgression of my people was the plague, or judgment, stroke upon him." And so we know it was; but this is the explanation, blessed explanation of a fact which had also an outward aspect. Na-chah is the simple act of smiting; ne-ga goes, I think, further. This is seen when both are used as participles, " Yet we did esteem him na-ga (stricken)"—thus absolutely, the plague of God on Him; smitten of (mu-keh)1 God and afflicted. The truth was He was made a plague for the transgression of His people. But Messiah was cut off as such, and took nothing, and the sheep that were with Him then as Shepherd were scattered, and hence, as we have said, it is applied already in Gethsemane.

But there was, I am persuaded, in the atoning work a much deeper element. The forsaking of God in respect of sin, that no thought of ours can reach, though, blessed be God, it has reached us, for every sorrow was to meet there. I judge it is the want of deep apprehension of what atonement is—of what Christ suffered in His soul for it, which leads to cavils about other sorrows, and the application of passages to them. Every sorrow was there, but there was one which only the spiritual mind can in any sense understand. Isa. 53 shows that this was the case that, as they esteemed Him outwardly under God's judgment—and He was, in a far deeper sense, for their transgression—"With his stripes they were healed." But by this act, in which atonement did take place, there was, besides the atonement, the setting aside all His earthly Messiahship, and the taking away His life from the earth; and all this the Lord felt and entered into as to the setting aside of the people by their own wickedness.

Letters 3, Early Blessing in Plymouth

Plymouth, I assure you, has altered the face of Christianity to me, from finding brethren, and they acting together. There are, as you know, individuals here, but scattered as missionaries over the country.

Dublin, April.13th, 1832.

Selections for Saints, Cast Thy Burden Upon the Lord

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” (Psa. 55:22)

There are two points in this verse. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord.” Whatever the trial or difficulty may be, cast it upon the Lord. It is not that the trial goes always—here (in this Psalm) it would not till judgment came; but “He shall sustain thee.” It is better than the trials going. It is the direct coming in of God to ourselves, to our own souls, the sense of His interest in us, His favor, His nearness, that He comes in to help us in our need. It is a divine condition of the soul, which is better than absence of evil. God is a sure help to sustain us.

The second point is the infallible faithfulness of God. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Tried they may be, but He cannot suffer evil in the world to prevail, nor will He. We may learn to trust by the evil, but in trusting we know the Lord will keep, and the extreme character of the evil only shows the rather that God must come in—makes His intervention necessary.

J.N.D.

Letters 3, Government of God

I want to get this1 printed as a leaflet letter.

It is with unfeigned trembling I have put it out, not as doubting its truth, and as to its contents, opportunely, but doing it in the way of addressing all.

Do not give in to the alarm and uneasiness some would create: many things God alone can settle, and there is an effort to give importance to discontent. God will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are stayed on Him. He is above all evil, and Christ has gone through everything, and has all power in heaven and on earth.... The Lord governs, and will bring all about in His own way. The brethren everywhere, speaking generally, are in ten thousand times a better state than they were before the hubbub. There is more conscience, more fear of God.... Seek the good, leave the evil to God, only keeping a good conscience. He says, "Be still and know that I am God." "I waited," says Christ in Spirit, "patiently for the Lord." And then there will be a new song in our mouths, and blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust.

Love to the saints.

Pau, October 13th.

Christian Truth: Volume 25, Waiting

Psalm 40:1

It is Christ's perfect life, and sorrows at the close of it, in which He refers to the faithfulness and goodness of Jehovah, so as to lead His people to confide in it, instructing them in this in which His perfection is shown. "I waited patiently for Jehovah" (J.N.D. Trans.). Patience had its perfect work-an immense lesson for us. Flesh can wait long, but not till the Lord comes in-not in perfect submission- and confiding only in His strength and faithfulness, so as to be perfect in obedience and in the will of God.

Saul waited nearly seven days, but the confidence of the flesh was melting away-his army. The Philistines, the proud enemies, were there. He did not wait till the Lord came in with Samuel. Had he obeyed, and felt he could do nothing, and had only to obey and wait, he would have said, "I can do nothing, and I ought to do nothing, till the Lord comes with Samuel." Flesh trusted in its own wisdom, and looked to its own force, though with pious forms. All was lost. It was flesh which was tried and failed. Christ was tried. He waited patiently for Jehovah. He was perfect and complete in all the will of God. And this is our path through grace.

Letters 1, Affliction's Lessons, and Bereavement; Subjection of Will

Beloved Sisters,—Here I am at last at Montpellier, not knowing how long I ought to stay here. Outwardly there is not much to make me remain. However, I believe that God has something in His mind, and though I shall go after a little into the Gard, I do not think of leaving Montpellier altogether. God, I trust, will lead me. I have all confidence in Him, who governs according to His thoughts of grace, and not according to those of man.

But in writing to you, it is rather you, your sister, and your family that I think of, for cold and undemonstrative as I am, you cannot think that after so much kindness and care that you have lavished upon me, I could be indifferent to what concerns you. I was deeply touched by the news, received through———, of the death of your poor nephew. I was ready to complain of you for having told me nothing about it, but that I had regard to the affliction that a blow so felt must have produced. But I venture to assure you of all my sympathy. I know that it is the Lord alone who can really comfort when He strikes us, and the source of our consolation is precisely the feeling that it is He Himself who so loved us, who strikes us, for that which comes from His hand can only be perfect. We shall not know how to explain it; the heart suffers by it; but it is our Father that has given the cup to drink; that was the only, and it was perfect, consolation of Jesus. One recognizes the hand of one who is known; we do not stop at the circumstances that appear to us mysterious, we refer in them to Him, and all is changed; the heart is softened

by it, does not wish it to be otherwise, but the will is not in rebellion, and we are comforted near Him, feeling more than ever that He is our all. What a precious lesson, what a glorious position! God alone could have placed us there. Until we are there, the flesh will stir: we must not be surprised at it: and then all will be dark, because we see everything after our own hearts, and light is not in man; but if the life of Christ is in us, we shall see that there is sin in it; it will be exposed; we shall feel that we had need to be smitten; submission will come; we leave ourselves before God. "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." Then peace will soon be there. If the soul is already subject, then nothing separates us from His love; and confidence in this love gives us an unruffled peace.

Dear sisters, I can weep with you and the family of your poor dear C. like the Jews with Mary, but I know that He who loves him can sustain your souls. I have confidence in Him with regard to you.... I trust this painful blow will be a blessing: Be assured also yourselves of my entire sympathy. I feel that this will operate in a different manner with each of you, but our precious Savior will do His own work in each of His own. From what I saw three months ago, I thought that-might be discouraged and cast down by this affliction. If it be so, let her remember that His ways are not as our ways, and that the heart of Jesus, of Him who smites us, has itself passed through all the trials through which He makes us pass; that He cannot make us taste anything for our good without having drunk Himself all its bitterness to the dregs. He knows what He is doing; He suffers all that He inflicts. It is His love, His knowledge of all that makes Him do all that He does. Let us have full confidence in Him who has been tempted in all things like unto us. Do not impose on yourself the task of replying to me. I think of seeing you before very long. There is an English brother who lost his wife nearly a year ago, who will be with me.

Your very affectionate brother.

Montpellier,

March 15th, 1844.

The Loving-Kindness of the Lord, Loving-Kindness of the Lord, The

“How precious is Thy loving-kindness, O God!” (Psa. 36:7 JND).

Father! in Thy eternal power,Thy grace and majesty divine,No soul, in this weak, mortal hour,Can grasp the glory that is Thine.E’en in the thoughts of sovereign graceIt leaves us far, far behind;The love that gives with Christ a placeSurpasses our poor, feeble mind.

The prodigal afar off from his father asks to be made as one of his hired servants. When he comes into his father’s presence, there is no such word. Before he was only thinking of what he was to his father and not what his father was to him.

Remark here . . . one thing most beautiful to observe (Ex. 33-34). God, after threatening to consume them (His people), had said (ch. 33:3), “I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people.” Yet Moses says in chapter 34:9, “If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people.” Grace had come in in the interval; God’s goodness had passed before him. This changed all, and the people being so stiffnecked, Moses says, We cannot do without God. . . . The moment grace is brought in . . . we feel that our very sinfulness is a reason why the presence of God cannot be dispensed with.

People think it humility to doubt God’s grace. It is no such thing. It is thinking your own thoughts when God has spoken. . . . True lowliness is to accept God’s thought. We have no business to think when God has spoken; our business is to believe.

The Lord intercedes for us without our even asking. We do not gain Him to intercede for us because of our repentance or prayers. He did not intercede for Peter when he repented, but before he sinned. He interceded for Peter because he needed it. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.” . . . It is the exercise of grace in His own heart towards us to restore our souls.

“There came a cloud, and overshadowed them” (Luke 9:34). . . . It was the divine presence. . . . The fact was that coming into the cloud was coming into the presence of the Father, now a dwelling-place for us. It was thence the Father’s voice was heard, “This is My beloved Son.” . . . He brought them to the Father, the only place into which redemption brings us. . . . Until a man . . . is brought into His presence, he can never know the Father’s love, but when there, he can never know the end of it. It is the kind of love the prodigal never knew till he was in his father’s arms.

The heart finds itself infinitely and everlastingly a debtor to the continual fountain of all grace.

If He uses me, it is a great honor; if He lays me by because self was elated, it is a great mercy. He is saying, as it were, Be satisfied with Myself; be content to know I love you. Are you content with His love? The secret of all service is the due appreciation of the Master’s grace.

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Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, I Will Guide Thee With Mine Eye

Psalm 32:8-9

There are three special characters of blessing mentioned in the Psalms.

First, that which we get at the very opening of them: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water” (Psa. 1:1-3). It is here a contrast between the ungodly and Christ, the righteous Man.

In Psalm 119 we go a little farther. This psalm speaks of having wandered, and of being restored (vss. 67, 71, 176). It is here, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of Jehovah.” It speaks of one who has the word, delights in it, looks to it, and seeks to be guided by

it; still it is not so absolute.

In the psalm before us, Psalm 32, we get the blessedness of, and God's dealings with, the sinner whose transgressions are removed. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered [not who has not transgressed, who has not sinned]. Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (that is, the restored soul).

It is important to notice the work of the Spirit of God, in the process through which the soul is going here (as it says, “Thy hand was heavy upon me”), God's dealings with the soul that does not submit itself entirely in bringing it down into full subjection and confession. “When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin” (vss. 2-5). This is always true, if the Lord's hand is upon a man, until he recognizes the evil before God; and then there is forgiveness of the iniquity. It is very important that we should distinguish the government of God towards our souls in forgiveness.

Until there is confession of sin, and not merely of a sin, there is no forgiveness. We find David, in Psalm 51, when he was confessing his sin, saying, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me,” not merely, I have done this particular evil; that he does (vss. 1-4); but he recognizes the root and principle of sin. When our hearts are brought to recognize God's hand, it is not merely, then, a question of what particular sin, or of what particular iniquity may need forgiveness; God has brought down the soul, through the working of His Spirit on it, to detect the principle of sin, and so there is confession of that, and not merely of a particular sin. There is then positive restoration of soul.

Now this is a much deeper thing in its practical consequences, and the Lord's dealings thereon, than we are apt to suppose. Freed from the bondage of things which hinder its intercourse with God, the soul learns to lean upon God, instead of upon those things which, so to speak, had taken the place of God. “For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance” (vss. 6-7). There is its confidence.

And then follows what, more especially, is the object of this paper—“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee” (vss. 8-9).

Now we are often like the horse, or the mule, every one of us—and this, because our souls have not been plowed up. When there is anything in which the will of man is at work, the Lord deals with us, as with the horse or the mule, holding us in. When every part of the heart is in contact with Himself, He guides us with His “eye.” “The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light” (Luke 11: 34-36). When there is anything wherein the eye is not single, so long as this is the case, there is not free intercourse in heart and affections with God; and the consequence is, our will not being subdued, we are not led simply of God. When the heart is in a right state, the whole body is “full of light,” and there is the quick perception of the will of God. He just teaches us by His “eye” all He wishes, and produces in us quickness of understanding in His fear; Isaiah 11:3. This is our portion, as having the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, “quick of understanding in the fear of Jehovah,” hearts without any object, save the will and glory of God. And that is just what Christ was: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psa. 40:7-8; Heb. 10:7). Where there is this, it may be bitter and painful as to the circumstances of the path, but there is in it the joy of obedience as obedience. There is always joy, and the consequence—God guiding us by His eye.

Before anything can be done, if we have not this certainty, before we enter upon any particular service, we should seek to get it, judging our own hearts as to what may be hindering. Suppose I set about doing a thing, and meet with difficulties, I shall begin to be uncertain as to whether it is God's mind or not; and hence, there will be feebleness and discouragement. But on the other hand, if acting in the intelligence of God's mind in communion, I shall be “more than conqueror,” whatever may meet me by the way (Rom. 8:37). And note here: not only does the power of faith, in the path of faith, remove mountains; but the Lord deals morally, and will not let me find out His way, unless there be in me the spirit of obedience. What would it avail—unless indeed God should provide for His own dishonor? “If any man will do [wills to do] his will,” says our Lord, “he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17). This is precisely the obedience of faith. The heart must be in the condition of obedience, as Christ's was, “Lo, I come.” The apostle speaks to the Colossians of being “filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col. 1:9). Here it is quickness of understanding in the fear of the Lord, the condition of a man's own soul, though his spirit of mind will be necessarily shown in outward acts, when that will is set before him; as Paul goes on to say, “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful unto every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Here then is the blessed joyful state of being guided by God's “eye.” “I have meat to eat,” says our Lord to the disciples (John 4), “that ye know not of.” And what was that meat? “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”

The Lord guides, or rather controls, us in another way by providential circumstances, so that we may not go wrong, even though we are those which have no understanding. And thankful we ought to be that He does so. But it is only as the horse or mule. Your will being subject to Mine, He says, “I will guide you with mine eye”—but, if you are not subject, I must keep you in with “bit and bridle.” This is, evidently, a very different thing.

May our hearts be led to desire to know and to do God's will. It will then be not so much a question of what that will is, but of knowing and doing God's will. And then we shall have the certain and blessed knowledge of being guided by His “eye.” There is all this government of God with those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile—whose whole dependence is upon Him, and who feel they are sure to go wrong if not guided by Himself.

There is a guidance with knowledge, and there is also guidance without knowledge. The former is our blessed privilege; but it may be the latter is needed to humble us. In Christ there was everything exactly according to God. In a certain sense He had no character. When I look at

Him, what do I see? A constant never-failing life—manifestation of obedience. He goes up to Bethany just when He is to go up, regardless of the fears of the disciples; He abides two days still in the same place where He is, after He has heard that Lazarus is sick; John 11. He has nothing but to do all, to accomplish all, for the glory of God. One man is tender and soft; in another firmness and decision predominate. There is great diversity of character amongst men. You do not see that in Christ at all; there is no unevenness; every faculty in His humanity obeyed, and was the instrument of the impulse the divine will gave to it.

Divine life has to be guided in a vessel that has constantly to be kept down. Thus even for the apostle the command not to go into Bithynia (Acts 16:7) was not guidance by the Spirit of the highest sort. It was blessed guidance, yet not the highest character of guidance an apostle knew. It was more like the government of the horse or the mule, not so much the intelligence of God's mind in communion.

A great range of the guidance of the Spirit is just what we get in Colossians 1:9-11 to those in communion with God. There we find the individual to be “filled with the knowledge of his will.” The Holy Spirit guides into the knowledge of the divine will, and there is no occasion even to pray about it. If I have spiritual understanding about a given thing, it may be the result of a great deal of previous prayer, and not necessarily of the things having been prayed about at the time. One has often had to pray about a thing, because not in communion. I may have my mind exercised about that today, honestly, truly, graciously exercised, which, five years hence, it might be, I should not have a doubt about. When God is using us, if we are free from ourselves, He may put it into our hearts to go here, or to go there; then God is positively guiding us. But this assumes a person to be walking With God, and that diligently; it assumes death to self. If we are walking humbly, God will guide us. I may be in a certain place, and there have one say to me, Will you go to (naming some other place)? Now, if I have not the mind of God, as to my going or otherwise, I shall have to pray for guidance; but this, of course, assumes that I am not walking in the knowledge of God's mind. I may have motives pulling me one way or the other, and clouding my spiritual judgment. The Lord says (John 11)—when the disciples speak of the Jews having of late sought to stone Him, and ask, “Goest thou thither again?”—“Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him” (John 11:9-10). This is just an application of the simple fact, that, if walking in the night, I must be on the look-out for stones, lest I stumble over them. So Paul prays for the Philippians, that their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that they might approve things that are excellent [try things that differ]; that they might be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, without a single stumble all the way along.

Many speak of providence as a guide. Providence does sometimes control, but it never, properly speaking, guides us; it guides things. If I am going to a place to preach, and I find, when I get to the terminus, that the train has started, God has ordered things about me (and I may have to be thankful for the over-ruling); but it is not God's guiding me; for I should really have gone, had the train not left: my will was to go. All we get of this guidance of providence is very blessed; but it is not guidance by the Spirit of God, not guidance by the “eye,” but rather by the “bit “of God. Though providence over-rules, it does not, properly speaking, guide.

Christian Truth: Volume 33, Guidance

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." Psalm 32:8, 9.

Now we are often like the horse, or mule, every one of us -and this because our souls have not been plowed up. When there is anything in which the will of man is at work, the Lord deals with us, as with the horse, or the mule, holding us in. When every part of the heart is in contact with Himself, He guides us with His "eye." "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no dark part, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." Luke 11:34-36.

When there is anything wherein the eye is not single, so long as this is the case, there is not free intercourse in heart and affections with God; and the consequence is, our will not being subdued, we are not simply of God. When the heart is in the right state, the whole body is "full of light," and there is quick perception of the will of God. He just teaches us by His "eye" all He wishes, and produces in us quickness of understanding in His fear! (Isa. 11:3). This is our portion, as having the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, quickness of understanding in the fear of Jehovah, hearts without any object save the will and glory of God. And that is just what Christ was: "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." See Psalm 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7. Where there is this, it may be bitter and painful as to the circumstances of the pathway, but there is in it the joy of obedience as obedience -God guiding us by His eye.... Many speak of providence as a guide. Providence does sometime control, but it never, properly speaking, guides us: it guides things. If I am going to a place to preach, and I find, when I get to the terminus, that the train has started, God has ordered things about me (and I may have to be thankful for the overruling); but it is not God's guiding me; for I should surely have gone had the train not left; my will was to go... but it is not guidance of the Spirit of God, not guidance by the "eye," but rather by the "bit" of God. Though providence overrules, it does not, properly speaking, guide.

Letters 3, Self Knowledge

It is time I wrote to you, and seek withal to cheer you also, for I hear that you have had trouble. My letter I had headed to begin some weeks ago, but only now could continue. I have not lost my interest in Barbados, nor in your work, dear brother; but I have been incessantly occupied traveling and visiting the gatherings, besides claims in study work. I have been looking over the hymns for a new edition, have my Testament on hand for a new edition, an English translation of my German to look over, am writing on John's gospel for the French, and on Romans for the Germans, and have been laid up in the gout to boot, not to say that I am within a few months of eighty; but enough of myself, only to excuse myself for my delay in writing. And now I must begin again for the third time, with the same excuse, having had two meetings, if not more, daily up to this (Edinburgh); besides the same work as far as possible while traveling, but Christ more precious than ever. I

wonder sometimes how in sovereign grace God has revealed Him to me. I feel nearer, more at home in the Father's love, yet conscious of unworthiness, but more in the sense that all is pure grace. That there was no good in me I learned, in one sense thoroughly, that is as a fact, some eight and fifty years ago, and I have, I hope, a deeper, clearer sense of it now, not seeing it, of course, at God does-for who does?- but at least with Him; but thus more in the sense of present, sovereign goodness in Him. And that is blessed, for that is what will be forever, when no sin will remain and where sin can never enter; but that love is a sanctuary in which we walk while passing through a world of snares, "the provoking of all men... from the strife of tongues," and the more the crossing and entanglement of what is without, the sweeter the rest of His presence; and soon there will be nothing else, and even here He makes all things work together for good to them that love Him: but the rest is better, but the other leads to it even here.

We are not at the end of our troubles here, at least locally, for in the mass in the country they only need ministering Christ to them. And there is a great thirst for the word, so that a door of blessing is richly opened. But besides the positive evil in worldliness, a class had sprung up of true hearts, many of them, but where will, and, in some, pretension was at work, who, tired of the evil which I think they had not faith to meet, would have thrown, as we say in French, the handle after the ax, and cut the connection altogether, and set up afresh—not pretending exactly to make a new body, but that it was hopeless trying to go on. I had been deeply tried by this question before the evil broke out, but had concluded before God that it was not faith thus to leave, that "the hireling fleeth," and I stayed and served, though away in France from the London disturbances.... Where there has been faithfulness there is more life than before, sensibly so I think, and they are more closely united; but there is wanting a bond of general confidence which, I trust, may grow with time, and is growing; but there is still the feeling, and locally the effect, of the class I mentioned—the last not large, but it tends to keep the sense of uneasiness alive. One has to have faith for everybody. Yet God is so good; for the work goes on with as much blessing as usual. Except in the locality referred to, a stranger would perceive little amiss; it is the general bond which is wanting: for one's work in testifying of Christ it is quite, happy.

