

Who hath despised the day of small things?
Zechariah 4:10

A Day of Small Things

Keeping the Faith in a Ruined Church

Simplified Summaries of Papers by
John Nelson Darby 1828

The Faith once Delivered to the Saints

Prepared by Sosthenes

DRAFT

Not for general distribution

Forward

This is a preliminary version of a planned publication of my summaries of 'The Present Hope of the Church'. It is therefore not for general distribution.

Readers should go through it with a critical eye and let me know where

1. It does not make sense
2. It does not read well
3. There are typographical errors

My aim is that it should be intelligible to young and untaught believers who know the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour and are looking for His soon return.

Please e-mail me at sosthenes@adayofsmallthings.com

This work is committed to the Lord for blessing and I trust that with the help of God, guided by the Holy Spirit there will be blessing and instruction.

Sosthenes Hoadelphos
Rochester, England
February 2014

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The Faith Once Delivered to the Saints

Easy to Read, Summaries of Papers on the Church and our Dispensation by John Nelson Darby

During the 1800's, and up to the early 1900's God gave His Church teaching which has been of great blessing to millions. Men like John Nelson Darby (JND), Macintosh, Wigram, Stoney, Raven, Coates, Taylor (Sr), with others perhaps less known like Bellatt, Dennett etc were helped in opening up the thoughts of the Lord's coming, the hope of the Church, deliverance from sin, eternal life, the person and glory of the Holy Spirit, the Service of God, household baptism and much else. They also helped Christians through the confusion caused by the public breakdown of the Church, freeing them from sectarianism and clericalism. Words like 'dispensationalism, pre-millenniumism, pre-trib(ulationism)' have been used – but their object was to be free of what dishonoured the Lord to serve Him to His glory.

Some writings, like Darby's convoluted long and difficult, particularly to the young believer. Even at 68, I cannot claim to understand all myself, but for the benefit of my brethren (and my own), am seeking to produce simplified summaries of a number of JND's classic papers, books and words. This task has just been started.

I trust that God gives me the strength and resolve to continue, and I also pray that He helps me to bring out accurately and comprehensively the teaching of the papers without losing their appeal to exercised souls. Your comments are valued.

I also am happy to enter into correspondence (using my real name) with any about the truths, but will avoid contention and arguments.

In God's grace

Sosthenes



J N Darby

[The Faith once delivered to the Saints](#)



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[Darby Summary – Separation from Evil, God’s Principle of Unity](#)



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J N Darby

[Darby Simplified – The Notion of a Clergyman, Dispensationally the Sin Ghost](#)



The Faith once delivered to the Saints

Summary of Summaries

“The Faith once delivered to the Saints” - or -Knowing where we are, and what God wants us to do, in the Confused State of Christendom

What God sets up perfectly, man ruins. This applies equally to the Church publicly. But it remains the Church, and it is for us to be faithful to the Lord accepting our part in its public failure. We are in the last days and the Lord's coming is imminent, so we are exhorted to *earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints* (Jude:3).

We need to have a conscience about what is evil, and to keep close to the Lord, recognising the public situation. We must heed the Holy Spirit, so as to judge evil, and rest on the word, not the teachings of men. We must be prepared to act alone or with few and then we can then get a view of what God has here. So we should know what God's mind is for us on our path, individually and collectively. And we can trust in God, not in our own reasoning – *in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:*” (Isaiah 30:15)

Church Unity and Sectarianism – or -The Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ

That they all may be one; [John 17:21](#)

In this paper Darby's objective was, with God's blessing, to show Christians how the Church can be united according to the Word of God, and how it should operate consistently. It would therefore be strengthened in its hopes and show the world clearly the power of God's grace, leading believers to rely more on the Holy Spirit and less on human plans and co-operative schemes.

Darby looks at the way in which the public Christian Church has degenerated with worldliness, human organisation, tolerance of evil and sectarian fragmentation, running counter to the Lord's words *That they all may be one*.

Church unity cannot be achieved by human compromise and

confederacy. It can only be in looking to the Lord Himself, giving Him His place, by the Holy Spirit, *going forth to him without the camp* and being *not of the world*.

Separation from Evil and Christian Unity- or - Separation from Evil, God's Principle of Unity

Every right-minded Christian feels the need of unity. However if Christians are to be united, the union must be centred on God who is righteous and holy. The secular and religious world is full of evil, and God cannot be united with evil. The Christian must separate from the evil – and only then can unity be considered. Christ – who died, rose again and ascended is to be the Centre, and the Lord's Supper the symbol and expression of unity and fellowship. *Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*"

If the Church is to be maintained separate from evil, it is called upon to *judge them that are within*. Thus Christian unity is maintained in the power of the Holy Spirit and an honest conscience.

God's Love and Grace – Holiness, Unity and Christian Gathering – or Grace, the Power of Unity and of Gathering

Grace is the active power that unites and gathers saints together. Separation from evil is necessary, but it cannot be the power to gather Christians. Holiness may attract, but the power to gather is grace, working in love – love through faith.

We are to be separated from evil, but separated to God. And that is in love, so we abound in love towards one another, our fellowship being with the Father and the Son, grace alone having revealed God's heart. Active love gathers us.

If Christians gather purely out of separation from evil, they become occupied with the evil, which is not of God.

Independent Churches, Independent Local Assemblies, Personal Judgment and Conscience – or - On Ecclesiastical Independency

I must not confuse my private, independent judgment with conscience. My conscience relates to God's rights, the Word and the

Lord's authority. God has vested authority in persons, even though they are not infallible. But if I am disobedient, I am acting independently, in self-will, and despising God's authority.

There is only one Church of God – the body of Christ. An action in one gathering is binding on all, even if I personally have reservations about it. Scripture does not support independent churches, whether in a place or universally. Many Christians might prefer to belong to independent assemblies, but these are unscriptural, the work of Satan and positively evil, flying in the face of known truth.

If there is blasphemy in an assembly or association with it, then I have to act. That is not independence, but I act in the light of the whole: *“Because we, being many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf (1 Corinthians 10:17 JND).* We profess to be one body whenever we break bread; scripture knows nothing else.

The Church as the Body of Christ, the Church as the Habitation of God, and Local Churches – or - Churches and the Church

Most people, Christians included, think of churches in terms of the Anglican Church, the United Reformed Church, the Baptist Church, the Roman Catholic Church etc., and the structures, church organisations and buildings associated with them. Scripturally the Church is the Body of Christ, and churches the expression of this in a place. Teachers, shepherds, evangelists and other gifts apply to the whole Church. Elders (or overseers) are local. The idea of a single person, appointed or voted into a professional position is totally of man's order and sets aside the Spirit of God.

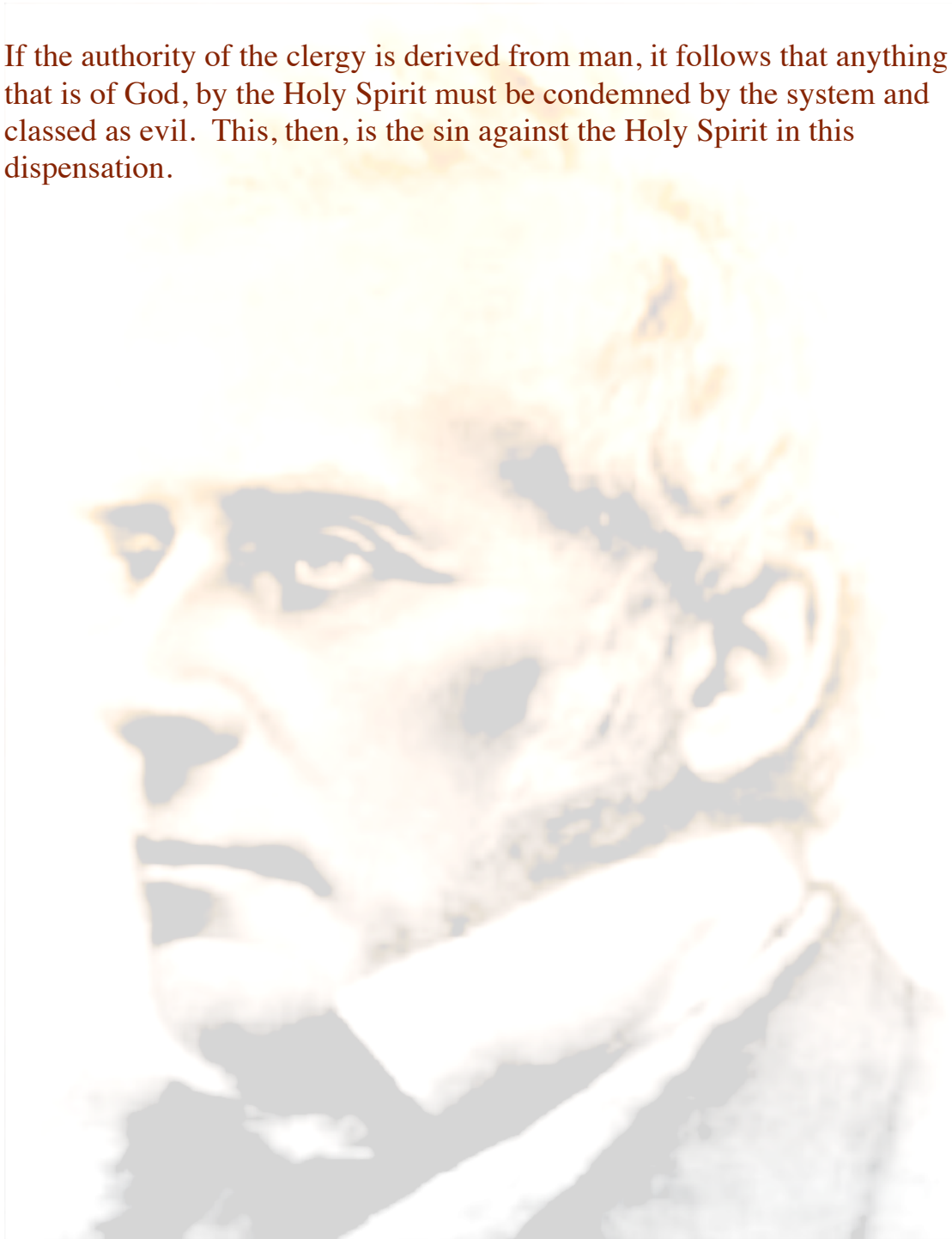
If we believe that the public church is ruined, and governed by man, not the Holy Spirit, then we should humbly cry to the Lord. He will meet us in our need.

The Evil of Clericalism – or - The Notion of a Clergyman, Dispensationally the sin against the Holy Ghost

When John Nelson Darby, a former clergyman himself, published *‘The Notion of a Clergyman, dispensationally the sin against the Holy Ghost.’*, with its understandably provocative title he was said that he was accusing any clergyman or appointed leader of committing the sin against the Holy Spirit. He was at pains to show that this was far from the truth.

