

Letter: 36f 72 Mons Eynard, St Hippolyte Du Fort, April 11th, 1844

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon reflects on the challenges of maintaining faith amidst the complexities of human behavior and the importance of acting with a clear conscience before God.

Scripture: Romans 14:10

Topics: "Judgment", "Grace in Conflict"

Description

John Nelson Darby addresses Mons. Eynard in a letter expressing gratitude for his correspondence and discussing the complexities of faith and human conduct within the church. He emphasizes the importance of not rushing to judgment about others' actions, acknowledging the presence of fleshly behavior in both sides of a conflict. Darby reflects on the necessity of maintaining a clear conscience before God, despite the challenges and trials faced in the faith journey. He encourages a focus on God's grace and the principles of faith rather than the shortcomings of individuals. Ultimately, he expresses his desire for love and communion among believers, trusting in God's judgment over human opinions.

Transcript

p72 [Mons. Eynard] [From the French.] DEAR BROTHER, - I received your letter, and I thank you for it. I found it here on my return from a round I have just been making, with blessing to my soul.

I reply to the principal subjects of which you there speak to me. You are mistaken in supposing that I am acquainted with the details of what has gone on at V. I have, of course, heard something said about it, but nothing to make me thoroughly know what belongs to the case. However, I do not much mind as to that, but I wished to reserve any judgment it would be needful for me to form, until I might see the persons who were interested in the judgment which might be passed upon them. It appears to me to be the most straightforward thing. Moreover, I do not at all pretend to judge of all the circumstances and all the conduct of those whom I meet in going from place to place. In charity, I may apply myself to it, but I do not feel myself under obligation to solve everything that every one's mode of proceeding may have occasioned. From the little I have heard said, I believe the flesh has intermingled itself with the affairs of V. It is an extremely sad thing, I deplore it in the result, both on the one side and on the other. Before God I deplore it, but if you think flesh which knows better how to conceal itself, which is more agreeable and less clashing, more adroit in directing its way across circumstances in order not to displease - not to make itself

manifestly culpable - if you think, I say, that such flesh pleases me more than that which, less yielding, knows not how thus to regulate itself according to circumstances, you are mistaken; and I think, dear brother, if you reflect upon it before God, you will not be slow to recognise that it is not more pleasing to God either.

I deplore all these things, but the judgment that man passes thereupon matters very little to me. I am sure, before God, that it is often entirely false; and do you believe, my dear - (and I love you much, and I hope I shall love you, even if you should put your threat into execution), that to threaten me with withdrawing from me your confidence, which at the same time I assure you is a thing to me very sweet, would influence me as to the judgment that I should pass on the circumstances I might meet in my arduous life? Alas, my brother, weak indeed as I am - and I am more and more feeling my weakness, and my entire dependence on grace, and I hope always to feel it, more and more - for these seventeen years I have had to undergo the consequences, painful and trying to my heart, of the convictions and of the faith that God Himself has wrought in my heart by His word. I have suffered from it, and greatly; but whilst making sometimes humiliating experience of my weakness, I have had a recompense I could not tell you how abundant, even here below.

I have seen the flesh intermingle itself with principles that I find in the word; in the walk of individuals who profess these principles, I have deplored the manifestation of the flesh, but I have not disavowed the principles. I have also seen poor brothers, who embraced them, act in haste, driven to despair by the behaviour of those who ought to have known things, and who should have been guides. I am not speaking particularly of V. I have seen these brothers falsify and throw these principles into discord, sometimes, with other truths that I myself cherished greatly; but do you think that the course of the others commended itself to my heart and to my judgment more than that of the poor brothers who perhaps lost their way in some respects in the details?

As to Geneva, it has been said to me, Will you judge and condemn those brethren who have separated themselves? and this has been put to me as a test. I have replied, that if I judged those who separated themselves, I must judge others also, and I did not pretend to do either the one or the other: that if I were at Geneva I should act according to my conscience, and should endeavour to walk individually in peace.