I thought you would like, dear brother, to know how things were here, and I have given you as plain and true an account as I could. Those who went wrong are disposed to make and represent all as bad as may be, but as to that I trust God. I have little uneasiness as to that. They feel I believe, when there is a little soundness, that God is not with them in it. I fear more what I believe is the unbelief of those who have felt and judged the evil, and with whom, as to that, I sympathize. The real truth is, God has been sifting us, but I believe in love, and when needed; and in that love I trust, and in this matter I never trusted anything else.

Kind love to the brethren: may God abundantly bless you and them.

Affectionately yours in Jesus.

Edinburgh,

1880.

Letters 2, Experience in View of the End

When we have settled we are going Home, we have to wait here till He calls. He may keep us for service if He do not take us to rest. It is this dear Bellett would not hear of: I suppose his time was come. We are His, not our own, and it is a privilege to serve, if better to be gone. I find it a good thing to think of going, and feel my life depends on Him—not simply on age. The old Psalm version says, "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong, and he shall stablish thy heart." Some have to wait [as] in His hands; and as service is a privilege from Him, so the work is done by Him, but we ought to work from Himself. I have not felt any such call to work this time in London, though I have gone on—more entering into scripture latterly than ever, yet not a bit of it, directly at any rate, for use in speaking. I have been working up a little in case I go home and be no more seen. Much peace be with you.

Affectionately yours.

London,

July 24th, 1874.

Letters 3, Watchfulness, Need of

I was very glad to hear from you and get news from you all, and surely so much the rather that they are happy ones. I was very thankful you could say that you were going on now, not occupied with your old trials and evil. We may be forced to go through it and he sifted by it, but it never feeds nor builds up the soul; and when it is no longer necessary to do so, it only distracts and tends to irritate, to turn away from the bright and blessed apprehension of Christ and the love of God. I rejoiced greatly that you were getting on with positive blessing; but we have to watch, for the enemy always does, and if we are not looking actively to the Lord we lose our safeguard, and when distracted from Him he gets in, and often unconsciously: duties, occupation of heart with them, loss of spirituality, and the sense of the preciousness of Christ, worldliness, and then all the feebleness of walk which flows from the heart not realizing Christ as motive and power, the light of His presence, and the soul in the light before Him. The Lord has been very gracious to you, having cleared you out from all your difficulties, not merely as a part, but not leaving a trace of what might have rested as a regret on your spirits—haste in leaving, and returning while the evil was still there—for you have been left clear of it all, and all that went before clean out of question. Now it is only the straightforward conflict with self and the world that we always have here.

You know we have gone through a great conflict here, but the Lord has been very gracious, and shown that He governs -a great comfort. There is a great desire to hear the word, I may say in a general way, everywhere. I have some fifty young men to read with me every Saturday evening, with only the word to draw them; and the brethren who have been faithful in our trials are more knit together. Altogether, though all wounds are not healed as to individuals, we have much to bless God for, and the work goes on externally as usual. It is increasedly

blessed in Italy: we have lost a very dear man who was the efficient laborer, nor on account of the language can his loss, humanly speaking, be easily supplied, but God is above all difficulties.

What I fear everywhere is the world—often unsuspected. We have need of positive diligence in seeking His face, so as to prove He is with us. " The secret of the Lord is with those that fear him." Our salvation is accomplished and settled, but the government of God which goes on according to His nature and holiness and wisdom, is a most important thing. He is faithful and full of love; but oh, what a difference to walk in the light of His countenance, to be in His secret! It would be a great joy to me to see you all again, but I am now in my eightieth year, and though my mind is as fresh as ever, that is no help to long journeys. Kindest love to the brethren, some of whom I do not know, and all your family.- I trust will learn that Christ is worth a lot of lumber, and gold too, and, what is a great thing, worth it forever and worth it now too. I have not had a shoe on these four or five weeks with the gout, but it has given me quiet.

Ever affectionately yours in the Lord.

London, March 17th.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 1, Are You Praising With Christ?

Psalm 22

In the first Adam all men failed, and came under condemnation. We have failed; I have failed; not only do I belong to a world of sin, but I am a sinner. If I am honest, as to my state, I shall own I am under condemnation. It is not enough to say all men are sinners, but I am a sinner. “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest” (Rom. 2:1). All men in their reason own they are sinners; but this is another thing altogether. I must learn that I am a sinner, and that God and sin cannot go together. Man, by nature, is in darkness, and light and darkness have no connection with each other. Man in the flesh is lost, not only because he is a sinner, but because he is in a sinful condition; there is mercy for him, it is true, but his position is ruin. He is not now in a state of probation. Once God did try him. He was in a state of probation until Christ came.

We must get back to our starting-point, and then we shall see man in himself, lost, ruined, without hope, without help, until he rests in Christ, and then he is saved. Man is lost; this is his condition. Ruin is where he starts from, as involved by Adam in condemnation. The believing man is taken up out of this place, in virtue of the second Adam. This is the grace of the gospel. All now depends upon Christ. Man got out of paradise, the place of earthly blessing, and he never can get back again. I cannot get there; but I have received the same place of dignity Christ has gained; not the paradise Adam lost, which was earthly: our place of blessing in Christ is heavenly; and what is before us is the ground and way of our blessing. We have Christ as the object of our faith, and we have Him as the effect in salvation. Called upon to believe that Christ died upon the cross, we hear God saying, You are saved—not you may be, or you shall be, but you are. “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life.” We shall see how completely that work on the cross was done.

The first thing, when men fell, was the word that Another should come—“The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head” (Gen. 3:15). It is not a promise made to Adam, but a revelation in his hearing that his faith could take hold of, that Another should come. When Adam sinned, he was turned out of paradise, and all his posterity with him, and he never can take his place there again. Being in heaven is not blessedness in the garden of Eden. There is no going back to a state of innocence; that is impossible. If we have once done evil, we never can return to innocency. Christ came, the promised Seed of the woman, which Adam was not. To Abraham God had promised that in his seed, which was Christ, all the families of the earth should be blessed. It was unconditional, a settled thing, irrespective of man's righteousness. It was God's own act, and according to His way. The promise rested not on man's responsibility. I will do it, says God. It was independent of man's righteousness; nor is it that God is indifferent about righteousness: the flood settles that.

After the promise was given, God brought in the law, to raise the question of righteousness in man, and to make known his responsibility. It was not grace reigning through righteousness, but law claiming righteousness. Have you got this? The law says, Have you done what God requires? The law says, You should love God with all your heart; have you done it? The natural conscience tells you that it is right to do so. The world also pushes you, and says you ought; but you are without power. The question of righteousness has been raised by the law, to prove that every motion of our nature is sin. The law says, Do, and you shall live; obey, and you shall have life; but it does not give power, it leaves you without strength to meet its claims.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law” (Rom. 7:7). What does this mean? Would God give a law that man could not keep? why should He give it? This is the working of the natural reason. Why was the law given? That sin may abound. “I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Man finds out that he cannot keep the law, and he must get to this point. The apostle, as man, says, “The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, and sold under sin.” This is not exactly the right place. He must get further still: “That which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not.” And it is worse than even this: “What I hate, that I do.” All must come to this place. We must find out that we are without strength, and cannot get help through the law; but we are slow to learn this lesson. God never meant to save by the law. The law was given between the promise and its fulfillment to test man, to show out what was in his heart. And this is the case often with us, after we have grace; the law comes and shows us our sin, but gives us no help; it only makes us cry, “O wretched man that I am.” There is the end of all strivings. I am in a ditch, and I have to cry out, Who shall deliver me? It is too late to help myself, I cannot get up. Where can I turn to? To whom can I look?

Now I am come to the point: “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:25). Now it is the question of the worth of Another. It is no longer, What shall I do, but what has been done by Another? If the law could have given life, then Christ would not have died. There was no life in the law; that has been proved. The first thing Israel did, after the law was given, was to make a golden calf. Man failed under the law; and then comes another thing; not a promise, but much more, the Yea and Amen of all the promises, Jesus Christ. To Abraham's seed was the promise made, but they could not inherit it by the law; had this been the case, it would have been no more of promise.

When Christ came, there was one sad thing more to be made known—that man's will was altogether wrong. Had it been only a question of power, Christ had power for anything; He could have broken the devil's power, He could bind the strong man, open the prison doors, and let

the captive free, had that been all. But there was another awful truth to come out: “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” “We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). “He is despised and rejected of men” (Isa. 53:3).

Thus we get the whole history of man. There man, as man, ends: there you, by nature, were. Without law, you were lawless; under law, you were rebellious. Then God sent His Son, saying, Surely you will reverence Him: but you deliberately killed the Lord of glory. Now try your own hearts. Has not this been your state? Is it now your state? You think you ought to be righteous, and that is true; but you are slow to learn the lesson that you are without power; that help must come through another.

There are two distinct aspects of Christ's sufferings. They are of a double character. The one was for righteousness, and brings judgment; the other for sin, and brings blessing. In this Psalm 22, He is suffering from God, for sin, and it ends with nothing but blessing. The heart of God is seen delighting in blessing. The first aspect of Christ's suffering is from man: it is man against God manifest in the flesh. Christ suffered, because He was righteous and for righteousness' sake, from the hands of men. He suffered for God. “For thy sake I have borne reproach. The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me” (Psa. 69:9). In all these sufferings, it is our privilege to suffer with Him. Alas! how little fellowship we have with Christ in His sufferings! But every sorrow He passed through from the hands of men brings down judgment on them. We get the character of it in Psa. 21 “Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.” “Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven.” Christ is now in an expectant state at God's right hand, waiting to take vengeance on those His enemies, who, with wicked hands, have crucified Him. It is the effect of these sufferings from man that He gets the promise of having His enemies made His footstool.

Psalm 22 is altogether another thing; not so much suffering from the hands of man, though there are bulls of Bashan, it is true, but a wholly different kind of sufferings here. His cry now is, “Why hast thou forsaken me?” He repeats it: “O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. Be not far from me; for trouble is near.” In all His sufferings from the hands of man the face of God was upon Him, but now His face is turned away. Why did God forsake Him? Was it for His righteousness, His holiness, His love? No. “He was made sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). When He suffered for righteousness' sake, He was representing God before man; but when He suffered for sin, He was representing man before God. He was forsaken of all; man fled; God hid His face. He was alone when He drank the cup of wrath, and those sufferings brought nothing but blessing.

If man was to be delivered, Christ must take his place before God. He must stand in the sinner's stead, and there and then He cries, “Why hast thou forsaken me?” Why was He forsaken? That I might be owned; that sinful man may be delivered; that sin may be put away. Nothing that He suffered from the hands of man made Him cry, “Save me from this hour”; but the effect of those sufferings was of a totally different character. Suffering for man brings grace, and peace, and blessing. Sin is put away, and forever gone. The believing man is delivered. We have died with Him; we have done with wrath. The power of Satan is broken. Christ took my place as a sinner. Grace brought Him to it. I met God at the cross in Him. I must meet God. Have you done it? Can you meet Him in nature? If you own the truth, you know that you cannot.

Christ had to go to the horns of the unicorn when He represented man. Man's heart was at enmity with God, and Christ must go to the place of judgment that man might be delivered. “Save me from the lion's mouth” (vs. 21). When He had been to the very transit of death, He could say, “Thou hast heard me.” The whole work was done. He bore the wrath. Christ settled all that was against man. He drank the cup; He endured the cross; and when that transverse spear entered His side, out flowed grace and peace and blessing. The gospel testimony can go forth. Righteousness is satisfied. Justice cannot claim more. God's requirements are met, and now He is righteous and just to forgive sin. Christ had sin on Him once, but He does not exist in that state any longer. He died for sin once. He is gone up to heaven, and He did not take sin with Him. God was bound in righteousness to take Him to heaven. Christ had a twofold title to be there— one in His own right as Son of God, the other because as Son of man He had finished God's work. He is now “sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3). God's righteousness set Him there; and where He is, there I am. My unchangeable righteousness is in heaven. I am immovably there.

“I will declare thy name unto my brethren” (Psa. 22:22). When Christ rose from the grave He declared God's new name— the God that raises the dead. He first sees Mary Magdalene, and He says to her, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father” (John 20:17). He had never so called them “brethren” before. “Touch me not,” He says to Mary. I am not going to set up the kingdom yet; I will do that by-and-by. I am come now to declare God's new name. He is the God of resurrection—My God and your God. I took your sins, and you have the same place I have. How completely His work was done! It not only entitled Him to sit in God's presence, but He thereby associates His brethren with Himself. Where He is, you are; and what He has, you have.

But there is yet more than this: “In the midst of the congregation I will praise thee.” After Christ had declared God's new name, He could only praise, He could not but praise. He will lead, and we should follow. “My praise shall be of thee.” He will sing praises and then He will sing with us. In the midst of the congregation He praises, and then in “the great congregation.” Christ associates His beloved bride with Himself, in all His glory (save His Godhead). He adorns her with all the blessings His completed work had effected. He has united her to Himself, and He would not, we may say, be happy in heaven without her. Do you know the love God has for Christ? If you do, He has the very same love for you. Christ, in communion with His Father, gives two reasons why He would have us in heaven: first, that we should behold His glory: and then, “that the world may know that thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved Me” (John 17:23). Do you believe that? If you do not, it is positive unbelief.

God loves me as He loves Christ. I dare to say that. He has glorified God by taking my place. It was a true transfer. He has suffered, and we are saved—not by our responsibilities, but by His work. He has taken us out of the ditch. We have done with judgment. Who is to judge us? Can Christ judge Himself? Will He judge those that are His, or condemn His own work? When He sits in judgment, we shall be seated on thrones around Him. When He takes up Israel, we shall reign with Him.

“The meek shall eat and be satisfied” (Psa. 22:26). There is nothing but blessing for those that have found Christ. Have you found Him? or do you say you are seeking Him? Well, it is a blessed thing to see a man seeking. But Christ suffered for sin, and He must see of the travail of His soul. He says, “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him “; but there is no praising until you have found Him.

“All the ends of the world shall remember” (vss. 27-29). Christ is not content with having the church with Him, and seeing Israel in a state of blessing; He must bring in the millennial glory. He will take up high and low—“all the kindreds of the nations”; “all they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him.” All the redeemed shall join in this song: “He hath done this.”

It is all grace for us, the judgment Christ took. He could say, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished” He could not declare God's new name until He had passed through death. Life, light, and love flow to us from His grave. He could not say, “My Father and your Father” before the resurrection. Do you know the risen Christ? This is the gospel. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:17). Have your hearts found rest in a risen Savior? Can you claim a part in the praises in the midst of the great congregation? Christ came not only to put away sin, but to condemn sin in the flesh. Have you learned the lesson that the flesh is irreconcilably bad and cannot be mended? You may take it to the third heavens, and then it will be proud.

Well, are you seeking Him? Christ is full of love. Come and praise Him.

Letters 3, Psalm 21:2-4

If we compare Heb. 5:7 and Gethsemane's1 cry, I think the force of the Psalm will be evident. The answer in the Psalm is not being preserved from dying, but life as risen in glory above, made most blessed forever; not sparing life for a time here, but honor and great majesty laid upon Him as man in a higher and more glorious condition. Christ as a man, though mighty to do things, asked everything of His Father. Dependence was His perfection. At Lazarus' tomb He asked, knew His Father heard Him always; asked in John 12; asked that the cup might pass. Only the word is not used of Him. The necessity of an event does not hinder asking. Everything in God's purpose will be necessarily accomplished; but He leads men's hearts to ask, as the moral filling up of their relationship with Him. In Christ, as man, this was perfect.

Letters 1, Hades and Sheol; Purgatory; Origin of Prayers to Saints

As regards your hard questions, I am not disposed to be wise above what is written. It was the old patristic doctrine, but with every imaginable notion tacked to it. It issued in 'the limbo patrum, or as now expressed, the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers, but I humbly think they (nor our friends who speak of it) know nothing about it—at any rate, I do not. People like to speak of mysterious things about which we know nothing: we can dogmatize ecclesiastically or hereticize conveniently. Where was Samuel, and Lazarus, may be settled by both, because God has said nothing. That Christ's soul went to Sheol I believe from Psa. 16 The womb is called the lower parts of the earth in Psa. 139, which makes it more mysterious still; that Christ went to paradise and took the thief there as a place of blessedness with Himself is certain.

Sheol is too vague to say anything. In Num. 16:31, they went alive, body as well as soul, into Sheol. In Isaiah (14.) the poetical allusion is to the grave: they rise from their thrones to meet him. But there, and in Amos (9:2), it is from burying or swallowing up de facto looked at as on the earth. So in Psa. 49:14: they lie in Sheol like sheep: their beauty shall consume in Sheol. Yet Psa. 16: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol." Here we have New Testament interpretation that His soul was not left in Sheol, nor His flesh saw corruption. But here, as far as it goes, His coming out was in resurrection. I say as far as it goes, for only the fact is mentioned. Still verse 31 (Acts speaks pretty plain. So it is identified with , the pit, in Isa. 38:18. In Luke 16 (Jewish forms of thought, I admit) the rich man is in and Abraham afar off, and there was a great gulf between. This as to state of fathers. All this the fathers made physical truth out of, as some would now, and had a kind of extension on the side of the earth, a cage of happy birds, and hence prayed for the saints to be soon out of it and in the beatific vision, which afterward came to be praying to them, as to which the liturgy was formally changed. Epiphanius, I remember, says even the Virgin Mary was prayed for: Christ was the only exception. But then every one had his own ideas pretty much, till it settled into purgatory in the Roman—not the Grecian church. Jonah was in the belly of Sheol. It is evident the Old Testament saints were all in the dark as to it, with a lightning ray crossing in sometimes.

As to 1 Thess. 4, "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," I have no doubt at all it is after resurrection when He comes again. Jesus died and rose again, and will come, so the saints with Him, and then in a parenthesis it describes how they get there, and in chapter v. continues the bringing with Him for the day of the Lord. Life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. All was dark before. "The living, the living, he shall praise thee." The present fruit of death was seen and outwardly they went into the grave, and all was dark beyond. Saul's being with Samuel was merely being a dead man, I apprehend. There was also the general idea—" the spirit shall return to God who gave it." The passage in Acts makes it difficult to separate, for Christ, hades and paradise if He was in Sheol till the resurrection, but I believe Sheol is purposely vague and dark, as hades merely means the invisible place. We know if we depart we are with Christ. But I do not profess to know much about it (nor do I think others do much more), nor pretend to know more than is said. I have not a concordance with me. I have quoted what occurred to my memory: there may be other passages which cast more light on it. Hoping ere long to see you, and with affectionate love to all the saints.

Ever affectionately yours.

Psa. 30 only gives the same; "Kept me alive" (ver. 3) shows it was a vague idea of what was past death.

As to Sheol, to see how vague it is in scripture, see Gen. 42:38; 44:29, 31. 1 Kings 2:6, 9. Job 11:8 seq. Psa. 86:13; 141:7.
Isa. 14:11; 28:15, 18. It meets sight at the grave, and all is dark and silent beyond. Job 7:9, where nothing is seen beyond—chapter xiv. 12.
Yet we have "the lowest hell," where lowest is lowest part. So Deut. 32:22, same as lower parts (of earth), only singular, Job 17:13. As to lower parts (of the earth), you have these of Sheol, and some of the earth: Psa. 63:9; 139:15; Isa. 44:23. It is most common in Ezekiel (xxvi. 20, mod 14, 16, 18; xxxii. 18, 24). There is also Psa. 88:6, lowest Sheol.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Acts 13:33-35

I may now turn to some particular assertions. "The three prophecies quoted (Acts 13:33-35) in proof of the resurrection of Jesus are simply puerile, and deserve no reply." (Phases, p. 169.) I doubt the application of Acts 13:33 to the resurrection. Raising up Jesus is in the same sense as raising up a deliverer. Why "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption" does not mean resurrection, I do not know. Mr. N. should show us the puerility of it. In reading the psalm (the application of which to Messiah is, in my judgment, incontestable) we have the plainest evidence that it is the resurrection. What should make flesh rest in hope, and lead to the presence of Him in whom is fullness of joy, "and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore," if it be not the resurrection?

The words themselves also depict it, and that it should take place without His seeing corruption, in the clearest way. man's soul not resting in hades, and his body not seeing corruption, can only be by a speedy resurrection. I am aware of the difficulties raised as to Shachath (), one of the words here used, but I see nothing in it to shake the certainty of the Septuagint, Vulgate, English, and other translations (maintained by the soundest Hebrew authorities). The context makes the meaning certain, and the whole psalm treats of the humiliation of Jesus in the most beautiful manner possible. The beginning of it is cited by Paul, as containing, among many other psalms, the great leading principle of this humiliation. Though a divine Person, He took upon Him the form of a servant. Messiah takes a place in which He calls Jehovah His Lord, and declares all His delight to be in the godly remnant of Israel.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Practical 2, Resurrection, The

1 Corinthians 15

The resurrection after all is that which is the full and perfect deliverance from the whole effect and consequence of sin. At the same time it shows that what God has predestinated us to is an entirely new estate and condition of things altogether. Nothing is more important than that we should clearly apprehend what it is God is about; whether He is correcting the old thing, or setting up an entirely new thing. Now the resurrection shows that God is not bringing about a modification of the scene in which we are, but that He is bringing in a totally new power. The discernment of this has the most important effect upon the way of life, the modes of seeking to do good, the objects and efforts of Christians. Christ went about doing good, and we are of course to follow His example; but what of the state of things around did Christ correct or set right when down here? Nothing! The very result of the Lord’s coming into the midst of the Jewish nation was just this, that they rejected, hated, and crucified the Prince of life and Lord of glory. The Lord Jesus went about doing good, but seemingly in vain. Still none of God’s counsels have failed; but as to the outward result, the Lord said, “I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught” (Isaiah 49:4). And so far as the outward scene went, in which He labored, there was no kind of restoration; for the more love Christ manifested, it only brought out more fully man’s hatred to Him. “For my love they are my adversaries” (Psa. 109:4).