Darby's issue was that any human appointment, whether by delegation or election, substituted the direct sovereign action of the Holy Spirit, by that of man. This is the *notion* of a clergyman. The system is wrong. It substitutes man for God. True ministry is by the gift and the power of God's Spirit, not by man's appointment.

If the authority of the clergy is derived from man, it follows that anything that is of God, by the Holy Spirit must be condemned by the system and classed as evil. This, then, is the sin against the Holy Spirit in this dispensation.



Knowing where we are, and what God wants us to do, in the Confused State of Christendom



A summary by Sosthenes of John Nelson Darby's

"The Faith once delivered to the Saints"

What God sets up perfectly, man ruins. This applies equally to the Church publicly. But it remains the Church, and it is for us to be faithful to the Lord accepting our part in its public failure. We are in the last days and the Lord's coming is imminent, so we are exhorted to *earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to*

the saints (Jude:3).

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[To view the complete paper – The Faith once delivered to the Saints](#)

[To download book \(JND Collected Writings – Vol 32 Miscellaneous 1 – p379\) containing this article click here](#)

Trusting in God

As Christians, God in grace has put us on a path, both individually and collectively. It is important therefore for to know where we are on that path and what God's mind for us on it. Our circumstances may vary, but God's principles never vary. While God's thoughts do not change, we need spiritual discernment to see where we are, and how we can go on with God, without departing from the great principles laid down for us in God's Word.

God said to a rebellious people, under attack in Hezekiah's time "*in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:*" ([Isaiah 30:15](#)). The people were being called "*not my people*" ([Hosea 1:9](#)). God's mind never changed as to His people, but they were protected during Hezekiah's time. Later they were to experience judgment. Still those who trusted would be preserved.

Man spoils what God sets up

In Adam, Noah, Aaron, Solomon and Nebuchadnezzar, God set up something good. Man spoiled it. That is because of his poor human nature. We must bear this in mind this when assessing our position, otherwise it will become our own ruin. We cannot plead God's faithfulness and promises in order to sanction evil.

As God carries on, a remnant is preserved in tune with Him. So just before the Lord came there were small numbers – Zacharias, Mary, Simeon, Anna – they were awaiting redemption. They knew one another and were intelligent too as to the Lord's entry. Meanwhile Israel rejected Christ when He came.

There was soon Failure in the Early Church

If we look at the Church, God's assembly on earth, in the early days of the Acts of the Apostles, 3000 were converted in one day. All had one heart and one mind; they had everything in common, and the place was shaken where they were. The power of the Spirit of God was there.

Evil got in when Ananias and Sapphira made things out to be different from what they were. But because the Spirit of God was there, these two fell dead and fear came upon all, both inside and outside. However, that line of corruption has continued, so that even before the close of scripture the whole profession was mixed up with the world, and judgment was called for. Just look at the church now, the Roman Catholic system included!

Have a Conscience about our Position in the Church

Due to a lack conscience, most do not have a sense of the condition that they are in, and also how God is working. To be intelligent spiritually, as being part of the professing church, we need a sense of our condition.

We may have to act Individually

Abraham acted alone – *Look to Abraham ... I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him (Isaiah 51:2)* . Being little was of no consequence. God blessed him; He will bless us still more.

The Church teaching? – and the Holy Scriptures

The Church's teaching? People say the church teaches this and that, but who is that? The church? What do they mean? We never see the church teaching. The church does not teach – it is taught; individuals teach. But remember that there is no inspired person in the church now to teach with absolute authority. So for authority we must turn to the Word of God itself. We must learn from Peter and Paul.

Paul reminds Timothy of the things he had learned – *the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15)*.

The scriptures are the direct authority of God; they determine everything. Meanwhile we have His Spirit to communicate things. We have ministry too, which is a help. But it is a poor thing if we look only to men as guides.

We are in the Last Days –and it is a time of Judgment

It is on the authority of scripture that we know that we are in the last days. Unfortunately many people do not appreciate that. Being in them requires us to have a judgment as to the general condition around us. What so many do, even if they have right feelings as to the condition, is to shelter in what they regard as the church's teaching, a wrong principle as we have seen.

We see from scripture that the Church has departed from God, and ruined what He set up. That was already happening when Jude wrote: *it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude:3)*.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17). In Ezekiel judgment was to start at God's house – *begin at my sanctuary, (Ezekiel 9:6)*.

As to the last days John said, *Even now are there many antichrists,*

whereby we know that it is the last time. ([1 John 2:18](#)). God has born with the state of the church for centuries: it has not improved. Now God is calling souls to Himself in grace (as He did Israel).

Our hearts should take notice: what was set up so beautiful in the power of God's Spirit - what has it all come to? It casts us on the strength that can never fail!

The Lord Judging the Churches

In Revelation 2-3, Christ addresses the seven churches in Asia. He was not speaking to the churches as Head of the body, though He is always that, but as looking on them in their responsibility to maintain His interests down here on the earth. This was Christ walking in the midst of the candlesticks, judging the state of the churches. The Churches had to listen to what He had to say. What had they made of the blessings that had been entrusted to them? For example, to the young assembly in Thessalonica (Thessaloniki) the Bible speaks of works, labour, faith, love, patience and hope; but to mature Ephesus it is just works, labour and patience – faith and love were missing. Indeed in Ephesus the spring was missing – judgement was needed, and the candlestick would be removed if they did not repent. Hence the faithful were exhorted: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* ([Revelation 2:7](#) etc).

The Public Ruin of the Church

Christians were losing their place. “*All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's.*” ([Philippians 2:21](#)), but they did not cease being the church. Nevertheless it says, “*In the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves and so on; (2 Tim. 3:1-2). Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*” ([2 Timothy 3:13](#)). There is the professing church, such as it is, and things would return to the level of heathendom. Mere formality was leading to infidelity or superstition and it was clear that this is how things were going.

The Church has failed publicly in being the epistle of Christ. It is not a question of apportioning blame or attacking persons, because we are all involved. Things were set up so beautifully in the power of God's Spirit – what have they all come to? It has not ceased to be the church of God. But the state of the Church has to be judged. But grace fits the condition.

The Answer to the Church's Condition is in Jesus

Christ is as sufficient for the Church now, as He was at when He first set up the church in its beauty and blessedness. We have to look at His word and see what His mind is, whilst not hiding our eyes from the state we are in. There is power to overcome in the midst of evil.

Things get mixed up – the good and the evil go on together. The wise and foolish virgins slept together, but things changed at the words ‘Behold the bridegroom cometh’ ([Matthew 25:6](#)). The Lord’s coming is imminent. Our relationship with God is to be more than our testimony to men, otherwise we will break down and fail. We must renew our strength. We must remain in that which was from the beginning. *If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father* ([1 John 2:24](#)). The great secret of Christian life is our intercourse with God by the Holy Spirit. And that makes nothing of ourselves.

When the children of Israel failed in Joshua’s time, they had to get back to Gilgal – complete separation from the world. But the angel of the Lord went to Bochim, the place of tears. This means that as well as being separate, we should feel the situation.

All that will live godly in Christ Jesus will be Persecuted

It does not say that every Christian will be persecuted, but all that *will live godly* ([2 Timothy 3:12](#)). The world will not stand a man showing the power of the spirit of God. It drew out the enmity when Christ was here, and it does now. All those who seek to be faithful to the Lord in days of departure can expect that.

Seeing the Church Here

I see what God set up; I see the unity of the body, and Christ as the Head. That is what the Church was to be on earth. Jesus said “*Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” ([Matthew 16:18](#)). It is Christ’s building, and that building is going on still. It is not finished. Paul says of the building, *fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.* ([Ephesians 2:21](#)). Now that is what Christ’s work is – men call it the invisible church.

We are building, and if rightly, on the foundation laid by Paul. If I build with the wrong materials *wood, hay, stubble* my work will be destroyed. But Hades gates will not prevail. [1 Corinthians 3:12](#) .

The Work of the Holy Spirit

As an individual I find that the secret of power of good against evil, outside or inside, is the presence of the Spirit of God, – the Word being the guide. Paul said to some going on badly, “*Do you believe, beloved friends, that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?*” ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#)). Then what kind of persons ought we to be?

It is the same collectively, “*know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*” ([1 Corinthians 3:16](#)). The presence of the Spirit gives power for real blessing – whether in the church or the individual.

Now, we have true and full redemption; the Holy Spirit dwells in those who believe. We can be the expression of what Christ was Himself when He was down here. When a person is really a Christian, God dwells in him; he is sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the power for all moral conduct. If we really believe this should not we be in subjection and not grieving the Spirit?

Things which are inconceivable to man are revealed unto us *by God’s Spirit* ([1 Corinthians 2:9](#)). The Spirit of God and the spirit of the world are always in contrast. What God has revealed is in spite of our state, and this includes our apprehension of the Church in these days of ruin.

In 1 Corinthians 2 the Holy Spirit is seen in three ways

- Things are revealed by the Spirit;
- Things communicated in teaching by the Spirit;
- Things spiritually discerned – received by the power of the Spirit.

A Warning

I cannot have my private judgment in the things of God. The moment I get my own thoughts into divine things I start judging the Word of God. Not accepting God’s word in Scripture is one sign of the evil of our times. But if I own the Word of God, brought by His Spirit, I hear what God says to me: it judges me; I do not judge it. It is the divine word brought to my conscience and heart, and who am I to judge God when God is speaking to me? But it has to be the Word of God – what was inspired at the beginning, and nothing else.

If I were to say I understand and judge the Word of God by itself, I am a rationalist – it is man's mind judging the revelation of God. But where I get God's mind communicated by the Holy Ghost, spiritually discerned, I get God's mind. God has given us the wisdom and power to meet the state of ruin in which we are now, just as at first when He set up the church. That is what I have to lean upon.



Darby on Church Unity and Sectarianism



A summary by Sosthenes of John Nelson Darby's

The Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me – [John 17:21](#)

In this paper Darby's objective was, with God's blessing, to show Christians how the Church can be united according to the Word of God, and how it should operate consistently. It would therefore be strengthened in its hopes and show the world clearly the power of God's grace, leading believers to rely more on the Holy Spirit and less on human plans and co-operative schemes.

Darby looks at the way in which the public Christian Church has degenerated with worldliness, human organisation, tolerance of evil and sectarian fragmentation, running counter to the Lord's words *That they all may be one*.

Church unity cannot be achieved by human compromise and confederacy. It can only be in looking to the Lord Himself, giving Him His place, by the Holy Spirit, *going forth to him without the camp* and being *not of the world*.

