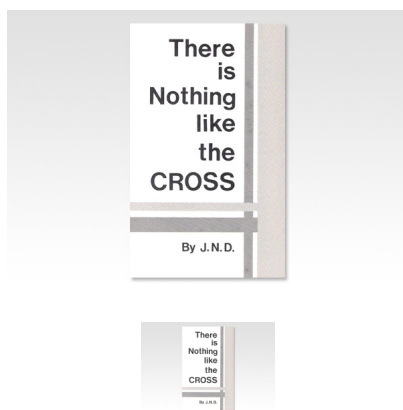




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Description

"For the preaching of the Cross is to them which perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." - 1 Cor. 1:18.

Christianity is light and love come into darkness and selfishness, and in the human heart reaching all its springs, and destroying self, by showing it and replacing it by God: and this, not by the flimsy spinings of the human brain, but by a divine Person; who, if divine desires are wrought in me, takes me out of myself by divine affections, instead of exalting self, by producing in it qualities to be admired, which being by self makes them bad and false. The Christian, qua Christian, has divine qualities, but sees, and because he sees only God....

There is nothing so eloquent as Christianity itself. Did you ever remark, that Christianity makes the poorest mind eloquent? What is eloquence? Is it not elevated thoughts, clothed in what is perfectly adapted to the meanest capacity, and enjoyed because it lifts the poor heart, wearied with commonplace life and toil, out of itself? Now, this is what Christianity does, because it reveals a divine Person, God Himself, who has adapted Himself to the lowest, yea, the vilest; who is holy enough (for He is perfect in it) to bring love into all the recesses of the human heart, because never defiled Himself, and awake, even by its sorrows and its miseries, the want of, and to the enjoyment of, the love that has visited it. It has set, too, by a glorious redemption and atonement, the poor soul, that by love has learned to delight in light, at liberty to enjoy it, because it is spotless in it, and the adoring object of the love that has brought it there.

I look around. What can I see? Heathenism, men worshipping stocks and stones; Christendom, what would often disgrace a heathen; yet goodness and wisdom evidenced in the midst of it all. What can I think? All is confusion. The goodness and wisdom I see lead me in spite of me to God, and the thoughts of God confound me when I see all the evil; philosophy, poor philosophy, would justify evil to justify God. But when I see Christ, the riddle is gone. I see perfect good in the midst of evil, occupied with it, and then suffering under it. My heart rests. I find one object that satisfies all it wants-rises above all its cravings. I have what is good in goodness itself. I see what is above evil which was pressing upon me. My heart has got rest in good, and a good which is such in the midst of and above evil, and that is what I want; and I have got relief, because I have found in that One what is power over it.

But I go a little further, and I get a great deal more. I follow this blessed One, from whom all have received good, and who has wrought it with unwearied patience, and I hear the shouts of a giddy multitude, and I trace the dark plans of jealous enemies-man who cannot bear good; I see high judges who cannot occupy themselves with what is despised in the world, and would quiet malice by letting it have its way, and goodness the victim of it. But a little thought leads me to see in a nearer view what man is - hatred against God and good. Oh! What a display! The truest friend denies, the nearest betrays, the weaker ones who are honest flee; priests, set to have compassion on ignorant failure, plead furiously against innocence; the judge washing his hands of condemned innocence; goodness absolutely alone, and the world - all men-enmity, universal enmity, against it. Perfect light has brought out the darkness; perfect love, jealous hatred. Self would have its way and not have God, and the cross closes the scene as far as man is concerned. The carnal mind is enmity against God.

But oh! here is what I want. Oh! where can I turn from myself? Can I set up to be better than my neighbours? No, it is myself. The sight of a rejected Christ has discovered myself to myself, the deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare, and self, horrible self, is there. But not on the cross; there is none. And the infinite love of God rises and shines in its own perfection above it all, I can adore God in love, if I abhor myself. Man is met, risen above, set aside in his evil, absolute as it is in itself when searched out. The revelation of God in Christ has proved it in all its extent on the cross. That was hatred against love in God; but it was perfect love to those that were hating it, and love when and where they were such. It was the perfect hatred of man, and the perfect love of God, doing for him that hated Him, what put away the hatred and blotted out the sin that expressed it.

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE CROSS.

It is the meeting of the perfect sin of man with the perfect love of God - sin risen up to its highest point of evil and gone, put away, and lost in its own worst act. God is above man even in the height of his sin; not in allowing it, but in putting it away by Christ dying for it in love. The soldier's insulting spear, the witness if not the instrument of death, was answered by the blood and water which expiated and purified from the blow which brought it out. Sin was known, and, to have a true heart, it must be known; and God was known - known in light, and the upright heart wants that, but known in perfect love, before which we had no need to hide or screen the sin; no sin allowed, but no sin left on the conscience. All our intercourse with God founded on this-grace reigning through righteousness.... It is a wonderful scene. There is in truth nothing like it. Nothing in heaven or earth, save He who was there for us. The glory we shall share with Him; but on the cross He was alone. He remains alone in its glory. Associated with Him there nothing can be, save as it is the expression of the nature which was revealed and glorified in it. That we

find ever in God who is thus known. Eternal life is become thus associated with God.
J.N.D.

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