The resurrection introduces an entirely new scene, so that Paul says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). Now it is a very difficult thing for men to submit their minds to this truth, because it plainly tells man that, in himself as man, he is totally and utterly ruined. It is quite true, and I fully admit, that naturally man has great and wonderful faculties; and faculties which, it may be, will be much more developed than they now are. But still, with all this, man morally is utterly ruined and lost. Paul opens out in this chapter what the character and power of resurrection is, the resurrection of the just being the subject of it, although that of the unjust is also glanced at. It is not merely God acting in sovereign power, which can take a dead thing out of the state of death; but by virtue of association with the life of Christ we have participation in Christ’s resurrection. It is not only that we are blessed, but blessed with Christ. If He lives, we also live together with Him. “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19). If He is the righteousness of God, “we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21). If He is heir of glory, we are “joint-heirs with Christ,” and “where I am, there shall also my servant be” (John 12:26). If He is the Son, we are sons also. “I ascend to my Father and your Father.” We are put, through grace, into this wonderful place of sons; so that it is a real thing; and having thus been brought by adoption from a state of sin to that of sons, the Holy Spirit is given to us as the power of our enjoyment of it. Such is the marvelous place into which we are brought, even that of everlasting companionship with Christ, “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5:30). Man down here on the earth “disquieteth himself in vain”; for wonderful as his natural faculties may be, as soon as his “breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psa. 146:4). What then becomes of his wondrous faculties? All is gone; for there is no fruit whatever reaped by himself. The man may have directed the world, but what of that, if death comes in and writes nothingness on all his powers? Another may come after him and improve upon what he has done, but it is all gone as regards himself forever, although the man has a moral responsibility in connection with it all.

In this chapter the apostle was meeting the minds of those who had cast doubts on the resurrection, but not on immortality. A man will cast doubts on the resurrection, while he will speak of his immortality and magnify himself in it because it is me. It is I that am immortal. But if I am the dead thing God raises from the dead, what then—where am I? Why my pride is brought down, and God’s power is brought in and exalted. Therefore if I am talking of immortality, I am talking of myself; but if talking of resurrection, I am wholly cast on God.

Resurrection is connected with death (I now speak of believers), but it is the coming in of God’s power to deliver from the power of death; not merely an escape from my sins, but a full and perfect deliverance from all the consequences of my sins, so that even the very dust of my body will be raised in divine glory. In Christ’s death I also get another truth, which is, that my resurrection is consequent on Christ’s death and resurrection. I share in it as forgiven; for Christ quickens me, in virtue of having put away my sins. “And you, being dead in your sins ... hath he quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:13). We are partakers of the life in which Christ is risen; so that I have a life totally discharged from all question of sin; for I cannot have life without having forgiveness, and hence rest and peace.

Christ had an unchangeable life as Son of God; but He died as a man; for there was complete evidence given through many incontrovertible proofs that He was really a dead man, and that He was raised from the dead and seen of “witnesses chosen before of God.” How entirely Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man is seen by His being raised from the dead. All the gospel rests on the resurrection of Christ. There is no gospel at all, unless there is the resurrection. This is a point of the deepest interest, showing how really Christ entered into the case. So truly was Christ dead in consequence of our sins, that if He did not rise from the dead, then all is utterly gone forever. But so completely was Christ a dead man for us, that if He is not raised from the dead, no man can ever be raised. And if dead people are not raised, then is Christ not raised. Yet we know He could not be holden of death; that were impossible. It is most important for us clearly to see and

understand this, that our faith and hope may be “in God which raiseth the dead” (2 Cor. 1:9). Thus everything that could possibly come between the sinner and God has been entirely removed—the burden of sin on the soul— God’s wrath against sin—Satan’s power—the weakness of man in death. Christ put Himself under all this. “He bore our sins,” for He cried “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). By grace Christ put Himself entirely in our place. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. All my sins are therefore entirely gone: He bore them all on the cross, and went down under the power of death, and rose again without them. Has death any more power over Him? No, for He is risen in the power of an endless life. But still He has been there on account of our sins, and has entirely put away the sin that took Him there, having risen without them. What then can there be between me and God which Christ has not entirely put away? Nothing. Seeing then that Christ has so completely acted out this condition before God, death is no longer death to me; it has lost its power and its terror too; for now death to me is simply departing “to be with Christ.” It is to be “absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8); it is but the getting rid of a mortal body.

The power of the resurrection is distinctive; and it is of great importance to see this. God’s eye rested on the blessed One who had glorified Him about man’s sin; so that He takes Him from amongst the dead up to Himself. We see a whole course of sin had gone on to the full accomplishment even of putting God’s Son to death on the cross. But over all this evil Christ gained so complete a victory, and so thoroughly glorified every attribute of God about man’s sin, that God’s eye rested on this blessed and righteous One with complete satisfaction. And thus, as He said, was the world convinced of righteousness, “because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more” (John 16:10). But now, we who believe see Him—that is, by faith; being quickened together with Him, having all trespasses forgiven us. For God does not raise a saint to condemn him—no; but to make him a partaker of all Christ is. For Christ has accomplished a righteousness on which God has set His seal, in that He raised Him from the dead. God’s eye being fixed on this accomplished righteousness, this object of His love, He took Him up to Himself; and having quickened us together with Christ, we are made partakers of it. Were there no resurrection, it would be complete abandonment by God; for He is not the God of the dead but of the living. And “if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” For if Christ be not raised, our preaching is vain; we have not been preaching the truth of the gospel, but preaching a lie: and your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

But now comes a full burst of testimony to this accomplished work: “Now is Christ risen from the dead.” Thus the righteous and beloved One is raised out of this scene into an entirely new one, even that of becoming the first-fruits of them that slept. For if Christ be raised, His saints must be raised, as a Head cannot be raised without a body: it would be monstrous. There is then the broad statement in John 17, “Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” The resurrection comes in, not by the power of God only, but also by man. “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” It is the Man Christ Jesus coming in, in power. Every created thing, the whole universe, is to be wholly put under this righteous Man, this now glorified Man, the second Adam. He only is excepted which did put all things under Him—that is, God the Father.

As spiritual men, we now belong to the Last Adam, being content now to suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together with Him. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Christ had the heart to come down to us. He did not throw down the blessing to us from heaven, but He came Himself to bring it. Such was His wondrous love—a love which was stronger than death. Now He is set down at the right hand of God, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. Meanwhile He is gathering out His joint-heirs—His friends. Christ came in grace, and took our place as sinners; and now takes us up to His place of righteousness: for to sit with Him on His throne is to be our place; and this through a real living association with Himself. He is the First-born among many brethren. He wrought the work alone, but He takes His power with the many. We may be burdened, groaning in conflict: still we have certainty. The Holy Spirit is the witness of what Christ has done for us; we are “made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21). What a thought, that I have this standing before God, though vile in myself! In virtue of this I hate sin, because it is so different from what I actually am there.

All power in heaven and earth is given to Christ. All are to be brought under His power. Not only will His saints bow before Him—who do it now with delight, in the power of a new life; but His enemies must bow before Him. He is gathering His friends now, but His enemies will be dealt with by-and-by. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. The wicked dead are glanced at here; for when death’s power is destroyed, the wicked dead must all rise, as being no longer holden of it. What a different resurrection will this be to the resurrection of the saints, in virtue of their association with Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit! (Rom. 8:11) Then, when all things are made subject, and Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, the mediatorial reign will be at an end, because God will be all in all. Therefore Christ will not be ruling as the mediatorial man then; but Christ the man will never cease to be “the first born among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29). Subjection is man’s perfection. Therefore Christ’s subjection as man results from His perfection. “Then shall the Son also himself be subject.” This is most blessed, that forever and forever He will be in our midst—He whose heart is love—He who, as the Man of sorrows here, brought down God’s love to us! He will take His place in our midst as the second Adam, as the Head and Source and Channel of every blessing.

If I am now joying in God, it is in virtue of being risen with Christ, God’s perfect delight. Why is it that God has given us so full a revelation of these things as He has by His word and Spirit, but that we might know and enjoy them now in our souls? as David says, “For thy word’s sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them” (2 Sam. 7:21). God has given us intelligence of these things, that knowing and enjoying them we may be sanctified by them. The simple child who loves his father knows more about the relationship than the philosopher who might write volumes on the subject. The child would be astonished that one should be unable to understand that love of the father which he as an affectionate child was living in the enjoyment of, but still he might not be able to explain it. Unless we are in the relationship, we can never enter into the feelings which result from it. The relationship is not formed in heaven. The fruits of it will be enjoyed there, but the relationship is formed here on the earth; while the one who is known and loved as a father, being in heaven, the child wishes to be there, as it is very natural for the child to be with the father. Fellowship is more than inheritance. It is most blessed to have the inheritance beneath our feet, but it is much more blessed to have fellowship with God as our Father above us. We have poor foolish hearts needing to be exercised; but still we have accomplished glory, accomplished righteousness, and all in virtue of the accomplished work of Christ, so that our hearts bow before Him. The reason of all this blessedness is—”That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). The more faithfulness there is in us, the more sorrows doubtless; but then there will be consolations abounding. Only let us take up the cross, and if it be really the cross, we shall find Jesus with it, and the earnest and spring of glory in our hearts.

The power then which delivers us from wrath, from sin, and from Satan, is the resurrection of Christ in virtue of His accomplished righteousness, and thus we are brought into fellowship with Him. Our portion, whether in suffering down here or in glory up there, is all in

Christ, as the One risen from the dead. The Lord keep our hearts full of rejoicing, crucifying the flesh, and as being dead to law, sin, and the world. We live to God in the same power in which Christ lives. The Lord give us thankful hearts for His unspeakable mercy.

Letters 3, Last Days; Gathering of Saints Sought; Irving and System; Union Among Saints, The

Very dear brethren- -,

So long a time has passed since I saw you, without my having addressed to you one word, that you may well believe I no longer was thinking of it; but it is not so at all. I have been, during many weeks since my return, hindered, whether from reading or writing, by the state of one of my eyes, but I use the strength God in His great goodness has given back to me, to address myself to you all. I hope that several brothers, to whom I was also thinking of writing separately, will forgive my silence. I should feel myself, however, dear brethren, wholly unworthy, I say it in all simplicity, to address myself to you, as to a body assembled under the direction of the Lord, a church body, if our dear—had not requested me to do it; but if this is to be the expression of the strength of my remembrance of the love with which you have received me, which you have always shown me, and of how sweet it is to me to call to mind always that love, I do it with all my heart.

The remembrance of it is extremely precious to me, and that has been to me, dear brethren, of great blessing, and by the Spirit of God who acts in me, I feel often at my dear Geneva amongst you, while blessing God with all my heart for the testimony of His love, which He has given me in the love of you all, my dear brethren, and my heart expands in thinking of the ties which His goodness has established between you all and my feeble heart. You do not know how it has opened my heart, and how I found the grace of God in my visit to the brethren of Geneva; and I find my joy again in beginning to write this letter. A stranger previously, and for the most part unknown, I found a welcome which was the manifestation of the operation of the Holy Spirit, and one is always happy when one finds oneself in subjection at the work of God.

I will communicate to you news of us, dear brethren, persuaded that you will take interest in it. Our dear brother—-will have communicated to you something of this. Our meeting, where I was able to work in public almost for the first time since my return, has been I believe of great blessing. There was a spirit of love and of confidence and of liberty, which always flows from this, which struck even our enemies who were present, and which acted powerfully upon those who there took part. There were a great number of brethren, instructed ones of all classes, a hundred and more from nearly all parts of England and from Ireland. We should have much wished to see some of our Swiss brethren, but God orders all these things. Besides this kindling of love, and the communications of their light among the brethren, and these communings (so sweet) of brotherly love making us anticipate the great congregation which will assemble itself around the Lamb, the direct action, actually manifested, of the meeting was rather upon those who were not of the Anglican establishment. Several deacons who had left their society as not being based upon the word, were much strengthened and confirmed; there was a Presbyterian minister and an Independent fully convinced that their position was false, and they have both acted since in accordance with their convictions. This will produce much more effect in these countries than if it were an Anglican who had left his parish, and will bring out more into light what we seek, and, whatever feebleness there may be, the gathering together of the church of the living God and not any sect, and that we are not opposed to such or such a sect, in particular; and this is what already has taken place, for the report of it has been spread in the two most populous parts of England, namely, London and Lancashire. However, that does not as yet come to much; God only knows what the result will be. It will be, at least, of Him, for we are very feeble, whether as to the number of brethren Or as to the number of ministers. So much the better, in a sense. But there is a great movement, though much hidden, among dissenters: those whom I have met, dare not defend their system by the word, and I hear everywhere that they confess constantly in private that there is something bad in their state somewhere; that is indeed the state of all the systems here, stronger outwardly and more active than ever, but all on the quicksands, and trembling within. What I remark is, that they are more openly attached to the world, and act consequently more openly for their private interests, whether established or dissenting. It is God alone who can withdraw His own from the judgment which must come upon the world. I feel it more and more each day; with much external display, the Establishment becomes every day more popish, the dissenters more feeble.

As for ourselves, our meeting has been, by the grace of our God, in very great blessing. All have felt it, more than any previous meeting. Its character was a little different. We were more in public, and there were other circumstances. God continues, my brethren, to bless our little flocks. They have much increased in Ireland since my leaving, and are walking happily in love; it is only, however, a small thing: the enmity against them increases greatly every day. Their conduct, however, from that which I hear, produces effect, gathers strength in the consciences of those who surround them in several places. In England also there are several flocks recently formed; as that which—visited at Hereford, whence I write; and a great increase in the numbers of brethren in the North (Cumberland), and I am invited this week to visit Edinburgh, where thirty-six are gathered together. As to our churches formed longer ago, several have also been increased since my going away, and there have been in several parts several conversions, insomuch that (although in great feebleness) we ought to thank God for what He is doing. Still, as in Ireland, the enmity both of Anglicans and dissenters increases also. It is what the children of God must always expect, "Ye know that the world hath hated me before it hated you," the Lord says.

You see, dear brethren, I have believed that you would take interest in all that concerns us, as I do in all that concerns you, as if I were amongst you, as I have been, with my heart fully occupied and blessed, so many times. May God, who is good, who alone can establish and strengthen us by His grace and His power, be constantly with you, and may His presence be powerfully felt, dear brethren,, amongst you. Be nuked, closely united, united in that charity which is the bond of perfectness. No blessing without that; nothing will be lacking where love abounds. Perhaps we are not perfected in the order in which we are, as to ourselves here. I am persuaded that we are very far from perfection. The only thing which would give me fear for our brethren here would be to see a high idea of themselves, and satisfaction in their present state beginning to rise up among them; for when I compare this state with the Bible, I find such a distance, although we are, and we ought to be, deeply thankful for what God has given us and shown. But if there are imperfections it is love and union which will prevent their bad effects, and which will give room to weigh circumstances and to find the remedies that the word of God can furnish to spiritual wisdom; at least that love is the bond of perfectness. I pray God with all my heart that you may be united in heart and in the practices of brotherly love which so much nourishes that love, and that your ties may be strengthened and drawn closer by the Spirit of God, bound fast together in the strength of our eternal union with Christ, and in the strength of the grace which flows like the precious oil poured on the head of Aaron, and which went down unto the skirts of his garments. If I may further, dear brethren, express the wishes of my heart for you, it is that you may be

large-hearted towards all Christians, and rigid in discipline towards yourselves; a discipline, nevertheless, of love. We are priests, I believe, to separate that which is pure and impure it is true, but to discern, to purify, and to restore; to wash each other's feet—not judges of what is not of God.

The desires of my heart are towards you, dear brethren, that you may be more and more as true saints, full of love, the means of satisfying the heart of Christ, and accomplishing the object for which He gave Himself, of gathering together the children of God who are scattered abroad. I salute with all my heart, dear brethren, your pastors and your deacons, by means of whom I have so many times communicated with you all, and all the church. How many beloved ones pass before my spirit in thinking at this moment of -. Indeed, dear brethren, I have a deep sense of your love. If God preserve us in life, I have still, if it is His will, the hope of seeing you again, and finding again that same affection that I have met when with you. I salute also our dear sisters. May the God of all surpassing grace keep them near Him. I have confidence that, although she may think me her enemy, has not been seduced by that fatal delusion of Irvingism. There was a brother at M.'s whom I was sorry not to have seen. May God keep him, or bring him back from such an error, if he has already fallen into it.

I desire so much, dear brethren, to receive tidings of you, how all is going on at -, how the little meetings in the town go on, if they still exist, if much work is being done among the unconverted, and if there are conversions and souls added to your number. Seek, dear brethren, personal holiness, devotedness, to have your hearts filled with the Holy Spirit, in order that your hearts may carry the savor of Christ, of whom that Spirit is the witness, and may all things enhance Christ to your souls. Oh what peace, what sweetness, what liberty there is when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. May He not be grieved. May God give you grace to seek that all your comings together may be the manifestation of the Holy Being who is in the midst of you, that other Comforter, that you may be the habitation of God by the Holy Spirit. I find that the flesh manifests itself in the impatience which seeks human means to reach some divine end, instead of trusting entirely to Him: may God keep you from this snare. I am persuaded, dear brethren, of the importance of your position. If you keep simplicity, spirituality, and if you do not attempt to go farther than the strength God has given you, the strength that God allows you—if you keep yourselves from undertaking to be able, by human wisdom, for things in which God, on the contrary, will make the actual feebleness of His church to be felt, from making arrangements instead of following His word, God will use you as witnesses, in the world, of the assembly of His own, of His church, in spite of all your feebleness; a testimony of all importance every day. For every event confirms me in the conviction, in the faith, that we are in the last times, and that this conviction is absolutely necessary, I do not say for salvation, but for the walk of the church, and in order that a faithful witness, sure, and according to the heart of God, may be rendered. The gospel may be preached, and God may bless it, as perhaps at the Oratoire or at Pre l'Evegne, but that is not the witness of the church of God to the state in which the world is, nor to its hopes in the midst of the disorder. If you are simple and faithful, full of love, united, and spiritual, separate from the world, waiting for His Son from heaven, you will be able to be it, and you will be it. I desire it with all my heart, for the glory of God everywhere, and in your country, which, since my visit, has been so dear to me. I desire it for you, my dear brethren; may God bless you and keep you. Again I greet you all with all my heart, praying God to keep you in humility. You will pardon me my letter, written in the midst of a work constantly increasing, and the produce of a feeble heart. If you receive it as the witness of my faithful love to all of you, I shall be fully content.

I am, very dear brethren, your brother and servant affectionately in our Lord and Savior glorious and human Hereford [not before 1837].

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Closing Remarks

I HAVE nearly closed my task; for task it has been.

I somewhat fear I have tired my reader, and certainly I have tired myself. For the wide waste of infidelity, without an object and without an affection, without a link with God, is a wearying thing; the dreary waste "seems lengthening as I go." I look upon myself as a mere "hewer of wood and drawer of water," nay, as a mere "watchman" round the house of God. How often I have felt this in respect of learned writers! That they were useful, no doubt; but just as supplying materials to negative the unfounded but constantly renewed allegations of infidels (to whom it is so easy to allege a thing without feeling bound to prove it-to catch at anything as an objection, where there is sufficiently obscurity to hinder any one giving a clear answer1), while the faithful feed on the green pastures of God within. I little thought it would come to my turn, without any pretense to learning, to undertake such a task. The mischief done to one I knew led to my reading the book I have answered. The perfect horror I felt on reading it led me to examine its statements more carefully, as I found it had done mischief to several. Its emptiness, and a tone I will not characterize, astonished me. It is cleverly written,2 so as to attract, and in some respects with very measured subtlety; but to a moral, spiritual mind, there are traits in it which are most deeply painful. It borrows, moreover, from old infidelity and new all it can pick, and dresses it up as the history of the progress of the author's mind. Certain elements in it are calculated to mislead, and just those which most show the want of genuineness of conviction in the writer. It has been impossible for me, of course, to write an apology for the Bible; I should not feel myself competent to do it. I have answered Mr. N.'s book in moments which incessant occupation scarce afforded me. The reader, and finally the Lord, must judge how rightly.

true heart loves what is excellent, because it is able to appreciate it, or at least to discern it; it is glad it should have its superiority, because, capable of appreciating excellence, it feels, in virtue of its own love of it, that it ought to have, and it desires that it should have, this place of superiority. This applies in an infinite degree to God in Christ; besides His immutable title to this place. Hence, for faith to be occupied with the positive object of it is the best and truest means of proof. It carries its own unquestionable power with it.