[To view the complete paper – Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ](#)

[To download book \(JND Collected Writings – Vol 1 Ecclesiastical 1 – p20\) containing this article click here](#)

The Truth of the Gospel

All genuine Protestant churches profess the great truths of the gospel. Receiving the gospel by faith leads to our having pure desires in

love and a life for Him who died for us and rose again, a life of hope in His glory.

The Sectarian Situation of the Public Church

However, believers' standards of unity and gathering are generally very mixed, falling far below God's. If unity were based on human standards, God would be acquiescing in the moral inconsistency of degenerate man, sinking below the glory of Christ, without even a testimony to His being dishonoured.

Unity in the Early Church

In the early church there was unity. "*The Lord added daily such as should be saved*", was when *none said anything was his own* ([Acts 2:43-47](#)), and *their conversation was in heaven* ([Phil 3:20](#)); for they could not be divided in the common hope of that. It knit their hearts together.

But soon division began about the goods of the church; for where there could be division, there could be selfish interests.

The Church in the Dark Ages

In the hundreds of years leading up to the Revelation, there had been judgments which dishonoured to God. Meanwhile the church was sinking, and utterly sank in apostasy. Indeed, apostasy and moral corruption overwhelmed the professing church.

Witnesses sighed and cried for the abominations that were done in the church. Even without much spiritual understanding and teaching, but the redemption by the Lord Jesus, they testified against the state of the degenerated church.

The Reformation

We are therefore thankful for the Reformation. However, this did not institute a pure form of church, but re-established "Justification by faith" in which believers might find life. Sadly, it was mixed with human activities and much of the old system remained. Whilst those involved were excellent saints, the character of the Church remained short of that which was acceptable to God.

Non Conformist Movements and Sects

As religious and world leaders were more secularly minded and alienated

from God, many recognising the authority of the Word of God, separated seeking to follow it more closely. Hence arose all the branches of nonconformity and dissent.

So long as people pride themselves on being Church of England, Presbyterian, Baptist, Independent, or anything else, they are antichristian. How then are we to be united? – it must be the work of the Spirit of God. Believers should consider, “*Is Christ divided? (1 Cor 1:13) whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*” (1 Cor 3:3) Darby wrote: “*There is no professed unity among you at all.*”

What do we see? Both the Established and non-conformist churches are using unbelievers to gain secular advantages and honours of that world – the very world out of which the Lord came to redeem us. Are they behaving like His peculiar people? What can I do with these things? Nothing.

Because of the diversity of sects, the true Church of God has no avowed communion at all. This is an anomaly. Individuals of the children of God are to be found in all the different denominations, professing the same pure faith; but where is their bond of union? Indeed, the bond of communion is not the *unity* of the people of God, but in fact on their *differences*.

If this is correct, we must conclude that one who seeks the interests of any particular denomination is an enemy to the work of the Spirit of God. Those who believe in “*the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Peter 1:16) ought therefore to keep separate from such activities, otherwise they are drawing back the church to a state occasioned by ignorance and non-subjection to the word. A most subtle and mental disease prevails amongst groups of Christians, especially those of higher orders. This can be illustrated by what the disciples said, “*he followeth not us,*” (Mark 9:38). Let us not hinder the manifestation of the church by this spirit. This line of thinking infests groups of Christians, especially those of higher orders.

Could there be a Union of Protestant Churches?

If Protestants formed a formal union, it would be impossible that such a body could be at all recognised as the church of God. It would be a counterpart to the Roman Church, but without the power of the word and

the unity of spiritual life.

No meeting, which is not framed to embrace all the children of God in the full basis of the kingdom of the Son, can find the fullness of blessing, because it does not contemplate it – because its faith does not embrace it.

Protestants have often professed to the Roman Catholics that their unity in doctrinal faith. Why then is there not an actual unity? If they see error in each other, ought they not to be humbled for each other? If there was diversity of mind, instead of disputing on the footing of ignorance, why not wait in prayer, that God might reveal this also unto them? Yet I well know that, till the spirit of the world be purged from amongst them, unity cannot be, nor can believers find safe rest.

Unity is the glory of the Christian Church; but unity to secure and promote *our own interests* is not the unity of the church. It is confederacy, and a denial of the nature and hope of the church and not the Lord's work.

Non-sectarian Christian movements

The people of God have found a sort of remedy for this disunion in the Bible Society, and other missionary ventures, giving a sort of vague unity in the common acknowledgment of the word, or of of desire and action. In many instances the genuine cravings of a mind actuated by the Spirit of God has been behind it, and doubtless partially afforded testimony to what the Church was.

How God sees the Disunity in the Christian Church

Sensing our immense distance from genuinely exhibiting the purpose of God in His church, we ought to be thankful that He still deals with us. It should lead us also to seek Christ's current mind, so that our path may be according to His present will, rather than our own.

It was God's purpose in Christ to gather into one all things in heaven and on earth; reconciled unto Himself in Him; and that the church, by the energy of the Spirit should be the witness of this on earth. Believers would know therefore that all who are born of the Spirit have substantial unity of mind, so as to know and love each other, as brothers and sisters. What is more, they were so to be all one, as that the world would know that Jesus was sent of God. But this is not all. Sadly this has not been fulfilled in practice, and in this we must all confess our sad failure.

Are believers happy with the current state of the Church? Clearly not. Do we not believe that it has, as a body, utterly departed from Christ? Has it been restored so that He would be glorified in it at His appearing? Is there not a practical spirit of worldliness at variance with the death and coming again of the Lord Jesus as Saviour.

Darby said “I shall seek to establish healthful principles: for it is manifest to me, that it must flow from the growing influence of the Spirit of God and His unseen teaching; but we may observe what are positive hindrances, and in what that union consisted.”

The Self-complacent Christian Church

Christians are little aware how the spirit of the world prevails in their minds and how they *seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ*. While the spirit of the world prevails spiritual union cannot subsist. Believers think, because they have been delivered from secular dominion, that they are free from the practical spirit which gave rise to it; and because God has wrought much deliverance, therefore they are to be content. In this state of self-complacency, the springs of grace and spiritual communion dry up.

We have learned to trust in too much in the outward ‘Temple of the Lord’, adorned with goodly stones and gifts, and have ceased to look to the Lord of the temple. We have almost ceased to walk by faith. The unclean spirit of idolatry may have been purged out; but the great question still remains, whether there is the effectual presence of the Spirit of the Lord.

The original State of the Christian Church cannot be restored

Those who parted the Saviour’s garments among them could not rend that inner vest – which was inseparably one in its nature. That has fallen into the hands of those who do not care for Him, the Lord will never clothe Himself with it again.

The Christian’s Call

Should believers correct the churches? Darby says, “*I am beseeching them to correct themselves, by living up, in some measure, to the hope of their calling. I beseech them to show their faith in the death of the Lord Jesus, and their boast in the glorious assurance which they have obtained by it, by conformity to it – to show their faith in His coming, and practically to look for it by a life suitable to desires fixed upon it*”. Let

believers testify against the secularity and blindness of the church; but let them be consistent in their own conduct. “*Let your moderation be known to all men.*” ([Phil 4:5](#))

The Practical Way for the Christian Believer

We as believers can see in ourselves things that are practically inconsistent with the power of Lord’s return. We are conforming to the world, showing that the cross does not have its proper glory in our eyes. However, we can be thankful that we have a way marked out for us in the word.

Our duty as believers is to be witnesses of what we believe. God says “*Ye are my witnesses*” ([Isa 43:12](#)) in His challenge to the false gods; and as Christ is the faithful and true Witness, such ought the church to be. Of what then is the church to be a witness? – against the idolatrous glory of the world. How? by its members being in practical conformity to His death, with a true belief in the cross, crucified to the world, and the world to them.

If we are not living in the power of the Lord’s kingdom, we certainly shall not be consistent in seeking its ends.

Two or three are gathered together in His name

Where two or three are gathered together in His name, ([Matt 18:20](#)), there is blessing; because they are met in the fullness of the power of the unchangeable interests of that everlasting kingdom in which it has pleased God, the glorious Jehovah, to glorify Himself. He has been pleased to make His name and saving grace known in the Person of the Son of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the name of Christ, even two or three enter (in whatever measure of faith) into the full counsels of God. They are “*God’s fellow-workmen.*” ([1 Cor 3:9](#)). Therefore whatever they ask is done, that *the Father may be glorified in the Son.* ([John 14:13](#)). As we seek the Lord’s glory of the Lord we will find personal blessing.

In the Lord and His Death on the Cross we find Christian Unity

In *the Lord alone* we find unity. He declares, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me: this he said signifying what death he should die.” It is then Christ who will draw to *Himself by being lifted up from the earth* ([John 12:32](#)). So we find His death is the centre of communion till His coming again. In this rests the whole power of the

truth and nothing short of this can produce unity. Otherwise *He that gathereth not with him, scattereth* [Matt 12:30](#)).

The Lord's Supper is the Symbol of Christian Unity

The outward symbol and instrument of unity is the partaking of the Lord's supper – for we being many are “*One bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*” [1 Cor 10:17](#) And “*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*” ([1 Cor 11:26](#)). Therefore the essential and substantial unity, to be seen in glory at His coming, is conformity to His death, because that is how the glory was brought about. The Lord's death is the sole foundation on which a soul is built for eternal glory.

Unity of the Spirit

There are two things in seeking unity, which we have to consider.

- Are our objects in our work exclusively the Lord's objects?
- Is our conduct the witness of our objects?

Have we faith in these things? How shall we show it? By acting on these directions of our Lord: *If any man serve me let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be.* ([John 12:26](#))

Unity of the Christian Church, is the unity of the Spirit, and can only be in the things of the Spirit. It therefore can only exist between persons who seek to be led by the Spirit of God

So there can only be Christian unity if the Spirit of God brings God's people together. And it can only be achieved as they follow the Author and Completer of faith, looking for His return.

Let us go forth to Him

The children of God can but follow one thing – the glory of the Lord's name, according to the way marked in the word. They have nothing else left, but as He, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, “*suffered without the gate, to go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*” ([Heb 13:13](#))

But what are the people of the Lord to do? Let them wait upon the Lord,

according to the teaching of His Spirit, and in conformity to the image of God's Son, by the life of the Spirit. Let them go in the footsteps of the flock, as the good Shepherd feeds His flock. And if this way seem dark, remember the word of Isaiah: *"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."* ([Isa 50:10](#))

A Plea for the Church

The Lord Himself says, *"That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."* ([John 17:21-23](#))

May we as believers consider this word, and see if the Church shining in the glory of the Lord, and fulfilling that purpose for which it was called. Do we look for or desire this? or are we content to sit down and say, that His promise cannot be fulfilled?

