

Letter: 10e 29 G v Wigram, Stafford, January 31st, 1839

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the church's responsibility to maintain order and correct error in speech with love and discernment.

Scripture: Proverbs 15:23, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 14:40, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 4:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 10:24-25, James 1:19, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Discernment", "Church Order"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the necessity of maintaining order within the church by addressing and stopping those who speak error or are led by the flesh. He advocates for a balance between allowing the Spirit to guide and restraining the flesh, asserting that the church should not be a place where unprofitable speaking is tolerated. Darby stresses the importance of acting with holy wisdom, being prompt in cases of error while being patient in cases of profit, and ensuring that the collective mind of the church is considered in all actions. He expresses his commitment to God's will and the need for careful discernment in church matters, highlighting the role of the Spirit in guiding the church towards unity and truth.

Transcript

p29 G V Wigram - With regard to speaking, I am quite clear those who speak error ought to be stopped, and those, I think, who speak merely from the suggestion of the flesh, ought to be first warned of it. Any one may do it in love, but those who guide may, if it be needed, take it up, and that for their own sakes who have done it; and if there were from this, habitual unprofitable speaking, I think it ought to be stopped. Those who are active in this, must carry the sense of the brethren, which if rightly ordered under the Spirit is a real test of unprofitableness, with them; for that is the ground of the act. I never could understand why the church of God is to be the only place where flesh is to have its way unrestrained. It is folly to suppose this. I desire the fullest liberty for the Spirit, but not the least for the flesh. The church, for God's glory, is as bound to stop it there (and more, for it is the place of holy order) as elsewhere, and the means are just the same, the grounds just the same, and it is written, "Let the others judge." Such, I think, is the very simple principle and rule of practice.

On the other hand. I am very jealous of meddling, merely because there is not the same refinement, or people being puffed up for one against another; that is just the flesh in another shape. The poor often get profit, where a refined ear would be offended. It is a holy loving wisdom which must order this. In [cases] of

error, the act should be prompt, in cases of profit, patient. But I must say I have not the least idea of subjecting myself to the self-will of another's notion, that he is to speak when he cannot profit the church. I should take the liberty of going away in such an extreme case, and try the question summarily if driven to it. I never knew the Lord desert me, or rather the act of obedience to His own will. In such a case, I have no right to wrong the whole church of God, making them unhappy, and hindering the gathering of the saints, to humour the flesh of any.

But then, this must be clearly, and if needs be, patiently ascertained, acting in all quietness, though in all firmness; for the other extreme of stopping people unnecessarily, or merely because they do not please the ear as well, hinders the gathering to Christ equally on the other side.

I only await the signal to leave this, to be up in London. The Lord is working. I do not like leaving uncared for the sign of His hand; but I have learned enough of my own ways and to trust His, not to be anxious to anticipate His plans, nor to press beyond my measure; but I feel the need, and have been a good while myself anxious as to helping in London.

I have my "Revelation" ready too, if the printer could print from my writing, but it is of no consequence.

The great point, if a man were an apostle, as I see from the Corinthians, is to carry the mind of the great body of the people - all, if possible, but the offender - with you in every act of order. This was the first effect of the apostolic action, and when we act in the Spirit we shall ever do so with the spiritual; any for the moment merely led away, will see their folly and be profited.

Ever, dear - ,

Very affectionately yours.

Stafford, January 31st, 1839.

[51010E]

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