There is another thing that helps our judgment; that is, that when the object is known and valued, the moral aim of the infidel is judged. "Their device is only to pull Him down whom thou wouldest exalt." The sagacity, and here the spiritual sagacity, of affection easily detects this. " Give God the praise!"-the modern compliment of infidels also-" As for this man, we know that he is a sinner," will not hide it. There is a kind of reasoning which flows from being oneself the subject of power, which infidel Pharisees cannot reach: theirs only creates astonishment, by its evident nonsense, to the simple mind who knows the power. "Why herein is a wonderful thing, that ye know not who he is, yet he hath opened my eyes." There is no mistake then. Mr. N. may ask," What has this to do with scripture, or an historical document?" He is found there. No doubt Mr. N. has not found Him there; he does not know Him. He says, indeed, to the evangelical-imitating language he has heard-that he has tried both; he has a double experience-the believer's and the infidel's. But this poor imitation of what converted persons, who have come to the knowledge of Christ, have said, is too miserably transparent to be anything but the shame of him who uses it. What did he experience

at the first? The effect, on his own showing, of believing a lie-of supposing true what had no existence in truth. "A deceived heart hath turned him aside: he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Let not the language seem hard. Mr. N. declares it is a lie; and that Jesus is not the Messiah. (Phases, p. 225.) What was his first experience?-" To any 'evangelical' I have a right to say that, while he has a single, I have a double experience." (Phases, p. 201.) Now how can he tell what the effects, " the spiritual fruits," if a living knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ are, since he does not believe there is such a person at all? His only past experience was, as he avows, a wholly false one. I ever hope it may not have been. " Spiritual fruits," in his case, are not those of the true knowledge in power of the Lord Jesus. He never had such; for if he really knew Jesus to be the Son of God, it was and must have been because He was so-if He was so, He is so. Now Mr. N. declares it is (and hence was) all a delusion. His " spiritual fruits " were the fruits of a delusion-of belief in an imposture. Think of a person coolly speaking of this in his own case! To what a state of moral reasoning, of moral susceptibilities, must he be reduced! " It was really operative," he tells us, " on my moral tastes, pursuits, and conduct." (Phases, p. 2.) What was?

But I have said, infidels love obscurity. God allows, indeed, faith to be tested. We had seen self-boasting learning, at the end of the last century, relying on Hindoo Vugas of millions of years, and Chinese chronology of any length you please. Egyptian hieroglyphics being then illegible, the Zodiac of Dendera disproved the dates of the Mosaic account, by the long period of the earth's existence demonstrated by this very ancient monument. All here was obscure, and it suited infidel reasoning. Alas! Western astronomy and science examined Hindoo calculations and proved that the observations must have been made-indeed, profess to be made (that conjunction being assumed to have existed at creation) -in a certain position of the movable bodies of the heavens, and all the rest calculated backward, like Scaliger's Julian Period, making the great Calpa, or epoch, of similar conjunction; in fact, they were mere astronomical cycles. And still worse, hieroglyphics were read, and the Zodiac of Dendera was found to have been made in the reign of Augustus Caesar. Chinese chronology has suffered the like diminution, the Emperor Hoangti (B.C. 213) having destroyed all records, that everything might be dated from him. It is ascertained, as far as obscure traditions allow, that the real Hindoo dates of historical events agree pretty much with scripture history, and belong to epochs as recent as that history gives them. I do not here enter into details of course. It seems ascertained that the most ancient Hindoo astronomical treatise is not above seven hundred and fifty years old. (Hales' Chronology, vol i, p. 195.) It is of little moment. I refer to these circumstances to show the disposition of infidels to get into the dark to make objections. The light dissipates them: they turn to others undaunted and unashamed. Their will is engaged in it.

So now their researches into the historical origin of the books of the Old Testament. On these points they can throw doubts, as they do not own the authority of the New. And why? Because the books, though we can trace their existence as far back as we have any records (and they are confirmed by references to the history contained in them as authentic, by fragments of the earliest known authors quoted in such books, as Josephus, Eusebius, &c.), yet are themselves the only existing records of the times they belong to. They are, beyond all controversy, the most ancient records in existence. Hence, when their own intrinsic power is not perceived, and their coherence as a moral whole, as a key to the whole world's history before God, is not understood, ample scope is found for speculating in the dark and raising objections. Still even here God has confounded them by such means as Egyptian antiquities, where the details of Exodus are found painted in yet brilliant colors on the walls of long lost buildings.)

I close with noticing some instances of reasoning or sentiment which could hardly be taken up in the general argument, but which will help to characterize and give a just idea of the book.

Mr. . complains that Calvin "supposes God to have created the most precious thing on earth in unstable equilibrium, so as to topple over irrecoverably at the first infinitesimal touch... surely all nature proclaims, that if God planted any spiritual nature at all in man, it was in stable equilibrium, able to right itself when deranged." (Phases, p. 98.) Where is this proclamation? We see misery, degradation, idolatry, a vast extent of prevailing wickedness: this Mr. . avows. Did God create it so? If not, man has lost his equilibrium, and has not righted himself. Perhaps, indeed, Mr. . thinks God created man wicked; for he avows that man has an "antagonist will." If so, there was indeed no "unstable equilibrium," no deranging any, and certainly no righting itself. If not, then the equilibrium was lost, and is not righted. Perhaps Mr. . thinks an "antagonist will" to God no harm at all. But his eternal morality is then of a very singular kind.

"I saw," he says further (Phases, p. 98), "that the Calvinistic doctrine of human degeneracy teaches, that God disowns my nature (the only nature I ever had) as not His work, but the devil's work. He hereby tells me that He is not my Creator." This, if it have any sense, must apply to being born in sin; but sin is not my nature as a creation, but a certain state of my nature-its departure from God. And independent creation is sin in existence, because it is the creature God created, and is not dependent on Him. The sin is not the nature, it is its corruption and fall-the negative of its state as a creature in the nature of things. God made man upright; but he sought out to himself many inventions. Mr. ., as we have seen, owns an "antagonistic will." Does he mean to say that God owns that as His work?

God disowns man's present state, not his nature. Mr. . owns cur state of sin. Does he think God owns or disowns sin? It is well our minds should recollect that sin, evil, and misery are there, before the Bible begins to account for them. The infidel denies the scriptural account of the fall. How does he account for the evil which exists?

Mr. . insists much upon "eternal ethics," in order to show that that outward government of God which He exercised over Israel, as scripture teaches, could not be from Him. I say, outward government of God, for such it was, without a full revelation of Himself (the only true ground of all ethics, as laying the foundation of the first of obligations), a government which He patiently exercised toward Israel for special ends, but which contained within it, as a kernel which Christ was able to draw out, the eternal and immutable and perfect rule of right and wrong-love to God and our neighbor. What, then, is Mr. N.'s measure of right and wrong? "I saw that it was an immorality to teach that sin was measured by anything else than the heart and will of the agent." (Phases, p. 78.) It is not pardon, he alleges, to befit God, it is not patience; it is judging, according to the opportunities of light, them that are without law, them that are under law. No-the measure of sin is "the heart and will of the agent." That is "eternal ethics" in earnest. If such is the eternal law of ethics, let us now see the history of the knowledge of God-Mr. N.'s theological notions.

"The law of God's moral universe, as known to us, is that of progress. We trace it from old barbarism to the methodized Egyptian idolatry; to the more flexible polytheism of Syria and Greece; the poetical pantheism of philosophers, and the moral monotheism of a few sages. So in Palestine and in the Bible itself we see, first of all, the image-worship of Jacob's family, then the incipient elevation of Jehovah above all other gods by Moses, the practical establishment of the worship of Jehovah alone by Samuel, the rise of spiritual sentiment under David and the psalmists, the more magnificent views of Hezekiah's prophets, finally in the Babylonish captivity the new tenderness assumed by that second

Isaiah and by the later psalmists. But ceremonialism more and more incrusted the restored nation; and Jesus [read here, an impostor] was needed to spur and stab the consciences of his contemporaries, and recall them to more spiritual perceptions; to proclaim a coming `kingdom of heaven,' in which should be gathered all the children of God that were scattered abroad; where the law of love should reign, and no one should dictate to another." (Phases, p. 223.)

Singular, that this systematic series of impostures should be the means of producing spiritual perceptions, and the knowledge of the true God! Still more singular, that methodized idolatry, flexible polytheism, and poetical pantheism, should be the law of progress, of God's moral universe! The contemptibleness of such a passage vies with its cool wickedness. "The law of God's moral universe" is idolatry of the most wicked, polluted,3 and degraded kind. But "we trace," it is said, "from old barbarism." But how do we trace it to it? It is not "known to us." ' it so: ignorance has its convenience, even for an infidel, sometimes. But was "old barbarism" man's original state? Progress begins with something: old barbarism was brutal ferocity of manners, and grosser though less developed forms of idolatry-the worship of the serpent, of the sun, and moon. Did God create man then in this "old barbarism?" If not, how came he there? what progress brought him to it? Is there no law of progress in God's moral universe but barbarism, and methodized worship of bulls, onions, and crocodiles? Is that all that Mr. . has to tell us of God's moral universe? He must have a strange idea of God. This, added to acquiring spiritual perceptions, and a law of love, by imposture, constitutes all he knows of God's moral universe, save (I had well-nigh forgotten) his good opinion of his own "higher spiritualism." Can anyone be fallen lower in his ideas of God's moral universe, and its law?

But his facts are rather peculiar. He says, "In the Bible itself, we see, first of all, the image-worship of Jacob's family." This phrase, so singularly turned to bring in the teraphim of Rachel, ill covers its own deceit. I say nothing now of Moses's account of creation. It may be considered dogmatical, or mythical, or I know not what, and to be dated as of his time; but Mr. N. accepts Moses's history of Jacob-necessarily, then, of Isaac and Abraham, to say nothing of Noah, or even Enoch. Whatever he accepts, it is totally false to say, "In the Bible we see, first of all, the image-worship." We do not see it first of all-quite the contrary. No; not even in Palestine, which is foisted in to save appearances. What we see in the Bible is this: the knowledge of one true God possessed by Noah; that knowledge of the true God lost, and men serving "other gods beyond the flood" (that is, the Euphrates); one of these men called out by the true God's revealing Himself to him, and this person worshipping the one true God "in Palestine:" so did his son; and as did Jacob, though wandering back to the East, his wife, whom he married there, had brought with her her father's household images. Mr. N.'s statement of what we "see in the Bible" is a false statement; and he knows enough of the Bible-alas for him!-to know very well that it is so.

I do not know what he means by the incipient elevation of Jehovah by Moses. Moses's teaching is as clear, more full, more elaborate, more absolute as to the sole deity of Jehovah, than that of Samuel, and he too declares that he knew Israel would corrupt themselves.

That polytheism is a part of God's moral universe is quite worthy of the heartlessness of infidelity; that "old barbarism" should be its only idea of what man began with, without a thought of going farther as to man's connection with God, or an inquiry whether he was created in "old barbarism," is worthy of its "superficiality;" and the statement as to "Jacob's family," worthy of its truthfulness. I am aware this may be accounted hard. I ask, What else can an honest man, with his senses about him, think of this paragraph? There are cases where you may hesitate between indignation and contempt; but the absence of both is a proof of want of moral sentiment in him in whom they are not found.

But take another example of the moral justness of the seasonings: we have seen Mr. N. stating, in his attack on Calvinism, that "all nature proclaims, that if God planted any spiritual nature at all in man, it was in stable equilibrium, able to right itself when deranged."

Now I can understand in physical nature, where there is no will, an action of attractive forces which keeps in order the movements of bodies in various and periodically contradictory directions, or self-correcting contradictory directions, or self-correcting contradictory influences, because one will has imposed them all; but the application of this where there is a will is wholly false. Besides, "stable equilibrium," which, if "deranged," is, I humbly conceive, flat nonsense; because, if "deranged," it is not "stable;" nor, if deranged specially by the action of will, is there any reason why it should necessarily re-arrange itself; indeed, it has proved itself unstable. It did not maintain, far less is able to restore, a deranged equilibrium.

This is not the case with the movements of the moon's nodes, or mutation of the earth's axis, or other astronomical self-correcting motions. This is not derangement; it is the variety of order arising from one common principle; it is the proof of stable equilibrium. It is always going on, and always going on regularly, by the constantly operating effect of the same power.

But this is not all. I must cite another passage of Mr. N.'s to show what the moral equilibrium of infidel thought is. "To me," I read (Phases, p. 101), "it appeared an axiom, that if Jesus was in physical origin a mere man, He was, like myself, a sinful man, and therefore certainly not my judge"-singular, let me say in passing, that we can judge God or His revelation by "a preexisting standard of moral truth," and our "inward power," and be incompetent to judge of man's state because we are sinful. But, if the fact of Jesus being a man, made Him necessarily a sinful man, what becomes of the stable equilibrium? Is a state of sin moral equilibrium, and a stable one? Indeed, the whole phrase is worthy of attention, as showing the necessity to which infidelity is reduced, when it has, by circumstances, got the external light which Christianity affords. Sin is, according to Mr. ., a necessity; at the same time, to maintain his system, man's state is one of stable equilibrium; yet he would not allow that God created man a sinner, nor will he admit the fall, save as a common necessity to all. What confusion, not merely of reasoning, but of all moral thought, is here, from abandoning the simple and clear testimony of scripture, which has its witness in every conscience! The man who would recognize both necessary, sin and a stable equilibrium, has, indeed, a harder task than a believer. Sin is in the world without the Bible; the infidel cannot get over that. Revelation tells us much about it; but it exists- revelation or no revelation. The infidel makes it a part of God's moral universe; the believer, of man's immoral condition.

And then, in Mr. N.'s system, the deranged stable equilibrium is to be set right by an "antagonist will." This is hopeful.

See the kind of statements, too, indulged in. "It is clear that Paul logged, above all things, to overthrow the wall of partition which separated two families of sincere worshippers." (Phases, p. 225.) Were idolaters sincere worshippers? Worshippers of whom? He taught that converted Jews, and converted Gentiles brought out of their corrupt worship of devils by the knowledge of Jesus, were to worship together. But an idolater is a true worshipper for Mr. .; it is a pan of the law of progress of God's moral universe, that men should worship demons and stocks and stones!

Nor am I wrong in supposing this indifference to exist in Mr. N.'s mind as to truth and error as to God Himself; that it is all one, if it be

"By saint, by savage, or by sage;Jehovah, Jove, or Lord."

"We now see stronger and higher walls of partition than ever between the children of the same God.... The cause of all this is to be found in the claim of Messiahship for Jesus" (Phases, . 225-the italics are Mr. N.'s). That is, a worshipper of Jove, and stocks and stones, is a sincere worshipper-children of the same God, with those who follow "a higher spiritualism." The only intolerable mischievous thing which makes barriers, is believing that Jesus is the Messiah.

It does make a barrier against such notions of God as would make "old barbarism" the beginning of God's moral universe, and flexible Polytheism its desirable progress; and which would call themselves, with perfect self-complacency, "higher spiritualism," Mr. N. is astonished, too, at being treated as an infidel. But how powerful, after all, is scriptural truth! In Phases, p. 223, we read:

"We trace the law of God's moral universe in the progress from old barbarism to the methodized Egyptian idolatry, flexible Polytheism, and poetical Pantheism."

In page 230: "The great doctrine on which all practical religion depends-the doctrine which nursed the infancy and youth of human nature-is `the sympathy of God' with individual man." This was succeeded by Paganism and Pantheism. "Among pagans this was so marred by the imperfect characters ascribed to the gods, and the dishonorable fables told concerning them, that the philosophers who undertook to prune religion too generally cut away the root, by alleging that God was mere intellect, and wholly destitute of affections." No doubt. But where is the progress, which is the law of God's moral universe, which we trace from old barbarism upward to the higher spirituality? It would seem that the infancy was the best part of progress, only, unhappily, it was at the beginning-I suppose before even the "old barbarism."4

Would you know, reader, how this precious doctrine of God's sympathy with individual man was preserved and developed? Hear Mr. N.'s account of the book he is rejecting, traducing, and leading you to regard as an imposture. He continues:-

"But happily among the Hebrews the purity of God's character was vindicated; and with the growth of conscience in the highest minds of the nation, the ideal image of God shone brighter and brighter. The doctrine of His sympathy was never lost, and from the Jews it passed into the christian Church. This doctrine applied to that part of man which is divine the well-spring of repentance and humility, of thankfulness, love and joy. It reproves and it comforts-ít stimulates and it animates. This it is which led the Psalmist to cry, `Whom have I in heaven but thee? There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.' This has satisfied prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with God as their portion. This has been passed from heart to heart for full three thousand years, and has produced bands of countless saints." (Phases, p. 231.) Now, in the first place, all these saints have fed undoubtedly on what Mr. N. denies, and got this temper and character from believing it. They were prophets of-apostles to promulgate- martyrs for-the truth of that which Mr. N. says is a falsehood and an imposture, the cause of all the mischief-the Messiahship, and, when Jesus had appeared, the Messiahship of Jesus. This last has been for two thousand of these the governing motive and principle of their lives and testimony. They have lived by it, and died for it. They have avowed this as the one thing which gave them full faith in this sympathy of God. This has produced all these admirable effects. Yet, according to Mr. N., it was all a mistake; and "more entangling to the conscience, and more depressing to the mental energies, than anything in the Levitical law.... This gave a premium to crooked logic.... This perverted men's notions of right and wrong.... This gave a merit to credulity." (Phases, p. 225.)

But mark another thing. We have seen Mr. N. obliged to confess, that this sympathy of the true God with individual man was that which nursed the infancy and youth of human nature; that it was succeeded by Paganism and Pantheism, and then passed into infidel coldness in philosophy; but that one little, obscure, detested, despised, bigoted, exclusive people (who had impassable walls of separation from all others, and possessed and valued as inspired the books which Mr. N. is attacking as an imposture of Josiah's reign), alone in the midst of the universal corruption, "methodized" or "flexible," "happily vindicated the purity of God's character"-that through their means "the doctrine of His sympathy was never lost, and from the Jews it passed into the christian Church." Why, this is exactly the history the Bible gives. It verifies to a letter its whole contents. It shows why, when the pagan barbarism had destroyed the truth which had nurtured the infancy of man, Abraham was called out in order to vindicate the purity of God's character; how thus the doctrine of His sympathy was never lost; why there was such a wall of partition raised up between Israel and the pagan nations, by a system of ordinances "imposed on them to the time of reformation;" while the great central principles of truth were preserved within. It shows that, at the same time, it was, as a whole, only a temporary provision for this particular purpose, in connection with the people thus kept apart to preserve this truth, and who did thus preserve it; and how, through the well known history of Christ, and His rejection and death by the Jews (by which they forfeited by their own act the title to claim anything exclusive), it passed by grace to every Gentile, who (through faith in Him, who was the deepest living expression of that sympathy, and accomplisher of that in which the whole power of it was shown) believed in and came to it in truth.

The admissions of Mr. N.-and history compels these admissions-are the extorted confession, not merely of particular acts, but that the whole system of scripture is the undoubted truth of God, and that the notion of progress as applied to moral condition (for it is true in civilization and science) is as baseless and unfounded as can possibly be. Indeed, this kind of statement awakens in my mind the longing hope, that he who makes them is so forced to be a witness to scripture truth, that that truth, which I know to be eternal life, may have a hold within-deep as it may be covered, and hardily as it may be intellectually braved- which will produce a glorious testimony in the person of the author to God's patient grace, before the day which will prove all truth to the confusion of those who have denied it. The Lord grant it may be so!

Mr. . says (Phases, p. 95), "In short, I could not find the modern doctrine of the fall anywhere in the Bible... that is, of a permanent degeneracy induced by the first sin of the first man; and when I studied Rom. 5, I found it was death, not corruption, which Adam was said to have entailed." A strange state of mind! The passage is, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Does not the apostle state, in the Romans, that men were in a state of permanent degeneracy-in Ephesians, that all were by nature children of wrath; that there is a law of sin in our members (Rom. 7:23); and that the flesh lusts against the Spirit? (Gal. 5:17.)

And why is it so carefully noted that Adam begat a son in his likeness after his image? But this is more a question of theology than of rationalism. I only note it as showing how easily Mr. . disposed of scriptural truth.

The best answer is to read what is said in Romans and elsewhere, and see whether permanent degeneracy is not taught, and as the fruit of Adam's sin.

I would just remark also the strange notions, the singular moral contradictions (and moral contradictions are serious things), which pass unnoticed in Mr. N.'s mind. From the want of all objective truth, not only is a worshipper of demons a sincere worshipper of God's family for him, but, as to his own mind, he thinks falsehood can have the same happy effect as truth. Thus, in his early days (p. 2), when under evangelical influence: "Such was the beginning and foundation of my faith-an unhesitating unconditional acceptance of whatever was found in the Bible.... And as to my creed, I must insist that it was no mere fancy resting in my intellect: it was really operative on my temper, tastes, pursuits, and conduct"-that is, a delusion and a falsehood was! And now that he thinks it so, he tells us it took real effect on him (that is, believing a lie to be of God did). This is singular.

Again (Phases, p. 99): "I was conscious that, in dropping Calvinism, I had lost nothing evangelical: on the contrary, the gospel which I retained was as spiritual and deep hearted as before, only more merciful." As "spiritual and deep-hearted!" And yet it was all a delusion from beginning to end. It was an imposture carried on by an impostor who rode in on an ass-"a deed which he appears to have planned with the express purpose of assimilating himself to the lowly king here described." (Phases, p 195.)

What, then, is Mr. N.'s notion, a common notion, of truth-of love of truth? It is the total uncertainty whether anything is true or not-the keeping the mind perpetually open, without acting on it at all. It is not, as in the progress of sound science, the relinquishing hypotheses for the investigation of facts.