If we cannot say, *"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee,"* ([Isa 60:1](#)) we should say, *"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old"* ([Isa 51:9](#))

"Surely the eye hath not seen nor ear heard what He prepareth for him that waiteth for Him". ([1 Cor 2:9](#))

Darby Simplified – On Separation from Evil and Christian Unity



A summary by Sosthenes of John Nelson Darby's

Separation from Evil, God's Principle of Unity

Every right-minded Christian feels the need of unity. However if Christians are to be united, the union must be centred on God who is righteous and holy. The secular and religious world is full of evil, and God cannot be united with evil. The Christian must separate from the evil – and only then can unity be considered. Christ – who died, rose again and ascended is to be the Centre, and the Lord's Supper the symbol and expression of unity and fellowship. *Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*"

If the Church is to be maintained separate from evil, it is called upon to *judge them that are within*. Thus Christian unity is maintained in the power of the Holy Spirit and an honest conscience.

To view the complete paper – Separation from Evil – God's Principle of Unity – [Click here](#)

To download book ([JND Collected Writings – Vol 1 Ecclesiastical 1 – p353](#)) containing this article [click here](#)

Christians desire Unity, but how?

Every right-minded Christian feels the need of unity now. Saints appreciate both grace, truth, and also the one body. However, we all feel the power of evil, in Christendom. Christians of all types cannot be blind to that.

But there are many opinions as to how unity can be achieved. Some people might continue to trust in their existing bulwarks in spite of the many shortcomings they find; others might trust in a particular aspect of

the truth, others to a union through a compromise agreement. None of these are ever satisfactory.

Partisan Sectarianism

Some may abstain from any agreed union, generally due to existing obligations or relationships. They tend only to form a party.

If denominationalism is used as a basis of some kind of church unity, any divergence is regarded as divisive. Denominationalism attaches the name of Christian unity to what is not God's centre and plan of unity.

God Himself has to be the Spring and Centre of Unity

God Himself has to be the spring and centre of unity, which He alone may be in power or name. Any centre of unity outside God is a denial of His Godhead and glory, an independent centre of influence and power. God is one – the righteous, true, and sole centre of true Christian unity. What is not of God is rebellion. God should be the centre in blessing and power.

Unity in Creation

The principle of unity is true in creation. It was shaped in unity with God as its only centre. It will be brought back into unity once more, centred in Christ as Head, since *all things were created by him, and for him*. ([Colossians 1:16](#)).

It was man's glory to have dominion with Eve as his dependent help-mate. He was the image and glory of God. His dependence made him look up to God.

The Fall of Man

Man's fall reversed this. Man became independent - in sin and rebellion he has become the slave of a mightier rebel than himself. Initially, he was in innocence, a blessed but not a divine state. But this was lost in his assertion of independence. If man became as God, knowing good and evil, it was because he had a guilty conscience. He knew evil and had become the slave of it. And he could not sustain himself. He had morally lost his dependence on God to rely on himself.

Separation from Evil necessarily becomes sole Basis of Unity

Evil then exists. The world is in wickedness, while the God of unity is the

Holy God. God cannot be united with evil. Thus, separation from evil necessarily becomes the sole basis and principle of unity. As evil and consequently corruption exists, those who desire to be in God's unity must be separate from it. Otherwise one is attaching God's authority to evil, rebelling against His authority, and being independent of Him. God must be the centre and power of that unity.

Worldliness destroys Unity

Worldliness always destroys unity. The flesh cannot ascend to heaven, nor go down to meet every need in love. It walks in schismatic self-importance. "I am of Paul," etc. " The sectarian minded Christians in Corinth were earthly-minded and unity had disappeared.

False Unity is not of God

Latitudinarianism or the maintenance of outward unity by broad religious tolerance unity might be respectable and amiable in the religious world, as it is often connected with good intentions. However it is permissive and does not exercise the conscience. Often those with liberal views will regard those who do not subscribe to these views as narrow, divisive and sectarian.

Confederacy, or the outward bringing together of different groups, is not unity. This unity is professed to be of the church of God, but it is not based on separation from evil. Bringing companies together without evil being dealt with is a serious matter. The only way that such confederacy is held together is by the clerical principle. Indeed, the Holy Spirit cannot be its power, and clericalism takes its place, guides and rules in its place. Otherwise such a body falls apart.

God is Working in the Midst of Evil to Produce a Unity of which He is the Centre and the Spring, and which owns His authority

God is not doing this by judicially clearing away the wicked. But He cannot unite with or have a union with anything that serves the wicked. So He separates the called ones from the evil. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* [2 Corinthians 6:17-18](#)

God says "Come out from among them". He could not have gathered true

unity around Him otherwise. Since evil exists (our natural condition) there can only be union where the Holy God is the centre and power by separation from evil. Separation is the base of unity and union.

Unity must have a sole and unrivalled Centre – It is Christ

For unity to be maintained there must be an intrinsic power holding the union to its exclusive centre. When such a centre is found it denies all others. There must also be a power separating from evil from it when it arises. The answer is simple for the Christian – Christ. He is the object of the divine counsel – the manifestation of God Himself – the unique vessel of mediatorial power, entitled to unite creation as He is the one by whom and for whom all things were made. To the church He is its Redeemer, its head, its glory, and its life. This is a double headship – *He is the head over all things to the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.* ([Ephesians 1:23](#)).

Christ becomes, as the centre of divine affections in man, the One round which Christians are to be gathered. He is the sole divine centre of unity. Hence Jesus says *“he that gathereth not with me scattereth.”* (Luke 11:23). Even in death He said: *“I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”* ([John 12:32](#)) And more specifically, He gave Himself *“not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.”* ([John 11:52](#)) But here again, we find this separation of a peculiar people, *“He gave himself for us that he might . . . purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”* ([Titus 2:14](#)). He was the very pattern of the divine life in man, separate from the evil around. He was the friend of publicans and sinners, displaying grace and love to men; but He was always the separate Man.

The Church’s Centre

Christ is the both centre of the church and the high-priest. *“Such a high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners”* – and, it is added, *“made higher than the heavens.”* ([Hebrews 7:26](#)) So the centre and subject of this unity is heavenly. By His death He broke down the middle wall of partition, dividing Jew and Gentile, making them into one. Now as risen, higher than the heavens He becomes the centre and exclusive object of unity amongst Christians.

Let us go forth to Him without the Camp, Bearing His Reproach

“Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”

(Hebrews 13:13). The Lord's own were not to be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil, and sanctified through the truth. Accordingly, Jesus has set Himself and us apart to this end.

The Holy Spirit is the Centre and Power down here of the Unity of the Church in Christ's name

The Holy Spirit was sent down from heaven to identify the called ones with their heavenly Head, and to separate them to Christ out of the world in which they were to remain. Hence God Himself in the Holy Spirit, as dwelling amongst them, becomes the centre and power down here of the unity of the church in Christ's name. The saints, therefore are gathered into one, became the *habitation of God through the Spirit* ([Ephesians 2:22](#)). Indeed, the very name of Holy Spirit implies it; for holiness is separation from evil. Otherwise we would provoke the Lord to jealousy, as if we were stronger than He.

The Lord's Supper is the Symbol and Expression of Unity and Fellowship

For we, being many, are all one bread (loaf), for we are all partakers of that one bread. ([1 Corinthians 10:17](#)).

Unity is maintained by the judicial function in the church

How will separation from evil maintain unity? Here we must touch on mystery of iniquity, since the very nature of the Holy God cannot be put aside. Separation from evil is the necessary result of The Holy Spirit of God's presence. Through holiness there is the power to reject evil. This has a direct effect on believers' conduct and fellowship. When evil arises there is the power against evil because of the need to maintain the sanctity of the position. *Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.* ([1 Corinthians 5:12-13](#))

Thus the church maintains its separation from evil. And unity is maintained within the power of the Holy Spirit and an honest conscience.

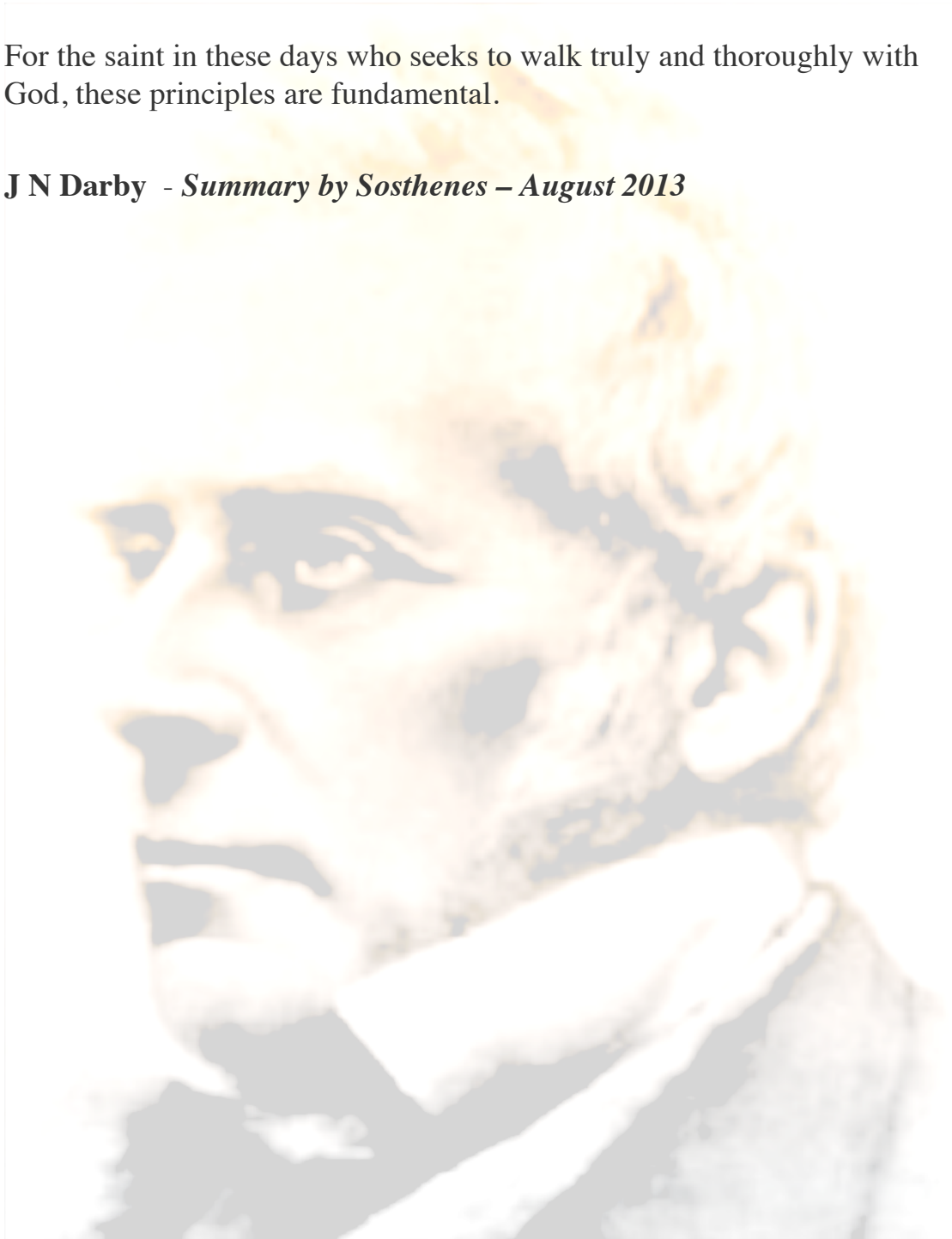
Let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity

The Lord exposes evil to the body through the word or by judgment. In so doing it maintains the body's spiritual energy, holding to His glory and its place. If the church refuses to answer to God's nature and character,

by not separating from evil, it becomes a false witness for God. Then the primary and changeless principle recurs, the evil must be separated from. “*Let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*” ([2 Timothy 2:19](#)). Whatever the consequences are, it makes no difference: it is a matter of faith.