I do not altogether ignore what has been done by adversaries of the brethren, who in different places have separated themselves from the dissenting movement. I desire, nevertheless, to ignore it as far as possible, that my heart may be kept free from the painful influence of these things, and that love may abide: but you must be a very slight observer of the hand and of the ways of God, not to see that there are, although the flesh may mix with it, two principles which are in conflict, and that those who like clericalism, have done all that they could to put into bad odour the principles of those who do not believe this clericalism to be of God. I have seen the fruits in those who have subjected themselves to this yoke, and in those who have not, and I cannot say that the result has weakened my convictions.

I do not believe that Dissent is according to the word of God. The more I have read the word of God, the more the thing has been discussed, the more profoundly I have been convinced of it. If those who leave it, in pursuance of convictions founded upon the word of God, have not behaved well in the detail of their separation, one ought to warn them of it, as of the work of the flesh. My conscience does not reproach me with having failed therein, when occasion required it, and christian fidelity.

I cannot say that the conduct of the leaders has inspired me with confidence in their course in preference to that of those who have separated from them. It is possible that they are beyond the sphere of my brotherly warnings, by their position, higher according to the world; if it is so, I must leave them there, save in praying to God. It is He who, at the end of the reckoning, will judge both, and then each will have his praise from God.

As to your ordination ("consecration"), dear brother, I do not attach any importance to it, knowing the persons who did it, and I cannot say that that presents itself in God's sight as a commendation for a special work. It is a little, it seems to me, throwing oneself on the wrong scent over words. That all the formalities, dissenting or national, may not have taken place, is very probable. The truth penetrates, although it may be dishonoured, and although those who have propagated it may be repulsed as innovators. It is what generally comes to pass. That some who like to profit by it and glory in it, like also to mix it with the old wine which suits their taste, I understand also. That only shews me that they are weaker in the faith in this respect, that they have not enough of it to follow with simplicity their convictions, nor the plain path of faith; that is all. God upholds them for the main thing of their Christianity; I do not believe He approves them in what is equivocal, in the faithlessness of their course. Ordinarily, it is the first step toward falling back into what one had pruned off by reason of the light being too strong for these things to subsist in it.

I do not believe, dear brother, that your way has been the way of faith. I do not cease to love you for this. That others should be glad to have you under their influence is to be understood. I do not think this way of acting has been of faith, and I think I already see its baneful influence in your letter; you will pardon me for saying so. That your path may be externally more easy I believe; this it is for me, that in the present state of things is the evil. That which most separates from the world, and even from the religious world, is that which makes the testimony clearer. I am not saying that this evil has been your intention, but it is the effect of the way of acting. Our want of faith associates itself always, according to its measure, with the world, and the place of the religious world of the day is there. It is thus that I judge the thing, and I do not doubt hat my judgment is right before God. . . .

If the brothers at V. have acted in the main by faith, and have mixed much of flesh with it, God will certainly humble them for this last, and will none the less bless them according to their faith. It is thus, in these trying days, that His grace is forced to act, if I may so say. For the rest, I shall endeavour to act according to a good conscience before God; the consequences are of little moment to me. I believe, from what as been told me, that the flesh manifested itself, and that they did things that my judgment disapproves, but I am still judging from their adversaries' account, for, except a single one for a moment, I have not seen them; but I do not think you can be able to judge of it without bias, or that it would be right for me to take your manner of seeing for a rule that I ought to follow.

I do not venture to give you advice thereupon, but I hope that God will decide you in all things, and I ask for you, very dear brother, dear to me and to the Lord, who has loved us both, with His church, all graces and all blessings, and an abundance of His communion, and may God bless you in leading souls to Him.

Your very affectionate brother.

St. Hippolyte du Fort, April 11th, 1844.

[51036F]

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/letter-36f-72-mons-eynard-st-hippolyte-du-fort-april-11th-1844/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net