"They left off," as he expresses it, "to dogmatize, and approached God's world as learners." They did well. But "God's world" was a certain existing thing to be learned-a known existence, though much was yet to be learned about it. Now, when the love of truth is spoken of in this book, it is entirely a different thing. There is no existing truth to be investigated. That is the position of him who receives the Bible as the truth. Be he right or wrong, he approaches, not GOD'S world indeed, but God's word, as a learner. The man of science receives creation as existing; he investigates it. The believer receives the Bible as the existing revelation of God; he investigates it. Truth to the man of science is merely the ascertaining the laws of admitted facts, or the discovery of facts already existing. Now the rationalist has no object before his mind. Mr. N., in order to discover what God is, works in the mine of his own intellect; and, just as Des Cartes would hold that such things must be, because nature abhors a vacuum, or others theorize on the fortuitous concourse of atoms, so Mr. N. settles that God must be the projected image of man's mind. It is just like the hypothesis which preceded Baconian science; an hypothesis-a theory; not an existing object already before us, investigated by our minds if capable of it. What then does all this love of truth amount to when it is not mere hypothetical speculation about what must be? It is merely that a person is unprejudiced!

Mr. N. would persuade us that he is the most unprejudiced person going, unless it be the whole company of his friends. I do not doubt their good opinion of themselves, or their disposition to state it. But I somewhat doubt about this entire absence of prejudice. I see marks of will working very strongly in Mr. N.; I have noticed some. The joy manifested at the discovery of a difficulty, or a slur thrown by others on the credit of a book of scripture; the plain proof often given that their "wish was father to their thought." When a man speaks of being "justly encouraged to apply similar criticism;" when he thinks he has found a flaw-is there no will there? When I read the passage I already ventured to translate,

Is there no will at work here? When I read, "But as soon as it begins to discern error in the standard proposed to it, we have the mark of incipient original thought which is the thing so valuable and so difficult to elicit." Is there no love for getting rid of a standard here as well as love of truth? Now, I would remark here, that universal openness at all times to receive everything is not the proof of love of the truth, but of incapacity at all times to ascertain it, and of perpetual uncertainty in consequence. Supposing the human mind, by itself or by divine aid, capable of ascertaining truth with certainty, love of the truth when it is ascertained is shown in holding it fast, because it is truth. Not to do this is merely, I repeat, to say that perpetual uncertainty is the only possible state; that is, that there is no such thing as truth for. the human mind, and that the love of it is nonsense. Truth in this case does not exist for man; and therefore the theory, the notion of the love of truth, is a contradiction in itself. If there be truth as to anything, as to what God is, what Christianity is, when I have ascertained it, and know that to be the truth, I hold it fast because I love it.

In a word, either the truth cannot be ascertained, and then there is no truth for man; or it can, and then if we have ascertained it, we hold it against all cavils. It is true, our minds may be prejudiced, and we may also receive solid truth mixed with other things. Hence patience, discrimination, and readiness to hear become us; but not readiness to call in question what is certain. This is the love of doubting, not of truth. Further, if the positive proofs of a thing remain, the difficulties connected with it are not disproof. They may be proof merely of my incapacity to solve them. But, besides, the proof of divine things is upon quite a different principle from that of human experience; and must be, because they are divine, and cannot be the subjects of human experience till received. And the kind of knowledge possessed about divine things is not reached consequently by human cavil. Thus Mr. N. speaks of an "intellectual creed" being held to be an essential criterion of God's people (i.e., such an historical proposition as "that the Jewish teacher, Jesus, fulfilled the conditions requisite to constitute Him the Messiah"). Now such a conviction would not constitute a person a believer at all.

Mohammedans believe it; and they are not "the people of God." Thousands who would not understand Mr. N.'s phrase are devoted believers in Jesus. There has been an action on their hearts and consciences connected with his name, which is more certain to them than their existence-more powerful than the love of it. It characterizes their life-fills them with joy in death: their whole life is formed by it. A person has been revealed to them whom they love, by whom they know God, and are at peace:-I do not say how, for I am not writing on theology. Christ's account of it is, "They shall be all taught of God." They are quiet, sober, unenthusiastic persons, who know themselves, confess faults they hid or excused before, yet are happy and peaceful. They know in whom they have believed. And all this is identified with the word of God which has produced it, orally or in writing, and is recognized by it when studied. Hence too their convictions have an elevated and deeply moral character and bear the impress of divine action. This, as to the proof of its source, though partially mixed with other things in the stream it flows in, is of the highest importance. Now questions as to historical contradictions do not touch the ground on which this faith is built. Be it foolish or wise, that is not my question now. I only say that historical questions and genealogies do not reach it; for it never was founded on them, but on something else. There may be complete ignorance of what the difficulty applies to, and yet a profound knowledge of the person it applies to; and such an appreciation of Him and all that regards Him that difficulties of genealogies have no weight. He is a sinner and does not keep the sabbath-"yet He opened mine eyes," says the man. The disproof, in its nature, did not touch the kind of proof. The seasonings of learned men were lost upon him, because he was the subject of a power which it needed no learning to know the force of, when a person had been subjected to its influence. Such a believer reasons from the power, of which he is quite certain, to judge that which would call so certain a thing in doubt. And he reasons justly.

Now that is the divine way of teaching-God acts and makes Himself known in acting, and a man thus taught of God believes, and with divine faith; that is, with certainty. He leaves intellectual propositions to those who make them; he possesses the subject of them. This is nut logical. No; not if you mean conclusions drawn from human knowledge. It is divine teaching. I repeat what I said at the beginning, that God can act on man's conscience and heart so as to make Himself known, though the conscience and heart would have never so known Him if He had not acted on them. It is not a "pre-existing standard" in the human mind, but a susceptibility of receiving impressions with the certainty of what produces them, without the independent power of forming the ideas for itself, or of judging them by a complete measure already formed. I admit fully the conscience and the heart; and that there is a sense in all that there is a God. But then conscience always takes notice of the authority and just judgment of God, and judges self, or it is not conscience.

The question really is this, as I have already stated, Can God communicate His mind and thoughts to man with the certainty that it is He who does so? To deny it is an absurdity. It makes God inferior to men, who certainly can do so-almost to some beasts, who in a small measure can. But if man has been created with a capacity for receiving thoughts of and from God (and of and from have really the same force here, so far as that all that is from must be of Him), and that God can communicate such, is it not very much more than a probability that He would do this?5

It does not at all follow that man would know by other means the same things. Nay, it is rather the contrary that would follow. Even in human intercourse, a person may communicate things to me which I fully understand and receive with certainty, which I did not know-perhaps never should have known-nay, take the full scope of human education, certainly never should have known-íf they had not been communicated; yet I have the certainty of them when they are. It is not the judgment I form of them; but that I am so formed, so circumstanced internally, that they carry conviction when announced.

But another point is clear, that is, that if God does communicate knowledge, it will be in its purpose the knowledge of Himself; that is, it will have a divine character-be a divine communication. If I am communicating algebra, the communication will be algebraic. If God communicates divine knowledge, the communication will be divine. Man may be (I do not doubt he is) such as can be acted on by such communications when God so acts; but the communication does not lose its own character; it cannot cease to be divine, or it would wholly miss its object, it would cease to be what we suppose it. Yet, as such, God can (for I assume this now) accompany it with the certainty that it is He who does so. It carries, where He does, its own proof of the power and authority of the communication, so as to bind the conscience and soul of man. God is known in the obedience of faith. The question of judging is out of place. "The entering in of thy word giveth light and understanding to the simple." Now God may, to put man to the test (I believe He has), communicate truth by means which have a permanent character, so that men should have them always before them. He may use means of doing so adapted to men's faculties, and as means, within the scope of man's moral investigation; yet with fully adequate proof of the authenticity and power of the communication, and of who made it. Here it is that infidelity has its scope and play. Now such a communication puts man to the test, and, adequate evidence being given, demonstrates an "antagonist will"-the moral evil of his condition, that he does not like to come to or receive the knowledge of God as having authority. Such a state of mind will receive no communication from God, though there be one before it; but it proves its unwillingness to receive one.

Nay, there is more than this; because there is not merely adequate proof within the scope of man's intelligence in due moral exercise, but there is, in the divine word thus communicated, a direct action on the conscience, which is its own witness. For conscience man has, whether he will or no; and Felixes will tremble before the word their will rejects and their passions slight; and they do tremble: for God will make Himself known to man in his conscience, if He pleases (and He does please); and every secret work shall be brought into judgment.

But if God can make Himself known to man, He alone really can. He has addressed adequate testimony to man's responsibility. But what shall change man's will? His people shall be willing in the day of His power. This is grace. God really reveals Himself in gracious, life-giving power; and the word, which is His, acquires at once the authority which a known God has over a soul to whom His holiness becomes true and His mercy precious. God is known. His word is His word. The permanent testimony delivered to men in every kind of condition, adapted to them, copied for three thousand years, and transmitted from man to man, may present difficulties. It may present such as arise from his own defective spiritual apprehensions and intelligence, and (which in part is the converse of it) the depth and vastness of the communication made, embracing all God's ways with man from first to last, and His counsels for the glory of His Son. It may present difficulties, which arise from the circumstances of its transmission by man during so long a period, considered as "committed" to him, though guarded by Providence. But "Who has spoken?" is no longer a question. He who thus knows God is called upon diligently to inquire what He has said-to use all diligence as far as he is capable-to see that man has not deceived him either by design or by carelessness; and he may count on gracious divine aid in doing so. He has now, not perfect capacity, but a sense which helps him much in this, because he does know God. But these inquiries suppose an existing truth communicated, which is loved because it is God's truth. There is something (as the existing world for science) which inquiry is occupied about. The infidel's love of truth means that he has no known truth to love; it is an immoral thing, a self-wasting affection without an object. If man be framed to know God for his happiness, in what state is he till he finds Him? Yet that is what is called "love of truth above all." It merely means subjecting everything as it occurs to the assumed competency of our own mind to judge of it. It has no object which is truth, which it values as such.

"Morality and truth are principles in human nature both older and more wide-spread than Christianity or the Bible," says Mr. N. Now that man has a conscience, and judges right and wrong, is most true-knows good and evil, as the scripture expressly teaches; and so it is, that the divine word addresses and acts on this. But it is not true that this is truth, or a standard of moral truth; because, though it recognizes the authority of God, yet as we are sinners impressed with fear, 've do not really know God thereby. It craves, though it fears, that knowledge. It does judge men's acts, but it does not reveal God's nature, ways, thoughts, and purposes. Revelation (and O what grace to have it!) is the answer to its need. Conscience deals with man as man, and man subject to God in judgment; but it does not reveal God as God, though it dreads the authority it has despised. Now, if God does thus reveal Himself (and how immense the privilege!) that becomes the standard of moral truth. Thus Christ was born under the law; but He was God manifest in the flesh. He became the standard of moral truth, and the pattern of divine ways in man. Others may, through grace and "partaking of the divine nature," have followed him-He may graciously call them His companions. The day that comes will mark out some one in this walk, proximus at longo intervallo. It was reserved for Mr. N. alone, not to delight in the blest resemblance in those who followed Him, but to show his own state-to proclaim his capacity for discerning divine perfectness in man-to raise (what horror would it have occasioned him!) the devoted and gracious Fletcher to a level with Jesus.6 We may thank Mr. . for this: a man's tastes show, not what that which he likes is, but what he is. A Rousseau could see farther than this. We have a

tolerable specimen of the standard of moral truth in Mr. .'s mind. It is true that Fletcher was not, as Mr. . makes the blessed Jesus, an impostor. That would make some difference in excellency, though it appears not a great deal with Mr. .; for, after all, it is this imposture which, even for Fletcher himself, "has vindicated the purity of God's moral character."

But let us leave this miserable display of an infidelity effaeta veri. The Christian does not reject the ascertaining the truth of Christianity. The proofs are there; and Mr. ., with his associates who pretend to the "higher spirituality," will be judged by the positive proofs which have been afforded them-proofs to their conscience-proofs to their heart. Would that they would listen to them, and not merely to their understanding! But the Christian thinks that, if God speaks, however He may condescend to man, He speaks as God; and, in examining a professed revelation, he must expect this; and hence it is not by a pre-existing standard of moral truth, nor by the inward powers of the hearer that he will be judged. He will address the conscience which man by His appointment has, and the heart that needs Him. He will adapt Himself to it; but He will speak in His own character, and must, if He be God, give the standard of moral truth. He is it in Christ. The weapons of this warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down reasonings, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into the captivity of the obedience of Christ. He will not contradict what He has taught. He will act on the conscience He has given. If the Being, presented as divine, is, in His own desires and character, below the standard of natural conscience, conscience may reject Him, and man become an infidel. If I have the truth from God, I shall judge by it what pretends to be so. I shall not talk of the inward powers of the hearer as a judge when I am hearing God.

I do not deny a conscience. I believe that there are obligations flowing unchangeably from relationships in which we are by nature (in that sense ethics are eternal), and from such as redemption places us in. But I deny a pre-existing standard of moral truth possessed by man, and his competency, or his inward powers, to judge God. Where is it? Conscience does recognize evil and good, and it bows, by its very nature, to God, when He speaks to it. I speak of the fact, but the subjection of conscience to judgment is not judging. It does more; nay, it is the opposite. It puts God in His place: judging puts Him out of it. Does His speaking enfeeble man's sense of right and wrong? It adds divine authority as a sanction to it, and enlarges vastly the knowledge of it by new relations of an infinite character. But God has far more fully (nay, only then really) His place; for He speaks in love, and that is what He is. The soul does not want to judge God; it is glad to know Him.

I have only one word to add-that difficulties which arise may exercise the heart as to its faith, but do not touch the consciousness we have of the knowledge of God, where the will is not corrupted, nor, consequently, the authority of His word, nor its evidence. I have been conversing with a man, with my father, with intimate acquaintance of his and my history. He has told me things which, in connection with it, prove their own truth; and one comes and proves by inferences, that from dates, and the like, he could not have been where I was. I cannot solve the difficulty, but I do not doubt my intercourse with him. Perhaps I detect that he who would persuade me of the contrary, does not like that I should believe what he has told me. At any rate my certainty is unshaken. I solve the difficulty, if I can; if I cannot, I leave it unsolved. I have got the knowledge I want, and I know my Father's care and love. May you, my reader, thus know it. Let me only add a very simple but all-important remark. The question as to Christianity is not, if it be true (Mohammedanísm is true), but if it be from God. The kinds of proof and their effects will be quite different.

Practical Reflections on the Psalms, Psalm 119:121-176: Practical Reflections on the Psalms

Psalm 119:121-128

Ver. 121-128. There are three points in this section. He is fully in the presence of the power of evil, his regard is to Jehovah Himself; the energy of evil in its moral character only attaches him increasedly to God's word and testimonies. This is the effect of nearness to God, because His presence keeps the heart free and confident, and maintains the sense of value for what is in the word. There is, I think, progress here. In 82, it is, “when wilt thou comfort me.” This is not so here, though Jehovah's mercy is earnestly sought. He appeals on the ground of righteousness to God's protection, but, with this, if waiting in anxious desire for deliverance, yet for the word of God's righteousness, more, I think, than faithfulness to promised deliverance, as 124 shows. When delivered, his heart would be set free in obedience. But he looked for more than deliverance, or measuring this by the evil he was under. His heart had got to God, and he looked to be dealt with according to His mercy. This is progress too, and, I think, shows consciousness of integrity on which God has set His seal in the heart. When under the sorrows of God's chastening hand, we look for mercy, for deliverance: grace and caring for His favor leads us to it. But it is left to Him, as wholly undeserved; the pressure of the power of evil is felt as deserved, and deliverance from it is mercy enough; but when this has wrought its effect, when the heart has been purified to think more of God, and His holiness and will, and less of the sorrow and evil from without, so that it springs up from under it, so to speak—when the heart is morally restored, (and God's place in it in contrast with the sorrow is just the test of it,) it measures what it seeks for by God, into whose knowledge, revealed within, it has, so to speak, got back. Hence, in what follows, we see the fruit of this reconciliation with, or restoration to, God. The soul has got into the place of uprightness, and it says, “I am thy servant.” In such a shape we have not had this vet. Holy desires, confidence, true confession we have had—the general expression, “Thou hast dealt well with thy servant.” But this is another thing. He presents himself to God directly as being in this relationship, and place; “I am thy servant.” It is perfect submission, but one who holds the place, God owning him in it, and he knowing that He does. This is saying a great deal. What a ground to ask from God, understanding that we may serve Him! For what a thing it is to serve God rightly such as we are! No doubt it is a great encouragement being able to say “I am thy servant:” so the parable of the talents, where confidence in Him, who had enabled them to serve, was the spring of service. But there all was happy and right. Here the soul was only getting back to say “I am thy servant” after long chastening for wanderings. Verse 126 shows the same growing confidence and taking the blessed title of one free with God. God's law is precious to Himself; not a tittle can pass from it till all be fulfilled. And when the believer can look out of himself, it is a plea with God. It is time for Thee: “they have made void thy law. What a principle it is that God's authority must be maintained, so that the extreme of evil gives the assurance of deliverance. But it makes God's law exceeding precious. The love to the law (and here this is the egression of God's will) grows with the growth of the power of evil. We feel more how precious it is, how sure it is, how it comes from God; and what makes His intervention precious as against the power of evil, makes His word precious against the development of evil itself. There is a double feeling as to this. The commandments of God are loved above all that could be precious to man. There is decision of moral judgment. All God's precepts are taken as absolutely and the whole of what is right, and every way of vain falsehood is hated. The decision of good and evil is absolutely by the word.

Psalm 119:129-136

Ver. 129-136. The soul has now got into a place where it not only obeys, and tastes the goodness of the law, but estimates its value in itself. There is intelligence. “Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore does my soul keep them.” God's word getting into the heart gives light: even to the simple they give understanding. Thus they become to the heart the subject of earnest desire; the soul is engaged with the excellency of them. It was a thirst produced by them; not a filling of the heart, though a desire formed by them. There may be intelligence, obedience as regards the path we walk in on the way, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, a moral forming and tilling the desire, but the satisfying it will be only when the promises are fulfilled and God takes His place, of whose mind His testimonies speak. So with us, though in a higher way; for it is Christ, and a heavenly cry Himself. Hence the cry is for this mercy ordering his steps, delivering from oppression; and one sees he is in the midst of evil—only looks for God's face to shine upon him, and to be taught. He has deep grief, because the law is not kept; but this seems to flow more here from the sense of the excellency of the law, than from love to the persons who failed.

Psalm 119:137-144

Ver. 137-144. But the righteousness of God's law, and the key it gives to God's ways, leads to the recognition of what Jehovah is who gave it. “Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.” That is the way Jehovah deals with a case, or the moral decision which He utters as to it. His testimonies He had commanded according to righteousness and faithfulness. This characterized them. The contempt of Jehovah's words had roused his zeal so as to consume him; he became as an earnest adversary, in collision with evil yet in power, as Christ in the temple. But whatever the evil around, there is in one rest and comfort for the heart when the word of God is known and loved. “Thy word is very pure,” try it ever so, it is only more proved to be purity itself; the heart loves it as its resting place and joy. And it gives greatness and courage to the heart. One may be small and despised, yet one has the courage to keep God's precepts in spite of the power of the world or its scorn, for they are God's words—what God is as judging evil and good; He is everlasting. His righteousness is everlasting, and His law truth. It is not here, surely, the truth that came along with grace by Jesus Christ; but in the presence of all else on the earth, which is a lie, that is truth, true religion, God's mind about everything in contrast with man's thoughts and all he sets up to be; and God will make His judgment therein revealed, good forever. (Comp. Isa. 42:3.) It is not the absolute revelation of God as He is; that is in Christ. But it is the revelation of God's judgment as to man as to good and evil, and that will be made good forever. Executed judgment will be verified. Those that have sinned against the law will be judged by the law; just as those that heard Christ's word will be judged by it. The tribulation of the power of evil will take hold of the remnant, but there will be the comfort of the commandments being their delight in the inner man. So we in all sorrow, in the evil day in a yet higher way. And now he arrives at the point we have touched upon. “The righteousness of Jehovah's testimonies is everlasting.” They come from God, His will and judgment concerning man; and that He will make good forever. What he has to look for is understanding; then he will live, guided in the path where life is found, found even when the wicked are cut off: yea, never so found here below as then. This is true of government as to us, yea, even of Christ, ("as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love"). As to life, it was in Him, and in our case we have it by Him: so all that live; but it was only brought to light by the gospel. What was presented to them as the governmental way of life, and will be so literally at the end, is the governmental way of blessing for us here below.