For the saint in these days who seeks to walk truly and thoroughly with God, these principles are fundamental.

J N Darby - *Summary by Sosthenes – August 2013*



Darby Simplified – On God’s Love and Grace – Holiness, Unity and Christian Gathering



A summary by Sosthenes of John Nelson Darby’s

Grace, the Power of Unity and of Gathering

Grace is the active power that unites and gathers saints together. Separation from evil is necessary, but it cannot be the power to gather Christians. Holiness may attract, but the power to gather is grace, working in love – love through faith.

We are to be separated from evil, but separated to God. And that is in love, so we abound in love towards one another, our fellowship being with the Father and the Son, grace alone having revealed God’s heart. Active love gathers us.

If Christians gather purely out of separation from evil, they become occupied with the evil, which is not of God.

To view the complete paper – Grace, the Power of Unity and of Gathering

To download book (JND Collected Writings – Vol 1 Ecclesiastical 1 – p366) containing this article [click here](#)

God’s Holiness, Love and Grace

In God’s nature there is both holiness and love. As Christian saints we possess these because of the life that has been given to us. Holiness, is needed by all who approach God, but love, the spring of activity, provides the energy for us to do so. God is holy – God is not just loving, but love. Wherever love is found, it is of God, for God is love. This is the blessed active energy of His being. And God displays His love in the riches of His grace to sinners. It is to their eternal blessing as He will show *the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus* ([Eph 2:7](#))

God imputes no sin to the Church. Through grace and redemption this

fact is always blessedly and eternally true.

We are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Eph 1:4). God is holy; God is love, and in His ways, blameless. We are sinners. but in His love God has put sinners in the place of holiness and blamelessness. He has shown us favour *in the Beloved* – In Christ the Son, the blessed one. We have *redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins* (what we need) – so we can enter where we can be *to the praise of the glory of His grace* – and this *according to the riches of his grace (Eph 1:6-7)*

Our Heavenly Position

When Christ was here He was alone; grace was rejected here, but in His death redemption was accomplished and atonement made. Jesus has revealed God, even though His power is seen in creation, and we thus know Him to be love and light too. Blessed knowledge!

In the exercise of that love God gathers to Himself those who display that love in Christ. He is the great power and centre.

In bringing us into unity, God has the highest thoughts for us. In [Eph 1:3](#), *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* In [John 20:17](#), Christ speaks of us as *His brethren*. Our wonderful part in sweet and blessed grace is up there in the best and highest sphere of blessing, where He dwells.

We therefore have an inheritance. The Holy Ghost is the *earnest of the inheritance*, ([Eph 1:14](#)) but not of God's love. That is *shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. (Rom 5:5).*

“Separation from Evil, God's Principle of Unity.”

Darby's earlier tract “*Separation from Evil, God's Principle of Unity*” bore on state of the Church of God in general, and not any member in particular. However, anybody denying the basic principles of that tract is not on Christian ground at all. Is not holiness the principle on which Christian fellowship is based? And the real message of that tract is simply that.

The Danger of becoming Occupied with Evil

Separation from evil, distinguishes the person who separates from the person who is separated from. The danger when we separate we get over-occupied with our position as separate – this tends to make our position important to us. Our treacherous human hearts being what they are, mix up our position with self. If separation from evil becomes the gathering power, then what is in my mind is *my* position, and I am over-occupied by its importance.

As a Christian separates from evil, it is the evil acting on the conscience of the new man, which drives him out. He knows it to be offensive to God but if he becomes *occupied with the evil*, he is in a dangerous situation. Naturally he is anxious about those he has left, to justify and demonstrate to them clearly the ground on which he left. Meanwhile those he has left tend to cover things up in order to explain their position. So our friend becomes occupied with proving the evil to others. This is slippery ground for the heart, to say nothing of danger to love. This is not holiness, nor separation from evil. It harasses the mind, and cannot feed the soul.

God separates us from evil, but *He* does not fill the mind if we continue to be occupied with it; because God is not in the evil. Where conflict with evil not maintained in spiritual power, communion is lost, and it becomes impossible to maintain unity.

Real Holiness is not merely Separation from Evil, but Separation to God from Evil

What is holiness? Holiness is separation *to* God. We are brought to God and to know Him. The prodigal came to himself and said “*I will arise and go to my father.*” God says “*If thou wilt return, return unto me.*” ([Jer 4:1](#)) A soul is never really restored until it returns to God. Even if the fruits of flesh have been confessed, forgiveness and restoration are from God in love.

God is above all. The new holy and divine nature, being exercised in life, revolts from evil when it has to face it. Natural conscience involves the rejection of evil. But real holiness is not merely the rejection and the separation from evil, but separation to God from evil. God is our object. Real holiness, then, is separation *to* God, as well as *from* evil; for only thus are *we in the light, for God is light.* ([1 John 1:7](#))

So instead of the heart being occupied with the evil, which it abhors, it is filled with good. This does not weaken separation, but puts the evil quite out of mind and sight. Hence the heart is holy, calm, apart from, and abhorring evil. God is good, and we can be positively filled with God in Christ. As we become occupied with good, we become holy. Hence we can abhor evil, without occupying ourselves with it.

The soul goes from sin to love, and goes there because love was displayed in Him that was made sin for us. Love is the power that separates us from evil, and ends all connection with it; for if I die then to the nature I used to live to, I live hereafter in the blessed activity in love.

Through the Holy Spirit's working, purifying our affections our souls are drawn to what is good. We recognise evil, not by a mere uneasy conscience, but by sanctification. This is all in the power of God's grace.

Love precedes holiness

Love comes before holiness, wither mutual amongst the Christian saints , or individual in enjoying the revelation of God. *“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints,”* [1 Thess. 3:12, 13](#). Also *“Ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. ... God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”* ([1John 1:4-6](#)). So separation from evil involves *walking in the light*, in God's revealed character in Christ, in the truth as it is in Jesus in whom *the life was the light of men* ([John 1:4](#)). *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.* But what makes the fellowship?

Christ therefore becomes the centre. Jesus had won John's heart, and was the gathering power into *fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ*. John knew that by the Holy Spirit. He knew that is what made the fellowship.

The true Character of Christian Fellowship – with Him, where He is, where Evil cannot come

As we have been restored to God together, we can gather to a common

Christian fellowship. We are to have fellowship in something, that is, with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus says “*I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me*” ([John 12:32](#)). Now here was perfect love, entire separation from all sin and in condemnation of it. But He is risen and ascended, so It is a heavenly place that He takes, and our gathering through the cross is to Him *there*, in the good where evil cannot come. There is our communion – entering into the Father’s house in spirit. And this is the true character of the assembly, the church, for worship in its full sense. It remembers the cross, it worships, and all known in heaven before God.

Our fellowship or communion, is in that which is good – heavenly, no evil being there. Hence it is said: “*If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.*” ([1 John 1:7](#)) The only way in which we can walk out of darkness is by walking in the light, that is, with God: and God is love, and were He not, we could not walk there.

And this is true even if realised imperfectly.

Active Love Gathering Us

In love we are bought into fellowship, love acting to bring us together. In love we have our part. Love, while sanctifying and maintaining God’s holiness, makes us partakers of it, revealing God and gathering weary souls.

Love is active. Jesus has revealed God, and we know Him to be love and light; He has given us eternal life. The Lord said : “*My Father worketh hitherto and I work*”. ([John5:17](#)) *He gave himself . . . that he might gather into one the children of God, which were scattered abroad.* ([John 11:52](#))

It is evident to the Christian that love gathers to holiness, and on the principle of it. Grace alone fully reveals God; without grace that to which we are to be gathered cannot be seen. Grace reaches the heart.

Law and Grace

The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ ([John 1:17](#)). The law told man what he ought to be. It did not *tell* him what he was, nor did it tell him what God was; that remained concealed. The truth is not what ought to be, but what is – the reality of all relationships as they are, and the revelation of Him who must be the

centre of them. And that cannot be without grace, for man is a ruined sinner, and God is love.

