

On Evangelism (Extracts)

by John Nelson Darby

The importance of evangelism in the life of a Christian and the need to maintain a balance between evangelism and care of souls.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19

Topics: "Evangelism", "Love for Souls"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the vital connection between evangelism and the spiritual health of the church, arguing that love for souls should drive both personal and communal efforts in spreading the Gospel. He warns against neglecting evangelistic work, as it is essential for maintaining a vibrant faith community and reflects God's love. Darby believes that true blessing within the church is directly proportional to its commitment to evangelism, and he encourages believers to engage actively in outreach while remaining grounded in Christ. He stresses that both the care for believers and the pursuit of the lost are crucial and should coexist harmoniously. Ultimately, Darby calls for a return to the early church's fervor for evangelism to prevent spiritual stagnation.

Transcript

Darby on Evangelism

"I should also be exceedingly sorry to see that the peculiar principles of brethren, and their just and never to be loosened attachment to the assembling of the saints, led to the giving up of work among souls. It was quite the contrary at the first. And if love is at work- if the meetings are to be blest it must be so- what works in the world blesses the meeting; only we must have the thought of the Holy Ghost really being in both"

Excerpt from a letter written in 1860

"But I believe that, in all times, blessing within is in the measure of the spirit of evangelisation. The reason is very simple. It is the presence of God which blesses, and God is love, and it is love which makes one seek souls. It is not at all to despise or neglect the care of souls that are christian. Nothing is more important in its place, but it seems to me that the two things go together where the love of God is found.

Excerpt from a letter written from London on January 23, 1862

"The gifts are clearly distinct, but I do not see that one should enfeeble the other..."

The evil is not earnest devotedness to evangelising- it is itself the way of blessing to an assembly, or rather God's working in one by His presence builds up the other- it is being absorbed by it. But this affects the evangelising itself; there is less of Christ in it, more of man's importance, and when pursued in a revival way, more of delusive work; it never gives a solid foundation to build upon. I should be most loath to weaken evangelisation: I believe God is blessing it, specially for gathering out in these last days, and it is healthful for an assembly that their hearts are engaged in it. At the very beginning it characterised brethren, and I trust still does, though it be more common now on all hands. The love exercised in it binds also saints together...Finally, the hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of you. I do not reject the joy of counting converts, but we must not lean upon it: "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." The bond of service to Christ is kept up, and that is of great importance. It is not refering to the effect of our work, but our work and heart to Him.

I am sure if we were near Christ we should do both well, assuming of course that Christ has called us to it. Do not be content to put one in place of the other, but see what Christ means by it. Be with Christ about the saints when you have to say to them. Be with Christ as to both, and then see what is the result."

Extracts from a letter written from New York, November, 1874

"I should be greatly grieved if brethren ceased to be an evangelising set of Christians. Indeed, they would fade in their own spiritual standing, and get probably sectarian, not in theory but in practice, because the enlarging principle of love would not be there. Thank God, it is not as yet so..."

At the beginning brethren were engaged, and pretty much alone, in the roughest evangelising- fairs, markets, races, regattas, and everywhere in the open air. Gatherings grew up, and the care of them became needful, though evangelising went on, and was blessed, and in a measure is in many places...At all times in a general way we have to do it, as Paul says to Timothy."

Extracts from a letter written from New York, February, 1875

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