Psalm 119:145-152

Ver. 145-152. Here the soul expresses, and expresses to God, the sense of its dependence. This is an important point. We are dependent, know ourselves to be dependent, and remain quiescently so. This shows want of interest in that for which we are dependent, and want of reckoning on God's faithful love. If we did, we should cry. “If thou knewest and who it is thou wouldest have asked, and he would have given “Here he cries with his whole heart, and declares his purpose of obedience to Jehovah's enactments. Then he looks for deliverance that, having, he may keep, them, no hindrance and his heart so disposed. There was diligence in the cry too, for the word, which led his heart, was trusted, but it was not only for the cry to be delivered he was diligent, but to meditate in Jehovah's word itself. Deliverance, no doubt, was sought, but the word itself is loved. All this goes together necessarily in the soul. Deliverance is to be with God, freed from transgressors of His law, from rebellious oppressors. The meditation of the law is to be with God, and the word which makes us hope is the testimonies we delight in. Still he looked, as we shall in true-heartedness, in distress, (so did Christ Himself) to be heard, and according to the kindness of Jehovah, but with the desire that the work of power might be wrought in him, to be quickened, receive life according to the mind of God, that is, which had its nature and desires according to God's judgment. He does not speak as dead, but of moral quickening. We know it must be a new life. The sense of the present power of evil was upon his soul. Jehovah only was his refuge he must draw near to. This is beautiful, the true only resource which gives a perfect principle. “I waited patiently for the Lord” —perfect submission to His will; no deliverance sought until it was so, till His will brought it; but faith knew Jehovah was near and the path plain. All His commandments were the one true path of security and of God. Jehovah's testimonies were founded forever. They could not change; they will be made good. Only God must come in, and that was his cry and demand here. These verses are a cry for deliverance, but it must be, if true and of God, according to His word and making good forever its truth, in its moral testimonies, and as the foundation of hope.

Psalm 119:153-160

Ver. 153-160. The soul of him who opens out his heart to God is much more in presence of the persecutors and enemies, God's deliverance and of the need of help, than in the beginning. There what the law was for the heart was more in view. So it ever is. With Christ the word of blessing begins; at the end he is in presence of the enemies and looks for deliverance. So Paul: he begins with carrying out of the blessing; at the close he has to do with persecution and desertion too. So ever, when good is persevered in, because the testimony of God in every shape and faithfulness draws out opposition, and the place of the word in the world, not in the heart, is more distinctly, felt. Still there is no uncertainty of heart. Salvation is needed, i.e., present deliverance, but it is far from the wicked. But where righteousness of heart and way is, the affliction is a ground of pleading with God. But, with deliverance, quickening also is sought, the practical power of life according to the word and revealed judgments of God. Righteousness is sought in liberty and power when righteousness is loved in the heart. External security in the word is sought, but internal power too. In the thought of Jehovah's tender mercies quickening is sought according to God's judgments. The felt goodness of God leads always to the desire of His will. When the purity and blessedness of His word is thought of with delight, His loving-kindness is thought of as that in which He should quicken us. His word is so precious, we look to grace to form us freely into it. Truth and perpetuity characterize the word. I question whether “from the beginning” is the sense, and if not rather the sense the whole contents, but cannot now say.

Psalm 119:161-168

Ver. 161-168. The soul goes something further in this portion. The heart stands in awe of God's word—a godly feeling. It comes with God's authority; yet he rejoices in it as one that has found great spoil. This, i.e., the connection of these two, characterizes the true, full apprehension of the word. It is God's—a most solemn thing; the soul trembles, as it is said, “at thy word.” It comes with divine and absolute authority; but as it is God's word, and we have a new nature, and are taught of God, we delight in an unspeakable way in that which is of and reveals Him. Nor is there any indifference as to good and evil, the law being taken as the truth or true measure of what is right. He hates and loves—hates lying and loves the law; not merely what is right, but God's authoritative expression of it. And all this begets praise, because the heart rises up to the source of these things. It is not merely that we have what is good; we have it. from God. He praises Him in the relationship he was in with Him. These are Jehovah's ways with His people. But the expressed will of God has another power when really received: the heart is in peace. It is a known perfect communication from God with which the heart is satisfied, and, if it trusts in God, circumstances cannot stumble the heart then, because it has and enjoys the mind of God which no circumstances can affect. There is no stumbling. I have what is perfect from God, know it to be so, and enjoy it in a new nature. That is affected by nothing without.

Another element of a godly walk besides obedience is found here. “All my ways are before thee,” but this leads naturally to obedience: but the heart and conscience is all before God. It is a most important principle. So Paul, “We are made manifest to God;” only this goes further. He looked at complete, final judgment of men, and for that knew the righteousness of God. And it was not merely his ways before God as to his earthly government. He himself was manifested, as men would be manifested, before the judgment-seat of Christ, who judges as Son of man—perfect, every secret emotion, the heart itself brought out.

Psalm 169-176

Ver. 169-176. When men have gone astray, cries and supplications go first, praises and testimony after. Still the cry and supplication is a godly one, though it arise from need. He seeks understanding, intelligence, not exactly of the word, but according to it. It is that wisdom in discernment which those taught in God's word have. They see clear in what is before them. No doubt it is God's mind and will they discern; but they discern in circumstances. They walk not as fools, but as wise. The word has formed their judgment. Then the soul looks to be heard and delivered. Still its delight is in God's revealed will. It will praise when really taught them of God—for thankfulness comes first—for it is our own portion first of all; and from God; then we have liberty to speak of it to others. This is an important principle also: no testimony, no preaching, no teaching, even if the matter of it be all right, is right teaching, when the soul is not filled for itself first from God. We must drink for ourselves that rivers may flow, Indeed all else dries up the soul. “That thy profiting may appear,” says the apostle. It is only fresh, good, and powerful, when it is the soul's own portion first with God. The help of God's hand, the longing for His salvation, is not merely that we may be delivered. That may be sought, if only it be sought, in some bye way, not God's way. But when the heart is in God's precepts, only God's salvation is sought. So Christ: “I waited patiently for the Lord.” There was submission to God's will. God could not come in till His will was done, so that His glory should be made good in coming in—till His counsels were fulfilled and perfect judgment wrought by His coming in. And this the soul had learned to desire, though often out of sorrow. There was Christ's perfectness in this respect—there our path in submissive uprightness. Then the soul praises God, God Himself in it, and God's own judgments help us. This is a principle of great perfectness and great blessing. Yet here, though brought to this, yea because brought to this, the people then—some when occasion arises—acknowledge that they had gone astray (for that is their case and is the condition of the whole Psalm, the law being now written, in desire at least, in their hearts,) and gone astray like a sheep wholly lost. The humbled and repentant remnant, (and, I repeat, we, when we have wandered from God,) look for God's seeking them, for they were upright in heart, mindful of His commandments. This gives the key to the whole Psalm—Israel gone astray, the desire and love of God's law in their hearts, but their circumstances and condition not yet set right by Jehovah's deliverance, but their hearts set right that He may come in His word, and His deliverance being their desire, and His word the ground of their hope. In the restoring of any soul we have an analogous process, specially when under chastisement. It does not seek comfort without restoration, where uprightness of heart is. Only if we know the Lord, we stand in Him as our righteousness. This they could not speak of as established or their hearts in it. They were only looking for it when delivered. It had been prophesied of: Jehovah would be their righteousness. Gracious and true as this is, our place is infinitely higher.

I have thus closed this running notice of Psa. 119, of which I feel the poverty. But I feel every day more, that, true and applicable as this may all be to the government of our hearts, we are far away from Christian ground here. Nothing makes it more sensible than the Psalms. Neither the Father, nor divine righteousness, is known in them, nor that whole class of feelings, blessed and holy as those feelings are, which flow from them. May we remember we are Christians!

Practical Reflections on the Psalms, Psalm 119:73-120: Practical Reflections on the Psalms

Psalm 119:73-80

The soul looks now to God as dependent for man's very being on God, so that He should surely direct and guide it, as Peter wrote, “Committing the keeping of our souls to him in well doing as unto a faithful Creator.” The heart alone, which knows Him in grace, can do this. Otherwise we seek our own will in resistance to Him. But once He is known, He is known in all that He is according to the truth of His nature in grace. This enlarges our knowledge of God and applies it to everything. It warrants thus the desire founded on it. Here it is applied to the teaching of the word, because the soul is walking and to walk in the old creation. Still we can, as down here now, look to the truth of God's nature, when, as I said, He is known, and look to Him thus because thus our dependence on Him, in the fullest and most absolute sense, is expressed, as well as the desire of the renewed heart. I only exist by thy work: make me then walk as disposed in heart and guided by thee. He who made can give understanding. But there was a common bond in thus looking to God—the same disposition of heart which delighted in His being owned and honored, and was kind to those who did, in the midst of an evil world. They were companions, as Malachi speaks: “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and as we see so beautifully in the lovely picture of the hidden ones in the beginning of Luke. There is another trait of this divine work in the soul. God being really known in the soul, it rises up to the justification of Him in His ways, however painful. Thus the heart knows in a double way that His judgments are right. They are His and we know what He is. He cannot but do rightly, and more, rightly towards us. He is faithful to us in goodness; but then, secondly, we see the rightness of it morally. God ought not to allow evil—above all, not in His people. For their good He could not. Right and wrong are known and judged, and it is God's care over His people which makes Him follow them in their ways.

But the feeling that the chastening comes from God, though it gives submission, gives the desire of His favor, when the submission is complete. Still one desires relief; but a subdued heart, while naturally desiring relief, yet seeks divine favor in it, and comfort from God, not in self-will. “Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort.” “God who comforteth,” says the apostle, “them that are cast down;” and this depends on God's faithful word. On that goods ness he counts and looks for it, and this is right.

Mere looking for relief is self-will and may be the means, if we had it, of more sorrow; but a subdued and broken will under chastisement is all right in desiring mercy. It knows this character in God and desires that it may be exercised, if possible; and it can plead its integrity in this case, for the desire is right when submission is complete, that goodness is felt to be in God. So here, “For thy law is my delight;” and judgment is the portion of the proud. There is the sense that the proud will is the subject of judgment. In the time of grace the Christian desires that will may be changed. Yet he knows faith is not of all. Here the desire that they should be ashamed is according to the righteous character of God. The faithful one keeps himself apart and meditates in God's revealed will. But there is the desire, not only of the favor of God, but that those who fear God should turn to the afflicted one. There is something special in these. It is not that he seeks them, though this be right. There is energy of affiance in God, and he seeks Him only, nor leans on another, but delights in their association with him. It is not that he was not a companion of those that feared God's name, but here he seeks his comforts from God; and as Job's acquaintance came to him again when the testimony of God was with him, so it is here. Only whatever the comforts of God, his desire is to be maintained in integrity. There is no thought of blessing out of the way of God's word. So shall the servant of God not be ashamed (ver. 73-80).

Psalm 119:81-88

Ver. 81-88 goes farther. The pressure of the power of evil is greater and the cry more earnest, but the word is fully trusted. This blessed revelation of God Himself, of His will and favor, that in which He cannot lie, maintains the heart through all. How precious is it—the fact of having a revelation of Himself as sure as Himself! With this two grounds of appeal—the extremity of distress. He is dried up like a bottle in the smoke; but he dare not forget God's statutes. But a poor, short-lived creature, it was time for God to lay to his hand, if he was to taste of mercy. And the sorrow he was suffering was both the pride of man and was not according to the word which God made good and owned. Yet that word was, all of it, faithful and the persecution wrongful. It had gone very far. He was almost consumed in the land, the very place of promise and God's power; but he forsook not God's precepts. Mercy, too, is looked for as life-giving to himself. It is not only comfort from without, but the restoration of the soul itself, and so is it kept firmly, and with good courage, and confidence, the testimonies of God's mouth. Thus sorrow itself and great pressure, where there is integrity, become a plea with God.

Psalm 119:89-96

Another aspect of the word is now before the soul—before God in heaven itself. There it is settled forever. There where He is, it remains in its own character of God's settled and expressed purpose. But God has acted out of heaven, though. His purpose be settled in it. His faithfulness, His abiding by what He is and has said, continues through the changing generations of men. Hence when we have His word, we can reckon upon it as sure as what is in heaven, and changes not as God Himself. He established the earth and it abides. All continues as God orders it; for—and it is another important truth—all that does exist is the servant of God. If even He has given them fixed laws, why do they abide in them? Because they depend on Him. They are His servants. All are His servants; but then the soul has its strength in this word. Here is a moral, willing obedience in a renewed heart, and when circumstances were all adverse, it were hard to hold good unless the moral side of the law had its power. God seemed out of the circumstances, but the inward delight in the law of God kept it fast. We have, I think, something more, though this be interesting as a testimony to a renewed heart and true to us. We glory in tribulation, knowing its working in us, having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, as it is witnessed in the gift of the Son, by the Holy Ghost given to us. “All things work together for good to them that love Him.” How truly Christ held to God's will, in the highest sense, against all adverse circumstances—even to wrath. This power of the word in sustaining the heart, in sorrow, in its inward quickening and restoring power in the new man, gives purpose of heart in the consciousness of its divine preciousness. And this leads up to God in the consciousness that we are His. I do not say it creates the thought, but it leads the heart to the consciousness of it; and hence to look to Him who is faithful to save and deliver, and that, as ever here, in the consciousness of integrity. “I have sought thy precepts;” and this must be so. Want of it enfeebles all confidence, though God may have mercy. One sees how constantly the soul is seen in the presence of oppressing enemies; for the remnant will be so in the last days. In one sense we always are, but it applies often in evil days. “The wicked have waited for me to destroy me.” But the soul waits in peace, occupied with God's testimonies. And this does give peace and enables the soul to leave all to God. Another pressure of the soul is universal failure. Not that there is no integrity; but the heart would be disposed to say so under the pressure of it. But there is no fulfilling, completing—such is the force of the word—the will of God even in those who undertake to walk in it. But if the heart turn to the word, it has quite another effect. This very failure, though never justified, leads to see how perfect, how complete, and wide God's commandment is—how it reaches to everything in which man can be engaged—everything in the relation of the creature to God—all moral relations (ver. 89-96).

Psalm 119:97-104

Ver. 97-104 is the affection and value he has for the law, its known experienced value. He loves God's law in itself. It is of God to him, the revelation of His will. It is his meditation all the day. It is not for the fruit he got from it, nor the wisdom it gave him towards others; he loved it for itself. This characterizes the new man. But its effect when loved for its own sake was to make him wiser than his enemies, however subtle and cunning they may be; there is a path which the vulture's eye has not known— “simple concerning evil, and wise unto that which is good,” which outreaches and baffles the adversaries of God and the godly man. They can form no estimate of the principles of those who fear God. But this supposes constancy and consistency in them. “They are ever with me.” It is divine wisdom, and immediately so that it gives a discernment, because it acts on the soul itself and forms it, and is perfect in every respect which no human teaching however godly can. This may be very useful as drawn from and leading to the word; but even in the case of the highest gift nothing gained by it is in the faith of the soul with God, until it is learned there; it may be pointed out, interest the heart and mind; but to possess it, it must be learned with God. “They shall be all taught of God.” Nothing teaches like the word of God, sought out and searched in holy subjection, and received as a new-born babe. We have thus understanding—divine wisdom—as to our mind and path; so it gives more wisdom than human experience, when God's precepts are kept. It becomes a positive motive; it is preferred to every evil way: we leave them all for that one which is God's way, because the heart has learned to delight in that. We see too how directly the soul connects itself with God in grace here, and has the consciousness that it is of God, gives the word authority. “I have not departed from thy judgments, for thou hast taught me.” This has great weight in the soul, when the power of God's word has been realized. What has been taught of man, may be left for man; but what has been taught of God, will never be left for God; and for whom else shall we leave it? It has the bond of faith and authority for the soul. It comes from

and leads to Him. The soul returns to the thought of the sweetness of the word to the taste. These divine communications are the delight of the soul. It is not merely duty, though that is owned, but they are sweeter than honey to the mouth. Through God's precepts the heart itself is formed; learns to discern good and evil. It is not merely obedience to a law, but moral discernment grown up in the heart and will. By reason of use, the heart being attached to God's word, the senses are exercised to discern good and evil, and every false way is hated.

Psalm 119:105-110

It is remarkable to how many things the word applies. In the last section the heart and affections were engaged in it for its own sake, leading to wisdom. Now it is a guide to our path through the world in which we walk, a very different service. It “is a lamp to my feet and a lantern to my path.” This it is. It is the means of a right walk, not merely because it sets the heart right, but as casting light on this world; yet not merely light on this world, such as it is, but on our path through it. So Christ does not merely detect by practical righteousness, but he that follows Him has the light of life. It shows the path of the law, to us of divine life, through the world. But withal it never loses the character of obedience. Here, of course, in Jewish form: “I have sworn and will perform it: I will keep thy righteous judgments.” Yet here, I think, with a decided moral estimate of their character in contrast with man and the world. It is not testimonies here, that is for oneself; righteous judgments are the contrast of God's ways and man's ways. He then turns to his trials through which this path must pass. Affliction is here seen not as coming from the hand of God, but as affliction. The former he had to learn and did learn, his will being bound (see ver. 67, 71, 75). So it was the wasting of human strength (ver. 81, 83). Here it is viewed as affliction on the path which was lighted up for him by the word; and he looks for strength and revival through the word from God in his soul in that path. But the desire of the heart is not here deliverance, sweet as it may be, but that, in turning to God in this path of righteousness, the free-will offerings of his mouth may be accepted. He can bring, as kept there, and God's thoughts in him, free praises to God: that was not interrupted through affliction. He was brought low—had been astray, but walking now in rectitude of heart, desired that these outgoings of his heart, fruit of the word's power, might be accepted. This is all right. It is not the joy of present salvation. There is all through the consciousness of having been astray; only the heart is set right. The word has power over his ways; he feels it as a light in these be has entered on; and, though in a certain sense under the fruit of his old ways, his heart set right, can go forth in praise; can it be accepted? Such is his desire, and surely it would be. But the lowliness of the desire is right, as the desire itself is the fruit of grace. It is not the simple-hearted praise of one in known relationship when it flows forth unhesitatingly as the natural and necessary fruit of blessing. As he praises, so he looks to be taught in God's ways, in contrast with evil. Purpose of heart then characterizes his path. His state of affliction and even danger was great, his soul was continually in his hand; but this did not alter his purpose, he does not forget God's law. He was not so absorbedly in the danger as to put this out of his mind. This is a blessed witness of the power of the link with God which grace gives, and how what is known of God, where faith is in exercise, is paramount to the strongest effects of circumstances and the power which Satan can exercise! What God gives to the soul is kept in remembrance in spite of it. Craft and subtle wiles were in his path; and to an upright mind this is trying and painful, but his feet were steadfast in the way. They were set in that way to dishearten in it, but the word had its own power within; and the full secret of this was, he had taken God's testimonies as his portion forever. It was not present delight which may influence the mind and be lost as in a moment; it was a divinely-given estimate of the good and divine truth that was in them. Hence, when really held by grace, it abides, and is not affected by circumstances. The terrors of the enemy and his wiles make the soul cling more closely to what is of God and truth from Him. They have been and are themselves the rejoicing of the heart; only we say more— “nothing shall separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Hence obedience was the purpose of the heart, in its continual practice or as a perpetual bond. So indeed with us. Still we say rather, “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Yet even that leads to equally perpetual obedience as our very element and state as men (ver. 105-112).

Psalm 119:113-120

This section is simple in its character. The soul states its. own condition, but then looks out to see God's intervention according to the word, hoping in that, but withal apprehends God's judgment on the disobedient. “I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love” —thoughts, I suppose, of man's understanding and reasoning, but God's word he loved. The soul thus turned to God from man's reasonings, God, and God only, is his hiding-place and shield; he hopes in His word. So in turning to men he refuses evildoers, his mind is made up, he looks to be upholden to the end, and not disappointed in this hope founded on the word. But this desire is more precise; that is, he looks to the Lord to hold him up in the way, and be will be safe. He needs not only to be guarded, but kept morally upright—God's strength and grace to sustain him: otherwise the enemy would have the advantage over him; but thus kept be would constantly heed God's commandments. But he sees God's judgments on those that went away from them. That by which they sought to beguile men turned out to be emptiness and vanity. Deceit is, as regards men, falsehood—what was vain and false in itself. God rejected them and treated them as naught—as dross. This encouraged the heart in God's testimonies, whose way the heart had kept, in spite of the wicked who puffed at them. But there was fear, and just fear, in the prospect of these judgments. We indeed shall be above them, taken out of the hour of temptation which shall come on all the earth, but encouraged by the word and even by the judgment in looking up to Min from whom it came. And such is ever the case in this psalm. Nothing can be more natural nor more true than this righteous fear. The expression of the apostle, (how perfect is Scripture ever!) in view of deeper judgments, if less outwardly terrible, shows that while he would not directly be in it at all, he was not unconscious of it. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” It only awoke love (for he would not come into judgment), but he knew its solemnity and terror. It acted in sanctifying power, manifesting him as a present thing to God, but where one passed through it, though not reached by it, fear was right. So “Noah, being warned of God, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house” (ver. 113-120).

Practical Reflections on the Psalms, Psalm 119:25-72: Practical Reflections on the Psalms

Psalm 119:25-32

He who seeks to follow God's ways will find himself often in evil days—days when the power of evil prevails and presses upon his spirit. What then marks faithfulness is that the heart does not turn aside to an easier path or other comforts, but looks to God and His raising up the heart according to His word. There his heart is. He prefers sorrow with it to leaving it, but has learned to trust God, and in the sorrow looks to relief, according to this revelation of God; and God can be counted on for it. The heart had been true with God—not only knew that He knew all its ways, but the desire of being right in His sight and confidence with God even there. He had declared His ways. This integrity in the time of trouble, when there is not the joy of God's deliverance, is very important—to be able to say, “When my spirit was in heaviness, thou knewest

my path.” Still there is confidence in the result, so that the soul cleaves to God's ways, and the heart reckoning on His faithfulness is sure, if led by Him in faithfulness of walk, it will soon declare His wondrous works. Not only did the heart take the lowly and abased place, as having no courage as to external things, but it melted within for heaviness—inwardly was in felt weakness. Still the strength it looks for is according to God's word. It seeks nothing but this. The false way in the midst of which it lived, it would have kept far away from the heart. Through this it was downcast. But better to be downcast through evil than to walk merrily in it. More energetic faith might lift up. Still the sense of evil and dependence is good. It was deliberate. He knew all this, but he had chosen the way of truth. “Lord, to whom should we go?” How simple the path then! The soul had been steadfast, and another thing was connected with this. The heart sees that its joys and sorrows are in the hand of God. If it was put to shame, it would be His doing, but He could not for our keeping His own testimonies. “Put to shame” is not here bearing shame by man's mocking, but confounded as coming under judgment. After all, the free running in God's path is when the heart is set at liberty and free, joyfully, with Him. (Ver. 25-32.)