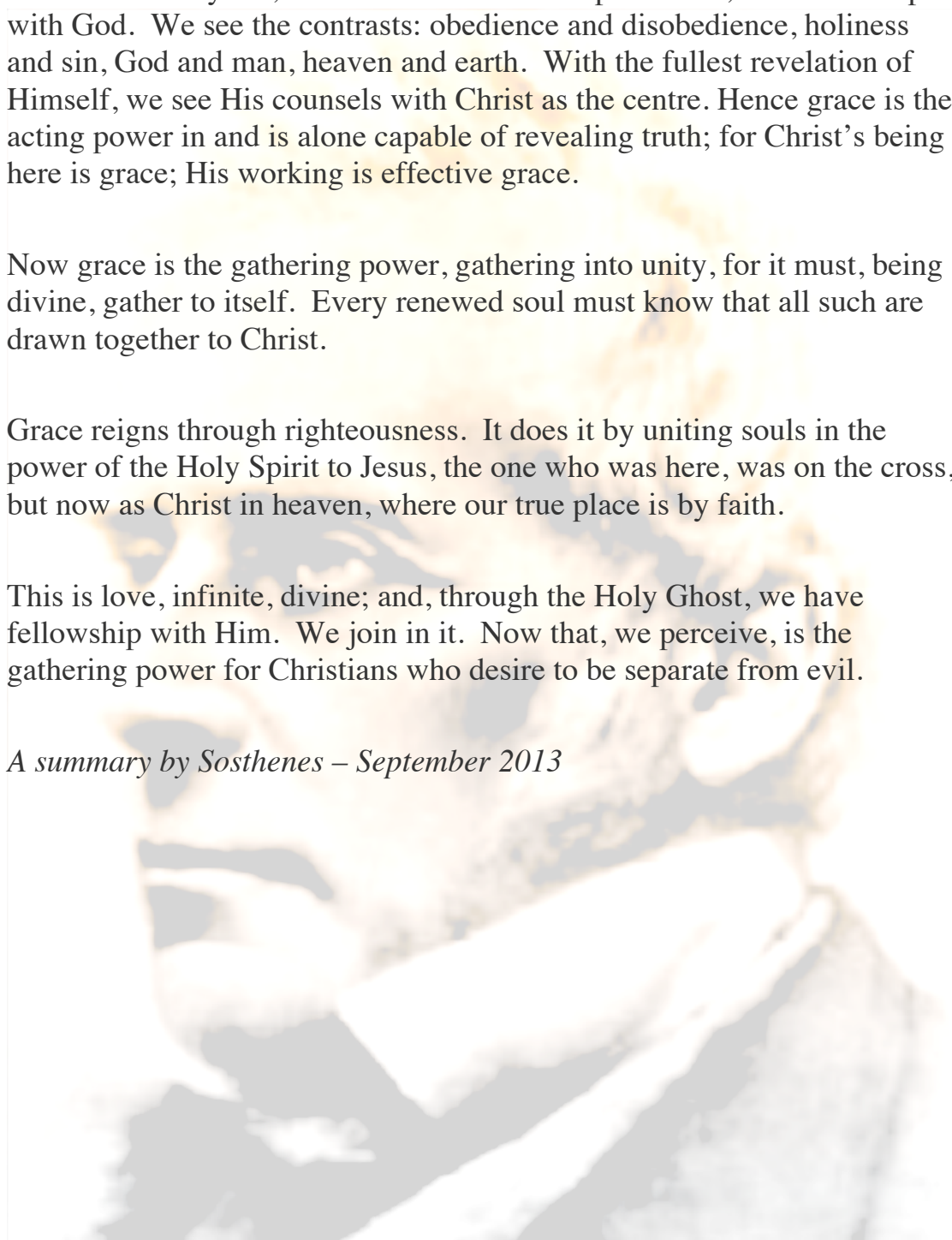
Through grace, God Himself, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are revealed as They are, and also what man is in perfection, in relationship with God. We see the contrasts: obedience and disobedience, holiness and sin, God and man, heaven and earth. With the fullest revelation of Himself, we see His counsels with Christ as the centre. Hence grace is the acting power in and is alone capable of revealing truth; for Christ's being here is grace; His working is effective grace.

Now grace is the gathering power, gathering into unity, for it must, being divine, gather to itself. Every renewed soul must know that all such are drawn together to Christ.

Grace reigns through righteousness. It does it by uniting souls in the power of the Holy Spirit to Jesus, the one who was here, was on the cross, but now as Christ in heaven, where our true place is by faith.

This is love, infinite, divine; and, through the Holy Ghost, we have fellowship with Him. We join in it. Now that, we perceive, is the gathering power for Christians who desire to be separate from evil.

A summary by Sosthenes – September 2013



Darby Simplified – on Independent Churches, Independent Local Assemblies, Personal Judgment and Conscience



A summary by Sosthenes of John Nelson Darby's

On Ecclesiastical Independency

I must not confuse my private, independent judgment with conscience. My conscience relates to God's rights, the Word and the Lord's authority. God has vested authority in persons, even though they are not infallible. But if I am disobedient, I am acting independently, in self-will, and despising God's authority.

There is only one Church of God – the body of Christ. An action in one gathering is binding on all, even if I personally have reservations about it. Scripture does not support independent churches, whether in a place or universally. Many Christians might prefer to belong to independent assemblies, but these are unscriptural, the work of Satan and positively evil, flying in the face of known truth.

If there is blasphemy in an assembly or association with it, then I have to act. That is not independence, but I act in the light of the whole: *“Because we, being many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf (1 Corinthians 10:17 JND).* We profess to be one body whenever we break bread; scripture knows nothing else.

[To view the complete paper – On Ecclesiastical Independency](#)

[To download book \(JND Collected Writings – Vol 14 Ecclesiastical 3 – p301\) containing this article click here](#)

Personal Judgment and Conscience

It is a fatal mistake to confuse your private, personal and independent judgment, with conscience. To do so leads to chaos, confusion and disintegration. That is the trouble with Protestantism.

A father has authority. He is not infallible. But I have to respect his authority, and submit to it, even if I disagree with my father. If I

disobeyed my father whenever it conflicted with personal judgment, I would be despising his authority. In fact I am putting my self-will above obedience. Indeed, in many situations – government, employment and so on, obedience is obligatory although there is no infallibility. Otherwise there would be no order in the world at all. There is blessing in doing what we know in obedience.

But if Christ's authority is a stake, a denial of the Word, or the confession of His name, then that is a matter of conscience. I am bound to love Christ more than father or mother.

However, obeying God rather than man is not to give liberty to the human will. Scripture does not tolerate that. We are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. And this principle – our doing God's will in simple obedience, without analysing every matter that comes up – is a path of peace. Many who consider themselves wise do not regard that, but it is the path of God's wisdom.

Assembly Judgment and Personal Judgment

The same principle applies in the Church. Say a Christian assembly has put somebody out for evil. The assembly feels that he is humbled and repentant and restores him. I think he is not. It would be a despoliation of the assembly for me to refuse to break bread with that person because of my private judgment. The same applies if the converse is true. If I think he is humbled and the assembly is not, then I have to continue humbly in prayer and look to the Lord to set things right.

I might disagree with something that arises in my Christian gathering. Who am I to impose my individual way of thinking on my brethren? If I set up my judgment as superior to that of the Assembly of God which has been entrusted to care for the Lord's interests, I am neglecting God's word and He will not honour me in that. Moreover, if I leave an assembly because it does not agree with me in everything, I cannot belong to any assembly of God anywhere the world. I am denying the presence and help of the Holy Spirit, and the faithfulness of Christ to His people.

Darby said: *There is such a thing as lowliness as to self, which does not set up its own opinion against others, though one may have no doubt of being right.*

One Assembly's Act Binds Another

Scripture does not support the idea of independent Christian assemblies. All Christians are members of the Body of Christ. When the assembly in Corinth was called to act as to the incestuous man in 1 Corinthians 5, that assembly was responsible for maintaining things pure for the Lord, and action was taken by the whole assembly *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. The wicked person could not have been received in Ephesus or nearby Cenchrea. If assemblies acted as independent churches and received independently of one another, then they would be rejecting the unity of the body. There could then be no practical unity.

Christian unity is maintained by the headship of Christ, not by His lordship. Christ is Lord to individuals, but Head to the whole body, – *head over all things to the church*. ([Ephesians 1:22](#)). Therefore unity is not by lordship. Obedient, godly individuals will help to maintain it; but unity is the unity of the Spirit, in the whole body, not in multiple bodies.

As to Church unity, scripture does not speak about churches or a bond linking individual churches. Unity does not consist of union of churches. The idea of Independent churches: one body of Christians being independent of every other but united by voluntary association, is unscriptural. It is a simple denial of the unity of the body.

What is an Assembly Judgment?

If a judgment is made by one or a few dominant Christians in an assembly, not by the whole assembly, then the Lord's place in the midst of an assembly is set aside. Individuals are acting in the flesh. It cannot be called an assembly judgment.

The saying "Obedience to first Christ, then the Church" is totally unscriptural. That is separating the two: if Christ is not in the church, then it is not the Church of Christ. It would justify my putting private judgment above that of the assembly.

What about Serious Church Matters?

If a Christian assembly supports or associates with what is blasphemous, then that is a totally different matter. I cannot be associated with that. I cannot use lowliness as to self to justify my remaining in that assembly; I would be setting aside the idea of the Church of God. I am free to act: we are a flock, not an enclosure.

What the Church must Judge

The judicial authority of the Church of God is in *obedience* to the word. Paul says “*Do ye not judge them that are within? Them that are without God judgeth. Wherefore put out from among yourselves that wicked person.*” (1 Corinthians 5:12-13) Where a person has been judged unfit for Christian fellowship, Christians everywhere are bound to respect it. Even if something had been done in the flesh, it is met by recognising the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Spirit of God amongst the saints.

It is wrong for one Christian church or assembly to assume the competency to judge another. Otherwise that would justify independent churches. This is unscriptural and denial of the whole structure of the Church of God. Many Christians understandably prefer to be members of independent churches; it is more comfortable, and they can choose an assembly that suits them, but that is wrong. The Church is not a voluntary association; It is not formed of independent churches, each acting for itself. When Antioch admitted Gentiles, there was no suggestion that Jerusalem would not. There is one body and every Christian has the duty to maintain its unity. Self-will might wish otherwise, but grace certainly does not.

What if there are Difficulties in the Assembly?

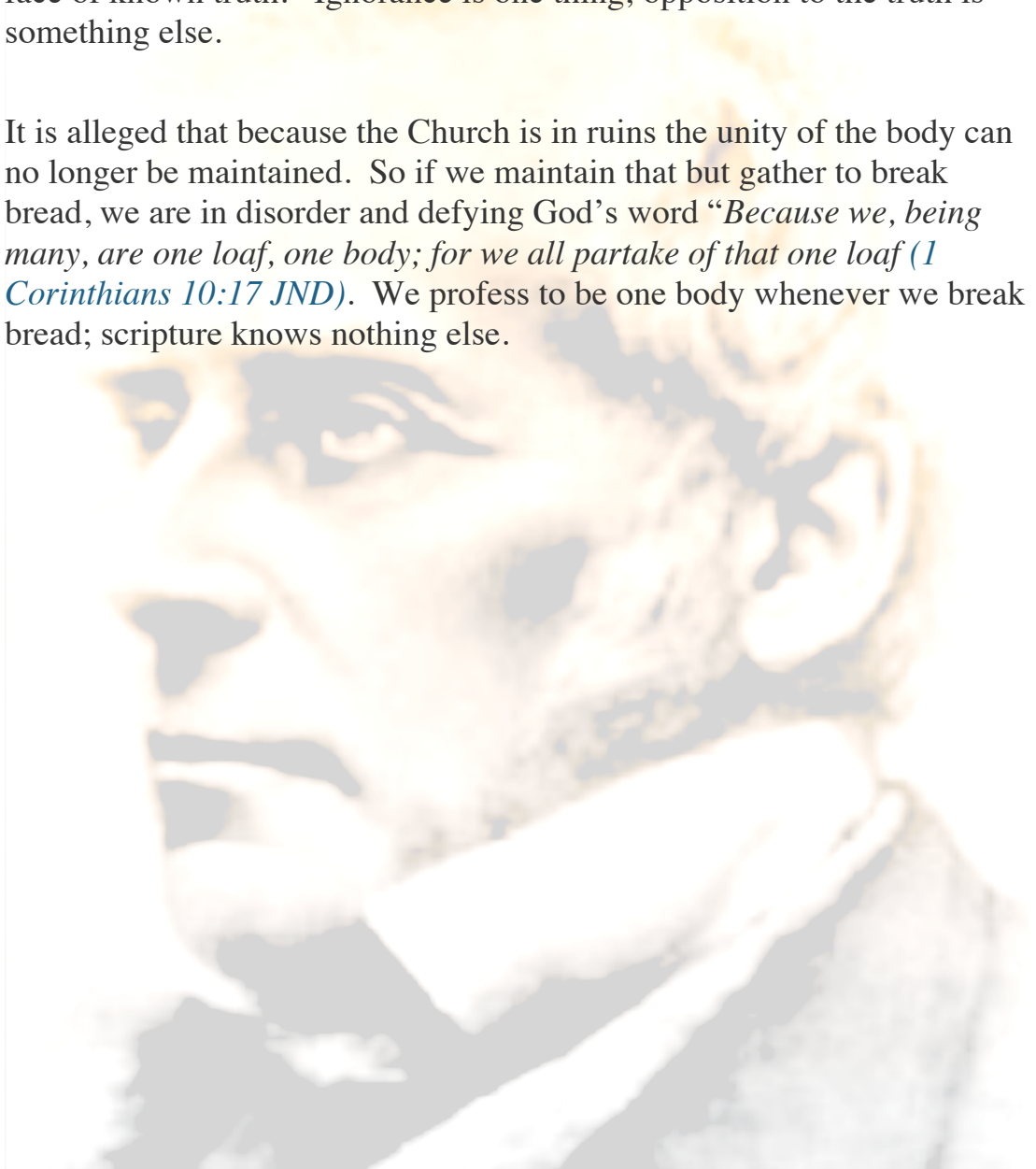
We do not have an apostolic centre now, as there was in Jerusalem in Acts 15. But we do have the the Holy Spirit, acting in healing grace and helpful gift, and the faithfulness of a gracious Lord who has promised never to leave us or forsake us. The Holy Ghost acts in the body, maintaining its unity.

