

Unpublished Letter, Dated July 1850, and Sent From France

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the importance of first principles in the Christian life, and how denying them leads to a loss of the Church's true identity and a righteousness that is incompatible with the unity of the Church.

Scripture: Matthew 16:18, Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 1:6, Colossians 1:18, Hebrews 10:25, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Unity in the Church", "Faithfulness to God"

Description

John Nelson Darby expresses gratitude for a letter from Harris, affirming his conviction that he is led by God to remain uninvolved in the movements in England, which he views as misguided. He critiques the Bethesda assembly for straying from the foundational principles of faithfulness to God, asserting that their denial of Christ's supremacy undermines the Church's unity. Darby emphasizes the importance of adhering to first principles in Christian life and believes that a sifting process is occurring among believers. He finds joy in the simplicity of faith and expresses hope for those who walk faithfully with Christ, despite feeling weak and unworthy. Ultimately, he reassures that Christ's love for His Church is unwavering, even in challenging times.

Transcript

{From 'Current Objections and their Fallacy, etc.', pages 62-3.}

"Dearest Harris,

I thank you very much for your letter; it has convinced me how much I have been led of God in not taking any part in the affairs in England. Had I been there I could not, of course, have avoided a testimony. Perhaps I should have felt called on to put myself more forward than even I have done - as it is, I am outside a mass of movements which are but the writhings in false position, of those who cannot see the simplest thing possible.

"What are protracted investigations to me as to Bethesda when I do not admit the avowed basis of their meeting as consistent with the first principles of faithfulness to God? They have denied (to me) the only ground on which the Church of God stands. Hence Bethesda has ceased to exist, to my mind, as an assembly - on the same grounds on which I am a Christian, they avow they are NOT bound to see

whether Christ be denied or no - I exist because He is what He is, and nought else; and they maintain the righteousness of the principle, when they avow the doctrine to be such that if it were true, Christ would need to be saved as much as the Church.

The further I go, the clearer I am that in not owning Bethesda at all as a saints' meeting, I am going on the first principles of Christian life. All who have countenanced Bethesda have mismeasured their strength, because their path is not of faith. The Lord, I believe, is consolidating souls on the ground of truth. All the investigations possible would not make me own Bethesda. I am satisfied it is no want of charity (my charity might be greater), but that which produces it produces my decision in this matter.

A person simply looking at Christ and His glory cannot say anything, but that it is a question of first principles, as to saints' conduct in this day. I am satisfied a very decided sifting is going on through this means, and that persons who walk on ground incompatible with the unity of the Church, as based on the witness of Christ, will not stand. Were it my duty to be in England at this time, I should feel perfect peace and liberty; but my work for Christ is here I doubt not.

What investigation could change a judgment founded on the letter of the ten? That letter is the basis on which I go, though I know some of its statements to be unfounded, and mere subterfuges, but I have investigated that letter, and cannot own what is based on the principles contained in it. The joy, the simple joy of the brethren; is my delight and life. I have no doubt blessing is preparing for those who walk faithfully, in more simplicity than ever. My heart is much with the brethren in England, but I am in peace.

L- C- will bear a sad burden. It is a sorrowful thing to be the instrument of sifting and chastening God's people, but Christ's love is perfect and unailing - feeble as I am I feel it. I never enjoyed the consciousness of it so much, and the intelligence, the wonderful living depth of the Word of God. I suspect our associations were not enough in Christ. The Church has had a large place in my heart for the past twenty-two years. I lived, and sorrowed, and joyed with it if I could.

I believe there was singular blessing for the brethren, but they took it too much for themselves. God would have the Church in more direct association with Himself. I feel myself excessively weak and feeble, and unworthy of anything, but full of hope. In these dark days it is the time to show Christ's infallible love to His Church - He Himself bears it according to the counsels of God.

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