Psalm 119:33-40

These last verses look for apprehension of the ways of God's precepts; so that the heart is taught in the midst of sorrow. Here it is more keeping and observing it in his path. Otherwise the first three portions were his own resolutions; here the demand of God's teaching. For the heart, true in its resolutions, then turns to God. It may be first for its sorrows, but then for guidance and dependence on Him. We need His teaching when the will is right, need understanding from Him—His help too. “Make me to go.” But the heart seeks to be rightly inclined also, but that root of all evil turns it aside—covetousness. The same as to vanity, but this is all around us. It is not the inclination of the heart, but distraction and leading away the mind from God to folly. Hence the soul seeks to be given energy and life, to seek in singleness of eye heartily the Lord and His will. He seeks too that the word may be confirmed to the soul. This may be inwardly by the Holy Ghost giving it power or even by God's ways according to it. The heart follows God and bows in heart to Him at any rate, but seeks to be strengthened and confirmed. Reproach is when God allows shame on one for righteousness without interfering to screen or save from it. It is as if He abandoned His servant to the mockery of the enemy, successful in his ways, or at any rate the faithful in a state to be triumphed over. So Christ: “Reproach hath broken my heart.” The world could say, “He trusted in God, let him deliver him.” But after all, what God ordained was good, in which the faithful walked. Why should he be left to reproach, which he feared? The heart was right. It longed after God's precepts, and looked for the Lord to give liveliness of heart and energy of renewed will, undistractedness through the faithfulness of God (that consistency with His own goodness and favor on which we can reckon in Him). “Quicken me in thy righteousness.” This last supposes an increased knowledge of God, so that we can reckon on Him. So indeed does all this demand on God for help and teaching. Uprightness and integrity lead to confidence in Him for our leading in the way of righteousness, which we know He must love. Being thus of one mind with Him, through grace, gives it; but the last word here shows deepened intimacy of faith, which counts on what God must be. (Ver. 33-40.)

Psalm 119:41-48

Remark here, that all through there is no thought of looking, in difficulty or trial, to anything but God.

Help to keep the law, deliverance from trial because of it, these are sought, but there is not the smallest idea of turning anywhere else; it does not even to the faithful. This is true integrity of heart. God in truth, of His will, God in mercy, God Himself as an object, but only God—nothing outside or away from Him. His mercies are looked for, and that is right, and deliverance from Him, and this according to His word, for He has perfectly revealed Himself, and we want nothing short of Him. What an answer will His deliverance be to the enemy that reproaches! And the word He had sent to us was trusted in as well as obeyed. This is an important point, it is not only the authority of the word, but we have set to our seal that God is true, we receive it as the word of God, and God, we know, must be true, for we know Him; and the soul is interested in the truth of the word. It has taken it as of and from God, delighted in it, had its confidence in it, taken it in face of the wicked as that which we had of God (was perfect as He, revealed Him,) identified it, so to speak, with God. Hence, when there was deliverance according to it, (and other the heart would not seek,) it was the very answer the heart wanted to him that reproached; God's word has an immense place in the heart. It is what reveals Him. Not only it does so, but it is what does so. (So John 5:39.) Had God abandoned the faithful, as fear would lead him to expect, the word would have been taken out of his mouth. Yet here it is not doubting the truth of the word, or its being God's testimony; but be was allowed to accredit it no more by faith. This he fears because he values it. This was Christ's trial and perfectness of the cross, as to desire (“how, then, should the Scriptures be fulfilled?") as to trust. “Yet thou continuest holy.” Here the faithful has hoped in God's judgments, God's acting on that which is gone out of His mouth, His acting according to the revelation of Himself in His word; and this enabled him to keep it forever. So will it be with Israel when he is delivered from the oppressor at the end, the law having been written in his heart. Christ took none of the promises in life, but higher glory awaited Him as man, an answer to higher and infinite faithfulness to God, faithfulness to make good His nature, to be the proof of it when abandoned, when only it could be done because of sin. Then will Israel walk at large, when God's judgments have come in, for that was his desire, to be free to keep them in delight and joyfully. Through mercy we may learn this by times, but our path is a higher one—to follow and suffer with Christ. But he has been encouraged by these thoughts. The word gets its value and God His place, so to speak, though unseen. He speaks of His testimonies before kings, and is not ashamed. This is the character of faith. It has the sense of the importance of God's testimonies, and is filled with it. Men take their place, may be respected, as due to them; but God fills and governs the mind, not by effort, but, so to speak, naturally. The commandments of God become thus, instead of a pressure on the conscience, the delights of the heart. There is open confession and dedication to them; I suppose this is lifting up the hands to them. It is a solemn avowal and asseveration of heart; not only he has loved them, but he openly declares his owning their truth and authority, saying, That is what I own. And as he openly owns his affiance to them, so he meditates in them for his own joy. (Ver. 41-48.)

Psalm 119:49-56

But the soul has counted on God's word; God has taught and led the soul to do it, and now it looks for God to put His amen to it (man, through grace, having put his). This confidence of faith in God's word had been its comfort in affliction. There was that which was firm and steadfast for hope, and brought in God's faithfulness and testimony—Himself in hope to the soul when all circumstances around were adverse, and nothing to lean on. And this is comfort, true comfort, in affliction; but it looks to God to fulfill His word—knows He cannot but do it. That very word had quickened the soul itself to do it. This lowly, patient obedience, accepting meekly reproach, had been the scorn and derision of the proud; but faith in His word had kept the soul from swerving. It kept fast in the sorrow. It looked back to God's ways of old, when His hand bad been stretched out. What made it obedient made it confident: that is, God was looked to, and this kept the vision and memory of faith clear. It counted on faithfulness, and it remembered judgments; for all this is the government of God. And His ways of old are ever the thought of Israel in the Psalms, and, in their place, we can think of them; though our hope be elsewhere, as Christ's, in whose favor, when all was tested,

it was not made good; but the better portion of resurrection was the answer for us. But this thought of God's judgments does make it awful to contemplate the result for the wicked, who are hurrying willfully against them. But it is not only the end of the wicked that is spoken of here. The wickedness itself is to the soul poignant distress. The soul dwells in Mesech. It sees around what is grief of heart, for its delight is in the fresh air of God's holy will. The rank and fetid breath of sin is distress and pain to it, and seen not only intrinsically as sin, but in the pride of wickedness. Still there is joy: God's statutes are its song in the house of its pilgrimage. How true that is! How, when pressed in by evil around, does the heart find its relief and enlargement in the word and testimony of God Himself! His statutes are our songs in the house of our pilgrimage; and the loneliness in which the heart is in a world of evil, (for it will and must be isolated, however sweet communion may be by the way, if it be faithful,) will be met by the name of the Lord (to them Jehovah, to us Christ and the Father in Him). And when cast upon our thoughts, these thoughts are filled with their names and all is peace, and the purpose of the heart in obedience and communion is settled and strengthened. And this is the fruit of obedience, for holiness and communion—the sense of God's presence—are the fruit of obedience. So Rom. 6:22, “Ye had your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” The obedience here has the sense of diligent observation of God's precepts, a thing not to be forgotten. (Ver. 49-56.)

Psalm 119:57-64

In this part (ver. 57-64) we have more the affections connected with the word written in the heart: “Thou art my portion, O Lord.” The heart has Himself as its source of joy and blessing. This connects itself necessarily with purpose of heart towards God: “I have said.' It is impossible to look to the Lord as one's portion without thus purposing to do His will, for that would be not owning Him. This, too, necessarily involves the desire of His favor since He is God. Still the word here has its place, which has awakened this desire and confidence, both as assuring of the mercy and the revelation of the principles on which this favor and mercy are shown. I see the same desire, not mere obedience though resulting in it, but the meditation of the heart: “I thought on my ways” —the heart's inward exercises, a needful and important matter for us—“and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.” We may obey instinctively, carelessly almost, with right intention, but showing that the heart is not with God, not exercised, not anxious as to pleasing Him, and in which, though the path be not evil, the heart may be in a very poor state. But the saint rightly with God will review the purpose of his ways, the direction of them, how far they are according to the measure of the purpose which the light given to us leads to, and if the purpose be adequate, how far the filling up in practice be true to it and earnestly pursued, true to the character of that purpose. For we may be externally blameless, in appearance even amiable, and unfaithful to the calling of God. Here, of course, we have to turn to God's testimonies which are able to make the man of God perfect, “throughly furnished unto all good works.” We see how having the Lord for our portion is the very spring of all this. Thus we should have a heart which thinks on our ways. But this gives diligence when the heart is right. It does not confer then with flesh and blood, having only God's favor in view and purpose of heart: “I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments.” How characteristic and all-important this is I need not say. It is the essential first-fruits and spring of a life true to God, as we see in the blessed Apostle Paul. Suffering may be found in this path, opposition of the haters of the Lord, the instruments of Satan, but the inward life remains steady and rightly directed—does not swerve in its judgment of its path: “I have not forgotten thy law.” We may be occupied with opposition and evil, so as to have the state of our mind formed by it, though opposed to the wicked. It is but meeting flesh by flesh. He who looks to the Lord has the character of his path in the scene of wickedness formed by the unforgotten word, and this leads to see God as the dealer with these things. It looks for the perfectness of God's dealings with evil. This, is a comfort, for an upright mind would often rise up in indignation against public evil; but the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. It is hard often for an active energetic mind to take the lowly place, and not bring down fire from heaven, or will to smite with the sword, when Christ and His truth are insulted and annoyed; but in looking above we have songs in the night. The heart, in singleness of eye, led of God in His ways, has springs of joy which wake it up in the time of evil, and when it is alone with God. Sorrow may be around, but joy with Him. It arises. There is a chord of heart to praise. It is not only comforted in the sorrow, but freed from the bond of evil, active in praising Him whom it knows and who is its portion. For judgment and deliverance will come according to the word, and the heart gets up to God as to it now. But though we are and must be alone in faith, not in fellowship, when the Lord is our portion, we are a companion of thorn that fear Him and walk in His ways. And here the heart is able to turn round and, when all the evil had pressed upon it, yet see mercy. And so it is: evil may rise up like a flood, but the Lord is always above it; and when the heart by faith realizes that, and the will is bowed as to it all, if it is then comforted by the thought of God's judgments, it finds the constant exposition of His mercy now, and seeks in peace to be led in His ways. This is an interesting part of the soul's experience under the influence of the word of God. (Ver. 57-64.)

Psalm 119:65-72

We have now the sense of blessings from God, and the heart turned to Him as its portion: this with the consciousness, the will being broken, of being His servant. Still in unerring goodness the word, the great subject of this psalm, has its place. The word guides Jehovah in His goodness, as it assures us of that goodness, revealing Him and His ways to us, as it guides us in our path. This is very precious, because it teaches how to reckon on it, and that we can. And here he had found it by experience; he had been afflicted, and he can now account for it; but as His word, so Jehovah's ways had been. So even, (and it is most precious,) we can reckon on it at all times. We may have more, but this we have. Now he looks for discernment as taught of God, divinely-given judgment and knowledge; for be had put the seal to God's commandments, for believing here is putting the amen of His heart. Herein he can confidently look to be guided—so we; and it gives confidence to the heart, so as to look for it. His will had been broken. Affliction had been there; before will had its way, forgetting God and going its own way. Affliction is understood now, and obedience wrought. How graciously God follows though righteously as to government and necessarily so in general! For sometimes He breaks the heart through favor as He knows how, when we have wandered away from Him. Hence God is known in goodness in the subdued heart: “Thou art good and doest good.” The desire of the heart is after God's ways.

Now “teach me thy statutes;” that is, the goodness the heart seeks. This subdual of will and setting the heart right is beautiful to see. The pride of ungodly adversaries is before him, saying evil of him in untruth: it is natural if he has left their ways and his own pride of will, but experience has given purpose of heart. It was enough to have gone astray; he clings to that with purpose which he has now got; and the moral difference is great. Filled with will and self on one side, perhaps success; delight in Jehovah's law on the other: the law of Him whose we are—Jesus Christ's will in all things. But not only was there breaking of will and return; there is positive progress, through infinite grace, in this experience. The breaking of will brings the elements of the heart directly into contact with the word. Self is judged in the forms it takes within in the heart—what flesh is in its ways, however deceitful. Thus the heart gets to learn, freed from self, and the light of the word breaking in on the heart and exercised by it, thus rendered cognizant of its import and power; for (though, yea, and because, of God) it is directed to and adapted to the heart of man: only till the will is broken and conscience awakes, it does not reach it intelligently. See the parable of the sower and John 4. But then the law of God's mouth is precious above all, the expression of His own perfect mind and will, and His will about us. We

live by it, but we live on it too, and with delight, as from Him and perfect and for us.

Practical Reflections on the Psalms, Psalm 119:1-24: Practical Reflections on the Psalms

Psalm 119:1-8

Psa. 119 is the expression of the effect of the law written in the heart of Israel, when they had long erred from God's ways and were sorrowing under the effects of it. It is one of the psalms which pronounces blessedness. We will examine some of the elements of this work in the heart. This blessedness is pronounced on “the undefiled in the way.” The world is full of defilement. There is only one path in the world (for ours is out of it, we are pilgrims and strangers following Christ who is gone on high) but only one in the world which can be undefiled; that is, God's law. It is not what is heavenly formed within, affections set on things above, a walking in the Spirit; that no doubt will produce fruits which no law of God will condemn. It is the way wholly formed by God's expressed will for man's walk in this world. They “walk in the law of Jehovah.” There is a delight in what is right, in what is not defiled by sin or the world; but that is in walking in the law. It is a perfect rule, according to God, in this world for a living man. But this is carried farther in the heart. It looks to the source. God has borne witness to His will, and shewed that He would have man walk in it, and the heart turns to it, not only as undefiled and right, but as “His testimonies.” This connects itself with the desire after Himself. They “seek Him with the whole heart.” This is the general character of the effect of the law written in the heart. The practical effect is evident: they “do no iniquity.” Not only the heart is set morally right in undefiledness, but evil or unrighteousness, relative wrong, is not done. Instead of their own will, and puffing, as it is said, at God, “they walk in His ways.” The authority of God is recognized in the heart, and diligence in acquiescence in it, and the desires of the heart are towards it. “O that my ways were directed,” &c. It is not only the perception of God's ways—what is intrinsically approved in the heart; but the desire that the actual course of life were ordered so as to keep God's statutes; not satisfying our will, or our will being towards God's. And here dependence is felt as to the course of a man's life, and there is the desire it may be directed. Conscience and spiritual discernment go together. Shame does not flow from man's disapprobation; but from the conscience not being good according to God's revealed will. But this way is complete and an only one. Whatever is out of it is not undefiled, is the world which is abhorrent from God; we must be in it in will, heart, and way, or out of it, and so ashamed, if the will of the heart be right. If my mind and soul have morally discerned the excellency of God's way, the conscience, if I am out of it in every respect, makes me ashamed. The heart set right has respect to “all God's commandments.” But where this is, not only the conscience is right and peaceful, but the heart is set free. “I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.” There is knowledge of God through His ways, and the heart restored to Him, and having learned His thoughts, (not only commandments, but His judgments,) can praise Him not only for benefits but in the heart's association with Himself. Another element of this state is full will and purpose of heart to obey and keep what God has ordained or appointed, what has God's authority attached to it, not merely moral right and wrong. But it was a time when Israel had erred; hence here there is a special looking to God, not utterly giving them up. We see thus that the form of this psalm cannot apply to the Christian. He never expects to be utterly forsaken; in a particular course he may apply this, when he is conscious of having followed his own will. But from the general principle we may learn much, as that which is wrought in the heart as regards its moral disposition. (Ver. 1-8.)

Psalm 119:9-16

But there are other points practically. The tendency of man's energy as such is to follow his own will. This s now natural, not before the fall. Then man enjoyed, thanked, and blessed; followed naturally in the path described by God—a simple one. Now, through that first distrust of God, will is come in. And here we have a difference of the very last importance in Christian obedience and the law. The law addresses itself, as such, to responsible man down here without raising the question of and not supposing a new nature, though it may discover (when known to be spiritual) the need of one. It supposes a will and lusts which have to be checked and put down. The Old Testament does not speak of flesh and spirit, but of responsible men and their ways. Christian obedience is as Christ's; the will of God is the motive of action, not merely the rule. “I come to do thy will:” no doubt it will herein be a rule to guide us. In us this is a new nature, Christ being our life. We do not find in the Old Testament “he cannot sin because he is born of God.” It is not that there was not the desire to obey in renewed souls then; surely there was. It could not be otherwise. But the relationship in which men stood to God was a law without them to govern their ways when in flesh, not a known new nature standing in the results of redemption whose only motive of action was God's will. The prophets indeed pointed out Christ as such (as in psalm 90) and the masters in Israel should have known that, to have their future privileges, they must be born of water and the Spirit (as in Ezek. 36). But obedience under the law was a rule applied to one who had a will whose movements were to be judged by the law, not a nature whose only motive was God's will, standing in the power of redemption so as to have the right to reckon a discovered old man to be dead, yea which God had pronounced dead through Christ. Hence the heirs differed nothing from servants, to do this, and that, whatever their own will might be. Ways, and not nature, were in question, even though renewal of heart were there. Hence the young man, where energy of will is found, into “cleanse his way.” Lusts would have carried his will elsewhere: how should he find the means of having his ways clear before God? Watchfulness, the fear of God (not will) according to God's word. God's word—how precious to have it in such a world of darkness and will, to guide our feet in a path according to God's mind! For the heart is set right. It is not indeed the sweet enjoyment of love in a reconciled soul, love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given, but (what is of all vital importance) the heart right in the sight of God. It supposes the man away from God but undiscovered in his desire. Both are true of the Christian. He is reconciled and has peaceful affections in perfect relationship (this the law had not); and he has, as known and seen in glory, earnest desire after Him that has loved him, only as knowing (not merely seeking) Him. Here He is “sought with the whole heart;” no guile but the true desire of the heart towards God. Being so, (the commandments of God being precious, as making known His will,) the true heart prays not to be let to wander from them. God is looked to in goodness; for when He is truly sought, there is always some sense of His goodness. It is what distinguishes conversion from mere terror of conscience, desire towards Him and sense of goodness in God. We have then another element. The heart which thus seeks God, and has a desire to do His will, not only seeks outward conduct to be right when the occasion arises, but keeps the word at the center, so to speak, and springs of action. He hides it in his own heart as that which he loves; “out of the heart (where that word is hid) are the issues of life. How large a place the word has here. Note, too, man's estimate of conduct disappears. It is between God and the heart, and that is integrity of heart. It is not here a single eye to an object; so far as that is here, it is found in seeking with the whole heart. This is the integrity which, by reason of the desire towards God, takes His mind as governing the springs of life. It is a blessed and important principle. The word hid in the heart prevent' sinning against Him. But the heart goes farther. It owns the blessedness of Jehovah Himself, known in His ways, His

goodness, His mercy, that endureth forever. There, in the midst of its distress, the renewed heart finds its resource and its rest. “Blessed art thou, O Jehovah.” This makes the heart look for what He has decreed and ordained and for divine teaching in it. This looking at God gives courage and the consciousness of integrity and faithfulness. When the heart is right, this is the case. The heart, however humble, when it walks in integrity, has the consciousness of it before God. It may see weakness and infirmity in its ways, shortcomings of which it will judge the cause; but with God it will have the consciousness of entire guilelessness and purpose of heart. “This one thing I do” — “To me to live is Christ.” This does not affect humility; entire dependence on grace and divine strength for willing and doing is felt, (we are in result unprofitable servants, had we done all,) it is duty and delight. But there is the joyfulness with and from God that the heart is right. Service flows from confidence in God and knowledge of His blessedness with the value we have of what God has given. So Christ fully in Psa. 40. The spirit is the same here. It is the effect of perception of divine things, in power and value for them, to make us declare them. It is glorifying God. Love to others may accompany this, but it is another thing. We owe it to God to declare what He is. He ought to be known, and what He is owned. The difference of praise is that the sense of what He is, is addressed to Himself. Perfection is where He is fully known, so that there is no need to declare it to others; all with one mind worship because of it. Then we hold nothing back, “all the judgments of Thy mouth.” We are filled with what God is, its value; and it is uttered. We may be wise for others' sake, but God is sufficiently valued to be fully declared. God's testimonies become the riches of the soul. The possession of heaven somewhat modifies this; yet, still, for here below, the way of God's testimonies are joy, moral joy, as riches would be to men. But there is an inward life, which occupies itself with these things, as well as the activity of duty; much to be fed on, digested, learned in God's testimonies. We meditate on them: we have thus God's mind—the Holy Ghost's intention in them. Thus the soul is fed in delight. But God's ways are held in respect, as authority to the mind. The heart goes with them too. It is not merely that they delight his soul, but there is the activity of the new man; he delights himself with them, he makes it the matter of his occupation, seeking his enjoyment there, and keeps it (oh! how needed it is) in memory, the true proof of affection.