But what if the flesh acts in the Christian assembly? It may do. But what denies the unity of the Church, and splits it up into independent churches, is unscriptural, and *nothing but the flesh*. It is the dissolution of the Church of God. The remedy is in humble, subject minds, helped by God’s Spirit in maintaining the unity of the body and the Lord’s faithful love and care. If I cite the question of infallibility to justify my judgment over against divinely-ordained authority met by lowly grace, I am on independent lines, rejecting the whole authority of scripture in its teaching on the subject of the Church. I am setting up a system of man instead of God.

Is “Two or three Gathered Together” the Assembly of God?

If two or three are gathered together, it is an assembly, and if scripturally assembled in the Lord’s Name, an assembly of God. If it is the only Christian assembly in a place, it is the assembly of God in that place. But if souls set up an assembly, and assume the exclusive title of the assembly of God, they may lose sight of the ruin of the church. Any assembly set up by man’s will, independent of the unity of the body cannot morally claim to be the assembly of God in God’s sight. The whole independent system is unscriptural, the work of Satan and positively evil, flying in the face of known truth. Ignorance is one thing; opposition to the truth is something else.

It is alleged that because the Church is in ruins the unity of the body can no longer be maintained. So if we maintain that but gather to break bread, we are in disorder and defying God’s word “*Because we, being many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of that one loaf (1 Corinthians 10:17 JND)*”. We profess to be one body whenever we break bread; scripture knows nothing else.



Darby Simplified – on the Church as the Body of Christ, the Church as the Habitation of God, and Local Churches



A summary by Sosthenes of John Nelson Darby's

Churches and the Church

Most people, Christians included, think of churches in terms of the Anglican Church, the United Reformed Church, the Baptist Church, the Roman Catholic Church etc., and the structures, church organisations and buildings associated with them. Scripturally the Church is the Body of Christ, and churches the expression of this in a place. Teachers, shepherds, evangelists and other gifts apply to the whole Church. Elders (or overseers) are local. The idea of a single person, appointed or voted into a professional position is totally of man's order and sets aside the Spirit of God.

If we believe that the public church is ruined, and governed by man, not the Holy Spirit, then we should humbly cry to the Lord. He will meet us in our need.

To view the complete paper – *Churches and the Church* – [Click here](#)

To download book ([JND Collected Writings – Vol 20 Ecclesiastical 4 – p318](#)) containing this

What is the Church?

The Greek word ἐκκλησία / ekklēsia simply means assembly – generally of citizens or privileged persons. God's Church or assembly comprised all believers formed into one by the Holy Spirit. It is viewed as the Body of Christ and also the Habitation of God.

The Church as the Body of Christ

The assembly is the Body of Christ; – *his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all* ([Ephesians 1:23](#)). It is by one Spirit we are baptised into one body. The church is still being formed, and it will only be complete in heaven.

Jesus said “*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*” ([Matthew 16:18](#)). Peter understood this and spoke of *unto*

whom coming, as unto a living stone, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house ([1 Peter 2:4](#)), and Paul “in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord ([Ephesians 2:21](#)). The Lord continues to add to the church those that are to be saved ([Acts 2:47](#)), and He will have it in perfection. This has resulted in what some call ‘the invisible church’.

When Christ ascended up on high, He gave gifts to men: apostles and prophets were the foundation ([Ephesians 2:20](#)); then there were evangelists, shepherds and teachers. These were set in the whole church or assembly according to [1 Corinthians 12](#). So a teacher in Corinth could teach in Ephesus. A man with a gift of tongues spoke wherever he was, it was a gift to the whole body, *to the perfecting of the saints and edifying of the body till we all grow to the stature of Christ* ([Ephesians 4-12:13](#)). Christians were to wait on one another in prophesying or exhorting. Women were to keep silent in the assemblies.

The Church as the House (or Habitation) of God

There is another view of the Church, that is the House, a habitation of God, but built by people in responsibility. God did not dwell with Adam or Abraham, but He did with Israel after it was redeemed out of Egypt. He now dwells in the house of the living God, by the Holy Spirit, consequent on Christ’s redeeming work on the cross, His resurrection and ascension. The house is where the Holy Spirit dwells - *a habitation of God through the Spirit,*” ([Ephesians 2:22](#)).

That is in spite of the fact that man has built a lot that is not of God. Paul says “*As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon* ([1 Corinthians 3:10](#)). That means that there can be a lot of things which were not sound structurally – wood and hay and stubble, fit only to be burned. However, God has not yet executed judgment, but this is why, when He does *judgment must begin at the house of God* ([1 Peter 4:17](#))

That is how the church or assembly is depicted in scripture.

What are Churches or Assemblies?

In New Testament times, Churches were local. Believers could not meet all in one place so there were assemblies in each town or city, each forming God’s assembly, the unity of the body, in that place. There was one church in Corinth, one in Thessalonica, Jerusalem or Ephesus; in

Galatia, a province, there were several. Wherever there was an assembly it could be addressed as such. Paul could write a letter *unto the church of God which is at Corinth* ([1 Corinthians 1:2](#)), and that was to the whole assembly in that city. It could be small or large, from 'two or three' to hundreds or thousands. Elders or overseers looked after God's flock.

They did not have church buildings – they met in houses. *The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands* ([Acts 7:48](#)). Many houses must have been used, but there was just one assembly in the place and elders related to the whole assembly in the place. The Christians that composed it were members of the whole body, not the local one, the only membership seen in scripture being of the whole of Christ's body.

Elders (called bishops in KJV, but the word means 'overseer') were local. Qualifications were needed: blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach ([1 Timothy 3:2](#)), Gift was not essential, though the ability to teach was desirable. They were elders in the one assembly of God, in the place in which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers ([Acts 14:23](#); [Titus 1](#); [Acts 20:28](#))

The State of Churches Now

Churches are totally different now. Although the Lord still speaks, and those who have been raised up may minister as God has given them the word, man has organized them according to his fancy. The thought of Church of God has been forgotten save for owning some 'invisible church' to which the Lord is faithful. This is sad, because if it is to be the light of the world, how can it be invisible? It may be more visible when persecuted for there people give their testimony under extreme conditions.

Publicly the church has sunk into popery, or eastern orthodoxy, or Protestantism. In the latter governments have set up national churches. For some time after the reformation people were coerced into certain churches, but later there was religious liberty. This led to the setting up of independent or non-conformist churches, but nobody thought of anything other than systems of organized churches, humanly united. The unity of the body of which we were all members and that the Holy Spirit was here, the gifts being given by Christ, and those with them bearing responsibility for the whole church; all this was wholly forgotten and left aside. Truth as contained in scripture as to the Church and the presence of the Holy Spirit was ignored.

In the establishment, episcopal authority is deemed to be passed on by succession. Furthermore, they claim to make people members of Christ by baptism of water – totally unscriptural, instead of seeing that *one Spirit are we all baptized into one body*. ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#)). Baptism is to the death of Christ.

Even outside the episcopal system assemblies are formed by men who appoint or vote for a man, or woman, at their head. Sometimes this causes a division. People regard themselves as members of this so-formed church or assembly – a body organised by man and acting humanly. They may be members of Christ or not: what counts is that they are members of a particular assembly. The way this is done varies but the Holy Spirit is totally left out of consideration. From beginning to end, all action is of man.

What is more, the assembly has a single church leader, be it a vicar, pastor or minister. That person, often salaried, will think of it as his flock, not the flock of God. If gifted, he may be a preacher, but he preaches in his church; his gift is constrained to one place. He may even not even be converted, but he has been educated for the ministerial profession and ordained. His object is to increase the congregation, especially of well-to-do people who can contribute to the church's funds and influence. If he does not succeed he may be dismissed or forced to resign. God's constitution for the church has been substituted by man's and the Holy Spirit's power and order is ignored, if it is believed on at all. The results – let us not even talk about them! The miserable consequences are well known in the church and in the world too.

The Scriptural View of Churches

In scripture there is no thought of a membership of a particular church, or a vicar, minister or pastor of a flock peculiar to him, and no thought of a voluntary assembly with its own policies or principles. There is God's church or assembly, not man's churches. If Paul wrote a letter "To the assembly of God in x", where would it be delivered now? No such body exists because churches have set aside the Word, the church of God and the Holy Spirit.

There are evangelists, shepherds and teachers. But they should exercise their God-given talents wherever they happen to be, not in a nominated church where they are appointed or chosen, and certainly not amongst 'their flock'. Gifts are for the whole church.

How should a Christian view the State of Christian Churches?

When questioned, the answer from Christians who appreciate what is right is often, *'That is how it is'*. Godly, conscientious people are conversant with the state of things, and may acknowledge the principles that we have seen. Their groans are heard. But the system makes them powerless. They are hindered by the fear of man, and the desire to be pleasing to men. Paul said *if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:10)*. Exercised souls need to act in faith trusting God, by His Spirit, to rule and bless His own house.

