

Letter: 20e 43 G v Wigram, Lausanne, January 11th, 1841

by John Nelson Darby

The speaker reflects on the state of the church in Lausanne, the threat of Wesleyanism, and the need for faith and energy to do the will of God.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:27, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Unity in the Church", "Faith in Transition"

Description

John Nelson Darby reflects on the challenges and transitions faced by the brethren in Lausanne, expressing a deep longing for unity among Christians amidst the struggles with worldly influences and differing beliefs. He acknowledges the painful yet necessary progress being made, emphasizing the importance of faith and the need for prayer as he navigates a critical position in the church. Darby highlights the work of the Lord in using the weak and humble to advance His truth, despite the opposition and complexities present in the current state of the church.

Transcript

p43 Dearest G V Wigram, - A mouthful of English, and thoughts of the dear brethren, of whom I am almost obliged to deny myself the recollection, or I begin to hanker after them, and to be discontented with this part at least of the desert, for it is always this part that is disagreeable to us - but I check this as unbelief and murmuring, which really is not in my heart, against the Lord; for it was not against Moses that Israel murmured.

In truth, there is an evident march of blessing here, though I have been kept to the wheel most painfully, excessively painful in its progress, in order that my joy might be in it and in the Lord, and not in myself.

The Spirit of the Lord has put many dear brethren in movement, out of their cramped position towards better things, two or three ministers among others. Two have given their dÃ©mission, but all is in transition, though truly if feeble, yet real progress, so that it is difficult to speak of detail. There needs some one of a faith and energy that I have not, to act positively. I have served negatively in some measure, for Satan would have seized this moment of crisis by the means of Wesleyanism, and that as a system or generality, has not taken place. There are merely here and there a few Wesleyans, much less than I supposed. Probably, in the actual state of the church, it will make its proselytes, and those predisposed by their nature to a certain extent; but in general, it has failed, and though it has very much troubled by its

want of integrity, and want of honest firmness of those who differed - for independence of conduct is comparatively unknown in these countries - it, when known, rather retrogrades than advances. The weak state of Christians and the existence of worldly Christianity and Nationalism always leave room for these energies, in which vast evil is mingled with some necessary good. God cannot leave them without the good, and the church is too corrupt to give the good pure, too enfeebled to separate it. The Lord will do His own work: the brethren who were on higher and simpler principles, were not, humanly speaking, of qualities calculated to spread and sanction it. The Lord works Himself. What was in the eye of man steady and of influence, was opposed, but God chooses the weak things, to shew that the truth and strength are His.

I, dear brother, am in a very critical position here, and desire much the prayers of the brethren for me for the Lord's glory. The brethren who laboured among the Dissenters here, feared the Wesleyanism, and could not come to their defence, standing in the gap. While they feared almost the determination with which it was opposed, they were yet glad that the battle was fought; but when necessarily this conflict produced other effects, many Nationals came more or less out, and united. They feared again; for the conflict which had hindered in a measure the progress of Wesleyanism, had produced effects of which they felt afraid to judge, and yet more held aloof. In the meanwhile, the jealousy of the Nationals was natural enough; many many Dissenters in heart desire the union of God's children; others are excessively irritated, and hence, most of the others, or many at least, are timid as to committing themselves with their brethren who are opposed at Lausanne. Then there are now the old Dissenters, partly Wesleyans, among the women, though having protested as a body against it, some saying the pastor who introduced it, but who now denounces it, is their pastor, and some not - and in the meanwhile the principle of leaving their churches, placing the others in a dilemma how to recognise this body: meanwhile they look on. In one place the dissident body is dissolved, or consists of five discontented Wesleyans, and there is a meeting where all the Christians can, and mostly do, unite to break bread with one of the ministers, also whom I mentioned - very happy. At Vevey, Nationals, ex-nationals and Dissenters meet the last Monday of the month to break bread - very happy. It is a beginning. There, also, another National minister has left; a third has quitted elsewhere, but the Conseil d'État has begged him to wait awhile till they see what they have to do, which he does for the moment gratuitously - a faithful, upright man, but hitherto buried in scholastic learning, Fathers, &c., but I believe he makes progress out of this lore, and to him that hath shall more be given. Here the old Dissenters, and some who thought to seize the occasion to establish themselves, hate me cordially, at least, the leaders. You will understand by all this what has detained me here, though my judgment is, by more faith I might have got off sooner, for I am very weak in faith.

Adieu, dear brother. Pray all for me, that having done the will of God, I may also, when He sees good, see you in peace, . . . You will see from what I have said, it is difficult to give much account of what passes here - all is so in transition. There needs, I feel, some one more faithful a great deal than I; but yet I doubt sometimes if others of you would have borne with the inconsistencies with many true and precious principles which accompany this state of transition; perhaps you would have been thus more blessed in your fidelity than in thus bearing with what I have supported here in these things. The Lord turn all I trust to good. Again I say, pray for me. Salute cordially all the beloved brethren, whom I remember with all my heart in the Lord. . . .

Yours, ever affectionately.

Lausanne, January 11th, 1841.

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