Psalm 119:17-24

From the third division, another element comes in. Its literal application is to the sorrows of Israel in the last days; in principle it applies to all times—the sorrows and trials which accompany godliness. The soul looks for mercy from One that is supreme, where it is a stranger. It needs this to keep the law. No doubt, it may be strengthened even to martyrdom; but, in general, it looks for mercy to be able to walk. The heart owns it, is God's servant, and looks to be kept in mercy in order to walk truly. This is a great point of the return of the soul to God. By this fact God has now His own place and authority as such. Whatever evil may be permitted (comp. 94), God, our God, is supreme; and, further, goodness is always then necessarily known in Him. But there is more; the soul thus knowing God desires the knowledge of His mind, not merely a rule to direct, but “wondrous things out of God's law.” But all this gives the consciousness of being a stranger in the earth. A good God, (whose servants we are,) and an evil world, make a man “a stranger” (we much more, through Christ). We need these—our own moral delights—God's commandments; we must add the fullness of Christ. “They are not of the world as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” And here the heart is fully engaged and filled; “my soul breaketh” forth, for there is infinite delight, in the new nature, in the fullness of God's revelations. It does break forth with delight. But this delight in the word gives a just estimate of man in the world, the “proud” man acting from his own will and setting himself up. He may seem to succeed and puff at God. He is under a curse, he errs from the one true way of man—God’s ways. The exaltation of will brings necessary curse; for we are thus away from, in rebellion against, God—all acting of human will. But godliness does more than make a stranger, a sure thing for the heart. It brings cruel mockings, for proud man will not have subjection to God: it is contemptible to man; and the deist, he cannot help him, he boasts. That is not contemptible, his will is in it. But with God man must be subject, and the willful despise this, though often with misgivings of heart. This the saint, while enduring, seeks to be removed. God should assert His title, not suffer the faithful to be pressed down by evil. Still, meanwhile, he can retreat into his own delights; he meditates in God's statutes, hid there from the pride of man. They are his delight, and his counselors, too. (Ver. 17-24.)

Notes and Comments 2, Person of the Lord, The

How beyond all our wonder and praise is the Person of the blessed Lord! As an Apostle could say, and more because he knew it better, " Great is the mystery." But in one respect He was one with us all, great as His revelations were. No man knows the Son, yet He lets us see that He is that which no man knows. Who could say but there " God is known in death? " Is it not there love, God's love is known, never known really till known there? Yet it is weakness, and, as to His place as man, the very end of man. But in Himself God is known in love by His being down here with sinful men—by that love reaching even to us. He made Himself of no reputation, emptied Himself—not that He could be other than God—there is the mystery—but as to the form of God He did. Hence having taken the form of a servant, He is always such- receives all. Even when He takes the kingdom, He goes a long journey to receive a kingdom, and, when by His perfection in power He has subdued all, He gives it up to God even the Father. He gives up His own spirit when the time comes, but recommends it to His Father—raises up the temple of His body, but is raised by the glory of the Father—grows in wisdom, speaks what He knows, but He is the wisdom of God; He can do nothing of Himself—is obedient, but He is the power of God, and quickens too whom He will; created all things and upholds them by the word of His power. And this was His perfection, with the whole power of evil against Him, never to go out of the path of dependence and obedience-never to use power by His will. Thus He bound the strong man as in the wilderness-in death how much more even-He could have had, even in dependence, more than twelve legions of angels, but it would not have been obedience fulfilling the Scriptures.

But what an emptying that was when He who was God could come into death, though suffering, though obeying, bring all that God was in His moral perfection into death, and then when it was needed, in man's extremity through sin, in man's weakness, in the place of Satan's power, there glorify it—love, righteousness, majesty, truth, all found glorified there. God is glorified in Him, yet it was in death, and because it was death in all it meant for God; but it was all the power of love, i.e., God, in the emptying. I do not turn to John's writings here, already elsewhere spoken of, where the divine nature of the Lord is so distinct,1 where He comes out as God-not genealogic from takes the place of receiving everything. It is contemplation of the wondrous and unsearchable fact I seek, not Adam or Abraham or David—and yet, as made flesh, always proofs which are everywhere where He is.

But I would weigh some facts in the Gospels as to the manifestation of God in Him. When the blessed Lord had to do with unbelievers whom He knew and had to treat as adversaries, though His being God comes out—save His knowing all men, as yet not judging—what God is does not come out at all; it is only when driven, by the willful blindness and hostility of the human heart, to speak of things as they are, that forced and driven to the necessity of it, so to speak, the fact of His being God comes out, "Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to

cast at him, but Jesus hid himself." There is no revelation of Himself in John 8. He does not come to judge, and the woman is not condemned—she is to go and sin no more. He gives divine power to the law, or rather He is, by His word, divine power in the conscience—no grace is in question, and they all go away one by one—divine power in the Word awakes the conscience. He is the Light of the world, and he who follows Him does not walk in darkness. But here there are none such; it is simply the Light shining in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.

But Christ is divine—He can bear witness of Himself, yet He says "as the Father has taught me," as ever, in John, receiving all. Nothing inconsistent with grace, but the simple absence of all contrary to it. He could not contradict Himself, but He is only Light in darkness. As Man He hardly appears here, for that is grace; other cases present themselves where grace is at work. We may first take the woman of Samaria—but here away from Jerusalem, where with the Jews (not the people) He is always in judgment—where the great change of leaving them and having to do with the world, and bringing men to have to—do with the Father and with God spiritually, and that by life in the power of the Spirit, are brought out, and where Christ is the rejected Man and feels it, but is thereby thrown into the consciousness that He is the divine Giver of eternal life in the power of the Spirit. But here we have the Lord fully as a Man; the Jachin and Boaz of Christian truth had been set up in chapter 3—Man or Jew was naught, must be born again, and the Son of Man must be lifted up. God had loved and had given. Christ was a rejected Christ—He left Judaea where the Pharisees were jealous and would none of Him. Christ must be a rejected Christ for us to have part with Him—sad thing to say, but so it is—if it die not it abides alone. No doubt He could always quicken whom He would, but without His death we could not righteously see God, and if a man received a new nature without His death, there would be no putting away of the old; we must be risen as well as quickened—a new place as a new life—and that is only by His death. But He was rejected, felt it, afterward wept over the city, felt it deeply as none of us could feel—we see Him comforted, as rejected by His own to whom He came, by fields white to harvest.

He was weary with His journey and sat alone in the world—Oh, wondrous place! The world He had created, but more, into which He was come in love: and here only a weary Man feeling the rejection of His love, but, as to the place He had taken, dependent for a drink of water—He who had made it—upon this poor sin-wearied woman. But He had come where He could only come in grace; salvation was not of Samaria but of the Jews—promises were theirs, but they had rejected all—grace had its work outside, but then it was humiliation and on rejection he must needs pass through Samaria. He submits to human circumstance and conditions—He acts in divine grace. Here therefore where grace, free grace works, we find Him fully Man—a weary rejected Man, bound in spirit on a way He must needs take, and waiting on the kindness of another for a drink of water. Grace is in the humbled and obedient Man—there it is that what God is shines out. It is not "before Abraham was, I am," but "if thou knewest the gift of God," i.e., grace, "and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink." It is not the supreme God forced, so to speak, to say He is so to heartless adversaries without conscience, but God revealed in what He was in a lowly Man, and by His being a lowly Man; and surely if grace is, that is grace.

What heart is in the words! What a need to win the confidence of a weary soul! Yet the simple expression of what His own heart was full of, of God as goodness and brought out, as to circumstances, by the pressure on that heart of the rejection by His beloved people which he was suffering under! How wonderful to hear him saying just then "Salvation is of the Jews!" Perfect owning of God's counsels and ways! But in His rejection in them, grace flowing freely out—the natural expression of what He was full of, but as that was love, love which seeks to bring a weary soul to confidence in God by bringing that love down to lay its wants at the feet of such an one, to win confidence in a love that could do it. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith"—there He was—"give me to drink"—come even there—"thou wouldest have asked"—He would have given, for He was the giver. What a scene! Such a lowly place! And to learn what God is in it! Yea, what he is by it!

There is no feeling like that of the perception of the Person of Christ, and His words and He are one—He was what He said, always. Yet it is thoroughly in human nature I look at Him here, yea, that is the way and here I learn it. With adversaries He is simply God—in grace He is a Man yet God, and only precious as a Man because He is, and, as a Man, dependent. Yet we have seen the Father in Him.

I do not go into the state of the woman, that is another part of the question of the chapter. But He is the object of adoration for eternity.

I turn then to the Syro-Phoenician; here it is "He could not be hid." It was not the flowing out of a pressed heart to sorrow and need, but what God, so to speak, must be where faith is—Himself—He cannot not deny Himself: Still grace rises above all promise and curse, and God is revealed. It is not as in John 4 where the pressure on His heart of the rejection of His beloved people, and all it implied, had brought out what was in that heart; deeper still, the divine over-flowings of goodness not meeting promise, but finding its comfort in going out in free grace to need where no promise, no title was—rejected love making new channels for itself; God giving, and hence naturally where need, not where promise was, and giving eternal life and bringing to God in Spirit and in truth, for God, as He is was revealed, and so the Father seeking worshippers. This was John 4, and hence we find the opened heart of the Samaritans wider than promise, knowing more than appropriating pride, own Him as the Christ, the Savior of the world.

But in the Syro-Phoenician woman it was different; He goes to the borders of His earthly mission, retires to be alone (Mark 7) and would not have it known. Here it is not His own rejection, He labors among the poor of the flock—His mission according to prophecy, and as to Israel the designs of God—He is servant of this mission, nothing more, as to the place He takes; He is not rejected by proud Jerusalem, but sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But He is in His mission, but in His divinely traced, not free path, He goes out of the sphere of active service to the borders of the curse without.

Meanwhile moral truths had come largely out; ceremonial observances contrasted in Israel with divine commandments, but, still further, the heart of man, called in question in contrast with all such mere ordinances, lost in importance, not merely in contrast with divine commandment, but in their nature as merely external; God looked at what came from the heart, not what went into the belly—a simple truth, but which for man is hard to learn. God goes to the true nature of things in respect of man—what comes out of the heart—what he is but what did come out of it? Murders, evil thoughts, all manner of evil, and the Lord had no more to say. Then He leaves this scene of labor, is alone personally—as Man in position He would not have it known; but it was. Then we come to what was known; He goes, as I have said, to the borders of the curse—the place which served Him as an example of hard-heartedness—the people on whom God's curse rested as compared with Israel. What wondrous elements are all brought together here! But He sought to be alone, i.e., out of His sphere of labor; His mission, as a sent one, a servant, He insists on. But a want was there, a want which sought goodness in power, and God was there; the poor woman drawn by it, though purposely repelled to prove her faith (the disciples would have got rid of her—neither owned promise, nor in fact exercised love as above all promise) draws out what is above all promise, what recognizes fully the right to possess where promise was, but appeals to goodness as, after all, reaching over it, fully recognizing man's complete misery and wretchedness without a title—a vile dog,

which there was saying everything that was unclean and vile, but appealed to a riches in goodness which could reach in mercy even to that. Could Christ say "No! God is not that"?

No! God was there manifested and faith had all it sought for—it had found Him; there was no need of claim or goodness, but the confession of worthlessness and absence of all title—a need whose resource was in the goodness of God. The Servant who held Himself to His mission, as service He had to do, was after all the God of all grace, and God revealed in Him, and while owning God's ways in Israel, standing alone in the presence of the curse and the absence of all claim, what faith owned, but therein found God and infinite goodness—Israel's servant was God manifest in the flesh, was goodness, above all evil, above all curse, was God and God manifested. What God is is known in His being revealed in Man—being a Man; for that was infinite love.

But there was more than the revelation of His Person and the exercise of His power; I turn to another case, Luke 8, the Pharisee and the Sinner. Here we have not the rejected state of man and free grace rising above it all, but actual degrading sin in contrast with human righteousness—a legal condition as man stands in it, and what this blessed One was for sinners. Three hearts—man as he stands in his own righteousness—God's in Man—and the poor and degraded sinner touched by grace and won, in a certain sense unconsciously (i.e., with no dogmatical knowledge) by what was manifested in the Lord, what He was in blessed love first, then forgiveness. The legal man thought to judge, by human competency, if the Lord, this Preacher going about the country, were really a prophet, but he judged according to human righteousness—what man should be for God, but only in an outward way; his own heart, God's heart and light, and even this poor woman's heart unknown—light and love, light and conscience, and love in the heart, i.e., God, alike wholly unknown. God was in his house, in light, as He showed, and love, and he never found it out—despised Him—had no civilities or courtesies for Him—and judged from his own heart—while He was not like it He could be no prophet. Here self-righteousness, divine grace and sin come together in fullest juxtaposition and contrast, and divine light which makes all things manifest too, and that in the Person of the lowly Preacher, the Son of God. The Pharisee is wholly blind—says he sees—judges from his own heart, and sees neither the manifestation of God in Christ, nor the work of grace in the woman. Light and love are alike wholly foreign to him The Lord shows fully that He is the light that makes all manifest—knows what is in the Pharisee's heart—knows the woman's sins—and what the Pharisee was thinking of Him and her. But more—His grace, the grace that was in Him had attracted the heart of this poor sinful woman—her need was great, her shame great, her sin deplorable, to no human eye could she turn that would not scorn her but One, and that was God; there her heart found confidence—the more she was distressed and brought low, the more was her comfort in finding that heart; there, in that mercy, her shame could hide itself, for it was grace to her—scorn was not there. But all this, through grace, had won her to hate and own her sin. It was the meeting point of sin and grace, confession of a convicted heart through confidence in goodness in Jesus—sin seen and God seen, and because God was seen in love. Divine sight was there, not blindness, divine love had brought in divine light, so that God and sin in self were both known, and God trusted, and a guileless heart produced because grace was trusted. How deep a work to bring a soul to God, and have sin judged and God known! And then Christ was all—she thought little of Simon and his guests save One, Jesus was there and that absorbed her, she was delivered from her shame even as to all the rest, but not her shame before God. Then a silent heart wept, and washed His feet with her tears. There was boldness in her confidence, yet lowliness and thanksgiving in the boldness, she kissed His feet too, and spent what she had of precious on Him. Then as He had occupied that heart with Himself in grace, He occupies Himself with that heart—He has done with Simon and the rest—to such a heart He must give peace. But first He takes her part in that which shows not only that He knew Simon's heart and all about it, but there was that of which Simon knew nothing—besides blindness as to His Person—forgiveness. God, happily for her, knew all her sins and had forgiven them—wondrous revelation! The grace that revealed love and goodness, had brought forgiveness with it—relief, full and perfect, from God—when sin had confounded the soul before God, was seen as sin because God was seen and in grace, the grace could tell that it was all gone—before God forgiven.

The Person of Christ had drawn—she loved much. The grace of God in Christ had forgiven—of that, of God, Pharisaism knows nothing. The Lord takes up the woman's case in presence of the Pharisee's contempt, and shows what he was—what she was—what God was—what He was in Himself. Then He occupies Himself with the woman alone, "Thy sins be forgiven thee"; their remarks do not arrest Him, "Thy faith hath saved thee—go in peace." He had sounded the Pharisee's heart, sounded and brought to light her's—revealed God's, and conferred forgiveness—confession of sin and forgiveness of sin (and that is the cross for us) are the meeting place of the sinner in truth and God in love. Here again we have God revealed in a Man, but specially in respect of sin.

In the first case He does not come to judge, but He is simply with adversaries, and is simply in result "I am." In the woman of Samaria, He is rejected of the Jews and grace flows out giving life, going up to eternal life above, bringing to the Father—God known as a Spirit—and this by grace going out where promise gave no salvation and no claim to righteousness, but sin and need.

In the Syro-Phoenician, where faith comes, grace rises where grace is gone above all barriers—God is revealed to faith, and must be above them all, must be what He is in grace, cannot deny Himself, and faith pierces through all barriers, urged by need to appeal to what God is in Himself; in grace, and He cannot but be what He is, or be kept in by the barriers when that was reached, though He was there in One serving as sent where promise was; still God was there.

Luke 7 goes deeper and Light is there—Pharisaism and sin brought fully to light; the utter and deplorable blindness of Pharisaism manifested what man in self-righteousness is—no perception of God at all, nor of anything in Him. Then to the sinner a deep true perception of what He was as grace meeting need, and hence brought to God according to the power of His presence, and the grace of His nature, He being known, humbled fully before Him, but brought to Him according to what He was, the bond of the heart with Him formed, with Him known, and forgiveness, peace, and salvation received. It is deeper, because it goes into the full moral question of the state of man with God—light in the heart and soul of man as he was.

The case of the palsied man in Matt. 9 is somewhat different. It is not God revealed in His nature of goodness, what He is in Christ for men; it is relative—Jehovah of Psa. 103 manifested in Israel, His ways in Israel in grace, but relative—what He was, of course, but according to promise and prophecy.

I do not again enter into the full bringing out of the three hearts in Luke 7:36—to end, the Pharisee's, the sinner's looking to Christ, and, blessed be His grace and name, God's own heart already spoken of; light and love were there, neither the least known to Simon—he was blind, thinking he saw. Christ, in whom it is revealed, is the subject of our adoration. I only notice now " Thy faith hath saved thee "how God owns, as that which He sees in the heart of the poor convicted believer, what He has wrought. Tears and repentance were there, true love to

the Savior, excellent fruits of faith, but faith by grace, gave her Christ; hence faith saved her—God's work in the heart, by which Christ was seen and appreciated. Her heart was thus shown, what God indeed had wrought in it, but in it; but then it was what it was fixed it wholly on another, it was not objectively itself nor reflectively—it knew Christ only. It produced lovely fruits, most lovely, which the Lord owns, but it saved because it saw Christ only. But what is lovely here, that Christ owns, attaches value to what was in her heart, wrought there surely, but was in it; its action on Him as its object gives us to see divine appreciation of the state of the heart thus having Him for its object. He does not say, "Grace has saved thee," though true, "My work, my blood-shedding has saved thee "—that would have been speaking of something in God, of His own work; but He speaks to her of divine value for something in the heart of the poor woman. This is unspeakable goodness, divine tenderness and favor. If it be a wonderful picture in presence of Pharisaism, we have to leave the Pharisaism to itself, as the Lord did, and see the Lord owning what was of God in the heart that turned to Him. The poor, desolate, and lonely woman could go away and say, " I have His approbation on what is in my soul"—the comfort of His approbation, yet thinking of Him still, not of herself, for thinking of approbation, a father's approbation, is not thinking of what is approved, or of self. Faith had saved her, and she could go in peace—she had it from Christ—and her faith in His Person gave divine weight and grace to His words.

Letters 3, Death, The Effect of the Thought of

I have had it on my mind to write to you ever since I heard you were sick. But I have been a great deal more sick myself-more over-worked and broken-down than ill, but so that for some time, though I felt all was in the Lord's hands, I hardly thought I should recover my strength, but leave this passing scene. And this hindered my doing anything but what came necessarily to hand to do. I felt it a solemn thing: it was not doubt as to God's or Christ's love, or the efficacy of the blessed Lord's work in justifying, but the breaking up of the life and its state in which I had lived hitherto, and its being gone. But it was a useful experience. It broke the link with present life a good deal, and made Christ's and the Father's love everything, and much more real to me, and this is a great blessing. I am a great deal better, still feel the effect of it; but, thank God, the effect in the realization of Christ's love in my spirit is not gone. I did not doubt it before, but I have a keener sense of belonging to another world, though for a little moment remaining in this-that is, Christ and the Father's house is all. Now it has not come as near you: still your conscious decrease of strength, if it has not been such as to give a conscious snapping of the thread of life, still tells of its passing away. I trust with care you may be better and refreshed in spirit. Still I believe it is good to look the truth of it in the face. I found sovereign grace more precious than ever. That I knew had met all my sins; of that there was no question: but the personal love of the Father and Christ was what the sense of was so greatly increased thank God! It was a comfort to me that all I had taught and labored in was of God and from God. It was not on this a question of the workman at all, but of the truth: I had long known, and gladly, that I was nothing.

Remember that all things work together for good to those that love God, called according to His purpose, and dwell on the perfect divine love of the Father in giving the Son, and His unknowable (in its extent) love in accomplishing all for us. And then He loves you now. I have not a doubt, though much better, that all this was from God's hand; and so surely it is with you according to that love, only personally applied, which gave Christ for us—could not be greater. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father, and He assures us we are of value to Him. He makes no mistakes, and there is nothing that escapes His eye and hand. "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous"—what a mercy! It is not death in itself which is present to you, that is another thing, but the course of life is broken with you for the moment, and even if you recovered strength, as I trust you may, and rejoice in God's present goodness, still the experience will have been there, and give a tone to life, and that is a great gain. "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him."

And now, dear -, be of good cheer: look to Him who is your life—a life that never fades—as He has "made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." God has to take care of you for a little while, instead of your taking care of the house, and He does it tenderly, graciously, with His poor weak children. Think of Christ and the Father's love, and all will be well, and well forever. That is what I have learned....

Your affectionate brother and servant in Christ.

Croydon, July 12Th.

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