[2 Timothy 2](#) and [3](#) clearly point out the condition of the church in the last days, and the pathway for the believer who acknowledges that condition.

Darby asks the simple question: *Is the existing order of things scriptural or anti-scriptural? ... Happy is he who follows the word, and owns the Spirit, if he be alone in doing so. The word of the Lord abides for ever, as does he who does His will.*



Darby Simplified – on the Evil of Clericalism - or The Notion of a Clergyman, Dispensationally the sin against the Holy Ghost

When John Nelson Darby, a former clergyman himself, published '*The Notion of a Clergyman, dispensationally the sin against the Holy Ghost.*', with its understandably provocative title he was said that he was accusing any clergyman or appointed leader of committing the sin against the Holy Spirit. He was at pains to show that this was far from the truth.



Darby's issue was that any human appointment, whether by delegation or election, substituted the direct sovereign action of the Holy Spirit, by that of man. This is the *notion* of a clergyman. The system is wrong. It substitutes man for God. True ministry is by the gift and the power of God's Spirit, not by man's appointment.

If the authority of the clergy is derived from man, it follows that anything that is of God, by the Holy Spirit must be condemned by the system and classed as evil. This, then, is the sin against the Holy Spirit in this dispensation.

To view the complete paper – *The Notion of a Clergyman, Dispensationally the Sin against the Holy Ghost* – [Click here](#)

To download book ([JND Collected Writings – Vol 1 Ecclesiastical 1 – p36](#)) containing this article [click here](#)

The Church as a Worldly Institution

The word '*clergy*', or the clerical principle, has the characteristic mark of apostasy in it – that is the substitution of man's privileged order on God's Church. This has resulted in the Holy Spirit's being despised in the Church. Instead of those who had the lot of being instructors or spiritual overseers, ministers have now made themselves lords over the people and even the very Church itself. So people speak of "going into the Church".

Because this power is attached to the ministry, it has become the Church

itself in the eyes of the world. The world can therefore save itself the trouble of being religious by throwing all on to the clergy, so that irreligious people can regard religion as the clergy's business, not theirs. The substitution of the clergy for the Church is essentially apostasy.

It may be asked whether this is not really the sin against the Holy Spirit, merely resistance to Him. However anything that interferes with the Holy Spirit's vicarship of Christ in the world is a direct sin against Him is pure, dreadful, and destructive evil. It is the very cause of destruction to the church. Alas, even if not knowingly or willingly, every clergyman is contributing to this.

The Exclusive Authority of the Clergy

The Holy Spirit gives the word by whoever and whenever He chooses. But if clergymen have the exclusive privilege of preaching, teaching, and ministering communion, which is what they claim, then in their eyes anything else must be disorder and schism.

This accusation is therefore levelled directly against the sovereign operations of the Spirit of God. That is ascribing to the power of evil that which comes from the Holy Spirit. This is the sin (or blasphemy) against the Holy Spirit. – *This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils...whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him* ([Matthew 12:24,32](#)).

God's truth is always profitable, and by it the testimony is maintained in the world. But the principles of the truth were established before their being subjugated by the papal power. Believers have now to rest on the Lord, or sink into the system. But dependence on the Lord is by the work of the Holy Spirit. That is not resting on the official church, so it is condemned by the clerical system. Hence, the very notion of a clergyman is effectively apostasy and rebellion against God.

Appointment of Clergymen and Bishops

Are all clergymen and bishops, occupying a humanly appointed office, converted themselves? Whilst many are truly godly, there are some who are even haters of God. If so why are they in that position in the church? It must be that there is honour attached to the position and that

they are authorised to confer honour on others.

Most godly clergymen and bishops will admit that their appointment is not by God. Accordingly, in their position of being clergymen, they are forced either to resist God in the Holy Spirit or to resist the bishops and higher authorities from whom they derive their authority. Darby ventured to say that the most successful clergymen were the blindest, darkest and most ignorant in the external practice of religion.

And what about the bishops? Their appointment varies, but they may receive Letters Patent, in Britain by the Sovereign, with the support of the secular authorities. They, with their invested authority, are not appointed by God at all, but often by godless, worldly politicians. And if they are honest they will recognise it, even though the system must charge anybody who does not accept their authority with dissention and schism.

Resistance to the Gospel

When the gospel is preached, there is witness to the Redeemer's love: people are bought into the communion of the Lord's love, to bear witness to their sole dependence on His dying love. This witness is by ordinary lay persons. But their testimony is not accepted because they are not, nor have been brought together by – clergymen!

It will therefore be observed that where there is lay evangelical activity, which is blessed of God, opposition will come from the clergy. Some will even condemn it as evil. In Britain this will be from the vicars and bishops, in America from the presiding bishops and clergy, in Southern Europe, Latin America and Egypt from the Catholic and Coptic priests, in the Greek church from the papas – even if their numbers fall.

Darby cited a movement at that time in Ireland known as the Home Mission. Opposition from the Establishment was so strong that meetings were forcibly broken up, and those involved were excommunicated. This is despite the fact that thousands flocked to hear and enjoy the gospel. No doubt the clergy thought that it was their exclusive prerogative to preach, and therefore they should hinder any who were not ordained.

The situation is the same whether in Protestantism or Roman Catholicism. Indeed the status is the same; they are mutually respected, [witness the 21st century ordinariate]. If one is bound to

acknowledge the one, he is bound to acknowledge the other in the same title and office. They are their own witnesses that there is no difference between them in title as clergymen. The only difference is that one authority is passed down from the Pope, the other from the Sovereign. In either religion, this is the notion that meets you, as the barrier to God's truth and work.

The Clergy in the Dark Ages and Afterwards

As Christianity became the imperial religion, the church sunk into worldliness and embraced the world's methods and standards. The world therefore became its head. The world cannot manage a spiritual office, but it can manage global, national, regional and local authorities. So it set up these authorities to minister, guide and manage the church.

For a long time, due to ignorance and superstition, ecclesiastical offices wielded more power than kings and the secular nobility. Later secular power reassumed supremacy, but the ecclesiastical structure remained the same. The world's geographical secular powers used the church as an instrument to manage the mass of people. Those who desired to put themselves in Christ's hand would be regarded as rebellious, because people were taught to rely on the Church rather than on Christ's hand by the Holy Spirit. Meanwhile the official church's – not the true Church of God's – influence declined. The church, bound up with the world, has become merely a compound of secular influence and remaining superstition, where spiritual energies are cramped.

The Clergy in the Reformation

The reformation introduced a statement of individual faith, and broke off from the power of Rome and Popery. But it did not separate the Church from the world. Outward signs changed, but Christ and His Spirit did not rule. Darby said he believed that eventually the principle of the clergyman would result in the re-introduction of the power of Popery, since in all cases the religion is based on a doctrine of succession, not on the presence of the Holy Spirit. No Protestant minister, as a clergyman, can prove his title any more than the Pope can. It is not a question of what doctrine is held, though in a great number of instances the clergy do not preach the truth, and many would question whether some are even Christians.

The Influence of the Clergy

As a position, the rank of clergyman has an amazing pernicious influence

on the minds of people. This has grown up though its association with the world, and a hindrance the operation of God's Spirit. Indeed, it charges the operations of the Spirit of God with evil, as rebellion to its authority, because it does not act within its defined territorial limits, or conform to its secular and ceremonial arrangements. Nor too does the true Church recognize ecclesiastical hierarchy. Their godly and faithful brethren, acting under the Spirit of God are rejected, and branded divisive schismatics.

The Gifts to the Church

There are gifts: *He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers*" ([Eph. 4:5, 7, 11](#)); so in [1 Corinthians 12](#), *To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit* But these are known only as gifts. The notion of a Clergyman *substitutes* something which cannot be said to be of God at all in the place of all these. And is not found in Scripture either.

Not being Lords over God's Heritage

Peter spoke of those who were elders or instructors: *Neither as being lords over God's heritage* (κλήρων, kleron), *but being ensamples to the flock.* ([1 Peter 5:3](#)). That is the real meaning of the word *kleros* or lot. The only use therefore of the word 'clergy' in Scripture is, as applied to *the laity*, contrasted with ministers, charging them to assume no lordship.

Speaking of "My flock"

How often have we heard that expression from the mouth of a minister or clergyman – "My flock," as if it were a virtue to think of the congregation as such. To claim that is a shocking blasphemy, even if not done so knowingly or wilfully. Not even an apostle would have dared to claim the flock as his own. It was God's flock which they might be given to oversee – Christ's sheep – which they might be entrusted with a portion of, a lot (*kleros*), to feed and guide. *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.* ([Acts 20:28-30](#))

Vicars, pastors or ministers who talk about their sheep, or their flock, put themselves in the place of God or His Christ. They do so because they are clergy: they count it their title as clergy – they would effectively be as gods. What will they say before the Righteous Judge?

The Clerical System vs. Individual Clergymen

Nevertheless, Darby, having been a clergyman once himself, had high esteem for many individuals amongst the clergy, and he did not doubt that there were many others as worthy that he did not know. But it is not an individual question, but one affecting God's glory and the whole order of the Church. For the official church publicly has departed from God, and has become what it is, both in name and title. It has become the concentration of that which, by its denial of the Holy Ghost and gratuitous blasphemy against Him, brings destruction on all to which it is attached.

Conclusion – The clergy identifies the Church with the world, not God with the Church

The clerical system identifies the church with the world, not God with the Church. Being of the world it is of Satan, and the world denies, rejects, and even blasphemes the Holy Ghost.

***JND concludes:** What is the remedy? It must be the recognition of God's Spirit wherever He operates, personally bowing to His guidance and direction. The Christian will see as the hand of God, in the Comforter who has been sent to abide with us, and works in us by obedience. As a result we can possess its joy in boldness, against all that grieves Him. This we do against joining the world, which cannot own or receive Him, and which denies the truth, of which He is the witness.*

May the Lord give us to discern things that are not of the Holy Spirit, and to separate the precious from the vile.

A summary by Sosthenes – September 2013



J.N. Darby – A true Churchman

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), an Anglo-Irish evangelist, was led to the fierce conclusion that all churches, as man-made institutions, were bound to fail. The believer's true hope was the return of Jesus Christ. With others Darby gathered in a less formal way, free of clergy and human structure, founded on a desire to be separate from unholy organisations.

Darby, after resigning his curacy in the Church of Ireland, became a tireless traveller, talented linguist and Bible translator. His influence is still felt in evangelical Christianity. He is credited with opening up the truth of the dispensational character of the ways of God with men, the Lord's coming and the rapture of the Church – nowadays called pre-trib or pre-millennial dispensationalism

For more on this servant of the Lord please see

- [STEM Publishing: J. N. Darby: John Nelson Darby Bio](#)
- [John Darby \(evangelist\) – Wikipedia](#)
- [JN Darby Biography – MyBrethren](#)

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